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Introducing Inroads 19

In HER ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE ON BREASTFEEDING AND HIV IN MALAWI, Betsy Trumpener informs us of the stark choice facing many a Malawian mother. If she is HIV-positive, breastfeeding carries the risk of infecting her baby with the virus. But if she stops breastfeeding, her baby may die of some other disease or starvation. “It’s a choice no mother in Canada has to make,” Trumpener notes.

Indeed, the choices facing Canadian parents seem luxurious by comparison. But that doesn’t prevent us from devoting a good deal of time and emotional energy to those choices. Do I stay home with my child? If I go to work, what kind of child care is best? What school do I send her to? Overlapping these individual choices are others at a societal level. Should a child care program be universal or targeted – or a simple cash payment to parents? How do we keep likely dropouts in school? How do we manage cultural and linguistic diversity in schools where most children have roots in other parts of the world?

Choices of this kind pervade our theme section on youth – most explicitly in the article on child care by John Richards and Matthew Brzozowski, who find that the best option is a program targeted at families

whose children will be at risk of failure in K–12 education. Two other articles report on innovative programs directed at students whom school systems too often fail to reach. Nadia Rousseau, Ghislain Samson and Karen Tetreault look at an alternative program for likely high school dropouts in Quebec that combines education, recycling and on-the-job training. In my own contribution, I report on initiatives at three culturally and linguistically diverse schools in Mississauga, Ontario, aimed at valuing the contributions of immigrant families.

Finally, Don Cayo and Betsy Trumpener report on youth in eastern Africa, where they travelled as part of a group of journalists reporting on development issues. While Trumpener looks at HIV and breastfeeding, Cayo asks what happens when governments make schooling free but don’t have the

resources to deal with the surge in the number of students resulting from this change.

In the Canadian political arena, the major event of the last six months was the victory of Stephen Harper’s Conservatives in the January federal election. Harper’s four-year odyssey from taking over the leadership of a party in disarray to the Prime Minister’s Office needs to be acknowledged as a significant achievement, no matter where one stands on the political spectrum. Tom Flanagan, one of Harper’s key advisers, tells us how he did it and what we can expect now that he is in office. Richard Nimjean approaches this political watershed from another angle, looking back at Jean Chrétien’s identification of the Liberal Party with “Brand Canada” and attributing Paul Martin’s defeat largely to his failure to sustain this successful strategy.

In our last issue, we introduced English-Canadian readers to the debate in Quebec sparked by *For a Clear-Eyed Vision of Quebec*, a manifesto signed by 12 prominent Quebecers, which had just been published at the time. The debate continues, and so does our coverage. Two of the manifesto’s signatories, former PQ cabinet minister Joseph Facal and La Presse editorial page editor André Pratte, comment on the process that led to the manifesto and the responses it has elicited. One of those responses was a countermanifesto, *For a Quebec Based on Solidarity*, excerpts from which are reproduced here. On a related subject, Gérald Leblanc reviews the recently published memoirs of Claude Castonguay, the chief architect of Quebec’s universal health care system in the 1960s and 1970s, who is now asking some of the same questions as the authors of the “Clear-Eyed” manifesto.

Two articles in this issue deal with the environment. Jan Narveson, a longtime skeptic about global warming, is not convinced by

Tim Flannery’s new book calling for action on climate change. Chris Adams wonders why the environment did not become a “top-of-mind” issue in the federal election campaign and finds an explanation in longer-term trends in Canadian public opinion.

Also in this issue:

- In his editorial, John Richards, author of the recent C.D. Howe Institute publication *Creating Choices: Rethinking Aboriginal Policy*, is encouraged by a lengthy letter on Aboriginal policy that Stephen Harper wrote during the election campaign, but remains skeptical as to whether Harper intends to follow through.
- Ariane Blackman laments the CBC’s cancellation of the innovative legal drama series *This is Wonderland*.
- Listserv participants debate the significance of the uproar in the Islamic world set off by the publication in a Danish newspaper of cartoons of the prophet Muhammad.
- In the Summer/Fall 2005 issue, Michael Benazon reviewed a book by Yakov Rabkin tracing the history of Jewish religious opposition to Zionism. Jacob Mendlovic argues that many of the rabbis portrayed favourably in Rabkin’s book were hostile to non-Jews and antipathetic to modern life; Benazon responds.
- Paul Delany reviews two books that seek to provide a window on the world of the homeless; Henry Milner reflects on the uses and abuses of autobiography in light of recent books by Bob Dylan and Philip Roth; and Stephen Muecke reviews Deborah Bird Rose’s account of white-Aboriginal relations in Australia’s “wild country.”

— Bob Chodos

Aboriginal policy: Two priorities

FOR CENTURIES, WHITE SETTLERS ADOPTED a sense of racial superiority to Aboriginals. At some point in the 1970s – after Pierre Trudeau’s 1969 White Paper and before entrenchment of treaty rights in the 1982 constitution – Canadians repented. Since then, majority attitudes have been suffused with “white guilt.” Four decades after Trudeau’s White Paper, a small Aboriginal elite now exists, and much of its discourse is angry. Relations between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals have much in common with black-white relations in the United States. In both cases, the sins of the past haunt the present, and in both cases, the combination of majority guilt and minority anger is not a basis for good policy.

In a lengthy open letter written during the election campaign to Dwight Dorey – at the time head of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples – Stephen Harper laid out his intentions for Aboriginal policy. It was a potentially significant gesture, largely ignored by the media. “The fundamental obligation of a Conservative federal government,” he wrote, “would be to improve the living conditions and educational and economic opportunity of all Aboriginal Canadians including off-reserve, urban and non-status Indian and Métis.” The letter made the

case for ambitious programs to improve education and employment outcomes for Aboriginals, wherever they are living.

Skeptics can argue that Harper was merely making an electoral appeal to Dorey’s supporters (non-status Aboriginals living off-reserve) and that he has no intention to make of Aboriginal concerns a “fundamental obligation.” The skeptics may be right; it is too soon to know. Whatever Harper’s government does or does not accomplish, the letter contains a good deal of common sense.

Under Paul Martin, federal Aboriginal policy hewed closely to the goals of the 600 band chiefs, as articulated by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). For example, the first ministers and Aboriginal leaders met in Kelowna last November and promised that the Aboriginal high school completion rate would, by 2016, equal the rate for non-Aboriginals. A noble goal, but virtually all the promised new money went on-reserve: more than \$1 billion on-reserve; \$150 million off-reserve.

This overwhelming on-reserve emphasis does not make sense. Of the one million Canadians who identified as Aboriginal in the 2001 census, slightly over six in ten identified as Indian – as opposed to Métis



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or Inuit – but of these six, half lived off-reserve. Once we include Métis and Inuit, seven in ten Aboriginals lived off-reserve; five in ten in a city. Despite facing elements of racial prejudice, off-reserve Aboriginals have significantly higher employment rates, incomes and education levels than do those on-reserve. The future for most – not all, but most – Aboriginals is not on a reserve; as is the case for other Canadians, their future is in Canadian towns and cities, as neighbours to non-Aboriginals.

I see two fundamental priorities that need to be established if Aboriginal policy is to work. Harper’s letter raises the first of these, namely accountability.

PRIORITY ONE: Aboriginals are receiving services from three orders of governments – federal, provincial and band-based. All three orders must become more accountable for results.

Consider K–12 schooling. If the next generation of Aboriginals is to succeed, a precondition is better education. At present, neither band councils nor the provinces nor Ottawa – with a few honourable exceptions – are measuring school performance. In repeated reports, the Auditor General has criticized the Department of Indian Affairs for transferring money to bands for schools while making no effort to monitor school performance. Which, in general, is not good

enough. According to the census, among young Canadians aged 15 to 24, by far the lowest high school completion rate exists among those on-reserve. This is not to let the provinces off the hook. Off-reserve, Aboriginal high school completion results are better but far from adequate.

In his final years as Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien moved away from the agenda of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). Among his final projects was the First Nations Governance Act, legislation intended to improve accountability of band councils to band members and to Ottawa. The chiefs opposed it as a violation of the Aboriginal right to self-government. Under Martin, the policy pendulum swung toward accommodation of the AFN. One of his first decisions as Prime Minister was to withdraw Chretien's draft legislation. Martin then initiated high-profile negotiations with Aboriginal organizations, negotiations that culminated in the First Ministers' Meeting in Kelowna last November.

