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From:
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To:
Letter to the Editor
Various publications

Barack Obama revealed both his ignorance and his bias during his speech in Cairo by giving credit to Islam for technical advances that predate Islam by centuries.

Besides the historical error, it is a philosophical mistake to give credit to a religion for the achievements of individuals—especially scientific ones. It would be just as inaccurate to say that Christianity brought us the automobile or the electric light because they were invented in countries that were primarily Christian.

Karl Benz may have attended religious services on Sundays, but he certainly did not invent the automobile inside of a Church while consulting priests on the merits of the internal combustion engine. His achievement came from the work he did the other six days of the week inside a workshop.

The extent that a culture has any influence on creativity is the degree of freedom that it allows for its citizens to think and to act on that thinking. And to the extent that a culture embraces religion, this freedom is curtailed and scientific advancements are hindered (e.g. the dark ages for Western Civilization and most of the Islamic countries of today). And to the extent that a culture questions established religious beliefs and embraces scientific inquiry, the opposite is true (e.g. Western Civilization today and Ancient Greece and the Byzantine Empire of the past).

But this is not primarily a religious versus a secular issue. Curtailing freedom on any grounds will yield the same results. Ayn Rand recognized that the fundamental choice is between collectivism and individualism, between self-sacrifice and the pursuit of one's self interest. And since Barack Obama is continually calling for sacrifice, I guess we know which side he falls on.

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