The Danish Cartoon Affair: Free Speech, Racism, Islamism, and Integration

Contributors:

Professor Tariq Modood, University of Bristol, is currently working on multicultural challenges to secularism, including a Leverhulme Programme project on British National Identity, Religion and "Difference". His next book, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Polity Press, appears in April 2007.

Professor Randall Hansen, University of Toronto, organized this debate. He became interested in the controversy for two reasons. First, as he witnessed the events unfolding in late 2005 and early 2006 it seemed to him that the whole crisis raised basic questions about multiculturalism, religious accommodation, and integration. Second, the crisis coincided with an email debate that he was having with members of the political science department at the University of Toronto (including Joseph Carens) about how liberals should react to an event, organized here, entitled "Israeli Apartheid week". He is the author of *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* (OUP, 2000). His website is www.randallhansen.ca.

Professor Erik Bleich, Middlebury College, is the author of *Race Politics in Britain and France: Ideas and Policymaking since the 1960s* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and has written extensively on issues of ethnic minority integration in Western Europe. His current research focuses on state responses to hate crimes and other forms of ethnic, racial, and religious violence.

Professor Brendan O'Leary, University of Pennsylvania, is the author, co-author, or co-editor of 15 books, including *Terror, Insurgency and the State* (2007), *Understanding Northern Ireland: Colonialism, Control and Consociation* (2007), *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq* (2005), and *The Northern Ireland Conflict* (2004). He is now evaluating the stability of pluralist federations and consociations.

Professor Joseph H. Carens, University of Toronto, is the author of a book on multiculturalism (*Culture, Citizenship, and Community*, Oxford University Press 2000) and is completing a book on the ethics of immigration tentatively titled *Who Belongs? Immigration, Democracy, and Citizenship*.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM
Published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd.,
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK,
and 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA.

International Migration Vol. 44 (5) 2006
ISSN 0020-7985

The Liberal Dilemma: Integration or Vilification?[1]

Tariq Modood

The origins of the infamous Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad do not lie in an attempt to offer contemporary comment, let alone satire, but the desire to illustrate a children's book. While such pictures would have been distasteful to many Muslims – hence why no illustrator could be found – the cartoons are in an entirely different league of offence. They are all unfriendly to Islam and Muslims and the most notorious implicate the Prophet with terrorism. If the message was meant to be that non-Muslims have the right to draw Muhammad, it has come out very differently: that the Prophet of Islam was a terrorist.

Moreover, the cartoons are not just about one individual but about Muslims per se – just as a cartoon portraying Moses as a crooked financier would not be about one man but a comment on Jews. And just as the latter would be racist, so are the cartoons in question.

That does not in itself mean such cartoons should be banned. One relies on the sensitivity and responsibility of individuals and institutions to refrain from what is legal but unacceptable. Where these qualities are missing one relies on public debate and censure to provide standards and restraints. Hence, where matters are not or cannot easily be regulated by law one relies on protest as well as empathy. This is how most racist speech and images and other free expressions (e.g. the use of golliwogs as commercial brands or British television's *Black and White Minstrel Show*) have been censured – rather than censored – away.

Sometimes legal intervention is also necessary. For example, when there is a serious risk of incitement to hatred; or when the "fighting talk" is likely to inflame passions and risk public order; or when it is likely to reinforce prejudice and lead to acts of discrimination or victimization.

In recognition of this, the British parliament passed a bill on 31 January 2006 to protect against incitement to religious hatred. Yet it was only passed after members of both houses of parliament – supported by much of the liberal intelligentsia – forced the government to accept amendments that weakened its initial proposals. A key sticking point for the critics – that incitement must require the intention to stir up hatred – reveals a blind spot in liberal thinking that the Danish cartoon case amplifies.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

If the intention of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* was not to cause offence, there clearly was a purpose of trying to achieve some kind of victory over Muslims, to bring Muslims into line – especially as it has recently emerged that the same paper refused to print cartoons ridiculing Jesus because they risked offending some Christians (see G. Fouché, "Danish paper rejected Jesus cartoons", *Guardian*, 6 February 2006).

The Danish editor cannot plead ignorance about the effect the cartoons would have on Muslims, for the whole exercise was premised on the view that a collective effort involving 12 cartoonists was necessary to withstand Muslim opposition. As for the republication of the cartoons across continental Europe, this was deliberately done to teach Muslims a lesson.

A hole in the mind

But the cartoons themselves are a trigger rather than the main issue, for everyone – Muslims and non-Muslims – "views" them (whether literally or imaginatively) in a wider domestic and international context that is already deeply contested. From the Muslim side, the underlying causes of their current anger are a deep sense that they are not respected, that they and their most cherished feelings are "fair game". Inferior protective legislation, socio-economic marginality, cultural disdain, draconian security surveillance, the occupation of Palestine, the international "war on terror" all converge on this point. The cartoons cannot be compared to some of these situations, but they do distil the experience of inferiority and of being bossed around. A handful of humiliating images become a focal point for something much bigger than themselves.

This at least helps to explain if not condone some of the violent protests in several Muslim cities, and the language of some of the initial protestors in places like Copenhagen and London. Such behaviour is wholly unacceptable and does great damage to the cause of the protestors and to the standing of Muslims in general. Yet while violent protests do not win Muslims many friends, they are not the principal reason for a lack of sympathy for Muslims. Much more real estate has been burnt and more lives lost and endangered in protests in, say, Detroit or Los Angeles; in cases like that protest has been understood by many commentators and politicians as legitimate rage to be addressed by positive socio-economic policies.

Two factors are critical to the lack of sympathy for Muslims in Europe. First, there is a lack of recognition that the way that Muslims are treated is a form of racism – after all it is less than 15 years ago that Britain's Commission for Racial Equality and most British anti-racists denied that the vilification of Muslims was

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

a form of racism. Most of continental Europe has hardly begun to have that debate. The suggestion that Muslims are not the subject of racism because they are a religious group is nonsense when one considers that the victimization of another religious group, the Jews, is paradigmatic of many peoples' understanding of racism, especially on the continent.

The second reason is the idea – prevalent among anti-racists, the progressive intelligentsia, and beyond – that religious people are not worthy of protection; more than that, they should be subject to not just intellectual criticism but mockery and ridicule.

The idea is that religion represents Europe's pre-enlightenment dark age of superstition and clerical authoritarianism and so has to be constantly kept at bay. Look at how Richard Dawkins in the recent Channel 4 series, *The Root of all Evil*, traduces faith by identifying all religious people with the worst cases.

This understanding of religion is deep in the culture of the centre-left intelligentsia and is what is being appealed to in the current sloganeering around "freedom of expression". That's why, when Muslims counter by citing what Europeans regard as acceptable limits to freedom of speech (e.g., the imprisonment of holocaust deniers), it cuts little ice; for no one actually disagrees with limits to freedom of expression as such, it is just that some will not limit it in the field of religion. In this, liberals are no less following a creed, indeed are no less fundamentalist, than some of those who they want to be free to abuse.

Marginal or equal?

Satirizing clericalism may have been emancipatory, but vilifying the marginal and exhorting integration is a contradiction. For radical secularism – no less than aspects of the "this is our country, you Muslims will have to put up with our ways" right-wing nationalism – is an obstacle to Muslims becoming included in Europe and coming to have a sense of being part of Europe.

Europe has to choose which is more important, the right to ridicule Muslims or the integration of Muslims. If the Danish cartoons have not been reprinted in Britain it is because we came to this fork in the road with the *Satanic Verses* affair. While we could not be said to have made a decisive choice there is greater understanding in Britain about anti-Muslim racism and about the vilification-integration contradiction than in some other European countries.

This is not to say that Muslim sensibilities must be treated as fixed. They too will rightly change and adapt to new contexts. The point is that this cannot be a

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

one-way process. Civic integration and international interdependence – let alone anything as ambitious as a dialogue of civilizations – means that there has to be mutual learning and movement on both/all sides, not just the hurling of absolutes at each other. This is not just a matter of compromise but of multicultural inclusion: Muslim sensibilities, concerns and agendas should be knitted into society just as is the case when other marginalized groups or classes are accepted as democratic equals.

The current temper of the controversy in Britain – in particular the non-publication of the cartoons – is a sign of some progress since the *Satanic Verses* affair. But we have only just begun on a long journey and the task of carrying our European Union partners with us makes it more uphill. The important thing is not to lose focus. If the goal is multicultural integration, then we must curb anti-Muslim racism and exercise restraint in the uses of freedom directed against religious people – who, after all, are a minority in Europe. While in the United States, the Christian right stand in the way of civic integration, the secularist intelligentsia needs to consider whether it is not playing the same role on our continent.

NOTE

1. This essay was originally published on the independent online magazine www.open democracy.net on 8 February 2006. The responses below grew out of an email exchange between some members of the Ethnicity and Democratic Governance Project, a new international Canadian-based five-year major collaborative research project detailed at www.edg-gde.ca.

The Danish Cartoon Controversy: A Defence of Liberal Freedom[1]

Randall Hansen

The Danish cartoon controversy,[2] which erupted following the publication by a conservative Danish daily of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, provoked popular passions and intellectual debate that recalled the 1988-1989 Rushdie

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

affair. In this piece, I review the Danish cartoon controversy and offer a robust defence of the right to free expression that, importantly, rejects the notion that Islam and the West are split by any immutable differences of principle. The "clash of civilizations" thesis is another rendition of the argument made dozens of times in the settler societies – against Germans, Jews, Italians, Asians, and East Europeans – that this current batch of immigrants is for reason x harder to integrate than previous waves of immigration. Against this argument stands the weight of history: all of these groups have integrated into Canada, the United States, and Australia. The precedent suggests the same will be true of Muslim migrants; indeed, in most cases, it is already true. The corollary of rejecting the thesis of Muslim exceptionalism, however, is the rejection of any claim to religious, in this case, Muslim preference: like all actors living within the liberal state, observant Muslims' beliefs are to be respected, but they are to be accommodated within the norms and principles that underpin the liberal constitutional state. They cannot be accommodated through a revision of those norms and principles.

Events, dear boy, events: the development of the Danish cartoon crisis

On 17 September 2005, the Danish newspaper *Politiken* published an article titled "A profound fear of criticizing Islam", which discussed the difficulties encountered by a Danish writer, Kare Bluitgen, in finding an illustrator for a children's book. The paper attributed its difficulties to self-censorship. Two weeks later, *Jyllands-Posten*, published 12 caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. *Jyllands-Posten* is a conservative newspaper with a circulation of 175,000, the largest in Denmark. It has close ties to the Prime Minister of Denmark, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, whose coalition includes the far-right Danish People's party. Its core demographic is made up of farmers and the provincial middle class. It had never published anything that would offend their religious sensibilities (Klausen, 2006).

The cartoons themselves, depending on one's tastes, varied from the anodyne and perhaps even amusing to the offensive. One was a subtle attack on the paper itself: in it, Muhammad is not the Prophet but rather a young boy, a second-generation migrant. He points to a chalkboard script: "The editorial team of *Jyllands-Posten* is a bunch of reactionary provocateurs". The most offensive portrays Muhammad with a bomb, replete with a lit fuse, in his turban. It was penned by a member of *Jyllands-Posten's* staff.

Following the publication of the cartoons, Muslim groups in Denmark launched a series of protests. All of these fell well within what we would regard as regular

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

interest group activity. The Islamic Society of Denmark demanded an apology and the withdrawal on the cartoons on 9 October, and 5,000 people held a peaceful protest at the Copenhagen offices of *Jyllands-Posten* on 14 October. At this moment, the crisis became international. On 19 October, ambassadors from 11 Islamic countries requested a meeting with the Danish Prime Minister, Rasmussen, to discuss the cartoons. He refused, citing free speech and his government's unwillingness to influence editorial opinion. A week later, Muslim organizations in Denmark filed a complaint against the paper, claiming the publication constituted blasphemy under a rarely invoked section of the Danish criminal code. At the end of the month, there were the first signs of what was to come. Muslim youth, possibly taking inspiration from the French suburbs, rioted in a suburb of Aarhus, citing in part the cartoons as justification.

Until this point, the story was a Danish one. Then, with the court case undecided, a delegation of imams headed off to the Middle East with a 43-page document titled "Dossier about championing the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him". The dossier contained the 12 caricatures, pictures from another Danish newspaper, anti-Muslim hate mail, a televised interview with Dutch member of parliament Ms. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who received the Freedom Prize from the Danish Liberal Party, and three additional images. The last included a picture of a man with a pig's face. The dossier claimed that this was an insulting representation of the Prophet Muhammad, but it was in fact the winner of a French pig-squealing contest that had nothing to do with Islam. The delegation's spokesperson was Ahmed Akkari. Akkari was secretly filmed by a French TV crew suggesting, to the delegation's head, Sheikh Raed Hlayhel, that Naser Khader – a moderate, integrationist Muslim and member of the Danish parliament – be bombed. When confronted, Akkari rediscovered his sense of humour (though he remained irony-blind): he was only joking. It was a form of expression presumably covered by free speech principles.

In early 2006, things began to get ugly. A Norwegian newspaper republished the cartoons, followed by other papers and the *Brussels Journal*, which published all 12 cartoons. On 24 January, Saudi Arabia publicly condemned the cartoons, followed by Yemen and Syria. Libya closed its embassy in Denmark. The Danish flag was burned in Nablus and Hebron, on the West Bank. *Jyllands-Posten*, clearly taken aback by the events it unleashed, issued two apologies for hurting Muslim feelings, though not for publishing the cartoons. They had no effect. On 30 January, armed gunmen in the Gaza strip stormed the European Union (EU) office in Gaza, threatening to kidnap the workers unless the EU issued an official apology. Hamas's leader demanded that Denmark punish the cartoonists and *Jyllands-Posten*.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

By February, one French, four German, one Italian, one Spanish, one American, and three Dutch publications had decided to publish (some or all of) the cartoons. Publishers in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, India, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Korea followed suit. Demonstrations were organized outside the Danish embassy in London, during which radical Islamists brandished placards stating: "Slay [also butcher/massacre/behead/exterminate] those who insult Islam", "Free speech go to hell", "Europe is the cancer and Islam is the cure", and "Europe will pay, your 9/11 is on its way". In the Middle East, Syria and Lebanon decided to instrumentalize the crisis. In Damascus, demonstrations (with direct or indirect government assistance) were organized outside the Swedish and Danish embassies, and the building housing both was set on fire by a mob. The Norwegian embassy was next, and it too burned. In Beirut, protesters set the Danish embassy ablaze. In Gaza, the same happened to a German cultural centre. Demonstrations became ever more violent, and in Somalia, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan people were killed. When the protests finally ended, some 139 people were dead.

Reactions in the EU and the West

As the accusations of Western hypocrisy and Islamophobia became ever louder, reactions in the West became ever more accommodating. The EU protested the burning of the embassies, but balked at the prospect of collectively withdrawing its ambassadors. In the face of the unofficially encouraged boycott of Danish products, the EU threatened vague retaliation, but did nothing. As Danish flags burned – the protestors demanding respect for religious symbols that matter to them but showing none for the national symbols of others – the EU remained silent. The EU's reaction was nothing short of feeble.

The United Nations (UN) had entered the fracas in the autumn. Under pressure from Muslim countries, some of whose records on tolerance are hardly without blemish, it requested observations from the Permanent Danish Mission to the UN and launched an investigation into the cartoons' "racism". Next, the Council of Europe attacked the Danish government's invocation of free speech as a defence of the cartoons. The cartoons were "insulting" and a "seam of intolerance" characterized the Danish media.

Finally, major politicians – active and retired – offered their pronouncements. Tony Blair and George Bush, according to *Guardian* commentator Jonathan Steele, showed their "good sense….by siding with left-wing and liberal critics of the offensive drawings' publication". But it was Bill Clinton who went furthest in attacking the cartoons, describing them as "totally outrageous" and comparing European Islamophobia today with pre-war anti-Semitism.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

Whither freedom of speech?

