

A WVIP Commentary
By William O'Shaughnessy
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We're against the Police.

The Thought Police.

When I hear of attempts to intimidate and put pressure on Facebook and other social media platforms as well as that glorious, old punching bag FOX News ... my mind drifts back to similar attempts to stifle and intimidate CBS and other media outlets during a long-ago era.

In those desperate days, we defended William S. Paley and his colleagues at CBS when Harley O. Staggers, a right of way agent from Mineral County, Virginia wanted to throw Mr. Paley, Frank Stanton and Walter Cronkite ... including the elders of my beloved New York Times ... in the slammer.

And now, in 2020, we rise from our Westchester community radio station with its 500 pulsating watts in the Heart of the Eastern Establishment to defend the son and heir of a dentist from Ardsley, New York, a billionaire with a nerdy haircut named Mark Zuckerberg.

Zuckerberg deserves the same enthusiasm and support from all of us as did Mr. Paley of sainted memory and his rich friends Jock Whitney, Walter Nelson Thayer and Ogden Rogers Reid who collaborated – with the help of Broadcasting Magazine and Variety – to shut down <r. Staggers on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The Thought Police are not threatening a jail cell for Mr. Zuckerberg (yet). But they are trying to intimidate him by bringing pressure on his advertisers.

We stand with Zuckerberg. And those who want to intimidate The Dentist's Son ought to think long and hard before they stifle Free Speech.

We plead for the same protections for Mr. Zuckerberg that we demanded for our own colleagues Rush Limbaugh, Don Imus, Bill O'Reilly, Howard Stern, Bob Grant, Billy Bush, et al.

Speaking of which ... we also have to again be on full battle alert against those holier-than-thou corporate geniuses on Madison Avenue presently threatening Tucker Carlson's opinions and his livelihood. But in that predictable instance they'll also have to tangle with the formidable Rupert Murdoch and his son and heir Lachlan, who need no prompting to stay the course against the economic crosshairs of the Censors as they have in London and Australia for many years.

The Supreme Court ruled in *Packingham V. North Carolina* that social-media platforms are the new "public square" and access to them are protected by our cherished and essential First Amendment.

And a federal appeals court ruled that a Facebook "Like" is indeed a form of expression and that clicking a "like" button is a protected form of speech. The courts have also looked with hostility and a loack of enthusiasm on the use of speech which encourages force, fraud or defamation. And we quite agree.

But the rest of it, in all its unpleasantness, raucous vulgarity, imprecision, and even meanness must be protected.

Some many years ago we published a poster with the help of Mario Cuomo and some other First Amendment Voluptuaries. See Attached.

