

# Freedom of Speech/Conscience/Religion and the Magna Carta

## Special Screening of Free China: The Courage To Believe

American INSIGHT in association with Delaware Humanities Forum

Theatre N, Orange Street

Wilmington, Delaware

Notes for David Kilgour

25 March 2015

---

*Free China* illustrates that freedom of speech, conscience and religion are inextricably linked. Also, that China's governance problems today exist mostly from the conflation of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms after 1978 into what has become a system of 'crony capitalism/Leninist governance'.

There are many religiously free countries today among Asia-Pacific, Latin American and African nations. Those of central and eastern Europe, except for those of former Yugoslavia, have largely avoided religious persecution in recent years. Regrettably, other governments are going in a different direction on related issues.

People of good will everywhere should Oppose the harassment of free speech and persecution of religious communities anywhere. Democratic governments must also ensure that their own religious, cultural and linguistic minorities can live, speak out and work without fear.

### ***AFRICAN AMERICANS***

Law professor Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, notes that African-Americans are more likely than their white counterparts to be arrested for similar crimes. Once arrested, they are more likely to be formally charged. Once charged, they are more likely to be convicted. Once convicted, they are more likely to receive sentences of incarceration.

Ferguson reignited the national debate over race relations and the tactics used by some law enforcement agencies. Protestors, chanting "No justice, no peace" and "We have nothing to lose but our chains", were descendants of African-Americans who suffered injustice for generations. Despite the victories of the Civil Rights Movement, African-Americans still appear to be disproportionately targeted.

Ferguson reminds that some Americans still do not respect one another as neighbors, and are failing to act and speak with respect as members of one national family. Michelle Alexander says that until Americans confront and conquer the underlying issue of racism, its curse will continue to manifest itself in insidious new ways in attitudes and institutions.

Many across the world are waiting for America to find ways to build greater trust between communities and law enforcement, so that all can live up to such ideals as “All persons are created equal” and “Justice for all.”

### ***AN AFRICAN AMERICAN IN CHINA***

If anyone thinks that such problems exist only in America, consider the experience of American Lynn Knight, Ph.D., during eight years in China before 2013 as recounted quite recently to the *Epoch Times*:

*... on Sept. 21, 2007 in Beijing... Knight had plans to go out and meet some friends for dinner. But a colleague called him and told him that ... Beijing police were beating every dark skin male they could find... So he decided to stay in.*

*From what Dr. Knight learned later, security forces brought in hundreds of poor young Chinese men from the country side... armed them with sticks. And then they were given orders to round up every black male they could find in the Sanlitun area, thoroughly beat them up, and bring them in. It didn't matter who or where they were—in a restaurant with the family, walking down the street, or in a grocery store—as long as they were black and in this area, they were to be beaten and brought in. The Guardian of the UK was the only international daily to report the incident.*

### ***FALUN GONG***

Falun Gong (Dafa) is a China-wide movement using exercises and meditation derived from Buddhism/Daoism, which numbered 70–100 million in the mid-1990s by the government's own estimate. In a 2014 book, *The Slaughter*, author Ethan Gutmann explains how he arrives at his “best estimate” that vital organs from 65,000 Falun Gong and “two to four thousand” Uyghurs, Tibetans, or House Christians were seized in the 2000–2008 period alone. Organs are pillaged and trafficked for high prices to wealthy Chinese and ‘organ tourists’. The commerce has been termed a ‘new crime against humanity’.

David Matas and I visited about a dozen countries to interview Falun Gong survivors, who managed to leave both the estimated 350 forced-labour camps across China and the country. They told us of working in appalling conditions for up to sixteen hours daily with no pay and little food, crowded sleeping conditions and torture. As indicated by Jennifer Zang and Charles Lee in *Free China*, they make all manner of exports for Western consumers. This constitutes both corporate irresponsibility and a violation of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; all governments should place an onus on importers to prove their goods are not made in effect by slaves.

