



## Editorial

# Shame On Us!

In our last issue (June 6, 1994) we ran an opinion piece from Bradley Smith regarding open debate of the Revisionist Theory of the Holocaust. A number of our readers have responded to this piece and have questioned our judgement in running the piece and in running the piece on the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. Some of our readers have contacted our advertisers regarding the issue.

We feel that we were justified in printing the piece. It has been the policy of *Statesman* for many years, and particularly in recent years, to not reject - based on content - any letter for publication that has been sent to us. That is the purpose for which the Opinions/Letters section was established: to let our readers have a place to express their opinions about anything appearing in *Statesman* or relating to any newsworthy events that affect the campus community.

The Holocaust Revisionist Theory, indeed, is a topic that *does* affect this campus and the surrounding community. As the primary news source for the

University at Stony Brook and a noticable source for the community, *it is our responsibility* to inform our readers of such a movement. If we refuse to publish the piece, not only are we not doing our job, but those opposed to the notion will not have the opportunity to respond to or act against the 'offender.'

At some time during the spring semester, we received the piece in question as a paid advertisement. At that time, *Statesman's* Editorial Board decided not to accept the piece as an advertisement. To accept money for the piece, in the opinion of the majority of that Board, would imply endorsement of the idea and a compromise of integrity. At the same time, that Board decided to offer Mr. Smith the opportunity to resubmit the ad as a Letter to the Editor or an opinion piece. (The difference between a letter and an opinion is in terms of length only).

The present Board recently decided to uphold the previous Board's decision. The piece was run as an **opinion**, not as an **article**. We, in not endorsing the ideas

represented within the piece, accepted no money for printing it. The piece reflects the opinions of the author only, and in no way does it represent the opinions or ideas of *Statesman*, its Editorial Board, any of its staff or its advertisers. A "disclaimer" such as this now will appear, starting with this supplement, on the first page of the Opinions/Letters Section and at the head of Columns.

We deeply apologize to our advertisers who were wrongly accused of supporting the ideas stated in the opinion piece and to their patrons. In no way did we intend to offend anyone. Nor did we intend for anyone to associate our advertisers with that piece or any other article, editorial, letter or column written in *Statesman*.

We will continue to support our readers' rights to state their opinions, and we will continue to provide this *service* to the campus community. We will not refuse *anyone* the publication of *any* letter or opinion, except in the cases of vulgarity or libel.

"Let Each Become Aware!"

F. Y. I. - F. Y. I. - F. Y. I.

*In the relatively recent past, there has been some apparent confusion as to the definitions and purposes of different sections of Statesman. This brief summary hopefully will clarify those misconceptions.*

### EDITORIAL:

A written piece appearing on a page of the paper under the heading "Editorial." It is written by one or more members of *Statesman*, subject to review by the Editorial Board (Associate Department Editors and up). It is to be viewed as the majority opinion of the members of the Editorial Board, and, therefore, of *Statesman*.

### LETTER:

A piece appearing in the Op-Ed section of the paper under the heading "Letters." It may be written by anyone and is submitted to *Statesman* as a Letter to The Editor. After verifying that the author did, indeed, write and submit the piece, it may be edited only for spelling, vulgarity, and "minor" grammatical mistakes - not for content. A Letter reflects the views of the author of the piece *only*, and not those of *anyone* else. Letters are not rejected because of content.

### OPINION:

A piece appearing in the Op-Ed section of the paper under the heading "Opinions." The major distinction

between a Letter and an Opinion is in terms of length. Letters are less than 500 words in length; Opinions are greater than 500 words in length.

### COLUMN:

A piece that may appear in any section of the paper. Its placement is usually dependent on the usual subject matter of the column. A column is a regularly appearing feature (usually once per week) written by one member of the newspaper, usually an editor (as in, for example, "Scarlet and Gray"), or an outside source who is an expert in a particular field (as in, for example "The Life Column"). The views expressed in a column are those of the author *only*, and not those of *anyone* else. Columns are edited for spelling and grammar and (on occasion) content.

### ARTICLE:

A piece that appears in the News or Sports sections of the paper. These pieces contain **factual** information regarding specific topics (events, occurrences or issues) that affect the campus community. There is no (or very little) allowance for opinion or "editorialization" in an article. Articles most often are written by members of the *Statesman* staff and, occasionally, by outside sources.

### FEATURE:

A piece appearing in the Features section of the paper. These pieces are a combination of factual information and opinion of the author. Examples of this type of writing include, but are not limited to reviews of plays, concerts, CDs, and art shows; individuals or groups of interest; and special events that are not covered under news. These pieces may be written by members of *Statesman* or by outside sources.

