

Political Censorship

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Preface

The purpose of this report is to educate the reader on the extent to which censorship is practiced by governments around the world. This report will specifically focus on the political aspect of censorship; the government withholding, distorting or falsifying the information that its citizens receive (PBS, n.d.).

Political censorship, as defined by the Britannica Encyclopaedia, is “the changing or the suppression or prohibition of speech or writing that is deemed subversive of the common good” (2010, p.21). In all expressions of power, censorship has occurred, yet in modern times it has been of extraordinary significance by the ways the government relates to the laws of the country (Censorship, 2010).

In every country around the world, the government will filter information reaching the public, but to what extent the information is filtered depends on the beliefs of the ruling party. Some governments, mainly in socialist states, will filter all the information that goes out to the public through all media forms (Censorship, 2010). Some governments, such as those of a democracy, will ‘set the agenda’, meaning they choose which topics will be discussed (Chomsky & Herman, 1988). By whatever means the government censors the information, they are doing it for one purpose. As George Bernard Shaw said, censorship exists to prevent the challenging of current conceptions and existing institutions (Anti-Censorship, 1998). This means that governments choose which information they give out in ways that they believe will make the public satisfied so they will not rebel.

Everyday, innocent people all over the world are being killed or imprisoned due to the attempt to seek information which the government had been withholding (RWB,

2011). These people can include journalists or even citizens of the country. In fact, as of March 4, 2011, seven journalists have been killed and one hundred fifty-four imprisoned because of their jobs (RWB, 2011). Governments fear that if information is made public by journalists, their citizens will challenge them. For this reason, they capture the journalists before their findings can be made public (CPJ, 2011). For example, in Tunisia on January 17, 2011, Lucas Mebrouk Dolega, a member of the European Press Photo Agency was killed because he was a journalist (RWB, 2011). This report will advise the reader on three specific countries, China, Libya, and Cuba, where people have been murdered by the government. Political censorship has risen as a global issue because of the tragedies that have occurred.

The fact that governments can control an entire nation's minds by altering and choosing the information given out without having the citizen's notice is a thought that is considered frightening for many people (Gross, 2010). However, the more educated people become on the topic of censoring, the more aware they will become and find ways to see around the shield that the government applies (Chomsky & Herman, 1988). This report will advise the reader on ways which governments control the media and make them more aware of situations some countries face.

Censoring information provides governments with a sense of control, which, after all, is the purpose of the government (Rupp, 2011). Censoring also provides security for the country. Governments may feel that certain information needs to be concealed for the national safety of the region.

Political censorship, the suppression or altering of information reaching the public, is a prevalent and important issue in today's society. This issue is crucial and must be discussed to protect the lives of thousands of journalists and citizens.

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Summary

This report is designed to discuss the global issue of political censorship. It includes a definition of political censorship and arguments as to the importance of this issue. It includes background information on censorship, including how it came to be an issue, how it is of great significance in history and previous attempts at resolving the issue. Expert Liu Xiaobo's, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, contributions to censorship in China are examined. In addition, the role of control is examined as to who has it, who wants it and who needs it. The aspect of religion is studied in how religion plays a role in deciding what needs to be censored. Three case studies in developing countries are included. These comprise of the censoring of information in China, Libya and Cuba. An analysis of the many organizations that help deliver information to the public is included. Canada's role in these organizations and the censoring of information in Canada has been analysed. Lastly, possible solutions addressing the issue of censoring are discussed.

For the purposes of this report, information was collected from a variety of resources. Various resources, including academic journals, newspaper articles, books, encyclopaedias, interviews, reports, and databases have been used.

1. Background

Censorship is a global issue that has existed for as long as society has. It can exist in two forms: pre-emptive, meaning the government is preventing the publication or broadcast of undesirable information, or punitive, the punishing of those who publish or broadcast offending material (Censorship, 2010). Both forms have been practiced multiple times in history as governments changed and evolved by the force of its citizens.

