

The Return of the 20th Century Pestilence



Eric Hoffer

by Armando Simón

An intellectual is a self-appointed soul engineer who sees it as his sacred duty to operate on mankind with an axe.”

–Eric Hoffer

The pestilence of the 20th century that killed millions was not the Spanish flu, not Communism, not Fascism. It was intellectuals. Intellectuals laid the foundation and rationale for Communism and Fascism, which resulted in millions dead, with science, art, history being stunted (and, contrary to what you may have read, yes, [Fascism definitely had intellectual underpinnings](#) and [adherents](#), especially among French intellectuals). Remember that notorious orators of the totalitarian persuasion (Hitler, Lenin, Robespierre, Goebbels,

Trotsky) were considered to be dangerous to listen to, it was like being hypnotized.

It is no wonder that both George Orwell (“So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don’t even know that fire is hot”) and Eric [Hoffer](#) (“When you look into the question of what it is about this country that brings out all the malice and hatred of the American intellectual, you discover that what he can’t stomach is the mass of the people” (i. e., the common man, the “redneck”) had an intense hatred for intellectuals.

Before I continue, I must define my terms. Intellectuals are persons who have a mastery of words and are only good at words, or as Thomas Sowell has so deliciously phrased, they are “masters of verbal virtuosity.” Some disciplines’ entire *raison d’être* is based on this ability; examples are lawyers, [journalists](#), pastors, writers, and several college disciplines.

Scientists and artists are, therefore, excluded. Although they are often mistakenly grouped together, intellectuals, as opposed to scientists and artists, are in different categories. In fact, quite often, intellectuals are [enemies](#) of [artists](#) and [scientists](#), especially the [latter](#) since they deal with [facts](#) instead of opinions (it also should go without saying that not every intellectual is besotted with totalitarianism).

This is not a modern phenomenon. It has been with us ever since some individuals were gifted with verbal diarrhea. In Ancient Greece, there were intellectuals called sophists, who were so known for this that the word “sophist” has come down to us to mean someone who is glib at advocating an absurd or immoral viewpoint. And in Roman times, Cicero observed that, “There is nothing so absurd that it has not been said by some philosopher.”

When I first went to study at a university, one of the things that I learned to my surprise is that anything can be argued for and justified. Anything! I mean . . . *anything!*

One time in American history class, the professor divided the class into slave owners and abolitionists and told us to argue our positions. We later switched sides. In another class, we were divided into pro and con Vietnam War. I found to my surprise and enjoyment that I was very good at it, regardless of which side I was placed and whereas classmates were giving vacuous arguments for positions which they obviously did not believe in, I could put forth a very good argument (probably because Cubans are born with a razor-sharp tongue), sometimes to the intense irritation of my opponents and even the teachers.

In the English department of a university, I once read an intellectual's argument that in *Beowulf*, the murdering monster should actually be seen as the hero of the story. In philosophy, it is a common assertion to state that just because the sun has always come up in the morning, there is no guarantee that it will do so tomorrow.

Since then, I have seen that with the right usage of words and the right circumstances, a master of verbal virtuosity can *convince anyone of anything*, no matter how idiotic, how morally repugnant, or how bizarre. Specifically, we [see](#) this [today](#) in the castration [cult](#) called the [transgender](#) movement, or the suicide cults of [white](#) people who push [CRT](#), or of [Jews](#) who promote anti-Semitic groups and persons. In particular, I strongly recommend the reader listen to Laurence [Fox](#) as he reveals leftist intellectuals' justification for pedophilia and drag queen shows for children.

Among the Muslim savages, an imam can convince men to commit satanic actions: murder, mass murder and rape if they do it in the name of God and, therefore, they are being exceptionally moral in committing those crimes.

Apropos of this, to be successful at this brainwashing, (A) [isolation](#) to some [degree](#) is necessary, so that someone like myself is prevented from cutting through the BS (this is why universities [cancel conservative speakers](#), or why news media hire “conservative” journalists who are really liberals), (B) [suppression](#) of jarring facts leading to cognitive [dissonance](#) is paramount although most of the times simply not mentioning them (such as celebrities traveling in private jets [while](#) advocating [lower](#) carbon emissions to [combat](#) climate [change](#)) serves just as well, and (C) employing euphemisms to [mask](#) and make repulsive claims sound delectable (look how benevolent sounding are the most evil organizations in America: American Civil Liberties Movement, Black Lives Matter, Anti-Defamation League, Teaching for Change, For the People, Southern Poverty Law Center, Global Engagement Center).

