

democracy will heed my counsel of caution. I wholeheartedly endorse their ambitions but sincerely hope they will recognize the dangers of fostering new instability—by giving hardliners an excuse to usurp power—that could witness the emergence of an even worse dictatorship.

Anti-Catholicism

To the Editors: “Sense and Nonsense About Anti-Catholicism” was an apt title for Jim Castelli’s article in the October, 1979, issue of *Worldview*. Sad to say, though, the author’s sensible comments were virtually obscured by his nonsensical ones.

Castelli’s sensible statements were, with few exceptions, platitudinous; for example, that “it would be naive to deny the fact of anti-Catholicism in America”; that “there is discrimination against believers of all faiths in America”; and that “attacks on Catholic sacraments, rituals, and teachings, particularly in the area of sexual morality, are indeed gross.”

Hackneyed or not, such statements are at least sensible. Much less must be said of the preponderance of Castelli’s reflections on anti-Catholicism. For even his very thesis—that America’s leading defenders of Catholicism “have moved beyond legitimate criticism in ways that are both counterproductive and irresponsible”—is utter nonsense.

America’s leading defenders of the faith, called the “Big Four” by Castelli, are Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Father Andrew Greeley, and two leading spokesmen for the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, President Virgil C. Blum, S.J., and Chairman James Hitchcock.

According to Castelli, these defenders of the faith have devalued the word “anti-Catholicism” by using it indiscriminately. He says they have lumped together ignorance, insensitivity, simple political disagreement, and outright bigotry, carelessly calling them all manifestations of anti-Catholicism.

Castelli says the Big Four “feed fears of Catholic intolerance by offering a simple formula: If you disagree with me, you’re anti-Catholic.” The result, he says, is a “simplistic, paranoid, self-serving attack on anti-Catholicism,” an attack which “is a disservice to Catho-

lics and non-Catholics alike.”

Nonsense! Blum, Hitchcock, Greeley, and Moynihan are all respected scholars, and they didn’t gain their reputations by bandying about unsupported charges. They have served their faith tirelessly for decades; they have extensive public records to defend; and when they level charges of anti-Catholicism, they do not do so lightly. Which makes it all the more a pity that Castelli could not have assailed these men on their records, rather than sniping at them with innuendo and fragmentary, out-of-context quotations.

Anti-Catholicism must be placed in its proper perspective, says Castelli. Toward that end he points to racism and anti-Semitism as greater evils than anti-Catholicism; as if the Big Four would deny that, as if they are wrapped up in some sort of more-persecuted-than-thou contest. Never more sensible than when he is pointing out truisms, Castelli also makes light of the fact that many actions which Catholics find threatening are not directed solely at Catholics; this time the not-so-subtle implication is that the Big Four had selfishly tried to misappropriate someone else’s misery.

Castelli berates the Big Four for saying people wouldn’t get away with anti-Catholic defamation if they said it about the Jews. Exaggeration of Jewish influence in America frightens Jews, he says. The point, which Castelli ignores, is that the statement is not an exaggeration; it is a tribute to the willingness of Jews to defend themselves against defamation; it is a tribute to their consequent success; and it is an exhortation to Catholics to do the same.

Observing that it is irresponsible to attribute base motives to one’s opponents, Castelli chastises the Big Four for attributing anti-Catholic motives to those who disagree with them. Notwithstanding that he never substantiates that assertion, he turns right around and attributes base motives to the Big Four, saying their attack on anti-Catholicism is “self-serving.”

Perhaps Castelli thinks Harvard Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., was serving himself when he said: “I regard prejudice against [the Catholic] Church as the deepest bias in the history of the American people.” Schlesinger, it may be recalled, is a highly regarded American historian, not a journalist.

Maybe he thinks Johns Hopkins Pro-

fessor John Higham was also serving himself when he said, “The most luxurious, tenacious tradition of paranoiac agitation in American history has been anti-Catholicism.”

Schlesinger and Higham are by no means the only respected and impartial observers of the American scene who have called attention to anti-Catholicism. “Catholic-baiting is the anti-Semitism of the intellectuals,” said Yale Professor Peter Viereck. Adam Walinsky, a liberal Jewish intellectual, wrote in the *New Republic* that “liberal Democrats . . . treat defeat of Catholic interests as triumphs over the devil.”

Philosopher Michael Novak concedes that the old nativism is dead. But, he says, “as usually happens with abiding passions, a new nativism has quietly continued. And not always so quietly.” Though he may not have had Castelli specifically in mind, Novak was certainly referring to Castelli’s mindset when he said: “By and large, Catholics have tried the ostrich tactic: Pretend that anti-Catholicism does not exist. Ignore the slander and the innuendo. Laugh along with the cruel jokes. Show one’s own ‘liberalism’ by joining in the chorus deriding certain Catholic faults, errors and practices. Give no offense.”

Castelli’s message would have made sense as a caveat. The Big Four, like the leaders of all organized minorities, run the constant risk of becoming too defensive, too strident, of crying wolf too loudly and too often. They are keenly aware of the risk, and they do their utmost to guard against unseemly paranoia, but one more warning certainly would not have been amiss.

But when Castelli denounces the Big Four for having already gone too far—of having damaged the faith they would defend and of having insulted innocent non-Catholics—then Castelli is in fact the one who has gone too far.

