

Funding the Future

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Trump's plans to control films that can be seen in the USA and what can be taught in US universities are all about full-on thought control - a classic fascist propaganda aim.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9aEHAAAECE?si=swV38gngqyT9Cdq6>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=ekg2w-18a43f3-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Trump wants to stop the people of the USA from thinking.

Why do I say that? For two reasons.

The first is that he is proposing a 100% tariff on films made outside the USA because they are apparently a threat to national security. And secondly, because we know that he is waging war on universities in the USA.

Let's just stand back for a moment and look at those two issues and think about what this means.

We aren't sure what Trump means when he has said that there ought to be tariffs on all films made outside the USA because they're a threat to national security, because I

don't think he knew what he meant either.

And the White House has already stepped back a bit, but what does seem to be clear is that this tariff is a part of his agenda that is intended to sanitise those ideas that might be available to people in the USA, which are the basis on which thought can be created.

I don't believe that Trump will end up imposing tariffs on films made by Marvel, and Disney, and whoever else it might be that films outside the USA because locations are available in other places. I think that's very unlikely.

What I do think Trump is targeting are the films like those from independent producers, from arts houses, and which tend to be decidedly provocative in their style.

Trump will think those are left-wing.

Trump will think those are trying to promote ideas that he and his cohort do not like.

Trump is trying to make sure that those films will not be available in the USA by basically pricing them out of the market.

Let's just imagine what he's doing here.

First of all, he's trying to divide opinion in the US by making this statement that these films are a threat to national security.

He's saying that America is good and the rest of the world is bad. At a very basic level, he's sending out the message that tribal nationalism is something that he believes in, and that, of course, is at the core of the fascist agenda.

Secondly, he's sending out a message about trustworthiness. He's saying only films that are approved of by the administration should be considered to be reliable sources of information. Everything else is not. This is part of a propaganda war.

The third component in this attack on foreign films is part of the creation of an agenda that will treat people as 'other' in the USA. And this term 'other' is really important in thinking around fascism, because all fascists try to create the idea that some groups in society are outsiders. In other words, they are the 'other'. And what Trump is trying to suggest by imposing this tariff is that the creators of foreign films are threats to national security because they are 'others'. In other words, they promote ideas that he does not like, whether that be around diversity, whether that be around inclusion, whether that be around equity, whether that be around gay rights, whatever it might be.

He does not want those ideas in the USA, and he does not want the normalisation that very many mainstream films have over recent decades provided for these agendas because Hollywood has bought those ideas, lock, stock, and barrel in most cases, and

he hates that.

So, yes, he is threatening the American film industry by this threat of a tariff, but he is very much more threatening the right of people to hear films that endorse their worldview. Trump and his cohort claim that they are interested in free speech. Of course, that is not true. They are absolutely committed to reducing the right of people to hear views that they do not like, and this tariff is trying to price out of the market, for the time being, those views that they don't like before, I suspect, in due course, they will ban them altogether.

And we are seeing this agenda happening in universities in the USA as well.

We know about Trump taking on people like Harvard.

We know about him taking on all the Ivy League universities, with whom he has a very strained relationship, even though, technically, he's a graduate of one.

What we are now seeing is that the attack on universities is spreading. The Ivy League universities are privately owned institutions, and so they can stand up and say to Trump, 'get lost', because first of all, they have massive financial wealth of their own, and secondly, their students basically pay for themselves. But that is not true of all universities in the USA. There are very large numbers of universities in the USA which are state-funded, and in this sense, I mean the individual states of the USA.

So, for example, Texas has sixteen state universities within its area and the Texas government is trying to pass laws which will regulate what might happen inside Texan universities. In effect, they are trying to take control of those universities so that they decide who can work in them, what courses may be taught in them, what subjects are unacceptable in them, what materials are not allowed to be included in the curriculum, and so on.

They are saying that their objective is to ensure that students are taught how to think and not what to think, but the very clear subtext is that they do not accept that it is appropriate for anything other than right-wing thoughts to be promoted inside a Texan university.

Now, as a matter of fact, universities all over the world tend to be left of centre, and the reason why universities all over the world tend to be left of center is because intellectuals tend to be as well, because they spend a lot of time thinking about such things as justice and equity, and come to the conclusion that actually these things are good for society, and are good for intellectual development, and are good for the discourse that takes place in universities, and are the basis on which innovation, which is what universities are all about, takes place.

But that is not what the Texan authorities think. They believe that market rigour is what

provides the foundation of society and only market rigour should be taught in these universities, and therefore, they would wish to seek to ensure that anything that is left or centre is actually eliminated from the curricula of Texan universities.

This, of course, is once more about creating an 'other', the 'other' being left-wing thought.

And at the same time, it's also about a complete restriction on the freedom of speech, which is protected in the US Constitution by the First Amendment.

They're saying that freedom will not exist.

They're saying that somebody who wishes to breach it by teaching using materials that they do not approve of will lose their job.

They are saying that ideas come with a ranking attached to them, and those which are left-wing have a low rank, and may not be taught.

This is quite literally thought control within the Texan university system, and if Texas does put this in place - and there is absolutely nothing to prevent it doing so, because every tier of the Texan government is controlled by Republicans - then we are going to see this contagion spread right across the university network of the USA, at least in Republican states.

And that is immensely dangerous because these two ideas - tariffs on films and control of university teaching - are part of the fascist agenda that I believe Trump is promoting.

Fascists hate intellectuals.

Fascists hate people who can think because they question.

Fascists want people who are automatons - people who will produce for them, and fuel their profits, and who will consume for them, therefore, buying the goods that they are presented with without questioning whether there is a right or wrong to the process involved. This is what the fascist agenda demands.

So, what Trump is trying to do, and what his cohort is trying to do is to control the ability of the US population to think by literally denying them the right to access thoughts other than those which are promoted by the right-wing in that country.

This is what the intellectual takeover of a country looks like.

This is what fascism looks like, and it's coming to the USA.

How long will it be before we see intellectuals, teachers, and others pouring out of that country, trying to secure their freedom by leaving it, and coming to Europe?

How long will it be before we see the backlash in Europe to those people coming, because remember that the last time this happened was in 1933 when Jews who could still leave Nazi Germany did try to do so, and papers like the Daily Mail in the UK were exceedingly antagonistic to their arrival in this country?

And how long is it before this idea, sweeping right across the USA now, will be incorporated into the UK?

Remember that Reform has in its policy programme a requirement that UK schools should teach a pro-English agenda, that empire was good, that there were no problems with slavery, that we have a hierarchy of power that works, that capitalism is the answer to all questions. This is their belief about what should be taught in schools in this country, and that is no different from what the Texan authorities are going to demand be taught in their universities.

Thought control is a fundamental part of the far-right agenda. We need to be aware of it. We need to react to it. We need to say no to it. Because if we don't, fascism will be on our doorstep sooner than we think.