

Eye on Editorials

PAIR OF PENNIES: 9/11 Mosque Should Not Be Opposed

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The opposition to the controversial New York City "Ground Zero Mosque" is heavily flawed and reveals an alarming trait in many Americans. For those who lived in isolation for the past few months, the project officially titled Park 51, is a Muslim-sponsored community project that is intended to fill the property previously owned by the Burlington Coat Factory, only a few blocks from the site of Ground Zero.

Now, the initial uproar over the project, I believe, is caused by the fact that the backers and leaders of the venture are Muslims. We'd like to say that we've lived up to the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr. and that we only judge others solely on the content of their character. We, however, are imperfect. Many of us hear "Muslim" and "New York City" and the alarms go off. "Oh...my...God..." we say, "...those terrorists were Muslims, so..."—wait for it—"...those Muslims must be terrorists!"

Such associations are the motivating factor for racism and xenophobia. We, as Americans and as humans, must use our reason to overcome our primal associations and the fears that come with them. Fred Phelps (Google "God Hates Fags" to see the way this guys runs his church) and I both claim to be Christians, but I assure you that it's improper to assume that I condone his campaigns of hate...and that's my point. We can recall the religious affiliation of 17 off-the-rocker terrorists and associate their wildly violent and immoral activity with anyone who shares that affiliation.

The terrorists of the September 11th attacks were agents of hate and violence, who were tricked into thinking that they were agents of Islam. Regardless, like criminals of any sort, it is their malice and their deed which demonizes them, not their religious beliefs. Literally millions of Muslims, worldwide, exem-

plify the fact that practicing Islam, alone, is not harmful. These men, however, were backed and inspired by Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaedaian ideas, and it is this association which is dangerous.

The arguments against Park 51 are consistently weak and often logically flawed. Two protestors, portrayed in the image exemplify this logical ignorance. The man on the left who claims that a

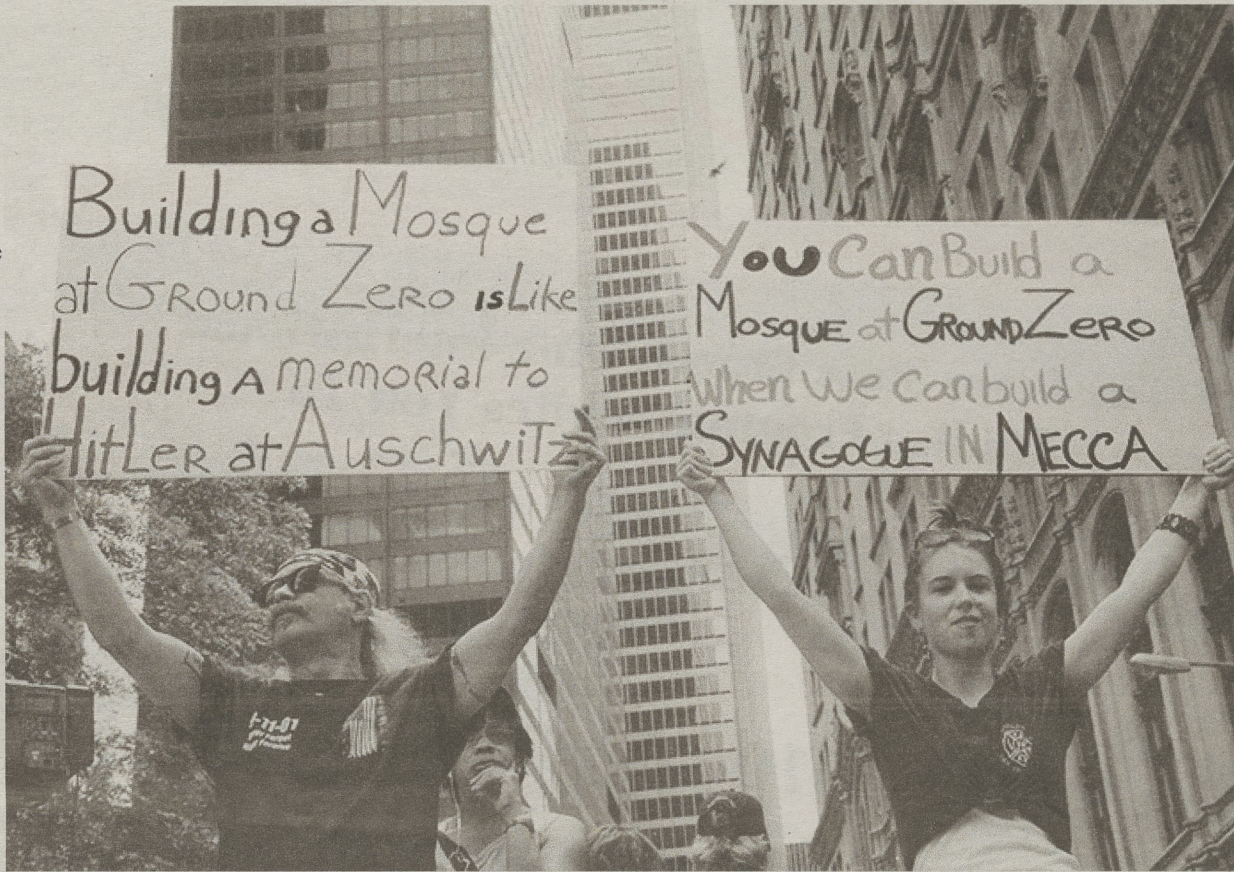
because here in America we do what's right because it's right. This country is a republic which we support due to its protection of, and establishment of freedom for, all people. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, is an absolute monarchy, a government system that we openly and nearly unanimously (I'd imagine) oppose. Why should we look to a system that we know to be less honorable and say "we won't act