In the midst of the furore, those who defended the cartoons in the name of free speech – the Millian principle that we may hate what people say but will defend to the death their right to say it – found themselves isolated and their motivations impugned. They were at best hypocritical, and worst racist. As a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester put it:

> A chorus of European commentators have invoked the freedom to speak as a smokescreen for the crudest form of racist vilification. In addition to Israel, this racist vilification spans at least 13 European states. The constellation of responses spanning media coverage cannot have escaped anyone's attention. Reminiscent of the liberal inquisition pursued by western commentators during the Rushdie affair in 1989, we are yet again witnessing attempts to denigrate legitimate Muslim political expression. Back then Muslims merely questioned the conventional criteria of free speech. Now, however, they recognize free speech as *the* red herring in an Islamophobic onslaught…These cartoons cannot be located in the tradition of European satire, but they can be located within the tradition of racist representation, currently directed at Europe's powerless minorities (Nabi, 2006).

If there was a "chorus", it was barely audible; the majority of liberal newspaper commentators and scholars did everything they could to judge the motives of the cartoon's publishers – they were racist, wanted to provoke, in partnership with the right-wing government, and so on – and to relativize that of the violent protestors – they were frustrated with poverty, social exclusion, discrimination, the war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine. When an earlier version of this paper was sent to the misnamed website OpenDemocracy, they rejected it on the grounds that their coverage had "moved on". Some weeks later, the headline story sung from what has become the standard scholarly song sheet: "the Muslim protest…challenges the conceits of liberal democracy".

The equation of the cartoons with racism has become so common (a Google search of "Danish cartoons" and "racist" produces 232,000 hits) that it is rarely, if ever, questioned. It should be. Three possibilities present themselves. The first is that the cartoonists and editors are themselves racist. They might well be, but the cartoons themselves do not provide a doorway into their heads. The second is that Denmark is a particularly anti-Islamic society, and that the publication of the cartoons reflects that hostility. Again, this might be the case, but it might not. Comparative public opinion polls, content analysis of editorials, and studies of day-to-day discrimination faced by Muslims would shed light on this question. The cartoons themselves tell us nothing. The third is that the cartoons equate Muslims with terrorists.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

Do they? The question is open to interpretation, but none of the cartoons portrayed stereotypically looking Muslims; they were not, as many claimed, the equivalent of *der Stürmer's* hooked nose, bearded Jew reaching into a pot of gold. The most offensive cartoons portray Muhammad with an unsheathed sword and with a lit bomb in his turban. They seem to equate Islam with terrorism, to argue that Islam is an essentially violent and deadly religion. This is of course nonsense, but is it racism? It is not. It is hatred of a religion. And in a liberal society, there is and must be a distinction between racism and religious hatred, for the simple reason that while there can be no acceptable reason to object to "blackness" there are many good reasons to object to religion, whether Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. Many people believe, not without historical evidence, that religion encourages intolerance and violence (how many throats have been slashed in religion's name?) and oppresses women and minorities (think of all three religion's attitude toward gays). In a liberal democratic society, religion is, like it or not, a fair target for criticism, satire and, fortunately or unfortunately, mockery and ridicule.

This point relates to the question of whether the cartoons were hate speech, the only conceivable grounds for censoring them. Most of them were not. The sword/bomb cartoons came closest, but again only if they are read as equating Muslims with terrorists, or if it can be shown that they provoked attacks on Muslims. As far as we know, they only provoked attacks by Muslims.

Some might reject the hatred of religion/hatred of race distinction as untenable on the grounds that putative hostility to religion masks a deep-suited hostility to Muslim people. Tariq Modood (2006) argues this case, pointing to two pieces of evidence: "First, the suggestion that Muslims are not the subject of racism because they are a religious group is nonsense when one considers that the victimization of another religious group, the Jews, is paradigmatic of many peoples' understanding of racism, especially on the continent". Second, there is an "idea – prevalent among anti-racists, the progressive intelligentsia, and beyond, that religious people are not worthy of protection; more than that, they should be subject not just intellectual criticism but mockery and ridicule" .

The first argument oversimplifies the matter. A religious group may be transformed by racists into an ethno-racial group, which is exactly what happened to the Jews. There are, of course, clear cut instances when Muslims are attacked because they are Muslim: women wearing the hijab are spat on, men with beards or who otherwise appear Muslim are denied jobs. Such and similar incidents are depressingly common. Islamophobia does exist, but this does not mean that every injustice suffered by Muslims – social exclusion, poverty, physical and verbal attacks – can be related back to a hatred of religion. In many if not most cases, those committing the injustice could not distinguish a Muslim from a

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

Hindu and are motivated by nothing other than base racism. Many of those who invoke September 11th as an excuse for attacking Muslims would have attacked them pre-September 11th as Asians, Pakistanis, or Indians. Some readers may view the hatred of religion/hatred of race distinction as one without a difference, but there are broader issues at stake. Some of those who are quickest to claim Islamophobia – and I cite the Muslim Council of Britain here – have an interest in essentializing Muslims, placing their religious identity above their nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, or any other sort of attachment they might have. Rather than being Pakistanis, Indians, Saudi Arabians, Britons, Germans, Londoners, Berliners, Europeans, cosmopolitans, gays, atheists, workers, or anything else, the foundation of their identity can only be Islam (Adamson, 2006). And their spokespeople head an organization that denounces homosexuality as a sin, does not include Muslims gays and lesbians, and refuses to recognize Holocaust Memorial Day.

Modood's second argument can be easily dismissed. Defenders of free speech do not hold that religion *should* be subject to mockery; they hold that it *can* be subject to mockery. In a liberal democratic society, religion is, like it or not, a fair target for criticism, satire and, fortunately or unfortunately, mockery and ridicule.

Hypocrisy and free speech: the case of holocaust denial

Defenders of free speech are frequently accused of hypocrisy because of the West's treatment of the holocaust: it criminalizes holocaust denial while allowing Muslims to be mocked, ridiculed, and vilified. While this argument seems superficially appealing, it too is unsustainable for three reasons. First, banning holocaust denial while allowing the ridicule of religion is not inherently hypocritical. Liberal thinkers have long admitted exceptions of freedom of speech, and it might be argued that criminalizing holocaust denial is an acceptable limit while limits on religious satire are not. Denying a historical fact is not the same thing as mocking a religion. The accusation of hypocrisy would only make sense if it were the case that *any* limit on freedom of speech was evidence of hypocrisy; clearly this is not so. Second, holocaust denial is hardly illegal across all of Europe, though that is the most common position; it is perfectly legal in the United Kingdom and in Denmark. Third, and most importantly, there are many liberals – including Ronald Dworkin and Deborah Lipstadt (and the author) – who believe that such laws should be overturned in the name of freedom of speech and who oppose the recent imprisonment of historian David Irving under Austria's holocaust denial laws.

Who's the hypocrite now?

The real hypocrisy and inconsistency would be if Western countries protected some religions but failed to protect others. They do not. When Christian

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

fundamentalists burn abortion clinics, demand the teaching of education and prayer in school, and attempt to have homosexuals fired, they are told that their religious beliefs are inconsistent with liberal constitutional values. If any religion has been treated with leniency and indulgence, it is Islam. As noted, in the weeks since the protests erupted, major politicians – George Bush, Tony Blair, Jack Straw, and Bill Clinton – and liberal intellectuals (see the contributions to http://www.guardian.co.uk/cartoonprotests/0,,1703418,00.html) have lined up to denounce the cartoons; they have urged self-censorship; and they have expressed sympathy with offended Muslims. I doubt that Christian fundamentalists would receive such an empathetic response under comparable circumstances. If, following the screening of the *Last Temptation of Christ*, Christian fundamentalists had burned theatres, and held placards in Times Square saying "Death to you and your Freedoms", the response from the liberal intelligentsia and politicians would have been total condemnation. I find it unlikely that either would justify their actions with reference to the difficulty of living in a world that does not respect one's deepest beliefs, or explain that years of seeing babies murdered (which is what abortion is for Christian fundamentalists), deviant lifestyles flaunted, and insulting representations of Christians (think of the Church Lady on *Saturday Night Live*) led to a level frustration that boiled over because of the film.

One ironic element in the whole crisis was that the real hypocrites were not identified. They were not observant, non-violent Muslims: it is entirely right of them to let their offence be known, and to protest, as Catholics and Jews do, a failure to respect their religion. They only have to accept that they may not convince everyone that it or any religion is worth respecting. Nor, for that matter, were the violent Muslims hypocritical: the position of those few who shouted "massacre those who insult Islam" was all too clear and consistent.

Neither were Danes hypocritical: Denmark has some of the most robust free expression laws in the world. It is the home, against German protests, of many publishers of neo-Nazi propaganda, and it hosted, against Russian accusations of support for terrorism, a Chechen congress. Danish courts rejected police demands that a journalist reveal his sources for a story on Islamic extremists in Denmark. Danish artists have with impunity painted murals of Jesus with an erect penis and made films portraying him as a sexually active terrorist. The country consistently ranks near the top of "Reporters without Borders" worldwide index of press freedom. Since the crisis erupted, there has been much talk of the importance of context – particularly broader Muslim frustration and deeply held prejudice in Denmark – but little has been said about this libertarian Danish context. In failing to placate Muslim demands for censorship and/or apology, the Danes were on one level treating them as citizens rather than foreigners.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

The real hypocrites in the debate were liberal intellectuals, too many to name, who spent years denouncing Christian fundamentalist demands for prayer in and the teaching of evolution in schools, the censorship of books and films, limits on abortion, only to cave to fundamentalist Muslim demands: for the introduction of Shari'a law, for separate swimming classes for boys and girls, and – in the Danish case – for the respect for religious rules not only by members of the religious group but by the society at large. Portraying the Prophet may be prohibited for Muslims, but it is not and cannot be for anyone else. Muslims may ask that others respect their religion's precepts, but they cannot demand it any more than observant Jews can demand that their fellow citizens not shop on Saturdays or Christians can demand that non-believers respect their sexual mores. That liberal intellectuals could be so absolutist in their dismissal of the demands made by Christian fundamentalists but so apologist and relativist in their indulgence of those made by Muslim fundamentalists beggars belief.

Muslim exceptionalism?

One argument for a Muslim "opt-out" of the liberal free speech requirement might be that Muslims take their religion more seriously than Jews or Christians. I know many Jews and Christians who would disagree, but let's admit the possibility. If we do, then there is a problem. Academics, including myself, have for years rejected as bigoted the argument that Muslims are particularly difficult, relative to earlier generations of migrants, to integrate. Many of those angered by the cartoons would also reject the claim, but they cannot have it both ways. They cannot argue that Muslim integration does not present particular challenges *and* that religion is so important to Muslim identity that our conception of and laws on freedom of speech have to be changed. Because if the latter were the case, then Muslim integration would raise particular challenges and present particular difficulties.

For my part, I am convinced that it does not. I am sure it is the case that many Muslims are deeply and genuinely offended by the Danish cartoons, and I sympathize with them. But this offence is the price of living in a liberal society, one that has been paid by many groups before. Soldiers in Canada or Britain who were disgusted by the thought of serving in the army with homosexuals have been told they must; Christians and feminists who object to pornography have been told that others have a right to view such material; Bavarian Catholics who demanded a crucifix in every school were told that respect for other religions in Germany meant that they couldn't. Elderly Jews, including holocaust survivors, have been told that they could not stop neo-Nazis from marching past their front windows. Going back further, racists have been told that their deepest convictions were unacceptable. In these as in many other cases, people have been told that their firmly held beliefs and attitudes were inconsistent with liberal democracy and that, however important those beliefs and however offensive a

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

failure to respect them was, they simply had to accept it. So it is with those Muslims who think that their religion is above satire and mockery. It is not; no religion is.

At the end of the piece cited earlier, Modood presents Europe with a choice: it has to decide which is more important, the right to ridicule Muslims or the integration of them. This gets it entirely wrong. It is not Europe that has to choose; it is rather those who wish to restrict free speech, whether they be Muslim or non-Muslim, citizens or non-citizens, recent immigrants or long-standing permanent residents. They have to decide whether they wish to live in a liberal democratic society. If they do, they have to accept that they will hear and see things that offend them, sometimes deeply. They are free to protest them peacefully, but not to demand their criminal sanction. They will hopefully do this in the knowledge that that same liberal democracy sustains many values and practices from which they benefit and that they cherish. In the end, the same liberal democratic values that protect a right to practice one's religion, to maintain one's distinctive cultural practices, to be reunited with one's family through family reunification, protect the right of free speech. It is part of the liberal democratic framework, not a negotiable addition to it.

NOTES

1. This piece first appeared in *EUSA Review*, 2006, 19(2), Spring: 1-6. I am grateful to Amy Verdun and the editors of the *Review* for granting permission to reproduce the piece here.
2. I have discussed the issues raised in this essay with many people, and I am grateful for their comments: Emmanuel Adler, Fiona Adamson, Erik Bleich, Joseph Carens, Matthew Gibney, Todd Lawson, Rahsaan Maxwell, Shourideh Molaei, Shahreen Reza, Phil Triadafilopolous, Gokce Yurdakul, Melissa Williams.

REFERENCES

Adamson, F.
2006 "'Muslim' as a politicized identity category: changing discourses of "immigrant" mobilization and political incorporation in Western Europe", paper presented at the Council of European Studies conference, Chicago, 29 March-1 April 2006.

Klausen, J.
2006 "Rotten judgment in the state of Denmark", *Der Spiegel*, 8 March 2006, http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,399653,00.html.

Modood, T.
2006 "The liberal dilemma: integration or vilification?", Open Democracy, http://www. opendemocracy.net/faith-terrorism/liberal_dilemma_3249.jsp.

Nabi, S.
2006 "Honing European traditions", OpenDemocracy, http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/muslim_cartoons_3244. jsp#seven.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

On Democratic Integration and Free Speech: Response to Tariq Modood and Randall Hansen

Erik Bleich

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to these thought-provoking essays by Tariq Modood and Randall Hansen, as they touch on issues of perennial concern to citizens of liberal democracies. The terms of Muslim integration and the protections granted to freedom of speech are particularly pressing issues in the wake of recent events, and the Danish cartoon controversy opens an important window into these debates.

The cartoons as tools that help construct images of Muslims

Given the dominant public framing of Muslims as a "problematic" group in contemporary Europe, I thoroughly disagree with Hansen's argument that equating Islam with terrorism, violence, and death is not racism. In the September 2006 Council for European Studies newsletter, I argue that Muslims are being constructed as the newest ethno-racial outsiders in Europe. This construction is taking place by non-Muslim Europeans (and not by Muslims, as Hansen suggests) and it has all the earmarks of classic racialization: namely the essentializing of an entire group of people based on a primordial identity marker, and the classification of such a group as inherently dangerous and inferior.

While European Muslims are being constructed as ethno-racial outsiders in many places and in multiple ways, I do not believe that they are always cast in this role. What "Muslim" stands for is politically contested, and the Danish cartoons reveal this contestation. It is not true that the cartoons universally contribute to Muslims' ethno-racial outsider status. Modood is wrong to assert that "they are all unfriendly to Islam and to Muslims". Hansen comes closer to the mark by noting that the cartoons varied "from the anodyne and perhaps even amusing to the offensive". I would go one step further than Hansen at the two extremes. On my reading, two of the images actively promote the view that Muslims can be integrated into Western Europe, while two others go beyond mere offensiveness into the realm of hate speech that should be sanctioned by law. The first point to emphasize, therefore, is that these cartoons were much more of a mixed-bag than commonly recognized, because the public's eye has been drawn

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

to those that are unambiguously offensive. I will return to the most controversial images below, but first I would like to make the unusual case that at least two of the illustrations actually contained positive messages about Muslim integration in Denmark and in Western Europe.

One of these cartoons – apparently penned by someone pragmatically interested in the job as a children's book illustrator – is a straightforward image of Muhammad as a shepherd-figure. Looking at this cartoon, one is struck by the fact that it could just as easily be a depiction of Moses or Jesus. In other words, this image puts Muhammad squarely in the Abrahamic tradition, signalling, one could easily argue, the compatibility of Islam with Judeo-Christian heritage. Although observant Muslims may object to this cartoon on the grounds that it violates the norm against pictures of the Prophet, for less observant members of the faith and for those of other religions, this portrayal may actually foster sympathy and understanding. The second image is one discussed by Hansen, namely that of a schoolboy clad in standard-issue Western youth garb who has written on the chalkboard "The editorial team of *Jyllands-Posten* is a bunch of reactionary provocateurs". This is expressly not a picture of the Prophet and therefore does not contravene religious prohibitions. Rather, it is an immigrant child who is both cheeky and savvy enough to thumb his nose at the media. The Muhammad depicted here is not a sheltered, conservative, fundamentalist boy, but rather a well-integrated Muslim child, perhaps representative of Muslims not only in Denmark but also of those across Europe.

