

and SMU campuses. The ability of university faculty and students to study and more fully understand contentious issues without administrative interference is of great importance.

Suppressing material vital for the study of significant world events is the opposite of what our universities ought to be doing: Promoting open, impartial study and debate. Your administrations are in error both in demanding that the cartoons in question be removed from Peter March's office door and in the removal from circulation of a recent edition of *The Cadre*.

University students and professors should be afforded absolute freedom to post, publish or teach about any article of controversy they see fit. How can you foster debate on what should or shouldn't be the limits of a free press if the material in question has itself been censored?

Your actions have made what may be the most influential pieces of political and religious commentary less accessible to your students.

This restriction could lessen the capacity and motivation of your students and faculty to observe and study the factors that have led to a seminal standoff between freedom of the press and Islamic values. I sincerely hope the manner in which your universities have chosen to deal with this situation is not mirrored by other institutions – that would be a sad day for those who believe in the free exchange of ideas and ideals.

I appreciate the difficulty of the situation in which your administrations find themselves as the result of the actions of Peter Marsh and Ray Keating. There has been violent, hateful reaction to the publication of the controversial Mohammed cartoons throughout the world, and nobody wants such malicious behavior to rear its head on Canadian university campuses. But if peace and calm can only be achieved through the suppression of controversial material, the price is simply too high.

Sincerely,
P. K. Smith, BA

The latest chapter in the unhappy chronicles of the early 21st Century is a clash of cultural values in a modern world. Intolerance and misunderstanding, orchestrated with the sound of chanting mobs and the threat of the sword, the gun, and the bomb, has been generated by a simple exercise of freedom of expression most Canadians take for granted. This

is the freedom for which generations of our forebears sacrificed their lives.

The reaction of our university administrations, in stifling free debate on this or indeed on any subject is distressing and irresponsible. Students are the cream of our intellectual society and our future leaders. They must be allowed the right to debate, within the law and under the protection of that law, without censorship and fear of reprisal. This clash over the publishing of the Danish cartoons is a further wake-up call that our supposedly tolerant multicultural society is more fragile than we could imagine. But more worrisome is the possibility that multiculturalism is not the whole of the explanation, but rather that the same forces that have engendered media self-censorship in much of Europe are beginning to have the same effect in this country. That is a truly fearsome prospect to behold.

Twenty years ago, newspapers would have republished those Danish cartoons, no matter how offensive. Editors have traditionally defended their freedom to offend, yet this time they sat on their hands. Does the restraint indicate sensitivity towards a minority community? Is it due to concerns over threats of violence, either within Canada or to Canadians living, working and fighting abroad? Whatever the case, the impact of this affair on our freedoms demands continuing attention.

The University of Prince Edward Island is gripped in trepidation of circulating "*The Cadre*" ... for fear of a perceived reaction. As a writer, this flies in the face of everything I hold dear. By refusing to allow students to see and explore these editorial cartoons, the university is preventing a crucial issue from being debated by the students. It is critical for such a debate to take place on campus at a university. It is an unbiased environment where students can ask questions. Universities have to be forums for asking difficult questions. For students, it is all about coming to grips with very difficult world issues and trying to understand them. It is an aspect of the student experience. The diversity of the observations and questions from students, faculty and staff would clearly validate the event's relevance. Now would be the time for the University to cover the story and add context and knowledge to what should be a full airing of censorship, deep religious traditions and, at the same time, a dangerous global flash point.

In journalism telling the truth, not letting anyone suppress the truth, being forthright, giving the reader or the viewer the full story is what we

do. The very highest calling of journalism is to explain complex issues. This is certainly a complex issue. And, by definition, you cannot possibly explain a raging debate about cartoons if you do not show the cartoons.

Freedom of speech and expression is and ought to be an extremely popular cause. Sensitivity to Islamic tenets is also a politically correct motivator. The proper reaction to the cartoon episode should come in the form of adopting a strategy aimed at persistent enlightenment of primitive religious and social taboos that are behind the enslavement of vulnerable minds. If it takes pen and paper, fingers and keyboard strokes, computers and internet, let everyone exercise their freedom to express their thoughts about any religion.

For the truth to prevail, freedom of expression is the way. Seek the truth and debate it. Either that or let historic lies and deceit linger around to feed backwardness and violent temptations indefinitely.

In the words of the great Canadian poet Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, let us remember once again the sacrifice of those who fought and died for freedom.

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Patricia Gray

Bravo! You are right, the administration wrong. The UPEI President needs to take his thumb out of his mouth and grow up. The cartoons need to be published so that people can see how the sons of Ishmael react to freedom of expression.

Peter Woods, 70 years old, retired engineer and priest.

The decision to publish the infamous Muslim-riling cartoons was, IMHO, neither bold nor brave nor noble, it was just redundant and stupid. Not quite as stupid as, say, threatening to kill or actually killing people in an insane reaction to said cartoons, but plain stupid nonetheless.

Sure, you have a right to publish these things. Any fool already knows that; it didn't need to be proven. "It's been done."

What great illumination did this add to the debate? Will it help to bridge cultural divides? Or does it only serve extremists of every stripe, from

the mountains of Afghanistan to the halls of the White House, who would have us in a state of perpetual conflict?

Perhaps you should publish a running series of tasteless cartoons stereotyping Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists... oh heck, why not whites, blacks, natives, Asians, Alberta oil jockeys, BC bud-heads... and pea-brained racist hicks from P.E.I.?

You are certainly free to poke a stick in a beehive. And when people are running around getting stung and being sent to hospital with venom reactions, you can stand there proudly and declare "I had a right to do that." Everyone is free to be an idiot. Just don't expect to be invited to the next picnic.

Sincerely,
Scott Willing
Boggy Creek, MB

Hi Ray, a fellow student here from the far reaches of York University. I just wanted you to know that I entirely support your decision to publish the cartoons and urge you to continue the struggle against your administration's attempt to limit free speech. The right to critically examine that which is socially relevant should be protected above all else within the academic community, and it is truly unfortunate that some would seek to prohibit such a crucial discourse.

Bravo to you and your staff,
Stephen Zwir

I am a Saint Mary's student who is greatly interested in the freedom controversy currently. I see that you and Peter March (of SMU) have stood up for what is right. As I believe in freedom for the Muslim faith, I greatly believe in freedom of speech. I like to be very political of my views, as today I provided security for Peter March, and listened to the whole protest.

You are justified in your way of expressing freedom of speech, but make sure you sensor yourself no matter what you believe in. The water is boiling hot, and you don't want to fall in. The Muslim faith is very serious, and testy. I think this is well over-reacted, and should be dealt with in a more civil way. The ridicule should remain in Denmark, without violence, not here in Canada. You were merely advising of the current news around the world. You shouldn't be chased around for that.

Thanks for you time,
Will Shatford