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measures to ensure that immigrants acquire proficiency in the Finnish language—indeed, one could argue that the Finnish government has a duty to do so, given the vital connection between majority-language competence and equality of opportunity (see e.g. Barry 1998: 315–16; Carens 2000: 80). Similarly, nobody would accuse the government of Portugal of condemning its citizens to a life lived in Portuguese, or of unjustly depriving Portuguese children of the opportunities to be had in foreign economies, if it refused to commit itself to a "language of choice" model of publicly funded education. The only reason that Quebec is held to a different standard is that it is not a state (see e.g. Carens 2000: 130), but to reiterate, this distinction between the rights of nations that control states and the rights of nations without states is arbitrary, and therefore irrelevant, from a moral point of view.

Its almost as if the critics assume that every individual in Quebec has a fundamental right to be educated, at public expense, in the language of his or her choice. But if Quebec adopted such a policy it would surely be the only jurisdiction on the planet to do so. And the reason why no one has ever gone down this road is quite simple. Governments that wish to maintain thriving economies, effective systems of political representation, smoothly functioning bureaucracies, and cohesive civil societies cannot afford to be neutral or laissez-faire on the language question—they must designate one or more languages as the common medium of communication in all of these areas, and then utilize whatever resources, incentives or pressures are necessary to ensure that they are widely acquired by members of the polity (Miller 1995: 189; Barry 1998: 316; Carens 2000: 77–9; Kymlicka 2001: 212–15). This is precisely what Quebec has done. It has declared French the official language of the province, and it has taken measures to ensure that new immigrants to the province are equipped with the linguistic skills necessary to integrate and become upwardly mobile in the province's predominantly French-speaking economy and society.

At the same time, moreover, Quebec has pursued its official language policy while vigorously supporting the language rights of its historic Anglophone minority. In fact, it is probably fair to say that Quebec has done more to secure the rights of its Anglophone minority than many other Canadian provinces have done for the rights of their French-speaking minorities. Anglophones in Quebec not only enjoy the right to receive a public education in English, but also the right to access health and social services in English, and to use English before the courts of law in the province (Carens 2000: 114; Salée 2002: 190 n. 10).[15] Regardless, Quebec is continually singled out for its supposedly discriminatory language policies.[16] Fukuyama, for one, seems to be under the impression that while Quebec is busy discriminating against Francophones and immigrants by denying their children the right to a publicly-funded education in English (the province's *minority* language), parents elsewhere in Canada remain free to choose the language of instruction (Fukuyama 2006: 9). But this is simply untrue. In every other Canadian province the dominant language of instruction in public schools is English, and the children of English parents do not enjoy anything like a guaranteed right to attend public school in French (the minority language in Canada outside Quebec). In fact, admission to French public schools outside Quebec is generally reserved for the offspring of Francophone parents who meet the same sorts of requirements as those laid out for the Anglophone minority in Quebec.[17]

A similar confusion surrounds the accusation that Quebec's language of instruction policy violates the principle of freedom of association. True, the public education options for Francophones and immigrants in Quebec are more restricted than they would be under a laissez-faire language regime, but no more so than in any other jurisdiction that endeavors to establish and maintain a shared medium of communication amongst its citizenry. Furthermore, just like their counterparts in any other liberal-democratic state, Francophones and immigrants in Quebec are free to opt out of the dominant language community—for example, by paying for private schooling in another language or by moving to another jurisdiction where that language is publicly funded. Indeed Francophones and immigrants in Quebec arguably enjoy greater freedom in this respect because of the proximity of English Canada and the availability of private schooling options in English in Quebec. Granted, these so-called exit options from the dominant language community may very well prove to be too difficult and costly for many individuals, but the Quebec government commits no injustice by refusing to subsidize something which is most aptly described in Barry's terms as an expensive taste (Carens 2000: 85, 129; c.f. Kymlicka 1989: 195). Indeed, if Quebec acceded to the demands of immigrants to be educated in their language of choice, it would only be a matter of time until English became the dominant language and Francophones would experience drastically reduced opportunities in French (Spinner 1994: 159), with no corresponding alternative option (other than perhaps to move to France). Anglophones may complain that this policy threatens the viability of their own community, but again, Quebec has done much to protect the rights of English speakers in the province and even if it could arguably do more it cannot reasonably be expected to take measures that would compromise the long-term survival of French.

