

Make No Mistake. You Are Living Under the Perfect Censorship.



by Armando Simón

In 1991, [Mario Vargas Llosa](#), Nobel laureate from Perú, caused a firestorm on Mexican television by calling Mexico the “perfect dictatorship, a phrase that has since become [iconic](#). He pointed out that the one-party rule in Mexico had become entrenched: the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional in Spanish, or PRI) [held uninterrupted power in the country for 71 years](#), even though the name of the presidents changed every five years (whereupon they were automatically amnestied by their successor for any criminal activity). Criticism—up to a point—was permitted, even encouraged, to maintain the illusion of Mexico being democratic. Opposition parties were allowed, but they often found that the means for an effective election campaign was controlled by the ruling party. As Vargas Llosa explained, a special kind of political rhetoric had been created to justify Mexico’s political system by recruiting intellectuals who were too willing to prostitute themselves. In short, it was a deviation from the traditional style of brutal military dictatorship, but it was a dictatorship nonetheless.

Vargas Llosa's interview had an impact. Vicente Fox, running on the [National Action Party \(PAN\)](#) ticket, was elected president in 2000, followed by Felipe Calderón (also PAN) in 2006. In 2012, PRI returned to power with the election of Enrique Peña Nieto, but lost it again in 2018 with the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (of the center-left progressive populist party, [Movimiento Regeneración Nacional](#)). By pointing out what everyone knew, Vargas Llosa had effectively altered Mexican politics.

Criticism—up to a point—was permitted, even encouraged, to maintain the illusion of Mexico being democratic.

With reflection, it is evident that the template for a “perfect dictatorship” has also been applied in other countries such as [Turkey](#), [Venezuela](#), and [Russia](#): either the same leader—Erdogan, Maduro, Putin—gets “re-elected” while opposition candidates are hamstrung. Alternatively, as [in the case of Iran](#), clones of the same kind of leader cycle through the office. Though these regimes are a deviation from the traditional style of brutal military dictatorship (where power is seized by force), they are dictatorships nonetheless: despite the performance of periodic elections, power is nevertheless held by a single leader or group [with little or no tolerance for political pluralism or independent media](#).

Upon further reflection, it is also clear that many western (ironically, *democratic*) countries now face a similar condition—not necessarily in terms of their elections, but in terms of other freedoms that democratic electorates have grown accustomed to. Western democracies are now under **perfect censorship**. This process has been going on for many years, and is on the verge of being perfected in the United States.

THE DANGEROUS TREND TOWARD PERFECT CENSORSHIP

“Perfect censorship” has already been perfected and is in full operation in many of our western counterparts: the [United](#)

[Kingdom](#), [Canada](#), [Germany](#), [France](#), and [Sweden](#)—all countries where freedom of speech has [vanished](#). [Gone](#). In those countries, anyone who makes [jokes](#) will at [best](#) be fined and, at worst, [jailed](#).

When these views are combined with the power of left-leaning institutions, censorship isn't far behind.

In Great Britain, through section [58 of the Terrorism Act 2000](#), people can now be [sent to prison for 15 years just for viewing](#) “far-right propaganda,” which is a [vague](#) and undefined [phrase](#) (much like Germans and Dutch were jailed for listening to the BBC during WWII, and Russians and Hungarians could be sent to the gulag for listening to Voice of America). [In 2019](#), journalist Caroline Farrow, a devout Catholic, was threatened with prison for [“misgendering” a transgender person](#), accused of violating the UK's [Malicious Communications Act](#).

Jokes, meanwhile, are practically illegal in [Scotland](#) (actually, in all of the [UK](#)), as Mark Meechan, known online as [“Count Dankula,”](#) [found out](#) when he tried to irritate his girlfriend by teaching her pug dog the Hitler salute. When he posted the prank online, it was deemed not only offensive, but *threatening*, as if people were going to be converted to National Socialism because of a pug doing a Hitler salute. He was taken to court and fined. (Meechan subsequently [praised America's First Amendment](#) after Britain's [Prince Harry](#) called it “bonkers.”) Meanwhile, [police are on the lookout](#) for a “loud man” who talked of his “dislike of Muslims” on a train from York to Leeds—a heinous hate crime, according to British Transport Police.