Trust democratic institutions

In spite of these positive images of Muslims, there remain enough doubts about the role of Muslims in Europe that I have to take issue with core aspects of Hansen's article. Hansen comes out fighting, announcing that he is offering a "robust" defence of the right to free expression. But at times, his vision of how to defend such an important right verges on the authoritarian. This is particularly so in the last two paragraphs of his essay, in which he deploys phrasing such as "this offence is the price of living in a liberal society, one that has been paid by many groups before", "people have been told…they simply had to accept it", "they have to decide whether they wish to live in a liberal democratic society", "if they do, they have to accept…" and, finally, that free speech "is part of the liberal democratic framework, not a negotiable addition to it". Such firm phrases are consistent with Hansen's argument that the weight of history demonstrates that other groups have integrated into settler societies in the past on the presumably rigid and static liberal terms dictated by the hosts. The overriding impression these formulations leave is that Muslims are demanding more than other groups have been granted. For Hansen, this appears to be the Muslim

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

exceptionalism, and it is something that cannot be tolerated. It is only by democracies holding firmly to principles of liberal free speech that Muslims will eventually be integrated as others have been in the past.

But it is untenable to maintain that other ethno-racial, religious, and linguistic groups have not negotiated the terms of their integration into liberal democracies. In fact, such negotiations are politics-as-usual, and major liberal democracies have proven quite flexible even when it comes to core elements of their identity. Jewish groups were among the leaders in pushing for provisions against incitement to racial hatred in Britain in the early 1960s. Now, such anti-incitement laws are common across Europe, but at the time, many MPs fretted about their impact on the right to free speech. Latinos have successfully supported Spanish language use in schools and in other public institutions across the United States, in spite of the challenges it poses to many Americans' dearly held beliefs about the English-speaking identity of their country. And Turkish groups helped push for easier access to German citizenship in the 1990s, a revision that flew in the face of long-standing convictions that membership in the nation was based on blood not soil.

Such ethnic, racial, or religious lobbying has sparked major cultural and legal changes in all liberal democracies. Thus, when Hansen asserts that those who confront things that offend them "are free to protest them peacefully, but not to demand their criminal sanction", one wonders, why not? Lobbying for the application of a law or a change in the law is part and parcel of democratic politics. There are plenty of limits on speech in these societies, and I believe that the appropriate boundaries must be worked out through democratic channels. Perhaps it is not free speech that needs a robust defence from Muslims or their sympathizers, but democracy that needs a rhetorical defence from ardent free speech proponents. I have faith that the democratic institutions in Western Europe are themselves robust enough to mediate such competing claims.

Clarify acceptable boundaries

Because I take the view that democratic institutions should be the venue for determining the rules of the game, I think it is imperative that individuals, groups, and countries delineate as clearly as possible the lines they wish to draw around legally protected speech. While Modood and Hansen argue forcefully for more respect for Muslims or for free expression, neither author explicitly identifies the boundaries he advocates for freedom of speech. Modood strongly implies that he believes the Danish cartoons should not be banned – that such images should be "censured – rather than censored". However, in the next paragraph he admits that legal intervention is sometimes necessary, notably when speech "is likely to reinforce prejudice and lead to acts of discrimination or victimization".

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

The bulk of his subsequent essay is devoted to the myriad ways in which these cartoons reflect and reinforce a profound lack of sympathy for Muslims in Europe, suggesting that legal intervention is justified in this case. Would Modood have these cartoons banned on these grounds? It is not clear.

Hansen is equally difficult to pin down when it comes to the question of which acts he deems acceptable and which he thinks cross the line. At the outset of Hansen's chronology of events, he identifies the original domestic response to the cartoons' publication as a "series of protests" that he labels "regular interest group activity". But if protesting the publication is acceptable behaviour, then presumably Muslims, liberal intellectuals, and others should be expected to participate in such activities and should not be condemned for it. If everyone agrees that at least some of the cartoons were offensive, why should it be surprising or even annoying to Hansen that people complained about their publication?

To the extent that Hansen does identify what he deems unacceptable, it follows the sentence "In early 2006, things began to get ugly". What comes next is an amalgam of acts, ranging from Saudi Arabia's condemnation of the cartoons, to the burning of Danish flags in the Middle East, to demonstrations in London with "radical Islamists brandish[ing] placards", to the burning of embassies in Syria and Lebanon, to people getting killed in Somalia, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. But which of these acts does Hansen condemn? It is unclear. Surely, most people would not countenance the sacking of embassies, riots, and killings. But does Hansen also condemn the burning of the Danish flag? Saudi Arabia voicing a public complaint? Placards brandished in London? The logic of his overarching support for free speech suggests that he does not, yet he uses these examples as part of a broad story he judges "ugly".

What precisely does Hansen wish to defend? It is only through specifying Modood and Hansen's positions on the toughest questions that we can see the true differences between them, and decide where we wish to situate ourselves in the debate. For my part, I belong to the near-unanimous chorus that decries the use of violence. Moreover, I side with Hansen's underlying principles (and probably Modood's) in that I would not bat an eyelash at the speech aspect of Saudi Arabia's public criticism or of the Danish flag being burnt. Freedom of expression is important, and should be defended.

Where I believe I would differ from Hansen and where I might diverge from Modood (though I do not think so) is over the placards. Two of the statements Hansen identifies fall squarely in the realm of protected speech, namely those that announce "Europe is the cancer and Islam is the cure", and, perhaps ironically, "Free speech go to hell". However, the one reading "Europe will pay, your 9/11 is on its way" (aside from being a little late, coming in the wake of the Madrid

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

and London bombings) promises violence. More dramatically, the placards that call upon readers to "Slay/butcher/massacre/behead/exterminate those who insult Islam" are unambiguous in their aim. These placards, by threatening or inciting violence, cross the acceptable boundaries of free speech. If Hansen wishes to robustly defend free speech, he should defend (to the death?) the right of Muslims to carry such placards. For my part, I side with the Crown Prosecution Service, which advised Scotland Yard that public order offences had been committed during this demonstration, including incitement to racial hatred. My stand against incitement is not as controversial as it would have been in earlier decades, yet it is important to note that hard-core free speech advocates should oppose legal action against those who carried the placards. Does Hansen?

Perhaps the harder task is to elaborate principles that allow us to determine which if any of the cartoons should be legally actionable. I believe that it must remain permissible to criticize elements of a religion, even interpretations of core beliefs. However, a line is crossed when criticism evolves into essentializing, stereotyping, and branding the entire group as dangerous or inferior with the likelihood of stirring up hatred. Such criticism is hate speech, and I believe it should be penalized by law. On these principles, I view the cartoons that depict Mohammad with a sword and a bomb as hate speech. By casting Mohammad, the spiritual forefather of the entire group, as inextricably linked to violence, the message is clear – all Muslims are linked to violence. Here, I side with Modood's analysis that the cartoons are "not just about one individual but about Muslims per se". Modood's logic suggests that he agrees that these images should be actionable, but he does not come out and say this, and I am puzzled as to why not. Hansen ostensibly opposes legal penalties for the publication of these cartoons. Yet, ironically, Hansen himself seems open to banning hate speech, calling it "the only conceivable grounds" for censoring the cartoons. His defence against doing so is that the sword/bomb cartoons do not equate Muslims with terrorists. If these cartoons do not link Muslims with violence, what do they do? And if they do link Muslims with violence (and/or terrorism), does Hansen concede that they should be banned as hate speech?

Danish law forbids dissemination of threatening, insulting, or degrading material on account of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, or sexual inclination, but not on the grounds of religion. I would advocate that this list be extended to include religion, as it has been in some countries, and that it be limited to incidents that are likely to stir up hatred. This second qualification would exclude acts such as a shepherd-like depiction of Mohammad that some Muslims view as insulting by virtue of Islam's prohibition on images of the Prophet, but that would fail to generate animosity among non-Muslims. I wish to be clear, though, that the lines of legally acceptable speech I advocate are just that: lines that I advocate. I believe they make sense in most or all developed democracies.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

However, in keeping with my argument about the value of democratic institutions, I recognize that different countries have drawn legal boundaries in different ways for locally important reasons. So while I believe that some of the placards and some of the cartoons *should* be legally banned, it is the task of individual societies to hash out this argument and to arrive at workable solutions through their domestic democratic institutions.

Censuring versus censoring

Although legislation against hate speech and incitement is sometimes enforced in courts, often it is more useful as a symbol of discourse that society deems unambiguously out of bounds. As such, it is not the only tool at our disposal in debates about integration and free speech. Modood is correct that censuring is at least as important as censoring when negotiating these matters. The terms of integration and boundaries of acceptable speech are fluid and contested, and individuals, groups, and societies constantly work to define these for themselves. I believe that it is vital for those offended by public statements to voice their complaints and even to seek redress through normal democratic channels, just as it is critical that those defending the right to be offended stand up for that principle. All sides must be free to speak their minds, subject to the limitations of incitement and hate speech I have outlined above. It is through the careful juxtaposition of multiple arguments that citizens are persuaded to condemn or to applaud the cartoons, or to develop more complex and nuanced feelings about their effects on the world. From this perspective, Modood's and Hansen's essays are more than just scholarly analyses of the current situation; they are also forceful contributions to debates about social integration and free speech. While I've tried to highlight some limitations and alternatives to each author's perspective, I applaud their efforts to stimulate our thinking.

Liberalism, Multiculturalism, Danish Cartoons, Islamist Fraud, and the Rights of the Ungodly

Brendan O'Leary

The late Ernest Gellner argued that liberalism is a "miracle", by which he meant both that its emergence is not easy to explain, and that it is not the "natural"

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

condition of humanity, not that it was a gift from a "god". He described our natural (or default) condition as the "tyranny of the cousins" [clan rule], or "the tyranny of the 'ideo-crats'" [theocrats or ideological monopolists], and celebrated the exit from these mentally repressive equilibria. Gellner's *Muslim Society* is enormously stimulating (as is his less well-known *Legitimation of Belief*), and I think it is correct to suggest that predominantly Islamic societies are experiencing an Islamist (fundamentalist, if you prefer) temptation in response to modernization. Some Muslim migrants in Western (and substantively post-serious Christian) societies experience the same temptation.

Western liberals have strategic choices about how to respond to that temptation (if one does not share it). That response may be different at home and abroad, for reasons of prudence, strategy, and morality. For example, it may be necessary to support secular Kurds having to temporize with some Islamist Shi'a to build a pluralist federation in Iraq – the constitution of 2005 allows Kurdistan to preserve its secular politics, but permits other parts of Iraq to apply the Shari'a. This compromise was necessary to protect Kurdistan but it is tough for liberals in other parts of Iraq, which did not vote for secular parties in significant numbers. But where one does not have to be prudent one should be vigorous in protecting liberalism and secularism in their established heartlands, where all the participants in this discussion live.

My concern in what is called the "Danish cartoons episode" but should be called "the Islamist cartoon fraud" is that no liberal principles should be sold now that might be regretted later. Among their number is protecting freedom of expression, freedom to have no religion, and freedom of the press. Agreeing not to republish a mild dozen cartoons out of some misconstrued notion of respect is succumbing to bullying and thuggery in the name of religion. That is what happened in Great Britain; that is what is endorsed by Joseph Carens. Deciding not to publish the three fake cartoons designed by Danish Islamists in their dishonest act of manipulation has let the true provocateurs off the hook. Secularists and the irreligious must be very cautious not to allow a new alliance of the religious to insinuate changes in our political systems – out of misguided notions of respect and out of the misleading efforts of some to conflate criticism of religion with racism. It is right to respect people's languages; there is no obligation to respect every belief expressed in these languages.

Many liberals in Canada, the coastal United States, and urban London breathe liberal air, i.e. they live in an atmosphere which has been liberal (and libertarian) for a while, but not that long. We should not forget the abuses done by their ancestors to natives in colonies, slaves, Catholics and Jews, and countless other categories subjected to customary human cruelties. Contemporary liberals, I

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

find, have too easily accepted the fall of Communism and the quiet retreat of those who claimed "Asian values", and there is nowhere nicer to be complacent than Canada. Such liberals have not won their faith in any hard trials. It is their "heritage", for which they fear not enough. In consequence, they do not understand why those who have just emerged from illiberal environs, or who have lived or worked in deeply illiberal places, are much more concerned than they are to draw liberal "red lines" on certain matters, especially in the homelands of liberalism.

One of these red lines is the right to criticize all religions, the right precisely to treat nothing as "sacred" or "taboo", the right, contra Carens' words, not to respect sincerely held religious conviction, the right to have a good laugh at the godly. That right includes the right to tell good or bad jokes about religion and to draw portraits of Muhammad as many Sufis did until recent times. Tariq Modood and Erik Bleich probably do not want to require liberals to respect sincere religious fundamentalism, which mandates that creationism, intelligent design, and a certain set of "family values" be educationally institutionalized. But since Modood refuses to declare his religious convictions – as is his right – I am not sure what his sincere convictions on religious matters are. I suspect Carens and others simply want liberals to respect sincerely held and liberalized ("rights-respecting") religions. These are, of course, no longer, at least for now, the religions they were. Many exponents of Christianity and Judaism have tempered or modified the historic cores of their beliefs precisely because of centuries of scientific falsification, textual criticism, and ridicule in the heartlands of the West. Perhaps Carens accepts John Rawls' risible claim of an "overlapping pluralist consensus" among all religions, which he believed to be compatible with liberalism. Such an assumption cannot be based on any deep acquaintance with Islam, to name just one religion, but the one under discussion here.

Islam, as expounded in the Koran and the hadith, is a religion that commends war, not one of peace and tolerance. Islam has an iconoclastic and murderous record with polytheists, and the artefacts of non-Islamic religious cultures. It prescribes the death penalty for apostasy. In power it historically subjected Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians to the status of *dhimmi*. Neither in theory nor in practice does Islam respect the equality of women and men. It licenses an instrumental approach to the truth and treaties with non-Muslims. According to some current cant this summary statement makes me an Islamophobe. But to paraphrase the Christian who hates sin but not the sinner, I hate these beliefs, and their consequences, not the believers as persons. It is absurd and a repudiation of the liberal heritage for Modood and Bleich to expect me, and others, to respect a religious belief, and they mean an Islamic belief, because it is sincerely held. Many dangerous beliefs are sincerely held. I may have to treat exponents of

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

such beliefs with prudence, but I do not have to respect the beliefs or the believers qua believers. Sadly many self-styled liberals and multiculturalists demonstrate the anthropologists' relativist heresy: to each culture its own, including its sense of what is cognitively and morally true, and peace, blessings, and equal respect to them all. Islamists grant no such reciprocity.

There may be good reasons to regulate where people express their freedom of opinion, and indeed about how they may do so. Had the Danish cartoons been marched on banners into a mosque in Copenhagen and hung on the walls that would have been violently provocative, and a violation of the freedom of assembly of others, and indeed of their property rights. But to publish mockery of Muhammad in an outlet not noted for its Muslim consumers was well within the newspaper's rights (and indeed public manners) both under Danish law, and under the European Convention. Liberal rights also permit public relations stunts. But in this case Danish Islamists pulled off the public relations stunt that mattered.

Modood and Bleich make a case for taking seriously Muslim offence and outrage. Their case is however embarrassed by the facts. The outrage was manufactured, and cannot be justified by the cartoons' putative racism. One of the explanations for the delayed, allegedly "outraged", and grotesque overreaction to the cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* was the active campaign waged against them by Ahmed Abu Laban, a Danish imam. His campaign got under way two months after the publication (in the low circulation Danish journal), and some time after six persons associated with his mosque were arrested on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities. This man, and the Islamic Society of Denmark, then lobbied the Arab League to take offence on behalf of the entire Muslim umma. When Arab governments got in on the act, no doubt, seeing a chance to "defend" Muslims and attack Western liberal democracy, there was then a feedback effect on Islamist and Islamic (yes, I distinguish the two) networks in Europe. Then the campaign truly took off. It led to deaths, death threats, and government-encouraged boycotts. Demonstrators called for the beheadings of the cartoonists, just as one of the cartoons predicted.