The Danish cartoon affair

In September of 2005, the editors of *Jyllands-Posten*, a popular conservative Danish newspaper, commissioned a series of political cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad.[18] The invitation came in the wake of a story about a Danish author, Kåre Bluitgen, who was struggling to find an illustrator for a children's book about the life of Muhammed. As many of the potential illustrators were no doubt aware, some Muslims regard any pictorial representations of Muhammed, regardless of their design or intent, as extremely offensive.[19] Many members of the Danish artistic community were particularly worried about how those illustrations would be received by Muslim extremists, and for this reason declined to participate in the book project. The cartoon initiative was therefore launched in order to highlight the dangers associated with this kind of media self-censorship and to

provoke a public debate around the corrosive effect of religious fundamentalism on freedom of expression. Indeed, part of the exercise was to determine how many members of the Danish Cartoon Society would have the courage to respond to the editors' invitation. Twelve in fact did so, and on September 30, 2005 their cartoons were published under the caption "The Face of Muhammed."

The artists' offerings range, as one commentator aptly observed "from the anodyne and perhaps even amusing to the offensive" (Hansen 2006: 8; cf. Bleich 2006: 18).[20] Amongst the most offensive and inflammatory is a depiction of Muhammed with a bomb in his turban, and another which shows the Prophet perched on a cloud in heaven greeting a line of suicide bombers with a line that reads something like "Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins!" (the reward for their martyrdom). Somewhat less provocative is an image of a cartoonist looking nervously over his shoulder as he puts the finishing touches on his rendering of the Prophet. This image, perhaps more than any other, directly addresses the issue of media self-censorship. The message conveyed by some of the other cartoons is more ambiguous, such as the one which shows a police line-up containing seven figures, six men and one woman, all wearing turbans, and an observer who says he is unable to recognize "him" (the Prophet, presumably). The female figure is in fact the right-wing Danish politician Pia Kjærsgaard, a well known critic of Muslim immigration, who is lampooned along with a smiling Kåre Bluitgen—shown holding a sign offering consultations on public relations. The remaining five figures are of uncertain identity although as a number of commentators have suggested at least one of the five could be a caricature of Muhammed. Some of the other cartoons point their barbs in the direction of the cartoon exercise itself and the players behind its initiation. One such entry depicts a young boy named Muhammed standing in front of a blackboard on which is written (in Persian) "the editors of *Jyllands-Posten* are a bunch of reactionary provocateurs." Another depicts Kåre Bluitgen holding a stick-figure drawing of Muhammed, and wearing a turban topped by an orange on which is written "PR-Stunt."

In many respects, the cartoon controversy offered an eerie flashback to the events surrounding the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* in the United Kingdom (Hansen 2006: 7–8; Lægaard 2007; Davies 2008). As with the Rushdie affair, reaction to the cartoons was relatively mild at first—a calm that belied what would eventually follow. Some two weeks after their publication, a crowd of approximately 3,500 individuals mounted a peaceful protest in Copenhagen and demanded an apology from *Jyllands-Posten*, the same day that the paper was publicly condemned by representatives from 16 Danish Muslim organizations for insulting Muslims and their beliefs. Shortly thereafter, on October 19, 2005, a group of 10 ambassadors from countries with Muslim majorities requested a meeting with Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, to discuss the government's handling of the cartoon affair and to encourage him to take action against *Jyllands-Posten*. Rasmussen declined the invitation and reaffirmed his support for a free and independent Danish press (CBC News 2006; Keane 2008: 858–9). The initial response from *Jyllands-Posten* was also defiant. The paper declined the invitation to apologize, and its cultural editor Flemming Rose defended the decision to publish the cartoons, arguing that "Religious feelings cannot demand special treatment in a secular society" (CBC News 2005). Angered at these reactions, a group of Danish Muslims organized a campaign to bring the images to the attention of Muslim governments and publics overseas, and in December 2005 a dossier containing the cartoons and several unrelated but even more highly offensive images was shown to politicians, religious leaders and media organizations in various countries across the Middle East. The key event appears to have been the circulation of the images at a December 6 meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Mecca, which produced an official statement of condemnation and calls for a United Nations resolution against religious defamation that would include sanctions against offending countries or institutions (Abdul Ghafour and Hannan Faisal Tago 2006; Howden *et al.* 2006; Keane 2008: 858–60). The conflict quickly escalated from this point forward as countries such as Libya, Sudan and Saudi Arabia recalled their diplomatic representatives from Denmark amid calls for a global boycott of Danish products. Public protests spread to dozens of Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries, and while a number of these were mainly peaceful others turned violent and led to significant property damage and loss of life. Meanwhile, death threats against the cartoonists and the editors of *Jyllands-Posten* heightened tensions within Denmark, and concerns for the safety of Danish citizens overseas led the Danish foreign ministry to issue travel advisories for several Muslim majority countries (CBC News 2006; Howden *et al.* 2006).

