

Mazen Kamalmaz

**Against Colonialism
and fundamentalism**

2008

It is a big question for us, Muslims who consider freedom as our main aim or our main principle of life, where we stand in the conflict between what can be defined as neo-colonialist policies of the capitalist west and Islamic fundamentalism. In brief, my answer is that I think we must stick to our main principle: that is freedom, away from both.

No doubt that we would not accept, under any excuse, any violation or denial of the freedom of thought, consciousness and speech; let it be against Muslims or any other groups. But this position will change at the same moment that such a criticism becomes a justification of occupation or racism.

It is clear that those cartoons, about prophet Mohammad, tells more than just a simple and just criticism of brutal and intolerant Islamic fundamentalism; in fact, this is a part of a broader campaign that aims to confirm that Muslims are backward people; and to justify that colonialism is a necessary project designed to civilize these people; which in a way, resembles "God supports segregation" that could be seen in US and South Africa's streets before the triumph of the human rights movement.

It is not surprising that such an argument was repeated also by Bush's administration. People in the west, like anywhere else, are ready to defend their freedom more than the profits or greed of capital.

On the other side, fundamentalists promote denial of others' basic liberties, non-Muslims and even Muslims, as a prerequisite of resisting neo-colonialism. Totally the contrary, the antidote of colonialism is freedom, not a reactionary repression. Defending the freedom of speech or press is not equal to supporting the Iraq war or occupation, or neo-colonialism, which badly needs such racist arguments as its basic justification. It is also right that resisting this colonialism does not mean imposing Islamic religious dogmas on others.

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