While many – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – participated in the negotiations leading to Kelowna and the meeting proposed some important targets, it lacked the “teeth” to provide a reasonable expectation that the targets will be hit. For there to be any chance of meeting the high school completion target, for example, there will need to be more accountable and more professionally run on-reserve school boards, and more accountability among municipal school boards for the fate of Aboriginal children in provincially run schools.

PRIORITY TWO: There must be a more clearly stated limit to the RCAP strategy of “institutional parallelism.”

The RCAP commissioners envisioned a future in which Aboriginals need have minimum interaction with other Canadians. It is an agenda as unworkable as Trudeau's 1969 White Paper proposal to eliminate reserves. Reserves are important for those Aboriginals who choose a communal lifestyle. For those who choose an urban lifestyle, the need is for affirmative action programs to integrate them into Canadian institutions – as employees and employers, as community leaders, as teachers, as politicians.

In his first term as Prime Minister, Trudeau argued, “It's inconceivable ... that ... one section of the society have a treaty with the other section of the society. We must all be equal under the laws and we must not sign treaties amongst ourselves.” A quarter century later, RCAP concluded that Aboriginals are so culturally distinct from other Canadians that individual Aboriginals participating in mainstream institutions are doomed to fail. “To this day,” concluded the commissioners in their 1996 report, “Aboriginal people's sense of confidence and well-being remains tied to the strength of their nations. Only as members of restored nations can they reach their potential in the twenty-first century.”

Trudeau's position denies the importance of Aboriginal institutions; RCAP denies the reality that Aboriginals are increasingly living in mainstream Canadian society. No matter where they choose to live, Aboriginals and their children should have options as broad and as attractive as those for other Canadians. Harper is right to have insisted on that. However, he has yet to prove the skeptics wrong. To date there is scant evidence that he has made of Aboriginal policy a “fundamental obligation” of his government.

— John Richards

Observation

A new era of materialism?

Canadian public opinion and the environment

by Chris Adams

WHEN THE FEDERAL ELECTION WAS called last December, many thought that the environment would be high on the issue agenda: high energy costs, global warming and unhealthy water supplies in First Nations communities were all hitting the news. Conditions were ripe for a well-funded and energized Green Party to make inroads into voters' consciousness.¹ Yet things fizzled early. On election day, the Greens tallied a mere 4.5 per cent of the national vote with no candidates elected to the House of Commons. Worse still, the environment had been converted into a low-profile issue compared to health care, crime, daycare and taxes. Indeed, it appears that something more significant than our electoral system is now holding the Greens back² – something that is affecting environmentalism as a whole.

In 2006 one might ask: are Canadians returning to an era of materialism? After all, Stephen Harper and his Conservatives

campaigning on accountability, reducing the GST, tax breaks, anti-crime measures and an anti-Kyoto platform, and they won the election, albeit with a minority government. This article takes a quick peek at national polling data and some discernible changes that have occurred over the past 20 years which show that the 2006 federal election is symptomatic of a longer trend in Canadian public opinion.

Environmentalism's rise

During the 1970s and 1980s, citizens throughout the Western industrialized world became increasingly alarmed about the environment. Air pollution, acid rain, urban sprawl, cancer rates and accidents at nuclear power plants together contributed to increasing levels of public concern. In part, this increase can also be linked to the changing social composition of European and North American society: the rise of the

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“new middle class” made up of a younger and better educated generation of citizens whose concerns went beyond the “materialist issues” of social security, jobs and income. This growing new middle class served as the green movement’s incubator. “Post-materialist” issues relating to gender politics, international peace and environmentalism were the outgrowth of this better educated, knowledge-oriented, urban, more globally conscious citizenry.³

Specific environmental issues combined with changing social patterns had a direct impact on Canadian public opinion. At the end of the 1980s, pollster Angus Reid was reporting that one quarter of

This growing new middle class served as the green movement’s incubator. “Post-materialist” issues were the outgrowth of this better educated, knowledge-oriented, urban, more globally conscious citizenry.

Canadians were naming “the environment as the most important issue confronting the country.” Only the issue of taxes, and specifically the newly introduced GST, was rated “most important” by more Canadians. Furthermore, the concentration of concern for the environment among those under the age of 55 and among more affluent citizens appeared to indicate what some would term a “post-materialist effect.”⁴

Over the past 15 years, however, concern for the environment appears to have become more broadly spread across all social sectors in many industrial nations. One review of the numerous empirical studies conducted on this topic in the mid-1990s reached the following conclusion:

Taken as a whole, empirical findings show that, in western societies, there is no longer a distinct sociodemographic group promoting the cause of environmentalism. Moreover, they stress that one has to reject the assumption that traditional, sociocultural features of group classification (occupation, age, residence, and so on) homogenize and structure environmental concern and behaviour.⁵

Environmental “mainstreaming” in Canada has reached beyond public opinion data and has directly affected public policy. This is apparent in the widespread implementation of urban recycling programs at the local level, along with such national initiatives as the 1990 launching of the Progressive Conservative government’s *Green Plan for a Healthy Environment* and the Liberal Party’s 1993 “Red Book” proclamation that a “Liberal government will establish a framework in which environmental and economic signals point the same way.”⁶ While this promise was not immediately implemented, in part as a result of fiscal restraints, by 2000 the federal government was committing \$700 million for environmental policies and programs.⁷

Furthermore, there has been much debate about concerns over global warming and the emission of greenhouse gases, largely focused in recent years on the Kyoto Protocol. The Quebec National Assembly passed a resolution calling on the federal government to ratify the protocol in 2001, and in September 2002 Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg that his government would indeed ratify Kyoto. This was done three months later.⁸

Other environmental issues have been on the public agenda as well, including continuing questions about the nation’s household water supplies.⁹ In part, such concerns arose from the deaths and illnesses in May 2000 among those who consumed local tap water in Walkerton, Ontario,¹⁰ followed by high-profile coverage of problems with water supplies in First Nations communities in 2005 and 2006. Concerns about water are also part of a broader North American trend made evident by a March 2004 Gallup poll showing that 53 per cent of Americans report being worried “a great deal” about water pollution.¹¹

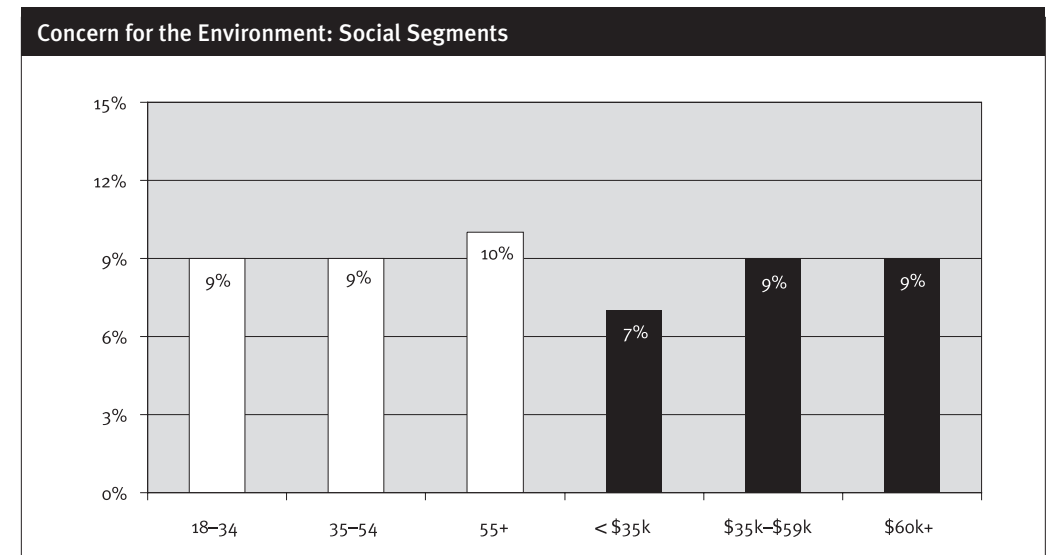
In contrast to the Angus Reid data from 15 years ago, more recent results show that catastrophic events and growing environmental awareness have led to a narrowing of generational and socioeconomic gaps when looking at top-of-mind concerns about the environment. National polling done by this writer’s firm, Probe Research, shows that in the current decade there is only

one percentage point separating the 55+ age group from younger adult Canadians, while only a two-percentage-point gap separates higher-income households from lower-income ones.

