

# Vatican Rejection of Freedom of the Press

The pressure of the Catholic hierarchy on the American press is one of the most important forces in America

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***Editor's note:** Given this November's US presidential election and the Catholic Church's immense stake in the outcome, we are publishing a series of excerpts from N4CM Chairman Dr Stephen D. Mumford's book, "The Life and Death of NSSM 200: How the Destruction of Political Will Doomed a US Population Policy". In the following chapter, Dr Mumford examines 150 years of uninterrupted papal hostility toward American journalism and freedom of the press, as relevant and revealing today as when the book was first published in 1996. [Chapter 9 here](#). [Chapter 11 here](#). [Chapter 12 here](#). [Chapter 13 here](#). [Chapter 15 here](#). [Chapter 16 here](#).*



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## Chapter 14: Vatican Rejection of Freedom of the Press

This  
pressure

[of the Catholic Church on American journalism] is one of the most important forces in American life, and the only one about which secrecy is generally maintained, no newspaper being brave enough to discuss it, although all fear it and believe that the problem should be dragged into the open and made publicly known.[260a]

George Seldes  
1890 -1995 Journalist and Dean of  
Investigative Reporters

George Seldes was the leading observer and critic of American journalism in this century. Of his 21 books,[260b] seven deal with freedom of the press.[260c] The pressure of the Catholic Church on American journalism has been catastrophic for population growth control efforts such as the Rockefeller Commission and the NSSM 200 initiative. The secrecy imposed by the Catholic Church accounts for the near total lack of awareness of the grave threat overpopulation poses to virtually every treasured aspect of life in America. How and why journalism in this country has come to such a deplorable state will be the subject of this chapter.

As we have said, the Catholic hierarchy's hatred of freedom of the press has long been known. According to Bernhard Hasler, in his encyclical *Mirari Vos*, Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) "condemned the ideas of liberalism. He viewed freedom of conscience as a 'false and absurd concept,' indeed a mad delusion. Freedom of the press, to his mind, could never be sufficiently abhorred and anathematized." [260d] In 1850, Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) branded freedom of the press and freedom of association as intrinsically evil.[260e] The Catholic hierarchy has never accepted the concept of freedom of the press.

By 1870, the principles of the French Revolution (1848), which included freedom of the press, had brought the Catholic Church to its knees. Newspapers everywhere were conveying the truth about Catholicism. Indeed, unrestricted journalism of the time was a major cause for the drive to adopt the principle of infallibility (see Chapter 11). According to Hasler, the Infallibilist Party "wanted to employ the infallible pope to contain the forces of unbridled journalism." [260f] On May 25, 1870, the newspaper *Unita Cattolica*, which supported adoption of the principle of infallibility, wrote, "The infallible pope must counteract and cure the prevailing abuses of unbridled freedom of the press, thanks to which journalists daily spread lies and calumny. Every day the pope can teach, condemn, and define dogma and Catholics will never be permitted to question his decisions." [260g]

With the adoption of the principle of infallibility by Pius IX and freedom of the press branded intrinsically evil by him, the Church immediately set out to “bridle” the press. In the United States, the Knights of Columbus was created in 1882 to organize the Catholic laity into a tightly controlled and responsive machine. By 1914 the Knights of Columbus had evolved into a national organization capable of intimidating anyone who criticized the Church in any way. During the period from August 1914 to January 17, 1917, the Knights succeeded, according to their own report, in shutting down 60 of the 62 or 63 newspapers in the United States that published news critical of the Catholic Church. And they bragged about it.[260h]

In 1946, Pius XII told a group of American editors that freedom of the press “does not allow a man to print what is wrong, what is known to be false, or what is calculated to undermine and destroy the moral and religious fiber of individuals and the peace and harmony of nations.”[260i] The pope, of course, considers himself the supreme judge of what is wrong, false, moral, religious, peaceful and harmonious encompassing all aspects of our existence. Given the pontiff’s statement, reporters, editors and publishers have only those rights given to them by the pope. Thus, any reporter, editor or publisher who defies the pope becomes fair game. These were the ground rules established by the Knights of Columbus in their crusade early in this century to destroy all American newspapers that did not conform to the dictates of the Vatican.

### PAUL BLANSHARD ASSESSES VATICAN INFLUENCE

In 1949, Paul Blanshard reported on his extensive study of Catholic censorship and boycott in a book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. He found that,

“The censorship system of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is neither a spasmodic nor an intermittent phenomenon. It is a highly organized system of cultural and moral controls that applies not only to books, plays, magazines and motion pictures, but to persons and places....[The Church] holds the power of economic life and death over many authors, publishers and producers who must rely upon American Catholics for patronage and support.” [260j]

For his analysis, Blanshard depends heavily on the writings of Catholics in good standing, including Canon law. He observes:

“Catholics are taught that the Roman Catholic Church is the supreme guardian and purveyor of truth, that the Pope has infallible judgment in moral matters, and that ‘union of minds requires not only a perfect accord in the one Faith, but complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff, as to God Himself.’ The words are those of Leo XIII in his *Chief Duties of Christian Citizens* ...[260k] ‘The Church is not afraid of the truth,’ says Father John C. Heenan in his *Priest and Penitent*, but She is very much afraid that a clever presentation of falsehood will deceive even the elect.’ The Church teaches that literature is ‘immoral’ if it is opposed to Catholic



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standards, and that ‘no one has a right to publish such literature any more than one has a right to poison wells or sell tainted food.’”[260l]

Blanshard quotes the most authoritative Catholic work on doctrine, Father Henry Davis’s four-volume *Moral and Pastoral Theology* which instructs Catholic bishops to enforce a boycott against all of the following classes of books, as described in the priest’s own words:

- “1. Books by any writers which defend heresy or schism, or attempt in any way to undermine the very foundations of religion;
2. All books...which affect to prove that true divorce is permissible in the case of adultery;
3. Books which attack or hold up to ridicule any Catholic dogma, such as the creation of man, original sin, the infallibility of the Pope;
4. Books which professedly treat of, narrate, or teach matters that are lewd or obscene, such as the defense of methods of birth control.”[260m]

