

## The Censors' Cabal

It is a whispering campaign to counter the harmful -- shall we say "hateful"? -- effects of freedom of speech and the liberty of inquiry. To whom are they harmful and hateful? To President Barack Obama. To his administration. To Congress. To tribal "communities" of every stripe. They know that the truth is out there, about them, about their actions, about their motives, and it must be suppressed. -- albeit without saying that it is being censored.

The first evidence of Obama's true intentions was the overt but clumsy invitation to Americans last summer to report via email to the White House any "fishy" anti-administration talk by other Americans. Obama received a stinging, well-deserved rebuke, one delivered chiefly in the Internet's blogosphere and which spread like slow molasses to the mainstream media, which did not welcome a rebuke of their copacetic favorite and sometime messiah. The White House's "rat-on-your-neighbor" site was taken down, but not before first crashing under the weight of countless thousands of retorts from Americans to Obama to mind his own business.

But Obama and Company haven't given up. They and Congress believe their "business" is to "run" the country, and that includes filtering and censoring what Americans read, think, and say. Like Muslims who object to images of Mohammed, their feelings are hurt and their sensibilities offended by criticism and caricature. Negative portrayals of Obama and his administration and his ilk in Congress are considered to be abrasive and secularly "blasphemous." Obama's "approval ratings" are plummeting and Congress's promise to shatter the floor. It's all the fault of the First Amendment. It must be emasculated, qualified, and delegitimized.

Their ideological clones in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) are assiduously searching for a means to impose censorship without calling it censorship. They are moved by a fear that the Tea Parties and an indiscriminate and unobstructed access to news other than what is reported by the MSM have demonstrated a power that threatens the hegemony of collectivism. They wish to silence anyone and everyone who pursues and exposes the truth.

The FTC is casting about for the means to "save" journalism, that is, the journalism it approves of. That is, the Commission is searching for a justification for meddling. It concedes that Internet journalism exists, but by implication discounts it as "true" journalism. After all, it isn't regulated or subsidized by the government; ergo, its news is highly suspect. What it wishes to do is find a way to bolster "traditional" news coverage and reportage, whatever that may be, for the concept is nowhere defined in its draft report.

They want a captive, obedient electorate as dumbed down and indoctrinated exclusively by government-approved news and government-vetted "journalists," as hapless and helpless as school children instructed in the ways of Islam and the environment and "Native American" culture, while fed miniscule portions of Howard Zinn-style American history that guarantee children will grow up to be subservient tax-cows and "good," selfless citizens.

One of those means is to tax the blogosphere and force it to subsidize its competitors. Another is to establish a "public fund" to subsidize newspapers, other approved media, and journalists by taxing the broadcast spectrum, consumer electronics, commercial advertising, and cell phone ISPs. Still another is to rewrite IRS rules to better protect newspapers and broadcast stations from the Internet. Nine pages of *The Federal Trade Commission Staff Discussion Draft of Potential Policy Recommendations to Support the Reinvention of Journalism (the Draft)* are devoted to how the IRS can further perpetuate "traditional" journalism (pp. 21-29).

Indeed, the IRS plays a heavy-handed role in what may be defined as public interest-oriented news and mere "commercial" news. If The New York Times, for example, claims that it is chiefly a "public service" and can prove it caters to the "public interest," while its editorializing is just a sideline, then it qualifies for tax exemptions or credits (in other words, a subsidy or tax break

enjoyed by few other papers). If a newspaper's chief purpose is to promulgate an ideology and is not published by a certified non-profit organization (and it's the IRS that decides what is a "non-profit" organization), then it gets no exemptions or credits.

The FTC *Draft* is essentially a 47-page excursion into fantasy land. Journalism has already "reinvented" itself without any government support. How many newspapers, for example, *do not* now have free or advertiser-paid or subscriber-paid online daily editions? The only "support" the government can legitimately provide is to stay out of it.

