

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS
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Many, if not all, of the candidates for the September 2004 elections for the Legislative Council of Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) are acting as though they are bidders at the auction of popularity.

And some of them, at least, are quite willing to use whatever tactics are required in order to achieve their goals of being called: The Honourable Bankety Blank.

But their efforts will, most likely, be in vain and, in the course of time, the 7 million-odd inhabitants of the HKSAR will come to realise that, in the future construction of the territory, these vain-glorious flatterers will be of no service ... to themselves, or the electorate, or to the shape of things to come.

Many of the would-be candidates, today jockeying for seats in the new Legislative Council, have voluntarily relegated themselves to role of sycophants, who are quite willing to curry favour from whomsoever may be seen as an agent, able to further their causes, be those causes honourable or dishonourable.

And the yellow yoke of sycophancy appears to suit the complexion of a great many of these candidates.

'For flatterers love neither their prince nor their friends, and I am saying that this is, above all, what I want our courtier to do; and he can obey and further the wishes of the one he serves without adulation, since I am referring to those wishes that are reasonable and right, or that in themselves are neither good nor bad, as, for example, in sport, to devote oneself to one kind of recreation rather than another. And I would have our courtier try to act in this manner, even if it is against his nature, in such a way that whenever his prince sees him he believes that the courtier will have something agreeable to say. And this will be the case if he has the discretion to discern what pleases his prince, and the wit and judgement to know how to act accordingly, and the considered resolve to make himself like what he may instinctively dislike ...'.

The above excerpt was written by Conte Baldassare Castiglione, an Italian writer and diplomat, who based his best-known work, *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), on his experiences in the imperial courts of 15th-and early-16th-Century Italy and Spain.

Conte Baldassare Castiglione's insight appears to be as true, today, as it was, during his time.

To be a flatterer of the electorate is to fail to be legislator, adopting the role, instead, of an instrument of the electorate, rather than being a guide of the people and acting for and on behalf of the people – which was the original intent when the electorate cast its vote in favour of their candidate.

Already, most right-minded people of the HKSAR accept, sadly, that one should view many a legislator's cause with suspicion as to its fidelity.

If moderation is to be stigmatised as the virtue of cowards, and compromise, the prudence that one may ascribe to traitors to a cause, then, the electorate of the territory must, ultimately, be the losers – perhaps, for ever.

For many a candidate, who would be the popular leader of the HKSAR, tomorrow and the morrows that follow, he or she is obliged, it would seem, to become active in propagating those doctrines and determinations of the powers-that-be of the territory, and the establishment dogma of the PRC, proper.

This will, ultimately, defeat any honourable purpose, for which that legislator might have soberly aimed, had he the wit and courage so to do.

For a legislator must not be the hired help of his constituents, the Government of the PRC, or of the Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mr Tung Chee Hwa; he should be a free and intelligence member of the highest lawmaking body of the territory, free to make determinations in the interests of every member of the population that he is bound to serve.

The candlelight vigil at Victoria Park, the HKSAR, of June 4, 2004, marked the 15th anniversary of the crushing of the pro-democracy movement at Tiananmen Square, Beijing, when hundreds, and, perhaps, thousands of Chinese students were mangled, as the tanks of the People's Liberation Army drove a swath through the unarmed student uprising at the stroke of midnight on a pitch-black night (all the lights in the area of Tiananmen Square had been extinguished by the orders of the PRC Government).

Orders to drive out the students was given by the late Paramount Leader of the PRC Government, Mr Deng Xiao Ping, who was televised, the very next day, shaking hands with his generals, those who delivered and directed the killing of the unarmed Chinese students at Tiananmen Square on that historic day.

History will, probably, record that, if the uprising had not been crushed on June 4, 1989, it would have been crushed at a later date, in any event – with, probably, even more deaths, having been required in order to maintain the political status quo in the PRC, proper.

If, on the other hand, the student uprising of June 4, 1989, had been successful, causing the downfall of the one-party system in the PRC, proper, anarchy, throughout the most-populous country of the world, would, most likely, have been the students' legacy.

