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## **The Blindness of Prejudice: United for Separation**

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# Book Reviews

## THE BLINDNESS OF PREJUDICE

**UNITED FOR SEPARATION: An Analysis of POAU Assaults on Catholicism.** By Lawrence P. Creedon and William D. Falcon. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959. 259pp. \$3.35.

This work is a study in prejudice and reveals in grim detail the lies and contradictions which prejudice generates. The term POAU is an abbreviation for the name of an organization called Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. The authors have resolutely tracked down the mass of half-truths, misquotations and even base fabrications which the POAU has spewn forth and continues to spew forth. It is regrettable that in our "enlightened" age, such an exposition of bias and blindness had to be written at all.

The book is divided into four sections: (1) a general conspectus of the POAU and its more prominent leaders and activities; (2) particular campaigns which illustrate the method and mentality of POAU; (3) a detailed analysis of one significant POAU article entitled: "The Rising Tempo of Rome's Demands" (the full text of the original POAU article is given in the appendix); (4) a summary of the Church-State question as contained in Catholic teaching.

It would be tiresome to rehearse all the incidents and misrepresentations which the authors have so patiently and methodically investigated and set down. Each false assertion, each biased generalization is searchingly illuminated against the background of the original quotations or letters of inquiry directed to the agencies or persons concerned. The process itself is wearisome, but in a refutation of this type, absolutely necessary. The authors are to be commended for their patience and fair-mindedness. Readers of every faith can be grateful for the tempered and temperate exposure of what are

in themselves most exasperating instances of misrepresentation by people whose good faith can be seriously doubted.

The resignation in 1958 of Mr. Stanley Lichtenstein as Research Director of POAU and his reasons for it, together with the entire Fourth Part of this analysis, are telling blows against the organization in question.

The issue which finally prompted the resignation of Mr. Lichtenstein has now become academic. It concerned the "Questions for a Catholic Candidate" proposed to Mr. John F. Kennedy during his recent campaign for the Presidency of the United States. Mr. Lichtenstein honestly admitted that the set of questions "actually tended to undermine the constitutional principle which the organization (POAU) professes to uphold." In other words, the Research Director of the POAU found himself caught in a complete contradiction of principles and chose the only way out left to an honest man. This is damning evidence indeed.

The painstaking scholarship displayed throughout the pages of this work renders a welcome service to the cause of justice and truth. The controversies are by no means dead. Recent actions of the POAU included a campaign against the sale by the City of St. Louis of some downtown property to the University of St. Louis, a Catholic institution of learning. It has loudly joined in the storm raised over the question of Federal aid to education.

The election of a Roman Catholic candidate to the presidency of the United States indicated that prejudice on that particular issue has died down in large measure. This is true despite the cartoons and scurrilous literature which were released during the heat of the campaign. But the ugly head of prejudice whether religious or racial is far from dead.

The lesson to be learned by all from this closely-reasoned refutation is the blindness of prejudice. It is all the more true when the issues concerned are intimately linked with passion and sentiment. Catholics too can profit therefrom by a stern determination even in the heat of controversy, to adhere rigorously to the canons of truth, scholarship and charity.

SAMUEL R. WILEY

## CARDINALS IN HISTORY

THE PAPAL PRINCES: A History of the Sacred College of Cardinals. By Glenn D. Kittler. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1960. 369pp. \$4.95.