

EU Moves Toward Authoritarianism

by Lorna Salzman (September 2016)



On May 31st of this year the EU Commission issued a press release, the first part of which follows and which contains a major contradiction in that it takes a token position in favor of free discourse, but nonetheless expresses an intent to censor the media and the internet. This is the kind of centralized unaccountable power typical of the EU which led to the pro-Brexit vote in Great Britain and has the distinct potential to arouse similar outrage at the EU and ultimately similar political responses.

The unelected EU Commission recently sent this threat to Spain: "According to reports, Europe's exasperated elite will freeze funding to Madrid, impose further budget cutbacks and rein in regional projects in a bid to bully elected Spanish politicians into cooperating with each other." Its director Jean-Claude Juncker has uttered other threats to any European country that could consider leaving the EU, suggesting potential economic pressures that could affect a country's economy.

European Commission – Press release:

European Commission and IT Companies announce Code of Conduct on illegal online hate speech

Brussels, 31 May 2016

The Commission together with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft (“the IT companies”) today unveil a code of conduct that includes a series of commitments to combat the spread of illegal hate speech online in Europe.

The IT Companies support the European Commission and EU Member States in the effort to respond to the challenge of ensuring that online platforms do not offer opportunities for illegal online hate speech to spread virally. They share, together with other platforms and social media companies, a collective responsibility and pride in promoting and facilitating freedom of expression throughout the online world. However, the Commission and the IT Companies recognise that the spread of illegal hate speech online not only negatively affects the groups or individuals that it targets, it also negatively impacts those who speak out for freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination in our open societies and has a chilling effect on the democratic discourse on online platforms.

Perish the thought that the left or liberals could ever espouse the basic civil liberty of free speech. Perish the thought that the EU commission could actually defend Europe’s right to free speech. As things stand now, those who allow radical violent Muslims the right to vilify Jews and Christians and call for their extermination are free to continue their calls for violence, while critics of sharia law, honor killings, the subjugation of women and child marriage are cursed as “Islamophobes” and are now facing a curb on their free speech rights while crazed Muslims are given free rein. One could hardly find a better excuse for those who oppose the EU to accelerate the exit of some European countries from the oppressive reign of the EU authoritarians, whose leader, Jean Claude Juncker, has actually issued threats to all of Europe about what would happen to them if they considered an exit from the EU.

How many more civil liberties will be sacrificed in order to appease potential terrorists.... as if terrorists were actually reasonable and easily diverted from their fanatic cause? How can the elite bureaucrats so disastrously misunderstand the real roots and motivation of religious fanatics? They are not on a mission

to insure that women's bodies are covered or that schools serve halal food or to protect Muslims' right to attend mosque. They are on a global mission to impose sharia law and a Muslim caliphate, and all those who do not agree with them will be slaughtered, wholesale in bombings, or one at a time in local attacks by "lone wolves."

Europe is in the direst of straits. Its civilization and future are now threatened...a threat not reduced but amplified by the EU's timorousness and trembling in the face of uncontrollable religious fanaticism and determination. Europe is no longer safe, nor are its survival and identity guaranteed. The dark side of this is the recusal of liberals from the battleground, leaving the field entirely to the radical right, neo-Nazis and pseudo-populist nationalists and ethnic isolationists. This is already happening in Hungary and other eastern countries will soon follow suit. And many Europeans will have no alternative but to support them at the very least, and join them as the situation becomes explosive.

It is absolutely clear that Europe must prevent the immigration of all Muslims. The gates must be fully and permanently closed. Tough efforts must be made to locate all private weapons and ammunition and confiscate them. At borders, searches for new incoming weapons must be instigated. Those who fear the imposition of new government powers are misguided; such government oversight is intended to PROTECT citizens from terrorism, not to form a new kind of police state. The basic mandate of a democratic government is PROTECTION of individual and national security. This is not like the nighttime raids of Pinochet or the SS. These measures are intended to find CRIMINALS and their weapons, not to harass or arrest political dissenters and thus are justified police powers that already exist. This is defense of lives and property, and not least the preservation of civil society institutions and the rule of law.

Anyone who believes that there should be no curbs on any civil liberties is living in a dream world, not our world today. But free speech does not deserve curbing; free speech is fundamental to individual and state security because it contributes to an informed society and thus enhances trust in government. Trust in government is corroded by the curbing of free thought and discourse. It produces a suspicion of government motives. Free speech is in the end the utterance of free thought. It is the lifeblood of a democratic society. All the tyrants in history understood this clearly...as opposed to today's left, for

whom, as for Stalin, the ends justify all means. "Hate speech" is hate thought, which can never be abolished. It is the attempts to abolish it that strangle democracy.

The open borders of the world have armed violent illegitimate struggles of "resistance" in far greater numbers than they have actually helped protect victims, and any look at the recent genocides in Africa and the drug-infused wars in Latin America are proof of this.

No one, the UN included, helped Rwandans and Congolese protect themselves or prevented Serbia from carrying out "ethnic cleansing" until hundreds of thousands had been killed. The American left, Noam Chomsky and Ramsey Clark stridently defended Milosevic and opposed the intervention of NATO to stop Serbian atrocities and ethnic cleansing. Worse still, money from abroad has increased Hamas' military capacity, rather than being spent to repair the country and the economy. Yet the left has no problem with the re-arming of this terrorist group even as it blames American invasions and military support for dictators and monarchs like Saudi Arabia, and the failed state of crazy-like-a-loon Pakistan.

The EU has a major blindspot with regard to public opinion, one that can only lead to a broader European rebellion. Such a rebellion will be entirely justified of course, but the side course will be the strengthening of populist and reactionary forces, the outcome of which may not necessarily be a strong democracy but something quite short of that, at best. One hesitates to postulate what the worst could be. A resurgence of authoritarian Christianity – something already visible in Poland – as the alternative to Islam could also increase what is now just simmering anti-Semitism in Hungary and Belgium, but something more ominous and overt. Already there are voices urging a more powerful show of Christian doctrine and worship as an antidote to Islam. There is no comfort in this.

Lorna Salzman's career as an environmental activist and writer began when the

late David Brower hired her to be the regional representative of Friends of the Earth in NYC. Later she worked as an editor on *National Audubon's American Birds* magazine and as director of Food & Water, an early opponent of food irradiation, and then spent three years as a natural resource specialist in the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection. She co-founded the New York Green Party in 1984 and in 2004 she sought the U.S. Green Party's presidential nomination. She is the author of "[here](#)."

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