In an attempt to defuse the situation, on January 30, 2006 *Jyllands-Posten* issued a letter of apology on their website in Danish, English and Arabic. Chief editor Carsten Juste was careful to note, however, that the apology was only for the offense caused by the cartoons and did not extend to the original decision to have them published, which he continued to defend on grounds of freedom of expression. In similar terms, the Danish Prime Minister expressed his personal distress over the fact that some Muslims viewed the cartoons as insulting and defamatory, but simultaneously voiced his unqualified support for the freedom of the Danish press. While some Muslims were satisfied with these qualified apologies, including a spokesman for Denmark's Islamic Faith Community, on the whole the reaction against the cartoons continued to intensify, particularly overseas where violent protests led to additional loss of life and to the firebombing of Danish embassies in Beirut and Damascus. Adding further fuel to this fire was the decision by several newspapers in Europe, the United Kingdom, North America and elsewhere to republish the cartoons as a sign of solidarity with the editors of *Jyllands-Posten*. This decision drew the ire of the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, who accused the papers of a preference for provocation over constructive dialogue with the opponents of the cartoons (Cowell 2006; Hansen 2006; Keane 2008: 860–1).[21] This cycle of provocation and counter-provocation continued into 2008 when Danish police uncovered a plot to assassinate Kurt Westergaard, the author of the cartoon depicting Muhammad with a bomb in his turban. *Jyllands-Posten* and several other Danish newspapers responded by reprinting Westergaard's cartoon, a decision soon followed by a

fresh wave of terrorist threats against Danish citizens and violent attacks against Danish Embassies overseas, including an incident in Pakistan that killed six. In 2009 a second assassination plot was uncovered, this one targeting both Kurt Westergaard and Flemming Rose, and in the most recent installment of this saga, in January 2010 a 28-year-old Somali man, with links to the radical Islamist al-Shabab militia, was apprehended by police after breaking into Westergaard's home with an axe and a knife, threatening to kill him (CBC News 2006; Keane 2008: 845–6; Bone 2009).

The cartoon controversy begs a number of compelling questions, but I want to focus on one in particular: should the cartoons have been published or should they have been banned? This deceptively simple question brings us face to face with some particularly challenging issues, including the potential tensions that arise between freedom of expression and religious tolerance, the difference between satirical speech and hate speech, the impact of negative stereotyping on the security and well-being of ethnic or religious minorities, and the role of civic multiculturalism in promoting tolerance and social cohesion in a culturally diverse democracy. I will consider three different answers to cartoon question: i) the cartoons were harmful, served no valuable purpose and should have been banned; ii) the cartoons were a legitimate exercise of free speech, served an important public function, and should not have been banned; and iii) the cartoons should not have been banned, but the decision to publish them was unsound and deserves to be roundly criticized.