Does the Catholic leadership have the right to suppress the press? Blanshard quotes Father Francis J. Connell, Associate Professor of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America, who was extraordinarily frank when writing in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* for January 1946:

“We believe that the rulers of a Catholic country have the right to restrict the activities of those who would lead their people away from their allegiance to the Catholic Church...they possess the right to prevent propaganda against the Church. This is merely a logical conclusion from the basic Catholic tenet that the Son of God established one religion and commanded all men to accept it under pain of eternal damnation.”[260n]

Pope Pius XI was equally forthright. In an Allocution dated December 20, 1926, he stated, “Catholics may not support, favor, or read papers which are edited by men whose writings are in notable opposition to Catholic doctrine in faith and morals...”[260o]

Blanshard describes a February 11, 1928 article by a Jesuit priest, Charles J. Mullaly, that appeared in the Jesuit magazine, *AMERICA*. The article is a point-by-point description of Catholic techniques in boycotting an American newspaper and a censorship program for priests and laymen. Blanshard writes: “Father Mullaly tells with perfect candor how a priest and four or five Catholic laymen, with the help of an impressive letterhead bearing the names of prominent citizens, can terrorize any editor with the specter of a great wave of Catholic indignation.”[260p] This same technique is still in use in the 1990s and numerous examples in the period 1994-1996 will be cited in the next chapter.

Mullaly offers an example of a boycott that can be used as a model in the techniques of suppression. The offending Washington, D.C., newspaper had published a series of letters-

the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

“Instead of writing an indignant defense of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd,’ says Father Mullaly, ‘and thus stimulating a controversy that would have been financially profitable to the offending paper, this Catholic Society followed a more practical method of action.’ Its strategy was aimed at the business office and not at the editorial department...Members of the society interviewed merchants who advertised in the paper and suggested they demand an immediate change of editorial policy, if they hoped to keep Catholic trade. No intimation of boycott was given, but these businessmen understood perfectly well that the paper was supported by their advertising, and they hastened to show sympathy for their insulted Catholic patrons.

“Priests in Washington were told to make a statement in their pulpits ‘somewhat as follows’: ‘There is a newspaper in this city that is attacking the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. I will not mention its name. This paper is opening its columns to bigots who are insulting the purity of our Catholic Sisterhoods. I do not know what kind of Catholic each of you may be, but as for me, I will fight insults to the Holy Mother Church. I do not know what you will do; I will fling any offending newspaper from my house and will never buy it again.’ Father Mullaly claimed that ‘the effect was magical,’ and that the offending newspaper lost forty percent of its circulation in two weeks.’...Father Mullaly, in a triumphant mood, told how the Washington Truth Society was able to function successfully as censor of the Washington press in this manner without any large membership meetings. Its actual work was done by ‘one active priest in charge, two zealous laymen and a Catholic lawyer or two, ready to give legal advice free of charge. The letterhead was formidable with prominent men, but this heavy artillery was brought to bear only when urgently needed. In any city of the United States one zealous pastor with two or three active laymen, together with a legal advisor, could form a Truth Society that would batter to pieces bigotry when found in the pages of any local newspaper.’

“Father Mullaly concluded this revealing document with a platform of action for punishing critical American newspapers:

1. Do not attack a magazine or newspaper through its editorial departments but act through its business office.
2. When a magazine or newspaper is attacking your religion, write to the business manager and inform him that you will not buy the offending periodical again, and mean it...
3. Call the attention of the merchants with whom you deal to the insults and tell them that as long as they advertise in any offending paper, you will not buy their goods, and mean it...
4. Tell your news-dealer that as long as you see the magazine or newspaper on his stand as an open insult to you, you will not buy from him, and mean



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These Catholic Truth Societies had the fervent assistance of the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic War Veterans.[260r] Blanshard offers lengthy descriptions of censorship organizations created to suppress information in books, magazines, and film and provides numerous examples of each type of censorship, but the reader is urged to refer directly to his book.[260s]

Blanshard concludes, “The machinery that the Church uses in the United States to enforce its boycott of unfriendly literature is quite elaborate...Non-Catholic publishers who print criticism of Catholic policy are threatened with boycotts and flooded with very unpleasant letters of protest. As a result of this type of pressure scarcely any publishers in the United States will even consider any manuscript that might expose them...to Catholic boycott.” [260t]

“Every city editor in the United States,” Blanshard goes on to say, “knows of the unofficial Catholic censorship of American news, but almost all publishers avoid discussion of the phenomenon because of the fear of Catholic reprisals. The Hierarchy itself has avoided public discussion of its boycott techniques in recent years, and has resorted more and more to quiet pressure[260u]...As a result of this policy of siege and boycott, very few publishers in the United States are courageous enough or wealthy enough to deal frankly with Catholic social policy or stories of priestly crime[260v]...Frequently the Church succeeds in intimidating the most powerful newspapers by this policy of organized protest and boycott, and, in many cases, the facts suppressed have great social significance.”[260w] Unquestionably, the most important story suppressed by the Catholic Church thus far has been that by 1970, overpopulation had emerged as the greatest single threat to the security-survival of the United States and indeed all nations. But before we return to the issue of population, let’s turn to an insider in American journalism, George Seldes, for more proof.

### GEORGE SELDES — AMERICA’S PREMIER PRESS CRITIC

On July 2, 1995, George Seldes, author, award-winning journalist and media watchdog, died at age 104. He began his career as a reporter for the *Pittsburgh Leader* in 1909 and later went to Europe to cover World War I. From 1918 to 1928, he worked for the *Chicago Tribune*, heading bureaus in Berlin and Rome, and also reporting from Mexico. He covered the Spanish Civil War for the *New York Post* in 1936-37. He was a mainstream reporter for nearly 30 years. From 1940 to 1950, he edited the nation’s first periodical of media criticism called *In Fact*—which won him a George Polk Award in 1982.[260x]

In an article, “George Seldes Leaves a Legacy of Courage,” the media watchdog publication, *EXTRA!*, writes, “As a press critic, George Seldes picked up where Upton Sinclair left off. From the 1930s onward, Seldes led the way for new generations of journalists eager to search for truth wherever it might lead...I.F. Stone aptly called Seldes ‘the dean and granddaddy of us investigative reporters.’”[260y] He was an American journalism insider.