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# Opinions

## Debate About the Holocaust Not the Issue

By Joseph S. Topek

The June 6, 1994 issue of the *Statesman* carried an opinion by one Bradley Smith of the so-called Institute for Historical Review in California. This opinion not only makes blatantly false claims about the Holocaust, but about Jews and the Jewish community as well. Since, however, the *Statesman* ran these remarks without editorial comment, some history of this issue is warranted.

Mr. Smith's Institute for Historical Review, which is directly tied to some of the most vicious and blatant anti-Semitic and racist hate groups in this country, has been submitting advertisements to campus newspapers for years. These full-page ads make many outrageous claims that the genocide of European Jewry perpetrated by Nazi Germany during the Second World War never took place. Sometimes the ads just claim that Jews were never gassed in extermination camps, or that the National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC is a fraud. Many college papers have accepted this ad, but the *Statesman* has rejected it twice. First in 1991, and then again this past spring semester. On both of those occasions, the *Statesman* editorial staff understood that Mr. Smith's First Amendment rights to freedom of expression were never at stake here. After all, he can publish his own materials and distribute them to his heart's content. A private newspaper though, like the *Statesman* and every other college paper, has no requirement to accept his advertising or that of anyone else, particularly if it's false or offensive.

If, as Mr. Smith claims, he has the "truth" about the Holocaust, why does he have to buy advertising in campus newspapers? Why isn't his "truth" part of the curriculum of history departments that teach about Europe during World War Two, or of the many courses on the Holocaust taught in universities? The answer is quite simple: Smith is not a scholar, but a charlatan and a cleverly disguised hate-monger. Every credible Holocaust scholar in every American university has denounced these ads as the vicious lies that they are. There is overwhelming evidence of the crimes of the Holocaust, much of it gathered from the Nazis themselves, who thought they were doing the world a favor by ridding it of the Jews. For example, Rudolf Hoess described to British investigators on March 16, 1946 how he "personally arranged on orders received from Himmler in May 1941, the gassing of two million persons between June-July 1941 and the end of 1943, during which time I was Commandant of Auschwitz" (Rudolf Hoess, *The Autobiography of Rudolf Hoess*. London: Pan Books, 1959). Michael Allen of the University of Denver notes that "the figure six million [murdered Jews] came from the German's own documents. The Germans kept meticulous records of who was sent where ... and who was sent to the gas chambers." Among the Nazi documents that support this is a report from Himmler to Hitler showing 363,211 Jews killed in the last quarter of 1942 alone, and a report from SS statistician Richard Korherr documenting the murder of 2.5 million Jews as of March 31, 1943. This was the first time in history that modern technology was utilized for the purpose of planned and sustained mass murder of non-combatant civilians. The Nazis not only engaged in active research and

development of their methodology, but they documented in great detail. A 1942 report from SS Dr. Becker described how the gas van drivers should press on the accelerator so that "death comes faster and the prisoners fall asleep easier" (before the gas chambers were built, Jews and others were gassed in closed vans using the exhaust fumes from the truck's engine). There is also direct evidence of the gassing of Jews in many extermination camps using Zyklon-B gas as an asphyxiant. Historians even have the manufacturing orders and invoices from the German company that made the gas!

Since every credible scholar on this subject has dismissed Smith's lame allegations, what motive could he have for persisting in this campaign, and who is providing him with the vast sums of money needed to run full-page ads in dozens of campus newspapers (although *Statesman* virtually joined his cause by giving him free space for an "opinion")? Let's look at who some of Smith's friends, associates, and supporters are. According to Rutgers University Professors David Oshinski and Michael Curtis, who research racist organizations in the United States, he is connected to the Populist Party, whose 1988 presidential candidate was David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux

Klan. Smith was an editor and appears on radio for the Institute for Historical Review, the primary Holocaust denial group in America. Its founder is Willis A. Carto, a man who the Anti-Defamation League has described as "perhaps the leading anti-Semite in the United States." Another of his groups is the Liberty Lobby and its publication arm the Noontide Press, which distributes tracts such as "The Testing of Negro Intelligence" and "The International Jew" (a collection of anti-Semitic ranting by Henry Ford, who later recanted them). The Institute once offered a \$50,000 reward to anyone who could "prove" that Jews were exterminated at the Auschwitz death camp. A survivor of that camp, Mel Mermelstein, submitted testimony from former camp inmates and others. When the Institute refused to keep their promise of the reward, he went to court. The presiding judge ruled that the fact of the extermination of Jews at Auschwitz was "not reasonably subject to dispute" and "it is simply a fact." Mermelstein was awarded the \$50,000 plus \$40,000 in punitive damages.

