The Image of a Lesser God

by Paul deParrie

"In the image of God He created them," our Bible tells us of God's creation of man. Since man's fall, however, it seems that man has tried to do the creating. In his own mind at least, he has succeeded in creating God in his own image. He has also been busy creating other men in the image of a lesser god. It is common, for instance, for primitive tribes to name themselves their language's equivalent of "human being" while other tribes are deer-people or owl-people—made in the image of a lesser god.

In modern societies, we do not necessarily deal so directly. We use images to tell our dehumanizing tale. Blacks used to be shown as slouching, lazy illiterates whose ability to care for themselves was at the level of a five-year-old white child. Mexicans were pictured as sleepy, slow, and prolific breeders. Jews were drawn as obese, swarthy, large-nosed, heavy lipped beings whose entire motivation was selfish and cruel. But those images are behind us—they would not be tolerated in the nation's newspapers.

What will be tolerated, however, is the portrayal of conservatives—especially Christians and pro-lifers—as fat, drooling, badly-dressed, tasteless boors whose only forms of communication are a scowl and a shout. The American public is regularly treated to the tyrannical, angry Bible-thumper wearing a plaid, polyester suit standing with his frumpy, sour-faced wife whose hair is in a bun. These are not merely images of a small group but are designed to be representative of

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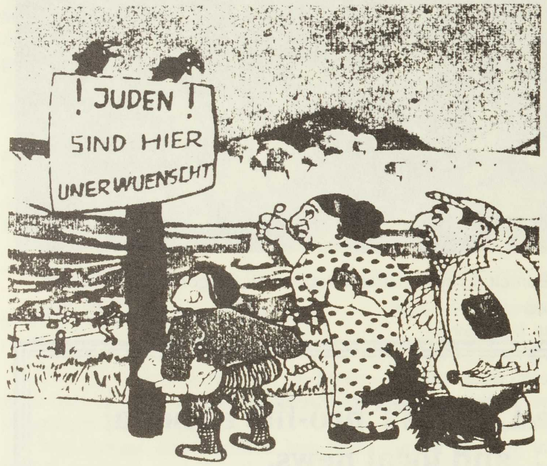
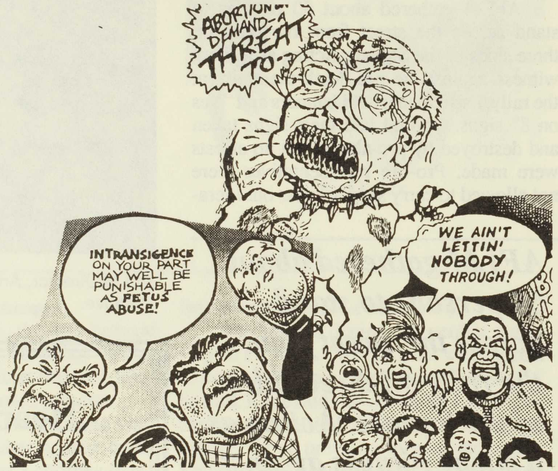


Nazi cartoon dehumanizes Jews. Sign says, "Jews unwanted here."



Dehumanization of pro-life Christians in a recent N.O.W. comic book. Both Christians and babies are unwanted.

the real mainstream of Christian Americans. It is the same kind of cultural sabotage that the Brown Shirts engaged in the early stirrings of the Third Reich.

And some of it is our own fault. Few of us spoke up when people were called "gooks," "niggers," or "kikes." We also allowed the world around us to get away with the verbal dehumanization of the unborn—now it's our turn. ■

Silent Witness

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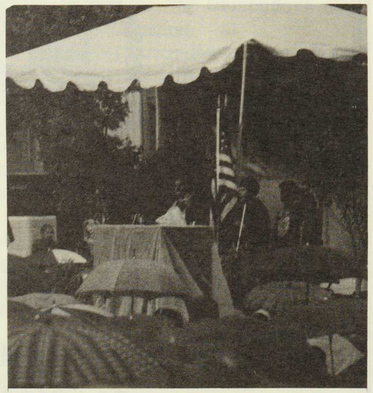
abortion for the following day across a nearby state border where parental consent was not required. (See related story, p. 10.)

The crowd chanted, "No on 8, No on 10, We will not go back again," as rally leaders attempted to stir them during the heavy rains.

AFLM Director, Andrew Burnett, provided signs and coordination to the pro-life presence. ■



Mrs. Bell tells the tale of her daughter's death from an alleged abortion. (Photo: Paul deParrie.)

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Our Early Pro-Life Legacy: Vincent de Paul

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The remarkable explosion of wealth, knowledge, and technology that occurred during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment completely reshaped human society. No institution was left untouched.

Families were transformed from mere digits within the larger baronial or communal clan into nuclear societies in and of themselves. Local communities were shaken from their sleepy timidity and thrust into the hustle bustle of mercantilism and organization. The church was rocked by the convulsions of the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, Anabaptism, Deism, and Neo-Paganism. Kingdoms, fiefs, baronies, and principalities began to take the torturous path toward becoming modern nation states.

Such revolutionary changes are not without cost. Ultimately, the cost to Christian civilization — both East and West—was devastating. Immorality and corruption ran rampant. Disparity between rich and poor became endemic. Ruthless and petty wars multiplied beyond number. Even the old horrors of abortion, infanticide, abandonment, and exposure began to recur in the urban and industrialized centers.

Vincent De Paul was born for such a time as this—to tackle such problems as these.

Raised the son of a peasant farmer in Gascony, he surrendered to the ministry at the age of twenty. Spurred on by a passionate concern for the poor and neglected, he quickly developed a thriving outreach to the decayed gentry, deprived peasantry, galley-slaves, unwanted children, and convicts of France. Over the ensuing years, he mobilized hundreds of Christians for charitable work and established innumerable institutions—hospitals, shelters, foundling centers, orphanages, and almshouses throughout all of Europe.

In 1652, Vincent was horrified to discover that a guild of midwives had begun performing illicit abortions in the slums of Paris. He quickly went to work, organizing relief and proper medical supervision for the children that had somehow survived the procedures, as well as the women that had been injured by them. He lobbied the magistrates to effect appropriate civil justice. He prodded the church to exercise spiritual discipline. And he appealed to merchants and businessmen to lift up their voices of concern and to exercise their prerogatives of privilege.

He also launched a complete investigation of the grisly trade, drawing public attention to the issue and provoking public ire against the whole sordid affair. At one point, he actually went undercover to infiltrate the covert meetings of the guild. He gathered crucial information from the inside that enabled him to more effectively do battle with the myrmidons of death.

Afterward, he led several rescue missions, saving the lives of dozens of children and stymieing marketability of the lurid death merchants.

Despite the fact that the free spirit of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment had swept across the culture like a prairie fire, Vincent's efforts struck a responsive note among a faithful remnant. They rejected the siren's song of the day and embraced the values and virtues of life. They developed a comprehensive plan of service to the victims of the crime and a concerted program of opposition to the perpetrators of the crime.

Vincent made it clear to his fellow-laborers that such activity is not an option

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