

TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN

The Holy Roman Catholic Church, for many years, prohibited the laity from reading The Bible.

The Church maintained that only the priesthood knew and understood the Holy Scriptures and, as such, the laity should just listen to the words of the emissaries of God -- the priests and their superiors in the Vatican.

In 1650 in New France -- now known as the Confederation of Canada -- it was a crime for anybody except a member of the Catholic priesthood to own a Bible, let alone to read it.

Time taught the Vatican that it couldn't monopolise knowledge for man's thirst for information is greater than the threats of the fires of damnation.

The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is so afraid that its 1.30 billion human population could learn some resolve from foreign *'fungus'* that it continues to try to ban the importation of what that government maintains is decadent Western material -- from newspapers to books to movies.

But, with the ever-decreasing prices of manufacturing computers and the ever-increasing speed of the Internet, these factors are thwarting the PRC Government's efforts, to be sure.

Try as it might, the PRC Government is losing the battle to keep its population, wallowing in ignorance, save that information which is deemed not damaging to the PRC political machine.

The question for the PRC Government, today: How can the Government stop the spread of alleged corruptive material from the West, entering the centre of Asian Communist learning?

And the next question: Who in the PRC Government is to determine which material is likely to corrupt the human population of the Middle Kingdom?

During World War II, in England, Kathleen Winsor's famous novel, *'Forever Amber'*, was banned.

The British Government deemed the work to be of a pornographic nature and, therefore, of a corruptive influence on the pure British public, as well as being contrary to public morality.

This followed a determination in Massachusetts, the US, the birthplace of Ms Kathleen Winsor, where a Court had decided that the novel's contents violated the State's obscenity laws. (this, in spite, of the famous and much-published immoral antics of Henry VIII)

'The Tropic of Cancer', followed by *'The Tropic of Capricorn'*, both novels having been written by Mr Henry Valentine Miller in 1934 and 1939, respectively, were banned in the US because they were deemed to be sexually explicit and, as such, were pornographic by nature, appealing to the prurient interests of society, only.

So, Mr Miller, an American by birth, just went to France and had his books published, there -- and then the novels were smuggled back into the US where they were avidly devoured.

If anything, the official banning of Kathleen Winsor's novel and Mr Miller's famous and sexually explicit stories made them more famous than they, most likely, would have become had not the US Government of the day given them the status of being notorious.

Most nations have learned that the march of science and learning cannot be defeated by anybody's laws, for human nature, being what it is, will seek out knowledge and truth for its own sake.

It is only when a State feels threatened that it employs the weapon of proscription, as the PRC Government is, now, trying to employ.

But the truth will out, as, in the case of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), the Italian astronomer and physicist who, in 1633, decided that he could not accept the Church's doctrine that the sun revolves round the earth, the earth, being the centre of the universe.

Galileo Galilei was an advocate of the Polish astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), who stated that the sun was the centre of our universe and the moon and all the planets revolved round it.

These empirical discoveries, of course, did not fit into the Church's Ptolemaic System of Astronomy, which stated that the earth must be the centre of our universe and that everything else revolved round it.

The Ptolemaic System appeared to fit in nicely with the Catholic dogma of the day because, if God created the Heavens and Earth, then, surely, his Earth must be the centre of the universe.

Else, it would be belittling and degrading of the value of God's creations.

Aristotelian Deductive Logic made for a fine bedfellow with Church Dogma of the 15th Century through to the 19th Century.

It took the Holy Roman Catholic Church from 1633 to 1992, a period of 359 years, to acknowledge that it had erred in the case of Galileo Galilei.

Today, this genius of the 16th Century and the 17th Century Italy stands out as one of the brightest inquiring stars of his day.

He personified man's battle against ignorance and of a political/religious dogma that attempts to impose restrictions on man's freedom to think and to seek the truth.

The question: How long will it take the PRC Government to realise that it cannot stop people from having inquiring minds and from seeking to learn and to enrich themselves through discovery.

The PRC Government may stop the importation of printed matter into the country, but it cannot stop the broadcasting of satellite images and audio broadcasts, try as it might.

The only true reason that the PRC Government adopts the posture, that it must protect its population from the corruptive influence of the West, is that it fears that, if the population of the PRC starts to question its Government, then the Government may have no defence.

And the PRC Government of today will fall.

What possible defence could a government muster from stating that its population may not travel freely throughout their own country?

What defence could a government muster, as was proved in the case of Galileo Galilei, from stating that its population must embrace a concept that is, clearly, wrong?

While, at this time, it is probably correct to state that less than 15 percent of the total population of the PRC live in major Chinese cities, with many of them, if not most of them, living in the countryside or up in the many high hills and towering mountains of the country, it will only be a matter of time before the total population will learn of the falsehoods, perpetrated on them by their authoritarian government, which seeks to maintain power by fostering ignorance.

Then, the people of the PRC will never forgive those political perpetrators of the great falsehoods of the 20th Century and the 21st Century: They will have no place to hide.

The PRC's industrial base is growing at an unprecedented pace, and the manufacture of the Personal Computer (PC) is so commonplace that it will only be a matter of time before the 10 million, proud PC owners of the PRC, today, explode into 100 million proud, PC owners, to one billion, proud PC owners.

Wireless technology is the next phase for Internet users, who will be free from having to rely on the fixed, landline wired communication.

As with the advent of the battery powered, 7-transistor radio of the 1960s, which revolutionised that industry, so will the 7-day, battery powered, 1,000 megahertz processor with 100-plus gigabyte, hard-disc drive storage capacity revolutionise the computer industry of the 21st Century.

One can envisage a time when the conventional telephone of today, with its wired connections, will be a museum tool, replaced by wireless technology, which will be more reliable, and with much-improved clarity.

How can the Government of the PRC stem this tide of development?

Will the Government of the PRC, today, be willing to face the investigations of generations of Chinese, which will surely come tomorrow?

Can the Government of the PRC, today, suffer the dissection of the political actions of today in the light of the morrow when the sun shall, surely, rise?

In the words of William Blake, the English poet of the 18th Century:

*'The generations of men run on in the tide of time,
But leave their destined lineaments permanent, for ever and ever'.*

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