Today’s leftist intellectuals offer arsenic by calling it honey, censorship of free speech by calling it hate speech, dictatorship and fraudulent elections by calling it democracy, racism by calling it inclusiveness and diversity, methods to prevent electoral fraud are called voter suppression. Some of the most truly evil organizations in America are called by benevolent sounding names: Electronic Registration Information Center ([ERIC](#)), Anti-Defamation League, ACORN, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), For the People.

Like all pathological liars, they know they are most convincing when they act like they really believe it while simultaneously knowing it is bullshit—and many do, through the process of Orwell’s doublethink. [Read](#) and [listen](#) to all of the [justifications](#) that [liberals](#) use [for](#) the [purpose](#) of [censorship](#).

The interesting thing is that their rationale at first sounds logical. It kind of makes sense. For example, you can see this phenomenon in reading the rationale for all the countless things that liberals now label “racist” (the outdoors, disliking [body](#) odor, organized [pantries](#), [horse](#) riding, [weight](#)

reduction, [philosophy](#), preventing [cheating](#), white [paint](#), proper [grammar](#)). When you read the arguments, they sound reasonable, they have a certain logic to them. Except that it's all bullshit. You may not be able to initially voice why the argument is bullshit, but you *know* it's bullshit.

The same is true for just about every other liberal obsession. Like [euthanasia](#), or "reparations," or solutions for climate change. One of those "solutions" is that cows cause flatulence which is a greenhouse gas. Therefore, we should kill the [cows](#) (except a handful, reserved for the elite), do away with [farms](#) and have everyone eat crickets and cockroaches (another "solution" is to do away with people's gas stoves).

There is a certain logic there.

Except it's bullshit.

And one gets the initial impression that some of the arguments tossed around in society today could only have been made by an imbecile or a certifiable psychotic, *but this is a characteristic of fanaticism*. Case in point: an innocent [black](#) person is [killed](#) by black policemen; it is the fault of [white](#) people.

Or free [speech](#) results in dictatorships.

"War Is Peace. Freedom Is Slavery. Ignorance Is Strength."*

Of course, the key for demolishing a sophist's argument is by zeroing in on the sophist's [premises](#).

True, there are some assertions being bandied about today by leftist intellectuals which do not even have so much as a façade of rationality or argumentation. These are simply repeated and anyone who laughs or disagrees with them is instantly attacked. The obvious ones are that men can get pregnant and have abortions, or men pretending to be women should be able to participate in sports (or, for that matter,

an inability to define what is a woman). As Orwell put it, "Some ideas are so stupid that only intellectuals believe them."

Totalitarians of all persuasions have a visceral hatred for America. They say so. Repeatedly. So, naturally, they have a hatred for the US Constitution. At present moment, it is the only thing that is protecting Americans from leftist totalitarians (Democrats) ravenous for total power over us. For two centuries, the Constitution has served as a bulwark against authoritarian politicians; the Bill of Rights in particular has protected basic freedoms in this country in spite of repeated assaults. At first, leftist intellectuals tried the subtle approach, repeating the benevolent sounding mantra that "the Constitution is a living document," which was code for "it has to be changed for our benefit."

Nowadays, all subtlety has been cast off. They constantly [refer](#) to it as an outdated, [obsolete](#), document which [needs](#) to be trashed, or [burnt](#), and of [being](#)—or course—[racist](#) (along other [racist](#) things like [football](#), [grammar](#), physical [fitness](#), daylight [savings](#) time, math, [swimming](#), [maps](#), Dungeons & [Dragons](#), two-[parent](#) families, [air](#) conditioning). Or they wish to do away with crucial aspects, like the electoral [college](#), the [Second](#) Amendment or the [Supreme Court](#).

I would like to finish this with a quote from Eric [Hoffer](#), whose writings have been relegated to Oblivion, with conservatives doing, as usual, nothing to reverse the unperson status:

The intellectual will feel at home where an exclusive elite is in charge of affairs, and it matters not whether it be an elite of aristocrats, soldiers, merchants, or intellectuals. He would prefer an elite that is culturally literate, but will put up with one that is not. What he cannot endure is a society dominated by common people. There is nothing he loathes more than government of and by the people.

*Remember Orwell's *1984*? His dystopia was based on Communist societies. When I first read it, having come over from Communist Cuba, I was amazed at how accurate the description was; Czeslaw [Milosz](#) in *The Captive Mind*, was also surprised at its accuracy. Orwell probably turned over in his grave when Erich Fromm, a Communist third-rate psychiatrist, argued in the Afterword that *1984* was about democratic countries. That Afterword is still in print.

Armando Simón is the author of *Very Peculiar [Stories](#)*.