

Should Anti-trust Laws Be Used to Break Up the Social Media Giants?

Google, Facebook and the rest wield more power than most governments.

[Robert Spencer](#)



The secular Left and the proponents of Islamic blasphemy laws have a new issue on which they are making common cause: the quest to destroy the freedom of speech, the cornerstone of our democracy. After Charlottesville, the Left sees its chance to crush all dissent, and given its alliance with Islamic supremacists, this means the implementation in the West of prohibitions on criticism of Islam, including counterterror analysis of the motivating ideology of jihad terrorists. This anti-free speech initiative, if it succeeds, will destroy free society, which cannot exist if one is unable to speak out against the tyrant.

The Left is trying to use Charlottesville as its Reichstag Fire moment to try to crush all dissent. CNN gave the Southern Poverty Law Center's spurious "hate group" list wide play, and an effort has begun to deny all platforms to those "hate groups," without any regard for the fact that the SPLC includes legitimate organizations that dissent from the Leftist agenda (including the David Horowitz Freedom Center and Jihad Watch) on the list along with the KKK and neo-Nazis, in an attempt to defame and destroy the legitimate groups.

Spearheading anti-free speech efforts on the Islamic side is a little-known organization that comprises most of the Muslim governments around the world today: the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which is made up of fifty-six member nations plus the Palestinian Authority and constitutes the largest voting bloc at the United Nations. The OIC has been working for years to try to compel the West to restrict the freedom of speech, and particularly the freedom to criticize Islam.

Essentially, they want to impose a key principle of Sharia — which forbids blasphemy against Allah, Muhammad, and Islam — on the entire non-Muslim world. They are advancing this initiative by trying to compel the West to criminalize “incitement to religious hatred,” which essentially means criticism of Islam; no international body has ever objected to criticism of Judaism, Christianity, or any other religion.

Aiding this OIC initiative has been the popularization of the term “Islamophobia.” Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, a former imam, [writes](#) that “this loathsome term is nothing more than a thought-terminating cliché conceived in the bowels of Muslim think tanks for the purpose of beating down critics.” Islamic groups tied to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, most notably the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), have for years been wielding this term like a club to smear anyone who speaks honestly about the jihad threat; by doing so, they have intimidated many into silence.

The SPLC has eagerly taken up this term as a key element of its censorship strategy, publishing lists of key “Islamophobes” (including David Horowitz and me) that have grown so absurd that they even include a reformist Muslim, Maajid Nawaz. Nawaz and his associates are themselves not above [using similar tactics](#), but his presence on the SPLC’s list does highlight its absurdity.

The anti-free speech initiative is also proceeding even aside from the SPLC’s hate group list. Canadian psychologist and social critic Jordan Peterson recently had his Google account revoked, without explanation, and then restored without explanation. “Maybe it was just an error,” [Peterson told Tucker Carlson](#), “but the fact that things have been happening in such a strange way politically brings up the specter of censorship.”

And Google has been engaging in censorship. The establishment media in the West completely ignored the story, but Turkey’s [Anadolu Agency](#) reported several weeks ago that “Google’s first page results for searches of terms such as ‘jihad’, ‘shariah’ and ‘taqiyya’ now return mostly reputable explanations of the Islamic concepts. Taqiyya, which describes the circumstances under which a Muslim can conceal their belief in the face of persecution, is the sole term to feature a questionable website on the first page of results.”

“Reputable” according to whom? “Questionable” according to whom? Google is bowing to pressure from Muslims such as Texas imam Omar Suleiman, who is mentioned in the Anadolu story as the driving force behind this initiative, without considering whether those who are demanding that the search results be skewed in a particular direction might have an ulterior motive. Could it be that those who are pressuring Google want to conceal certain truths about Islam that they would prefer that non-Muslims not know?

This is a real possibility, but of course Google executives would have to study Islam themselves in order to determine whether or not these Muslims who are pressuring them are misleading them, and that’s not going to happen. Still, they could have done a bit more due diligence, and made some efforts to determine whether those being tarred as “hate groups” really deserved the label, whether the Southern Poverty Law Center was really a reliable and objective arbiter of which groups were and

weren't "hate groups," and whether the information that Google was suppressing was really inaccurate. Instead, Google seems to have swallowed uncritically everything Omar Suleiman and the others said, and applied it as policy.

Meanwhile, Facebook's Vice President Joel Kaplan [traveled to Pakistan in July](#) to assure the Pakistani government that it would remove "anti-Islam" material. That endeavor had already started before Kaplan's trip. In mid-February, traffic to Jihad Watch from Facebook dropped suddenly by 90% and has never recovered. We do not post any hateful or provocative material and neither incite nor approve of violence, but Facebook is acting as judge, jury and executioner in all this. There is no appeal and no recourse.

A high-placed source in the tech industry told me: "Countries like Pakistan basically tell Facebook and Google that they either comply or the government will arrest all their employees in the country and make it illegal to use their produce. So, FB and Google are faced with either leaving the country or complying. Google famously refused to comply with the Chinese government's censorship policies and withdrew from China at great cost to Google. Facebook is obviously less principled. By the way, this is a growing phenomenon with more and more countries moving to censor US tech companies (plus there's been a recent vigorous campaign from the left demanding censorship in the US). They won't cave to domestic pressures, because it makes no business sense. They will cave to foreign pressure in foreign countries, because it makes business sense."

In his interview of Jordan Peterson, Carlson asked what governments should do with companies such as Google that are more powerful than the government itself. Peterson answered: "I'm not sure the government knows what to do." Susan Benesch, director of the Dangerous Speech Project, [said in July](#): "Facebook is regulating more human speech than any government does now or ever has."

So what is to be done? In other industries the government has used anti-trust laws when free markets are threatened. Here the free marketplace of ideas is threatened. Should the anti-trust laws be invoked to break up Google and Facebook?