

Letters on the anti-Muslim cartoons

21 February 2006

The following is a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site in response to a number of recent articles on the anti-Muslim cartoons.

On “The Abu Ghraib photos and the anti-Muslim ‘free speech’ fraud”

In your article you wrote, “California Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein commented, ‘The whole thing is disgusting and it’s hard to believe that this actually is taking place in a military facility.’” That’s all she has to say, eh? I can’t stand Diane Feinstein. If only Diane “I’m really a Republican” Feinstein had added that she voted *for* Bush’s illegal attack on Iraq based on his numerous lies. But because she’s up for reelection, Feinstein now claims Bush “misled” her on the reason for attacking Iraq. She was “misled” all right. The woman is a liar. She conveniently fails to say that she and her billionaire husband, Richard Blum, are making millions from Iraq (and Afghanistan) contracts through his company, Perini. This has been reported by the Center for Public Integrity at this link. Thank you for your article.

JS

17 February 2006

There are many texts which repudiate this posited ‘chasm’ between our cultures, many released in the past decade. The most useful, for me, when I was an anthropology undergrad, were Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, Leela Ghandi’s *Postcolonial Theory*, and any of the works written by Homi Bhabha.

For those who believe that Middle-Eastern and Far-Eastern cultures are barbaric, I say look into your own backyards. It wasn’t that long ago that Western ‘gun-boat diplomacy’ straddled the world, continuing the vilification and attempted decimation of cultures whose origins predate ‘Western’ (read European) civilisation. The bloodstains are still very much in evidence on colonialism’s doorstep.

The interesting notion, of course, is that Europhallogocentric expansion into the New World and

the East per se has, indeed, reaped its own whirlwind. That wind-of-change has burst the door asunder and threatens to bring about the fall of the house of capitalism.

Exploitation of the worker, regardless of her/his societal mores or cultural imperatives, continues apace. And it’s only going to get worse. Contemporary governments: African nation-states; countries such as Indonesia; and the emerging giant which is Chinese capitalism, will continue the capitalist tradition. After all, they were trained by the best: the Imperial Colonial oppressors.

And so it goes.

PW

Adelaide, Australia

17 February 2006

On “In their own words: the politics behind the anti-Muslim cartoons”

One obvious rebuttal for this claim for “freedom of speech” or freedom of the press, if you will, is that here the rulings have been that freedom of speech does not permit one to yell “fire!” in a theater. I guess one can conclude that these folks are indeed yelling “fire.” Thanks for great writing.

RK

15 February 2006

It strikes me that the same people who are so quick to defend “freedom of the press” are the same enlightened individuals who were appalled by the stamps released by the Mexican Government depicting Africans as monkey-like creatures just a few months ago.

It also strikes me that the same dehumanizing tactics (as these cartoons) have been used by fascists for years. How is this set of cartoons different from the anti-Semitic caricatures of yore, exactly? Come to that: How is the forced marginalization and isolation of Muslims within Danish society different from the isolation suffered by Jews in Europe for centuries? History repeats itself in the same ugly tones.

CMS

Portland, Oregon

15 February 2006

Yes, I see your point on the political background in Denmark over the cartoon furor, and agree with it. That is one side of the picture. In order to see the whole picture we would need a balanced appraisal of the situation of individual freedoms under Islam. Otherwise we are condemning racist Islamophobia but remaining silent about religious fanaticism.

JC

New York, New York

15 February 2006

On "Denmark and Jyllands-Posten: The background to a provocation"

In order to test the commitment to "free speech" that is being trumpeted by apologists for the anti-Muslim cartoons, one could submit a cartoon for publication that shows Jesus and Hitler giving each other a high five, with the punch line somehow being that Nazi Germany was a nation composed of Christian believers (after all, Germany was the location of the Holy Roman Empire as well as the Protestant Reformation, and the Nazis used the slogan "God is with us").

If such an idiotic cartoon were ever printed, then people who have internalized Christian beliefs would feel as if they were being personally associated with Hitler, in the same manner that anyone who believes in Islam has been personally associated with terrorism and therefore condemned and criminalized by the anti-Muslim cartoons.

But this is just another absurd "debate" in the Western media, with commentators innocently asking, "why all the fuss over a few cartoons?" The Bush administration's terrorization of the Middle East, which these same commentators justify, is the real reason for the outrage among Muslims, and the cartoons only serve to add insult to injury.

RG

15 February 2006

On "Letters on the anti-Muslim cartoons"

Those readers who have come across the fabulous WSWS articles concerning this episode, and who have fervently responded in defence of an utterly false conception of "free speech," ought to reconsider. They have failed to take into account the social, political and historical context in which these cartoons have been

openly published and cynically promoted.

The absurd comparisons to earlier cartoons which satirised Jesus, etc., form the weakest link of such arguments. There is no significant "War on Christianity," or on any other religion, which is being conducted by the Establishment and its Crusaders. However, Islam has been under intensive and sustained attack for at least four years. These cartoons were published with calculated provocation and antagonism in mind. In the current political climate, the endorsement of the Danish paper's actions is a dangerous position to take, and, in the final analysis, one that in no way articulates the interests of the international working class. Please continue to expose the truth, as well as the lies.

IN

15 February 2006



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