

THE UPEI CADRE

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Letters to the editor and submissions from contributors should be sent to upei cadre@gmail.com. All articles submitted must include name, year and field of study (if applicable) and contact information. Submissions for which we are unable to verify authorization will not be published.

Next meeting: February 27, 2006 at 4:30PM & **next deadline:** March 3, 2006 at 5:00PM

Ray Keating
Editor in Chief

The past two weeks have been rife with extreme reactions. On the local front, the reaction to The Cadre's printing of the Muhammad cartoons was extreme. While the university administration had the right to ban distribution of The Cadre in the buildings it owns, and the Student Union seemingly had a right to demand that The Cadre turn over remaining issues of the paper as The Cadre's legal owners, both reactions were knee-jerk and ill advised. Sending the UPEI Police to the offices of The Cadre to confiscate the papers was certainly extreme, as was the assistant manager of campus security's Allen Weale telling a staff member to 'put down your pen and paper' when questioned about their actions. The university administration has sent the message that students may only engage in debate on issues which are deemed to be inoffensive to all. The Student Union, in statements to the press, referenced calls from the university administration, upset parents and Island Muslims. When I last reviewed the Student Union Constitution, none of these people were their constituents.

All of us at The Cadre are respectful of the fact that the cartoons are offensive to some people. We are also keenly aware of the situations that have arisen in other countries as a result of some people's reaction to the cartoons. Please notice that I didn't say that the cartoons or the printing of them caused this unrest. Cartoons are simple inanimate objects. They may be funny, silly, offensive, annoying or nasty, but any unrest that comes about in reaction to them is caused by people.

The Muslim community in Prince Edward Island is a perfect example of how people should react when they are opposed to something. They used the media, sent e-mails, made phone calls and had meetings. No one burned anything down or blew anything up; as it should be. Clearly, The Cadre was within its legal rights to print the cartoons. This is a Fundamental Freedom guaranteed in Section 2b of the Charter of Rights and

But I Digress...

F r e e d o m s .
Having said this, for us it didn't come down to a Charter issue. It came down to who owned what. The university owns the buildings we distribute in and they denied us access to do so. The Student Union owns The Cadre, and they denied the students access to the paper.

Obviously the fear based reaction on campus pales in comparison to the reaction in some areas of the world to the printing of these cartoons. I reviewed the headlines on the subject as I sat down to write this: "Cleric Offers Reward for Killing Prophet Cartoonist"... "Indian State Government Official Offers Reward for Beheading of Cartoonist"... "Cartoon Protests Leave 15 Dead in Nigeria"... the reactions are clearly disproportionate to the offense. Reports have come to light that attempts were made to deal with the issue in the Danish legal system when the cartoons were originally run. These attempts failed and some Muslims, unwilling to accept defeat in the legal system as the end of their recourse began to circulate the cartoons in the Middle East. This was the match that set off the powder keg, not the original publication of the cartoons. These violent clashes are not the actions of the average Muslim. The people involved here are extremists, unwilling to recognize that in the western world, we enjoy both freedom of expression and freedom of (or from) religion. The vast majority of these extremists are coming from countries that do not separate church from state. We do. Any religion that expects us to respect their beliefs, must also respect our freedoms.



Respect cannot be gained through violence or threat of violence, this is simply acquiescence. True respect may only be earned.

I recognize that many (if not most) Muslims are offended by these cartoons. We did not intend to further offend them, but we did intend to shed light on the reasons behind the unrest, something which could only be done with the complete context provided by the cartoons themselves. Suggesting that we should describe them rather than printing them is not really any different than suggesting that a chemist should accept the findings of another's experiment without further study simply because it caused an explosion the last time the experiment was conducted. We would not make this suggestion. We would, of course suggest that the experiment be conducted with care and attention. Our care and attention came in the form of the words accompanying the cartoons; words which never reached the readers because of the actions of the administration and the Student Union.

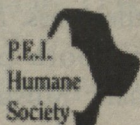
Take note, that which you may say or do is now determined by the court of public opinion rather than the law of the land. If we allow ourselves to be cowed by fear of extreme reprisals such as this, we have already lost a significant portion of our freedoms.

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