Awareness is high, priorities are low

While it is clear that citizens are increasingly aware that the environment is in trouble, and numerous actions have been taken by policymakers in the 1990s and 2000s, could it be that many Canadians feel that the issue has been resolved? Could this be a reason for the environment’s low profile in the 2006 election? A few years ago there were early signs of this. For example, a national survey done in 2002 by Probe Research revealed that health care, income and job security and crime superseded the environment as top-of-mind concerns among Canadians when they were asked about issues facing their local community.

More signs of complacency were found in another survey of 2,000 Canadians done



by Probe Research in 2004, in which 26 per cent of Canadians agreed with the statement that “the government is doing a good job of preserving and protecting the environment” (an increase from 2002 when 21 per cent reported the same view), while only a minority (35 per cent) in the 2004 study disagreed with the statement.¹²

Public opinion data therefore tell us that two forces are at work with regard to Canadian public opinion and the environment. The first is that environment-related concerns are no longer concentrated within specific portions of the population, and the second is that in the current decade these concerns appear to be increasingly sidelined by a new rise in social materialism. Many Canadians may think that enough has been done and may be less willing to make the sacrifices that are required for cleaning the environment. This is not good news for the Greens, but it bodes well for Stephen Harper and his new Conservative government. ■

Notes

¹ For a discussion of how new party finance regulations have directly benefited the Green Party, see Susan Harada, “The ‘Others’: A Quest for Credibility,” in Jon Pammett and Christopher Dornan, eds., *The Canadian General Election of 2004* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2004), pp. 178–79.

² For a discussion of how the electoral system holds back non-regionally based third parties, see Alan Cairns, “The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921–1965,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1968, pp. 55–80. See also Donley Studlar, “Consequences of the Unreformed Canadian Electoral System,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Autumn 2003 and Henry Milner, ed., *Making Every Vote*

Count: Reassessing Canada’s Electoral System (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 1999).

³ See Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 12.

⁴ “Issue Watch,” *Angus Reid Report*, January, 1990. Multiple responses were allowed. For an overview of national polls taken in the late 1980s and early 1990s see Herman Bakvis and Neil Nevitte, “The Greening of the Canadian Electorate,” in Robert Boardman, ed., *Canadian Environmental Policy: Ecosystems, Policy and Process* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

⁵ Karl-Werner Brand, “Environmental Consciousness and Behaviour: The Greening of Lifestyles,” in Michael Redclift and Graham Woodgate, eds., *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 1997), p. 208.

⁶ Glen Toner and Carey Frey, “Governance for Sustainable Development: Next Stage Institutional and Policy Innovations,” in *How Ottawa Spends: 2004–2005* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), pp. 198–99.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁸ Douglas MacDonald, Debora Vannjinnaten and Andrew Bjorn, “Implementing Kyoto: When Spending is not Enough,” in *How Ottawa Spends: 2004–2005* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), p. 184; Toner and Frey, “Governance for Sustainable Development,” p. 209.

⁹ “Improving the Water,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, May 24, 2002.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ As reported in the *Gallup Poll*, press release, March 2004.

¹² “Walkerton Victims Paid \$22-Million to Date,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, June 1, 2002.

¹³ Probe Research, *A Clear Perspective: 2004*, p. 29. In part this probably reflects views held by some that the Chrétien government was on the right track in signing the Kyoto Protocol.

Where has all the truth gone?

Dear Inroads editors,

It is no surprise that non-Jews would fall for Yakov Rabkin’s book *Au nom de la Torah* – as would liberally minded Jews such as Michael Benazon, who lauded it in Inroads (“Where have all the rabbis gone?”, Summer/Fall 2005). Rabkin’s history of ultra-Orthodox Jewish enmity toward Zionism is based on the foundation that the ultra-Orthodox rabbis and sages believed in a universal message of Judaism, loved humanity and were visionaries. After all, many non-Jews have read the endearing tales of Hasidim by Martin Buber and Elie Wiesel and seen the folksy film *Fiddler on the Roof*. However, the foundation of Rabkin’s book is totally false. On the contrary, all the rabbis he refers to demonized non-Jews, especially Arabs, and disdained Western values such as secular education and rights for women.

Rabkin’s book glorifying racist fanatics made me reflect on my education in *yeshivas* (Orthodox Jewish religious schools) in Montreal and New York in the 1960s. I have long silently struggled with ultra-Orthodoxy’s contempt for non-Jews in contrast to other magnificent Torah declarations of the supreme dignity of each human being. There are too many Jewish

apologists who are proficient in knowing how to sanitize the ugly teachings for the non-Jewish public.

Let us consider what the ultra-Orthodox rabbi Rabkin mentions – Chafetz Chaim, Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, Elhanan Wasserman, Moshe Dov Beck, Israel Eichler and especially Joel Teitelbaum – actually preached. Were they paragons of virtue, as Rabkin claims, or the Jewish counterparts of Wahhabi Islam without the cult of the sword?

THE FUNDAMENTAL MISUNDERSTANDING that Rabkin perpetuates is that ultra-Orthodox Jews believe in a universal code of ethics that applies to Jews and non-Jews alike. In fact, there are countless hostile laws against Gentiles in Orthodox Judaism, some of them astonishing. All the classical texts of Judaic law state that the beneficiaries of ethical commandments – love your neighbour, return a lost object, don’t stand idly by when your friend’s life is in danger – are only fellow Jews. A Jew who hits a Jew pays damages; a non-Jew who hits a Jew is liable for heavenly death.¹ Even though any mother’s milk is kosher, a Jewish baby

should not be breastfed by a non-Jew because her milk spiritually contaminates him.² In Torah commentaries, a non-Jewish woman is called a *zona*, a prostitute.³

It is only in the past two centuries, when the Conservative and Reform movements originated, that Judaism was liberalized and its ethics were universalized. There is an unbridgeable chasm between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews. Because liberal Jews do not read the Jewish sacred writings in rabbinical Hebrew, they are unaware that the discourse of ultra-Orthodoxy is a universe apart. Moreover, less objectionable words such as “heathen”, “Canaanite” and “Cuthean” were substituted for “non-Jew” by censors centuries ago to disguise the racism in the Talmud and other sacred books. Although some Modern Orthodox rabbis are uncomfortable with extremist interpretations of the Torah, a taboo against washing our dirty linen in public renders the public unaware. Extremist Muslims also were able to live under the radar until the 9/11 attacks and suicide bombings.

One of the fundamentals of ultra-Orthodox Judaism is a distancing as much as possible from the *goyim* (Gentiles), derived from Leviticus 20:26: “And I have severed you from other people.” For example, ultra-Orthodox Jews wear long black coats and wide black felt hats, even under the broiling summer sun, because clothing is the most visible sign of a distinction between them



and the Other: non-Jews are regarded as prone to murder, sexual immorality and theft.⁴ There is a direct correlation between their abhorrence of the Gentiles and their hatred of the Zionists because the founders of Zionism were

secular Jews who wanted to normalize the situation of the Jews in relation to other nations.

RABKIN’S MAJOR MISTAKES ARE THAT he relies too much on secondary sources, such as books by Aviezer Ravitzky and Yeshayahu Leibowitz; that his quotes from the primary sources are highly selective; and that, as he admits, he doesn’t speak Yiddish, the lingua franca of Hasidic Judaism. As sociologist and educator George Kranzler wrote in the Modern Orthodox journal *Tradition*, the Brooklyn, New York, weekly *Der Yid*, the official Yiddish voice of the Satmar Hasidim, is “perhaps the most influential Jewish publication today.”⁵ Without the Satmars – the largest Hasidic group in the world – and particularly their revered leader, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1887–1979), ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionism would now be a footnote to Jewish history. Rabkin devotes much of his book to Teitelbaum and the Neturei Karta, an extremist and weird faction of the Satmars numbering only a few hundred. Understanding their doctrine is of prime importance.

