

with alarming policies that suggest his real ideological agenda. Although he frequently appeals to the 'international community' to stop genocide, Goldhagen believes the UN is a corrupt and useless body that actually favours dictatorships. In his eyes the Genocide Convention is a warrant for eliminationism, while international courts are too slow-moving to be a deterrent.

Instead, the UN should be shut down and replaced with an association of democratic nations dedicated to eliminating tyrannies and replacing them with democracy. Genocide and its components should be redefined legally as war against humanity: 'This would empower and legitimize any state or group of states or, for that matter, non-state groups or individuals to take conventional military action or covert measures against the perpetrators. Killing them would become 'a defensive act'. In deciding whom to target, the democratic nations 'must not use law enforcement and criminal justice's cumbersome and enormously difficult standards of criminal trial proof'. He thus sanctions the extra-judicial execution of those deemed *génocidaires* by a self-appointed body of international vigilantes.

Prior to this, Goldhagen devotes many pages to identifying political Islam as the chief potential source of eliminationist policies today. He defines the 9/11 attacks as genocide, classifies suicide bombing in the Middle East as 'genocide bombing', and claims that Iran, Hamas and al-Qaeda are hell-bent on annihilating Jews and dominating the West. So, Goldhagen is in effect advocating a transition from a war on terror to a war on political Islam. But, then, he thinks it will be a cinch to impose democracy on 'weak' and poor countries, no doubt like Somalia and Afghanistan.

Goldhagen's prescriptions are not the only disturbing aspects of this book. It is punctuated by vicious attacks on the Germans, a peculiar reward for their adulation of his earlier work. He deals with the highly esteemed Christopher Browning in a petty and spiteful fashion – refusing even to mention his name in the text. He airily dismisses almost all other scholarship on genocide on the grounds that it never asked the right questions, yet much of what he says is unoriginal. In particular, several threads of his argument resemble parts of *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* by Benjamin Valentino (Cornell University Press), published in 2004.

*Worse Than War* is insufferably repetitive and constantly degenerates into unsubstantiated platitudes. Goldhagen has a gift for taxonomical analysis that is sometimes helpful and revealing, but is cumulatively deadening and monotonous. He clearly wants his book to change the world, but sadly it is impossible to recommend it to the general reader, while its length and density will defeat any but the most diligent policy-maker.

To order this book at £20, see LR Bookshop on page 18

DOUGLAS MURRAY

## We Ought to Care About the Danes

THE CARTOONS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

By Jytte Klausen  
(Yale University Press 230pp £20)

IT IS RARE for a book to be notable first and foremost for what is not in it. But that is certainly the case with *The Cartoons that Shook the World*, which came to international attention earlier this year when the news broke that its publisher, Yale University Press, had decided not to include the cartoons that are actually the book's subject.

The cartoons in question are of course those depicting Islam's prophet Muhammad – originally published in 2005 in the Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten* (J-P). The publication and republication of these cartoons have caused considerable anger among clerically whipped-up followers of the religion of peace. One of the Danish cartoons (the only one which could reasonably have been interpreted as being even mildly offensive) showed a figure meant to be Muhammad with a bomb in his turban. The reaction was the usual one: 'How dare you imply the founder of our religion was violent; we will refute this by rioting, killing and looting.' Several hundred people are dead and many hundreds more wounded as a result.

No UK paper has yet published the cartoons, though in the US and most other Western (and some Middle Eastern) countries, several generally small-scale publications have done so. Though Klausen doesn't mention it, in Britain the police took two Cambridge undergraduates in for questioning and attempted to bring criminal charges against them for publishing one of the dreaded cartoons. No less a figure than the Director of Public Prosecutions decided that it is now effectively illegal in the UK to portray Islam's founder.

If anyone had hoped that a leading academic publisher might have stepped up to defend freedom of expression they were disappointed. And it wasn't only the Danish depictions that Yale decided were unpublishable. Gustave Doré and Salvador Dalí's depictions of Muhammad's cameo in the *Divina Commedia* were also not allowed to be republished here. None of the actually rather tame Danish cartoons comes close in the scale of offence to Dante's description of Muhammed, split down the middle with his entrails spilling out, as a 'sower of discord'. First they

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came for the Danes, then for the Dantes.

When Yale's decision broke, a media storm ensued, with various commentators pointing out that the decision may not have been entirely unconnected with a substantial financial gift to Yale from a certain Saudi prince. Yale's response to this burst of negative publicity was to bring the book's publication forward, apparently having latched on to the notion that there is no such thing as bad publicity. That is possible, but they have certainly shown us that there is such a thing as a bad book.

Klausen's work is thorough in its attempt to cover the large amount of ground involved. Like so many books that aim to be authoritative, however, it makes for dull and painful reading. Repetitive and poorly structured, the work's main purpose must be to act as a reference for scholars – a first draft of a fascinating history. Whilst Klausen certainly presents a rigorous facade and unknots some parts of a tricky story, her work is littered with errors. Here are a few that arise in close proximity.

Klausen says that the story concerning the children's book about Muhammad for which an illustrator was so hard to find (which in turn suggested the idea of commissioning the cartoons to *J-P*'s culture editor, Flemming Rose) was a 'rumour'. It was no such thing. It was a fact, and one released by Ritzau, the largest

news agency in Denmark, in the middle of the month in which the cartoons appeared. The story went on the front page of every Danish newspaper, including *J-P*. And, contrary to Klausen's suggestion, in an interview performed under the condition of anonymity the illustrator who had accepted said that he had felt intimidated and referred to the murdered Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh. Klausen also reports that the *J-P* cartoons were 'timed for the end of the "silly season" of summer reportage'. The last day of September, when the cartoons went out, is neither the middle of the summer nor 'silly season'.

She says that 'a plurality of the illustrators' approached did not even respond to *J-P*'s invitation to draw the cartoons. She says that the paper invited forty-two members of the union of newspaper illustrators in Denmark to submit cartoons. What she does not say is that only twenty-five of them were active members. She says Flemming Rose returned to Denmark in 2000 when in fact he was then still a correspondent in Moscow, returning in 2004. Some of this jarred and I called Flemming Rose to check with him. He told me (and he said I could quote him): 'She misrepresents what I have been saying about this in many different contexts and she is not able to get the basic facts right.'

These elementary failings of the book might perhaps not matter so much if it were not for the book's more important and overriding moral failing. It does seem astonishing, to this reviewer at any rate, that an academic writing, researching and publishing in a free society, never mind one who has been subjected to a degree of censorship as she herself now has, could assume the position that she does. For in the wide range of positions it is possible to take between people who draw cartoons of other peoples' prophets and those who try to kill people for doing so, Klausen chooses to position herself equidistant between the two positions, as though to take a side, or even veer towards a side, would present an error of taste and judgement. Where her editorialising occurs it is consistently on the side of those who believe the Danes and their cartoonists had a terrible lapse of judgement that they should be ashamed of, though not of course punished for.

Just a few days before I spoke with Rose, two Muslim men in Chicago were arrested and charged for yet another plot allegedly to murder him and one of the cartoonists. For Rose, as for many others on the receiving end of the Muslim world's carefully orchestrated rage, this is now just a part of his life. Towards the end of her book Klausen quotes a member of the Egyptian foreign ministry saying to her, 'who cares about the Danes'. This book, not to mention the contemptible censorship that has surrounded it, reminds us why we should.

To order this book at £16, see LR Bookshop on page 18

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