The Government of the PRC, today, can boast of a miracle, with the country, enjoying the fastest-growing economy on the face of the globe.

The Government of the United States of America wants a slice of the PRC action, as does The Federal Republic of Germany, The Republic of France, The Democratic Republic of Italy, Great Britain, etc, etc, etc.

Money, and the ability to create more of this relatively modern medium of exchange, relative to the age of the world, that is, appears to be much more important to many governments than airy-fairy concepts, for which many Chinese students gave their lives on June 4, 1989.

Pragmatism is politics, exemplified in today's high-technology world.

And nowhere is pragmatism more widely practised than in a small outpost of the PRC: The Hongkong Special Administrative Region.

On Sunday, September 12, this year, there will be an election of the entire Legislative Council, but, exactly, who will be running for office is, still, being determined, it seems, because many members are not certain if they have a chance of winning.

And to throw one's hat into the political arena, with little to no chance of winning, is not on, in this part of the world, because *'face'* is still important in many quarters.

It matters little, however, who will run for office because, by and large, the majority of the Legislative Councillors of the 416 square miles that constitutes the territory are tergiversates of the best kind.

Chameleons have nothing on many of the existing Legislative Councillors, who would like to warm their bottoms in the Legislative Council Chamber, over the next 4 years, because changing the colour of a Legislative Councillor's coat comes rather naturally to most of them.

Most Legislative Councillors do not like to be interviewed by the local media, especially those members of the Fourth Estate, who have no axe to grind and who are not members of organs of the PRC State.

There is good reason for this attitude and some people empathise with the plight of many of these Legislative Councillors, who find themselves, forced to adopt this posture.

After all, it is always a good idea to know what will be written about one by a third party, rather than leave the matter to pure chance or the prejudices of a writer, whose mandate has not been determined by the Propaganda Ministry in Beijing.

If an act be the yardstick, by which to rank existing Legislative Councillors, then, most of them would score between zero and minus one.

A number of today's Legislative Councillors have been seen, on occasions, cavorting with ladies of the night, in various stages of intoxication.

Some are known to have been accepting '*favours*' from Food and Beverage Directors of some of the leading, 5-star hotels in the territory.

One, well-known Legislative Councillor voted against a piece of legislation, which would have outlawed the smoking of cigarettes in public places.

He gave a television interview, explaining his reasons ... while he puffed away at a cigarette on the roof of the Legislative Council Building.

The statistics, that smoking has the ability to kill one, and is one of the contributory causes to premature death in the adult population, worldwide, was, clearly, not a determinant factor in the mind of this Legislative Councillor.

And, it was not long after that memorable (and, to **TARGET's** thinking, ignominious) television interview that Mr Tung Chee Hwa agreed that banning smoking in public places was an act, which was not warranted in today's world.

While this example may serve to be but a small incident in the scheme of things, it tends to suggest that many of the lawmakers of the HKSAR have their own little agendas.

This is, just about, indisputable and irrefutable.

To be a successful Legislative Councillor in the HKSAR, one does not need a new, political platform because one may, always, borrow the planks of a political platform from one of the existing, popular parties.

Alternatively, one may always vie for the influence of high officials, as they lounge in their tall trees, in which case, no political platform would be required.

However, an existing Legislative Council member, or an aspiring candidate to be a Legislative Council member, has to be very certain that he or she does not tread on the many political landmines, thrown in one's path, as one tries to attain the purple of office.

The felon Chim Pui Chung is said to be trying to regain his old seat in the Legislative Council, but his chances are remote because he is not liked by either the Government of the PRC, proper, or by the Government of Mr Tung Chee Hwa, the PRC-appointed Chief Executive of the HKSAR.

Whether or not Mr Chim Pui Chung would make a worthy candidate for the Legislative Council appears to be immaterial – because Beijing and Mr Tung Chee Hwa do not trust him to follow their dictates, as any good and loyal sycophant would do.

