



You Say Ásátru, I Say Shoresh

IN THESE DAYS of political correctness and multiculturalism, the surprising thing is that there was so little controversy when the board of School District 205 awarded a \$40,000 contract to revisionist historian Michael Hoffman, author of *They Were White and They Were Slaves: The Untold History of the Enslavement of Whites in Early America* and *Judaism Discovered: A Study of the Anti-Biblical Religion of Racism, Self-Worship, Superstition and Deceit*.

Hoffman, who had once attacked that same board for firing a white principal who had changed the failing grades of white students, began volunteering his time last fall to mentor disadvantaged white students at a new charter school in the district. The superintendent was so impressed by his efforts that she drew up a contract for Hoffman's services that was slightly less than \$10,000. (Any expenditure over \$10,000 has to come before the board.)

Now that Hoffman was being paid, he could expand his program, which he called Ásátru, an Old Icelandic word that means (roughly) "those true to one's ancestors." District officials were so pleased by the results that they decided to offer Hoffman the \$40,000 contract. Some critics raised objections that Ásátru is really a religious program in disguise, and even one with some rather unpleasant racial elements. Still, board president David Kelley, a former state chairman of the Libertarian Party of Illinois and its 1994 gubernatorial candidate, told the *Rockford Register Star* that the program is "a cost-effective at-

tempt to reach students who might otherwise turn to crime."

A minor problem arose when it was revealed that Hoffman's Ásátru, Inc., was not incorporated with the state of Illinois. While the district insisted that Hoffman would need to file for incorporation, the school-board attorney told the *Register Star* that "the board won't have to wait for the state to approve the company's application."

And indeed, just a week later, the board voted unanimously to approve the contract, which runs from March 10 until June 30. Later this year, the board will consider expanding the program to a second school in the district.

IF ALL OF THIS seems a bit hard to believe, that's because I've changed a few of the details. There is no Ásátru, Inc.; Michael Hoffman does not have a contract with District 205 (nor should he); and he hasn't been mentoring white students and protesting the firing of a white principal.

In its essence, however, the story is true. On March 9, the school board voted unanimously to award a \$40,000 contract to Shoresh, Inc. (*Shoresh*, the company's website notes, means "rooted"). The company's founder, Yahcolyah Muhammad, once demanded that the very same school board "Show respect for the black community and not remove our leaders," when the board fired Kenneth Jackson, the principal of Jefferson High School, for changing the failing grades of black students. Muham-

mad later volunteered his time to mentor black students at the district's Leadership and Learning Academy, which he parlayed into his paying gig.

And while Muhammad has never written any books, he is the founder and director of curriculum and instruction at Muhammad University of Islam, an organization associated with the Nation of Islam. Minister Yahcolyah is a fairly popular speaker at Nation of Islam events and runs an Islamic study group that brings other Nation of Islam luminaries to speak at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

One of those speakers, Ashashed Muhammad (no relation to Yahcolyah), came to the NIU campus on August 29, 2009, to hawk his book, *The Synagogue of Satan*, the Nation of Islam's equivalent of Hoffman's *Judaism Discovered*. (The Foreword to *The Synagogue of Satan* was written by Malik Zulu Shabazz, the national chairman of the New Black Panther Party.) Minister Yahcolyah's website for the Islamic study group includes a book list featuring such titles as *Our Saviour Has Arrived* by Elijah Muhammad ("Messenger of ALLAH"), *The Isis Papers* by Dr. Frances Cress Welsing ("This work is dedicated to the global system of white supremacy"), and the Nation of Islam's old chestnut, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*.

While the *Register Star* reported on March 1 that Minister Yahcolyah's bio on the Shoresh website noted his role at the Muhammad University of Rockford, that line is now missing. I wonder why. It's not as if school-district officials or school-board members, or even the *Register Star* or any of the other Rockford media that covered the vote, saw any problem with Minister Yahcolyah's apparent racism and antisemitism.

