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EDITOR'S NOTE:

That appears below are an article written by SHELDON RAMPTON of the Centre for Media and Democracy titled "THE HATRED FOR HADJI GIRL" and the COMMENTS to the article (27 pages all in all) which appeared in AlterNet. The article was posted on the 26th June 2006.

OUR THANKS TO ALTERNET

The website address of the article and comments is :
<http://www.alternet.org/waroniraq/38084>

THE HATRED BEHIND

"HADJI GIRL"

A videotaped recording of a Marine singing about a shootout with an Iraqi family has war critics up in arms about U.S. troops' open hostility to Muslims and Arabs.

If you want to understand why the war is going so badly in Iraq, it may help to examine the recent reaction to "Hadji Girl," the videotaped [song about killing Iraqis](#) by U.S. Marine Corporal Joshua Belile. The song became controversial when the [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#) (CAIR) discovered it on the internet and [objected to its lyrics](#). "Hadji Girl" tells the story of a soldier *"out in the sands of Iraq / And we were under attack*

*Then suddenly to my surprise
I looked up and I saw her eyes
And I knew it was love at first sight.*

*And she said...
Dirka Dirka Mohammed Jihad
Sherpa Sherpa Bak Allah*

Hadji girl I can't understand what you're saying.

The girl says that she "wanted me to meet her family / But I, well, I couldn't figure out how to say no. / Cause I don't speak Arabic." They visit her home, a "side shanty" down "an old dirt trail," and as soon as they arrive,

*Her brother and her father shouted...
Dirka Dirka Mohammed Jihad
Sherpa Sherpa Bak Allah*

They pulled out their AKs so I could see

So I grabbed her little sister and pulled her in front of me.

*As the bullets began to fly
The blood sprayed from between her eyes
And then I laughed maniacally*

*Then I hid behind the TV
And I locked and loaded my M-16
And I blew those little fuckers to eternity.*

*And I said...
Dirka Dirka Mohammed Jihad*

*Sherpa Sherpa Bak Allah
They should have known they were fucking with a Marine.*

The song is gruesome, to be sure, and CAIR complained that it celebrated the killing of Iraqi civilians. The video shows Belile performing the song before a laughing, applauding audience of fellow soldiers at their base in Iraq. Recognizing that the song could only

bring bad publicity, U.S. military officials promptly issued a statement saying that it was "clearly inappropriate and contrary to the high standards expected of all Marines." Belile also [apologized](#), saying the song was intended as "[a joke](#)" and that he didn't intend to offend anyone. Pro-war pundits, however, actually rallied to the song's defense. The conservative Little Green Footballs weblog thought news reports about the video controversy were the "[mainstream media disgrace of the month](#)." There's nothing wrong with the song, the Footballs said, because it doesn't actually describe a soldier killing civilians: "the people who kill the 'little sister' in this darkly humorous song are -- not the Marines -- but her father and brother, as they attempt to perpetrate an ambush." Some of the comments on LGF even called it "a wonderful song," and attacked the "nutless Pentagon star-chasing bastards" for their "capitulation."

Here are some of the other comments about the song, from Little Green Footballs and elsewhere:

- "Damn it, we are in a fucking war! Nobody whined about 'insensitivity' to the fucking Japs and Jerries." "I expect more from the Pentagon. The State Dept &
- the CIA are just a bunch of cucumber sandwich eating fools. The Pentagon USED to be about waging war on our enemies. Now they just want to kiss up to them."
- "I'm *Proud* of my fellow Marines in that video. That is EXACTLY the esprit de corps needed, the HIGH MORALE needed in the middle of a combat zone where those self-same jihadists are trying to kill those Marines every single day.
- "Insensitive? Marines insensitive? [God I hope so](#). We need them to kick ass and follow orders but we don't need them to be particularly sensitive. A sensitive Marine Corps will be the death of this country."
- "[One of the things](#) CAIR didn't like was the phrase 'Durka Durka Mohammed Jihad, Sherpa Sherpa Bak Allah' which makes fun of the Arab language. To hell with CAIR and to hell with the Arab language. ... And the Islamist pigs can keep going to hell."