Throughout history, it was believed by many governments that it was their duty to control the views of their people (Censorship, 2010). It was not until the rise of the status of the individual that censorship came to be objectionable. People around the world are concerned about the issue of censorship, because throughout history, it has been proven that the power and influence of a government on its people can be very dangerous and should not be used as guides for judging information (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). According to the Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, “Censorship is at best problematic and at worst dangerous when it tries to silence the voice of the powerless at the behest of the powerful” (First Amendment Law, 2010, p. 2). This phenomenon has repeated itself many times throughout history (see appendices 1).

The derivation of the word censorship can be traced back to Rome in 443 BC. The title of Censor was given to the public official of the Roman government (Censorship, 2010). Censor came from the Latin word *censere*, which, according to Google Translate, means to appraise, value, or judge (2010). These officials would be responsible for overseeing the morals of the Roman people and, if they thought that these morals were incorrect, they could warn or ban certain people and behaviours (Censorship, 2010). In Roman times, this position was thought of as honourable, but the office of censor was

abolished from the Roman government in 22 B.C. (Baez, 2008). The idea, however, would persist.

One of the earliest acts of government-regulated censorship was the death of Socrates. In ancient Greece, around 399 B.C, philosopher and teacher Socrates was charged with “corrupting the youth of Athens with his controversial teaching methods and drawing them away from the Greek religion” (A Global History of Censorship, 2010, p. 3). Socrates was sentenced to death because of his actions of going ‘against’ the government. This was a form of censorship; Socrates’ rebellious ideas were removed from society.

However, Plato, a Greek philosopher and one of Socrates’ students, later became a leading activist for censorship after Socrates was murdered (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). Plato wrote a book, *The Republic*, which promoted the heavy censorship of literary materials for children. He believed that if children were exposed to fiction, they would overly identify with the characters and copy the bad behavioural traits (Baez, 2008). The book outlined a comprehensive system to censor information and ideas, focusing on the arts (Bloom, 1991). Plato supported censorship; he believed that youth needed to sustain their innocence so therefore the information they received would need to be censored.

The ideas behind censorship quickly spread throughout the world. In ancient China, in 213 B.C., Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered that all books be burnt, except those dealing with agriculture, medicine, or prophecy (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). He tried to impose uniformity on his people. According to historian Arthur Cotterell, “In [Huang’s] struggle to impose uniformity, he became one of the greatest destroyers in

history” (Baez, 2008, p. 67). He burnt the books in order to protect his newly united empire from the three things that he perceived to be dangerous: poetry, history and philosophy (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). He believed that these forms of literature would pull his empire apart. The fear of rebellious literature against official policy continued throughout history.

The fear of rebellious behaviour against the official doctrine was seen as early as 325 A.D, when the first Nicene Creed was written in the Christian world (Censorship, 2010). This document established the beliefs of Catholic Christianity and did not accept any other religious views (The Nicene Creed, 1997). As more books were written arguing the premises of Christianity, censorship became even more rigid and the punishments for heresy became increasingly extreme (A Global History of Censorship, 2010).

After Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1450’s, ideas, facts and opinions could easily be expressed to the public (Johannes Gutenberg, 2008). Information was now able to travel around the world. This reality resulted in certain works of literature being deemed as ‘dangerous’, and banned (Polastron, 2007). The *Index Liborum Prohibitorium*, a list of books that were banned due to their dangerous content, was issued by the Roman Catholic Church in 1559 (Polastron, 2007). This index was not abolished by the Church until 1966 (Censorship, 2010). Books continued to be banned and more laws were pressed on society. In 1542, an order from the Catholic Church decreed that no books could be printed or sold unless the church had granted permission (Baez, 2008). In 1563, Charles IX of France later decreed that no book could be printed without the special permission of the King (Baez, 2008). Many other rulers

across Europe followed suit and soon all expressions were being censored by the government.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe were known as the Age of Enlightenment (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). Loosening of the censorship laws which controlled the population were brought about as the rise of the individual came into perspective (Censorship, 2010). Freedom of expression rose and the publication laws were attacked and consequently removed (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). In 1766, Sweden was the first country to officially abolish censorship (Censorship, 2010). In 1790, the United States wrote the first amendment, which guaranteed freedom of speech and the press to the citizens (Censorship, 2010). Even though censorship was losing ground throughout the world, the structure of censorship was still encompassed into most government systems as an attempt to protect the security of the country (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). The restrictions of the structure were often very loose and courts were able to determine the principles and limits of freedom of expression (Censorship, 2010). In most of the western world, this was the end to government led censorship.