The case for banning the cartoons

One does not have to be an opponent of freedom of expression to argue that the cartoons should have been banned. Most liberal states and liberal-minded theorists regard as axiomatic the assumption that freedom of expression has its limits, and that censorship can be justified as a means of protecting other vital human interests and preventing serious and substantive harm (see e.g. Mill 1978: 9, 53; Parekh 2000: 320; Galeotti 2002: 137–68). Granted, the potential for harm must always be assessed in relation to the potential benefits of freedom of expression, and in cases where the benefits clearly outweigh the harms censorship cannot be justified. Nevertheless, in this particular case it is difficult to interpret the decision to print (and then later reprint) the cartoons as anything other than an act of naked provocation (Pieterse 2007: 180; Carens 2006: 37, 40).[22] The editors at *Jyllands-Posten* were well aware that the images would prove to be offensive to many Muslims, and would be likely to provoke anger and outrage—especially given the paper's links with right-wing parties that have been highly critical of Muslim immigration and Muslim customs and beliefs (Bleich 2006: 17; Carens 2006: 40–1; Keane 2008: 864, 867–8). The editors would also have been aware of the elevated levels of suspicion and mistrust directed towards European Muslims in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York, London and Madrid, and it is simply not plausible for them to claim they had no idea that publishing the cartoons in this volatile political climate would aggravate anti-Muslim sentiment and reinforce negative Muslim stereotypes. For both of these reasons, the caricatures of Muhammad were not particularly well suited to the task of increasing mutual understanding and amongst Muslims and non-Muslims in Denmark, or to the task of inspiring a reasonable public debate on the problems of self-censorship and religious intolerance (see e.g. Burcharth 2006). Quite the opposite—the cartoons were virtually custom-designed to undermine the possibility of reasonable dialogue and debate, which clearly contradicts the stated justification for their publication. To reiterate, harmful speech can be justified in a free and democratic society if it serves a valuable public function, but if the nature of the speech act is such that it undermines that very same public function it can justifiably be restricted (see e.g. Mendus 1993: 205; cf. Modood 1993: 148).

Even if we accept that the cartoon exercise was not entirely without merit, the harmful nature of the images was more than sufficient to outweigh whatever marginal benefits might have been gained from their publication. True, some of the images are relatively tame, while others mock both Kåre Bluitgen and the *Jyllands-Posten* editors, but others are extremely offensive and some are clearly designed to promote religious hatred—and not just hatred of Muslim beliefs but hatred of *Muslims*. The most obvious example is Kurt Westergaard's cartoon of Muhammed wearing a bomb-laden turban, which more than one commentator has appropriately categorized as an example of racist hate speech. The image is racist because it is meant to represent not just Muhammed but *all* Muslims, and it carries the message that *all* Muslims are prone to terrorist violence (Bleich 2006: 21; Modood 2006c: 54; Gemie 2006: 31).[23] Racism and the promotion of racial hatred is objectionable enough in itself, but it also has corrosive knock-on effects on the rights and opportunities of those who are its targets. It hardly needs mentioning that racism is hurtful and degrading and can easily undermine the dignity and self-esteem of its victims, poisoning their daily existence with feelings of self-doubt, resentment and anger. Acts of racist vilification also promote feelings of fear, mistrust and hatred of the target group which can drastically reduce the opportunities available to their members in areas such as education, employment, housing and political participation. It may even undermine their ability to feel safe and secure, let alone welcome, in the wider society (Modood 1993: 145–7; Parekh 2000: 314).[24] Some have responded to these charges by arguing that the cartoons do not express hatred of Muslims but at most only hatred of the Muslim religion (O'Leary 2006: 23–5).[25] Yet even if we accept this point it effectively changes nothing, because regardless of what name we give to the offence perpetrated by these hateful images, their poisonous effects—on Muslims and on the public perception of Muslims—is the same, and for this reason their publication should have been prohibited.

In defense of the cartoons

The editors at *Jyllands-Posten* had every right to publish the cartoons, and should be commended for their courage in doing so. Any effort at censorship—whether

