



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on August 2, 2023

Technocensorship: The Government's War on So-called Dangerous Ideas

"There is more than one way to burn a book. And the world is full of people running about with lit matches."—Ray Bradbury

What we are witnessing is the modern-day equivalent of book burning which involves doing away with dangerous ideas—legitimate or not—and the people who espouse them.

Seventy years after Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* depicted a fictional world in which books are burned in order to suppress dissenting ideas, while televised entertainment is used to anesthetize the populace and render them easily pacified, distracted and controlled, we find ourselves navigating an eerily similar reality.

Welcome to the age of technocensorship.

On paper—under the First Amendment, at least—we are technically free to speak.

In reality, however, we are now only as free to speak as a government official—or corporate entity such as Facebook, Google or YouTube—may allow.

Case in point: internal documents released by the House Judiciary Select Subcommittee on Weaponization of the Federal Government confirmed what we have long suspected: that [the government has been working in tandem with social media companies to censor speech](#).

By "censor," we're referring to concerted efforts by the government to muzzle, silence and altogether eradicate any speech that runs afoul of the government's own approved narrative.

This is political correctness taken to its most chilling and oppressive extreme.

The revelations that Facebook worked in concert with the Biden administration to censor content related to COVID-19, [including humorous jokes](#), credible information and so-called disinformation, followed on the heels of a ruling by a federal court in Louisiana that [prohibits executive branch officials from communicating with social media companies about controversial content](#) in their online forums.

Likening the government's heavy-handed attempts to pressure social media companies to suppress content critical of COVID vaccines or the election to "an almost dystopian scenario," Judge Terry Doughty warned that ["the United States Government seems to have assumed a role similar to an Orwellian 'Ministry of Truth.'"](#)

This is the very definition of technofascism.



John Whitehead



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on August 2, 2023

Clothed in tyrannical self-righteousness, technofascism is powered by technological behemoths (both corporate and governmental) working in tandem to achieve a common goal.

The government is not protecting us from “dangerous” disinformation campaigns. It is laying the groundwork to insulate us from “dangerous” ideas that might cause us to think for ourselves and, in so doing, challenge the power elite’s stranglehold over our lives.

Thus far, the tech giants have been able to sidestep the First Amendment by virtue of their non-governmental status, but it’s a dubious distinction at best when they are marching in lockstep with the government’s dictates.

As Philip Hamburger and Jenin Younes write for *The Wall Street Journal*: “The First Amendment prohibits the government from ‘abridging the freedom of speech.’ Supreme Court doctrine makes clear that [government can’t constitutionally evade the amendment by working through private companies](#).”

Nothing good can come from allowing the government to sidestep the Constitution.

The steady, pervasive censorship creep that is being inflicted on us by corporate tech giants with the blessing of the powers-that-be threatens to bring about a restructuring of reality straight out of Orwell’s *1984*, where the Ministry of Truth polices speech and ensures that facts conform to whatever version of reality the government propagandists embrace.

Orwell intended *1984* as a warning. Instead, it is being used as a dystopian instruction manual for socially engineering a populace that is compliant, conformist and obedient to Big Brother.

This is the slippery slope that leads to the end of free speech as we once knew it.

In a world increasingly automated and filtered through the lens of artificial intelligence, we are finding ourselves at the mercy of inflexible algorithms that dictate the boundaries of our liberties.

Once artificial intelligence becomes a [fully integrated part of the government bureaucracy](#), there will be little recourse: we will all be subject to the intransigent judgments of techno-rulers.

This is how it starts.

First, the censors went after so-called extremists spouting so-called “hate speech.”

Then they went after so-called extremists spouting so-called [“disinformation” about stolen elections, the Holocaust, and Hunter Biden](#).

By the time so-called extremists found themselves in the crosshairs for spouting so-called “misinformation” about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines, the censors had [developed a system and strategy for silencing the nonconformists](#).

Eventually, depending on how the government and its corporate allies define what constitutes “extremism,” “we the people” might *all* be considered guilty of some thought crime or other.

Whatever we tolerate now—whatever we turn a blind eye to—whatever we rationalize when it is inflicted on others, whether in the name of securing racial justice or defending democracy or combatting fascism, will eventually come back to imprison us, one and all.

Watch and learn.

We should all be alarmed when any individual or group—prominent or not—is censored, silenced and made to disappear from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram for voicing ideas that are deemed politically incorrect, hateful, dangerous or conspiratorial.



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on August 2, 2023

Given what we know about the government's tendency to define its own reality and attach its own labels to behavior and speech that challenges its authority, this should be [cause for alarm across the entire political spectrum](#).