While Blanshard’s intensive study of the press focused on what the Catholic hierarchy said and did regarding freedom of the press, Seldes observed and reported on the actual



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outcomes of the hierarchy's influence over American newspapers. Very few Americans outside the journalism field appreciate the intensive influence exercised by the hierarchy over the American press at least since the adoption of the principle of papal infallibility in 1870. This influence has greatly hampered the truthful and complete reporting on all matters of concern to the Vatican—including all matters related to population growth control. Seldes reported on numerous examples of this influence. I will present here only one example—the Spanish Civil War—carefully documented by Seldes to show that the Catholic hierarchy's wielding of enormous influence in the press, observed for the past 25 years in population matters, is certainly not unprecedented.

But before doing so, it will be interesting to note some of Seldes's findings during several decades of intensive research. These excerpts are from his book, *Lords of the Press*:

“It was then twenty-seven years since I had started in journalism, by which time I had learned the first lesson, namely, that one must never write on controversial subjects, the first of which was religion, and that one must never report even the truth in any case in which the Catholic hierarchy might be offended.”[260z]

Seldes quotes Heywood Broun,

“And still more precarious is the position of the New York newspaper man who ventures any criticism of the Catholic Church. There is not a single New York editor who does not live in mortal terror of the power of this group.”[260aa]

Seldes continues:

“Probably the bravest thing the *News* has done has been its editorial defiance of the pressure of the Catholic Church....”[260bb]

“To criticize the Catholic Church is to invite a boycott, the withdrawal of advertising, loss in circulation and in revenue.”[260cc]

“...almost every newspaper in the world is scared to death when any religious sect is mentioned critically.”[260dd]

“Ten years ago [1929] the Catholic Church was on the defensive. Today it is on the aggressive, and there is ten times the fear of it there was a decade ago. Father Curran, of the International Catholic Truth Society, changed the policy of one newspaper because he controlled \$20,000 of business (*New Republic*, December 30, 1936) and had the effrontery to boast of this outrageous attack on the freedom of the press. But it is general Catholic pressure, not \$20,000, which frightens if it does not wholly corrupt many other newspapers.”[260ee]

Regarding the War in Spain:



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rebels. The rebels had sworn to restore the Church to power. That was one reason for the Vatican's sympathy....The American press got its first facts fairly straight. Its errors were unintentional. But from the beginning of August 1936, the Catholic hierarchy in America...began a crusade against the newspapers which truthfully reported events in Spain.”[260ff]

“It is now well known that reactionary Catholics (as distinguished from liberal Catholics who are either for the Loyalist government or neutral) have used their tremendous pressure, plus threats of boycott, and the withdrawal of advertising money, to change the opinion of American newspapers regarding the war in Spain.”[260gg]

“How effective the boycott against the Stern paper [*Record* publisher, Stern] was I do not know. But every newspaperman knows that the most powerful pressure group in America today is the Roman Catholic Church. I do not know whether it succeeded in curtailing the *Record* circulation or inflicting a financial blow through the withdrawal of advertising by Catholic business men. But on August 10, 1936, Publisher Stern wrote a humble letter to Cardinal Dougherty...[who] accepted the apology....I believe that every newspaperman in America who really values freedom of the press, no matter what his religious beliefs may be, will deplore this episode, and especially the *Record*'s genuflections.

“And now we behold the publisher of a chain of four newspapers, four of the very tiny minority of liberal, free, independent newspapers left in America, bowing before the pressure of the Church when in fact his editorials on Spain had been true, honest, favorable to the anti-Fascist movement in Spain and applauded by all fair, liberal and intelligent men.

“Caught between the advertising pressure of big business on the one hand, and the political pressure of a religious organization on the other, the *New York Post*, *Philadelphia Record*, *Camden Courier* and *Camden Post* have had to make the usual compromises.

“I know of no better illustration of the fact that there is no completely free press in America.”[260hh]

## ON “CATHOLIC ISSUES” THERE IS NO FREE PRESS

From the “dean and granddaddy of investigative reporters,” when it comes to issues important to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, “...there is no free press in America.” Overpopulation and its solutions—contraception, abortion, sterilization, population education, sex education, advancement of women's rights, public debate of the environment and the greenhouse effect—all threaten the authority of the pope and the survival of the institution of the Papacy. On these issues, there is no free press in America.



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Of all of Seldes's conclusions, one of the most important is that secrecy is generally maintained regarding the fact that the pressure of the Catholic hierarchy on the American press is one of the most important forces in America. This pressure makes things happen or not happen depending on the needs of the hierarchy irrespective of the needs of the American people, our country and our democracy. This secrecy made possible the killing of the Rockefeller Commission and NSSM 200 initiatives and all other serious efforts to control population growth by the Catholic hierarchy.

## THE SPANISH “CIVIL WAR” LESSON FOR POPULATION GROWTH CONTROL

Over the past 25 years, American political will to deal with the overpopulation problem has been destroyed. NSSM 200 lived and died. As President Nixon's Special Message to Congress correctly predicted, these outcomes are certain to have an enormous impact on the lives of everyone on the planet. The story of the creation and demise of NSSM 200, and of how the government was thwarted in its effort to resolve the overpopulation problem, received no mention in the news media or any other information source. Few Americans are aware of what is perhaps the most important story of the 20th Century. How could it have been suppressed and for what reason?

Seldes's extensive study of the Spanish Civil War and the related control of the American press by the Catholic hierarchy is exceedingly instructive for all who are concerned about population growth control. Population growth control is by no means the first instance of absolutely pivotal Catholic hierarchy intervention in American press coverage of an important issue. The hierarchy has a history of manipulating the press to insure that Papal interests are served even at the expense of American interests.

