

The Corporate Thought Police

Das tatsächliche Ende der Meinungsfreiheit

by Judith Bergman June 30, 2020

- Sweden has been steeped in political correctness for decades; its failed immigration policies, which have had multiple negative consequences, as reported by Gatestone Institute, have long been taboo.
- The idea that free speech is *not* a fundamental liberty that must be defended at all costs runs deep in Sweden.
- Radio personality and NBA announcer **Grant Napear** was fired from his radio show at KHTK radio and resigned as the Sacramento Kings play-by-play TV announcer after tweeting on June 1, "All Lives Matter... every single one!", in reference to protests by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.
- A young Democrat data scientist, **David Shor**, was fired by the research firm for which he was working, Civis Analytics, after tweeting about the electoral effectiveness of peaceful protest as opposed to violent protest.
- Our corporate thought police have been working overtime, and from the look of it, they are only beginning.

Mats Skogkär, a journalist and editorial writer at one of Sweden's largest regional newspapers, *Sydsvenskan*, was recently demoted from editorial writer to a non-writing position for tweeting the following:

"When you see the Left's almost sexual excitement over the riots in the United States, over the looting, fires and violence, it also becomes easier to understand its desire to create similar conditions here with a large... segregated underclass of migrants".

"A tweet way over the line," wrote Jonas Kanje, editor in chief at *Sydsvenskan*, after receiving backlash on Twitter. "A way to express yourself that *Sydsvenskan* can never support. I dissociate myself from it."

According to the Swedish publishing house Bonnier, which owns *Sydsvenskan*, "Bonnier defends freedom of expression... a diversity of voices and perspectives should be heard in our media".

Less than a week later, **Sören Åkeby**, who had an advisory role on the board of the Swedish football team, ÖFK, was let go by the board for sharing a Facebook post that "directly violate[s] ÖFK's values". The post that Åkeby shared contained the following:

"Another Swede murdered by a racial stranger!... [The boy] was stabbed when he helped a Swedish girl who was being raped by a Somali... Don't stand by and watch your own people get murdered, raped and humiliated. Organize and resist this alien invasion. We are at war!"

"I read it too quickly and just [shared it]," Åkeby apologized.

"I certainly don't have those (thoughts)... I have trained foreign players for more or less all my life... For me, this became so surreal... I'm definitely not a racist. I'll take it back. I will delete the posts immediately if it is interpreted this way. I didn't mean to."

Alexander Bard, a Swedish artist and author was fired from Swedish TV Channel 4, after tweeting:

"If black lives want to matter, then black lives get their fucking shit together, study hard, go to work, make their own money instead of depend on welfare, stop lying, get out of prison, and become heroes instead of self-appointed victims for the world to laugh at. That matters!"

Bard's tweet was also reported to the Swedish authorities for "inciting hatred".

Sweden has been steeped in political correctness for decades. The country's failed immigration policies, which have had multiple negative consequences, as reported by Gatestone Institute have long been taboo and those who criticized the policies were, in the words of Ulf Kristersson, leader of the Moderate Party, reviled and frozen out. In addition, Sweden's hate speech laws have seen people who have criticized Swedish migration policies and their consequences on social media sentenced and fined for "inciting hatred".

The idea that freedom of speech is *not* a fundamental liberty that must be defended at all costs runs deep in Sweden. So deep, in fact, that in 2018, Tomas Åberg, founder of the private organization, "Näthatsgranskaren" ("The Web Hate Investigator") was nominated for a prestigious prize, the "Swedish Hero" award, by one of Sweden's largest national newspapers, *Aftonbladet*. The nomination came after Åberg's organization reported no fewer than 750 Swedish citizens in 2017 to the authorities for "web hate". Åberg's organization has been generously funded by government grants, another telltale sign of the scant value placed on free speech.

In the United States, people used to stand up for freedom of speech as an inviolable liberty -- until recently. While free speech has been highly unappreciated on US campuses for years, it still appeared to be a liberty that most Americans appreciate. This appreciation no longer seems to be generally the case, at least not in corporate America.

The riots in the US since the killing of George Floyd, or more specifically the debate about the riots, have exposed the stunning extent to which corporate America is willing and able effectively to shut down speech that does not conform to the orthodoxy of the moment.