After the eighteenth century, censorship took a new spin in developed countries. No longer was censoring government led, but now public librarians, teachers, and other citizen action groups took action to ban books and other media forms in order to protect the innocence of children (Censorship, 2010). However, in many parts of the world, including socialist republics, strict media and informational censorship continued.

Russia and the other socialist republics in the Soviet Union from 1917 to the late 1980s were governed under a strict rule of censorship. All ideas and expressions were

attempted to be eliminated from the society. It was thought that these ideas could destroy the new communist order (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). The government shut down many newspapers and publications (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). This form of censorship quickly spread throughout the eastern European nations. When Stalin took office in the 1920s, the importing of foreign media was completely cut off and all interior publications were censored under strict control from the government (Censorship, 2010).

When the Nazis took rule of Germany from 1933 to 1945, Germany was under a period of strict government censorship; media, public events, and private communication were censored by the government (Censorship, 2010). The Nazis organized a massive book burning event in 1933, where over 20,000 ‘offensive’ books were destroyed (Nazi Book Burnings, 2008). Thousands of books written by Jewish, communist and other distinguishable authors were burned and destroyed (Nazi Book Burnings, 2008). As the land occupied by the Germans expanded, these censorship laws were put into affect in their newly conquered nations. All national newspapers, radios, and publishers became government controlled or shut down (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). If a person was caught listening to foreign radio or circulating illegal newspapers, they could be punished by death (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). Even with these laws in affect, many illegal press operations continued to publish stories that the Nazis had censored out of their media (A Global History of Censorship, 2010).

During the Apartheid regime of South Africa from 1950 to 1994, censorship was a key force used by the Apartheid leaders (Coetzee, 1996). Apartheid leaders, who were extreme racists, censored all materials that they found to support the African National

Congress, which was an anti-Apartheid liberation movement (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). Censored items included newspapers, pamphlets, T-shirts, buttons, and lighters that supported the ANC (Censorship, 2010). If the laws were broken, a person could be tortured or executed (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). This extreme form of censorship ended with the falling of the Apartheid regime in 1994 (Robinson, n.d.).

Today in the western world, censorship does occur, but in subtle forms. The government may choose which information they give out to the public and what view they will have on the matter. To do this, they will 'set the agenda', meaning they choose the topics they will report on. Next, the information is filtered through a variety of filters including editors, time constraints, limiting debate and screening effects (Chomsky & Herman, 1988).

This, however, is not the case for all countries in the world. Nearly half of the world's population still lacks an independent press (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). In China, the government heavily censors all information in all media forms, including the internet, newspapers, and television (RWB, 2011). In Egypt, only 20% of the population goes onto the internet and surveillance has been increasing over the past four years (RWB, 2011). In Cuba, the communist government practises an extreme form of censorship on its people; the World Wide Web is not accessible, no private publications can exist and many journalists are held captive or killed for reporting (RWB, 2011).

In a 2006 Report, "10 Most Censored Countries" by the Committee to Protect Journalists, patterns were found amongst the countries with the most censoring:

- “Total control”- Countries with the most censoring have governments which control all the media and information reaching the citizens.
- “One-man-show”- Countries with heavy censorship are ruled by one man who keeps himself in power by manipulating the media and rigging elections, if any are held.
- “Use of the ‘Big Lie’”- Governments send out the message that everything is good and nothing bad ever happens in their country. They also report on made up events where the citizens are said to have risked their lives for their leader.
- “Zero tolerance for negative coverage”- If a journalist reports news that does not meet the government’s censor laws, they will be punished for their crime. They are put into jail, charged with ‘hooliganism’, or put under government organized ‘repudiation acts’, where demonstrators surround the journalist's home to prevent anybody from entering or leaving.
- “Cynical disregard for people's welfare”- Governments censor news of dangers and hardships, such as famines and natural disasters, which are faced by their citizens.

