

## Geert Wilders: on trial for telling the truth

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There is nothing hyperbolic in stating that a trial which has just started in Holland will have unparalleled significance for the future of Europe. It is not just about whether our culture will survive, but whether we are even allowed to state the fact that it is being threatened.

The trial of Geert Wilders has garnered hardly any attention in the mainstream press here. Fortunately the blogosphere can correct some of this.

Wilders is a Dutch MP and leader of Holland's fastest-growing party, the Party for Freedom. Just a few years ago he was the sole MP for his party. The latest polls show that his party could win the biggest number of seats of any party in Holland when the voters next go to the polls.

His stances have clearly chimed with the Dutch people. They include an end to the era of mass immigration, an end to cultural relativism, and an end to the perceived suborning of European values to Islamic ones. For saying this, and more, he has for many years had to live under round-the-clock security protection. Which you would have thought proves the point to some extent.

Now the latest attempt of the Dutch ruling class to keep Wilders from office has begun. Last week, apparently because of the number of complaints they have received (trial by vote anyone?) the trial of Wilders began.

The Dutch courts charge that Wilders 'on multiple occasions, at least once, (each time) in public, orally, in writing or through images, intentionally offended a group of people, i.e. Muslims, based on their religion';.

'm sorry? Whoa there, just a minute. The man's on trial because he 'offended a group of people'? I get offended by all sorts of people. I get offended by very fat people. I get offended by very thick people. I get offended by very sensitive people. I get offended by the crazy car-crash of vowels in Dutch verbs. But I don't try to press charges.

Yet, crazily, this is exactly what is going on now in a Dutch courtroom. If found guilty of this Alice-in-Wonderland accusation of 'offending a group of people', Wilders faces up to two years in prison.

If anyone doubts the surreal nature of the proceedings now going on they should simply look through the summons which is available in an English translation here. It shows that Wilders is on trial for his film Fitna. And for various things he has said in articles and interviews in the Dutch press.

Now some people liked Fitna and some people didn't. That's a matter of choice. But by any previous interpretation it is not the job of courts in democratic countries to become film-critics. In fact it would create a very bad precedent. I thought the latest Alec Baldwin film stank. But I don't think (though the temptation lingers) Baldwin should go to prison for it.

I've seen Fitna a number of times. Recently in the House of Lords, at a meeting Wilders couldn't attend because our then Home Secretary temporarily decided he shouldn't even come into this country. And I've just watched it again. And you can do so, too. It keeps getting pirated on YouTube but I think this is a good link here.

Parts of Fitna — which is a compilation of documentary footage — are very disturbing. And very offensive indeed. The clips of Muslim clerics calling for the murder of infidels. Very offensive. The clips of Muslims holding banners saying 'God bless Hitler'. Very offensive. The clip of a three-year-old Muslim girl indoctrinated and brain-washed to describe Jews as 'Apes and Pigs'. Very offensive. The passage of the Koran, Surah 47, verse 4: 'Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers in fight, smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly on them.' Very offensive.

Just to confirm — I find all these things very offensive. But Wilders didn't say them. He is being tried for pointing out the fact that some — in some cases many — Muslims do. If there are to be prosecutions they should be of the clerics and leaders who advocate this nightmarish version of Islam. But not of Wilders.

There are quotes from Wilders in the summons, though. It states for instance that he has said, and he has (I love the detective-work the court implies when citing op-eds from national newspapers): 'Those Moroccan boys are really violent. They beat up people because of their sexual orientation. I have never used violence.' This is true. As a number of gay Dutch men and women can attest, Muslim youths are behind a rise in homophobic attacks in what used to be the most gay-friendly country in the world. Bruce Bawer and others have written about this at length. It is very disturbing. It is also a fact. There is no sanity at all in a court trying a man for saying something true.

Wilders is also being tried for saying things which some Muslims deem to be rude about the Koran. Another dangerous precedent. Will the Dutch courts now come after Ricky Gervais for the rude things he says about the Bible in his show *Animals* (on sale in Holland)? Why the special laws for hurt Muslim feelings? Just wait till the others get on the band-wagon! There won't be room in the courts to prosecute the murderers and muggers. They'll be too full up with the religious. Dutch Calvinist pastors madly petitioning for the extradition of Billy Connolly.

The whole thing is so farcical that it would be funny. If it weren't

for the fact that it is real. The most popular elected politician in Holland is on trial for saying things which the Dutch people are clearly, in large part, in agreement with. Things which, even if you don't agree with them, must be able to be said.

Whichever way the verdict goes, it can't do anything but good for Wilders's poll ratings. But it is a terrible day for democracy. A political class so intent on criminalising the opinions of its own people cannot last very much longer.

Source:

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