In the 1970s and 1980s, George Seldes told us how and why in seven articles that appeared in *The Churchman* magazine, an Episcopal journal, founded in 1804, and the oldest religious publication in America. It has always been committed to the truth. (I am honored to be a contributing editor.)

After decades of intense study, in an August 1978 article, Seldes concludes: “The *New York Times* is still in fear of reprisals from the Roman Church in America, as it was during the entire Spanish War when under managing editor Edward L. James and the notorious ‘Fascist phalanx in the bull-pen.’ James's four, incidentally Roman Catholic, editor assistants, bowed to the ‘power house on Madison Avenue,’ Cardinal Spellman's residence, and a certain Father Thorning, and published scores of falsifications from Spain.”<sup>[260ii]</sup> Seldes provides strong evidence to support this conclusion. For example, he cites *The New Republic* magazine: “*The New Republic*, to its credit, in ‘Who Lied About Spain?’ when the war was over 1939 listed the [*New York*] *Times* man with Franco as the number one falsifier.” In a November 1981 article, Seldes concluded that all of America's 1,750 daily papers were similarly terrified by “the Catholic Church propaganda campaign.”<sup>[260jj]</sup> This “terror” that Seldes describes is still pervasive and has led to the disappearance of a free press in America in matters of concern to the Vatican, such as the recognition of overpopulation as a national security threat.



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But let us begin the story at the beginning and allow Mr. Seldes to lay out the evidence for us item by item.

In 1931, Spain became the Republic of Spain, a liberal democracy that separated church and state, ended State monetary support for the church and adopted the principles of Freedom of Conscience, Freedom of Religion, and Freedom of the Press. The Vatican feared for the Church's very survival in Spain. There had been four insurrections since 1835, and it was the Spanish people, the poor workers and poor peasants, who burned the churches because they blamed the hierarchy for having persistently backed the upper class. [260ii] The latest uprising against the Catholic Church took place throughout the country in July, 1936.[260kk] One historian described it as "the work of masses of common people, a spontaneous uprising." [260kk] The Vatican feared that the liberal democracy with its freedoms would spell the end of the Church in Spain.

The Spanish War of 1936-39 is often called a civil war. But this was a lie from the beginning. It was not a civil war but an invasion by Hitler, Mussolini and Salazar fascists or what Seldes refers to as the Fascist Internationale in league with the Vatican. Mussolini landed 200,000 infantrymen from his Black Arrow division in Franco-held seaports and Hitler sent Goering's Condor Legion to bomb civilians,[260ll] involving an estimated 50,000 German aviators.[260jj] All this had been envisioned in Rome in 1934. Seldes writes, "Mussolini and two representatives of the plan...met there and even promised help in overthrowing the Republic and establishing a fascist type of government. They also met with Hitler that same year—and the confessions of the Nazis at the Nuremberg Trials confirm the plot." [260kk] There was to be an uprising of treasonous Republic officers led by Franco, the invasion by the Italian and German forces and the promulgation of the lie that this was an uprising against a communist take-over of the Republic and a "Christian crusade against atheistic communism." [260mm] The creation of this great lie would be primarily the responsibility of the Vatican.

"Cardinal Pacelli, then papal secretary, began this campaign of falsification in America when he came to Hyde Park [New York] to enlist the aid of President Franklin Roosevelt in this undertaking. Pacelli, who three years later was to become Pope Pius XII, was successful. Roman Catholic layman James Farley, a boss of the Democratic party, Cardinal Spellman, and Joseph P. Kennedy, FDR's ambassador to London, promoted Pacelli's position. Each warned Roosevelt he would lose the Catholic vote unless he embargoed arms to Spain and joined Chamberlain's so-called Neutrality Pact."

The making of the "Christian crusade against communism" myth began immediately following Pacelli's visit to America. "*The New York Times*, October 1, 1936, was informed from Rome that Pacelli had 'left for the United States of America to enlist the support of President Roosevelt and the U.S. Government for the anti-communist campaign the Pope has been waging for some time. The Holy See regards the spread of communist doctrine as the gravest and most threatening danger hanging over the world.' When the cardinal arrived in New York *The New York Times* headline read: 'Pacelli Reported Seeking Aid in U.S. in



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In Spain the day before, Seldes later discovered, “The [Spanish hierarchy's] pastoral letter ‘Los dos Cindados’ of September 13, 1936 had converted a treasonable officer’s rebellion into the ‘Crusade Against Godless Communism.’”[260nn]

“Immediately following this meeting. Hitler’s newspapers reported FDR had made important concessions to the Cardinal and that Pacelli ‘is declared to have delivered the Catholic vote in the United States to Roosevelt.’ Although this appeared at first to be a typical Nazi piece of propaganda, it seems to have been substantiated by important visits to Hyde Park in 1936 by Farley and Cardinal Spellman. In every Catholic country in Europe, Cardinals, priests and diocesan publications had openly declared themselves to be against Franco, *but not one in America did so* [emphasis added].”[260mm]

The Neutrality Act was instrumental in the demise of Republican Spain. President Roosevelt prevented guns, food and medicine from being shipped to the Republic.[260ll] Everyone understood this. “Roosevelt was re-elected in 1936, and again in 1940. The Non-Intervention Pact, originated by pro-fascists in the British Foreign Office, remained in effect; the world press either falsified the news of the arrival of German and Italian troops, or confused enough people to prevent effective protest.”[260mm]

“When in 1938, a last effort was made to lift the embargo on arms, *The Nation* said: ‘The Catholics got busy and reached the President, who was fishing in southern waters. Big Church dignitaries came to Washington and talked cold politics...’ *The Nation* report, written by Max Lerner, columnist for *The New York Post*, continues: ‘only a band of heroes could have withstood the combined effort of Catholic votes, State Department leaning and authority, administrative pressure, and mental sluggishness, and the Senate Committee [considering this legislation] was not heroic...the biggest factor in the mind of the President was the Catholic vote...It is a cold political fact that Mr. Roosevelt, who has braved concentrated wealth, has not braved the risk of losing the Catholic vote.’ The repeal move in Congress failed, and the last hope for the Spanish Republic disappeared.”[260mm] This blockade was responsible for the Republic’s defeat.[260jj]