The global issue of censorship has been a problem throughout history and is still a major concern for people all over the world today. Freedom of speech, opinion and expression is a foremost right in most democratic countries, but this right is not always maintained. In nondemocratic countries, the freedom of expression is often nonexistent, leading to the violation of human rights.

2. Expert

Liu Xiaobo is an author, a university professor, human rights/political activist, and an annoyance to the Chinese government (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010). He won the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for “his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China” (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). He has always had strong political views; as a teenager he set up writers groups to debate these ideas. In a Nobel Peace Prize documentary, Tienchi Martin-Liao describes Xiaobo’s personality. “He is a very devoted writer. He is satisfied if he just sits down and writes. I think this is his passion to be someone who would just [put] all his emotion and his thoughts through the language; through the words. Words are important for him” (2010). He is the type of person who is good with writing and by doing so he can make big changes in the world.

According to the video, Portrait of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, he studied at Beijing University in 1987, where he achieved the first PhD in literature under the socialist system (2010). He then taught at the Universities of Columbia and Hawaii (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). In April 1989, his academic career ended suddenly as students began to protest on the streets of Beijing. He immediately returned to China to join the protests in Tiananmen Square (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). As the protests grew, he convinced his fellow protesters to begin a hunger strike (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). The next day the government ordered the army to cease the protests, and violence broke out. The Chinese government reported that 241 people died during the protests, but death tolls were calculated to be in the thousands (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010). To stop the violence Liu Xiaobo held talks with the army and urged students to leave the square

(Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). He was then put in prison for 20 months for counterrevolutionary behavior (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010).

Xiaobo had changed during this violent time; he became a campaign writer dedicated to promoting change in China. He continued to criticize the government and fight for a basic, fundamental human right: freedom of speech. In 1996, he was sent to a labor camp for three years and, while he was there, married Liu Xia (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010).

In 2008, Xiaobo coauthored a book entitled Charter 08 (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). This manifesto contained a list of 19 demands that called upon the government to give citizens more political freedom, including: democratic elections, freedom of speech and religion, freedom of association, and an independent legal system (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010). It was supported by approximately 300 academics, artists, lawyers and activists; all who wanted China's future political development to improve (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010). Before the book was published, the police raided Xiaobo's home and arrested him, although he was the only author of Charter 08 to be put in prison, and sentenced to 11 years in jail for seeking to end one-party rule in China (Nobel Peace Prize, 2010).

His imprisonment gave him international status and recognition, which led to his winning of the Nobel Peace Prize. The Chinese government acted in outrage when they heard of the winning, saying his actions broke the Chinese law and that is against the values of the Nobel Peace Prize (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010). When his wife Liu Xia, went to tell him the news of his Prize, he told her that the Prize should go to "all the fallen souls of Tiananmen Square" (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010). The government

put Xia under house arrest and she has not been seen since the award was given (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010).

Although Liu Xiaobo's name is well known and highly respected in the western world, he is unknown to many Chinese citizens. Xia says, "Now his name is unknown [in China]. But one day, even if he's not regarded as a hero, he'll be thought of as a very good citizen" (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010, p 4). The citizens of China don't know who he is because of heavy censorship laws that are put into place. The government censors all information reaching the public so they are not aware of him and his beliefs. The government does not want the all of the citizens to follow his beliefs and rebel as well. Xiaobo is well aware of this, and so is his wife. Xiaobo believes that one day the censorship laws will be lifted and people will come to know the name of the man who helped do that for them (BBC: 20 years of activism, 2010).