Which is wrong, of course, because Mr Chim Pui Chung, who was incarcerated for committing a white-collar crime in the HKSAR, some years ago, is known to be good at currying favours, and honouring those who have been of service to him, whatever be the character of that service.

Moral correctness is not, necessarily, a prerequisite to being elected to high office in the HKSAR.

One would think, however, that a whore-master was not the best type of person to represent the 7 million or so residents of the territory, but they do seem to proliferate in the territory, nevertheless.

The democratic system of electing delegates to represent the people of a country or region is, perhaps, not the best system of government, but until somebody can concoct a better political system, that is the best that the world has to offer, just now.

The weakness of the so-called democratic system is patently apparent, during the election of lawmakers in the HKSAR.

With a relatively small number of votes, one may be elected to office and be paid \$HK55,200 per month, termed by Government as being '*remuneration*', plus be given another \$HK1,356,940 per annum, or about \$HK113,078.33 per month, termed as '*accountable component for office operation*', and another \$HK153,070 per annum, termed '*non accountable component for entertainment and travelling*', all of which comes out of the coffers of the HKSAR.

The total, therefore, that a Legislative Councillor receives is \$HK2,172,410 per annum, or about \$HK181,034 per month.

Even by international standards, a monthly income of \$US23,209 is not to be sneezed at, to be sure.

It is not a bad living for somebody, such as a lay-about, a ne'er-do-well, a felon – or a person, who has the ambition to be a Deputy of the National People's Congress (NPC), the lawmaking body of the PRC, proper, where, since 1949, there has been just one political party.

In addition to the perquisites that an HKSAR Legislative Councillor receives, officially, from the coffers of the Government, there are, also, those perquisites that a budding Legislative Councillor receives, for which he does not have to account.

What many of the existing Legislative Councillors, still, do not appreciate is that, after they are elected to office, either on a Functional Constituency '*ticket*', a Geographical Constituency '*ticket*', or by an Election Committee '*ticket*', the moment that they take the oath of office, they are supposed to represent all the people of the territory, not just those who voted for them.

After a resident of New Territories West, the chosen member of the Accountancy Functional Constituency, the Finance Constituency, the Engineering Constituency, etc, receives the requisite number of votes, enabling him to take his seat in the Legislative Council, he ceases to be a delegate for New Territories West, he ceases to be a delegate for his professional peers, he, does, however, or, perhaps, that should read, should, be a member of the Legislative Council.

Full stop.

The Legislative Council is in danger of becoming, if it is not, already, the disgust of many of the electorate, if not the entire electorate.

For many Legislative Councillors, the HKSAR is a stepping-stone to obtaining a seat as a Deputy on the prestigious NPC.

To attain that purple of office, one needs to be singled out for this favour by one or more of the Beijing muck-a-mucks.

The advantage to being honoured, thusly, is that twice per year, a Deputy of the NPC may travel, buckshee, to any part of the PRC, proper, have chauffeur-driven transportation, laid on, receive free hotel accommodation, free food, free this and that, all at the expense of the taxpayers of the most-populous country in the world.

Only a handful of the NPC Deputies do anything, or say anything, when they meet in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, once per year, but, in the words of one HKSAR Legislative Councillor: *'It is deemed to be an honour to be selected ... I like it, myself.'*

Then, minutes later, this same HKSAR Legislative Councillor explained that the way to stay awake at meetings of the Legislative Council and at NPC meetings is to sit rigidly straight in one's seat and to concentrate on something, anything, other than that which a speaker is saying, or trying to postulate ... otherwise, if one tries to listen, one will be put to sleep.

Do not, **TARGET** was told, allow your head to drop in any direction ... otherwise, the jig is up.

The insolence of office!

One has to ask: Is the HKSAR electorate to be forced to suffer the insolence of wealth and title, or any other species of proud pretension; and, to continue to suffer scorn, while Legislative Councillors of the HKSAR look on with pretended reverence while, at the same time, making certain not to trample, or accidentally nudge, the existing ruling nobility?

For these insolent legislative councillors did not win their positions as a reward for service to the community: It was, for the most part, a *'fruit'* ... of tergiversation.

