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Thursday, June 24, 2004

'Hatriotism' & Michael Moore: Turkish Muslim says 'Fahrenheit 911' wrong on liberation of Iraq

Posted: June 24, 2004

1:00 a.m. Eastern

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He was lauded with a 20-minute standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival. A.O. Scott of the New York Times calls his movie a "passionate expression of outraged patriotism." At the June showing of "Fahrenheit 911" before the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science in Los Angeles, he received a standing ovation of over a minute.

And Michael Moore's most recent work spits in the face of my dead countrymen.

As yet another innocent person has their head severed by Islamic "extremists," Moore apparently glosses over the fact that democracy, in general – and America, specifically – is under attack. I am innately aware that Michael Moore is first and foremost a provocateur, and he thrives on controversy.

I am also sure he will smile gleefully at this op-ed piece, because I mention his film, which is free advertising. He has gone on record on his website as saying he hopes we will watch his movie, even if we disagree, because his facts and analysis are correct. He notes that he has a "dogged commitment to uncovering the facts."

I am not holding my breath. With the aforementioned facts in mind, I must still speak. Michael Moore has released the cinematic equivalent of a *French kiss* to all who hate America. He is the leading exponent of *hatriotism*.

"*HATE-RIOTISM*" describes the new breeze blowing through the American media. It is now "cool" and "relevant" to mock everything for which our soldiers are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Criticizing democracy and America has long been in vogue in continental Europe from those who look with disdain at American "naivete," while still lamenting the Islamic onslaught.

Now imported to our shores, *hatriotism* is the simplest way to get the growing contingent of professional protestors who populate television audiences to cheer: Mock America. Mock our involvement in Iraq. Mock President Bush ... and get rousing applause.

The only problem is ... America has freed my kinsmen.

I am a Persian Turkish immigrant raised as a Sunni Muslim, and in the interest of full disclosure, I must state that I left Islam in 1982, and became an American citizen. Yet, as I survey the current cultural landscape, I cannot help but be less than enthused when Michael Moore states that his film is a call to true patriotism.

The present conflict is not a war against Islam, and neither is it a "war for oil." In the previous six military endeavors, American troops sided with Muslims who were under attack, and there are much less extreme methods of garnering oil. This is a war of ideologies, and with "Fahrenheit 911," Moore clearly shows his.

His visual narrative of Lila Lipscombe, a Flint, Mich., mother who sent her sons to the military and "lives to regret it," as Roger Friedman of FOX News notes, is "unexpectedly poignant."

I wonder – was Moore equally moved when he heard of the honor killings which daily threatened the lives of Muslim women in Afghanistan? Was he equally as outraged at the female circumcision practices in my countrymen's lands, because it lessens the threat of adultery?

In fact, I wonder ... where were all the "hatriots" when our soldiers freed all the women of Afghanistan from the Taliban? Where were the feminists when our soldiers liberated the Afghan women to be educated for the first time in years?

The irony is, for all of their false bravado behind the First Amendment and their right to "free speech," the hatriots are exercising this right *because* American men and women shed their blood to afford them this right against those who would seek to oppress it. I would invite Michael Moore to *my* homeland to make a movie criticizing Turkish oppression and see what happens. The freedom he enjoys now was purchased with a dear price.

The central fact of the current controversy is the conflict between Islamic theocracy and American democracy. Islam has not now – nor has it ever – allowed religious freedom or freedom of expression. The best the Islamic republics can offer is "religious toleration." Based on the "Pact of Umar," religious toleration allows non-Muslims to enter Islamic republics, but they must pay a tax (jizyat). They can practice their faiths, but they cannot convert anyone from Islam. To do so means deportation ... or worse.

Further, Islamic prophecy foretells of worldwide conversion to Sharia law under Islam, and thus, those who are fighting against us are "holy warriors." In this instance, I would say our president is half right. He says we are not at war with Islam. I agree. However, a significant portion of Islam is in fact at war with us.

And Michael Moore is blind to it all.

The clearest definition of religious freedom and freedom of expression I can make is this – the religious freedom America offers means that I would fight and die for a Muslim's right to build a mosque in every city in America. It is precisely this freedom for which our soldiers are fighting.

In recent days, it has become fashionable for those like Moore to say, "I support the troops, but not the war." This is the equivalent to saying, "I support doctors but not surgery." The position they hold is ludicrous at best, and insulting at worst. When my brother – also a professor and my co-author of five

books – and I came out in support of the Iraqi intervention, we began to be accosted by peace protestors when we spoke. I found this amusing.

Allow me to say it emphatically: I support the troops – and their mission.

Our soldiers – your sons and daughters – are fighting to preserve Michael Moore's freedom to produce such works that mock their very existence. I hope he realizes that. They are allowing my countrymen the right to freely express themselves without being stoned to death as a consequence. Or have their heads severed slowly while their executioners are chanting "Allah hu Akbar."

There is one final irony. There is a film producer who has worked for years, chasing down Michael Moore in an effort to interview him. The young man, named Michael Wilson, is making a documentary titled "Michael Moore Hates America." So far, Moore has dodged him at every turn. Anyone who knows cinema recognizes that this is the exact tactic Moore took in his film "Roger and Me," as he chased an automobile executive for an interview.

Do you see the paradox? Because Michael Moore is now in the mainstream of *hatriotism*, and now the young conservatives are the radicals, Moore has become his own worst nightmare. Michael Moore has become that which he mocked. He has become an aloof elite.

Count me among the radicals.

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