The FTC staff discussions, however, created a smorgasbord of policy options to recommend (to whom? Congress? The White House? Cass Sunstein? Henry Waxman?). All of them require government action. Defenders of government action make the specious claim that the government has always been involved in promoting journalism and newspapers.

Besides, the *Draft* assures the public, the report only seeks

to prompt discussion of whether to recommend policy changes to support the ongoing "reinvention" of journalism, and, if so, which specific proposals appear most useful, feasible, platform-neutral, resistant to bias, and unlikely to cause unintended consequences in addressing emerging gaps in news coverage.

The FTC has only discussed "suggestions," not concrete plans of action.

"These are nothing more or less than information gathering meetings," says FTC spokesman Peter Kaplan, who adds that the agency has no current plans other than to publish the hearing results this fall. Beyond that, points out Lisa Graves, executive director of the Center for Media and Democracy, protestations aside, government has played a role in encouraging a healthy press from the dawn of the republic.

"First, we had an ink subsidy and then we had a postal subsidy both of which helped a free press to flourish," she says.

Yes, Miss Graves, the government played a role in encouraging the press -- by largely not meddling in it except for the "ink subsidy" and the postal subsidy. (I could find no reference anywhere about an "ink subsidy," unless Graves was referring to a tax break on printer's ink purchases or to a tariff or excise tax break on its importation.)

Much of the *Draft* seems heavily influenced by the findings and recommendations of a USC/Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism study, "Public Policy and Funding the News." It claims that the Internet and its blogging news reporters have benefited from government investment in development of the Internet, and will benefit again from TARPs I and II.

*Long before the United States was founded, the Postal Service was subsidizing the news business. It was in good measure the free-mailing privileges conferred by many postmasters that allowed a robust network of colonial newspapers to emerge. George Washington wanted all newspapers, in fact, to have 100 percent subsidized mailing costs. The Postal Act of 1792 rejected the idea of a total subsidy, but it codified highly subsidized and extremely low rates. What brought a halt to publishers' receiving 75 percent discounts on their mailed news products was the financial crisis that engulfed the Postal Service in the late 1960s. (p. 11) (Italics mine.)*

These are some of the transparent rationalizations that seek to sanction "public funding" of newspapers, the broadcast spectrum, and the Internet. I italicized the first sentence of this vacuous rationalization because the "Postal Service" could not have predated the country's

founding. There was indeed a British Crown-controlled postal “service” but its purpose was not to foster the growth of colonial newspapers. See the USPS site for clarification of the purpose of the Crown and post-Revolutionary postal services, and Benjamin Franklin’s role in them. And for a history of the development of the Internet and the government’s role in its initial role as a tool of national defense (it did little to develop the commercial potential), go here.

It does not follow that if, historically, government had *some* role in the growth of news communications, it should “monitor” the “reinvention” of it by taking control of it.

The Annenberg study offers recommendations as woozy and ill-defined as those in the *Draft*.

As policymakers debate how to respond to the fast decline of the news business, we offer the following principles as guidance:

- First and foremost, do no harm. A cycle of powerful innovation is under way. To the extent possible, government should avoid retarding the emergence of new models of news-gathering.
- Second, the government should help promote innovation, as it did when the Department of Defense funded the research that created the Internet or when NASA funded the creation of satellites that made cable TV and direct radio and TV possible.
- Third, for commercial media, government-supported mechanisms that are content neutral – such as copyright protections, postal subsidies and taxes – are preferable to those that call upon the government to fund specific news outlets, publications or programs. However policymakers proceed, they should do so based on facts rather than myths. The government has always supported the commercial news business. It does so today. Unless the government takes affirmative action, though, the level of support is almost certain to decline at this important time in the history of journalism. (p. 16)

In short, the study does not question a government role in journalism. It does not specifically oppose regulation of any media. It makes ambiguous suggestions that government “do no harm.” It seems to say: Wait until someone has a brilliant idea and a developed innovation; then you can jump in and control it for the “public good.” Whether or not that would be “doing harm” will be just someone’s subjective opinion. The “public interest” comes first.