Liu Xiaobo has been a key figure in helping to reform China's government. He has taken action in Tiananmen Square during the student-led protests, through his participation and leadership. He participated in the writing of Charter 08, which asked the Chinese government to reform themselves. Because of these actions, he has spent many years in prison and remains there to this day. However, these actions also gave him world recognition as a leader, and so he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. Xiaobo made several attempts to abolish censorship in China and because of that, he has been censored from the rest of the Chinese public.

3. Role of Control

When dealing with the issue of censorship, there is no question that the person who has the power is the person who controls the society. The question is, though, who has that power? (Hennop, 2009) The power is definitely not in the hands of the oppressed, or the citizens of the country. They have no say in what information reaches them. The power is in the hands of the government. All governments, whether socialist, democratic or fascist, have laws which govern how, and to what extent, freedom of speech, opinion and expression are regulated (Hennop, 2009). The government has the power because they make the laws which tell the media companies what can and cannot be published. They are also able to carry out punishments for breaking these laws. In some countries, the media also has power, as they chose which news to report.

Different types of governments have different laws and therefore different amounts of control over their people. In a socialist or fascist country, the government has great amounts of control of the people. They have laws which define the extremes to which they can control their people. For example, in the socialist state of Cuba, Article 5 of the Cuban constitution states that the government will govern under Martí's ideas and Marxism-Leninism. This means that the government controls all. They manipulate mass media and crush any form of intellectual expression before it reaches the public, which is why a single leader can stay in power for long periods of time (CPJ, 2006).

In democratic countries, the government censorship is not so straightforward and noticeable to the public, but it is still present. The government will filter information in the media that is seen as offensive. Violence, sexual content, offensive information, and

hate speech addressing race ethnicity, sex, disabilities, religious practices or sexuality are obscenities that are often extracted (Hennop, 2009).

There is control over what information is given to the public in a democratic society, but the majority of the power is not in the hands of the government, it is in the hands of the media. According to Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, media companies will first 'set the agenda', meaning they chose which topics will be reported. Next they filter the information through editors, time constraints, limiting debate and the screening effect (Chomsky & Herman, 1988). Editors cast a one-view belief on society, time constraints stop the public from grasping all the facts, limiting debate prevents citizens from discussing different views, and the screening effect is when one event distracts from another (Chomsky & Herman, 1988).

When considering who has control over censorship, one should consider if there should be any control at all (Thomas, 2001). Some argue that censorship should be removed from society, as it limits freedom of expression, opinion and speech. Some believe that censorship plays no key role in society. According to Roger Thomas, censoring materials does not stop the citizens who wish to obtain that information, as they will simply receive it by illegal means (2001).

Others believe the opposite, that censorship is important in keeping society in order. According to Mae West, censorship is important because it integrates dignity into society (Reavill, 2005). Some may also argue that censorship must exist, as there is no way for it to be abolished (Thomas, 2001). If governments and media corporations stopped censoring information, censorship would still occur. If a person has information, but they knowingly choose not to share it, this process is a simpler, smaller version of the

current censorship (Thomas, 2001). Censorship could never stop, because the intellectual mind is constantly choosing which information is appropriate to share. If someone chooses not to lie to a teacher, that person is censoring information that could be passed on. “Is censorship in general nothing more than a larger version of this process” (Thomas, 2001, p.41). Is there a need for someone to assume the position of control in society, or could each person be that controller and make their own decisions?

4. Religious Aspect

Religion has played a tremendous role throughout the history of censorship and still plays a role in many countries today. Arguably, the reason censorship was integrated into society was so people would not challenge already present and accepted views. Religion is a main reason to create censorship in both democratic and nondemocratic regions in the world. According to Roger Thomas, the types of media censored are judged in an enormous way by different religious beliefs (2001).