Here's the point: you don't have to like or agree with anyone who has been muzzled or made to disappear online because of their views, but to ignore the long-term ramifications of such censorship is dangerously naïve, because whatever powers you allow the government and its corporate operatives to claim now *will* eventually be used against you by tyrants of your own making.

As Glenn Greenwald [writes](#) for *The Intercept*:

The glaring fallacy that always lies at the heart of pro-censorship sentiments is the gullible, delusional belief that censorship powers will be deployed only to suppress views one dislikes, but never one's own views... Facebook is not some benevolent, kind, compassionate parent or a subversive, radical actor who is going to police our discourse in order to protect the weak and marginalized or serve as a noble check on mischief by the powerful. They are almost always going to do exactly the opposite: protect the powerful from those who seek to undermine elite institutions and reject their orthodoxies. Tech giants, like all corporations, are required by law to have one overriding objective: maximizing shareholder value. They are always going to use their power to appease those they perceive wield the greatest political and economic power.

Be warned: it's a slippery slope from censoring so-called illegitimate ideas to silencing truth.

Eventually, as George Orwell predicted, telling the truth will become a revolutionary act.

If the government can control speech, it can control thought and, in turn, it can control the minds of the citizenry.

It's happening already.

With every passing day, we're being moved further down the road towards a totalitarian society characterized by government censorship, violence, corruption, hypocrisy and intolerance, all packaged for our supposed benefit in the Orwellian doublespeak of national security, tolerance and so-called "government speech."

Little by little, Americans are being conditioned to accept routine incursions on their freedoms.

This is how oppression becomes systemic, what is referred to as creeping normality, or a death by a thousand cuts.

It's a concept invoked by Pulitzer Prize-winning scientist Jared Diamond to describe how major changes, if implemented slowly in small stages over time, can be accepted as normal without the shock and resistance that might greet a sudden upheaval.

Diamond's concerns related to Easter Island's now-vanished civilization and the societal decline and environmental degradation that contributed to it, but it's a powerful analogy for the steady erosion of our freedoms and decline of our country *right under our noses*.

[As Diamond explains](#), "In just a few centuries, the people of Easter Island wiped out their forest, drove their plants and animals to extinction, and saw their complex society spiral into chaos and cannibalism... Why didn't they look around, realize what they were doing, and stop before it was too



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on August 2, 2023

late? What were they thinking when they cut down the last palm tree?”

His answer: “I suspect that the disaster happened not with a bang but with a whimper.”

Much like America’s own colonists, Easter Island’s early colonists discovered a new world—“a pristine paradise”—teeming with life. Yet almost 2000 years after its first settlers arrived, Easter Island was reduced to a barren graveyard by a populace so focused on their immediate needs that they failed to preserve paradise for future generations.

The same could be said of the America today: it, too, is being reduced to a barren graveyard by a populace so focused on their immediate needs that they are failing to preserve freedom for future generations.

In Easter Island’s case, as Diamond speculates:

The forest...vanished slowly, over decades. Perhaps war interrupted the moving teams; perhaps by the time the carvers had finished their work, the last rope snapped. In the meantime, any islander who tried to warn about the dangers of progressive deforestation would have been overridden by vested interests of carvers, bureaucrats, and chiefs, whose jobs depended on continued deforestation... The changes in forest cover from year to year would have been hard to detect... Only older people, recollecting their childhoods decades earlier, could have recognized a difference. Gradually trees became fewer, smaller, and less important. By the time the last fruit-bearing adult palm tree was cut, palms had long since ceased to be of economic significance. That left only smaller and smaller palm saplings to clear each year, along with other bushes and treelets. No one would have noticed the felling of the last small palm.

Sound painfully familiar yet?

We’ve already torn down the rich forest of liberties established by our founders. It has vanished slowly, over the decades. The erosion of our freedoms has happened so incrementally, no one seems to have noticed. Only the older generations, remembering what true freedom was like, recognize the difference. Gradually, the freedoms enjoyed by the citizenry have become fewer, smaller and less important. By the time the last freedom falls, no one will know the difference.

This is how tyranny rises and freedom falls: with a thousand cuts, each one justified or ignored or shrugged over as inconsequential enough by itself to bother, but they add up.

Each cut, each attempt to undermine our freedoms, each loss of some critical right—to think freely, to assemble, to speak without fear of being shamed or censored, to raise our children as we see fit, to worship or not worship as our conscience dictates, to eat what we want and love who we want, to live as we want—they add up to an immeasurable failure on the part of each and every one of us to stop the descent down that slippery slope.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we are on that downward slope now.

ABOUT JOHN & NISHA WHITEHEAD:

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on August 2, 2023

Institute. His latest books [The Erik Blair Diaries](#) and [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) are available at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.