As these comments illustrate, defense for the song quickly turns into traditional conservative anger at what they see as censorious "political correctness." They have a *right*, they insist, to be insensitive and hostile to Arabs and Muslims. I would argue, in fact, that this cultural xenophobia is the main theme of the song and that the violence in it is a secondary byproduct.

Let's start with the title, "Hadji Girl." The term "hadji" (also sometimes spelled "haji" or "hajji") is the Arabic word for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. In Iraq and Afghanistan, it has become a common slang term used to describe the locals. According to a [dictionary of war slang](#) compiled by GlobalSecurity.org, the term is "used by the American military for an Iraqi, anyone of Arab decent, or even of a brownish skin tone, be they Afghani, or even Bangladeshi" and is also "the word many soldiers use derogatorily for the enemy." Related terms include "haji mart" (a small store operated by Iraqis) or "haji patrol" (Iraqi soldiers).

The term seems to have come into usage even before the war began in Iraq. Its use was noted following a U.S. military investigation into the 2002 [murder of two prisoners](#) at the [Bagram Collection Point](#) in Afghanistan, by some of the the same soldiers who later oversaw abuses at [Abu Ghraib](#). "We were pretty much told that they were nobodies, that they were just enemy combatants," said one of the soldiers at Bagram. "I think that giving them the distinction of soldier would have changed our attitudes toward them. A lot of it was based on racism, really. We called them hajis, and that psychology was really important."

One of the prisoners beaten to death at Bagram was an innocent taxi driver named Dilawar whose only offense was that he happened to drive his taxi past the American base at the wrong time. According to Corey E. Jones, one of the MPs who guarded him, the beatings intensified when "[He screamed out, 'Allah! Allah! Allah!'](#) and my first reaction was that he was crying out to his god. Everybody heard him cry out and thought it was funny. ... It became a kind of running joke, and people kept showing up to give this detainee a common personal strike just to hear him scream out 'Allah.' It went on over a 24-hour period, and I would think that it was over 100 strikes."

The term "haji" is not simply an ethnic slur, like "gook," "jap," "jerry" or "nigger." All ethnic slurs entail hostile stereotypes, but "haji" is a specifically religious stereotype based on hostility toward Muslims. In our 2003 book, [Weapons of Mass Deception](#), John Stauber and I described the efforts that the Bush administration has undertaken to rebrand America in the eyes of Arabs and Muslims, spending hundreds of millions of dollars on projects including [Radio Sawa](#), [Al Hurra](#), a "[Shared Values](#)" campaign, and the [Council of American Muslims for Understanding](#). Through glossy brochures, TV advertisements and websites, the United States has sought to depict America as a nation of religious tolerance that respects and appreciates Islam. These words, however, are constantly being undermined by the actual deeds and attitudes of the Bush administration's most ardent supporters, including soldiers in the field in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the White House has tried to frame the war in Iraq as a "war on terror," its own supporters keep reframing it as a war against Islam. This is a serious, if not fatal error. Rather than fighting a few thousand actual terrorists, the United States is positioning itself in opposition to one of the world's major religions, with more than a billion adherents worldwide.

Culture shock and awe

"Hadji Girl" also refers to another aspect of soldiers' experiences in Iraq: the language barrier that prevents them from communicating effectively. The refrain, "[Dirka dirka Mohammed Jihad / Sherpa Sherpa Bak Allah](#)," is borrowed from the movie "[Team America: World Police](#)." According to filmmaker Matt Stone, the phrase is not real Arabic but a parody of "Arabic gibberish which they just go, you know, 'Dirka-dirka, Muhammad, Muhammad Ali.' ... And that, to me, is what terrorists sound like when I look at their little tapes that they release." This inability to comprehend the local language contributes to the soldiers' inability to distinguish between friend or foe, forcing them to

suspect that anyone -- including the beautiful girl you just met, or her family -- might be a terrorist.

