

# Flat

(May 2023)

Shouldn't we expect soon the governing bodies of the European Union and other polities to ban, prohibit, outlaw, not to forget sanction for alleged mis- or dis-information the "[International Flat Earth Research Society](#)" (Ctrl+Click link to open in another tab) and all its followers?

Surely they must, if only to be consistent with their current policies.

Shouldn't the government then logically turn their sanctimonious prohibition ire to the [Book of Genesis](#) (Ctrl+Click link to open in another tab)?

Surely they must, if only to be consistent with their current policies.

One search engine returned a staggering 53 million results when queried about the "[International Flat Earth Research Society](#)", many such results originating from scientific parties exerting themselves at making a point that the earth is not flat, but round.

Come to think of it, there is little doubt that if the proponents of the flat earth theory came to power they would immediately outlaw any disciple of the round earth theory, for prohibition is the only avenue left to assert one's beliefs when one's reasoning lacks any strength. To be sure, refer to the General History of the Wars of Religion.

The same goes for other flimsy or improbable theories (some might even say ridiculous, if there were anything laughable in their subject) such as those which question the reality of methodical ethnic extermination during the Second World War.

By making it customary to prohibit legally any idea the government disagree with, be it virtuous or not, chances are that if, Lord forbid, the deniers of past butcheries rose to power they would find no legal difficulty at all in muzzling any contradictory opinion.

Furthermore, if you ban Nazi emblems, how will you recognize Nazis in a crowd? If you ban the emblems of white supremacy, how will you recognize white supremacists?

I would venture that the best defense against unreasonable theories is to let them be and die a natural death, since for each proponent unable to offer any solid argument or evidence there will be millions of critics expounding robust lines of reasoning.

Isn't the adage attributed to Sun-Tzu: "*Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer*" quite antithetical to pushing your enemies out of sight, in the vain expectation that their vanishing behind a curtain will make them disappear altogether from the face of the earth?

Besides, how could Freedom of Speech be limited to one's preferred speech only?

In the words of Aesop, "*Be Careful What You Wish For*": exactly 498 years ago the Edict of Worms outlawed Martin Luther and banned all his writings. As a result he became a hero, and a 125 year cycle of wars of religion started, which, in terms of constant population figures, killed twelve times as many as were slain by the Nazis in the Jewish Holocaust.

Regarding more mundane effects of prohibition, read here some lines of General Ulysses S. Grant's 1885 "*Personal Memoirs*", in chapters relating to his presence in Mexico as a brevet second lieutenant during the Mexican-American War (1846), written more than three decades before the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, which prohibited alcoholic beverages in the United States between 1920 and 1933:

*Almost every Mexican above the age of ten years, and many much younger, smoked the cigarette. Nearly every Mexican carried a pouch of leaf tobacco, powdered by rolling in the hands, and a roll of corn husks to make wrappers. The cigarettes were made by the smokers as they used them.*

*Up to the time of which I write, and for years afterwards—I think until the administration of President Juarez—the cultivation, manufacture and sale of tobacco constituted a government monopoly, and paid the bulk of the revenue collected from internal sources. The price was enormously high, and made successful smuggling very profitable. The difficulty of obtaining tobacco is probably the reason why everybody, male and female, used it at that time. I know from my own experience that when I was at West Point, the fact that tobacco, in every form, was prohibited, and the mere possession of the weed severely punished, made the majority of the cadets, myself included, try to acquire the habit of using it. I failed utterly at the time and for many years afterward; but the majority accomplished the object of their youthful ambition.*

*The tobacco tax, yielding so large a revenue under the law as it stood, was one of the last, if not the very last, of the obnoxious imposts to be repealed. Now, the citizens [of Mexico] are allowed to cultivate any crops the soil will yield. Tobacco is cheap, and every quality can be produced. Its use is by no means so general as when I first visited the country.*

Shouldn't our clearly uncultivated politicians spend some time reading classic literature and history, and try to learn from past political experience, instead of focusing all their energy on perfecting the not so subtle art of subjugating their brethren, to the detriment of other more important forms of knowledge?