As with all ultra-Orthodox newspapers – which ban pictures of women, sensationalism and sports articles – *Der Yid* serves as a vehicle to transmit “ethical values” to its readers, especially children. Here are some of the items that have appeared in *Der Yid* over the years:

RABBINICAL PROCLAMATION, SEPTEMBER 19, 1969:

All God-fearing Jews must not study in university. They must avoid its “teachings of heresy” so as not to destroy the “vineyard of the House of Israel.”

STORY, APRIL 23, 1986: Teitelbaum was angry that a Gentile overcharged him in a transaction: “God helped me and the *goy* was struck down by an unnatural death ... So should all your enemies be destroyed, O God.”

RABBINICAL PROCLAMATION, JULY 8, 1988: Women are strictly forbidden to drive a car because of licentiousness, just as they are forbidden to ride an animal.

INSTRUCTION, OCTOBER 7, 1988: “We are not allowed during the Exile [to be] a light unto the nations. We are not allowed to teach Torah to the *goyim* to convince them of the truth that God is King of the world. Let them be deluded and leave us in peace.”

PROPHECY OF A TOP RABBI, FEBRUARY 21, 1997: “When the Messiah will arrive, the world will be filled with God’s knowledge ... then God will exterminate all the *goyim* with the wicked people.”

STORY, MARCH 31, 2000: The late Shinover Rabbi saw a letter of a non-Jewish alphabet scrawled on his bench. He screamed, “Help! Do you know how much filth there is within that single letter?!”

QUOTE FROM THE KABBALISTIC BOOK ZOHAR, JANUARY 11, 2002: Before the Messiah arrives, God will exterminate the Arabs in the Land of Israel.

From Teitelbaum’s scholarly output: Gentiles are prone to sodomy; Gentiles are created only to serve God-fearing Jews; Gentiles will die natural deaths while Jews will live eternally (comment on the Messianic hope in Isaiah 25:8: “He will swallow up death in victory”); repentance for sins benefits only Jews, not Gentiles.⁶

Teitelbaum was not alone. When the Chafetz Chaim – who lived in Poland and was the preeminent ultra-Orthodox sage until he died in 1933 – heard of the

The fundamental misunderstanding that Rabkin perpetuates is that ultra-Orthodox Jews believe in a universal code of ethics that applies to Jews and non-Jews alike. In fact, there are countless hostile laws against Gentiles in Orthodox Judaism, some of them astonishing.

earthquake in Tokyo in 1923, which killed 100,000 people, he declared that they were punished because they were not observers of the Torah, and God’s purpose in causing it was to rouse Jews to repent.⁷ Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, explaining the biblical verse in which Sarah demands that Ishmael (patriarch of the Arabs) be expelled from Abraham’s household (Genesis 21:9–10), said that since the Arabs live a life of idolatry and sexual immorality, the Jews must separate from them.⁸

Moshe Dov Beck, whom Rabkin interviewed at his home in Monsey, New York,

wrote that the soul of a non-Jew is all evil. While a Jew is a unique creation whose purpose is to observe God's Torah, a non-Jew is naught before God.⁹ Rabkin quotes Israel Eichler, editor of *HaMachne HaChareidi*, the weekly of the Belzer Hasidim, on guarding the "holy Torah." However, Eichler recently published a Talmudic law in his "holy Torah" column that, although it is forbidden to defraud or steal from a Gentile, it is permitted to keep his financial loss in a business if he errs, just as one does not have to return his lost item.¹⁰

Rabkin relates a story about the anti-Zionist sage Chazon Ish: when he met Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, he refused to shake Ben-Gurion's hand or look in his eyes. He might have been interested in a similar story reported last November in the ultra-Orthodox weekly *HaModia*. Anti-Zionist Rabbi Aharon Rokeach, the Belzer Rebbe, was worried about his vision: "During the checkup, the doctor told him to look at a bird that flew above them. But the Rebbe said that he doesn't know what a bird looks like for he had never seen one. The reason he never looked up is because he guarded himself from seeing the face of a goy."¹¹

Rabkin mistranslates Elhanan Wasserman's statement that the Torah is emphatic that one has to be solicitous of and love the *ger*, meaning the stranger. Although the word does also mean stranger, in this context the ultra-Orthodox define *ger* as a convert to Judaism. Indeed, it is heresy to love the alien because it violates the prohibition not to give a gift to a non-Jew, gratuitously, and not to admire him.¹² Although one must not cause animosity toward Gentiles, since according to the Talmud one must act "for the ways of peace," there is absolutely no love for

Gentiles in ultra-Orthodoxy. All non-Jews are considered idolaters in the voluminous ultra-Orthodox Responsa.

How on earth can Rabkin repeatedly describe these rabbis, who abided by a theology of hatred, as engaged in the "humanitarian preoccupation" and "global dimension" of Judaism, and possessed with political acumen? Then again, the august New York Times – whose journalists also do not read Yiddish – was duped when it published a prominent, respectful obituary of Rabbi Sender Deutsch, the founder and editor of *Der Yid*, in 1998.¹³

One of the very few courageous individuals battling the wall of silence surrounding racism in Judaism is a former ultra-Orthodox rabbi, Yaron Yadan, who founded the organization *Daat Emet* (True Knowledge) in Israel, and was profiled in a five-page article in the country's largest-circulation newspaper, *Yediot Achronot*.¹⁴ He has received death threats but nonetheless perseveres. As the ghettos and persecutions are long gone and Jews now thrive in vibrant democracies, we can also fight the good fight.

— Jacob Mendlovic

Jacob Mendlovic is a freelance journalist living in Toronto whose articles have appeared in the Vancouver Sun, the New York weekly *Forward* and the Canadian B'nai B'rith monthly *The Covenant*.

Notes

¹ Maimonides, *Laws of Kings* 10:6.

² *Shulchan Aruch*, Yore De'ah 81:7.

³ *Sefer HaChinuch*, Commandment 266.

⁴ "Goy," *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, Vol. 5 (Jerusalem, 1953), pp. 347, 350, 353.

⁵ George Kranzler, "The Voice of Williamsburg: Mass Media in a Hasidic Community," *Tradition*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Spring 1988), p. 53.

⁶ *Divrei Yoel* (New York, 1998), Vol. 1, p. 620; Vol. 6, p. 101; Vol. 6, p. 245; Vol. 7, p. 45.

⁷ Yechezkel Levenstein, *Ohr Yechezkel* (Israel, 1988), Vol. 4, p. 153.

⁸ Shlomo Sonnenfeld, *Halsh Al HaChoma* (Israel, 1975), Vol. 3, pp. 394–95.

⁹ *Michtav Hitohrerut* (New York, 1980), pp. 308–9.

¹⁰ *HaMachne HaChareidi*, January 19, 2006.

¹¹ *HaModia*, New York edition, November 18, 2005.

¹² *Sefer HaChinuch*, Commandment 426.

¹³ Eric Pace, New York Times, September 13, 1998.

¹⁴ *Yediot Achronot*, December 13, 2002.

THE AUTHOR REPLIES

Dear Inroads editors,

I WISH TO THANK MR. MENDLOVIC FOR his illuminating and thought-provoking letter. I have three points to make in reply.

The issues Mr. Mendlovic raises are irrelevant to what Professor Rabkin is attempting to do in his book: to show that traditional Jewish thought has been opposed to Zionism. Mr. Mendlovic may or may not be correct in his view that the ultra-Orthodox are both racist and sexist. This is not the point. Professor Rabkin argues that the rabbis of all the major Jewish denominations opposed Zionism until they became aware of the Holocaust and the plight of the survivors, and then most Reform, Conservative and some of the Orthodox Jews changed their minds about Zionism. Mr. Mendlovic does not dispute Professor Rabkin's careful marshalling of the evidence.

Mr. Mendlovic presents a basically *ad hominem* argument. He wishes to press his charge that the ultra-Orthodox rabbis were and still are racist and sexist. But even if he is correct, his charges do not and cannot

detract from Professor Rabkin's argument. The rabbis can be racist and still oppose Zionism on legitimate religious and practical grounds. Moreover, Professor Rabkin's book goes well beyond the ultra-Orthodox and encompasses Reform and other liberal Jewish arguments against Zionism.