It was not only President Roosevelt who felt the intense Catholic pressure. When Spain’s Congress opened in 1938, “a resolution was introduced in the American Congress to send greetings. Only 60 members had the courage to sign; 440 were either on the fascist side or too cowardly to declare their convictions. The 60 who signed were attacked in the Roman pulpit, the Roman Catholic press, and by the Cardinals as ‘anti-American’ and as ‘Reds’. Cardinal Spellman and his colleagues, whose offices were referred to among newspapermen (but never by newspapers) as ‘the power house’, sent orders to the lobbyists to get retractions from the 60 under threat of defeat in the next elections. Many recanted.” A few half-recanted, saying their greetings did not mean endorsement. Among them: Harry Byrd of Virginia and Claude Pepper of Florida. Three Senators affirmed their endorsement of the Spanish Republic. Among them: Senator Hubert Humphrey.[260mm]

Seldes goes on, “The Vatican lobby continued its work in Washington for many years after



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the United Nations.”[260mm]

## SPANISH BISHOPS ADMIT DECADES OF DECEPTION

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**This important correction of history was slurred in the world press and is probably not known to more than one person in a million today.**

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The accuracy of this report on the role of the Vatican in the fascist takeover of Spain is irrefutable. Why? Because Spain’s Bishops themselves openly admitted the role of the Church. Seldes writes, “The myth of a Christian crusade against Communism in Spain persisted for decades, despite honest revisionist historians. It was not until 1971 that the myth was finally destroyed by none other than the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Spain. *This important correction of history was slurred in the world press and is probably not known to more than one person in a million today* [emphasis added].

“In Madrid, September 15, 1971, Primate Cardinal Enrique Taroncón presided at a Congress of the entire Roman Catholic Hierarchy, with 94 bishops and 151 priests present....Although a two-thirds’ vote was necessary to pass resolutions, and this one did not pass, it is significant that it received a large majority of the vote....The majority confessed it had sinned in supporting the wrong side (the fascist side) in Spain and asked to be forgiven. ‘We humbly recognize,’ said the resolution, ‘and ask pardon for it, that we failed at the proper time to be ministers of reconciliation in the midst of our people divided by a war between brothers.’”[260mm] “In 1971—and again in 1972, 1983 and succeeding years—a majority of Spain’s 94 bishops and 151 priests attending voted 60% or more for the Church’s apology but never officially passed it.”[260ii] By taking this action, Cardinal Taroncón probably prevented widespread killing of priests and nuns upon Franco’s death in 1975.

The news of these votes was almost completely suppressed in the world press. Only three minor reports on this story appeared in the United States.[260ii]

“FDR admitted his error in 1939—but it could not be published in his lifetime. He said to his Ambassador to Madrid, Claude Bowers, who had told the truth about the great world campaign of falsehood against Spain and had urged American help: ‘We have made a mistake, you have been right all along....’ He wrote this confession by FDR in 1954. Secretary of State Sumner Welles in his book *Time for Decision*, 1944, wrote: ‘of all our blind isolationist policies the most disastrous was our attitude on the Spanish Civil War.’ President Harry Truman wrote in his *Memoirs*: ‘I believe it was a mistake for me to support the Neutrality Action in the first place.’”

## AMERICAN HIERARCHY AND THE VATICAN MAINTAIN DECEPTION



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powerfully influenced American foreign policy—Farley, Kennedy, Cardinals Hayes, Spellman and Dougherty” and the archbishops and priests and Catholic laymen who so intensely lobbied in Congress, did not join their Spanish brothers and never admitted error. [260mm] Their vital roles and that of the Vatican are unquestionable in the crushing of this liberal democracy.

The Spanish War of 1936-1939 was unspeakably brutal. All told, an estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 of Spain’s population of 25,000,000 were killed.[260nn] By 1939, an estimated 100,000 prisoners of war had been murdered by the fascists.[260jj] “...the official organ of the Roman Church in France, *La Croix*, was the first to report that Franco killed *every* Loyalist Republican prisoner—a tremendously important news story. That, incidentally, was also suppressed in almost the entire U.S. press.”[260nn]

These Spaniards were murdered for only one reason—they believed in liberal democracy, just as we Americans do here in this country.

Seldes documents the leading role of the Vatican in the destruction of the Spanish Republic. The murder of 100,000 liberal democrat prisoners by Franco was undoubtedly made easier by Pope Pius XI. Referring to the uprising against the Roman Church throughout Spain in July, 1936, Pius XI attacked the “ruinization, destruction, villainies, barbarities by the savage forces whom it is impossible to dignify with the words human beings.”[260kk] Dehumanization always makes mass murder seem less reprehensible.

“Pius XII declared publicly year after year his support for Franco. He sent Franco the Supreme Equestrian Order of the Militia of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately after the war ended in 1939, Pius XII not only sent his congratulations to the fascist victor, but stated his ‘Christian heroism’ had ‘pleased God’. On July 11, 1939 Pius XII reviewed 3,000 Spanish Legionaries in Rome and called them the defenders of the faith and the culture of their country.”[260kk]

“Pius XII [also] blessed the Italian fascist army and air force on its return from Spain...in 1939.”[260mm]

“All the American Cardinals endorsed the Franco-fascist cause except Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago...Franco had awarded his decorations, usually the ‘Sacred Heart of Jesus’, to all the American Cardinals except Mundelein...Incidentally, two well known [Catholic] laymen, Ambassador to Spain Ogden H. Hammond and Ambassador William Cameron Forbes, are also listed among the recipients of Franco’s bloodstained medals.”[260kk]

In the publication *Historia del Franquismo*, which began in 1976 to revise 40 years of Spanish history following Franco’s death,

“Issue No. 1, page 6 states: ‘The rebellion of the generals was first called a Crusade for God, for Spain and for Franco’ by the Church. When Franco won



