

# Correspondence

## Madox Under Fire

To the Editors: In Mark Taylor's interesting article on "The Literature of War" (*Worldview*, October) he states that Ford Madox Ford was not a soldier in World War I. This is not so: He was commissioned in late July, 1915, his appointment being gazetted in August. In the following year he was frequently under fire though never in action, suffering from shell shock. He was invalided home in March, 1917, and received his discharge on January 1, 1919. There were no heroics in his military career, but a great deal of quiet courage and perseverance. Much of his experience reappears in his novels, and its authenticity gives a profounder quality to his satire than is to be found in the war novels of Evelyn Waugh a generation later.

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## Pharisees

To the Editors: In his article "Is the Holocaust Unique?" (*Worldview*, September) A. Roy Eckardt is in error in giving an anti-Semitic interpretation to John 8: 42-47.

In this passage Christ is compelled to speak to the Pharisees because they are wrong. However, their wrongness lies not in the fact that they are Jewish but, rather, in the fact that they are not Jewish enough. That is, if these Pharisees were truly laying claim to the heritage of Abraham as his heirs and descendants, they would rejoice in the Savior Christ and would not wish to kill him. The resistance on the part of these Pharisees, first, in perceiving this truth, and second, in acting in opposition to it, severs them from

the family of Abraham and makes them more akin to the Devil, who also refuses to acknowledge God and who incessantly seeks to pervert God's order and plan. And, as with God, kinship with the Devil is a relationship open to all who choose to claim it. Theirs is not, therefore, as Eckardt states, a "Jewish devilishness," for in forsaking the Hope of Abraham they have obliterated themselves as his heirs, and, more deplorably, in wishing to destroy this Hope they have obliterated themselves as heirs of God, becoming merely children of the Devil: undistinguishable from any other of his brood, unredeemable (until they choose otherwise) by any law—Mosaic or Christian.

Carol A. Doerrer

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### A. Roy Eckardt Responds:

Ms. Doerrer is incorrect in her reaction, on two grounds. First, she makes the fundamental mistake of misreading the Johannine materials. In John 8: 42-47 Jesus is not reported as speaking to "the Pharisees" but as speaking to "the Jews" in an indiscriminate and collective sense (as is indicated by John 8:48 and elsewhere). Second, and much more important, Ms. Doerrer fails, or refuses, to meet the point I make within the passage cited: "The charge of Jewish devilishness is the ultimate proof that the non-Jewish soul is conquered by Satan." It appears that until Ms. Doerrer is redeemed from the same condition she will continue to propagate the historical, moral, and theological calumny that the "Pharisees" wished to kill Jesus.

## The Hot Breath of the Press

To the Editors: Who tells the public whether or not the press is doing a good job? Why, the press does, that's who. The predictable result is that the media's evaluation of the media is frequently self-serving in the extreme. Seldom has this been more evident than in connection

with Watergate and, within the affairs surrounding Watergate, in connection with Bernstein and Woodward's *All the President's Men*. To hear the reporters patting one another on the back you would think the press brought down Mr. Nixon singlehandedly. . . .

In light of all this I am sure many readers joined me in welcoming William V. Shannon's review of the Bernstein-Woodward book (*Books, Worldview*, August). Mr. Shannon shows a refreshing modesty about the role of the press, a modesty that is all the more becoming, since he himself is one of the most distinguished members of the fourth estate as a member of the Editorial Board of the *New York Times*. But now I find myself in a rather awkward position. As refreshing as Mr. Shannon's critique is, I wonder if he has not pushed the pendulum to the opposite extreme.

It may well be, as he says, that Bernstein and Woodward, for all their glamorized detective work, did not uncover a significant item of the Watergate mess that had not already been discovered by investigators connected with Congress or the courts or the Special Prosecutor's office. But would not Mr. Shannon agree that all these public servants would not have worked so earnestly at their task were it not for feeling the hot breath of the press, of Bernstein and Woodward, for example, on their necks? So perhaps, after all is said and done, the press can rightly take credit for "exposing" Watergate, even though the details of the exposure, in the narrow sense, were largely handled by others.

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