In the fall, if Minister Yahcolyah finds that running programs at two schools is too much work, perhaps he can hire Michael Hoffman to help him out. Stranger things have happened—like the approval of this contract. ♦

In Darkest London, Part 2

by R.J. Stove

This is the second part of a two-part article written by a white male Catholic convert, 48 years old, who has no specialist theological training whatsoever, is of strictly average intelligence, and represents no interest group or political movement. It derives solely from a recent visit to London, in which nothing spectacularly horrible occurred, and which was spent mostly among people neither very rich nor very poor.

IN PART 1 of this report (see *Correspondence*, May) I attempted to give some idea of the cultural, political, and moral squalor that has overtaken London since 1990. Here I endeavor to give an account of the two phenomena—two alone—that gave me hope for the city of which Dr. Johnson said, “When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.”

One was an exhibition at the National Gallery: “The Sacred Made Real,” a collection of 17th-century Spanish religious art. If someone had told me fifteen or even five years ago that Londoners would flock to see some of the most hyper-realistic Crucifixion statues ever made, I would have laughed at the notion. But this very thing happened in my presence. Tickets were so scarce as to require 24 hours’ advance notice for booking. The crowds bore no resemblance to those I had seen at the nearby National Portrait Gallery a day earlier. There, Americans and Chinese surrounded me. At the Spanish exhibition, the conversations were all in British accents or German.

Why are people in London viewing these terrifying artifacts at all? Is it, for them, the hip modern equivalent to Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*? The sheer nightmarishness of the paintings and sculptures pre-

cluded, surely, mere aesthetic interest. Do the viewers feel toward God on Golgotha the same panic that ultimately overcame Pinkie Brown, in *Brighton Rock*?

Nevertheless, the news reportage is extraordinary. At a preliminary viewing, journalists who had spent their entire adult lives publicly defending Mossad agents, merchant bankers, and masturbators were seen to weep. Adrian Searle, an atheist *Guardian* writer, wrote on October 19, “Full of great and terrible things, this is a marvelous and often disturbing exhibition. . . . I left devastated and deeply moved.” The *Observer*’s Laura Cumming, also non-Christian, wrote six days later, “This is the most powerful show the National Gallery is ever likely to hold.” Public-relations girls—whose cultural awareness had hitherto been confined to memorizing every episode of *Sex and the City*—were briefly exposed to the astonishing fact that once upon a time in a faraway galaxy lived a Man called Jesus Christ, and there had been people who believed in His death on a Cross without ever having been silenced by Christopher Hitchens. (Hang on—didn’t some of these images resemble a Mel Gibson movie? Don’t remember the title, but it had something to do with passion. No Sarah Jessica Parker in it, though, so it can’t have been very important.)

THE OTHER SMALL SIGN of hope for London can be found, with great difficulty, once you leave the Marble Arch Underground station and turn to the right. Inlaid on a traffic island separating Bayswater Road from Edgware Road, there is a round plaque that marks the spot where once the Tyburn gallows stood. No policeman will admit to knowing where Tyburn Convent actually is, but the Muslim tour

guide will tell you.

On the door to Tyburn Convent is a placard: “MOBILE PHONES MUST BE SWITCHED OFF BEFORE ENTERING THE CHAPEL.” Even here, it seems, modernity must be warned against. Upon entering, you are suddenly overwhelmed by a vast silence, broken only by the occasional whine of ambulances outside.

Behind a white grille, a Tyburn sister kneels, reverently but impassively, before the Blessed Sacrament. There are two ladies in the pews, each of whom is saying the Rosary. And there is myself.

What happened to me, in the 20 minutes that I knelt there, I cannot profess to say. Perhaps I briefly went insane. Perhaps I only then appreciated for the first time what being a faithful Catholic means. Whatever the explanation for those 20 minutes, it was somehow as if St. Edmund Campion and all the other 104 Catholic martyrs of Tyburn were, in a strange way, actually present.

I guess it was the spirit of the place. The realization that on this very soil, Catholics like me were not worrying about how to get to the nearest Tube station or when the traffic light was going to change or whether they had all the documents for their forthcoming cross-Channel trip. They were worrying about how not to betray the Church when the hangman first plunged his knife into their bowels.

From a biography of Campion published in 1867:

There was standing beside the block where Campion was being cut into quarters a young man named Henry Walpole: he was still a Protestant, and had gone merely to see. As the hang-