kristinar

Posted by: kristinar on Jun 30, 2006 7:51 AM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Beautiful. This song explains, in one simple expression, why Americans are so hated in the world and why we can expect it to increase. Thanks to the "leadership" and example set by W, the entire country is perceived by the rest of the world as one big group of arrogant, blood thirsty, supremely selfish and inhumane thugs. And logically, if you are a concerned world citizen who sees the terrible damage done to the entire world by his policies, you would support the suppression and containment of his actions by any means possible. It is then only a small jump to understanding the mindset of suicide bombers. It is time for all concerned citizens to do everything possible to contain the devastating effects this president is having on the environment, people's health, our democracy and global relations.

GLUTTONY AT PUBLIC EXPENSE IS STILL CORRUPTION

Introduction:

The stench of corruption in this country is overpowering. According to the Natal Witness of the 21st October 2004, South Africa was rated number 44 out of 145 of most corrupt countries by Transparency International. This means that there were 101 countries rated more corrupt than South Africa. My recollection is that S.A. has slipped two places to 46 in the most recent survey.

The survey does reflect what many people believe. Not a day goes by without a corruption scandal dominating the news – whether it is the Vice President helping herself to an airplane belonging to the National Airforce or the Speaker of our parliament following suit to attend the inauguration of Mrs Ellen Johnson Surleaf as president of Liberia, despite the fact that her (Our Speaker's) absence would not have aborted the inauguration.

CORRUPTION IN RAPID SUCCESSION.

Then one after another, in rapid succession, the Natal Witness reported, firstly on the obscenely extravagant life style of the MEC for Public Works, one Blessed Gwala.

Then we are informed about the expensive trip by Mr. Mergan Chetty, City Councilor of the Msunduzi Municipality and three others to Germany to the World Soccer Tournament. No rational and acceptable explanation has been put forward justifying the trip. Experienced soccer administrators and members of the public have found Mayor Hlatswayo's explanation laughable, even pathetic.

The third incident is the allegation of a lavish spread enjoyed by certain councilors of the same Municipality. According to my information the spread consisted of lemon meringue, milk tart, muffins, scones and sandwiches to go with tea or coffee. And the occasion for the consumption of this spread? It was for tea! Not the "English high tea" but a mid morning tea. Mr Themba Zungu, the Committee Chairman claimed, inter alia, "You cannot work and work and work and not eat.". One cannot quarrel with that assertion until one investigates just what "work and work and work" entailed. The group had gone out on site inspections. It left for the sites at 9:45a.m, and returned at 12:45 p.m. Including travelling time and excluding the time it took to consume the spread, **work was about two hours!** Is this what Mr. Zungu considers to be "**work and work and work?**"

The reaction to Ms Lawrence's complaint about the junket in a City Council meeting was one of undisguised rage. It was the rage of people being caught out and exposed doing two blatant wrongs:

1. Abusing public funds by converting an indulgence of being allowed tea and a biscuit or two at the ratepayers expense into a **mini junket**.
2. Consuming the spread in full public view . Members of the public, customers and employees, not being advised of the occasion, must be forgiven for mistaking the consumers to be part of some high powered mission representing powerful financial interests and **NOT** their humble servants.

Common decency and sensitivity demand that at a time of very high unemployment and therefore of penury those who are more fortunate ought not to flaunt their good fortune. And most certainly not, if their *own money is not used*.

Ms Lawrence is to be highly commended for her courage. She must know that many thousands share her sentiments.

Conclusion

The fight against corruption must be based on zero tolerance. It is not the amount involved that determines whether it should be combated. All corruption whether it is direct theft or it is abuse of taxpayers money must be exposed, using, for a start the naming and shaming technique.

FIDDLING WHILE KWAZULU-NATAL BURNS!