The Society's campaign was utterly dishonest, built on lies, and more dishonest than any alleged hypocrisy over the Danish newspaper's apparent greater enthusiasm for lampooning Muhammad as opposed to Christ. The lobby group did not simply complain about the 12 cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* when engaging the Arab League. They added three others, grotesque caricatures (showing paedophilia, sodomy, and the Prophet represented as a porker), to bolster their campaign portfolio. When this fact was exposed, they defended these additions on the grounds that they showed how "hateful the atmosphere in Denmark is towards Muslims" (spokesman Ahmed Akkari). The spokesperson's excuse might seem convincing had not one of the additions already been shown

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

to be a Frenchman competing in a village pig-squealing competition. It was not an example of Danish Islamophobia or Danish racism, but an Islamist lie.

We should not be obliged to "feel the pain" of any of the allegedly disrespected Muslims for the publication of cartoons most of them cannot have seen – unless they sought them out. We can feel sorry that they were manipulated. Muslims in Europe may deserve our sympathy if they have experienced unjust police repression or discrimination in employment or employment opportunities, or denied citizenship rights. But liberalism – not democracy, which may merely mean majority rule – requires freedom of religious opinion, including the right to have no religious opinion. The cartoons were in no worse taste than Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. The cartoonists did not make their cartoons a global issue. Islamists did, and Arab league governments.

This takes me to the issue of racism, where I find myself in agreement with Hansen. Were the original 12 cartoons racist? No. They mock religion, and politically violent Islamists, not race. They mock Muslim suicide bombers in particular, but not because they are not white, but because they are said to be motivated by religious conviction, including a sexist notion of paradise. Incidentally, when it comes to racism, some of the worst I have heard expressed – and I am not shockable – has been Arab racism (toward Kurds in Iraq, and toward blacks in the Sudan, including black Muslims). A little less hypocrisy on the matter of racism is in order in Arab Muslim quarters.

Liberals must defend freedom of expression, provided it clashes with no other reasonable right, and that includes when that expression ridicules beliefs, and causes offence. There is no liberal case for immunizing religions, religious institutions, and religious personnel (in their formal roles) from public criticism. There are good arguments for reasonable laws of libel and defamation to protect particular persons' reputations – there I part from some in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – but not, I think, dead persons, like the alleged "last of the prophets" (a false claim on many grounds), or Christ, or Buddha. Equally, liberals are willing to regulate public constraints on freedom of expression in public places – one should face a fine for crying "fire" falsely in a crowded location – or to regulate and censor on paternalistic grounds, to protect children. But these arguments do not apply to the publication of cartoons ridiculing Islam and Islamists in Danish or European newspapers.

Those of us with passports in our pockets, who can contemplate "offers" or advertisements in universities in multiple states, usually have little practical experience of what it may be to be a refugee, an illegal or unregistered alien, or a source of sweated labour in an ethnic enclave. Equally, we find it easy and pleasant and entirely appropriate to welcome novel foreigners to our departments, but that is

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

not, sadly, the median response of those at the bottom of the division of labour. Academics are happy to be and to be received as "metics"; the same is not so true among the working class. Multiculturalism is great for us; we get the benefits. Must we not listen to others who say they do not experience the benefits? Must we simply re-educate them? Must we require them as well as competing with other workers to respect their beliefs – when that respect is manifestly not reciprocated?

It may be acceptable, as Modood argues, to have limits on freedom of speech when there is a "serious risk of incitement to hatred" (I'd prefer "to kill", or "to injure", i.e. actual bodily harm), or even a "risk to public order" (although I would preface the latter with "serious" before "risk" also). But, limits are not acceptable contrary to what Modood suggests, when speech or text merely "inflames passions", or when it is "likely to reinforce prejudice". That would mandate a very broad curtailment of freedom of expression, and enable each victim-group – real or alleged – to claim to be inflamed, or to be suffering from prejudice. I have been a member of a minority nationality in Great Britain, one whose alleged collective lack of intelligence is part of ingrained English "humour". That inflames some of my co-nationals, but I see no warrant for curtailment of such freedom of expression. I can present you catalogues of racially offensive cartoons of the Irish as a people, and am proud of the fact that the Irish, at their best, have responded by showing that they do not fit the stereotypes and by telling better jokes. That is not how many Muslim demonstrators responded. Many of them precisely conformed to stereotype.

Even if it was true that the Danish newspaper sought to "achieve some kind of victory over Muslims", "to bring them into line", as Modood puts it, and these claims, as the Scots say, are unproven, it is a logical *non-sequitur* to argue that the subsequent republication of the cartoons throughout Europe (which did not happen universally) was "deliberately done to teach Muslims a lesson"! This expression suggests that Modood shares a partiality for victimhood, and that he sees a coordinated conspiracy against Muslims. Such republication as occurred was prompted by freedom of expression concerns, and by the operation of market forces (competition for readers); in some cases, it may even be argued that republication and web-links were intended to promote information. The only significant conspiracy was that of the Danish Islamists, with the connivance of governments in the Arab League, to use the Muslim diasporas in Europe, and Muslims elsewhere, for "cheap politics". That quote is from my friend, an academic political scientist, and a secular Danish citizen, of Sunni Muslim origin.

It is fallacious to argue that if Muslims are economically marginalized, e.g. suffering in Palestine or feeling generally bossed about, that the way to resolve these lists of grievances is to curtail liberal freedoms in liberal states. The way to

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

address any just Muslim's grievances is appropriately, i.e. to practice progressive economic policies toward deprived areas in which poor Muslims are resident in Great Britain, or the *banlieux* of Paris, and to achieve a just political settlement in Palestine (and Israel). It would, of course, help if Muslims consistently showed universalism in their moral concerns – but in this respect they follow the counsel of their Prophet. I watched al-Jazeera throughout my extensive time in Kurdistan in 2004, and noted a total lack of reporting of the horrors in Darfur, and a dramatic over-reporting of American atrocities in Iraq by comparison with primarily Sunni Arab organized atrocities against other Iraqis. My point is this, "Muslim grievances", allegedly caused by the West, to the extent that they can be homogenized, weigh more heavily in typical Islamists' eyes than atrocities by Muslims, and atrocities by Muslim regimes, and even than much worse atrocities by Muslims on fellow Muslims. That group-centred hypocrisy is normal, though textually explicit in Muhammad's sayings. Liberal criticism is one of the few therapies for exposing all group-centred egoism, and foolishness. It is after all absurd, and funny – in the sense of funny peculiar – that an orthodox Islamist suicide-bomber who kills infidels imagines he is going to be rewarded with a sexual cornucopia, and that he should regard virgins as especially sexually delectable.

Modood cites two factors as critical in explaining a lack of sympathy for Muslims in Europe: the fact that Muslims are considered a religious rather than a racial minority, and the fact that post- enlightenment intellectuals do not like religion. These explanations seem to be variations on one factor (religion) rather than two. It was Islamists (who proclaim themselves devout Muslims) who were responsible for 9/11 (New York, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania), 3/11 (Madrid), and 7/7 (London). But I agree that the lack of sympathy for Muslims in Europe has a long vintage; it is not just recent. It is partly rooted in the legacies of Ottoman imperialism in Europe (about which Balkan peoples rarely have nostalgia), but among intellectuals and others it is partly explained by a reasonable appreciation of what orthodox Sunni or Shi'a Islam teaches.

Europe's choice, as Hansen argues, is not between "the right to ridicule Muslims", or "the integration of Muslims". The European Convention permits the right to ridicule religious beliefs. It is the right of the European Union's member-states to set the terms of integration of their immigrant and their national minorities in accordance with liberal human rights and various levels of recognition of group autonomy (in which there will be significant variation in modes of incorporation). I, for one, welcome the prospect of Turkey's entry into the EU, but if and only if Turkey conforms to the criteria for entry into the liberal democratic club, which includes proper treatment of Kurds, acknowledgment of the genocide against Armenians, and the removal of their military from political decision-making. No one is doing a worse job for Turkey's entry prospects than hard-

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

line Muslim extremists, and the soft-accommodation of their threats, of which Modood's essay is an illustration. Modood sees progress since the *Satanic Verses* affair. I do not, and that affair is not over. I see collusion between communitarian Anglicans, cowardly politicians in marginal seats, and radical Islamists, which may re-erect taboos on criticisms of religion. Perhaps that's what Modood regards as progress.

Now let me turn to consociations and pluralist federations, mostly in response to Joseph Carens. Liberal multiculturalism should not grant each group (or its representatives) veto rights over criticisms of its core beliefs. If Carens is simply recommending good manners, here's to that. Veto-rights over constitutional change or the passage of legislation, of course, is not the same as veto-rights over public expression. For example, parity of esteem between (Irish) Nationalists and (British) Unionists is usually understood to refer to parity of esteem for their national symbols (flags, dispositions toward monarchism and republicanism, and so on). In no sense, does it require others, including those who are neither unionists nor nationalists, to avoid criticism of these national symbols – and what they express. Nor does it require nationalists and unionists themselves to avoid criticizing the others' symbols, or their own. What parity of esteem mandates is that public institutions treat these symbols equally (but not that everyone respect these symbols, or equally respects them – fine distinctions, but important). In fact, Northern Irish nationalists seek parity of esteem as nationalists, not as Catholic believers. Those Irish nationalists who are Catholics have full freedom for their religion – there is no established religion in Northern Ireland. So they do not seek religious "parity of esteem": equality of school funding is another matter. Some, no doubt, are old-style Vatican supremacists (who like orthodox Muslims believe they are in possession of the one true faith) and therefore they would regard parity for their religion as an insult.

Liberal multiculturalists should not conflate (1) freedom of expression, (2) freedom of association and (3) the right to demonstrate, though these public liberties are linked. Ulster Unionists and the Orange Order have the right to say and publish whatever they like in my view – including hateful, provocative, and false caricatures of Irish nationalists, republicans, the Vatican, priests, and nuns. [And they do]. They have exactly the same normative rights in this respect as the Danish publication in question. On freedom of expression, I do not, unlike some, wish to use the concept of "harm" in "defence of public morals" at least for the protection of adults. I think we have good reasons for sheltering children on grounds of "public morals", but usually, at base, to protect them from exploitation. But freedom of association requires some more regulation than freedom of expression. Without this freedom there can be neither liberalism nor pluralism, political parties, interest groups, civil society, and so on. But we are entitled to ban freedom of assembly for those intent on armed attacks on our freedoms (but we must do so extremely carefully, so that

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

we do not intimidate dissentient opinion). I have explained why I thought it would be a matter for a regulatory, and a police, response had the Danish cartoonists marched into mosques in Denmark to decorate them with their "artwork". The freedom to demonstrate or parade requires more regulation than freedom of expression – precisely because direct physical harm may be occasioned to others, because disorder may occur, and because the exercise of such freedoms requires a decision as to what "spaces" are public and which private (and how we shall govern access to public spaces). But we should operate with the presumption that those who wish to demonstrate in public places should have the right to do so – provided that right does not clash with that of others, and provided they are not intent on physical harm of persons, public sites, or neighbourhoods.

So I defend the right even of the Loyal Orders to have their "parades", though I regard the beliefs expressed by many of the marchers as highly disagreeable, offensive, hateful, and false; they are not mere "folk festivals". I certainly do not favour any general ban on "parades" by the Loyal Orders as an outcome of the principle of parity of esteem. Yes, I decode many (but not all) such marches as deliberately intimidatory, and as expressions of what the late Frank Wright called acts of "communal deterrence". For that reason, among others, such parades require regulation, and policing, and, reasonable negotiations (with elected authorities, special commissions, and residents' associations) to ensure that such parades do not become sources of public disorder. The Loyal Orders have tended to be cavalier and provocative in defining "traditional" marching routes. The original Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association deliberately marched through predominantly Unionist neighbourhoods to reject the idea that public parading was the privilege of one group. This is exactly the application of the principle of parity of groups in the public domain to which I subscribe. Organizations which abuse, especially those which persistently abuse, the freedom to demonstrate, including those which deliberately organize riots, with damage to persons and property, may lose their rights to freedom of assembly, and may be appropriately fined, or have their officers taken before tribunals and courts. What for me is crucial and warrants restraints on public liberties is the idea of physical harm to persons and property. "Moral violations", "offensive behaviour", and "hate speech" for me are better ridiculed than jailed – except where the practitioners commend physical harm and killing (i.e. incitement).

So I have a consistent and long-standing position here. I am very happy for Muslims to have the right to demonstrate peacefully – including with outrageous placards – to express their feelings and views. Where I deeply disagree with their position is straightforward. I want no blasphemy laws. I want free speech protected, especially of religious and non-religious and anti-religious opinion. And that for me is a planet-wide commitment – it is not an opinion I want to modify for Baghdad, Berlin, or Bristol.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

In response to the question as to whether Muslims are entitled to parity of esteem my response is compared with whom? and in what respect? Compared with other religions, Islam, or rather those who have freely submitted to Islam, should have parity of association, assembly, speech, and *conversion* with other religions, even though Islamic states often do not grant these reciprocal rights to other religions. They should have exactly the same rights as others, but no special blasphemy protections. With regard to the status of Muslims *vis a vis* the state in member-states of the EU at least two positions may be consistently taken by liberals. One is to have no established religions. The "Kymlicka-liberal", I presume, may argue that immigrant minorities do not have the same presumptive group rights as national minorities, and consequently he or she may defend the existence of national churches – provided people don't have to belong to them, and provided other religious communities can operate, and that democratic and human rights are maintained. This style of settlement is often reached in the negotiation of constitutions which respect pluralism in religions. As for personal law, this is a very tricky domain and I'll try to be terse. The liberal state has the right to insist on a common civil marriage law but may respect diverse religious ceremonies for marriages – and may respect different practices. Whether Islamic marriage rules, e.g. on divorce and post-divorce property rights, should be permitted by liberal states depends on whether one regards these as within the margin of religious belief or whether they affect the equality of men and women. It is my view that they violate the equality of women. But I would not object to true parity in this domain (men may have up to four wives legally provided women may have up to four husbands). On education: I see no reason why the liberal state should treat Islamic schools differently from schools run by other religions. The liberal state may reasonably require a common curriculum; if it funds schools it should fund all schools equally without paying clergy or mullahs in their religious capacities. I can see why state schools may insist on uniforms – but I see no reason to insist on stripping children of Islamic scarves, crucifixes, or Jewish kippahs. I think, as a matter of fact, Islamic schools would adversely affect the education and career opportunities of Muslim children in Europe, and therefore would not commend them, but I would recognize the right of Muslims to have such schools, provided they teach the public curriculum so as not to reduce the life-chances of their pupils.

One last matter. Explanation and justification are analytically separate enterprises, though often conflated. Carens quotes me, correctly, as saying that, "People voluntarily kill, or die, for collective causes expressed in words that register their group's esteem, dignity and honour. Actions that provoke and rekindle resentment are the catalysts of violence" (O'Leary, 2005). I emphasized in my article on the IRA, from which these sentences are the opening lines, that one cannot explain

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

the IRA's origins, conduct, or the termination of its campaign, solely by reference to materialist or "realist" explanations. The "words" that I had particularly in mind were those in the Treaty of 1921, Ireland's constitution and the IRA's own constitution. Two things do not follow from my argument in that paper, namely (1) that we should always avoid hurting, or avoid allowing others to hurt, a group's esteem, dignity, or honour or (2) that explaining a group's commitment to political violence necessarily means that violence is justified. What I showed, I hope, in my article on the IRA, was that its evolution could not be understood without appreciating its own constitutional beliefs, and that its successive de-mobilizations (in sovereign Ireland and Northern Ireland) could not be understood without reference to constitutional engagements, by the Irish and UK governments, with those beliefs.

So am I consistent (empirically and normatively) with respect to Muslim reactions to (alleged) Danish cartoons? One of the mechanisms I specified in my IRA article – offence to group honour and esteem leading to violence – has definitely operated. There have been deaths and demonstrations in abundance from Northern Nigeria to Kabul. But that mechanism was manipulated by hard-liners, as I have claimed (without effective rebuttal), which is why I appropriately used "alleged offence". And, in this case, as was often true of the IRA, there has been gross disproportion between the [alleged] offence and the reaction (I earlier showed in these electronic discussions that even taking offence relied on accepting one narrow construal of Islam – one which presumes that the prohibition of representation of Muhammad is universal among Muslims when in fact Sufis in Iran historically drew such cartoons). Without the action of the Danish Islamist entrepreneurs and the actions of Arab governments – matters would not have gotten out of control, and I am surprised some here seem to avoid this conclusion. Had they not intervened – deliberately – there would have been no widespread "knowledge" of the cartoons and therefore no offence. It is also clear, as is often true of symbolic politics, that the alleged offence became a unifying issue to rally a whole gamut of Muslim grievances in the EU and against the foreign policy of the Western democracies.