There is no question as to what motivates Bradley Smith and his supporters. They very much want to plant

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# Holocaust is Nothing to Debate <sup>3</sup>

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seeds of hatred in the minds of a new generation of college students who will be tomorrow's leaders. If they can get you to begin to doubt that Jews were murdered by the Nazis, then perhaps you will go the next step and believe that perhaps Nazism wasn't so bad after all. If they tell you that when Jews protest against the dissemination of their propaganda by naïve campus newspaper editors it is just an attempt by rich and powerful Jews to control what you read, then perhaps you will begin to believe some of their ridiculous theories about Jews conspiring to control the country. Then maybe you will believe some of their theories about African-Americans having lower intelligence and being lazy, unmotivated, and inclined towards criminality. Sure, these people have the Constitutional right to publish and disseminate these "ideas," ludicrous as they are, but our campus newspaper is in no way obligated to publish them.

Smith's newest broadside, which is one that *Statesman* gave him free space for, also directly attacks the Jewish community and the Hillel organization. He claims that "a representative of Hillel, the

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith or some other mainline Jewish organization may have contacted your advertising department..." and goes on to allege that Hillel, the ADL (which are in no way connected to one another), Hillel rabbis, and the Jewish community are conspiring to suppress his "truths." Let's be absolutely clear on what happened at Stony Brook, a place where Smith has never even set foot. When the ad was submitted this past spring it was the Editor in Chief of *Statesman* that called me to seek my counsel, not the reverse as Smith alleges. Furthermore, while there were a number of Jewish students who spoke out against running the ad once it was known that it was being considered, it was a vote by the *Statesman* editors that caused it to be rejected. Where Smith comes up with his convoluted claim of, as he calls it, "a Jewish onslaught against

intellectual freedom" is a mystery. Clearly, there are students who become extremely upset and agitated when his ads and opinions are published, but some of these students are people whose grandparents and other family members were the Jews who were gassed in Auschwitz, Treblinka, and other places. But according to Smith, this probably never happened. According to him, these relatives just died of disease or starvation or are living on some Riviera somewhere. Despite the fact that in just the last two months close to half a million people were slaughtered in Rwanda, Smith wants you to think that human beings are incapable of genocidal acts against other people.

Smith claims that Hillel and Hillel rabbis don't want you to *think* about the Holocaust, and that we say to do so is a "hate crime." Au contraire! It is this Hillel that brought to the Stony Brook campus one of the Jews who was on "Schindler's List," made famous by the incredible Steven Spielberg film. It was this speaker, who packed the Union Auditorium to the rafters and who told of his dramatic rescue from the hands of the Nazis, that was the entire front page cover story of the following issue of the *Statesman*. It is this Hillel that organized a Stony Brook trip to the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC this year so that students could see for themselves and make their own judgements about it. It is this Hillel that has organized an annual educational program on the Holocaust every single year since 1967 on this campus so that students can learn about this tragic event in human history. It is this Hillel that has for many years organized a vigil on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass," in 1938 that was the beginning of the end for European Jewry, and welcomed many other campus groups as co-sponsors. It is this Hillel that has strongly encouraged students to enroll in courses on the Holocaust offered here on campus. It is this Hillel that just last year published a four-page insert in the *Statesman* on anti-Semitism and racism in its various forms for the edification of the campus community. Each of these programs has

been intellectually sound and appropriate to a university audience. In fact, Alex Rosner, the Jew from Schindler's List, was somewhat controversial because he challenged many of the conventional notions of Holocaust commemoration. There is no "orthodoxy" in the Jewish community regarding the specifics of the Holocaust or the ability of anyone to study or research it. This Hillel, and every other Hillel Foundation, remains deeply committed to academic freedom and the pursuit of truth through credible scholarship. We will, however, continue to speak out when hate-mongering, half-truths, lies, conspiracy theories, and outright racism come to campus disguised as scholarship, seeking a place alongside the erudition of our faculty who have devoted their lives to the genuine thing.

When Smith's ad appeared at Duke University its History Department was appalled, and responded by saying that the student newspaper had failed to distinguish between "those who revise history and those who deny it" (*New York Times*, December 11, 1991). Rutgers's Oshinsky and Curtis have said that, "The stakes are high because college newspapers may soon be flooded with ads that present discredited assertions as if they were part of normal historical debate. If the Holocaust is not a fact, then nothing is a fact, and truth itself will be diminished."

Somewhat ironic is that Smith's opinion appeared in the *Statesman* dated June 6, 1994, the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion when thousands of Americans lost their lives in the effort to rid the world of the oppressive Nazi regime. They also gave their lives so that Smith would have the freedom to publish his nonsense and so that papers like the *Statesman* would have the freedom to reject it. Even after fifty years, I'm afraid we haven't learned much, or at least the *Statesman* editorial staff hasn't. *Statesman*, shame on you.