The FCC is more obviously out to control speech, that is, to prohibit speech it deems offensive, specifically “hate speech.” But, as one blogger pointed out, the protection of “hate speech” is what the First Amendment is all about. No one has ever taken exception to “love speech” or demanded that it be censored.

The FCC is mulling over the petition of a collection of various collectivist groups, the “National Hispanic Media Coalition” (NHMC), to “monitor” speech on the radio and on the Internet, with a “view” to regulating its content and intent. But, to regulate or banish “hate speech” -- whose ever definition of the term it may be -- is to regulate or banish all speech.

NHMC’s Petition urges the Commission to examine the extent and effects of hate speech in media, including the likely link between hate speech and hate crimes, and to explore non-regulatory ways to counteract its negative impacts. As NHMC has awaited Commission action, hate, extremism and misinformation have been on the rise, and even more so in the past week as the media has focused on Arizona’s passage of one of the one of the harshest pieces of anti-Latino in this country’s history, SB1070.

There are forty-one more references to “hate speech” in the petition, the *Future of Media and Information Needs of Communities in a Digital Age*, while the phrase “hate, extremism and misinformation” appears four times. SB1070, however, is merely a replicant of the U.S. law, which

remains haphazardly enforced. Again, nowhere in the petition are *hate speech* and *misinformation* defined. Their meanings are up for grabs by the most vocal and “victimized” communities (read tribes, groups, gangs).

And, there is no “non-regulatory way” to “counteract” any speech, hateful or not, not without the use of government force. “Counteraction” means action, which means *force*, which can be either withholding a radio station’s license, or pressure put on a station’s sponsors, or just Hugo Chavez’s thuggish way of “counteracting” hate speech.

If “hate speech” is protected by the First Amendment, the recent Helen Thomas episode has demonstrated one of the practical values of that Amendment: it allows individuals to reveal their philosophy, their morality, and their souls for all to see. One may agree with them, disagree with them, or ignore them.

But, readers, viewers, and listeners should keep this in mind if they see anything benign in government regulation of speech: One of its purposes is to rig the airwaves, newspapers, television, and the Internet so that one *cannot* ignore its own propaganda, or know any truth but what the government says it is. How would one be able to judge or determine the truth? That would entail thinking, which is precisely what the government doesn’t want anyone to do. Just believe, and obey.

Paul Hsieh’s article on the FCC and FTC’s “probe” of the media, “Use It or Lose It,” outlines the necessary intellectual actions to uphold freedom of speech:

If bloggers, independent journalists, and ordinary thinking Americans value our free speech, then we must do the following:

1. We must articulate and defend a proper definition of free speech and of censorship.
2. We must defend free speech on the proper grounds of individual rights, rather than on utilitarian grounds that it promotes some “social good.” This includes defending free speech *in principle*, even when some people express views we consider odious. For liberals, this includes defending speech they may find bigoted or offensive. For social conservatives, this includes defending speech promoting alternative lifestyles they may find morally repugnant.
3. We must defend the principle of free speech not just in politics but throughout the full range of our culture — including science, art, and philosophy. We must defend the freedom of individuals to criticize another’s scientific or religious views as vigorously as their right to debate banking regulations.

“Intellectual freedom cannot exist without political freedom,” wrote Ayn Rand. “Political freedom cannot exist without economic freedom; a free mind and a free market are *corollaries*.”\* The current administration has made clear its attacks on intellectual freedom, political freedom, and economic freedom.

An attack on one has always implicitly meant an attack on the other two. This is what those who would defend the First Amendment must also understand. They must grasp that indivisible integration of freedoms. One cannot uphold freedom of speech to the exclusion of the other preconditions of it, as liberals have done for over a century, which is uphold freedom of speech while advocating the seizure or control of property. Logical consistency required that they now attack what they once defended. Their more ideologically consistent and activist brethren on the Left are only too happy to oblige.