Introduction:

With the presence of forces representing feudalism (the Afrikaners) and bellicose capitalism and rampant imperialism as represented by the English, the existing social system (tribalism) of the indigenous people was defeated and rendered powerless. Capitalism rules supreme. Tribalism has been consigned to history. The destruction or death of a social system does not mean the concurrent elimination of the ideology prevalent in a tribal society. Ideas far outlast social or economic systems.

It is for this reason that after 127 years since the final military defeat of the Zulu speaking people, tribalism continues to exist as relics or remnants. The dream of a Zulu dominated territory continues to move and rally people.

It is in this milieu, that the king of the Zulus, Mr. Goodwill Zwelithini, steps into the limelight by calling for a change of the name of “KwaZulu- Natal” to just “KwaZulu.”

In seeking to find support for his proposal in history, Mr Zwelithini is either under a serious misapprehension or he is being poorly advised.

It is not the intention of this article to deal with the historical fallacy. It is rather to ask a question which many people in the country are asking: WHY DOES KING OF THE ZULUS NOT USE HIS TIME CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC?

1. The Scourge of HIV-AIDS

South Africa has the shameful distinction of having the largest number of Hiv-Aids sufferers in the world.

The Province of KwaZulu Natal in turn has the highest number of HIV-AID sufferers in the Republic of South Africa.

Why does not Mr. Goodwill Zwelithini take an active and leading role in the fight against this scourge on a regular and ongoing basis and not just when feature articles are to be written or when photographs are to be taken. Can you imagine what a difference it would make in the thinking and motivation on this scourge if the advice came directly from a person who is regarded by a significant section of the local African population as their king?

2.Crime

This deadly and destructive anti-social activity has made the unarmed population easy prey for the criminal. No person or section of society is safe from the predations of the criminals. The civilian populations have become prisoners in their own homes.

The police are clearly unable to cope and the evidence is fast showing that the police are losing the fight. This is the biggest failure of the ANC led democratic government. The civilian population has to step in, if for no other reason than for its own survival.

There are many ways that the population can intervene against the wave of crime. There are the Neighbourhood Watches. Then there are the Policing Forums. There are Street Committees. There is great need to win over the local population against crime. Such was certainly not the case with the Jeppetown massacre. A large number of killer/robbers used the cottage in Jeppetown as their headquarters. Yet the Police were tragically unaware of the goings on in that cottage. The population in the vicinity refused to inform the police of the unusual movement of persons in and out of that cottage.

The involvement of a person who is considered king to a large number of people can make all the difference. Exposition of the problem, its seriousness, linking joblessness to absence of sufficient investment and the latter to crime by Mr Zwelithini to his subjects and other members of the public of this problem, can have a far reaching effect in the thinking of the people.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse:

The other scourge destroying the population is the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Apart from the destructive effect of the abuse of these substances on the family and larger social units, there is irreparable damage to health and huge costs for the treatment of the impaired health. This is not to minimize the enormous increase in road accidents, and crimes of violence, both of which are directly linked to alcohol abuse.

Alcoholism and drug abuse is a national catastrophe like HIV-AIDSs. But while many millions of rands, dollars and euros are raised and numerous clinics set up to deal with the scourge, virtually nothing is done by way of money and effort to fight the other scourge of alcohol and drug abuse.

The one institution which is accessible to ordinary members of public is the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It costs nothing to join the organisation and to receive help and support. There is no substitute body or organisation for long term treatment. The AA is unique.

Yet meetings are poorly attended relative to the number of people who suffer from this affliction. My information is that there is no “demographic representivity” in this very useful organisation in the sense that relatively few members of the African community are members or attend meetings regularly.

Once again, Mr Zwelithini who is king of a large number of people can make a tremendous impact in the thinking of his subjects by joining and taking part in regular counselling sessions on the evils of drug and alcohol abuse. His presence from time to time at meetings of the AA will encourage ordinary people to attend such meetings. They will think: ***“If the King can attend AA meetings, so can I. There is no shame in attending AA meeting!”***

One can go indefinitely as to all the things that Mr Zwelithini can do in the service of his people and other members of the public. And who can gainsay that there is great need for such service?