Mr. Mendlovic's views, as briefly set down in his letter, are of great interest. But to be effective and convincing, his arguments need to be elaborated and reorganized. The quotations cited should be analyzed and their context explained. We need to know how modern ultra-Orthodox rabbis interpret statements made in the Middle Ages or earlier. And Mr. Mendlovic has to learn to hold his resentments in check and to present his arguments in a balanced and fair manner.

Readers who wish to judge for themselves can now read Professor Rabkin's book in the recently published English translation, *A Threat from Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood/Zed Books, 2006).

— Michael Benazon

To print or not to print?

Fallout from the Danish cartoon affair

Selected and edited from the Inroads listserv by Harvey Schachter

THE PUBLICATION OF SOME CARTOONS ABOUT THE PROPHET Muhammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30, 2005, provoked a delayed reaction in the form of riots in many countries earlier this year. It also prompted a lengthy discussion on the Inroads listserv about tolerance, free expression and the intermingling of religions in multicultural societies.

From: Ricardo Duchesne

Tariq Ramadan's article "Reason and Religion Can Learn to Co-exist" in yesterday's *Globe and Mail* [February 8] offers a good opportunity to evaluate the cartoon affair. So reasonable and so balanced are his views as to receive the approval of most reasonable Canadians. How splendid: there's a solution to the coexistence of the West and Islam. We only need to avoid the "simplistic polarization" of differences by Muslims who resort to violence and Westerners who lack sensitivity

to the faith of others. Muslims need to "learn to keep an intellectual critical distance while facing such provocations," and Westerners need to be aware that their freedom of expression comes with responsible limitations, and that freedom does not allow for racial or religious insults.

But here's Ramadan's essential point: "Within a similar legal framework, each country has its own memory and its own sensitivity, and wisdom requires people to acknowledge and respect that reality.

Western societies have changed and the Muslim presence has naturally changed this collective sensitivity ... would it not be better to call the citizens to a more responsible use of the freedom that takes into account the different sensitivities that compose our contemporary societies?"

He means that the West must come to terms with the presence of Muslims in their own societies. The West has changed – has been changed by the presence of Muslims – and wisdom requires that the West acknowledge and respect this reality. The religion of Islam is now an intrinsic element inside Western civilization, and the West must show respect and sensitivity to this religion, and therefore the West should not have the right to criticize this religion.

The Canadian press was right not to print the cartoons – it would have been needlessly provocative and insensitive. Yet I sympathize with what the Danes were originally trying to do, and what other European newspapers were trying to say by reprinting the cartoons. This affair goes well beyond sensitivity or racial discrimination. What Ramadan is getting at is that since the West is now coeval with Islamic culture, within its own borders, it should start understanding that Islam is a very different religion which not only does not tolerate pictures of Muhammad but does not tolerate a rational open debate about the validity of this religion. He is not going to come out and say this outright, however. Time

lies on his side: the very legal framework of liberal multiculturalism, which lacks its own normative commitments, together with the demographic dynamics of Europe, will make it possible for the West to be open to this interpretation.

What is not well understood by those who call on freedom of expression to defend the right to publish the cartoons is that Muslims themselves have been using liberal democratic ideas to protect their Islamic faith. Ramadan is a very important thinker in this respect. He believes that the Western liberal legal frameworks offer Islam the best opportunity to expand the faith. He knows that the Enlightenment achieved a conception of man as universal being at the cost of rendering Western traditions empty and in a way meaningless.

Westerners may have freedom of expression, but in dissolving their traditional values this is their only certainty. The West suffers from a spiritual malaise that can only find a happy comfort in material abundance. Ramadan looks to Muslims as the ones who will fill this loss of a meaningful life in the West. Liberal multiculturalism promotes the idea that all cultures deserve equal respect. Those Westerners who can only invoke their right to provoke and show disrespect to other cultures are merely reinforcing the right of the isolated "I" to dissolve all the bonds of society.

Ricardo Duchesne is a professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick.

The Inroads listserv began operating seven years ago as a means to link readers of the journal and others interested in policy discussion. With nearly 130 subscribers, it offers one of the few chances for people of diverse views to grapple with social and political issues in depth.

To subscribe, send an e-mail note to listserv@post.queensu.ca with your name as in the following example: `subscribe inroads-l johnstuartmill@utilitarian.org`

From: Jan Narveson

I thought that (a) a sense of humour and (b) lots of public political commentary are some of the “bonds of [our] society”! Being ultra-thin-skinned doesn’t strike me as much of a “bond,” by contrast. Well, bondage, maybe ...

Jan Narveson is professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Waterloo.

From: Ricardo Duchesne

Let’s see if we can accommodate three positions:

1. There were good reasons for the Danish to publish the cartoons, and for some European newspapers to reprint them, but there are no good reasons for the North American press to publish them in the name of freedom of the press, because a defence of liberal democracy should not hang on the right to mock religious sensibilities disrespectfully.
2. Muslims in the West should not invoke their religious beliefs and sensibilities to suppress criticisms against Islam; arguing against the Qur’an should not be equated with “the spreading of hatred” as politically correct multiculturalists would have us think.
3. The Enlightenment belief that we shall have the courage to examine all our beliefs critically is essential to Western values, but by itself this belief is empty, and it is itself responsible for the current state of cultural amnesia in the West. Today’s Globe and Mail article “Beyond Cartoons” by Susan Drummond, a law professor at York University [February 11], serves well to elucidate this point when she writes, “I am not teaching about any legal tradition under the assumption

that its core tenets are inherently worthy of respect. I am teaching about each of them from the vantage of a critical distance cultivated over millenniums. Consistent with deeply entrenched values within the academy, I urge students to subject their understandings – from the most commonplace to the most sacrosanct – to the light of critical scrutiny.”

This is to say, as Susan partly recognizes, that she detaches herself from the very cultural values of the Enlightenment as she goes about adopting the critical stance of the Enlightenment. While she is aware that some hold the right to free speech as a sacrosanct value, she does not see much else that is substantive in this standpoint; and thus she recounts how she had agreed, a few days after 9/11, with a Muslim and a devout Lubavitch Jewish student that she should treat their religious texts with reverence in class discussions. She wonders now: What if some of the other students in her classroom had “declined to submit to the request of those two devoutly religious students?” She’s not sure what she would have done, but the defence she offers for her decision to give in to religious sensibilities is consistent with the very multicultural relativism that is ultimately encouraged by an Enlightenment that leaves one bereft of one’s own values.

As Susan is not fully cognizant of the dialectical dynamics of her own position, we must discover it ourselves. This is how she words her defence: “Taking into account that the study of law touches upon values that also embody different senses of injustice, I urged my students that year not to simply understand unfamiliar texts and traditions

from the vantage of a cold and purportedly neutral detachment.”

Do you not read what’s going on? The critical standpoint of the Enlightenment is “the vantage of a cold and purportedly neutral detachment.” The West has no spiritual content. What is valuable is outside, in Other different senses of injustice, and yet the West does have one value: it should be open to Other values. Death be proud. Pride thyself on being nice and respectful toward the Other. No magnanimity and no virtue. Susan has something else for our sensitive ahistorical souls: “To follow Simone Weil’s admonition: to understand the self from the point of view of the other’s affliction.”

From: Henry Milner

Ricardo Duchesne is right to defend the values of the Enlightenment against the acceptance of Islam’s refusal to tolerate pictures of Muhammad or rational open debate about the validity of this religion. Only I do not see the Enlightenment as Western. When I read about the excesses in the name of Islam in Afghanistan and the threats some fanatics scream out at Denmark, I feel that I am sharing the planet with Spain at the time of the Inquisition or Salem during its witch trials – except that geographical barriers have been eliminated.

The real question raised by the cartoons issue is: How long will it take the Islamic world to produce its Voltaire or John Stuart Mill? And what, if anything, can any of us do to further this process in a peaceful manner? Does pushing Democracy in and of itself, which Mr. Bush has made the centrepiece of American foreign policy, further or retard this process?

The questions are hard to answer because it is not just culture that is at play. Things would be different, I suspect, if there were no oil in the Arabian deserts, for by now the Arab world would have produced its own Atatürk.

Henry Milner is a professor of political science and co-publisher of Inroads.

From: Glen Koehn

Obviously, people should be free to make fun of Islam as well as any other religion, since proper freedom of expression entails the right to produce satire and parody. Anything that is really valuable will survive the refiner’s fire of ridicule.

