

The Passy Press[®]

Letters to the Editor

From: Michael Wyly <pvt57@undisclosed.com>
To: Nick Gardiner <enpg@thepassypress.com>
Sent: 26 Oct 2017 at 20:28
Subject: Peter Barnet Essay, October 2017

Dear Sir,

Peter Barnet in his essay "Fake News in the Post Truth Era and How to Fix It" offers a change to the telecommunications code as a partial remedy to deceptive messages in our media. The change he proposes would render illegal the proliferation of false information via interactive computer service. In so doing, the determiner of what is true and what is not would be the enforcer of the telecommunication code, an agency of *the Government*, and the enforcer of the law.

Once that law is in effect, and I write a statement and place it on interactive computer service, and now the Government asserts that my words are mine and can take me to task if it decides the words are false, unfair, or not to its liking, my prerogative to speak is burdened. So burdened it is no longer free.

I, for one, am not willing to cede the power of telling us what is true and what is not to Government or any other authority. The judgment is my own to make. I make that independent judgment for myself in the spirit of there being "no law abridging freedom of speech, or of the press." The burden of seeking out the truth is placed on my shoulders. As a member of the world's only true free society, it is a burden I am responsible to bear.

While the term that has become cliché of late, "Fake News" is a product of the 2016 Presidential Election, the phenomenon of print, radio, television and interactive media spreading false information has been around as long as print, radio, television, and interactive media have been around, each in succession. So, the question of how to separate truth from fiction is a matter of *who* will do the separating. The Government? Or the People?

I vote for the People.

Will we always get it right? No one is perfect. Seeking the truth has always been a challenge and always will be.

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If we place the responsibility in the hands of lawmakers and lawyers, will they get it right? Sometimes “Yes” and sometimes “No”. I am unwilling to cede that authority to a body that has authority over what is legal for me to do and what is not.

Then comes the next question. Will *the People* have the energy, drive, and wisdom to do the research and make the determination?

We had better. It is no ordinary citizenry that has the initiative and the wisdom to do so; but we are no ordinary citizenry or ordinary country. If we were we would have Government by “The Dear Leader” and not “By the People”. We were the first to make the dream of freedom real and it is a never-ending task to maintain it.

Let us put first things first! If We the People do not have the fortitude and energy to, on our own, search and separate true news from fake news, then the American dream is over.

Respectfully,

Mike Wyly

Michael Wyly, Colonel Michael D. Wyly USMC (Ret) and was Executive Director, CEO and Founder of The Bossov Ballet Theater in Maine. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy.