

Filmmaker Deepa Mehta replies to an attack in the Hindustan Times

19 May 2000

Filmmaker Deepa Mehta sent the following reply to the Indian newspaper, the Hindustan Times, which published an article on May 3 attacking both her and the World Socialist Web Site campaign to defend her against the attempts by Hindu extremists organisations to prevent the production of her latest film Water in India.

This is yet another case of being quoted out of context and, therefore, hitting the headlines. Mr. Mohan's picking and choosing quotes and sensationalising them by printing them out of context, makes me sound like a foul-mouthed, India-hating, lunatic, which I am not, and makes writers of the *World Socialist Web Site* sound vindictive and irresponsible, which they certainly are not. Nor does the web site at any point encourage hate-mail to the Prime Minister of India. Anyone who wishes may visit the web site to ascertain this for themselves at <http://www.wsws.org>.

I would like to make it very clear that though I might personally feel betrayed, bitter and sometimes even angry about what happened to WATER, never have I denigrated India or Indians. I care very deeply for the country in which I was born and brought up. Perhaps the distance I have now, allows me to look at India with some objectivity. That doesn't make me a traitor or a covert "Pakistani". India, like any other country, has its share of beauty and flaws.

What happened to WATER and to me was very traumatic and continues to be so. I am trying to put it into perspective and would be very appreciative if journalists like Mr. Mohan had the decency not to quote me out of context, or at the very least, to verify what I was purported to have said. But of course, that wouldn't make good press or warrant a cartoon, would it?

I have never thought of myself as a controversial filmmaker and neither are my films intended to be

controversial. I don't covet the label, "controversial filmmaker" and never have. Sadly, the tirade of the Hindutva Brigade wants my films to be seen only in this context. This irresponsible article propagated the "controversial" label and generated hate-mail from irate Indians the world over. From a false premise, Mr. Mohan fanned the flames of nationalist indignation—was this his intention when he wrote his sensationalist piece?

Furthermore, if Mr. Mohan wants to be abusive, at least let him get the facts straight: Mr. Kalraj Mishra is not the Minister of Tourism in UP and nor has any "lackey" of his ever been in contact with me. I have never mentioned Mr. Mishra (who has been nothing but cordial with me) to anyone associated with the *World Socialist Web Site*. Where did Mr. Mohan pick this up?

As Tavleen Singh says in her *India Today* article, it has been "open season on Deepa Mehta". Aren't your readers bored? I am.

Yours sincerely,

Deepa Mehta



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