

Fair Play and the Plague

by G. Murphy Donovan



"Most Americans say they do not trust the media." – *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Murray Kempton once said that "a critic is someone who enters the battlefield after the war is over and shoots the wounded." Kempton, earned his spurs at Hopkins and then at the *Baltimore Sun* at H.L. Mencken's knee. There was a time when some journalists were well-read social critics, not partisan hacks. Today, it is difficult to distinguish urban journalism from the agitation and propaganda of the old totalitarian left.

George Orwell, an old school pundit, would recognize today's political pig sties.

Most contemporary reporting and writing today has a political agenda. Truthfully, to one degree or another, press objectivity has always been honored in the breach. Habits of mind usually wash facts and conclusions through a sieve of personal predispositions. All politics in the end are local –

and personal. Most beliefs are a function of emotions or feelings, not facts or reason.

Perception is not a synonym for logic.

The important issue isn't really bias anyway. It's fairness. It is possible to make an argument that is both biased and fair. Indeed; formal logic, scientific argument, and judicial proceedings have agreed rules for that very purpose. Leading questions and assumptions not supported by facts are not permitted in a court of law because rhetorical tricks violate the rules of logic, evidence, and the ethos of fairness.

"Gotcha" is a game not an argument.

A fair debate, or trial, relies on fair argument. Trump doesn't trust the Intelligence Community for the same reasons we can't trust the press. The President doesn't trust either the press or Intelligence. Now, neither can we.

Unhinged press bigotry is an abuse of reason and the law, an abuse of the Bill of Rights that makes freedom of the press possible. Were James Madison with us today, he would probably amend the 1st Amendment to read "freedom of, **and from**, the press."

We simply cannot believe what we see, hear, or read from most media outlets today. Only yesterday, "[millions](#)" of Americans were supposed die from the "pandemic." Covid morbidity to date in America is about 50 thousand.

The policy of shutdown is designed to stop illness, not death. Preventing illness is an impossible goal. Ordinary flu or AIDS prophylaxis are examples. We can mitigate some diseases, but not prevent them. If low morbidity is the goal; then we might isolate, test, trace, and treat only the most vulnerable, not the entire population.

[Fake news](#), what the Communist left used to call *agitprop* or

dezinformatsiya has been normalized. The price of fairness is [trust](#)