### ***David Shambaugh***

David Shambaugh, named one of America's top 20 China watchers by the China Foreign Affairs University (affiliated with its ministry of foreign affairs), is now convinced that we are witnessing the “endgame of Chinese communist rule.” Recently, he wrote:

*In 2014, Shanghai's Hurun Research Institute... found that 64% of the "high net worth individuals" whom it polled—393 millionaires and billionaires—were either emigrating or planning to do so. Rich Chinese are sending their children to study abroad in record numbers...*

*... since taking office in 2012, (President) Xi has greatly intensified the political repression that has blanketed China since 2009. The targets include the press, social media, film, arts and literature, religious groups, the Internet, intellectuals, Tibetans and Uighurs, dissidents, lawyers, NGOs, university students and textbooks...*

*(Corruption) is stubbornly rooted in the single-party system, patron-client networks, an economy utterly lacking in transparency, a state-controlled media and the absence of the rule of law.... Xi's campaign is turning out to be at least as much a selective purge as an antigraft campaign. Many of its targets to date have been political clients and allies of former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin... Another problem: Mr. Xi, a child of China's first-generation revolutionary elites, is one of the party's 'princelings', and his political ties largely extend to other princelings. This silver-spoon generation is widely reviled in Chinese society at large.*

### **Role of Governments**

Governments, investors and entrepreneurs should examine why they are supporting the violation of basic human rights in order to increase trade and investment with China.

The world's democrats should, however, continue to engage with the Xi/Li government in Beijing and the broadest possible range of citizens across China. Democracy with very Chinese features is probably much closer than many think.

The long suffering Chinese people want the same things as the rest of us, respect, education, safety and security, good jobs, the rule of law, democratic and accountable governance and a sustainable natural environment. If the party-state ends its systematic violations of human rights at home and abroad, and begins to treat its trade partners in a transparent and equitable way, this century can move towards harmony for both China and the world.

### **Hong Kong, Martin Lee and Anson Chan**

On a number of issues, including free speech and freedom of religion, as Martin Lee recently reminded parliamentarians in Ottawa, Hong Kong is an example for the rest of China. Anson Chan (Chief Secretary of Hong Kong under both British and Chinese governments) agrees, "One of my most cherished hopes for my country is that, over time, China can evolve peacefully to a nation where basic human rights are guaranteed and where every individual has an equal right and opportunity to influence how and by whom he or she is governed... I have the benefit of living in an open, pluralistic, tolerant society, rooted in the rule of law, personal freedom, clean government and sense of fair play... I learn never to take these values for granted."

On the 1.8 million China-born residents in Hong Kong, Chan adds, "It is vital to keep building this ever expanding network of economic and personal ties between our two countries. It is a key to greater mutual understanding and trust. In order to play this role, Hong Kong must remain true to itself and the rights and freedoms enshrined in our constitution, the Basic Law, under the concept

of "one country, two systems", namely, the rule of law and an independent judiciary; freedom of expression, including freedom of the press; freedom of religion; freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; and zero tolerance of corruption.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "A riot is the language of the unheard." To his credit, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder launched a series of 'nationwide conversations' by stating that he plans to announce "rigorous new standards" for federal law enforcement "to help end racial profiling, once and for all".

But let me give the last word to Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, a devout Muslim and president-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), speaking at an International Women's Day event recently in Berlin:

*In the past two centuries, our world has time and again reached new heights in large measure due to women's equality movements...the advancement of the ideal of equality has today come face-to-face with a formidable barrier, Islamic fundamentalism. While endangering the whole region and world through genocide, terrorism and discrimination, this phenomenon is most hostile to women. For this reason, today, women's plight in the Middle East is entirely entwined with insecurity, oppression, homelessness, murder and servitude...Nevertheless, I want to say that there is a way to defeat and overcome this destructive force and there is a solution: Women's power is the greatest challenger to Islamic fundamentalism.*

Thank you