

CENSORSHIP

--- In A Free Society?

There are, we must admit, many reasons to be offended by or to disagree with the content of various publications, movies, or television and radio programs.

Often, when some individuals feel personally threatened by what other people read, publish, or broadcast, they believe that they can resolve their perceived threat by lobbying for government intervention --- *censorship* --- a "solution" unfortunately welcomed by governments ever eager to extend their control over the citizenry.

But is the perceived threat real? Can the simple *expression* of ideas, opinions, or lifestyles pose a genuine threat to the safety of individuals?

We think not.

The world is replete with potentially dangerous people, ideas, and opinions. But history has demonstrated that *potentially* dangerous ideas only become a *real* danger to citizens when *governments* become active in attempts to enforce or ban the acceptance of those ideas.

That's exactly what happened with publications like *Mein Kampf*, *Das Kapital*, and yes, even the *Bible* --- yet few today would advocate their banning despite the carnage that has been attributed to them at various times throughout history.

Freedom involves balancing the risk that there will always be some individual abuse of it with the understanding that the *environment of freedom* for all is the most valuable --- and a *necessary* --- social condition. Otherwise, we'll have *tyranny*, which guarantees oppression for everyone under the false pretext of "protecting" certain interest groups.

The issue here is choice. The power to abolish what we don't like is the same power that can --- and eventually, will --- abolish the material we do like.

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Freedom Party

Those who still believe that it is possible to confine censorship to specific areas of thought or depiction (i.e., sex, violence) should take a closer look at today's reality --- the content of virtually every conceivable form of communication in Canada is controlled by some level of government in some manner: television, radio, newspapers, religious opinion, record albums, units of measurement, language, political advertising, telephone rates, the mail, sexually-oriented matter, rock videos, film, "crime" comics, satellite reception, "lifestyle" advertising, etc., etc., etc.

"We're not trying to *protect* anyone," said former *Ontario Censor Board* chairperson Mary Brown, at a time when the Board's powers were expanded and it was re-named the *Ontario Film Review Board*, "our purpose is simply to *enforce community standards*."

What Brown revealed to us in no uncertain terms goes much further than the simple admission that individuals in Ontario have been denied their right to *freedom of speech* and *association*. It means that certain selected minorities within society have been categorically denied their right to express *disagreement with majority opinion*. Unfortunately, as happens with all censorship justifications, things like "community" standards become *government* standards in practice, and the word "enforce" always refers to the initiation of legal force (i.e., violence) against someone with whom the government has a *difference of opinion*.

Freedom Party believes that the purpose of government is to protect individual freedom of choice, not to restrict it.

We think that the basis of any free society is having the *right to disagree* in a peaceful manner without fear of political reprisal --- no matter how unpopular a person's point of view may be.

If you believe that you should have the right to make your own choices, rather than have those choices taken away from you by often well-meaning but always ill-advised interest groups and politicians, then perhaps now is the time to choose **Freedom Party**, before even *that* choice may be taken from you.

Censorship --- in a free society? Never.

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