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thankful that your excellency has brought a Catholic victory to Spain....We send your excellency and to all the noble people of Spain our apostolic benediction. [signed] Pope Pius XII”[[260nn](#)]

“To the Spanish press Pius XII issued the following statement for April 18, 1937: ‘The nation selected by God...the people of Spain came to the defenses of the faith and of Christian civilization...God in his compassion will lead Spain on the safe road of your traditional and Catholic greatness.’”[[260nn](#)]

“Primate of Spain, Cardinal Goma...called the war ‘a crusade for religion, for country, and for civilization’ in a pastoral letter.”[[260nn](#)]

Seldes offers a mountain of evidence to support his conclusions that “it was the Roman Catholic Church which was fascism’s main supporter,” and “It was the hierarchy which originated and propagandized the ‘holy crusade against Godless Communism’. The hierarchy was as responsible as guns and planes in destroying the Republic. It monopolized schools. It propagated Fascism for 39 years.”[[260nn](#)]

Why would the Vatican propagate Fascism? “The first fascist newspaper, *Arriba España*, was published August 1, 1936. One of its directors was a priest representing the Church...on September 16 *Arriba España* said editorially that ‘Catholicism will find Fascism its best collaborator’.”[[260nn](#)]

And what were the Church’s rewards? “Franco repaid the Roman Catholic Church by abolishing divorce, making religious marriages obligatory and restoring taxes for the benefit of the Church—all previously banned by the Republic.”[[260nn](#)]

Most important, Franco turned the schools over to the Catholic Church. Seldes offers “...two short abstracts from nationally used catechisms taught to two generations of children, in the hope of producing a brain-washed people which would never rebel.”[[260oo](#)]

“In the second year of the war the Archbishop of Grenada gave his imprimatur to the catechism of the Jesuit priest Angel Maria de Arcos. This catechism was so unbelievable, so obscurantist, incredible, outrageous, that when John Langdon-Davies wrote about it in a London liberal magazine he was attacked by numerous Catholic editors, accused of making the whole thing up. He sued for libel, established the veracity of the catechism, and won his case. *Here is what the children in many eastern cities, including Granada, were taught:*

Q. Is every Liberal government hostile to the Church?

A. Evidently, since whoever is not with Christ is against Him.

Q. Then there is no grade of Liberalism that can be good?

A. None: because Liberalism is mortal sin and anti-Christian.

Q. What of Communism, Socialism, Modern Democracy, Anarchism, and the like sects?

A. They are contrary to Catholic faith, to justice, and to virtue, and as such condemned by the Church.

(In reply to another question:)

A. The Liberal system is the weapon with which the accursed Jewish race makes war on our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Church, and on the Christian people.

In 1944 the new classic catechism, known as the *Nuevo Repaldi*, and used nationally, was published and introduced into every secondary school in Spain. It consists of 112 pages, and was fully described by the U.S. press attaché, in Madrid during the Spanish War, Emmet John Hughes, in his *Report from Spain*. Of the ten pages which concern themselves with the essential doctrines of Catholic faith and morals, here are a few samples:

Q. What does freedom of the press mean?

A. The right to print and publish without previous censorship all kinds of opinions, however absurd and corrupting they may be.

Q. Must the government suppress this freedom by means of censorship?

A. Obviously, yes.

Q. Why?

A. Because it must prevent the deception, calumny and corruption of its subjects, which harm the general good.

Q. Does one sin gravely who subscribes to a liberal newspaper?

A. Yes...Because he contributes his money to evil, places his faith in jeopardy, and gives a bad example.

Q. What rules can be given to know liberal papers?

A. The following:

1. If they call themselves liberal.
2. If they defend freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, freedom of the press, or any of the other liberal errors.
3. If they attack the Roman Pontiff, the clergy, or the religious orders.
4. If they belong to liberal parties.
5. If they comment on news or judge personalities with a liberal criterion.



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personalities and parties.

7. If, in reporting events concerned with the battle waged by Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Church against their enemies today, they remain neutral.

Q. What is the rule to avoid error in these cases?

A. Do not read any newspaper without the previous consultation and approval of your confessor.”[260oo]

These two catechisms make it clear just how strongly the Catholic Church feels about freedom of the press, as well as with what disdain and contempt it views this vital democratic principle.

### OTHERS RECOGNIZE PRESS MANIPULATION

The death of NSSM 200 and the disintegration of American political determination to overcome the overpopulation problem occurred with the knowledge of only a handful of Americans over the past two decades. Has the rabidly anti-free press posture of the Catholic Church resulted in suppression of the American press in reporting on these vital topics? Could the Church, with its bishops and laymen, have had such an effect on the American press? Let us examine Seldes’s findings regarding the Spanish War of 1936-39.

Of course, Seldes was by no means alone in his assessment of the Catholic leadership’s corruption of the press (particularly *The New York Times*). *The Churchman* published numerous articles on this topic,[260ll] as did the *New Republic*. In their June 28, 1939, issue, “Who Lied About Spain?”, *The New York Times* and its reporter, William P. Carney, headed the list.[260kk] Numerous books were also devoted to this topic (see Herbert L. Matthews, *A World in Revolution*, and Guy Talese, *History of the Times*).[260ll] Few Americans today are aware of this page of American history, or of this corruption of the principle of freedom of the press by the Catholic hierarchy, or of its implications for population growth control.

It should also be made clear that not all Catholic reporters were part of the Vatican propaganda machine. Writes Seldes, “In all justice, it must be stated that a score of noted Catholic war correspondents and noted Catholic newspapers—in Europe—reported the war honestly, detailing all the atrocities committed by the Fascist-Nazi forces...”[260ll] (The most famous reporter on the Loyalist (Republican) side was a Catholic named Ernest Hemingway. Other notables were Fernsworth of *The Times* and Taylor of the *Chicago Tribune*, both Catholics.)[260mm]

Seldes continues,

“On May 12, 1949, one New York newspaper carried this item, *otherwise suppressed throughout the country* [emphasis added]: ‘Patman Ousts Priest Lobbying for Spain’. Representative Wright Patman (D.-Texas) called a doorkeeper and had ejected from the speaker’s lobby of the House the Rev. Dr.