In societies with multiple religious groups, what should be taught at schools is a critical issue. A religious school may only teach their fundamental doctrine and not even mention that another one exists (Hennop, 2009). For instance, a Catholic school in Canada will not teach the beliefs of the Buddhist religion, only those of the Christian views. An Islamic school is only going to teach views from the Qur’an, the religious text of Islam, not that of the Jewish beliefs (Syria: IRFR, 2010). Different religious groups will censor out information to their youth about other religions.

There has also been an ongoing debate about if it is appropriate to teach the theory of evolution in schools. Ever since the 1920’s when an American schoolteacher

taught this theory to his class and was taken to court, it has been argued that if the theory of evolution is taught, faith will eventually diminish and religion would disappear (Kramer, 1960). In an attempt to stop this from occurring, teachers fight to get the concepts of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, removed from schools. In other words, they want to censor out beliefs that interfere with their religion.

It can be argued that extremists of all religions are at the heart of the issue of censorship (Hennop, 2009). In a democratic society, different religious groups will fight for a certain book to be banned because it offends their religion. Religious groups may view other beliefs as immoral and obscene compared to their own. They may want to dispose of the obscure beliefs that oppose their official doctrine (Religious Right: Issues-Censorship, 2009).

It is possible for different religions to be highly respected to the extent that censorship is readily practiced (Glanville, 2008). Many publishers are terrified to distribute a book that may offend a religious group. This leads to censorship from the publisher, the author, and even the government. However, religion does influence governments more heavily in nondemocratic societies.

Extremists in many types of nondemocratic societies may implant strict rules that must be followed in the country. For instance, in Syria, the President must be Muslim and enforce Islamic jurisprudence to be the principal source of legislation (Syria: IRFR, 2010). The government supports programming in the media for the practice and study of government-sanctioned forms of Islam (Syria: IRFR, 2010). The radio broadcasts Islamic prayer in the morning, at noon, and in the afternoon (Syria: IRFR, 2010). While the government is pushing as much information about Islam as they can into the media, other

religions in Syria are being censored out and they cannot broadcast their prayers. The government implanted strict regulations in the legislation of the country and it uses the media to advertise their religion. Although, due to much aversion of people in the western world, Syria is not the only country with this type of government; many other states have closely related constitutions.

5. Case Studies

In many countries around the world, censorship has grown to be a major impact on the society. In China, Libya and Cuba, political censorship has grown to such an extent that the citizens are constantly blinded from the truth. This section of the report will focus on three countries where this occurs, and the extent of the government-regulated censorship in them.

China

In China, the government constantly censors all media that reaches its citizens. All the information is screened through the General Administration of Press and Publication, the government's administrative agency that is responsible for drafting and enforcing China's restraint regulations (Agencies Responsible for Censorship in China, 2006). The government does not want information to get out to the public because they do not want the citizens in the socialist society to know about freedom. If they did, the government fears there would be a revolution.

Censorship in China has been an issue all throughout history. In ancient China, Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered all books to be burnt, unless they dealt with agriculture,

medicine, or prophecy as an attempt to impose uniformity on his people (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). He did not want the newly united empire to be exposed to three things that he perceived to be dangerous and could pull his empire apart: poetry, history and philosophy (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). This fear was experienced again in 1949 when China fell to communism.

Since 1949, China has been under communist rule, and the government has controlled every form of media in the country. In the years after the country fell, the government had complete control over what information was dispersed. To glorify the communist party and to depict capitalism and western culture as evil, they used propaganda (Ickovic, Lane, & Jones, 2006). During this time, the Chinese people were cut off from the outside world and censorship worked perfectly in the eyes of the government; people were only hearing exactly what the government wanted them to (Ickovic, Lane, & Jones, 2006).

From 1966 to 1976, after this period of strict censorship, the Cultural Revolution in China occurred (Ickovic, Lane, & Jones, 2006). The students and workers of China fought against the officials of the Chinese Communist Party and forced them to relax on their position in censorship and the economy. Today, all information is still strictly approved by the government; however, they are more tolerant of violations than they previously were (see appendices 2).

