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Dissecting Racism and Bigotry

25 Comments

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Jabbering Jabba The Greenhut Strikes Again

Steven Greenhut posts on the Orange County Register's OrangePunch Blog on Friday October 13, 2006 under the heading **"Islamophobia charges are ludicrous."** This is a good one, the jabbering Jabba the Greenhut feebly tries to justify the attacks on Bill Dalati as justifiable political debate.

Greenhut starts off claiming that Steel criticized Dalati's "extremist views." Extremist Views? Sounds like code speak for "terrorist views" to me. Steel did not refer to Dalati as an American Businessman. He highlighted his country origin, which was intended to automatically register in the mind of the reader as code for "Terrorist Businessman." Steel, in a deliberately racist way, chose to identify Dalati as Syrian Businessman rather

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than acknowledge that he is an American.

Greenhut repeated Steel's claims that Dalati supported a far-left rally titled *"Rally Against U.S.-Israeli Terror in Palestine and Lebanon,"* that his Arab American Broadcasting Co. sponsored an event in 2000 that included a *"prayer for the martyrs,"* and that *"Dalati stood up for controversial Islamic marriage contracts in the United States that would deny women alimony in a divorce."*

As I have stated before, the rally was a rally for peace and an end to the violence in that part of the world. It was not a protest to promote anti-American or Anti-Israeli sentiment. It is absurd for Steel to question Dalati's fitness to serve on the City Council in Anaheim because he supported a peace rally. The prayers Steel demonized are traditionally offered at Muslim gatherings. In fact, Christians have prayers for their martyrs as well but the greater question here is why is why would this be relevant in a political context other than to incite an anti-Islamic attitude towards Dalati.

On the matter of Islamic law related to divorce Steel further incited a negative view of Dalati based upon his faith. How is this different from the Christian theocratic view that there should be no separation between Church and State; the belief that the Bible (literally interpreted) should be the guiding law of the land; the belief that civil rights protections for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender individuals is contrary to the Bible and God's law. How are Dalati's beliefs regarding marriage and Islamic law any different from those of Lou Sheldon on the Christian right who wishes to apply the same standards based upon his faith? The only difference is the religion, and therefore nothing more than religion based hate speech.

Greenhut attempts to justify Steels' hate speech and his own by suggesting that since he knows nothing about Dalati's stands on city issues that questioning his patriotism, his ethnic origin, his values, and his religion is fair game. Both Greenhut and Steel are wrong. Dalati's faith should not be an issue in a City Council race. A relevant question to ask would be to ask if his faith, or the Constitution and laws of the United States and California would have more bearing upon his decisions as a Councilmember.

Mr. Dalati's perspectives about the conflicts in the Lebanon, Iraq, and the Palestinian territories are not relevant to his Council campaign. His opposition to war is not an issue and it is vile for Greenhut or Steel to question Dalati's patriotism and his allegiance to this county because of his opposition to the violence in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories.

In his letter, Steel asserts: *"There is much more to learn about Bill Dalati. He has given funds to Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney at a CAIR reception."* I cannot find any justifiable reason why Steel would call these contributions into question and deliberately ignore his contributions to prominent Republicans such as Congressmembers, Ed Royce, Gary Miller, and Dana Rohrabacher. I have to ask the question why, other than to mislead, would Steel do that?

Towards the end of his letter Steel states: *"The purpose for a CAIR activist to gain a seat on the Anaheim city council would be to raise his prominence in the California political community."* This is clearly an anti-Arab and anti-Islamic statement. If you accept the inference of the phrase "CAIR activist" as code speech for Arab or Islamic activist the true bigotry of Steel's comment is revealed. Imagine the outrage of Christian activists if Dalati, or one of his supporters said of Bob Hernandez; "The purpose for a Mexican-

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