

ON PEOPLE WHO HATE IDEAS: **alexis dolgorukii © 2002**

There are indeed people who truly hate and fear ideas! History is far too full of them. But oddly enough, the dismal record of those who truly hate ideas and beliefs other than their own, seems most common after the advent of the Common Era. That is not to say that prior to the advent of the common era there were no atrocities, but I have never come across one that was ideological. In those days the motivation seemed to have been Kingly lust for power and simple acquisitiveness. The Persian invasion of Greece, and the reciprocal invasion of Persia by Greeks were certainly horrific but they had absolutely nothing to do with ideas..

Prior to the twentieth century, the history of Christianity is infinitely too full of horrible examples of the lengths people go to destroy ideas that either contradict their own, or perhaps, and this may be worse, simply ignore them. I think it very probable that everyone is all too familiar of the excesses of the Roman Catholic Inquisition, and the atrocities committed by both sides in the "Reformation". But let's start this discussion in the twentieth Century.

In May of 1933, Dr. Josef Goebbels, Ph.D.; who was the Nazi Government's newly appointed "Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda", began a program that can better be described as "Public Un-enlightenment".

In many University towns, of which there were a great many in Germany, which was truly a center of World Culture and Science, but especially in Berlin, in the great square in front of the Library of the Friedrich Wilhelm (now The Humboldt) University, books deemed "Un-German" and/or "depraved" were burnt. But mostly they were books by Jewish Authors of which there were a very great number.

There's an interesting corollary to this activity, one I find somewhat amusing in an ironic way. I imagine some one who is Jewish would find it a very satisfying historical oddity.. In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella exiled the Jews and Muslims from Spain and thereby destroyed the nation's intellectual life. In 1933 the Nazis weren't nearly so kind, they murdered all those Jews that didn't escape and thereby not only destroyed Germany's intellectual life, but it's scientific life as well. But in Germany's case, their loss was usually America's gain. It took Germany a great many years to even begin to recover, and the recovery is far from complete.

Today, in Iran and until just recently in Afghanistan, the Mullahs not only issued "Fatwas" (decrees) against books and authors they didn't like, they burnt books deemed "Un-Islamic". The "death sentence" placed on poor Salman Rushdie by the Ayatollah Khomeini is a perfect and really ludicrous example of this phenomenon. Luckily, Rushdie survived, even though Khomeini declared it "every Muslim's duty to kill Rushdie on sight". What is so

ludicrous about this event was that neither Khomeini nor any of the other Shiite Clerics who fulminated about the book “Satan’s Verses” and it’s alleged “blasphemy”, had read it.

I read it, and I am not unknowledgeable regarding Islam and the Koran, and it was anything but disrespectful to Mohammad. It simply treated him as a man. Now the book was, in my view, an incredible bore. BUT, you really shouldn’t kill an author simply for being a bore.

In Afghanistan under the Taliban, “Un-Islamic” really meant everything except the Koran (and certain tracts written by various Islamist Sheiks). In Iran the mullahs drove out the large Jewish population. I wonder if it will eventually produce the identical damaging effect on the intellectual life of that nation that the same action had historically on Spain and Germany. Considering the nature of the Islamic State of Iran today, one really has to wonder if it has anything resembling an “intellectual life”. At least not out in Public. This is a shame because Iran (Persia) was, for a very long time, a truly glorious center of the intellectual, philosophical, and scientific life on this planet.

Most reasonably intelligent people regard the burning of books as an abominable crime. Why? Because books, even novels, are simply the presentation of ideas. To be adamantly against ideas is to be the very worst sort of willfully ignorant bigot!

In the New York Times issue of New Years Day 2002, there was a photograph which, to me at least, was every bit as terrifying as the pictures of the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11th.

Why do I make such an extreme statement? Well, because it seems to me, that awful as it was, the destruction of the World Trade Center and the attempted destruction of the Pentagon was one incredibly insane and vicious act. But once done, it was finished, and did not represent a trend for all life. Terrorism may, in fact, surely will be with us for a long time to come. But it’s very clear that its primary causes are radical religion and radical nationalism. There are those who attribute terrorism to economic causes, it is true that economic inequalities are contributory, but without religion and nationalism there would be no terrorism.

