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Yahoo Watch: Michelle Bachmann

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 13, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

I wish Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann was my next door neighbor. It would make writing the Yahoo Watch that much easier.

Bachmann offered these words [1]at a Conservative convention the other day: ?We will talk a little bit about what has transpired in the last 18 months and would we count what has transpired into turning our country into a nation of slaves.? She cited a letter by founder John Jay, where he wrote, ?We are determined to live free or not at all. And we are resolved that posterity shall never reproach us with having brought slaves into the world.?

Jay was also the author of an Address to the People of Great Britain [2]issued by the First Continental Congress. In that epistle, Jay wrote, ?That we think the legislature of Great Britain is not authorized by the constitution to establish a religion fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets, or to erect an arbitrary form of government in any quarter of the globe.? The religion in question was Catholicism which Jay described in that same letter thus: ?a religion that has deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder, and rebellion through every part of the world.? And he wrote that the establishment of Catholicism in Quebec would lead to the ?free Protestant colonies? being reduced to the status of slaves.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the use of the word ?slave? was not confined to blacks in the South. In political discourse, it meant someone, usually French, subject to an ?arbitrary and Popish government.? The idea of civil and religious liberties were closely intertwined in the Whig country ideology that so inspired the writings of many of the Founders. Somehow, I suspect Bachmann doesn?t know a Whig from a walnut. Certainly, I doubt that she was intending to associate herself with the leading anti-Catholic bigot among the Founders.

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