do not wish to see "foreign" places of worship anywhere in America. As for the possibility of the venture being a covert jihadist infiltration, I'll say two things: 1) it is, technically, possible that this is true, however it is unforgivable to begin restricting the first amendment rights of citizens on the grounds of "could be," and 2) I don't think that Al-Qaeda could have picked a worse spot to build an undercover infiltration point, than two blocks from the most significantly motivating source of anti-Islamic sentiment in the world.

The Park 51 site is going to be controversial for a long time, whether protesting its construction is fair or not. If it is going to happen, though, let's take a look at what this "mosque" will really bring...let's analyze the threat up close and really see what we're so pissed about. According to one news source the Park 51 project will contain a 500-seat performing arts theater, a swimming pool, and a basketball court. Hmm...doesn't sound so bad. Additional sources say that the center will also contain a restaurant and culinary school, a library, childcare services, a prayer space (I can hear them now: "I don't know about this prayer space, Dan, sounds risky"), and what's this?—a

September 11th, 2001 memorial. Doesn't really sound like much of a mosque, does it?

If it is a mosque, don't be an ignorant boor and oppose it on the grounds of blind rage, and if it isn't a mosque—and it doesn't sound like it is—don't be a close-minded fool and oppose what should be a wonderful, cultural hub for New Yorkers.



Mosque at Ground Zero is like a statue of Hitler at Auschwitz is over-looking the simple fact that while Hitler knowingly and willingly ordered the systematic annihilation of Jews, Muslims as a whole did not carry out the September 11th attacks. A select few were behind the violence, the leader of whom was Osama bin Laden. Building a mosque at Ground Zero is not the same. Building a statue of bin Laden on the other hand...well, you see how that's actually similar. The woman who reproaches Saudi Arabian law and/or public opinion is also totally off-base. It doesn't matter what people do elsewhere,

right because you don't act right"? That ideology is childish, at best, and repugnant, at worst.

Similarly ill-bred theories have arisen, in public and private, regarding the nature of the Park 51 project. Among them include claims that it is the presence of any religious building near Ground Zero that is offensive and that the building will prove to be a jihadist foothold in our country. Opposition to mosques, nationwide, are protested and opposed while other religious buildings are let alone. It's got nothing to do with the presence of Ground Zero for most people, as they

People Poll with Kelly Crawford

What is your favorite Fall TV show?



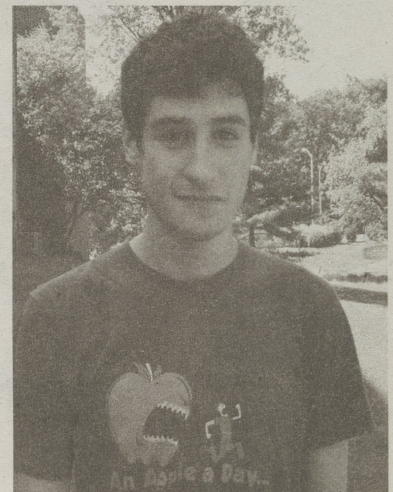
Amanda Bowers
Sophomore
"Dancing With the Stars"



Kelsey Smith
Freshman
"I don't really watch TV"



Bobby Harper
Junior
"Survivor"



Chris Brown
Sophomore
"I watch the National Geographic Channel everyday"