\*“For the New Intellectual,” in *For the New Intellectual* (1961). New York: Signet/Penguin Books, p. 25.

Edward Cline  
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Freedom of speech re FTC and FCC links:

FTC Discussion draft:

<http://www.ftc.gov/opp/workshops/news/jun15/docs/new-staff-discussion.pdf>

Annenberg study of gov't subsidies of journalism

<http://www.niemanlab.org/pdfs/USC%20Report.pdf>

Christian Science Monitor on FTC and news:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2010/0605/As-new-media-proliferate-does-government-have-a-role>

Hey FCC, FTC, while we're on the subject of hate speech:

<http://bigjournalism.com/mwalsh/2010/06/02/hey-ftc-fcc-as-long-as-were-on-the-subject-of-hate-speech/>

Petition to FCC from anti-freedom of speech groups:

<http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7020450549>

White House "fishy" talk link:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/08/05/white-house-draws-requesting-fishy-information-supporters-health-reform/>

Post office vs. postal service B. Franklin:

[http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/\\_pdf/PMGFranklin.pdf](http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/_pdf/PMGFranklin.pdf)

Shape of things to come with gov't controlling news? Venezuela.

<http://www.breitbart.tv/chavez-issues-arrest-warrant-for-owner-of-opposition-tv-station/>

Benjamin Franklin as joint postmaster general under Crown:

[http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/\\_pdf/PMGFranklin.pdf](http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/_pdf/PMGFranklin.pdf)

Internet history Wiki:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Internet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Internet)

Hsieh Use it or Lose it:

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/free-speech-use-it-or-lose-it/>

## Censorship À la Carte

Were you a dictator, or merely an appointed bureaucrat or official charged with preserving a status quo by abridging, repealing, policing, or suppressing the written and spoken word of your worshipping but delusional private citizens' troublesome thoughts and deeds, you would have a gilt-edged menu from which to select the best, tried-and-true methods to preserve the peace – your own peace of mind or that of your master.

In Vladimir Putin's Russia, it is simply a matter of creating an atmosphere of spine-dissolving fear and obedience and the passage of a law or two to make it "unpatriotic" to question or criticize federal policies. At hand are battalions of riot police and secret police to knock a few heads together, or to arrest loudmouths and sentence them to long spells in Soviet-style mental "hospitals." Failing that, they can be shot in elevators or kidnapped from their offices or residences, never to be heard of again.

Unpatriotic Russians, such as Alexander Litvinenko, who defect to the decadent West from which to slander you and your government can be poisoned, murdered, or maimed with impunity. Remember Anna Politkovskaya? Weak-willed "democracies" are not likely to insist that you or your agents be hauled into court to face indictments or charges of murder committed in their own capitals.

In China, the same alternatives are available at nominal cost, with the added perk of having the assistance of Western companies, such as Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, and others to police, detect, gag, and arrest troublemakers with an efficiency that would be the envy of Caligula, Hitler, and Stalin. The unpatriotic can be shipped to reeducation camps to labor for the good of the country and incidentally be "struggled" until they get their minds straight.

In Venezuela, you can gag the press and opposition simply by denying them access to newsprint and the airwaves. Those who insist on taking to the streets to express their ingratitude and dissatisfaction with your beneficent and humanitarian regime can be dealt with by your loyal supporters, the army, and the riot police.

In the Middle East, you *own* the airwaves and the press, so there would be little problem with blasphemers and other sinners. Those who speak out, or behave in any immodest or traitorous manner, can be lashed, stoned to death, have their hands cut off, and the like. It is a little known fact that the Nazis borrowed a page from Islam and beheaded persons they accused of treason. (The only thorn in your side would be Israel.)