Then, there is climate change. Those who deny global warming should be murdered, [according to at least one British actor](#)—but murdered humanely, he insisted. One actor's opinion doesn't rise to the level of censorship, of course, but when these views are combined with the power of left-leaning

institutions, censorship isn't far behind. Climate activists have lobbied social media platforms in the UK to designate speech critical of the "climate change" narrative as misinformation, even [going as far as to call for the de-platforming and demonetization of these views](#). The mainstream media, meanwhile, has fallen in line: in February, the Press Gazette's Charlotte Tobitt [declared](#) that the UK press has "moved from denial to acceptance and now action on climate change."

In Europe, Books critical of Muslims, like [Hege Storhaug's *Islam: Europe Invaded, America Warned*](#), and [Sabaditsch-Wolff's *The Truth is No Defense*](#), are being attacked, along with their authors. For all intents and purposes, criticizing any aspect of [Islam](#) is officially verboten in [many](#) European countries (but attacking Christianity is [permitted](#)). [The European Court of Human Rights has ruled](#) that the Islamic religion should not be criticized in any way, even when simply pointing out historical [facts](#) regarding the religion's central figure, the Prophet Mohammed.

I could continue, but you get the picture. In short, Europeans (and Canadians) may have democracy, but, paradoxically, they do not have freedom of speech. They have been told, and they have accepted, that such restrictions are for their own good and so certain select groups won't feel offended. In fact, the majority of the citizens of those countries are even unaware that they are living under a regime of censorship—that is how effective it has been.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT HANGS ON BY A THREAD

Just as the "perfect dictatorship" deviates from the traditional violence of a military coup, the "perfect censorship" deviates from more traditional styles of state censorship in that it is not instituted by the government. Instead, it is a kind of control that has been slowly, subtly,

and systematically imposed over the years by ideologically driven fanatics who, almost without notice, have established a wide presence within institutions, and who instinctively gravitate towards positions of power within those institutions, no matter how seemingly insignificant (like student governments in universities). They have a *hive mind*: they think alike, they speak alike, they act alike, they feel alike. It is as if they were [NPCs](#).

Whether one wants to admit it or not, the fact of the matter is that American censorship is being carried out not by libertarians or conservatives, but by [liberals](#). The very same people that so fiercely advocated free speech decades ago are now equally fiercely advocating censorship.

In order to present an illusion of tolerance, American editors will occasionally hire a “conservative” who is anything but a conservative. Occasionally, they will even hire a real conservative as long as he/she hates Trump. However, when one of these token conservatives steps out of line for expressing views that are anathema, he/she finds themselves instantly out on the street (as happened to [Kevin Williamson](#) in 2018 with The Atlantic, when the editors realized that Williamson was [much more conservative than they had anticipated](#), having once [posted](#)> on Twitter that women who have abortions should be hung).

Another instance is Bret Stephens, formerly of Wall Street Journal, now working on borrowed time at The New York Pravda—sorry, The New York Times. He was brought over to the Dark Side immediately after the 2016 election simply because of his intense hatred for Donald Trump, and he has pleased his new masters by occasionally writing pieces like the one where he defended [Sarah Jeong](#), despite her unapologetic anti-white racism. (However, deviation from the party line sends leftists into a hysterical frenzy, as Stephens has learned on a [number](#) of [occasions](#).)

The United States has one advantage that the supposedly democratic countries of Europe and Canada do not have: the First Amendment of the US Constitution—the highest legal authority of the United States—which forbids any governmental body or bureaucrat from usurping the free speech rights of its citizens. This is not to say that there are no politicians who would love to strip us of those rights. Or try to, rather. And as expected, they all happen to be from the Democratic Party.

During a 2018 CNN interview, California Democratic Representative Ted Lieu [declared that](#) he “would love to be able to regulate the content of speech,” while the former Chair of the Democratic National Committee and presidential candidate [Howard Dean declared in a Tweet](#) that “Hate speech is not protected by the first amendment.” David Chipman, President Joe Biden’s pick to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, recently showed his contempt for not one, but *two* fundamental American rights, [saying](#) that those who use “hate speech” on the internet should not have the right to bear arms.

Most of the 2020 [Democratic](#) primary candidates advocated “regulating” “hate speech” and “white nationalism” speech. As early as 1974, then-Senator Joe Biden had [bragged](#) that politicians could take away the First Amendment while, during the Democratic presidential debate, Kamala Harris [called on Twitter to delete President Trump’s account](#). Sen. Bernie Sanders, the socialist Senator from Vermont, [wants to control all facets of journalism](#), which is not surprising since there [isn’t](#) a [communist regime](#) that he [doesn’t](#) like. In 2019, Sanders published an op-ed for Columbia Journalism Review to [share his vision for a government-managed Fourth Estate](#): “We need to rebuild and protect a diverse and truly independent press so that real journalists can do the critical jobs that they love, and that a functioning democracy requires,” he writes.