But it is often a mistake to appease authoritarians, especially when there is no necessity to do so. Many (legitimate and genuine) grievances require appropriate responses, and they should be redressed, but not by weakening liberal institutions. For the record, I do not commend offending just Muslims as the liberal perspective on religion; but I do think, as Islamists recognize, that liberal principles taken seriously are an affront to all seriously held historic versions of monotheism. Liberalism rejects "faith"; it makes a virtue of scepticism. Liberalism arose in part from the clash of rival Christian monotheisms. So, what I defend is the right to criticize (and mock by word and movie) all religions, especially those which are religiously supremacist. Liberals should engage Muslims' beliefs, including their beliefs on the appropriate responses to blasphemy, rather than accepting them as

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

given data which must alter law and public practice. I assume no certainty of knowledge about the insides of others' minds, but retain the right to question whether people truly are offended – especially when I know they have been manipulated.

REFERENCES

Gellner, E.
1974 *Legitimation of Belief*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
1981 *Muslim Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
O'Leary, B.
2005 "Mission accomplished? Looking back at the IRA", *Field Day Review*: 216-246.
O'Leary, B., et al. (Eds)
2005 *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Free Speech and Democratic Norms in the Danish Cartoons Controversy[1]

Joseph H. Carens

In my contribution to this exchange, I want to make two main points. First, a deep commitment to free speech is no barrier in principle to criticism of *Jyllands-Posten* for publishing the cartoons. Second, people who are committed to liberal democracy in Europe should criticize *Jyllands-Posten* for publishing the cartoons, even if they do not share any Muslim religious beliefs.

I want to start with a critical comment about the style of these exchanges. Both Randall Hansen and Brendan O'Leary adopt a polemical tone that is (perhaps) entertaining to read but that obscures more than it clarifies. Hansen, for example, hurls an accusation of hypocrisy against "liberal intellectuals, too many to name" who criticized the publication of the cartoons by *Jyllands-Posten*. This is a serious charge. It is one thing to say that someone with whom one disagrees is inconsistent or wrong. That is a normal part of intellectual debate. But to say someone is a hypocrite is to accuse an interlocutor of bad faith. It is like saying that someone has cheated (rather than simply made a mistake). Hansen's broad and unqualified indictment implicitly impugns the integrity of a significant

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

number of reputable scholars without warrant, even though I am certain that is not his intention. O'Leary is, if anything, more sweeping in his claims about the failures of "many liberals in Canada, the coastal United States and the United Kingdom." Little is gained by casting aspersions upon those with whom one disagrees. It is possible to disagree sharply with others without calling into question their character and motivation. Indeed, that is precisely the sort of wider democratic dialogue that we should try to promote in dealing with the many hotly contested issues around immigration and multiculturalism. We are more likely to do so if we model it in our own scholarly discussions.

Free speech: rights and responsibilities

Let's start by distinguishing between what is (and ought to be) legally permissible and what is morally right to do, or, to put it another way, between having a right and exercising that right responsibly. Someone can have a moral and legal right to do something and still deserve criticism for the use she makes of her right. Some things, including expressions of opinion, may be legally permissible but may still deserve moral criticism. So, one can endorse a very robust conception of free speech without endorsing everything that is said. Freedom of speech does not entail immunity from criticism, including criticism of the decision to say what one has said. To say that certain cartoons are offensive and that a newspaper should not have published them is not, in itself, a violation of democratic norms of free speech. All this would seem so obvious as not to need elaboration were it not for the fact that Hansen and O'Leary both seem to think that no one who is really committed to free speech can criticize *Jyllands-Posten's* decision to publish the cartoons.

Let's unpack this puzzle a bit. Like Hansen and O'Leary, I think that the newspaper had a right to publish the cartoons in the sense that no liberal democratic state could prohibit their publication without violating fundamental norms about free speech. Here I depart a bit from Bleich and perhaps, though I think not, from Modood. The cartoons were offensive to most Muslims but, in my view, they do not rise to the level of hate speech, which is the sort of thing that is restricted by law in some liberal democratic states. Similarly, but importantly, I will assume that everyone accepts the principle that the cartoonists and the publishers should not have been subjected to death threats. No one should be threatened with violence for what they write or publish, no matter how offensive. No one should feel unable to express views out of fear of physical retribution. I take these claims to be uncontroversial, at least with the readership of this journal.[2]

The mere fact that it is legally permissible to publish something does not mean that it should be published, however, or that a given newspaper is obliged to publish it. Major newspapers have greater responsibilities than individual

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

authors to exercise judgment in what they publish and to think about its public impact. As many commentators have noted, *Jyllands-Posten* chose not to publish some anti-Christian cartoons a few years previously, and at least partly justified its reactions on the grounds that it did not want to offend its readers. It is legally permissible in many places to publish racist and anti-Semitic cartoons, but no major newspaper – or perhaps I should say no reputable newspaper – in Europe or North America would do so, even though such cartoons are available on the web and appear in print in small circulation journals, and would undoubtedly turn up in the archives of many major newspapers from the first half of the twentieth century, if we looked for them.

I am not claiming here that the Danish cartoons were racist. I will leave the discussion of racism to Tariq Modood and Erik Bleich (though I agree with their general line of argument). I am simply trying to establish the point of principle. If Hansen and O'Leary really think that it is wrong to object to the publication of anything that is legally permissible, they have no grounds to say that racist cartoons ought not to be published, when there are no legal obstacles. Is that really their view? If so, they should acknowledge it explicitly, rather than ducking behind the debate over whether the Danish cartoons were racist. And they should acknowledge that their position is an extreme one, not shared by most liberals or by most liberal newspapers which generally acknowledge some responsibility to exercise discretion (in various forms) in what they publish. Even those newspapers that published the Danish cartoons do not take such an extreme position. If this extreme position is not their view, i.e. if they think that newspapers in a democratic state should not publish racist cartoons even when they are legally free to do so, then we are back to the substantive argument about whether the Danish cartoons were so objectionable that they should not have been published or not objectionable at all but just fair comment. I will turn to that issue in a moment.

Let me first consider an alternative reading of the position of Hansen and O'Leary. Perhaps what really motivates their position is the fact that the publication of the cartoons was greeted with violent protests and threats of violence against the cartoonists and the editors of *Jyllands-Posten*. Perhaps their view is that any criticism of *Jyllands-Posten* is an implicit endorsement of the violence and the threats of violence. Hansen and O'Leary do not make this argument explicit, but there are passages that suggest that this is what drives their stand. This seems a more plausible position at first glance because the right to freedom of speech clearly requires protection against threats of violence, but it, too, fails. We do not forfeit our own right to evaluate and criticize someone's position simply because they have been threatened by violence by others. We should criticize the threats of violence, to be sure, but we can still object to the opinions of those being threatened. When people have been threatened for expressing their views, those

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

who want to criticize them may have a special obligation to dissociate themselves from the violent threats so that their own criticism cannot be construed as an implicit endorsement of the violence. But this is a long way from saying that one should not criticize, and a long way from the position of Hansen and O'Leary.

Democratic norms: respect and offence

Do those who published the cartoons deserve criticism? Hansen and O'Leary argue that they do not, on the grounds that, in a democratic society, no subject is taboo and one must be able to criticize, even mock, all sacred cows (including, as the phrase "sacred cows" suggests, religion).[3] Even if one accepts this general principle, however, it does not follow that anyone may publish anything in any context without violating democratic norms.

Step back for a moment and consider again the origins of the controversy. An author was writing a children's book about the life of Muhammad. That sounds admirable. It evokes an image of some multiculturally oriented Danish author who wants to provide Danish children from the non-Muslim majority with some information about the leading historical figure in the religion practised by some of their fellow Danes. Rhetorically this reference to the origins of the conflict has made it appear as though an innocent exercise in intercultural communication was disrupted by the irrational reactions of an illiberal minority. But wait a minute. If the author knew anything about Islam, he must have known that many Muslims object to representations of Muhammad. And if he did not know this at the outset, he ought to have figured it out when the illustrators kept turning him down. So, why would someone deliberately present information to children about another religion in a way that the author knows will be offensive to many followers of the religion? Suddenly the author's agenda does not appear so benign, and the refusal of the illustrators (if they acted out of principle and not fear) an admirable exercise of multicultural respect rather than a suppression of free expression.[4]

What about *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish newspaper that solicited and published the cartoons of Muhammad, ostensibly because it was outraged about the restrictions on free speech revealed by the inability of the children's book author to find an illustrator? Here again, context matters in interpreting what is at stake and evaluating actions. As I have already established, newspapers always have to make choices about what to publish, and no reputable major newspaper in Europe or North America will publish overtly racist or anti-Semitic cartoons, even though they are often legally free to do so. Why not? What keeps them from doing so and are they acting appropriately? One of the reasons, I assume, is that they think such cartoons do not treat Jews and racial minorities with the respect that is due

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

them as members of a democratic society. And this does seem to me an appropriate exercise of self-restraint.

Are the Danish cartoons also objectionable? Do they fail to treat Muslims with the respect due them as members of a democratic society? I think the answer to that question is *Yes*. Again, I will leave to Modood and Bleich the debate over whether some of the cartoons deserve to be labelled racist. Clearly some are more offensive than others, but unlike Bleich, I want to argue that even the ones that only depict Muhammad and don't portray him as a terrorist are objectionable. Why? Because they offend widespread Muslim sensibilities, and the publishers knew or should have known that they would. To offend others violates a norm of civility and respect in engaging with other members of society. This requires justification beyond the claim that one is legally entitled to act in this way. Sometimes giving offence is justifiable, even unavoidable. But that is not the case here.

If Muslims had a norm against publishing pictures of any contemporary Muslim figure, the conflict with the obligations of newspapers to report the news would be clear and direct. They would be justified in publishing such pictures despite the offence. But Muhammad is not news. The only reason to publish pictures of Muhammad was because Muslims do not like pictures of Muhammad to be published. That is not a good enough reason. In fact, it is not a good reason at all.

In Denmark the Muslim minority has been marginalized socially, economically, and politically and has been portrayed as a threat to the Danish nation. The publication of the cartoons by *Jyllands-Posten* grows out of and contributes to this marginalization. So, one can reasonably say that Denmark has not met the morally legitimate expectations of Danish Muslims about how they should be treated in a democratic society, and *Jyllands-Posten* deserves criticism for its part in this failure, including its decision to publish the cartoons.

One objection to my argument so far is that I am taking at face value the claim that Muslims were offended when, as both Hansen and O'Leary were at pains to show, certain Muslim leaders inside and outside Denmark publicized this event for their own political purposes, at times misrepresenting what was actually published. But Hansen and O'Leary fail to explain why these parts of the story are relevant to the question of whether *Jyllands-Posten* was right to publish the cartoons in the first place and whether the cartoons were offensive to Muslims. Is the implicit message that what *Jyllands-Posten* did was acceptable because it did not really offend anyone, that all those who claimed to be offended were disingenuous or duped? That is an implausible view.

Of course, the Muslim leaders who lied and manipulated deserve criticism for their actions, but that does not affect the question of whether *Jyllands-Posten* acted

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

badly and whether ordinary Muslims are right to feel aggrieved. The former Soviet Union published a lot of propaganda about the treatment of African Americans in the United States, some of it true, some of it false, all of it deployed as a political tactic to discredit an external political rival and to distract the domestic audience from problems at home. The distortions and political uses of Soviet propaganda did not mean that African Americans had no legitimate grievances.

Commentators, including O'Leary, have pointed to the fact that there have been times and places when Muslims themselves have portrayed Muhammad. They rightly observe that Islam has no single central religious authority, has many different strands and traditions, has evolved over time, and will continue to do. It is a mistake, they insist, to treat a few political activists as though they speak for all Muslims and the entire tradition.

All of this is perfectly sound, but, as with the stories about the Danish imams, the implications are not self-evident. The fact that some Muslims in the past have thought it appropriate to represent the Prophet Muhammad in pictures does nothing to contradict the claim that some (many? most?) Muslims today think it is inappropriate to do so.

There is a partial parallel here with the hijab debate. We know that the requirements of hijab are interpreted differently by different Muslim traditions and that these partly reflect different national and ethnic traditions. But the fact that some Muslims feel that they have no religious obligation to cover their heads does not prove that other Muslims are insincere in saying that they do believe that they have such an obligation or that their belief is not worthy of accommodation and respect. And the fact that some of those who share this belief may be violent and hostile to democracy does not prove that all (or most) of those who share this belief feel the same.

Critics like O'Leary suggest that those liberals who are concerned about the offence given to religious sensibilities by these cartoons are unwittingly playing into the hands of the extremists, but I would propose that it is actually their position that does this by associating all those who are offended by the cartoons with a narrow spectrum of Islamic opinion. Everything I have read suggests that most Muslims – not just "Islamists" – were offended by the cartoons. The notion that the offence Muslims throughout the world have said they feel at the derogatory portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad is entirely a product of political manipulation is preposterous. It is possible that most Muslims would not have learned about the cartoons in the absence of the political use of them, but that is quite another matter from saying that the offence they felt once they did learn about them was not real. There are many, many Muslims who live in Western democratic states and accept familiar democratic constraints upon politics (e.g.,

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

rule of law, freedom of speech and religion, no use of threats of violence against those with whom one disagrees, etc.) who were deeply offended by the cartoons. That is the reality that Hansen and O'Leary are obscuring with their emphasis on Danish imams and Syrian politicians.

In a second, somewhat different objection, Hansen and O'Leary accept the claim (at least for purposes of argument) that Muslims may believe that it is wrong to portray Muhammad, especially in a derogatory way, but insist that this is irrelevant to those who are not Muslims. Religious dictates, they say, apply only to believers. To exercise restraint in portraying Muhammad would be to allow the Muslim minority to dictate to the majority.

This line of argument misses the point that treating people with respect, when it does not cost you anything to do so, is not the same as internalizing their religious norms. Suppose you were inviting guests to dinner who were Jewish or Muslim. Would you serve pork just because you had a taste for it? Now think about the food served in a public school's cafeteria. Would it be appropriate to serve pork as the only main course to a student body known to include Muslims and Jews? I treat these both as rhetorical questions, while recognizing that the second may cause a moment's more pause than the first. But what both these cases illustrate is that it is appropriate to take others' religious and cultural concerns into account and to accommodate them when one can do so at very little cost to anyone else. To refuse to do this, to insist on serving pork in either of the contexts that I mentioned above would be profoundly disrespectful. In the first case, it would be a violation of personal friendship, in the second a violation of civic friendship, since public schools are one of the most important places where people learn what it means to live in a democracy – not from what they read but from how they and others are treated.

It matters, of course, what the nature of the belief is and what you give up, if anything, in respecting it. O'Leary seems to believe that if you show respect for any religious belief that you do not share by refraining from saying or doing something you might otherwise say or do, you are compromising a fundamental freedom and taking the position that every religious belief must be respected, no matter what its content. This is an absurd position, and not one that I or anyone I know holds.

As we all know, deep conflicts can and do arise between what one group's religious beliefs dictate and what others believe to be right or desirable. But there is no need to manufacture conflicts unnecessarily, and indeed a responsibility not to do so. This was precisely the failure of *Jyllands-Posten*. Of course, there is no religious (or legal) obligation for non-Muslims not to publish portrayals of Muhammad, but there is a civic obligation not to do so, when this serves no important purpose

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

and causes offence. Moreover, this civic obligation is much greater for public officials and for major actors in civil society, like a leading newspaper, than it is for ordinary individuals. Even for individuals, gratuitous offence is not justifiable simply because it is legally permissible. This is perfectly compatible with the view that in a liberal society religion is open to criticism and even mockery. Ridicule can be an important form of social criticism. But again the normative (not legal) standards for mockery that are appropriate for a major newspaper are different from the ones that are appropriate for a novelist or a filmmaker or a stand-up comedian.

O'Leary's version of liberalism (more than Hansen's) contains a hostility to religion that is unwarranted and unwise. It is unwarranted because a proper understanding of liberal principles will leave much more space for religious and other views than he does. It is unwise because this approach encourages politically moderate but deeply religious people to accept the radicals' claim that there is a fundamental incompatibility between their religious beliefs and the normative requirements of a democratic society.

