

Controlling words

Seems to me that there is more than just a little truth in the belief that *groups that control the words control the narrative, and that groups that control the narrative control the argument*. Add government as the group that controls the argument and you are left with the absolute absence of free discourse. If that is indeed true where does that leave us today? I'll tell you where. It leaves us back in the pages of "1984," the novel by George Orwell that he published in June of 1949.

Orwell had done quite a bit of personal research on the power and influence of words on human beings and had published an essay, "Politics and the English language" three years earlier. While that essay's main theme was not just the purposeful ambition of the political class to co-opt us into their world of partisanship and ideological bias, one of his main points was that political speech and writing was largely directed to defending the indefensible and that it was the enemy of sincerity.

He then took this belief and imbedded it as one of the power structure's main tools to control the populace into the aforementioned dystopian science fiction novel that presaged what I would contend we are now experiencing in today's America. It doesn't take a social scientist, professional linguist or etymologist to see that the USA is quickly becoming the dire scenario outlined in Orwell's novel - that we are bowing to the power of the Liberal social engineers who want to strip us of our ability to express ourselves, honestly and straightforwardly. And the fact that those same Liberals view themselves as our overlords and can abuse our rights without fear of reprisal is unconscionable. That's a mouthful, I realize, but we needn't go too far back in time to recognize how swiftly the political-correctness movement has advanced to become the litmus test for who is lionized or vilified in our society.

As long as there are leaders, monarchs or persons of great authority there will be propaganda measures that they will employ to safeguard their reigns or consolidate their power over their subjects or electorate. In times of war, it's customary to demonize the enemy and make him appear less human, and this tactic has worked well over the centuries. Unfortunately, those on the Left of the political spectrum who possess a radical social makeover agenda have extended the use of such demonization to peacetime and are now attempting to use language as a weapon to radically change how the rest of us speak in public and even in private. Progressives have been very successful in certain areas. In many of our newspapers and on National Public Radio, they have managed to infiltrate the *style manuals* of these organizations and have demanded that certain words be replaced with other 'less objectionable' words to describe their favored protected groups.

Protests that have become violent and resulted in riots, arson or property destruction have now become "mostly peaceful protests." Bias and prejudice are now conflated with "racism." Just this week the Biden Administration has mandated that government agencies like the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) refer to *illegal aliens* - people who have crossed our borders illegally and are, in fact 'aliens' (def.: belonging to a foreign country or nation) must now be called "non-citizens or migrants" and *illegal* must now be replaced with *undocumented*.

I can't say that this came as a complete surprise to me and probably not to many of you who have been following the Left's push to repackage how we all interact with one another, either. It was simply another manifestation of their push to re-identify and rename everything according to a strange and contradictory world view that sees all of us as the same but different. Let me explain. The Left wants to use their belief that we are all the same as a means to wage culture war on those of us who are different. I'm speaking specifically of those of us who believe that while we are all equal under the law and that we all embody differences and individual identities that we can choose to either stand out in a crowd or blend in. To the Left, however, *standing out* is only allowed for certain groups (principally those who they classify as society's true victims and who deserve everybody's protection) while the oppressors must be rehabilitated and reeducated. Who are the oppressors you ask?

They are those of us who are White, religious, conservative, defenders of biology and of our Bill of Rights and Constitution. If you fall into any of those categories, you are a target for their ire and WILL be called to task for violating the new 'woke' template that is being foisted on us by the Progressive movement. In order to achieve their objectives of remaking our culture through our nomenclature, the Left is also using censorship as one of their principal weapons. Anything that can be remotely considered a criticism of their social terminology or a slur against their protected groups is censored from view on social media, YouTube or on the Internet. If not censored outright, competing opinions are labeled racist, subversive, or worse, the next step being an attack on the authors of the offending comments for daring to disagree with Liberal orthodoxy.

It doesn't take a genius to see where this is going. Censorship and ostracization lead to self-censorship of those who escaped the first wave of attacks on free speech. This is accompanied by the coercive adoption of newspeak by the private sector and a buy-in to the accusations of systemic racism and White supremacy in the country, something we're already seeing today in the implementation of the 'Pareto Principle.' An example is in TV commercials where a disproportionate number of Black actors (Blacks represent 13% of the U.S. population) are introduced as the *new normal consumer* in the majority of television commercials. Corporate America has, apparently, given in to the demands of the 'woke' community that includes special interest organizations like Black Lives Matter, to "redress the inequities of the past in mass media prejudicial programming."

Even sports teams and sporting events have become targets for the Left's accusatory language and false pronouncements of racism. The Major League Baseball organization felt the pressure from Black activists to move their All Star Game from Atlanta to Denver because of a new, ironically more liberal voting law in Georgia. Coca Cola and Delta and many other corporations followed up with letters of condemnation of Georgia's new law in an effort to save market share and stave off confrontations with Black pressure groups. Sadly, the simple act of calling attention to these events or situations like that of the disproportionate use Black actors in TV commercials can not only be considered *improper* or *un-PC*; it can also be classified by the Left as RACIST or an example of White privilege rearing its ugly head. The bottom line is that the Left expects us to just accept the changes taking place in our society and especially those in our language. We are warned not to discuss them openly and to go along to get along. In short, there's nothing to see here.

On the contrary, there is much to see here and much more that needs to be said ABOUT what's going on here, but the real question is: "Do we have the courage to discuss these changes as a mature, tolerant and truth-seeking society before the destruction of our language prevents us from doing so?" I certainly hope so.

Stephan Helgesen is a retired career U.S. diplomat who lived and worked in 30 countries for 25 years during the Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, and G.W. Bush Administrations. He is the author of ten books, four of which are on American politics and has written over 1,100 articles on politics, economics and social trends. He operates a political news story aggregator website, www.projectpushback.com. He can be reached at: stephan@stephanhelgesen.com