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[emphasis added] for Franco's fascist regime in Spain. Throughout the war, Thorning not only praised the fascist coalition but denounced the correspondents who were reporting from the Republican side."

Seldes concluded, "Although *The New York Times* always surrendered to Father Thorning, he continued to attack it." [260mm]

We have witnessed in America since the mid-1970s the application of this same technique for control of the press on the issue of overpopulation. Although the entire press consistently genuflect to the Catholic hierarchy, they are under continuous attack for being too 'liberal' and 'anti-Catholic'. The charge of 'liberal press' is always used to attack the anti-Vatican position on every issue. This technique is used hundreds of times each day to control the American press.

In January 1977, *Historia* revealed for the first time in Spain what Seldes, Matthews, Hemingway, Fernsworth and others attempted to report in this country, that "Nazism and Fascism were accepted and became Franco's policy from the first days of the war. These facts the American press also largely suppressed, preferring to call Hitler's and Mussolini's collaborator Franco a nationalist," asserts Seldes. [260nn]

Seldes was quite critical of the world press generally. He writes, "The world press it might be said—although no general statement is wholly true—failed its readers during the Spanish war. The democratic Republic was labeled "Red" and "Communist" at a time when there were fewer "Reds" and Communists in Spain than there are today." [260ll]

### ***THE NEW YORK TIMES WAS THE WORST***

However, he singled out *The New York Times* in his study, concluding that the newspaper was the worst offender and because of its reputation for reliability in reporting, was particularly influential in this case in a most negative sense. He was highly critical of the *Times* for its refusal to admit to its wrongdoings. He writes:

"The Army and the rulers joined the majority of the Spanish people in repudiating Franco-Fascism with the dictator's death. This left only the Fourth Estate, and notably the outstanding newspaper in the world, the most powerful and important maker of public opinion, *The New York Times*, to complete the repudiation by confessing the falsehoods and pro-fascism of the past.

"Its great opportunity came on August 1, 1977, when it published a two-column obituary of its Spanish War correspondent, Herbert L. Matthews. Instead of confessing that it had falsified history during the war by publishing slanted news and outright 100% pure lies from the Franco side, and harassed and intimidated Matthews, who risked his life and told the truth, this dirty-trick obituary added to the sad record of American journalism's failure.

"This failure of *The New York Times* to correct its false history of the fascist



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(there were almost no Spaniards in the Franco armies: there were Germans, Italians, and the Terico and Foreign Legion of Muslims)—was so flagrant that for the second time in *Times* history, if not in all journalism's history, one of the senior editors of the *Times* was forced to criticize the *Times*. John B. Oakes wrote a 'Letter to the Editor' and it was printed!

“Matthews was one of the victims...Edward L. James, then unfortunately managing editor, published falsehoods alongside Matthews' factual reports...Unable to get the truth published in the *Times*, he wrote it in his book, *A World in Revolution*. Here are a few quotations:

“McCaw had ordered the copy readers to substitute the word “Insurgents” when I sent “Italians”.’ (p. 26).

“I saw two of Henday's Associated Press stories [French border] front-paged, both equally false.’ (p. 35).

“I especially took strong exceptions to the fact that in the effort to be “impartial” the *Times* had throughout alternately featured mine, Carney's and AP Henday's copy from the Franco side, regardless of news value, accuracy, and honesty.’ (p. 39).

“Elsewhere in his book Matthews wrote that ‘Carney was a Roman Catholic...in Carney's case it blinded him to any other aspect of the rebellion.’ And again, ‘All four of the editors who worked in the bull pen throughout the war were Roman Catholics: Robert McCaw, the assistant managing editor in charge; Neil MacNeil, the second man; Clarence Howell, a convert, was almost fanatically religious; and Harvey Getzloe.’ These four were known in the *Times* as ‘The Catholic Bull-Pen.’

“Guy Talese in his history of the *Times* refers to them as ‘the Fascist phalanx in the bull-pen.’

“It might be worth noting that the *N.Y. Times* also used the services of the *Times* of London, whose correspondent in Spain, Lawrence Fernsworth, happened to be an American and a Roman Catholic. Fernsworth also wrote for the American Catholic press as well as the *N.Y. Times*. When Fernsworth once protested Editor James' mismanagement of the Spanish War news, James cabled ‘Resignation accepted.’ Fernsworth had not resigned; James threw him out.”[\[26011\]](#)

The editor of *The Churchman* inserted the following note into Seldes's article:

“[Lawrence Fernsworth's...articles in *The Churchman*...titled 'A Catholic Reporter in Spain,' gave an inside story of the pressures upon an American reporter working in Spain during those war years, 1936-39. 'A political church,'



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*The Churchman* for March 1, 1940, stated: 'All too rarely does the public have the opportunity of being taken behind the scenes of dramatic events of such significance. All through the Spanish war liberal-minded Americans who attempted to counteract the falsehoods of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in reference to that conflict were bitterly attacked, as *The Churchman* was on many occasions, by Catholic leaders. When we, along with others, insisted that there were thousands of Italian troops fighting in Spain and that great numbers of German army technicians were in that country aiding Franco, we were frankly and bluntly called liars by Roman Catholic leaders. Yet, as the public now knows, we were merely recording the facts.' [26011]

Seldes continues:

“...*The N.Y. Times* under James, by publishing one column of falsehoods alongside one column of Matthews’ eyewitness facts, served the cause of Franco and his allies, Hitler and Mussolini...” [26011]

This very same technique is being used in America today by a press manipulated by the Vatican to misinform Americans, minimizing the threat of overpopulation and, in particular, the threat of the greenhouse effect. The Vatican demand is that both sides of the issues be given equal press. An article of falsehoods is published alongside an article of facts. For example, the United Nation’s task force on the greenhouse effect includes 2500 scientists. There are perhaps a half dozen people with credentials who dismiss this theory. The Vatican has successfully insisted that both groups be given equal press or, better yet, none at all. On illegal immigration, the costs to America vastly outweigh the benefits. The Vatican has succeeded in leveling the playing field using this technique of press manipulation. As a result, Americans remain unorganized on the immigration issue. The outcome: press generated confusion prevents effective protests.