A final objection to my approach is that I place too much emphasis on the particular situation of Danish Muslims as a marginalized minority. Elsewhere Hansen has asked why it matters whether those offended are rich or poor, powerful or weak, integrated or socially excluded. There are a number of ways in which context matters morally to this sort of question.

First, recall that Mill, that classic defender of free speech, was particularly worried about the repressive effects of majority views and attitudes on minorities because of the enormous social power – not just political power – that the majority inevitably wields in a democratic society. In democracies, minorities need more protection from majorities than majorities need from minorities. Some commenting on Muslims in Europe and North America seem to forget this elementary feature of the logic of democracy. It matters that Muslims are a minority.

History matters as well. Again, take an extreme case. There was very good reason for Germans to have especially strict laws restricting the expression of Nazi or anti-Semitic views in the second half of the twentieth century. But leave aside the question of what was legally permitted. If a major German newspaper had published an anti-Semitic cartoon in the 1950s, would this have warranted (or received) only the same level of public criticism that it would have received anywhere else in Europe or North America at the time?

Similarly, the specific circumstances of Danish Muslims do and should matter to our reactions. It matters greatly whether one sees the publication of the cartoons as an isolated event or as part of an overall pattern of negative and hostile public communications about Islam by major players in civil society and in the state

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

within Denmark. In the former case, ignoring it may well be an appropriate strategy. In the latter case, ignoring it entails sticking one's head in the sand.

Finally, I think that there is a wider context that matters as well. Equal legal rights for Muslims and for Islam are not enough to bring justice and contain conflict in Europe and North America. They are necessary, to be sure, and not yet achieved in some important areas, but they are not sufficient. In my view, there is a deep and unjustified hostility to Islam within Western states – not just to Islamists and their actions and versions of Islam. I think that this hostility is manifested in a wide variety of attitudes, dispositions, and actions, as reflected in part by the reactions to the Danish cartoons controversy. (I also think that anti-Semitism is a growing problem, especially in Europe.) It seems to me that one's views on the Danish cartoons case and on what policies and practices are appropriate in Western states are likely to depend, at least in part, on whether one thinks that Islamophobia is a serious problem in these states or not.

I do not want to be misunderstood here. I am not suggesting that everyone who disagrees with me on the Danish cartoons issue is Islamophobic. This sort of polarizing "you are with us or against us" attitude is the death of open discussion. It is perfectly possible to think that Islamophobia is a serious problem and still think, on a certain view of free speech, that it was appropriate for *Jyllands-Posten* to have published the cartoons or that the cartoons themselves did not contribute to or reflect this Islamophobic pattern. Nor am I saying that everyone who denies that Islamophobia is a serious problem is, *ipso facto*, Islamophobic. There is a respectable body of scholarship that argues that the basic problems facing African Americans are best analysed through the categories of class rather than race. Taking that approach does not make one a racist. So, too, there is a respectable body of scholarship that argues that the problems facing Muslims in Europe are best analysed though the categories of class and have little to do with Muslims as a social category or with Islam as a marker of social identity. Taking that approach does not make one Islamophobic. Nevertheless, if one thinks, as I do, that Islamophobia is a serious problem in Europe today and that many Muslims are disadvantaged in part because they are Muslims, then one cannot ignore the ways in which civil society contributes to this problem, including by means of the legitimation of anti-Muslim views in major newspapers. The formation of public opinion is not beyond critical scrutiny. And that is why context matters so much in this case.

NOTES

1. A few of the paragraphs in this essay appeared previously in the 2006 Yearbook of the Philosophers of Education Society under the title "Fear vs Fairness: Migration, Citizenship, and the Transformation of Political Community".

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

2. By the same token, those who engaged in non-violent protests against the publication of the cartoons were exercising their legal rights of free speech as permitted by liberal democratic laws, as Bleich rightly notes. To go slightly beyond Bleich, one can say that placards advocating "death to the cartoonists" would be a violation of democratic norms, even if they were legally permissible because they did not in themselves constitute the sort of threat that could be punished by law. Indeed, in my view, the people who advocated or endorsed violence against the cartoonists deserve criticism, regardless of where they live or whether they accept democratic principles. In addition, however, any resident or citizen of a democratic state expressing such a view can be criticized for violating legitimate normative expectations that members of a democratic community are entitled to have of one another. I have heard different reports about what the placards in the actual demonstrations said, so I do not know to what extent this sort of advocacy of violence actually occurred in Europe or North America. It seems clear, however, that it was generally not the typical public reaction of Muslims in Western states, a point emphasized by Modood.
3. Note how the rhetorical effectiveness of the phrase "sacred cows" depends upon the assumption that the reader will see the absurdity of this belief – a sacred cow is something that does not deserve the respect it is given – and so implicitly draws upon the cultural legacy of British colonialism and missionary Christianity. One can mock Christian beliefs, of course. (See Monty Python.) But is there a comparable phrase in English that simply presupposes their absurdity?
4. There are conflicting accounts about whether the illustrators refused the request out of respect for Muslim sensibilities or because they were afraid of violent reactions. So, let me repeat that no one should be impeded from publishing anything out of fear of being subject to violence, and it is of vital importance for a liberal democratic state to create a climate in which people do not restrain themselves out of that sort of fear. But if the illustrators refused the job simply because they knew such pictures would be offensive to Muslims, that seems to me a perfectly reasonable reaction.

Free Speech, Liberalism, and Integration: A Reply to Bleich and Carens

Randall Hansen

Professors Bleich and Carens have provided detailed, considered responses to my "The Danish cartoon controversy: a defence of liberal freedom". Their comments have made it clear to me that I need to clarify some of the views I

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

presented, and their searching questions gave me cause to consider the implications of the views I presented. Nothing in them has, however, led me to revise those views.

I should begin with Carens' comments on the "polemical" tone I adopted. I admit that my choice of the term "hypocrite" was deliberately provocative, but I defend the logic behind it. My point was that many liberal intellectuals – I will let Carens decide for himself if he is in this category – have operated with a double standard. They have refused to countenance Christian demands for a public recognition of religious demands (prayer in schools, the teaching of creationism, the banning of offensive films), but have been wholly accommodating of Muslim demands (for special dress, the campaign for the [limited] introduction of Shari'a law in Ontario, and respecting Muslim prohibitions on portraying the Prophet). I used the term "hypocrisy" because Muslim critiques and anti-racist activists frequently accuse "the West" of hypocrisy in its dealings with Islam and/or Muslims. I would happily substitute the (perhaps more accurate) term "inconsistent" for "hypocritical". The important point, which should not be lost in this semantic debate, is that the position taken by Carens on the Danish cartoon controversy implies other commitments that he may be hesitant to make. If we should attack *Jyllands-Posten* for publishing the cartoons, if we believe that they should not have published them, then we should attack Martin Scorsese for making the *Last Temptation of Christ*. We should similarly side with offended German Christians who opposed an August 2006 Madonna concert in which she sang during a mock crucifixion of herself. Catholic Bishops tried, unsuccessfully, to have her charged with blasphemy. All three productions deeply offended the firmly held beliefs of religious groups, and those producing them knew or should have known.

There might, however, be good reasons for distinguishing Muslims and Christians. Carens suggests several reasons why we might want to adopt a different attitude toward Muslims than we do Christians: they are a minority, they are poor, and they suffer discrimination. The contrast between the two groups is, however, less clear when we consider Christian fundamentalists, who are in any event the ones who take these demands most seriously. If all religious groups were like contemporary high-church English Anglicans, then there would be precious little religious conflict. Christian fundamentalists are a minority, many of them are poor (the "white trash" who are the butt of so many high-minded jokes told by the liberal intelligentsia), and they feel every bit as aggrieved as Muslims.

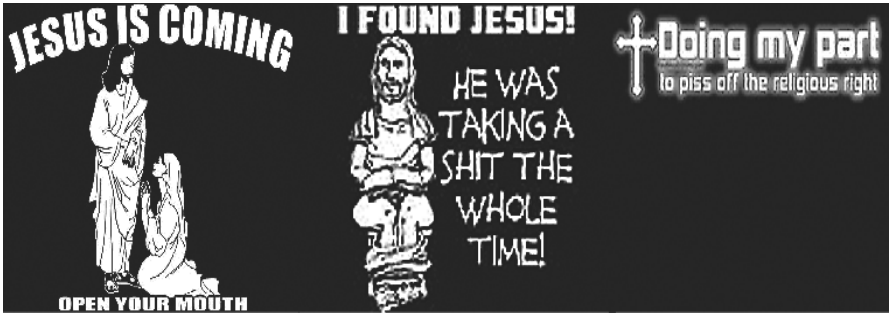
Even if we were to accept that Muslims suffered poverty and social exclusion in a way that Jews do not, treating this context as salient leads to perverse outcomes. Given Hindus and Jews' relatively higher incomes and greater political integration,

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

it becomes acceptable to mock Jews and Hindus' beliefs, but unacceptable to mock those of Muslims. Would Carens be content with this result?

In explaining the Muslim anger, Tariq Modood argued that, "from the Muslim side, underlying causes of their current anger are a deep sense that they are not respected, that they and their most cherished feelings are 'fair game'. Inferior protective legislation, socio-economic marginality, cultural disdain, draconian security surveillance, the occupation of Palestine, the international "war on terror" all converge on this point". Thinking of Christian fundamentalists, we could replace "Muslim" with "Christian" and keep every word in the first sentence. We could then rewrite the second sentence to read "the failure to legislate to protect Christian beliefs and symbols, the removal of crosses from streets and squares, cultural disdain from the claret-sipping East coast elite, pandering to deviant lifestyles, and the UN's effort to promote immoral sex, through condom distribution, rather than abstinence all converge on this point". This is not terribly far-fetched; though they have done well out of the current US presidency, there has been for decades a deep sense of resentment and marginalization on the part of Christian fundamentalists. Having seen Christian fundamentalism from the inside (as a devoted Pentecostal from the impressionable ages of 14 to 16), having sat through their denunciations of gays, abortion, and premarital sex, I have not the slightest sympathy for them. But I feel a liberal obligation to treat all religious groups equally, however reactionary, irrational, and absurd their ideas might seem to me. If Carens wishes that we take Muslim grievances seriously, how can he not but do the same for Christians?

The answer would have to be that Muslim concerns are on a surer foundation, or that the context in which Muslims find themselves requires us to adopt a different approach. In the former, it might be the case that, assuming that *Jyllands-Posten* was really only trying to offend Muslims, that Islam is subject to greater disrespect than Judaism or Christianity. I am not sure that it is. Through a quick web search, I found the following t-shirts, which can be purchased online (http://www.foulmouthshirts.com/religiousshirts.htm):



© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

These t-shirts are presumably deeply offensive to Christians, and the last makes clear the artist(s)'s intention in making them. Why is the liberal academy not up in arms about them? More importantly, does the offence they cause to a minority – Christian fundamentalists – justify a working-through of basic liberal norms on sexuality, freedom of speech, and school education? Should we enter into a conversation with Christian fundamentalists to rework the boundaries of liberalism (recognizing the possibility that creationism might supplant evolutionary theory, and the rights of gays might be repealed)? By Bleich's logic, it does and we should, unless – in a reversal of the old adage about doing as the Romans do in Rome – only immigrants and not long-standing citizens are able to renegotiate liberal democratic terms.

This takes me on to context. Carens is wrong that I do not take context seriously; it all depends on which context, and the implications of one's actions and decisions. Quoting Carens:

> History matters as well. Again, take an extreme case. There was very good reason for Germans to have especially strict laws restricting the expression of Nazi or anti-Semitic views in the second half of the twentieth century. But leave aside the question of what was legally permitted. If a major German newspaper had published an anti-Semitic cartoon in the 1950s, would this have warranted (or received) only the same level of public criticism that it would have received anywhere else in Europe or North America at the time?
>
> Similarly, the specific circumstances of Danish Muslims do and should matter to our reactions. It matters greatly whether one sees the publication of the cartoons as an isolated event or as part of an overall pattern of negative and hostile public communications about Islam by major players in civil society and in the state within Denmark. In the former, ignoring it may well be an appropriate strategy. In the latter case, ignoring it entails sticking one's head in the sand.

Carens is right that it is an extreme example. Extreme, and non-analogous. Laws on anti-Semitism and holocaust denial in Europe are a response to the systematic slaughter of six million innocent people, to women and children being dragged helpless from their apartments, packed on to trains and shipped east without food or water, lined up naked, with women clutching their babies and men holding their little boys' hands before they were shot and dumped in open graves. Jews were subject to medical experimentation without anaesthetic, Nazi doctors cut off the genitalia of Jewish boys, sewed the spines of twins together, and placed Jews in pressure chambers, watching them explode or be crushed. In the end, they were gassed in the millions. As much as some left-wing intellectuals would like to suggest that there is something comparable in the treatment

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

of Muslims in Europe today [I refer readers to a risible article called "The Next Holocaust," published in the *New Statesman* on 5 December 2005 and based on nothing more scientific than recollections of taxi rides and scummy bars in three European backwaters], the Jews of Europe suffered a level of hatred, discrimination, and suffering that makes anything Muslims in the EU are currently experiencing seem like comic relief. Ask yourself this: would you rather be a Muslim in Germany today, with full welfare rights, free and excellent health care, and rights entrenched in a liberal democratic constitution, or a Jew in that country in the 1930s? The Europe of today is not the Europe of the 1930s, or even the Europe of the 1950s. For these reasons, an anti-Islamic cartoon cannot and will not have the same impact as an anti-Semitic one did before the war.

This point relates to the question of racism. In a curious passage, Carens states:

> If Hansen and O'Leary really think that it is wrong to object to the publication of anything that is legally permissible, then have no grounds to say that racist cartoons ought not to be published, when there are no legal obstacles. Is that really their view? If so, they should acknowledge it explicitly, rather than ducking behind the debate over whether the Danish cartoons were racist.

The debate about the cartoons' racism is not peripheral, it is central. For if the cartoons were racist, then there would be every reason to censure them; if they were racist to the point of inciting violence, there would be reason to censor them. None of the cartoons incited violence against Muslims. They only inspired violence by Muslims. I dealt with the issue of racism and drew on a distinction between hatred of a "race" (which can never be justified) and hatred of a religion (which can be justified). The cartoons argued that Islam is an essentially violent religion. I regard this a false interpretation, but given the events in New York, London, Madrid, and (far less violently) London again following the publication of the cartoons, is it so outlandish that someone would draw this conclusion? Carens is at pains to point out that only a minority of Muslims rioted, killed people, and (in London) threatened terrorism and butchery, but he sidesteps the fact that in the Europe of today Muslims instigate and react with a degree of violence that is unparalleled among Jews, Christians, Hindus, or any other religious groups. No amount of liberal hand-wringing will change the fact that the majority of terrorists are Muslims who commit unspeakable crimes in the name of Islam. Academics have the knowledge and conceptual apparatus that allows them to separate Islam and violence (Bleich, 2006), but can we truly be so surprised, horrified, and indignant when some members of the public fail to? To pick up German analogies again, when the glass and blood from *Kristallnacht* covered the streets of Berlin, serious historians could explain the distinction between Nazi and German, but it was lost on many ordinary Europeans.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

Essentializing Muslims

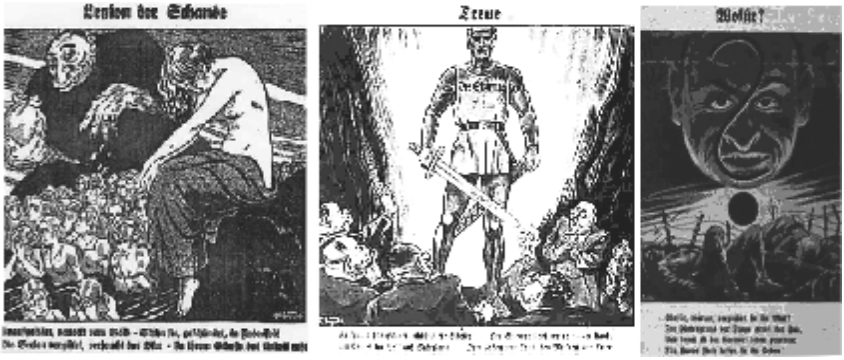
This takes me to the thought-provoking points raised by Bleich about the essentializing of Muslim migrants. He argues that "Muslims are being constructed as the newest ethno-racial outsiders in Europe. This construction is taking place by non-Muslim Europeans (and not by Muslims, as Hansen suggests) and it has all the earmarks of classic racialization: namely the essentializing of an entire group of people based on a primordial identity marker, and the classification of such a group as inherently dangerous and inferior". I do not disagree. Muslims are being so constructed, but by non-Muslim Europeans (racists, for instance), Muslim activists (the head of the Muslim Council of Britain), and Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals. All of these groups are suggesting that European racism, social exclusion, economic failure, and discrimination flow from the status of being Muslim. For the racists, the "Muslims" deserve their fate because Muslims are inferior, lazy, violent and so on; for the academics and Muslim activists, Europeans have oppressed Pakistanis, Turks, Algerians and others because they are "Muslim".