Book burning, and the vast hatred and intolerance it represents, is a danger to everyone on the planet, were it to spread.

The photograph I am talking about was the photograph of a large and very imposing church, The Christ Community Church, in Alamogordo, New Mexico and before it stood a large crowd of gleeful people watching a pile of books being burned at the command of their Mullah, The Reverend Jack Brock. You would be amazed to see how very much it resembles the photographs of the Nazi book burnings.

What were the books being burned? They were the children’s books, the Harry Potter series, and most extremely improbably, the works of William Shakespeare!

The Potter Series are simply delightful children's books (though truly people of all ages simply adore them), about something every single child clearly knows is simply fantasy. That is not to say that children (and some adults) will not indulge in some delightful daydreams about "magic", but deep inside themselves they know that the world of Harry Potter is purely "never-never Land".

Now Shakespeare (whoever he may or may not have been) is deemed by most intelligent, cultured people to be the greatest writer the English Language has produced. His stature is not limited to the English speaking peoples, but it is agreed upon by people whose language is not English as well. In Germany, the greatest poet the German Language ever produced, Johann Christoff Friedrich von Schiller happily translated Shakespeare into German. This has been true in most of the worlds civilized nations, only great poets dared to translate Shakespeare. And the so-called "Reverend Brock calls the greatest poetry the English Language has yet to produce "Satanic Deceptions"?

There's an ironic side to this too. If certain authorities are correct in their identification of "the Shakespeare figure" then the same hand was responsible for the King James Bible!

Were it not so tragic and dangerous, it would be funny. Some Redneck ignoramus declaring William Shakespeare's works to be "Satanic Deceptions""Satanic" indeed. The deception is entirely that of Jack Brock and his colleagues. As I have written many times; "Satan" is no more real than the "Tooth Fairy", nor is Jesus of Nazareth for that matter!

This is in no way different from the book burning of Josef Goebbels, The Inquisition, The Taliban, and The Iranian Mullahs! All book burners are alike! All book burners are criminals. What is their crime? Their crime is not simply to pollute the intellectual atmosphere of the human race, but the criminality consists of the attempt to destroy entirely the intellectual life of the human race! Fundamentalists, of all stripes and kinds, truly hate and fear intellectuals and intelligence itself.

I want to make it perfectly clear that the American Fundamentalist Mullahs are not a whit better than the Nazis, the Taliban, and The Shiite Mullahs.

There's another thing I want to clarify. People who burn books are really trying to destroy the ideas contained in those books. People who are that terrified of ideas contrary to their own are capable of anything as history clearly proves!

History clearly gives undeniable evidence that people who burn books always go on to murdering the people whose ideas are presented in those books and then they move on to murdering the people who simply agree with the ideas in the books.

Am I saying that people like Reverend Jack Brock are potential mass murderers? Yes, that's exactly what I am saying. It's a truth I do not believe there's anyway to avoid!

How do I dare say such a thing? Because the history of the human race is horribly rife with

terrible examples of the way religious fanatics resort to murder and oppression.

Remember, the Nazis too, were religious fanatics, only their religion was peculiar to themselves and their charismatic leader. Though they called themselves “National Socialists”; the racial component of their belief system, and the undeniable religious aspect of the people around Heinrich Himmler and the Ahnenerbe make it clear that Nazism was a religion not a political belief.

Why is burning books such a terrible thing? Well the burning itself is nothing much, after all more books can surely be printed (except when some moron destroys a first edition of which the plates no longer exist, or worse yet, some manuscript). It's the attitude that leads to the burning of books that is so awful!

Why do people fear ideas different from their own so much that they will stop at nothing to destroy those ideas?

The reason that people fear ideas and perceptions different or contradictory to their own is because these foolish and vicious people are extremely insecure in their beliefs. So very insecure, in fact, that they are capable of murdering anyone who presents a plausible different idea. First they try to intimidate, but if that doesn't work they go to the next stage; murder. That, of course, is what El Qaeda is/was all about. They wanted to forcibly convert the entire world to their own incredibly primitive brand of Wahabi Islamism! Jack Brock wants to convert the whole world to his incredibly primitive brand of Christianity!

