

Trump hates free speech

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Trump, Vance and Musk say they're free speech extremists – and they are. They've set out to remove the right to free speech from everyone but oligarchs. As with everything they say – the truth is the opposite of what they claim.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i8JbM8U--Y?si=rNBLvqH0MEwaTRFu

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=5c83f-1847918-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Trump hates free speech. Now, that's a big claim to make when Trump, Vance and Musk all say that they are free-speech extremists. That is the whole thing about Musk, according to him. But the reality is that they are free speech extremists in the sense that they want to deny free speech to everyone except oligarchs.

And this is the reality of the Trump administration that we are seeing rolling out in front of us. It's now a bit over eight weeks old, and during that time, there has been the most enormous change in what is happening in the USA, with consequences around the world. Let's just stand back for a moment to consider what those changes are.

There is a student with a green card in the USA who organised protests supporting the Palestinian cause in Gaza, completely legally, who is now being held in prison subject to deportation, simply because he said what he thought. This might be contrary to the First Amendment in the USA, which says that he is quite entitled to do exactly what he did, but Trump doesn't care about such things. Trump only cares about what Trump wants and, therefore, this student is at threat of deportation.

The university where he was undertaking the protest is under threat of having funding withdrawn, and one university has already lost hundreds of millions of grant support for work that they're undertaking because Trump doesn't like the fact that universities do allow free speech on their campuses.

There are Republicans in the US Senate who are saying that unless universities change their approach to free speech and only permit discussion of those causes of which the Republicans approve, including right-wing economics and the oppression of people and the creation of inequality, then those universities are going to be taxed a lot more on their unearned income. In other words, if they have endowments, which many universities do in the USA, the income that they earn each year will be taxed when, at present, it is almost tax-free. That is a deliberate act to oppress free speech, and we're seeing this happening elsewhere.

The right of journalists to question Trump within the White House press room is being constrained.

The activities of media channels are being openly criticised by the US administration for the simple fact that they are holding the president to account for what he's doing.

We are seeing threats against law firms because they have represented people who Trump does not like, but the whole basis of the rule of law is that lawyers should be able to stand up in court and represent their client whether they agree with them or not - but that is disappearing.

And we have seen threats against independent media, for example, newspapers who published articles which Trump doesn't like.

And now we're seeing the defunding of some of the American broadcast channels that have been used in the past to represent the views of the US government, like the Voice of America, which Trump no longer approves of.

This is happening and it's happening to people, of course, in the federal government as well. Anybody who disagrees with Trump is seeing their job threatened, or they're being downgraded, or they're being moved. There is a climate of fear being created around free speech, and this is exactly what neo-fascists - and I am suggesting that Trump and Vance and Musk are neo-fascists - do. They want to intimidate people into silence so that their cause of aggression does win by literally creating an atmosphere of fear.

Now, that will be worrying in the US, but let's also be clear that this is happening elsewhere.

In the last week, we have seen protests happening in Europe about oppressive regimes and the fact that people are not enjoying the freedoms that they wish to have because the right to free speech is being constrained in so many countries, Hungary being the most notable example.

But we're also seeing it in the UK. The right to protest in the UK was dramatically reduced by the last Conservative government.

Powers that were put in place during the course of the Covid crisis by that government are still there to limit the right of people to associate in public if the police so choose to do.

The declaration of what is a nuisance when it comes to demonstrations is now so tight that anybody making a noise in public can be deemed to be committing an offence.

The right of green protestors to literally walk down the road has been turned into a criminal offence, and there are people in prison for doing just that, serving sentences that are longer than many people would get for violent crimes.

We are living in a country in the UK where the right to protest - unless you happen to be a farmer supporting the cause of Nigel Farage - appears to be disappearing very rapidly.

We are living in an age of oppression.

The consequence is obvious.

Fear is rising.

Misinformation is growing.

There is a rise in blatant propaganda, and it's going out on all news media because there's nobody standing up to oppose it, including, I hate to say, too many journalists.

There is actual news suppression. When there's so much noise from the USA, what is going on elsewhere, for example, in the UK, with regard to disability cuts, is hard to pick up in the media because it's just being lost by the wayside, as are other important changes to UK law. For example, the right to die - which is a massive change in human rights and yet it's hardly being heard about.

It's as if, again, the government is choosing the opportunity of noise to reduce our access to free media to explain what is going on.

We are seeing unchecked government as a consequence of this climate of fear that is being created.

So the question is, what can we do about this? Well, one of the obvious things to do is to actually share critical media, like this channel, but there are plenty of others. Go out and search out those who are willing to criticise the government, look for alternative viewpoints on things like Substack, or look at Byline Times, for example. These are trying to provide narrative alternatives to what the government is doing, and there are plenty of people who are doing it both in the US and in the UK.

If you are in the US, read Letters from an American. It's a great daily newsletter, which is talking about precisely what is going on.

Look at what Robert Reich is saying.

And those positions are really important right now because we do need brave people to stand up and talk about what is happening in that country.

And we need to do the same here.

Subscribe to this channel if you want because we depend upon your support to get out messages which are opposing the view of our government, and I do believe our government needs to be opposed.

Call your radio station if you feel motivated to do so about something where you think the truth is not being told.

Write to your local newspaper. They are desperate for copy, so they might well publish your letter.

If you've got something you feel passionate about, you've got to take the initiative.

When we're talking about the freedom to say what you think, which is what we are discussing here, then the key issue is that you need to speak out. You don't have to make yourself troublesome, you don't have to be offensive, you don't have to shout. You just have to say, I think there's another argument available. That's all that is required, plus a few facts. And with that, you've got an argument and as a consequence, what you can do is just simply speak the truth to power.

That's what's required now. Good luck. Please do it. Please talk about this. Please reject the idea that we should live in a country where fear and oppression is the norm because if we give in, that is what we'll get, and then we will be in a very dangerous place.