The racist version of this essentializing project is obviously untenable, but so is its well-meaning liberal opposite. Religion is an acquired, not a "primordial" characteristic. It is not the equivalent of race, sex (leaving surgery aside), or sexuality. It has been barely ten years since scholars used the terms "Muslims" and "immigrants" interchangeably, and economic failure, discrimination and social exclusion has been the fate of these groups for decades. In the early 1990s, when people spoke about Muslims, we thought about Bosnians. The average, street-level racist is more likely than not working class and uneducated, and such individuals could not distinguish a Muslim from a Hindu (evinced in the fact that "Paki" is the most common form of verbal abuse on English streets). The difficulties and the very real hostility these communities face reflect a complex set of factors – their relatively poor skill and educational levels, poor bridging social capital in their neighbourhoods, the transformation of the European economy from industry to service, racism, and classism. To suggest that they in any simple way flow from their status as "Muslims" is reductionist and inaccurate, and academics should be concerned rather than captured by the idea. Islam has been seized on by opportunistic racists looking for another stick with which to beat the "darkies", and "Islamophobia" has been seized upon by PhD students looking for a topic, by academics hoping to publish a journal, and by religious Muslims seeking to advance their religious agenda and to divide ethnic minorities who should be united in a common struggle against racism. It captures only a part, and not the most important part, of the ethnic minority experience in Europe.

Returning to the issue of racism, ten out of 12 cartoons are obviously not racist (Erik Bleich's reading of them was extremely helpful); there is a question mark

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

over two of them: the one showing Muhammad with a sword and the one showing him with a bomb on his head. I regard these as religion-hating rather than race-hating, and do not believe – to quote the oft-repeated mantra – that they are in the tradition of European anti-Semitism, that they are the equivalent of the Nazi magazine, *der Stürmer.* I have randomly selected several caricatures of Jews from the magazine which can be seen below (see http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturmer.htm).



The first cartoon is from 1933 and is titled "Legion of Shame". The caption says: "Ignorant, lured by gold, They stand disgraced in Judah's fold. Souls poisoned, blood infected, Disaster broods in their wombs".

The second cartoon is also from 1933 and is titled "Fidelity (or Faith)". The translation is: "The sword will not be sheathed. The Stürmer stands as ever in battle for the people and the fatherland. It fights the Jews because it loves the people".

The third cartoon is from 1944 and is titled "Why?". The translation is: "Why, for what purpose is the blood flowing?" Behind the scenes, the Jew grins. That makes the answer clear: They bleed for the Jews".

Are people actually suggesting that the Danish cartoons are the equivalent of these hate-mongering publications? Evidently.

While I find the accusation of racism unconvincing, I accept that they could be subject to multiple interpretations. If individuals believe that they were racist (Carens ducks this issue), then they are absolutely right to criticize them. But these are not the grounds on which the cartoons were criticized. Carens himself concedes this – without qualification – when he writes:

> Unlike Bleich, I want to argue that even the [cartoons] that only depict Muhammad and don't portray him as a terrorist are objectionable. Why? Because they offend widespread Muslim sensibilities, and the publishers knew or should

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

> have known they would. To offend others violates a norm of civility and respect in engaging with other members of society. This requires justification beyond the claim that one is legally entitled to act in this way. Sometimes giving offence is justified, even unavoidable. But that is not the case here.

This gives away the game. What Carens is saying is that cartoons should not have published ("the publishers knew or should have known") because they offend Muslim sensibilities. But why do they offend Muslim sensibilities? Because they are racist? Reflect European hostility to Muslims? Are part of a wider campaign in Denmark against Muslims? To answer these questions, I undertook a content analysis of 113 newspapers articles published in seven major newspapers (*The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Observer*, *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Toronto Star*) in the first two weeks after the crisis became news, and coded them on a three-point scale: those that attacked the cartoons because they were offensive to Islam, those that attacked them because they were racist, and those that reported the story without explaining why they were offensive. Sixty-eight (51%) were neutral. Of those that took a position, 58 (43%) argued that the cartoons were offensive to Islam, while seven (5%) said they were both offensive to Islam and racist. All articles quoted Muslim spokespeople, and not a single person stated that racism was the only or main ground for protest.

The basis of both the wave of protest, and of Carens and (to a lesser degree perhaps) Bleich's argument, is that publication of the cartoons violated a widely accepted prohibition on publishing representations of Muhammad. The publishers of the cartoons, and the rest of us, are expected to internalize and respect Muslim norms. This is absolutely wrong for the reasons I outlined in my original piece. Religion is and must be a just target for satire, mockery, and ridicule. Equally importantly, religious principles apply only to members of the religion and not to anyone else.

Carens rejects these arguments by analogy: if you invite a [kosher] Jewish friend over, you do not serve him pork. The analogy does not work: if you invite a Muslim friend over, it is equally inadvisable to hang a portrait of Muhammad on the wall or (if your guest is female and wears the hijab) to launch into a lecture on the headdress' sexism. Our private lives are, however, fundamentally different from our public lives. The day after my Muslim and Jewish friends visit, I might be tempted to go to an art exhibit based on different representations of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Afterwards, I might pen an article making the case that supposed Jewish dietary requirements have little to do with essential Judaism and are rather a make-work project for cash-starved rabbis. Or I might give a paper arguing that the hijab and the burka are symbols of female repression that have no essential connection to Islam. In Bleich and Carens' world, I

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

could do none of these things. If academics want to respect religious groups' dictates, they are free to. But they should refrain from becoming latter-day prophets using political theory to define the bounds of acceptable religious behaviour for the rest of us. In a liberal society, I can eat pork, shop on Saturday, drink on Sunday, go to a gay sauna, write a play about sex in a Sikh temple, hold an art exhibit on all of the prophets, and do any other number of other things that offend religious opinion. It has been barely 30 years since these were all taken for granted as individual rights, and Bleich and Carens are already prepared to hand some of them back.

Integration and Islam

In the thought-provoking piece that initiated this discussion, Modood argues against what he calls a "take-it-or-leave-it" approach to integration. Similarly, Bleich argues that my own conception of integration borders on the authoritarian. Both argue in favour of a conception of integration as a flexible process of "give and take" in which the limits of liberalism are worked out over time. I would submit that Bleich, Carens, Modood and I have the same view of integration – it is sometimes "take-it-or-leave-it" and sometimes "give and take". We simply differ on which issues fall under which heading. The examples that Bleich cites – preventing fascists from rallying anti-Semites to beat Jews, bilingual education, reforming German citizenship – all fall easily in the "give and take" camp. Indeed, liberals like Dworkin would argue that these rights are implied by other liberal commitments we hold. But what of other beliefs? Most Muslims apparently regard homosexuality as repugnant and to be outlawed. Are we going to enter into a conversation about that? Some Christians and some Muslim men think their wives should stay at home, walk behind them, and can be beaten. Is such a view part of the negotiation package for migrants integrating into liberal societies? Of course not. In my view, but not in those of Bleich, Modood, or Carens, demanding that others refrain from satirizing religion is in the take-it-or-leave-it camp. To compromise on this is to compromise liberalism itself.

There might be a consequentialist answer to this argument: even if what I say is true in theory, might the implementation of it not inflame Muslim opinion and pander to anti-Muslim bigots. Scholars made a version of this argument in France's 2004 decision to ban the hijab (which was itself interesting, because it resulted from precisely the sort of two-way conversation between Muslims and non-Muslims that Bleich and Modood recommend). Recent evidence published by Pew suggests exactly the opposite. After surveying Muslims and non-Muslims' attitudes to each other, they found those attitudes were best in France, the country with the most robustly integrationist framework in Europe. A majority of French Muslims held positive attitudes toward non-Muslims, and the French were tied with the British for the best attitudes toward Muslims. There were,

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

however, substantial differences between the two countries' Muslim communities: 25 per cent of Muslims in France thought there was a conflict between their religion and living in a modern society (the lowest in Europe), while a *majority* of British Muslims (51%) believed there was such a conflict. At the same time, British Muslims had the most hostile attitudes towards non-Muslims: clear majorities of British Muslims viewed non-Muslim Britons as selfish, arrogant, violent, greedy, and immoral, and a substantial minority viewed them as fanatical (44%). French policy has neither pandered to racism nor alienated Muslims. British policy, which Modood praises as a model for Europe, has resulted in the greatest value divide between Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe.

These comments take me to a broader issue: the future of immigration and religious diversity in Europe. Europe's declining birth rates mean that it will need to accept many more immigrants over the coming decades. At the same time, Muslim birth-rates mean that Europe's Muslim population will grow. Unlike some US authors who predict a sinister "Eurabia" populated by anti-American and anti-liberal Muslims, I welcome both processes. I maintain, however, that this immigration is the cause for strengthening, not questioning, the liberal, individualist framework that is the unique product of the West. In contrast to what Bleich and Carens will have us believe, increasing immigration and diversity make liberalism and secularism more important, not less.

REFERENCE

Bleich, E.
2006 "Religion, violence and the state in Western Europe", paper presented at the Council for European Studies conference, Chicago, 29 March-2 April.

Obstacles to Multicultural Integration

Tariq Modood

I am grateful to Brendan O'Leary and Randall Hansen for their criticisms of my original piece and their provocations, and also to Joseph Carens and Erik Bleich for their comments and contribution to this debate, which originally took the form of two series of email exchanges.[1] I largely agree with much of Bleich's

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

contribution and nearly all of Caren's and will try to not simply repeat points of agreement. Nevertheless, there will inevitably be some repetition as I defend a point or attempt to develop a linked argument. Equally inevitably, given the limitations of space, I have had to omit or shorten some comments, especially on matters not to do with the Cartoons Affair or integration (as not a few of O'Leary's remarks are).

I first came to the issues of freedom of expression and Muslims in the West in considering some of the implications of the *Satanic Verses* affair and I shall draw on what I argued there; and on my view that groups such as British Asians are objects not just of a phenotypical racism but also of a cultural racism in which issues such as religion can play an important role in a process of racialization (the relevant essays have been reproduced as chapters 6 and 1 respectively in Modood, 2005).

In relation to free speech my strategy has been, firstly, to assimilate Muslims into existing legal provisions by extending the widely supported need in contemporary democracies for an offence of incitement to racial hatred to incitement to religious hatred and group defamation. Secondly, to protect the Millian value of unfettered pursuit of truth by defining it more narrowly as free inquiry rather than as free expression. Thirdly, to emphasize the importance of non-legal, non-coercive measures to reduce the dangerous effects of racist and quasi-racist public and media disrespect so as to reduce the need for legal interventions and at the same time promote respect for stigmatized and marginal groups and promote multicultural integration.

My OpenDemocracy piece that initiated the present debate was based on this perspective but as I made no mention of the second point, it is quite understandable that Hansen and O'Leary focus on the first point. I did however emphasize the third point and so it is very disappointing that they ignore that. Liberal objection to legal curtailment of offensive speech and images without suggestions of non-legal remedies is unhelpful.

Hansen and O'Leary broadly share a common strategy, which is as follows (though not each may subscribe to every aspect of every point):

1. *A Muslim Fraud*: the Cartoon Affair was whipped up by Islamist extremists/fundamentalists and so the Muslim case rests on a fraud.
2. *Religion and Race*: there is a fundamental distinction between race and religion; racial hatred and racist expression should be censured and where likely to lead to violence should be a legal offence; the giving of offence to religious people and the expression of religious hatred should neither be censured nor censored regardless of the consequences.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

3. *Hypocrisy*: the "soft accommodation" of Muslim militancy by liberals, intellectuals, politicians, publishers and so on is not only illiberal but is also hypocritical; and Muslims are hypocritical because they accuse others of racism and intolerance but are guilty of the same.
4. *Integration*: the making of exceptions in relation to Muslims as regards freedom of speech works against the integration of Muslims in Europe.

I shall respond to each of these points but my main focus will be on the second.

A Muslim fraud

The heart of the fraud is that: "The lobby group did not simply complain about the 12 cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* when engaging the Arab League. They added three others, grotesque caricatures (showing paedophilia, sodomy, and the Prophet represented as a porker), to bolster their campaign portfolio" (O'Leary, this issue: 25).

This argument is something of a non sequitur for Hansen and O'Leary are not suggesting that if these other cartoons had been "for real" they would take a different position on the Affair. There is certainly no suggestion that they think that the false cartoons, which they believe made some Muslims so angry that there was arson, violence and mayhem, should be banned. Moreover, as Carens has pointed out there is enough evidence that many, probably most Muslims, especially in Europe, were actually angry about the cartoons that were published (not having seen and not even knowing about those others in the campaign portfolio). Again, the fact that it took various organized campaigns by some activists before Muslim publics were made aware of the publications is neither here nor there, for that is generally how matters are publicized and protests mobilized. What is clear is that many Muslims were offended by the real cartoons and their reproduction in numerous Western newspapers.

I did also emphasize in the original piece that the cartoons were a trigger and had to be seen in the context of many events and policies that make Muslims feel that they are not respected but are dealt with by double standards. I could remake the point by updated illustrations. When Muslims were being lectured and hectored on how they are denying freedom of speech and seeking to ban what they do not like to see/hear and so failing to appreciate western culture, the following were prominent in the British media:

1. A British court acquits Nick Griffin, leader of the British National Party (BNP), and one of his followers on the charge of incitement to racial hatred even though he was secretly filmed making a speech to his members in which he calls Muslims in Britain cockroaches.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

2. Abu Hamza, a radical Muslim preacher, is imprisoned for seven years for incitement to racial hatred and for possessing "a terrorist encyclopaedia".
3. David Irving, a historian, is imprisoned for three years in Vienna for denying the holocaust.
4. The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, is suspended from office for four weeks for making an alleged anti-Semitic remark to a journalist in private.[2]

What Muslims rightly notice is that Western society protects certain vulnerabilities and sensibilities but not theirs, and that incitement by Muslims is more likely to be punished than incitement against Muslims. To see this one does not need to postulate a conspiracy theory. The point is that the status quo in countries like those of the EU is not anything like what could be called a level legal-political playing field in relation to Muslims. It can be explained historically, primarily by reference to who made the existing laws and what problems they were meant to address. Most Muslims simply want European society to take some of their concerns and sensibilities into account in the way that those of others have been taken into account and institutionalized and "normalized" so certain things are simply not said in public and the law plays its part in sustaining that.

I accept Bleich's point that I over-generalized: the cartoons are a mixed bag and not all of the 12 cartoons are unfriendly to Islam and Muslims. At least two do not even attempt a depiction of the Prophet; and on the other hand, two link Muhammad with violence and are, as Bleich explains, racist. As Carens points out the portrayal of Muhammad will be taken by most Muslims to be disrespectful – but he (nor I) would ban that, and the generality of Muslims have not sought this. The one that gave the most offence is Muhammad with a bomb in his turban, with a lit fuse, and the shahadah (the Islamic creed) written on the bomb. As Muhammad is meant to represent Muslims as such, the drawing is an incitement to hatred and therefore in the category of the kind of images that ought to be banned, especially in the context of the total exercise. I am particularly mindful of the view, shared by O'Leary, that group-honour often provokes more violence than considerations of material self-interest, or material group-interest (O'Leary, 2005; cf Modood, 2005, chapter 6). Nevertheless, I would not categorically say that even that cartoon should be censored rather than censured. It is enough to make the point that it is in the borderline area of the kind the banning of which needs to be discussed. Placards at angry demonstrations calling for certain people's death ought to be a legal offence though the (possibly unlawful) provocation of the cartoons must be taken into account as a mitigating circumstance.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

Hansen and O'Leary deny that any of the cartoons are racist for they maintain that in general there is no such thing as anti-Muslim racism. It is to this I now turn.