In the past two weeks alone, corporate America got rid of the following people for their "thought crimes":

Radio personality and NBA announcer **Grant Napear** was fired from his radio show at KHTK radio and resigned as the Sacramento Kings play-by-play TV announcer after tweeting on June 1, "All Lives Matter... every single one!", in reference to protests by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

KHTK's parent company, Bonneville International Corporation, said in a statement that Napear's comments "do not reflect the views or values" of the company, and the timing of his tweet was "particularly insensitive."

Apparently, as one Twitter user told Napear, "All lives matter" is the "go-to response from racist individuals, when they're asked about BLM". Napear apologized. "I'm not as educated on BLM as I thought I was," Napear told the Sacramento Bee. **"I had no idea that when I said 'All Lives Matter' that it was counter to what BLM was trying to get across".**

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago terminated its contract with University of Chicago economics professor **Harald Uhlig**, after a tweet he wrote criticizing Black Lives Matter's desire to defund US police departments:

"Too bad, but #blacklivesmatter per its core organization @Blklivesmatter just torpedoed itself, with its full-fledged support of #defundthepolice : 'We call for a national defunding of police.' Suuuure. They knew this is non-starter..."

The termination of Uhlig "reflects our determination that his views are not compatible with the Chicago Fed's values and our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion" said the bank. The termination came even as Uhlig apologized for his tweet. Uhlig was also suspended from his position as editor at the *Journal of Political Economy* at the University of Chicago at the urging of several professors who said that Uhlig was "trivializing the Black Lives Matter movement."

New York Times opinion page editor **James Bennett** was forced to resign from his position, after he ran an op-ed piece by Senator Tom Cotton, titled, "Send in the troops". The article argued that the U.S. military should be called in as a backup if police failed to get the recent riots under control. Bennett's resignation came after more than 800 *Times* staff members signed a letter protesting the publication of Cotton's op-ed, and many claimed it "puts Black @NYTimes staff in danger". Bennett apologized for the op-ed, saying that it should not have been published. The *New York Times* said it would make changes to its opinion section.

A young Democrat data scientist, **David Shor**, was fired by the research firm for which he was working, Civis Analytics, after tweeting about the electoral effectiveness of peaceful protest as opposed to violent protest. He referenced the work of a Princeton assistant professor, Omar Wasow, that violent protests turn voters away from the Democrat Party.

Shor experienced a backlash on Twitter, where he was accused of racism and "anti-blackness". In addition, "at least some employees and clients on Civis Analytics complained that Shor's tweet threatened their safety", according to *New York* magazine.

"I regret starting this conversation and will be much more careful moving forward" Shor apologized -- to no avail. One Twitter user, Trujillo Wesler tagged Dan Wagner, the CEO of Civis Analytics, telling him to "go get your boy". That was all it took. Shor was fired.

Serbian soccer player Aleksandar Katai was also fired from the Los Angeles Galaxy team. Not because of anything he said or wrote, but because of his wife's social media posts. The Instagram posts made by **Tea Katai**, according to *The Guardian*, "showed a police SUV attempting to drive through protesters in New York. A caption in Serbian read, 'Kill the shits!' while a second showed a picture of an individual carrying boxes of Nikes with the caption 'Black Nikes Matter'".

Galaxy fans immediately called for Katai's dismissal. He posted a message on Instagram in which he apologized "for the pain these posts have caused the LA Galaxy family and all allies in the fight against racism". He added, "This was a mistake from my family and I take full responsibility. I will ensure that my family and I... learn, understand, listen and support the black community".

The vice-president and executive editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, **Stan Wischnowski**, resigned after being hit with a backlash for running an article with the title, "Buildings Matter, too." Although the newspaper apologized almost immediately for running the headline, the staff and the public demanded still more. According to the newspaper's publisher, Lisa Hughes:

"We will use this moment to evaluate the organizational structure and processes of the newsroom, assess what we need, and look both internally and externally for a seasoned leader who embodies our values, embraces our shared strategy, and understands the diversity of the communities we serve,"

The United States nominally enshrines the most far-reaching freedom of speech, thanks to the First Amendment of the Constitution:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances".

Corporate America has circumvented the first Amendment by appointing itself the thought police over employees and associates who do not adhere strictly to the "rules" of the current orthodoxy. It administers its ruthless justice -- Cultural Revolution style -- through the destruction of employee livelihoods and careers.

The new corporate thought police are merciless; they do not accept apologies, however groveling. Perhaps, in the future, corporations will have "reeducation" departments, as in China or the former Soviet Union, for those who still have the courage to open their minds and their mouths.

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