state enforced or self-imposed—would have constituted a serious setback for freedom of expression in Denmark, and would only have further emboldened those who rely on fear and intimidation to stifle the open exchange of ideas and criticism. Several of the cartoons were indeed provocative but not gratuitously so as some commentators have suggested (see e.g. Carens 2006: 37, 39–40).[26] On the contrary, the images served several important functions, the first of which was to draw attention to the very real problem of media self-censorship both in Denmark and, given the number of foreign newspapers that refused to reprint the cartoons, in numerous other countries in Europe and around the world. Some of the cartoons also drew much-needed critical attention to the reality of religiously motivated violence, intolerance and inequality (particularly gender inequality).[27] True, this connection is sometimes exaggerated by those who assume that religious devotion necessarily predisposes an individual towards violent or intolerant behavior, but there is no denying the fact that a great deal of suffering, bloodshed and oppression has been perpetrated in the name not only of Islam but also Christianity, Judaism and other world religions (Hansen 2006: 12).[28] These issues warrant fearless and clear-eyed debate in any country committed to the freedom, dignity and well-being of the individual. We should also remember that open dialogue and debate can be an effective tool for marginalizing extremists, in that it opens up a space where the voices of religious moderates can be heard (see e.g. O'Leary 2006: 24; cf. Parekh 2000: 331; Spinner-Halev 2000: 150–3). A point that went largely unmentioned in the cartoon controversy is that the kind of dialogue sought by the editors at *Jyllands-Posten* in fact offered significant benefits to the vast majority of Muslims who renounce violence and intimidation as means of defending their beliefs. By participating in such a dialogue, Muslims could have taken the opportunity to separate the fact from the fiction about their practices and beliefs, to persuade their fellow citizens that the threat of Islam has been greatly exaggerated, and to present their views on what the reasonable accommodation of the Islamic faith might look like in the Danish context. Granted, dialogue of this sort is often difficult and adversarial, and there are no guarantees that it will lead either to mutual understanding or mutual accommodation, yet it still offers more hope than the alternative, which is to let the outstanding issues be "settled" by an appeal to force or fear. Indeed, from this perspective, the true villains in the cartoon affair are those who preached and perpetrated violent acts as a means of stifling this opportunity for constructive Muslim–non-Muslim engagement.

Some critics have nevertheless argued that the harmful nature of the cartoons far outweighs the possible benefits to be obtained from their publication, but on the whole these arguments fail to stand up to critical scrutiny. To begin with, none of the cartoons—not even the most offensive examples—are unequivocally racist (Hansen 2006: 11–12; O'Leary 2006: 23–6; Lægaard 2007: 189–90). True, some of the cartoons are open to this interpretation. For example, one plausible reading of the suicide bomber cartoons is that *all* Muslims are either vicious terrorists or hapless fools who murder for the sake of sexual gratification in the afterlife. However, another equally plausible, non-racist interpretation of these

images is that *some* Muslims are this way, just as some Christians, some Jews and some individuals from thoroughly secular backgrounds are this way—and for a variety of reasons other than their inherent racial or religious predispositions. Like most of the cartoons, these two images are in fact subject to multiple different plausible interpretations, and it is simply arbitrary to declare that they carry *only* the message of racism or religious hatred.

Granted, this still leaves us with the argument that, regardless of whether the cartoons should be considered racist, the fact remains that many of them were highly offensive to Muslims who regard any pictorial representation as blasphemous—and this fact alone is reason enough to condemn their publication (Carens 2006: 37).[29] But the obvious reply here is that there is no such thing in a liberal society as a right not to be offended by others. Individuals have the right to hold and express their religious beliefs, to celebrate those beliefs in communion with other believers, and to be protected from persecution and discrimination on the basis of those beliefs, but their fellow citizens cannot legitimately be compelled to respect those beliefs or to refrain from criticizing, mocking or lampooning them no matter how much distress or offence this may cause (Hansen 2006: 13–15; O'Leary 2006: 23–4, 29; cf. Barry 2001: 264–71).[30]

Consider in this context the common multiculturalist refrain that it is unjust to banish religion and religious reasoning to the sphere of private life while secularism is allowed to dominate the public sphere (Parekh 2000: 322–31; Spinner-Halev 2000: 142–65; Casanova 2007: 61–5; Modood 2007: 72–9). Fair enough, one might reply, but if you want to be part of the public discourse in a free and democratic society you must accept what that discourse brings—even if that sometimes means harsh, and possibly disrespectful, criticism. As Randell Hansen correctly observes (2006: 16), aggrieved Muslims have the same rights as any other citizens, religious or secular, to criticize and protest this sort of treatment. They are also free to respond with insulting or disrespectful speech of their own (though a more effective strategy might be to seize the moral high ground by calling for mutually respectful dialogue) but it is going too far to call for the banning of the cartoons or the prosecution of the publishers and cartoonists. Indeed, if we were to accept the principle that speech which is merely offensive should be censored we would probably have to consider banning some of the classic works of political philosophy like the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, where Marx compares religion to an insidious drug and caricatures religious believers as the hapless dupes of an ideology that helps keep them enslaved to their capitalist masters (Marx 1978: 54). A similar fate would likely be in store for the enormously popular anti-faith writings of evolutionary scientist Richard Dawkins, who compares religious belief to a form of mental illness and describes the God of the Old Testament as "a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sado-masochistic, capriciously malevolent bully" (2008: 51). We might also have to do without the works of influential feminist theorists like Susan Okin and Martha Nussbaum, who have excoriated religions of all stripes for contributing to the misery, oppression,