Do you not read what’s going on? The critical standpoint of the Enlightenment is “the vantage of a cold and purportedly neutral detachment.” The West has no spiritual content. — Ricardo Duchesne

Besides, who is in greater need of having their beliefs mocked than the rabble now screaming for infidel blood? It’s not as though the Qur’an is especially gentle to the feelings of apostates and atheists, so why should fans of the Prophet get a free pass to avoid criticism?

Yet, insofar as it is practical, devout people who are minding their own business should also be able to avoid seeing their cherished symbols abused and their beliefs derided. The case of pornography is relevant. Go ahead and take a picture of yourself desecrating someone’s sacred book, or performing your favourite sex act. Just don’t force your neighbours to watch you. There are many ways to create offensive

depictions, but peaceful folk who will be offended by something shouldn't have to have their noses rubbed in it.

The interesting issue is not whether Muslims have a right to enforce laws against blasphemy and sacrilege. There is no such right, and the sooner they figure that out the better. Instead, the real issues are what constitutes public (as opposed to private) blasphemy and sacrilege, and how much of it should be constitutionally protected. These remain to be negotiated to some extent.

Glen Koehn is an adjunct professor of philosophy with the University of Maryland University College who also teaches part time at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

From: Pierre Joncas

The heart has reasons which reason knows not. So wrote the French thinker Blaise Pascal. I believe he was right.

Faith is nonrational. It can also be irrational, even antirational but, at best, it is nonrational – and it is usually loaded with feelings. To acknowledge this is not to disparage faith. By its very nature, it is based on trust – generally the acceptance of testimony of esteemed and beloved elders, not on the certain, dispassionate knowledge acquired from experience and through tight reasoning. That is especially true of religious faith. If one subscribes to a religious faith, one doesn't know it to be true – one believes (or, in some cases, hopes) it to be true.

At the heart of the Enlightenment was a readiness to subject one's ideas and beliefs to rational examination. Such readiness is not willingness, much less eagerness, to surrender them at the slightest challenge: intellectual humility is not intellectual soft-

ness. To hold dear one's ideas and beliefs, in the good-faith conviction that they are true, does not exclude a disposition to admit they could be mistaken, and to revise them, piecemeal, in light of evidence (factual, logical or both) showing them to be so. Changing one's view of reality is never easy, but it can be necessary if one values truth above all else.

Although it can be illuminated by the mind, faith (especially religious faith), unlike knowledge, is a matter of the heart. Accordingly, while respect for the faith of others does not require one to join in their beliefs, it does require a deference to their sensibilities similar to that which one rightfully expects them to display towards one's own faith – or lack thereof.

The American democratic tradition holds "these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal [and] that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The French democratic tradition rests on the triple ideal of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood ("*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*").

The controversy over the cartoons that have given offence to Muslims opposes those who claim unlimited freedom of expression and those who claim the right not to be insulted gratuitously. Which principle should prevail? What the law ought to authorize and forbid in this instance is a matter for lawyers. Suffice it to note that there are laws on the books limiting freedom of expression: laws against libel and slander, and laws against hateful propaganda, for example. Hence freedom of expression is not absolute, even in Western democracies.

Quite apart from what the laws allow and prohibit (or ought to), one can, on moral



Controversy over the cartoons led to violent protests around the globe, particularly in the Muslim world.

or other grounds, take strong exception to a cartoon depicting the revered prophet Muhammad as a terrorist (a turban in the shape of an explosive device clearly implies this). Would a cartoon playing to stereotype and depicting Moses carrying tablets covered with dollar signs not give offence to those of Jewish faith? Would a cartoon of Jesus wearing a crown of bombs instead of a crown of thorns not give offence to Christians? And would one not share the indignation of the Jews and the Christians alike who were offended by them? Would not both (hypothetical) cartoons be seen as cruel and an abuse of the right of free expression? But hasn't the current President of the United States claimed Jesus Christ as the "philosopher" who influenced him most? If one were to judge Christianity by that President's odd (to say the least) behaviour, notably the massive bombing he launched against Iraqi civilian population centres only a few years ago (in a war consciously launched on the premise of outright lies), one would be seriously misled. It is impossible to square his (and Tony Blair's) war with

the Sermon on the Mount (the Beatitudes), a key element in the tradition of those who look to Jesus as the "Prince of Peace." Yet, to repeat, a cartoon depicting Jesus wearing a crown of bombs would give understandable offence to conscientious Christians.

It is one thing to depict Al Qaeda as a terrorist organization, which it is; it is quite another to suggest that, through his teachings (whether one subscribes to them or not), Muhammad encouraged, or even condoned, terrorism. By insulting all those who see the prophet of Islam as their ultimate teacher, the Danish cartoon can only hurt decent, conscientious Muslims. Accordingly, it is inconsistent with both the American ideal of the right to pursue happiness and the French ideal of brotherhood. In fairness, there has been little support for this offensive cartoon (and others) in the United States, and President Bush himself has condemned them; there has been some support in France, in *Charlie Hebdo* for instance, but President Chirac has condemned them too.

In fairness to the Danes, a peaceful and, on the whole, a tolerant nation (their king chose to wear the Star of David in World War II in solidarity with the persecuted Jews – that was active, courageous tolerance), the cartoons are far from receiving universal support there. Whatever freedom of expression might allow, defending such foolish provocation, at a time of high worldwide social and political unrest, strikes me as thoughtless and heartless at best, and irresponsible and reckless at worst.

Although there are important connections, the issue of multiculturalism is separate and distinct. In the case of Canada, multiculturalism was adopted as government policy by the Trudeau government to thwart the aspirations of Quebec nationalists, however mild the nationalism of most Quebecers at the time. When Lester Pearson set up the Laurendeau-Dunton Royal Commission, in recognition of the idea that Canada has “two founding peoples” (Native Canadians being our “First Nations”), he gave it the mandate of recommending measures to recognize and support bilingualism and biculturalism with due regard for other cultures. On André Laurendeau’s death, Pierre Trudeau appointed Jean-Louis Gagnon to replace him as cochair of the B&B Commission. Gagnon’s distaste for Quebec nationalism was equal to Trudeau’s, if not greater. One way to “drown the fish,” as we say in French, is to bring up extraneous issues so as to cause the old problem to be forgotten. In this instance, it was to have multiculturalism swallow biculturalism. Multiculturalism was to take on a life of its own, however, while the Quebec problem has continued to deepen and worsen.

As a general principle, it would seem reasonable for an immigrant who, for whatever reasons, seeks residence in another country to agree to live by its rules. Thus, a

Canadian who seeks residence in another country ought to be prepared to comply with its laws, learn its language and become acquainted with, and respect, its customs and culture; likewise and conversely, a foreigner taking up residence in Canada. It is the old principle of “*cujus regio, ejus religio*,” adapted, without harshness, to contemporary circumstances and needs. That said, if foreigners are encouraged to come to Canada to take on work the locals refuse (like laying down railway tracks), they are entitled to fair treatment. As well, if the terms of the encouragement are that they will be allowed to retain some of their customs, those terms ought to be scrupulously respected. Perhaps, it was unwise to extend them in the first place, but that’s another matter. Nor should any immigrant or guest worker be subjected to abuse as were, for example, the Chinese at the turn of the century and the Japanese during World War II.

It would be foolish for any host nation, including Canada, to refuse or resist the enrichment that might come from immigrants. To the extent that multiculturalism encourages friendly openness to other cultures, it should be seen as a healthy policy; to the extent it causes a host nation uncritically to surrender its core values to incompatible values of newcomers, it is foolish and dangerous.

Pierre Joncas is a retired federal civil servant and a former member of *Cité Libre*’s editorial committee.

From: George Bain

The cartoon affair was used by the extremists who seem to rule in Islam to enrage the uneducated and unemployed masses – some many months after the original depictions

passed rather unremarked. Most Muslims ignored the matter for a long time and most regret the crudity of the “resurrection” of the cartoons now. Where are the riots in the U.S.? In France, only a few hundred participated – egged on by the imams? So let us ignore it and this matter will play itself out, particularly if the news media drop it.

