

FET: General comments about interpreting cartoons

- ❖ Cartoons are often difficult to interpret.
- ❖ Cartoons are not a literal depiction of an event or person.
- ❖ A cartoon is not necessarily amusing, but rather it is a topical political comment which is usually published in a newspaper at the time that the event is happening. The cartoonist's views usually reflect the views of the editorial team at a newspaper.
- ❖ Cartoons are examples of satire, and only flourish in countries with a free press, where governments tolerate criticism and opposition to their ideas.
- ❖ In satire, individual and government shortcomings are ridiculed.
- ❖ The purpose is not necessarily humour, but rather an attack on something the cartoonist feels strongly about, using wit as a weapon.
- ❖ Exaggeration, sarcasm, irony, parody and double entendre are used.
- ❖ Cartoonists are often accused of poor taste.
- ❖ Cartoons are not reliable when it comes to assessing events, but they are useful to help historians understand how some people feel about an event.