

The Suppression of Information in the 21st Century

by Prof. James F. Tracy via stan - Global Research *Sunday, May 20 2012, 9:37am*

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The police state's framework for suppressing information and opinion arguably threatens all forms of independent thought and appears poised to intensify as the "war on terror" continues. As the recent emergence of US plans for indoctrination in reeducation camps reveals, Western governments' actual enemy is the capacity for a people to exercise critical thought en route to intervening in and altering political-economic processes.

Public opinion—defined by 19th century English political thinker William MacKinnon as "that sentiment on any given subject which is entertained by the best informed, most intelligent, and most moral persons in the community"—is fundamentally at odds with police state prerogatives also exemplified in recent US Department of Homeland Security documents.

The technocratic mindset of agencies such as the DHS and Federal Bureau of Investigation that oversee federal, state, and local policing procedures seeks to short-circuit and quell dissent by identifying transgressive thought that deviates from an assumed normalcy, then interlinking it with perceived threats or violent actions against the state. In a grand governmental exercise of Freudian-style projection, the DHS's usage of inflammatory terms such as "terrorist" and "extremist" are routinely utilized to emphasize the nature and degree of various activist groups' alleged deviant ideologies. This practice proceeds in light of the fact that most every "terrorist" act within the US since 9/11 has been carefully guided by the FBI or, as was the case with the initial "underwear bomber, Western intelligence agencies likely working in concert.

A November 2011 DHS document, "Domestic Terrorism and Homegrown Violent Extremism Lexicon", is the agency's recent codification of terms intended to instruct and aid government officials in recognizing "threats of terrorism against the United States by facilitating a common understanding of the terms and conditions that describe terrorist threats to the United States [sic]."

Then, in a fashion that will be familiar to those who understand the tactics of groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, an untenable array of activist pursuits spanning the political spectrum—"Anarchist Extremists", "Animal Rights Extremists", "Anti-Abortion Extremists", "Environmental Rights Extremists"—are libelously lobbed together and defined alongside designations including "Racist Skinhead Extremists", "Homegrown Violent Extremist", "Radicalization", and "Terrorism".

As with the phalanx of totalitarian-like legislation such as the PATRIOT Acts that potentially pit the militarized security state against the US population, through intentional ambiguity Homeland Security's definitions of "terrorism" and "radicalization" come perilously close to classifying critical thought and expression of almost any sort as terrorism.

"Terrorism" is defined as "any act that is dangerous to human life, critical infrastructure, or key resources ... and appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion [sic]" (author's emphasis). Under such a definition social protest—speech protected under the First Amendment—is impermissible. After all, any effective protest seeks through various ways to effectively petition authorities for a redress of

grievances.

The curious term “radicalization” will be of special interest to academics and journalists capable of engaging with and examining controversial issues and concerns that their students or readers may become passionate enough to weigh in on in some consequential way. According to DHS, a person is “radicalized” through indoctrination “from a non-violent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use violence as a method to effect societal or political change.”

Alongside DHS’s vague definition of terrorism and the broader prerogatives of police state ideology and practice, “violence” may be conceived in a number of ways, such as a person with of a certain racial demarcation peacefully sitting in the front of a segregated bus, or a concerned citizen occupying the lobby of a zombie bank.

In reality the actual target of such policing metrics is the small percentage of the population that have somehow escaped the enforced process of “de-radicalization”—those who, in other words, still possess the capacity to think and act critically on meaningful political matters.

Indeed, it is not beyond reason to point out that America is one serious terrorist attack or mass civil disturbance away from the implementation of policies to seriously limit or curtail the traffic of ideas, made all the more easy for authorities through the internet’s centralized configuration. Society will then be left with the corporate media and their custom inability (or refusal) to honestly examine and publicize the corrupt nature and practices of the national security state.

With alternative media outlets providing a broad spectrum of analyses and perspectives the tiny demarcation between critical thinking and terrorism outlined in the government’s missives is understandable. Minds not fully regulated and that risk awakening (radicalization) through an intellectual epiphany triggered by a professor, journalist, or author prone to encouraging thought crimes may become “radicalized” and carry out “terrorist” activities. They may, for example, recognize and critique the “war on terror” as an extravagant and monstrous deception.

Moreover, individuals capable of possessing, articulating, and acting upon meaningful ideas and information—of exercising an informed and self-determined opinion in furtherance of their shared security and welfare—have no need for a police state to “protect” them, which in all likelihood is why critical thought and public opinion are the New World Order’s greatest enemies.

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