

December 18, 2017

Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for your interest in my book. I wrote it to explain why robust freedom of speech is essential for promoting equality and countering hatred, while censorship undermines these essential goals.

The book's title summarizes its interrelated themes, all equally important in our current political climate.

- As the all-caps main title indicates, **HATE** is a large problem, which has undermined the safety, equality, dignity, and well-being of too many individuals and groups.
- We must **resist** hate vigorously and effectively.
- While **censorship** of hateful messages might appear to be a common-sense strategy for doing so, the actual record of such censorship, throughout history and around the world, shows that it is at best ineffective and at worst counterproductive. That is why so many hatemongers – from the Nazis in Germany to the neo-Nazis in Charlottesville – provoke and welcome efforts to silence them, in order to increase the attention and support they receive.
- In contrast, robust **free speech** – including through demonstrations, counterprotests, education, and advocacy – has a solid track record of advancing the essential causes of equality, diversity, inclusivity, and societal harmony. Many forms of “counterspeech” effectively counter the prevalence and potential adverse impact of hateful speech – for example, by refuting hateful messages, affirming the equality and dignity of disparaged people, and dissuading actual and potential supporters of hatemongers.

These themes are well captured by the epigrams to my book, two of which I include here:

“[T]he strongest weapon against hateful speech is not repression; it is more speech – the voices of tolerance that rally against bigotry..., and lift up...mutual respect.”
--President Barack Obama

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”
--Martin Luther King, Jr.

In championing free speech and opposing censorship, President Obama and Dr. King are typical of crusaders for racial and social justice throughout U.S. history: they have opposed empowering government to suppress ideas that are hateful or hated, in part because their own ideas have been targeted as such by their political opponents and government authorities. Indeed, current critics of “Black Lives Matter” have attacked its advocacy as “hate speech.”

We don't have to choose between civil rights and civil liberties, or between equality and free speech. My fondest hope for this book is that it will inspire readers to raise their voices in support of all these essential, mutually reinforcing, causes.

With all best regards,

Nadine