Just as Castelli urges the Big Four to distinguish among ignorance, insensitivity, political disagreement, and bigotry—and if he would but check the record, he would find that they have done so scrupulously—Castelli himself ought to heed the Big Four’s advice to distinguish between Catholics giving no offense and Catholics meekly accepting whatever offense others care to heap upon them.

Castelli acknowledges that anti-Catholicism abounds, but he offers no constructive proposal for countering it. He

merely registers his distaste for America's leading opponents of anti-Catholicism, and in so doing he proclaims himself to be the champion of anti-anti-anti-Catholicism.

It doesn't take a logician to cancel out a few of the negations, thus revealing Castelli's non-sensical position.

Orlan Love
Assistant Executive Director
Catholic League for Religious
and Civil Rights
Milwaukee, Wis.

To the Editors: It's not my wish to canonize the four allegedly intolerant and irresponsible Catholics Jim Castelli deems to be waging a "simplistic, paranoid, self-serving attack on anti-Catholicism." I do have a question about the harmfulness of self-serving actions. It would be unusual to expect blacks to avoid self-serving activity simply because much racial prejudice is directed against lower-class behavior. We have become substantially more tolerant because such a delicate course was rejected. If, by Castelli's contention, anti-Catholicism serves as a surrogate for class and ethnic prejudice and if, because of its size and style, the Church becomes a target for antireligious and not just anti-Catholic bigotry, might not a courageous self-regarding response from the institution paradoxically promote larger interests?

It is evidence of a disingenuous and not a balanced approach to require of the Church not only a polite tolerance in the face of attacks that are misplaced, mistaken, or merely "tribal," but also a nervous reluctance to advance its own interests for fear that some groups might imagine creeping Catholic intolerance. Perhaps those who fear that Catholics will attack all women's rights and will unwittingly help to overturn civil rights for blacks and those who are "struggling to save America's public schools" should also be advised not to use narrow political scorecards.

Patrick Molloy
New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Getting a handle on what Jim Castelli is trying to say in his rambling "Sense & Nonsense About Anti-Catholicism" is like scooping water with a sieve, but I think I've finally managed it.

He indicts Fathers Virgil Blum and Andrew Greeley and Messrs. James

Hitchcock and Daniel Patrick Moynihan as a sort of Catholic Gang of Four (my terminology) leading an effort to brand as anti-Catholic anyone who opposes public aid to parochial schools and/or a constitutional amendment returning protection of the law to the pre-born.

That must be the *nonsense* referred to in the title of the article.

The *sense* is that those gentlemen wouldn't argue that a pro-abortion or anti-aid stance of itself makes one anti-Catholic. Rather, they frequently point out examples of anti-Catholic bigotry being appealed to in furtherance of those causes, proving that anti-Catholicism is alive and well.

Take just one example from Moynihan, reprinted in the September issue of the *Catholic League Newsletter*. In a 1971 U.S. Supreme Court opinion, the then Justice Douglas quoted from an anti-Catholic tract that the purpose of Catholic schools "is not so much to educate, but to indoctrinate and train, not to teach Scripture truths and Americanism, but to make loyal Roman Catholics. The children are regimented, and are told what to wear, what to do, and what to think."

Who's paranoid—Moynihan or Castelli? My indoctrination in Catholic schools tells me to think the nod goes to Castelli.

Disappointed,
Daniel M. Andriacco
Cincinnati, Ohio

To the Editors: Those of us who write on the subject of anti-Catholicism in America have offered numerous examples of the phenomenon. (See for example my article, "The Not So New Anti-Catholicism," *Worldview*, November, 1978). Jim Castelli deals mainly in generalities, which makes discussion of the issues difficult.

His main evidence that the anti-Catholic problem is exaggerated is the assertion of certain Catholics to that effect. Why some Catholics would fail to perceive the problem is an interesting question of which space does not permit a discussion. However, it is worth noting that, while a few Catholics like Mr. Castelli deny that anti-Catholicism is a major ingredient in the abortion movement, non-Catholics like Bernard Nathanson and Lance Morrow have recently acknowledged that it is.

Contrary to Mr. Castelli, I have never accused Senator Moynihan of being anti-Catholic, although I am critical of his position on abortion. Such an accusation would be absurd.

James Hitchcock
Chairman of the Board
Catholic League for Religious
and Civil Rights
St. Louis, Mo.

Jim Castelli Responds:

Most of the writers seem to have erroneously concluded that my article somehow denied that Catholics should be concerned about anti-Catholicism; nothing could be farther from the truth. But the first step toward solving a problem is to understand it, and there has been far more heat than light on the subject of anti-Catholicism.

My article was written last March; since that time Senator Moynihan has taken pains to start a dialogue with those concerned about the public schools. But beyond that, I see nothing to convince me that there was anything wrong with my analysis. If I had had more space, I would have included more examples of what I consider irresponsible behavior. Even so, I used more examples to back up my contention that the four spokesmen in question have at times acted irresponsibly than my correspondents cited to back their contention that they have not.

James Hitchcock's letter offered a vivid example of his ability to see things that aren't there—he said I denied that anti-Catholicism was an element in the antiabortion movement, when I simply claimed that the abortion debate had sparked anti-Catholicism, not vice versa.

Mr. Love writes that the people in question have tried to guard against "unseemly paranoia." I guess I still have problems with "seemly paranoia."

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