Rabbi Joseph S. Topek is the Jewish Chaplain in the Interfaith Center and Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation.



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Stony Brook Statesman Monday, June 13, 1994

# Statesman

June 13, 1994 - Special Supplement

## We're Only Human

*The views expressed in this column are those of the author only, and not necessarily those of Statesman, its Editorial Board, its members or its advertisers.*

... And humans make mistakes. I'm not sure who it was, not that it matters, who said, "It takes a big man to admit he's wrong." Well, that goes for all people. I will be the first to admit that perhaps I exercised poor judgement - not in printing "Should There Be Open Debate On the Holocaust," (*Statesman*, June 6, 1994, Volume 37, Number 60) but in printing it when we did.

As an ex-Marine, it would be absolutely ludicrous to insinuate that I would disgrace D-Day, what it stands for and what its impact has been.

Though my time in the Corps was short, I served as faithfully (*Semper Paratus*), as proudly and as well as I could. I never would purposely do anything to belittle the import of the deeds of the Marines, other United States servicemen (and women) and the servicemen of the Allies who each played vital roles in the outcome of that battle.

My feelings toward servicemen and women are such that I am driven to the verge of tears upon seeing a military grave or cemetery, whether it be on the beach at Normandy, outside Washington D.C. or in my hometown in Massachusetts.

To have worn the same uniform, to have served the same country, to have been prepared to fight for the same ideals as those who gave their lives and those who were willing to do so is a privilege and an honor that I never have and never will take lightly or for granted. To have made a judgement error that has been inferred as a "slight" to those whom I wish everyone to respect so deeply is a burden that I must bear and come to terms with myself. To have injured others in the process ... I only wish that they will see it in their hearts to understand that I am only human.



SCARLET AND GRAY

Thomas Masse

To those whose lives were taken at the hands of the Nazis and to all of their relatives, I feel that you are no different than those who gave their lives to end the Holocaust and their relatives. I would never purposely do anything to disgrace their memory.

However, I do feel that it was important to print the opinion piece in our last issue. Freedom of speech is one of the ideals for which we have fought for over two hundred years. This right is granted to everyone in this country, including Mr. Smith, no matter how right or wrong, or profound or foolish, they are. This freedom allows anyone to respond to him or anyone else in an appropriate manner.

It was also important to publish this piece *because* many people disagree with it. If one does not know that an ideology exists, one can not refute it - if that ideology is not refuted, it gains legitimacy. Is it better to not print the opinion where more people have the opportunity to read and organize against it? Or is it better to ignore it, while it grows, ultimately gaining momentum while no one is watching?

Finally, the ultimate goal of a university is learning. It is also to investigate knowledge and evidence in the search for truth. If we do not question those that we do not agree with us; if we do not find the evidence and proof to refute his or her claims; if all we do is pass the buck or cover our eyes or point our fingers shouting, "you're wrong, you're wrong," with nothing to show otherwise, then we as a university, as a community and as a species have failed in our quest.

Has there not been enough hatred spread regarding this issue? I tried to do what is right by bringing to the public's attention an issue that needs to be addressed. That I did it at an inappropriate time without the proper delineation is not

a crime, but a human error. Two wrongs do not make a right. One should not persecute others because one has been persecuted. Rather, one should address those that have offended and prove that one's beliefs are correct.

Incidentally, the original vote on whether or not to accept Smith's advertisement took place on February 20. The vote to accept the ad failed by a 2-3-0 (yes-no-abstain) margin. At that time, it had been decided to run the ad as an Opinion piece if Mr. Smith gave his permission. Two of the three editors who voted against running the ad (one of whom is Yours Truly) are on the current editorial board which decided to proceed as the past board voted.

Let me, here, personally apologize to our readers, supporters and advertisers whom I have offended. Understand that I did nothing to offend you intentionally or maliciously, only that I am doing what I believe to be the right thing to do. I believe that on some occasions, one must fight for wrong to prove what's right. If you have any concerns about what you read in *Statesman*, as we have always said, please call or write to us. I will listen.

One final note to an unnamed individual, who I assume meant well: If you have concerns with what is printed in this publication, I would prefer that you come to us first and allow us to attempt to rectify the situation before you try to damage us. This whole episode has benefited no one but the person you are truly angry with. For this accident, we have all suffered.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Don't want to silence a desperate voice*

*For the sake of security.*

*No one wants to make the terrible choice*

*On the price of being free.*

(from "Lock and Key" by Rush)

\* \* \* \* \*

Like any other person, I am only human. I make mistakes. I laugh, I cry, I feel, I see, I think, I try, ... and I bleed Scarlet and Gray.

Let Each Become Aware!

**Statesman welcomes letters, viewpoints and suggestions about newsworthy events and issues on or around campus and its community.**

Write to:

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