On multiculturalism, Pierre ignores the fact that the Canadian system – which I hope the new Conservative government will change – encourages the creation of enclaves of “foreign” cultures and modes of expression. These groups distance themselves from the traditions of Canadian living and the mythology of the country.

I think that Canada could encourage adult immigrants to undertake courses of Canadian history, law and culture before their status is definitive. It should require all children to attend common public schools and bar new religious schools for children under Grade 8. The achievement of the United States is in integrating foreigners into the mainstream. Can Canada do that?

George Bain is a retired World Bank official.

From: Jan Narveson

It should matter to people’s sense of fairness among other things that while a dozen cartoons in a Danish newspaper have inspired tumult around the world, including a tidal wave of apology and breast-beating and “how would you like it if people insulted your favourite religious beliefs?”, the Muslim world is deluged, week in and week out, with highly politicized cartoons about the Israelis such as those recently collected by *Honest Reporting* – only this time with no basis in fact, but who cares?

From: Ricardo Duchesne

Some perspective on the offensive cartoons also means taking into consideration Rex Murphy’s point that it was not just the original 12 cartoons that sparked the reactions but three other far more insulting cartoons showing bestiality and pedophilia added by a Danish imam. This is what I call blasphemous: radical Muslims insulting their own religion.

May I also draw attention to Paul William Roberts’s essay “Profile of the Prophet” as an example of a seemingly innocent, tolerant and decent perspective that in fact says that it is wrong to challenge what the Islamic faith forbids. Once we understand Islam, he tells us, we will understand why Salman

Obviously, people should be free to make fun of Islam as well as any other religion, since proper freedom of expression entails the right to produce satire and parody. Anything that is really valuable will survive the refiner’s fire of ridicule. — Glen Koehn

Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* were so insulting to Muslims. Understanding is taken to mean not just showing a disposition to learn other religious beliefs, but actually showing openness to the strictures of this religion. Let Roberts present us with his sympathetic-innocent account; he has that right in our society. He should not expect his readers to show sympathy for this religion to the point that we should abstain from making critical remarks about it.

Roberts offers his essay in the hope that we may learn more about Islam before we make judgements. The presumption is that

Canadians already know Western civilization and Christianity. That is hardly the case, and not even Roberts shows he knows. He says that Islam brought “all the treasures of an ancient Greco-Roman world” to Europe. What he ignores is that Christianity alone developed a metaphysical framework consistent with that of modern science and freedom as a result of the profound impact Hellenistic culture had on the formative years of Christianity.

Christianity was a religion formed inside the womb of Hellenistic culture. The Greek language, rather than Hebrew, was the language through which the Christian faith spread. The first Christians were Hellenized

While a dozen cartoons in a Danish newspaper have inspired tumult around the world, the Muslim world is deluged, week in and week out, with highly politicized cartoons about the Israelis – only this time with no basis in fact, but who cares? — Jan Narveson

Jews. All the books of the New Testament were written in Greek; the Gospel of St. John reinterpreted Jesus in Platonic terms; when non-Jews became Christians they were educated Greeks. St. Paul, who understood better than anyone else the universal spirit of Christianity, was a rabbi educated in classical philosophy. If Jesus symbolizes the tie between humanity and God, the presence of God as something we feel in our hearts as an act of revelation, Greek philosophy symbolizes the idea that reason is capable of knowing the mystery of God. Athens has everything to do with Jerusalem. The four Fathers of the Latin Church, St. Ambrose (340–397), St. Jerome (340–419),

St. Augustine (354–430), and Gregory the Great (540–604), received a thorough classical education that taught them that God is a purposeful designer of the world who can be known through the things He has made. Essential works of the classical tradition were retained through the early Middle Ages; and Islam absorbed only some elements of this tradition, mostly Aristotle.

From: Pierre Joncas

Jan’s comment was followed by a set of cartoons from something called *Honest Reporting* (sic!). The cartoons were indeed, as Jan noted, “anti-Israeli.” They did not, however, depict any sacred Jewish religious figure. There was one particularly nasty cartoon of the flag of Israel with a swastika superposed on the Star of David, but, to repeat, it was the flag of Israel – not a sacred figure of Judaism.

One might argue, and Jan probably would, that the cartoon in question is unnecessarily offensive, mean-spirited and so on toward Israel, all of which I’d concede ungrudgingly. It is not, however, an attack on all Jews, *qua* Jews, some of whom (even among those living in Israel) are harshly critical, rightly or wrongly, of Israel’s policy toward Arab Palestinians (not all of whom are Muslims) and often accused of being “self-hating Jews” on that account – I have been an uncomfortable witness to such charges. By contrast, the Danish cartoon is an attack on all Muslims, *qua* Muslims, whether they support terrorism or, as many do, condemn it (and I am personally acquainted with some).

From: Gareth Morley

One Canadian parallel does not seem to have received much comment: Duplessis’s

campaign against the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who said all sorts of offensive things about the Roman Catholic faith (the “whore of Babylon,” etc.). Was Duplessis right after all?

Gareth Morley is a Vancouver lawyer.

From: Jan Narveson

The Arab world is awash with cartoons depicting the Jews in all sorts of savage ways. There is absolutely no mistaking the religious intent, despite Israelis being the immediate target. And second, any religion that can teach what some Muslims are managing to interpret it as saying would deserve plenty of abuse, I’m afraid. That certainly includes fundamentalist Christianity, but at present the Muslim community – as I’ve been saying ever since 9/11 – has a problem, and it’s a *big* problem. I am sure that many of them are acutely embarrassed as the squads of suicide bombers and assorted other murderers kill with “Allah is great!” on their lips. But still, they do it, and frankly, there is no reason why the rest of the world should put up with it.

What the Muslim community needs to do is to get into the business of reinterpreting the sacred texts, just as Christians have done for centuries and will no doubt continue doing. More power to them.

And, yes, I think there was and is every reason why newspapers all over the place should publicize the case, and the cartoons.

From: Gareth Morley

Of course, if you don’t have a right to bomb embassies, you *do* have a right to boycott products.

One interesting fact in Doug Saunders’s article in the weekend *Globe and Mail* [February 11] is that only about 10 per cent of Europeans of Muslim cultural heritage go to mosque regularly. I’m sure the Lutheran and Anglican churches would be happy with that kind of turnout, but the vast majority of those attending the mosques are likely just apolitical, pious people. Only a tiny minority are violent. The most dangerous thing is polarization along ethnic lines.

From: Bob Chodos

First off, I need to admit that I don’t have a clear position for or against the Danish cartoons. There are too many questions tangled up, and too much emotional baggage attached, for this to be a simple yes-or-no proposition. So I will limit myself to commenting on a couple of the issues that have surfaced in the discussion thread on this list:

1. “Arguing against the Qur’an,” wrote Ricardo Duchesne, “should not be equated with ‘the spreading of hatred’ as politically correct multiculturalists would have us think.” Call me a politically correct multiculturalist, but I think that the spreading of hatred is very much part of what’s at stake here. The problem with the cartoons is not that they are offensive. No one has the right never to be offended. Devout Muslims would be offended, say, by the typical attire to be seen on the average North American or European beach. To avoid being offended, they have the right not to go to the beach; they don’t have the right to close it down. But the cartoons are different. The cartoons can be hurtful even to a Muslim who never sees them, to

the extent that they reinforce anti-Islamic attitudes among people who do see them. Incitement to hatred is one of the areas where limitations on freedom of speech are reasonable; in the current context of relations between Western countries and Muslims both inside and outside their borders, an argument can be made that the Danish cartoons at the very least skirt that line.

2. Pierre Joncas is so consistently thoughtful, measured and respectful in his posts that I am hesitant to take issue with him, and yet in his disagreement with Jan Narveson about whether the Danish cartoons are comparable with anti-Israeli/anti-Jewish cartoons in the Arab press, I tend to side with Jan. To say that they are not comparable because the Arab cartoons did not malign a sacred figure of Judaism is, I think, to miss the point. Every religion is unique, and what doesn't cause a stir for one may be a neuralgic point for another. We don't have sacred figures in the same sense as Muhammad in Islam or Jesus in Christianity (and, of course, the position of Jesus in Christianity is very different from that of Muhammad in Islam). Our most revered figures, such as Moses and King David, are also ordinary human beings whose flaws are on full display in the Bible. It would be hard for any cartoon to paint a more unflattering picture of David than the book of 2 Samuel does in its account of his affair with Bathsheba. But Jews are also heirs to a long history of anti-Jewish incitement being followed by a *passage à l'acte* in the form of crusade, pogrom or gas chamber. We are therefore understandably sensitive when criticism of Israel spills over into use of anti-Jewish

stereotypes, as it frequently does in the Arab press. In my mind we are right in being concerned – although not in using the charge of anti-Semitism to suppress all criticism of Israel. Because they both strike at their target's deepest fears and sensitivities, I see the analogy between anti-Jewish cartoons in the Arab press and anti-Islamic cartoons in the Danish press as being a strong one.