The 1982 constitution of China states, “Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession, and of demonstration” (Green, 2005, pg. 102). However, the constitution also contains

articles that contradict these rights. Citizens are not allowed exercise their rights if they interfere with the interests of the state (Green, 2005).

In 1989, students in China led a movement towards democracy, known as the protests Tiananmen Square. These protests were said to have been the greatest challenge towards the Chinese government and since these events, the government has intensified their suppressing of free speech (BBC: On this Day, 1989). Today in China, students face intense pressures from propaganda, re-education and the judicial system (Green, 2005). The protests made the government fear more and therefore increased censorship can be seen.

In modern day China, the internet is the media form that is censored most heavily. Citizens who use the internet continue to experience censoring while online. In China, the internet became popular at the beginning of the twenty-first century (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). Chinese officials have denied access to websites and information that they deem to be inappropriate or harmful to their people. The Great Fire Wall, which was put into place in 2006, censors information, such as that about democracy and freedom, from searches (James, 2009). This wall consists of government monitors and citizen volunteers who regularly sweep through blogs, chat forums, and even e-mail to ensure nothing challenging the government is posted and to make it difficult to reach sites the government has deemed illegal (BBC News Timeline, 2010). Many websites, especially those related to pornography, are blocked and sites such as YouTube, Flickr and Wikipedia are heavily restricted (James, 2009). On April 29, 2010, China adopted an amendment to the State Secrets Law requiring Internet companies to cooperate with the authorities on matters relating to national security (RWB: Internet Enemies China, 2011).

In 2002, Chinese activist Jiang Lijun was arrested after an investigation that used information that was supplied by Yahoo (BBC News Timeline, 2010). In 2005, Microsoft agreed to censor its [blog writing tool](#), called Spaces, on MSN China (BBC News Timeline, 2010). In 2006, Yahoo was accused again of supplying information to Chinese authorities, leading to the arrest of net activist Li Zhi (BBC News Timeline, 2010). As an attempt to hide censorship, the government was forced to unblock sites such as Wikipedia and YouTube during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (BBC News Timeline, 2010). In 2008, it became a law that in order to use an internet café, a person must have their picture taken and ID shown. In 2009, Chinese officials introduced the Green Dam Internet filtering software, which comes preinstalled on all PC computers sold in China (BBC News Timeline, 2010). This software censors offensive sites, such as those dealing with pornography and violent images. In 2009, on the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, Wikipedia and YouTube were blocked again in an effort to prevent people from watching events that happened during Tiananmen Square.

Google has had problems in China since it launched its Chinese site in 2006 (BBC News Timeline, 2010). Google had established a separate site for China, www.google.cn, which censors to satisfy the Chinese authorities (James, 2009). In January 2010, Google announced that it had been hacked by the Chinese government and therefore they would no longer censor information and they threatened to remove themselves from the country (A Global History of Censorship, 2010). Google then redirected all searches from Google China to Google Hong Kong, yet the government firewalls still censored the searches (BBC News, 2010). This hurt China's world image, as one of the world's most well known corporations is refusing to work with them (BBC News, 2010).

Although the internet censorship in China gains the most media attention, the censoring of other media is still present. The government owns and dominates the country's press, radio and television (Green, 2005). They send out propaganda and have no shame in rewriting history (Green, 2005). China has two news agencies, one to serve national media and the other to serve foreign media; both are heavily censored by the government. Only the important stories are sent to the authorities, where they generate a new version (Chomsky, 1988). Film has also undergone major changes. In the 1980's and the 1990's, many movies were set in the past as to avoid provoking the censors (Green, 2005). Today, the movies are generally set in the present, yet they are heavily censored (Green, 2005). Many Chinese artists are not allowed to show their works in China, but they do present them internationally. Art is generally the center of the class struggle because it must serve "the workers, peasants and soldiers...in the victory of Marxist-Leninist principles" (Green, 2005, pg. 106).