So, come, pick another apple off the tree!

What Is Your Pedigree, Please?

Optime nati, bene vestit mediocriter docti (of excellent birth, well dressed, and moderately learned) was considered, in the England of the 18th Century, the way up the ladder to Parliament.

The priesthood of the Jews and of the Zoroastrians is hereditary, but a founders' kinsman is, always, preferable to an outsider if one is not religiously inclined.

If it is held that the electorate fashions the form and colour of the Legislative Council, then, the corollary must, also, be true, to some extent: That the Legislative Council fashions the form and colour of the people that it is bound to represent.

Hence, the June 4 candlelight vigil at Victoria Park; and, hence the expected march on July 1 by half a million or so of the inhabitants of the territory, who are being organised, today, to walk through the streets of the territory in order to display their disgust at the Administration of Mr Tung Chee Hwa, as well as their fears that the next Chief Executive will be as impotent as the existing one.

They would, also, like the right by law to vote for the next Chief Executive of the HKSAR: They are demanding Universal Suffrage.

The conduct of many of the HKSAR Legislative Councillors of today, and of yesterday, and, most assuredly, of tomorrow, is such that it is hardly any wonder that many of the electorate have determined not to concern themselves with, what they maintain is, pursuits of no great importance.

Which is a sad testament to the situation, one brought about by the lack of backbone of those, who are, supposedly, committed to represent the people of the territory.

If, by the conduct of the leaders of the HKSAR – and conduct is a language that rarely lies – they tend to view the ruling principle of the moral and natural world as convenient inventions of the day, then, they succeed in keeping the vulgar in obedience and, by so doing, they defeat the purpose for which they were voted into office in the first instance.

One would think that such leaders would be repelled and sickened at the obnoxious odours of their arrogance and presumptions; and, one might note the parallel in looking at the mental blotches of these people, as well as the stench of their running political sores.

It is, also, a sad testament of our time that the electorate of the HKSAR, by and large, far from thinking that tergiversation is uncommon, must, most assuredly, feel that it is an HKSAR Ordinance, yet to be enacted in its entirety.

There is a misbelief, among many of the laity, that the HKSAR Government of the day should protect the innocent and ignorant, especially.

As such, those candidates, running in the September elections, pray upon such ignorance because, in truth, nothing could be further from the fact: The ignorant and the innocent are merely disposable pawns in the political chess game of the territory.

They are as dispensable as is a toothpick at the conclusion of one, having picked out food deposits from in between 2 molars.

Wealth has privilege in today's world, and the wealthiest of men of the HKSAR extract their rights from the Administration of Mr Tung Chee Hwa in the most vulgar manner.

If it can be bought, the only question is: At what price?

Many of the sons of the hoity-toity sit on advisory boards to the Chief Executive, their only recommendation, being Dad's squillions of dollars.

The poor man of the HKSAR, today, knows his place in the scheme of things; and, he is sensible to his humble rank and inferiority.

The rich man, on the other hand, is nourished by the public hope, which is encouraged with notions of the impossible.

In *'On The Republic'*, penned by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-143 B.C.), a Roman writer, statesman, and orator, he states:

'For nothing done on earth is more pleasing to that supreme God, who rules the whole universe, than the assemblies and gatherings of men, associated in justice, which are called governments.'

It is a fact of history that there has never been a successful and viable government without religion, and the religiously devout, armed with epistles, given to them by the clergy.

It would appear that governments, which prey on the ignorant and the innocent and maintain them in a state of poverty, intellectually, as well as pecuniary, will, eventually, be cast aside by those very same people, whom they had hoped to control by force of arms, implied or actual, or by other means of debasement.

For people in this world, having grown up with religion as a guide to moral correctness, still require mental crutches, on which to lean when situations present themselves to which they have no ready or convenient answers.

God give us the grace to combat the evil of man!

TARGET is not in contempt of the Legislative Council, per se, but it is difficult not to have contempt from certain members who sit there – and do nothing, other than receive \$HK181,034 per month.

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