Seldes continues:

“If there is any value in history, if history teaches us something and helps world civilization, the Spanish record should be set straight. The *Times* failed to do so in August 1977. Yet in 1971 Matthews concluded:

‘I say that not only I, but the truth suffered. No student can today go back to the files of *The New York Times* from July 1936 and get a competent, balanced, complete journalistic picture of the Spanish Civil War. The *Times* failed its readers and posterity.’ [26011]

“The war correspondents, not only Matthews and Hemingway, but the hundred or more without exception, tried to tell the world from Madrid that this was a rehearsal by Hitler and Mussolini for a world war. We said so in 1936 and every year until 1939. We warned FDR and France and England that the Nazi-Fascists, masquerading as anti-Communists, were trying out guns, tanks, and airplanes. There was destruction of whole cities, air-bombing (Guernica)



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to tell the world to prepare for the Hitler-Mussolini-Japanese Anti-Komintern Pakt attack—World War II as it is now called—and by preparing, perhaps prevent it. We failed largely because of pressure by the Roman Catholic Church of the United States on the American press—by Father Thorning, Cardinal Spellman and others. And, being the most powerful opinion-making paper in America the *Times* must share a major part of the blame. Three estates—rulers, army, church—have at least confessed their sin. But not the infallible *Times*.”  
[\[26011\]](#)

To this day *The New York Times* has not published the truth about its falsehoods and pro-fascism of the Spanish war years. We must assume that the *Times* does not want known the influence of the Catholic hierarchy at the *Times* during that era. We must also assume that the *Times* has not acted because the Catholic influence prevails in its editorial offices today.

The overthrow of democracy in Spain by the Vatican with the Spanish War of 1936-39 was viewed as a matter of great concern to the Vatican. Their success required substantial control of the press in Spain and in the United States. Halting of population growth control is far more important to the Vatican than Spain ever was and control of the press is critical. The Vatican is succeeding in thwarting population growth control because it is largely controlling the press on this issue.

Seldes singled out *The New York Times* for particular scrutiny but his studies showed that all 1,750 American newspapers with few exceptions were victimized by the Catholic leadership and that “The Catholic Church propaganda campaign [was] conducted largely by the Knights of Columbus.” As late as 1978, he concluded that “the *New York Times* is still in fear of reprisals from the Roman Church.”

In the case of population growth control (family planning, abortion, immigration) no Catholic reporters, editors or publishers, or their counterparts in the electronic media have distinguished themselves, nor have any non-Catholics. The reason? For anyone to emerge from the pack has been made more difficult by the Vatican than it was even during the Spanish War days. Though it seems that a description of the opposition to population growth control and how the opposition operates would be newsworthy, reporters have not distinguished themselves by making this known. Despite its enormous importance, this information never appears in the press.

No doubt the influence of the Knights of Columbus with its membership of 1.5 million means that the American press is not free to report on matters that threaten the security-survival of the Papacy. But as if this were not sufficient, in recent years a new organization has been created to serve as the point of attack on the American freedom of the press—the Catholic League for Religion and Civil Rights. The next chapter is devoted to a survey of the League’s chilling effect on this freedom in the 1990s.

## Notes

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- [260b]. The Associated Press. Writer George Seldes, 104, dies; lauded as 'a witness to the century' News & Observer (Raleigh) July 3, 1995. p. 6A).
- [260c]. Seldes G. Falsehoods of the Spanish War. The Churchman October 1977. p. 7.
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- [260t]. Ibid., p. 186.
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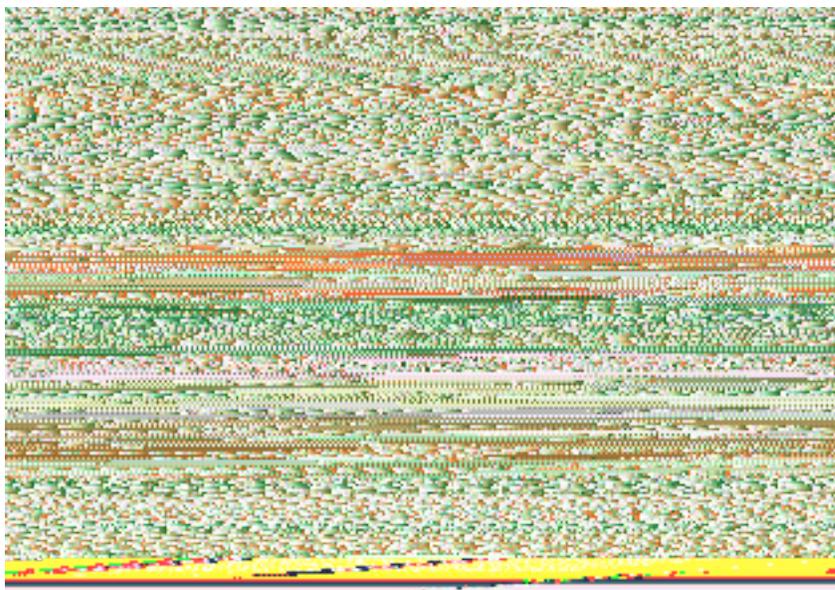
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[260mm]. Seldes G. "Christian" Anti-Communist Crusade. The Churchman October 1972. p. 11.  
[260nn]. Seldes G. The Roman Church and Franco. The Churchman December 1978. p. 10.  
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Dr Stephen D. Mumford is the founder and president of the North Carolina-based [Center for Research on Population and Security](#). His principal research interest is the relationship between world population growth and national and global security. This interest, pursued for over four decades, first developed during a tour of military duty in Asia, where he first recognized the linkage between political stability and population pressures. He obtained his master's in public health and his doctorate in population studies from the University of Texas. Using church policy documents and writings of the Vatican elite, Dr Mumford has introduced research showing the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church as the principal power behind efforts to block the availability of contraceptive services worldwide.



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