Race and religion

Hansen and O'Leary maintain that my portrayal of the cartoons as racist and generally of my talk of Muslims as suffering racism is inappropriate for in so far as they suffer racism it is not qua Muslims. Yet as Carens notes, they attempt to blame or at least de-justify the cause of Muslims in general by reference to the worst case Muslims. This is to judge Muslims as a group. (As I once heard a British Muslim say: "our extremists are taken to be typical of us, their extremists, like the BNP racists, are always dismissed as just a few hotheads and rotten apples in a barrel".) In O'Leary's case this is not just in relation to the anti-cartoons protests but to Islam, picking on some dark aspects of its history and doctrines and suggesting that they are an impediment to civic respect.[3]

Muslims are, indeed, being generalized about in these and other ways in Europe (and elsewhere) at the moment. They are being perceived not just as neighbours, citizens and so on but as Muslims; and it has to be said that many Muslims – like some blacks, Jews, gays, women, Scots, etc. in parallel situations before them – are vociferously challenging the negative perceptions but not the underlying logic that Muslims are a group. They are responding to the negative perceptions by offering positive images, stories, and generalizations about Muslims; less often by saying Muslims are not a group but a variety of individuals, citizens etc. Hence a process of group-formation is well underway.

Why do I call this process "racialization" and the negative dimension of it, "anti-Muslim racism"? Because the "otherness" or "groupness" that is being appealed to and is being developed is connected to the cultural and racial otherness that is connected to European/white peoples' historical and contemporary perception and treatment of people that they perceive to be non-European or non-white. How Muslims are perceived today is both connected to how they have been perceived and treated by European empires and their racial hierarchies, as well as by Christian Islamophobia and the Crusades in earlier centuries. The images, generalizations, and fears have both a continuity as well as a newness. Moreover, these perceptions and treatments overlap with contemporary European/white peoples' attitudes and behaviour towards blacks, Asians, immigrants, and so on. The perception and treatment clearly has a religious and cultural dimension but equally clearly it has a phenotypical dimension. Presented with a number of images – cartoons – most people asked to pick out a Muslim would not reply but I do not know what any of these people believe, just as if they were asked to identify Jews they would have a go (though probably less today than in

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

the past – because Jews are becoming de-racialized, normalized as "white", in some parts of the West).

It is true that "Muslim" is not a (putative) biological category in the same way as "black" or "south Asian", aka "Paki", or Chinese. But nor was "Jew" once: a long, non-linear history of racialization turned a faith group into a "race". More precisely, the latter did not so much replace the former but superimposed itself. No one denied that Jews were a religious community with a distinctive language(s), culture(s), and religion but they also came to be seen as a race – and with horrific consequences. Similarly, Bosnian Muslims were "ethnically cleansed" by people who were phenotypically, linguistically, and culturally the same as themselves because they came to be identified as an "ethnic" or a "racial" group. The ethnic cleanser, unlike an Inquistor, wasted no time in finding out what people believed, if and how often they went to a mosque and so on: their victims were "ethnically" identified as Muslims. My argument is that this same kind of process – though at least so far at a much lower level of violence – is taking place in Western Europe and, I would hazard, in the United States, given public support for "racial profiling" at airports and by security services, etc.

The results of such racialization or ethnicization are not "pure" racism, i.e. it is not just biological or phenotypical, which it might be said to be in the case of people of African descent. But it is clear here that Muslims are not exceptional, as the above example of the Jews illustrates. Indeed the same is true of the most numerous non-whites in the United Kingdom, namely people of south Asian origin, locally called "Asians" (and less pleasant monikers). I have argued that even before the rise of a distinct anti-Muslim racism there was an anti-Asian racism and that it was distinct from anti-black racism in having distinct stereotypes (if one was unintelligent, aggressive, happy-go-lucky and lazy, the other was "too clever by half", passive, worked too hard, and did not know how to have fun). Moreover, if in the case of black people the stereotypes appealed to some (implicit) biology, to IQ, physical prowess, sense of rhythm, sexual drive and so on, none of the main stereotypes about Asians even implicitly referred to a scientific or folk biology. The stereotypes all referred to Asian cultural norms and community structures – to gender roles and norms, patriarchy, family authority and obligations, arranged marriages, religion, work ethic, and so on. So, anti-Asian racism is best understood as cultural racism. The most violent form of racism that Asians in Britain have experienced is random physical attacks in public places – "Paki-bashing". I have not seen any analysis of this phenomenon that refers to any biological beliefs held by the perpetrators. Interviews with the pool of people from which the perpetrators come – young working-class white males, especially "skinheads" – and others in their neighbourhoods accuse Asians not of a deficient biology but of being aliens, of not belonging in "our country",

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

of "taking over the country" and so on. Actually, they are accused of things that the Nazis accused Jews of (as well as of not having the right biology).

Once we break with the idea that (contemporary) racism is only about biology or that racism is of one classical kind, then the idea of a pure racism should lose its social science appeal. We should be able to see that cultural groups and religious groups can be racialized; that Muslims can be the victims of racism qua Muslims as well as qua Asians or Arabs or Bosnians. Indeed that these different kinds of racisms can interact and have a dynamic and so can mutate and new forms of racism can emerge. This is not to reduce the multiple factors that account for the position of European Muslims to a single set, as Hansen alleges, but to recognize that a form of racism has emerged which connects with but goes beyond a critique of Islam as a religion.

Hansen acknowledges that racists are now explicitly targeting Muslims but apparently this is not anti-Muslim racism for what motivates them is a "base racism" (Hansen, this issue: 13), apparently a general colour-racism, for he writes: "Islam has been seized by opportunistic racists looking for another stick by which to beat the darkies" (Hansen, this issue: 47). Colour-racism is certainly a factor in the equation here but as we have seen that does not mean that it is not a compound racism that may legitimately be called anti-Muslim racism or that Muslims are merely a convenient tool. Racists may simultaneously hate a number of groups but that does not mean that they do not racialize these groups differently or treat them all as a kind of "base" race, say, non-white. Indeed, we potentially have an absurd regress here for some have argued that neo-Nazi groups' principal target continues to be the Jews and they have only latched on to the "darkies" to make political capital. For me a key question that could help analysis here is to ask: could all other/older racisms disappear but anti-Muslim racism persist? For me it is possible to imagine a (not necessarily likely) Britain of the future where the only non-whites that suffer racism are Muslims. Neither logically nor sociologically do the existence of anti-Muslim or anti-Asian or anti-black racism depend upon each other and increasingly there are people who express only one or only two of these racisms (Modood, 2005: 6-18 and chapter 1).

Hansen has a second argument to distinguish between racism and hostility to Muslims, namely that "while there can be no acceptable reason to object to 'blackness' there are many good reasons to object to religion" (Hansen, this issue: 12). While it is not clear how this brief statement is to be interpreted, it is not obviously true. There certainly are forms of "blackness" that there are acceptable reasons to criticize. For example, the form of "blackness" that states that scholastic endeavour and obedience to teachers is a form of "acting white".

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

Many people, including black people, do indeed object to this self-conception of "blackness". This only illustrates that ideas like blackness are not merely biological and that biology does not circumscribe contemporary ideas about "race".

We must not, then, over-religionize Islamophobia and think of it as a form of religious intolerance; it is more like racism than religious intolerance. Nevertheless, I accept that in the general phenomena of hostility to Muslims is hostility to Islam. That is why I originally argued that the lack of sympathy for Muslims among the centre-left intelligentsia was partly caused by a failure to appreciate the racialization of Muslims, but that there was a second factor too. Namely, a lack of sympathy amongst the same people for those who place an importance upon religion. O'Leary denies that this is an additional factor but in my view while the first explains a confusion about racism, the second explains why hostility to or ridiculing religious people is not seen as disrespectful or requiring censure.

Hypocrisy

There are two distinct issues here. Firstly, whether some liberals are hypocritical in not extending the concern they have expressed about the vulnerability of Muslims[4] to other groups such as Christian fundamentalists; secondly, whether some Muslims are not also being hypocritical.

I largely concur with Carens' rebuttal of the first point and will add some points of my own, including that Hansen does not realize that in pointing to a certain disdain for religion amongst liberals, a disdain which he and O'Leary share, he is supporting my point about an anti-religious intellectual bias in our culture. It is quite independent of any form of racism, it predates the post-war immigration from the South, and has no especial connection with perceptions of Muslims. Nevertheless, its existence makes it more difficult for Muslims to be respected in Europe and for their hurt to be taken seriously or sometimes even understood.

As Carens points out, in the contexts we are interested in, Muslims but not Christians have a vulnerability – discursive aggression against Muslims can lead to violent and exclusionary consequences against Muslims in the West. If other groups shared the same vulnerability (e.g. poor Christian fundamentalists) or no longer shared it (Hansen asks about upper-income Hindus), then I would hope this would affect the kind of protection that we would consider. Moreover, my biography has not made me as unsympathetic to Christian fundamentalists as Hansen's has made him. I do not want to encourage closed-mindedness and dogmatism, let alone bigotry and hostility to non-believers or other-believers but I do get annoyed when I see some Christians, especially if they are not wealthy, highly educated, or powerful mocked and made fun of by people who are (or are patronized by people who are) wealthy, highly educated, or powerful.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

We should also recognize one other important difference between offending Christians and offending Muslims such that liberals who are nonchalant about the first but urge restraint in relation to the second are not necessarily being inconsistent. People brought up in Christian homes or at least in Christian societies but who as adults are not Christian believers, nevertheless will think of Christianity as "ours" in the way they will not so think of Islam. Hence, they will feel a freedom to criticize aspects of their own culture in a way they may not think proper in criticizing aspects of the culture of others. This is analogous to the way that we speak to friends and family (being sarcastic, raising our voices, swearing, making personal remarks, etc.) but would not speak in the same way to people with whom we did not have a similar relationship. With outsiders we would indeed "mind our p's and q's" and speak in a more civil tone of voice. The fact that we would respond quite differently to the same remark made by a friend and a non-friend is not a form of hypocrisy.

Both Hansen and O'Leary think there is some hypocrisy on the part of Muslims as well. O'Leary mentions that Arab racism against Kurds and black Muslims in Sudan is worse than the racism Muslims criticize against themselves in Europe; and that Muslims are quick to talk about atrocities against them and slow to criticize Muslim atrocities against Muslims and others. I fear there is a lot of truth in this and I certainly do not want to justify it though I think one of the causes of such double standards is that Muslims are in a position of weakness in relation to the West and so see self-criticism as increasing vulnerability and perpetuating their inferior status. I think, however, O'Leary's examples have little to do with the Cartoon Affair, though Hansen has an example which is perhaps relevant to European integration.

In his first piece Hansen states that the Muslim Council of Britain denounces homosexuality as a sin and "refuses to recognize Holocaust Memorial Day [HMD]" (Hansen, this issue: 13). While it is true that many Muslims, together with many Christians and those of other faiths, regard the practice of homosexuality as a sin, Muslims, like the others, have different views about it socially and in the main British Muslim activists have an attitude of toleration towards homosexuals (Modood and Ahmad, 2007). Hansen's remarks about HMD are completely misleading in so far as they suggest some kind of holocaust denial. Anyone who visits the relevant web pages (http://www.mcb.org.uk/article_detail.php?article= announcement-530) will see that the MCB recognizes the horrendous nature of the Nazi holocaust but has refused, perhaps unwisely, to attend the HMD public ceremonies because it excludes the memorialization of a number of genocides – e.g., those in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia.

In any case the reason for not vilifying Muslims is not because they are better than any other group but because the alternative is a second class, alienated, and

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

resentful population. That would be a failure of integration as well as of democratic principles.

Integration

The final set of issues I want to consider are those to do with what principles are at stake in relation to integration, and how the integration of Muslims is best achieved in Europe. Most specifically, whether integration is advanced or undermined by constraints on the vilification of Muslims?

Hansen argues that those who advocate restrictions on offensive and hateful speech directed at Muslims are thereby arguing that Muslims are so different that they cannot be integrated into Europe without special measures, and thereby undermine the cause of Muslim integration and give indirect support to those who say Muslims are inassimilable (Hansen, this issue: 15).

I do not feel this criticism of self-contradiction can be directed at me for it should be clear from my original argument and my writing in general that I have been arguing that Muslim integration raises particular challenges and presents particular difficulties of which we need to be alert. This is to not exceptionalize Muslims but to recognize that all minorities raise distinctive challenges and problems of adjustment. This is part of the meaning of the "multi" in multiculturalism and it means that there is no single template of integration (Modood, 2007). What suits one minority, or works at one period of time, or in one country, should not be generalized and imposed on other minorities. This is not a naïve principle but a lesson from experience. Bleich brings this out nicely and in particular shows how Hansen's authoritarian demands for conformity to what worked for other groups ignores how past integration has required changes in legislation and behaviour on the part of the majority in order to accommodate minorities. I would add that integration of an unfamiliar and especially a stigmatized group which is fighting to achieve equality does not happen without the kinds of educative conflict such as the Cartoons Affair.

My argument is that we need to extend sympathies and protections to Muslims that we already practice in relation to other minorities. For example, that we should extend the offence of incitement to religious hatred from Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom. As Bleich points out, Danish law – like that of many other countries – already forbids dissemination of threatening, insulting, or degrading material on account of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, or sexual inclination, so extending it to cover religion is not making Muslims a special case but the reverse.

I do, however, agree that integration has to be within a framework of principles and rights which are wider than multiculturalism itself. These include freedom

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

of speech and the rule of law. But these principles, rights, and norms need to be interpreted. The question is who does this? I follow the approach which emphasizes that dialogue is central to an egalitarian approach. For one party in a dispute to exclusively interpret the principles at stake is to treat the other party as second-class citizens. Liberals have to learn as well as lay down what is and is not acceptable. Hansen insists that certain things are surely fundamental and non-negotiable. In our email exchange he suggested that no one would abolish elections simply because a minority had an objection to them. I do not agree that there cannot be multi-vocal dialogue about elections – this is exactly what has been happening in many countries in relation to issues of fair representation and proportional representation, the goal of a legislature "mirroring" an electorate and preferential candidate lists in relation to women and minorities. Sure this is not ending free elections but it is a fair parallel for as far as I know there is no suggestion about ending free speech. What the parallel shows is that free speech no less than free elections are appropriate and necessary subjects for democratic multicultural debate.

As my original essay made clear much can and must be done outside the use of law in relation to the demeaning of minorities. I was arguing that in our societies various kinds of restraints, personal and cultural, operate to inhibit offending fellow citizens who are perceived to be vulnerable; for example, Jews, blacks, and women. These cultural restraints are related to law but go well beyond it and in many ways the function of legal restraints on speech is to encourage a sensibility that cannot be enforced by law. These sensitivities are a result of history and society and so when new vulnerable groups enter society, there has to be some education and refinement of these sensitivities in the light of changing circumstances and the specific vulnerabilities of new entrants. I would like to think that this debate, both for its participants and its readers, can contribute to the kind of understanding that is necessary to achieve principled and viable multicultural integration.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Geoffery Levey, Nasar Meer, and Varun Uberoi for their comments on the second set of exchanges.
2. Later in 2006 he won the appeal against the sentence.
3. Carens has already pointed out that respect for Muslims is about the avoidance of giving offence, not of not criticizing their beliefs, let alone sharing them, or of practicing the same norms as them. Muslims might not create cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad because they think it verges on idolatry; non-Muslims may not think it is idolatrous but may refrain from publishing cartoons of Muhammad out of respect for the beliefs of Muslims.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM

4. I disagree with Hansen's supposition that this is the majority liberal position; it certainly was not the dominant position in the British media.

REFERENCES

Modood, T.
2005 *Multicultural Politics: Muslims, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain*, Minnesota and Edinburgh University Presses.
2007 *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Polity Press, forthcoming.

Modood, T., and F. Ahmad
2007 "British Muslim perspectives on multiculturalism", *Theory, Culture and Society*, Special Issue on Global Islam guest edited by Bryan Turner and Fredric Volpi, 24(1), January, forthcoming.

O'Leary, B.
2005 "Mission accomplished? Looking back at the IRA", *Field Day Review*: 216-246.

© 2006 The Authors
Journal Compilation © 2006 IOM