If people like Jack Brock and Osama Bin Laden were comfortable in their beliefs, they would not hate and fear those who do not hold their same notions. The reason this is so, is because they are anything but comfortable with their beliefs, and so the simple fact of disagreement shakes the foundations of their less than firm beliefs. If they really, deeply, unquestioningly totally believed what they claim to believe, nothing anyone else says or believes would bother them in any way!

For instance, how truly secure do you think the Islamists belief in the 72 permanent virgins awaiting the Jihadi Martyr is? I don't think it's at all secure. How secure do you think the Islamic Male is for him to treat womankind the way he does? If one observes the ferocity of the Islamic Males defense of his oppression of women, one clearly sees how insecure the Islamist is.

The saddest feature of this is that the oppression of womankind that is so much a factor of Islam, has absolutely nothing to do with Islam or the Koran! The sequestration of women is a thing that long pre-dates the advent of Mohammad. To be truthful, it is hardly a negativity limited to Islam, it is rife throughout all Eastern Cultures, and was once equally rife in the west. I must say however, that it was never as ferocious in the west as it is in the East.

Now, leaving Islam alone for a moment. Let's look at another religion that produces fanatics. Judaism. How secure can the average Orthodox Jew, or any other Jew either, be

when history and archaeology clearly contradict their folk history, and contradict it they surely do!

The good thing about the Jews however is that historically they have neither murdered or oppressed those who disagreed with them. Now in saying this complimentary thing, I am working from the premise that their folk history, the so-called “Old Testament” is completely ‘proclamatory history’ or history as they wished it to be. Were it true, then the Jews become equally guilty with other fanatics as according to their own testimony, they invented Genocide. (Amalek and Edom and probably the Philistines as well)

But it’s when you come to Christian fanaticism, that you find the worst horror stories regarding their treatment of people not sharing their presumptions.

Let’s face it, almost everything about Christianity defies rational belief. It is really no wonder that the Christians, all the many relatively dichotomous varieties of them, are so murderously defensive of their intellectually indefensible belief structure.

Let’s see: A “Virgin”; herself immaculately conceived (and that phrase is biologically and scientifically meaningless), “is conceived of a son”, whose “Father” is alleged to be “God”; the creator of the Universe. This “son” is not different from his Father but Identical to him (though he is of “like” rather than “same” substance to some Christians), and is even more “immaculate” than his Mother. After a life of 33 years, and a very short career as a wandering Preacher who produces “miracles” on demand, he is Crucified and three days later “rises intact from the dead. Add to this the belief that anyone who does not accept this fable is doomed to “burn in hell for eternity”, and you’ve got a belief structure that would make anyone insecure. And no one is more insecure than fundamentalists of any stripe, that’s why they become fundamentalists!

In Churches like Reverend Jack Brock’s, the congregation is usually in Church more than they are anywhere else. Why? To reinforce, one another’s beliefs. They almost never associate, especially socially, with anyone not of their “in-group”. They stick together like glue, because in fact, they are afraid to expose their belief structure to any possible contradiction. It’s a case of: “We all say so therefore it must be true!”. To these poor souls, anyone who has a belief system differing from theirs, represents an incipient danger.

Though it’s hard to believe, I must assume books like Harry Potter somehow shake those beliefs, and so much so that they are described as a “deception of Satan”. How a delightful and amusing little tale could be “evil” in any way is utterly beyond my comprehension. But then, I guess they know that they’re the “muggles”, though I would venture a guess that they are really more Like Lord Voldemort and company.

Every person of reasonable and rational intelligence should really protest this terrible burning books phenomenon, and do everything in their power to keep these people from attaining power. And they’ve almost done it, the President of the United States is

at least peripherally one of them!

This planet and the Universe in which it exists, does so for one purpose only. That purpose is the infinite extension of intelligent awareness and sentience.

All living things are physical only temporarily but their intelligences are immortal. People like Jack Brock, Josef Goebbels, Ayatollah Khomeini, and Mullah Mohammad Omar are only temporary roadblocks, but it behooves those of us who would participate in the advancement of intelligence to resist these people to the best of our abilities. And by “resist” I mean peacefully present to humanity a better, more rational, more reasonable, path to follow.

It is my very strong belief that if one patiently and gently presents people with a rational, reasonable, logical alternative to chaotic illogic, eventually they will see the difference and begin to think logically and rationally themselves.

Now to risk using a new cliché. Let's get rolling!