A free press, and freedom of speech, after all, are not prescribed by Allah's will, and are nowhere mentioned in the Koran or in Mohammad's (bpbuh!) works. (And if you are a Christian dictator, there is nothing in the Bible about them, either.) In point of fact, as Islam's learned scholars will tell you, they are *proscribed*

by implication in the sacred texts. Such notions are the tools of infidels to suppress and offend Islam and to cast an unflattering light on one's minions, who are insulted in their characterization of being helpless, mindless manqués.

Here, too, one can extend the range of one's fidelity to Allah and his Prophet by becoming what the infidels, in their perverted amusement, call "libel tourists" to sue writers and speakers in their own countries for slandering in print your faithful and gentle jihadists. You will need mountains of petro-dollars to indulge in this pastime and the tacit approval of their oil-rich eminences the Royal Family, guardians of the faith. The principal aim is to bankrupt writers and publishers, or to instill fear in them of the possibility of bankruptcy. After all, Mohammad never insisted that Dar-al Harb *must* be a theater of blood, violence, looting and rapine. It can be conquered and their occupants made to submit by exploiting the infidels' own laws and courts.

Britain is the chief resort and playground of such libel tourists. Of all the countries within Dar-al Harb, Britain is the most important after America. Italy, Germany, and Spain, for example, are "in the bag," as is the European Union. Tremendous progress in the reconquest of the West is being made all over the British Isles. Its infidel jurists are beginning to accept that there is no "Bill of Rights" in Islam. The back is stiff but it is bending by measurable degrees in the direction of Mecca, not to mention in the direction of Brussels and the super-state of the European Union. (Allow one the pun of thanking its politics for "Labouring" diligently for its submission to Islam and to that super-state, which is a willing accomplice to Islamic ends.)

Even one of the prominent servants of Satan there, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has conceded the inevitability of Sharia law (and the poor dog was mercilessly beaten up on by other worshippers of false gods, but to no perceptible avail) that would somehow "coexist" with its atheistic secular law (which is rapidly deteriorating into police-state style law, which is fine with Islam, which thrives on such politics, viz., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other repressive regimes). The press there no longer equates Islam with totalitarianism or thought control or violence; it has done you the favor of prohibiting inflammatory terminology, e.g., referring to suicide bombers and violent conspirators as merely "Islamic extremists," and not "Islamists," and if one flouts the prohibition, one can be charged with "insensitivity" and interviewed (what a quaint, misleading term for the "third degree") by the authorities if enough Muslims complain.

(To beg a question, is Islam any less thoroughly "radical" or "extreme" than Christianity, if consistently practiced? Both creeds offer eternal personal salvation at the price of suspending one's mind, denying the evidence of one's senses, and heeding the authority of persons who have been dead for hundreds, or even thousands of years. If you are an ambitious Muslim dictator, Islam, of course, is the true faith, while Christianity, Judaism and other faiths are merely false and



punishable digressions. But there's no reason you and a Christian dictator can't get along.)

One instance will illustrate how mushy a target Britain has become. A British broadcaster, Channel 4, aired a libelous and filthy "documentary" called "Underground Mosque," produced by a mercenary company, Hardcash Productions. This "documentary" revealed that Islamophobic "journalists" infiltrated British mosques and recorded, without any leave, permission, or warning, the sermons and prayers of humble clerics as they addressed their congregations. The "documentary" claimed these faithful holy men preached blood and violence to their votaries, and predicted the ultimate conquest of Britain through fair means and foul.

Naturally, Muslims who viewed this program were offended, and complained to the Crown authorities, who investigated and made public their concerns. Channel 4 countered with a suit, citing libel. But, what chance has this colony of infidel insects against unlimited Saudi petro-dollars that brim from British-Muslim legal war chests? Furthermore, Muslims have "hate laws" on their side, passed by an obliging, compliant and very confused Parliament, and endorsed by such notable infidels as Prince Charles, Gordon Brown, Tony Blair, and Ken Livingston.