abuse and needless death of countless women around the world (Okin 1998, 1999; Nussbaum 1999: 29–54). In fact, religious groups would be just as likely to find their own activities censured under such a regime. Fundamentalists would have to think twice about referring to women as harlots for wearing immodest dress or about telling non-believers they are evil and bound for the fires of hell, and they would certainly face restrictions on their right to publicly denigrate and degrade non-heterosexuals.

Free speech is what permits all of these things to be said or written, and members of religious minorities in particular should be careful to avoid calling for the removal of the very protections available to offensive speech which also shield them from censorship at the hands of the dominant majority. Freedom of expression is simply too vital a right to be sacrificed for something as trivial as the right not to be given offence (see e.g. Jones 1993: 132–3). It is only when speech presents a serious and immanent danger to others that it can justifiably be restricted. Examples that fall into this category would include speech that poses a serious risk to public order and safety, such as the incitement to riot, or speech which threatens the safety and security of particular groups or individuals such as incitement to racial hatred or violence (Mill 1978: 50–3; Galeotti 2002: 150–60; O'Leary 2006: 27).[31] Granted, there will always be grey areas and in some cases it will be difficult to determine whether a particular speech act has crossed the line from acceptable to unacceptable, but the Danish cartoons clearly did not pose this kind of a threat and their publication was entirely justified.

Defending freedom of expression, condemning the cartoons, and a comment on the importance of civic multiculturalism

Critics of the censorship option are correct in their assessment that the cartoons are neither racist nor an expression of hatred for Muslims (at least not unambiguously so) even if they are offensive to some members of the Islamic faith. They also rightly conclude that the cartoon affair raised important issues that need to be vigorously debated in any democracy—issues like the fragility of freedom of expression, the darker sides of religious belief, and the role of the media as a shaper of public opinion. It is also fair to say that, even though the editors at *Jyllands-Posten* are guilty of underestimating Muslim reaction to the cartoons, they could not reasonably have foreseen the rapid globalization of the images and the violence and bloodshed they would precipitate beyond the borders of Denmark. All of which is to say that the decision to publish the cartoons deserved to be protected by the right to freedom of expression. But was the decision to publish the cartoons a wise decision? No, it was not, and for this reason the editors deserve to be roundly criticized (Carens 2006: 33–4; cf. Jones 1993: 132–3). As more than one critic has pointed out, the editors must have known that many Muslims would be highly offended by the images. They also would have been aware that some of the images would likely stoke anti-Muslim sentiment, particularly given the elevated levels of Islamophobia in Denmark and Europe at the time of publication. Could they not see how

both of these factors would work to poison and polarize the ensuing debate (see e.g. Shearmur 2006: 25)?

If the editors were indeed serious about provoking a thoughtful debate, a much wiser strategy would have been to commission a series of thoughtful articles on the dangers of self-censorship, the limits of religious tolerance, and the challenges of integration and mutual accommodation in a culturally and religiously diverse democracy. A more balanced debate would also have been more likely had *Jyllands-Posten* canvassed a range of Muslim perspectives on the taboo surrounding pictorial representations of Muhammad, and had they offered Muslims an opportunity to comment on how the chilling effects of religious extremism on freedom of expression should be addressed. *Jyllands-Posten* instead opted for a more inflammatory strategy, and what is worse, they persisted with this strategy when all of the available evidence pointed clearly to its failure. Most notably, in the aftermath of the foiled plot to assassinate Kurt Westergaard and Flemming Rose *Jyllands-Posten* again opted for insult and provocation by republishing the most offensive of the cartoons. This may have been the most instinctive and viscerally satisfying reaction but it was not a sign of sound or measured judgement. Rather than seizing the opportunity to divert the trajectory of the cartoon affair onto a more constructive path—perhaps by publishing a series of articles penned by Muslim and non-Muslim moderates condemning the extremists and calling for constructive engagement and dialogue—the editors chose a path that was more conducive to perpetuating and escalating the conflict.