The enthusiasm that leftist leaders have for censorship is

trickling down to the local level as well. It speaks volumes that this year Glenbrook South's chapter of Turning Point USA was canceled by orders of Democratic politicians [because the group put up a poster criticizing China's Communist Party](#). That tells you everything there is to know about the future of free speech in a Democrat-controlled world. It's a little scary to think what all these individuals would do if it wasn't for the First Amendment. It's likely one of the reasons that Democrats are desperate to [pack](#) the [Supreme Court](#) with totalitarian-minded "progressives." After eliminating "hate speech," they would then outlaw the Republican Party (even though it is mostly composed of eunuchs), [something](#) that [they](#) have [openly](#) advocated.

Nor is it just politicians. American universities are teeming with [sophists](#) who [have argued](#) in [favor](#) of censorship; so [have journalists](#). (The irony being that these two groups have been strong opponents of censorship). Just look at the catalog of acts of censorship in schools found in [The College Fix](#), [Campus Reform](#), and [Samizdat 2020](#). It is fascinating [reading](#) the intellectual gymnastics undertaken by the intellectual left to [justify](#) censorship.

The First Amendment protects Americans from censorship by the government, but has no say in preventing censorship by [private institutions](#), such as [social media](#) ([YouTube](#), [Google](#), [Pinterest](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)), newspapers (e.g., [New York Times](#), [The Boston Globe](#), [Washington Post](#)), and [network news](#) ([CBS](#), [ABC](#), [CNN](#), [MSNBC](#), [NBC](#)). In the past four years, I have personally collected hundreds of instances of censorship by these entities, ranging from outright deliberate falsehoods ("fake news") to news blackouts to removal and demonetizing internet channels. After I finished writing this essay, President Biden called on Facebook to [censor](#) "misinformation" on its site, even more aggressively than it already does, just like YouTube. Since the politics of the Democratic Party and Silicon Valley [are](#)

[congruent](#), Facebook and its peers will no doubt comply.

We may have the First Amendment, but free speech in America is hanging by a thread.

WE, THE MODERN-DAY CASSANDRAS

It is not just censorship that is worrisome. And here we truly come to the crux of the problem. [Present-day censorship](#) is a manifestation of totalitarianism. Only someone who is very obtuse will fail to recognize that we are [in the midst of a totalitarian movement](#).

In schools and universities, ideological indoctrination and rigid conformity are taking place. Everything has become politicized, from television to businesses to advertisements to the military. People are afraid to [speak](#) their [minds](#). [Comedy](#) is under [attack](#) (and isn't it interesting that the Soviet Union never had comedy? In my research, I have never come across any comedy in Soviet films or television. There was never any comedy in Communist countries, which I guess is why circus [clowns](#) were so [popular](#) in the Soviet Union). The Radicalization Awareness Network recently [published a report](#) attacking humor, as it is applied to dogma, to political parties, to governmental policies, or any of an assortment of leftist sacred cows. It makes recommendations on how to eliminate [humor](#).

Meanwhile, resistance to censorship is minimal and ineffective.

I come from Cuba, and I have Russian and Ukrainian friends; what is happening in the United States has a disturbing familiarity. We are experiencing déjà vu. We who have lived in communist countries—[Vietnamese](#), [Poles](#), [Ukrainians](#), [Russians](#), [Cubans](#), [Chinese](#), [Romanians](#), [Czechoslovakians](#)—recognize all the signs. We have [seen](#) it before. We are frantically sounding the alarm to an unresponsive citizenry—the barbarians are inside the

gates—but we are dismissed as alarmists, as engaging in “hyperbole.” We are modern-day [Cassandras](#), who are disturbing the tranquility of the readers.

In the words of [Pastor Artur Pawłowski](#), “We were warning Americans and Canadians—Westerners—about what is coming. We could smell it for many years. People were laughing at us. ‘Oh, you’re just making this stuff up. You’re blowing this out of proportion. You conspiracy theorist.’ However, it’s here.”

I wonder if Winston Churchill felt the same way.

First published in [Human Events](#) on July 29, 2021.