Conclusion

Mr Zwilithini is enjoying a very generous gratuity/stipend from the Province of KZN for the upkeep of himself and his large family. In appreciation of the generosity, he should occupy himself with socially useful activities and not try and turn back the clock of history.

Instead of fiddling with matters already settled and agreed upon, like the name of this province, he should devote himself in the much needed activity of trying to douse the fire that is consuming this province.

Dr. J.S. MOROKA – ANC PRESIDENT WHO WAS A SELL-OUT!

Introduction:

The issue of the Mail and Guardian of the 19/24 May 2006 carried two articles on the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) The one was by the Editor criticizing the League. The other was by Rapule Tabane, the associate Deputy Editor of the newspaper. Tabane's article titled "Why we need the ANC Youth League" explains itself as to Tabane's position.

"The Kingmaker."

In seeking to justify the title of "Kingmaker" to the ANCYL, the "hallowed" names of two Youth League members, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela, are invoked in the election of Dr J.S. Moroka as President General of the ANC as replacement of the "conservative" Dr.A.B. Xuma.. The implication is that Moroka was either revolutionary, or at least, progressive.

The use of the two names who have become icons to many millions was meant to settle the point and forestall any argument.

Had Mr. Tabane pursued the matter or had he done research on Moroka, he would have been shocked beyond measure.

Dr. Moroka turned out to be an ill-manufactured cracker which exploded in the faces of the ANC leadership, including the two icons.

Let us illustrate:

1. MOROKA PRACTISED SEGREGATION/APARTHEID.

When we joined the liberation movement in the very early 1950s, we learnt, inter alia, that Dr Moroka, the President General of the ANC, had separate rooms for his white and black patients. We used this fact in debates and nobody seriously contested the claim. But there was nothing in writing, so to speak until half a century later when the autobiography of veteran politician I. .Meer, "A Fortunate Man" was published. He was a leading member of the Communist Party, of the Natal Indian Congress and, when allowed, of the ANC.

In this book, I.C. Meer describes the sequel of a press conference called by the ANC. in 1952. I.C. Meer claims that he was asked by Mandela and Tambo to chair the conference as they had no faith in the ability of Moroka to answer questions put by foreign correspondents.

After the conference, a BBC correspondent, Robert Simpson, asked IC Meer: "Why are you propping up this doddering old fool?" He went on to state that Moroka segregates his patients in his waiting room; special facilities for Europeans, not so special for non-Europeans."¹

I.C. Meer did not challenge this very damaging accusation. Nor does he pursue the matter. His reaction was as if there was no disputing the accusation.

¹ "A Fortunate Man" pages 142-143

MOROKA BETRAYS HIS COMRADES.

In August 1952, twenty ANC leaders were charged for promoting communism. Among them was Dr J.S. Moroka.

At the trial Moroka got cold feet and chose to separate his defence from his fellow accused, like Sisulu, Mandela, Kathrada, Cachalia, JB Marks and others. He did so on the grounds that he did not like the lawyers chosen by them because they were members of the Communist Party and stressed his anti communist position.²

Further in his separate defence Moroka's lawyer argued how well he got on with the white farmers of his neighbourhood and how he assisted white boys financially with their education.³

That trial sealed Moroka's political fate. In December 1952, he was replaced by Chief Luthuli as President General of the ANC.

Conclusion:

There is a lesson to be learnt here. Not everything touched by the ANCYL turns to gold, even if anointed by persons considered to be struggle icons. Unless, of course it is the tainted, corrupt and dirty gold of a Brett Kebble!

Note to the reader:

The contents of the above article were sent in letter form to the Editor of the "Weekly Mail and Guardian" on the 28th May 2006. Regrettably, the letter was not considered worthy of publication. We disagree. We believe that it is necessary for the whole truth of the history of political organisations and its leading personalities be made public knowledge. – Editor.

² Karis and Carter: "From Protest to Challenge" volume 2, page 421

³ Albert Luthuli: "Let my People Go" page 116