

Book Bans & Erasure of History Are Weapons of Authoritarians & Fascists

written by Eugene R. | January 20, 2025

The greatest weapon which fascist thinkers have in their arsenal starts with misinformation and disinformation. That is an attack upon the mind by way of erasing historic memory.

I was born in 1955 in the segregated state of Alabama where the oppressive conditions of segregation meant that my only escape was to “travel in thought” which could only be found in books.

That is why the banning of books on diversity is in my mind a crime. It is a crime when differences in thought, free speech and freedom of the press are criminalized. The greatest weapon which fascist thinkers have in their arsenal starts with misinformation and disinformation. That is an attack upon the mind by way of erasing historic memory. Oral history and the written word of rebellion, of people fighting for freedom from the bottom of American society become a threat to the structure of fascism.

In a society that attempts to pass itself off as a democracy but is built on a foundation of African slaves, there is a need to falsify history. There is a fear that the ground upon which the state is built will crumble when truth, the word, reflection and reasoning empower the masses to break the chains of control over our understanding of democracy.

A democratic vote can open the door to unfreedom if a character such as Trump, an authoritarian, is elected and surrounds himself with political bootlickers. The falsifiers of history, like the Trump presidency, solve problems with the talk of force and a nationalist economy that aims to seize land, Canada, Greenland or the Panama Canal. They operate under the cloak of patriotism with the blinding light of White supremacy. But “patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.” (Samuel Johnson, 1775)

In 2025 it is becoming normal to ban books. But we can go back to the 60's and 70's when prisoners were allowed to read 100s of their choice of books. That is what transformed George Jackson from a criminal to a revolutionary at the San Quentin Adjustment Center. This is what the state fears: that books are a weapon in the struggle against the control of our thoughts.

In 2025 we are told in the schools that certain books will not be allowed. How far has the attack upon the Mind gone that banning educational books for our children can be normalized?

In segregated Alabama, when I was growing up, we had a limited supply of school books which were considered cherished items. When we finally integrated in 1967, I had to attend special speech and reading classes to learn to comprehend what I had read. The passion to read and learn about difference was important. I was not to walk in "lock step" but be an individual with one's own thoughts. Free thinking, and integration also opened up a new world of fear. Violence was ever present, but the children helped to transcend differences between Black and white. To read books on different forms of thought is to help transcend our differences which is critical to true democracy.