You can bet that Channel 4 won't be airing any more offensive programs!

Here is another choice and very funny morsel on the censor's menu: In Malaysia, a poor, deluded woman, Kamariah Ali, chose apostasy over her faith and joined a lunatic cult called the "Sky Kingdom," which held its services in a giant teapot and claimed a desire to "reach out" to Muslims in the name of peace. This is the woman's second offense. Of course, the Koran and Mohammad prescribe death to anyone who is born into the Islamic faith but who abandons it for any reason. The Malaysian authorities were lenient the first time and simply jailed her for twenty months. The outcome of her new trial may not be so merciful. The teapot and its surrounding garden of icons and curious sculptures have been demolished.

Censorship in North America is making slow but observable progress. "Hate crime" laws have been passed in a number of the United States and in Canada, and present the dictator and bureaucratic preserver of public decency and sensitivity with numerous cocktails of suppression. For example, at New York City's Pace University, in October and November of 2006, a student got into an argument with some Muslim students, and subsequently removed two copies of the Koran from the school library and put them in toilets. The Muslims considered that an act of desecration, and so Russian immigrant Stanislav Shmulevich was at first charged with a hate crime. The student later entered a plea of disorderly conduct and was sentenced to three hundred hours of "community service."

It is interesting, and encouraging, that the first thing the authorities thought of was to charge Shmulevich with a hate crime, that is, with *unlawfully* expressing his

contempt for Islam. In the “good old days” of freedom of expression, Shmulevich’s action would have been treated as petty larceny, and no legal or formal cognizance of the hurt feelings or offended esteem granted to Muslims. Some day, when the rot has eaten away at objective law far enough, people like Shmulevich will be faced with hate crime as a capital crime and certainly not allowed to plead “disorderly conduct.” They will have to answer to a Minister or Secretary of Public Piety.

Of course, “hate crime” legislation can favor not only Muslims, but homosexuals, Indians, women, the obese, the disabled and any other group whose members can collectively claim “offense” and “emotional distress” should someone publicly disagree in any form with a group’s claims to uniqueness. An ambitious dictator or moral bureaucrat would be wise to patronize these groups and get them on one’s side. They make great social blocs and fine street fighters.

Self-censorship by private individuals and organizations and the press will prove to be a boon to you in your quest for power, not to mention such bizarre laws that regulate and punish political action committees for overzealous money collection. There is a Constitution that may obstruct one’s means and goals, but no one in the U.S. seems to take it literally or seriously, or even to understand it anymore, especially the Supreme Court. So, don’t sweat the Constitution.

In Canada, censorship is making better progress than in its southern neighbor. There, the government subsidizes many film, book and sound production projects through tax credits awarded to companies whose films, books and recordings stress “Canadian” content. Such is the just fate of “freedom of speech” in a welfare state with touchy nationalist aspirations.

The government there, according to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, is amending the income tax law to deny such credits to any material its “Heritage Minister” deems explicitly “sexual in nature, that denigrates a group, or is excessively violent without an educational value.” The Minister and his appointees and associates will be the sole judges of what is “contrary to public policy.” A Toronto lawyer said that the government “feels it must invest public funds wisely....They don’t view this as censorship because they say anyone is free to make the film or show or book, but not with their money.” Of course, no one in Canada has been sharp enough to issue the retort, “*Whose* money?” or even to question what the Canadian government is doing in the “angel” business.

It can only be hoped that Canada and its southern neighbor progress to the point that no one will be free or even able to produce a movie, book or recording without a government subsidy. That would save you statist much grief and anxiety; nothing could be said without your having said it first.

The menu of censorship is quite long. Take time making your selections from it. It is rich in practical, effective modes of action. And don’t worry about the prices. The bill will be footed by those it was necessary to silence.

And never forget your ultimate goal: to secure for yourself and your adherents the exclusive right to practice freedom of speech.

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Edward Cline  
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