3. Finally, I am struck once again by the way in which issues that could probably be handled amicably in other contexts take on a whole different tone when Islam is involved. Think of Mohamed Elmasry's appearance on the Michael Coren show, the shari'a controversy in Ontario, the riots in the *banlieues* in France and now the Danish cartoons – all within the last year or so. If more people could approach these issues with the virtues that Pierre Joncas brings to his posts, we would be a lot better off.

Bob Chodos is managing editor of *Inroads* and an active member of Temple Shalom, a Reform Jewish congregation in Waterloo, Ontario.

From: Henry Milner

There are still a few points in the discussion of whether the drawings should have been published needing clarification. I herein address the position well stated by Pierre Joncas and supported by and large by Canadian opinion leaders.

We need to ask:

1. Is it any pictorial depiction of Muhammad, say in a neutral form in an encyclopedia, that is the problem? I assume not. I assume that Pierre would approve of such and have no special sympathy for

those who are offended in their religious beliefs by this.

2. If so, it is an offensive depiction of Muhammad as a suicide bomber that Pierre would like to see not printed? This is clear with respect to the Danish newspaper. But does it apply so clearly to other publications, like our newspapers, which have a responsibility to inform their readers just what the angry mobs are objecting to? Where do we draw the line?

3. Returning to the offensive depiction of Muhammad, I propose that before condemning it, Pierre and those who support his views go through a thought experiment. Imagine living in a relative bastion of free expression – like Holland – at the time of the Spanish Inquisition. Suppose someone circulated a picture of Jesus Christ as Torquemada burning heretics. This would surely have offended many Christians. Would those condemning the Danish publication have reacted the same way? Should they? Similarly, would they have tried to persuade Voltaire to keep silent since his public demand to *Écrasez l'Infame* was causing pain to many devout Catholics?

John Stuart Mill famously stated, "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be in silencing mankind." This is not a matter of absolute rights, he added, but of human welfare: "The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still

more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error."

Surely a cartoon the content of which is an attack on suicide bombing in the name of Islam fits Mill's dictum. No doubt his approach could be discussed at length and disputed in a philosophy class. But it seems to me that the real issue raised by all this boils down to how do we get people all over the world to be exposed to the idea

Incitement to hatred is one of the areas where limitations on freedom of speech are reasonable; in the current context of relations between Western countries and Muslims, an argument can be made that the Danish cartoons at the very least skirt that line. — Bob Chodos

articulated by Mill. As far as we can tell, the main barrier today is the curtain Islam places on the expression and teaching of anything like such an idea in a large part of the world. Hence the question is: Does publishing this picture in the first place advance or retard this process of exposure?

From: Frances Abele

I appreciate the careful reasoning shown by those of you who have written on the cartoons controversy. Like Bob Chodos, I don't have a very firm position yet – but I do have the strong instinct that civility, mutual consideration and empathy can help a good

deal. And, I do agree with the implication of some of the commentary that a good operating principle is to consider what is to be achieved by reoffending – publishing the same hurtful images again and again. Listening to Ezra Levant basking in all the attention he is getting after the Western Standard's publication of the cartoons is both embarrassing and faintly disgusting. Since it is possible to describe the cartoons, why republish the images that cause collateral damage?

There is another aspect to this matter that I find intriguing. What other forces are at play to bring so many thousands of people into the streets, and to violence? Most of them have not seen the images. None of them can really be affected by the images in any direct, at-home way. I recognize that what was done was deeply offensive, but deep offence does not always move thousands, in several countries, to street demonstrations, arson and other forms of public violence. What else is at work?

Frances Abele teaches in the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University in Ottawa.

From: Ricardo Duchesne

Bob Chodos misunderstands me. I think I have made it clear that I can see why Muslims would be offended if our press publishes cartoons offensive to their religion just for the sake of demonstrating their right to freedom of expression, but what I question is the long-term implication, clearly manifest in Paul William Roberts's essay, that it is wrong to challenge (by means of a reasoned argument) what the Islamic faith forbids.

Do I have the right to argue, and when I say argue I mean offer a dialogical argument

in a civil manner, why I think Christianity worked to cultivate, more so than any other religion, the idea that reasoned debate (in a free and open manner) is essential to the pursuit of truth? Do I have the right to argue that Islam is inimical to the freedom of the individual and to the rational pursuit of freedom? I don't want to debate here whether this proposition is true – I may be wrong. What matters is whether those who say that we should be careful about hurting the sensitivities of Muslims are also saying that we should avoid any open discussion about the relationship different religions have to freedom, reason and modernity.

From: Philip Resnick

I am struck by the fear of giving offence that has overtaken the mainstream Canadian (and American and British) media as the Danish cartoon controversy rages. A good illustration was contained in the mealy-mouthed piece by Edward Greenspon in Saturday's Globe, February 11, defending self-censorship in this instance, since republishing would be both gratuitous and provocative. What could be more provocative than angry mobs besieging Danish and other embassies throughout the Middle East and demanding, in no uncertain terms, that the authors of the purported insult to Islam be dealt with summarily by their governments?

When the Salman Rushdie affair was raging two decades ago, there was no shortage of writers and artists who saw the issue as one pitting Voltaire against the Inquisition. What is the difference between the Danish cartoon case and the Rushdie one? And where are the Canadian writers and artists and editorial writers prepared to nail their colours to the flag of freedom

of expression when the going gets tough? So far only Ezra Levant has lined up. What does this say about the moral backbone of all the others?

In a book I have recently been reading by Pierre-André Taguieff, he writes, "Intolerance at the start of the third millennium often speaks the language of multiculturism." Can it be that we in Canada, and in other Western societies, have carried the multicultural idea too far, being afraid to defend fundamental values like freedom of expression for fear of giving "gratuitous offence" to one group or another? Should we be surprised to learn that in Holland, Denmark and other liberal Western European societies there is the beginning of a very strong backlash against the logic of giving in to blackmail from religious fundamentalists?

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From: Gareth Morley

There are easy issues, and there are difficult ones:

EASY: Morally, there is a distinction between expression for a sincere purpose that has the (unintended) effect of offending somebody's core beliefs, and expression for the purpose of offending somebody's core beliefs, particularly when those people are a minority in your country under political attack. The newspaper was on the wrong side of that line.

HARD: Should mainstream newspapers now print the cartoons, given their obvious newsworthiness?

EASY: Burning embassies and violent rioting as a result of expression are indefensible.

If such riots break out inside them, liberal societies should use whatever force is necessary to suppress them.

HARD: Should liberal societies impose legal penalties on expression intended to ridicule or humiliate people because of their religious beliefs?

EASY: A lot of people both in the West and in the Islamic world desire a showdown between a billion Muslims and some fantasized Anglosphere-Israeli alliance. These people are nutbars and should be shunned by the sane. The Bush administration has acted sensibly in this particular case, but it has helped sow this particular whirlwind.

From: Patrick Coleman

Gareth writes, "Hard: Should liberal societies impose legal penalties on expression intended to ridicule or humiliate people because of their religious beliefs?"

That's a hard question? Not for me. Who is supposed to judge what ridicules or humiliates whom? And what is special about religious beliefs? Take flag burning (I'm thinking not only of the U.S. situation but of the incident in Sault Ste. Marie a while back where the Quebec flag was trampled). Does anyone favour legal penalties for disrespecting that "sacred" object?

I'm not saying that there isn't and shouldn't be a process of informal negotiation about what is said in public media. After all, there are racial epithets that are no longer heard on radio or TV shows. But this happens as cultures evolve. And it requires real interaction among the parties. ■

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