The conduct of *Jyllands-Posten* in the cartoon affair is a prime example of a breakdown in what might be called civic multiculturalism, by which I mean those voluntary and non-enforceable norms or standards of conduct that help foster a climate of tolerance and civility in a culturally diverse society. For example, although the editors did nothing that could legitimately make them the target of legal sanction, their actions fell well short of what can be considered beneficial or praiseworthy, and did far more damage than good for Muslim–non-Muslim relations in Denmark.[32] *Jyllands-Posten*'s failure is all the more notable because of the significant power it wields as a shaper of public opinion in Denmark. Those who wield such power have a special moral responsibility to use it wisely and responsibly, particularly when it comes to dealing with vulnerable or vilified minorities (Carens 2006: 40–1; Pieterse 2007: 180). Yet the editors were not the only parties at fault in the cartoon affair, and the responsibility for the breakdown of civic multiculturalism must be laid at the feet of several other actors in this drama, including those Muslims who chose violence and intimidation over peaceful protest and dialogue as a means of airing their concerns. Such tactics may have been well-suited to the purposes of extremists, but for moderates looking to build bridges of mutual understanding and respect with members of the wider society the use of violence or intimidation is extremely counterproductive, not to mention entirely unjustified. Others who must bear some responsibility in this conflict are those members of the general public who chose to hear only the extremists and not the moderate voices in the Muslim

community, those who propagated only the most negative and sensationalist interpretations of Islam, and those who refused to subject the judgement and motivations of the cartoonists or the editors at *Jyllands-Posten*'s to any kind of critical evaluation (Carens 2006: 35–8; Shearmur 2006: 24–5).

And what of the Danish government? Do they have a legitimate role to play in fostering civic multiculturalism? This is a more difficult question. On the one hand, the state in a liberal-democracy has no right to compel either the press or individual citizens to show respect for or to refrain from criticizing the religious beliefs of their fellow citizens. On the other hand, the state does have a legitimate role to play in maintaining peaceful and stable relations amongst the diverse groups making up its civil society, and in creating a political climate in which citizens can feel safe and secure regardless of their religious beliefs and convictions. The Danish government did in fact make some efforts in this regard, for example by speaking out against the demonization of its Muslim citizens (Brogger 2006), but it could easily have done more. For example, it could have agreed to the meeting requested by the Muslim ambassadors in 2005 as a sign of its willingness to hear out all sides in the conflict, and as a means of reducing the potential for further escalation of the conflict. Furthermore, although the government was fully justified in its decision to support press freedom, it could also have shown more leadership by working to support a public debate on the key issues when it became clear that such a discussion was not going to emerge spontaneously (see e.g. Shearmur 2006: 25; cf. Modood 2006b: 61).

To conclude then, censorship was not the correct response to the publication of the cartoons but neither was a blind reliance on the virtues of free speech. In an increasingly culturally diverse society like Denmark, which faces significant challenges with integration and social cohesion, and a minority that is often regarded with suspicion and hostility, what is also required is the wisdom, and the will, to use that freedom constructively to promote mutual toleration, and mutual respect amongst its Muslim and non-Muslim citizens.

Conclusion

One of the greatest benefits of a contextual approach to the challenges of multicultural accommodation is that it keeps our theories grounded in reality and helps prevent political philosophy from becoming effectively irrelevant to political practice. As James Tully has argued (2004: 93–5), if our aim is to arrive at just and effective resolutions to struggles for cultural recognition it is vital that we understand what those struggles are really about, and the best way to do so is not to start with some abstract theory but by examining specific instances of such struggles and by paying particular attention to how the participants in those struggles articulate their claims. Contextualism, in other words, is a more accurate means of assessing the nature of the challenges faced by theorists or practitioners of diversity management. In addition to its more practical benefits, contextual multiculturalism has the advantage of being more democratic.

Specifically, by taking people's concrete claims and circumstances as the departure point for debate, contextualism embodies a signature principle of deliberative democracy, which is to listen to one's interlocutors and to respect their right to present their case in their own terms (see e.g. Taylor 1994b: 260). I don't pretend to have done full justice in this chapter to the richness of the contextualist methodology, but I do hope to have left the reader with a small taste of the potential fruits of such an approach, and of the pressing need to cultivate an interdependent relationship between the worlds of theory and practice in tackling the difficult challenges of mutual accommodation in a culturally diverse democracy.