

Letters to the WSWS

14 February 2000

Dear Editor,

I read your article on the GOP candidates visiting Bob Jones University with great interest, as I live in Greenville, South Carolina (current home of Bob Jones University.) This article provided a great deal of information to those ignorant of what Bob Jones stands for, but not enough. I have included some more information below:

In regards to Bob Jones University's involvement in politics, it is interesting to note that several current members of the US Congress are BJU alumni (including Asa Hutchinson, one of the prosecutors in the impeachment of President Clinton) as well as the Speaker of the SC State House (David Wilkins) and the Speaker Pro Temp of the SC State House (Terry Haskins).

Further, Bob Jones University also dominates the politics of the local community. In 1996, the Greenville County Council passed a resolution condemning the "Homosexual Lifestyle." Later that year, there was a Gay Pride March through downtown Greenville that involved over 1,500 people. Bob Jones University's response? BJU students passed out brochures throughout the county inviting people to an Anti-Gay rally at the local stadium. This distribution of material was called, appropriately, "Operation Saturation."

Recently, Bob Jones University has opposed the opening of the new downtown arena and was one of the leading groups in attacking arena leadership for scheduling "controversial" acts. Also, Bob Jones University was one of the leading forces behind the county's recent vote to uphold the current laws prohibiting alcohol sales on Sunday.

Bob Jones University's racism has not been only in admissions. In 1968, when Martin Luther King was assassinated, and President Lyndon Johnson ordered flags to be flown at half-staff, Bob Jones University refused, calling King "A traitor to the Gospel of Christ." When this was announced at an evening

chapel, many students applauded. (Bob Jones also awarded an honorary doctorate to Reverend Billy James Hargis, most widely known for his statement "God ordained Segregation.")

King was not the only Christian leader they denounced. Bob Jones University withdrew from Youth for Christ, the National association of Evangelicals and the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, due to their perceived "Liberalism." (This, it should be noted, refers not to Political Liberalism but Theological Liberalism, which is an entirely different thing from Political Liberalism.)

Bob Jones University also denounced Billy Graham for the same reasons. This was despite Graham's and many of his associates' graduation from Bob Jones University.

Bob Jones University is quite anti-Catholic. When Pope John Paul II visited Columbia, South Carolina, the late Bob Jones Jr. said that he would "sooner speak with the Devil himself" than speak with the Pope.

A frequent speaker at Bob Jones is Reverend Ian Paisley, who is also head of the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party in the UK. He was the most prominent opponent of the Good Friday Accord prior to its passage. He also had to be temporarily removed from the European Parliament chambers after he held up a sign "John Paul II = Antichrist" while the Pope was making a speech.

I hope this information can be of some use to you,

OE

Greenville, SC

11 February 2000

Hi there,

I have to say it's a pleasure having some Socialist news daily, as a web page like yours is badly needed. Keep up the struggle.

Regards,

J

10 February 2000

Apparently there are no laws that are designed to protect injured workers in the State of California. I just got a letter from my lawyer regarding my workers' compensation case. The California State Board of Workers Comp Appeals denied my claim. I was denied reinstatement, vocational rehabilitation benefits and was terminated for incurring a restriction that stemmed from an on-the-job injury. The company (Ralph's Grocery Company) even admitted in court to reclassifying workers and putting them to work in different job slots. I was not offered a reclassification or accommodation even after making several formal requests. The company claimed that my termination was out of business necessity. Ralph's Grocery Company claims not to discriminate against disabled workers. On the other hand, I was refused reinstatement and/or an accommodation after 26 years service. This not only affected my livelihood, it adversely affected my pension to the point where I'll only realize a small portion of my retirement benefit.

As a member of Teamsters Local 630 I thought that I could reasonably expect some support from the union. I was told by Local 630 Union Rep., Keith Hall, that this was a "work comp. issue" and that the union was not going to get involved. Thanks for the support, guys!

My case sets precedence for cases for a long time to come.

RG

10 February 2000

Dear Mr. Walsh:

I would like to thank you for your many thoughtful reviews, which I have appreciated and admired for several years. I am writing to comment on *Topsy-Turvy* which seems to have puzzled you to some extent. To me, the entire film is about process: the background to creating a work of art, the numerous rehearsals involved in execution, and the aftermath. This clear thread shows the many variables at work (e.g., a trip to a Japanese exhibition) and the numerous pitfalls that must be dealt with, which include the miseries of the social context: the dementia of Gilbert's aged father, the raving of the street woman, the actresses who must supplement their incomes as party girls, the actors who must shoot up or drink to face the stage, as well as the vanities and foibles of the various characters involved. (Interestingly, Leigh includes the labor negotiations of D'Oyly-Carte and his actors: what other theatre film has

paid attention to this?)

Yet, despite the miseries of these human and social conditions, the cast unites in work to create sparkling, colorful, witty art to challenge the negative forces of life. In fact, Leigh highlights, in an extended sequence, that the players, when they act collectively, have the power to persuade Gilbert to reinstate a central song. Indeed, the process of creating "The Mikado" works as a metaphor for the rehearsals and preparation and collaboration that are Leigh's own practice. From this viewpoint, Gilbert's long rehearsal scene seems key as most openly and directly celebrating the process. It is interesting that Leigh acknowledges Gilbert and Sullivan's relationship but rarely shows them together, perhaps because Leigh's true subject is the collaborative creation with the actors.

I don't claim that the film is beyond criticism or that some points could not be clarified, but rather that it is an honorable work in Leigh's canon and may even be a kind of artistic advance. Incidentally, to me, the announcement of Gordon's defeat appears as a defining moment of the age, recognizable to Americans who all remember where they were when John Kennedy was assassinated. As such it seemed more a historical detail and not an appropriate occasion to comment on colonialism. As you have eloquently pointed out to us in the past, the celebration of shared humanity is intrinsically valuable.

Thank you again for your fine work.

RK

Chicago

10 February 2000



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