In China, censorship has a heavy impact on society. The citizens of China have their opinions shaped for them and have limited access to information. In 2001, former President Jiang Zemin told the media that their role is to concentrate on the coverage of positive events (Green, 2005). As of April 3, 2011, thirty journalists in China have been imprisoned and Reporters Without Border's has marked their situation "very serious" (RWB China, 2011). On Reporters Without Border's 2010 Press Freedom Index, China marks 168 out of 178 (RWB China, 2011). Censorship in China has an enormous impact on society.

Censorship in China has grown so much that there are not many solutions at hand. The easiest, most straightforward way to solve the issue is to abolish censorship.

However, this solution isn't practical, as censoring the media is not an issue to the people who have control. The more practical solution would be for the world and the citizens of China to rise against the government until it is overthrown. But again, this is not a great solution because many people in China are not aware of the issue and to many people, it is not seen as a negative thing. As long as China remains socialist, censorship will always be practiced and in order for China to change its government system, censorship would first need to be abolished. No solutions will work because they all fall into a vicious circle.

Libya

Libya has had many recent issues regarding state-sponsored. In 2004, Libya seemed to be progressing back into the international scene and they even chaired the United Nations Security Council in March 2009 (RWB Libya, 2011). However, as rebellions began in early 2011, the government has regressed and heavy censorship has begun. Today internet routes are very slow, but still operating (Cherry, 2011). There are still entries and routers around the internet in Libya, but all traffic going in or out is being blocked with a firewall or other network devices (Cherry, 2011). The entire internet service goes through a single provider, meaning that it is easy to close it down. Libya Telecom and Technology, which is part of the state-owned telecommunications monopoly controlled by Gadhafi's son, is blocked (Cherry, 2011). To access the internet, a person must connect with a server outside the country, which is how people are spreading information through Facebook and Twitter (Cherry, 2011). Today in Libya, if you were to disconnect from an international provider, you would not have internet

access. As of 2009, 323,000 people used the internet, but sites, such as those focusing on political oppression, are censored.

The government in Libya strictly controls the media. In 2007, non-governmental media was authorized, which led to the launch of a newspaper and satellite TV company, yet, these were both affiliated to Colonel Gaddafi's son (BBC Libya country profile). In 2009, these outlets were nationalized. The state broadcaster is The Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation (BBC Libya country profile). The main newspapers are controlled by Gadhafi's government and although a few international newspapers exist, they are routinely censored (BBC Libya country profile).

In Libya, all of the media companies are state run and state controlled. Currently there are six press companies in Libya, all of which are run by a branch of the state (BBC Libya country profile). There are two television companies, all state run; three radio companies, all state run; and one news agency, which is state run (BBC Libya country profile). On January 24, 2010, Gadhafi began to block internet sites such as YouTube, after videos of the demonstrations by the families of prisoners in the city of Benghazi, and footage of members of Muammar Gaddafi's family attending parties were posted (RWB Libya, 2011). On Facebook, a protest campaign by Libyan netizens, journalists and human rights activists has started with the aim of getting these blocked sites accessible again (RWB Libya, 2011).

The constitution of Libya restricts the freedom of the press. The 1969 Constitution guarantees "the right to freedom of expression but within the limits of public interest and the principles of the Revolution" (RWB Libya, 2011, p. 7). According to Article 178 of the criminal law, any spreading of news or information that is seen as

offensive to the government will result in a life prison sentence (RWB Libya, 2011). Article 207 of that criminal code states that “whoever spreads within the country, by whatever means, theories or principles aiming to change the basic principles of the Constitution or the fundamental structures of the social system or to overthrow the state’s political, social or economic structures or destroy any of the fundamental structures of the social system using violence, terrorism or any other unlawful means will be sentenced to death” (Libya, 2006, p. 9).

Today’s situation in Libya, with the rebellions against the government, has caused Gadhafi to censor the information coming in to and out of the country. It is difficult to obtain information on the situation in the country and therefore the international media has been reliant on eyewitness accounts, videos, and images (Seleh, 2011). As of May 14, 2011, four journalists had been killed and one imprisoned (RWB Libya, 2011). Reporter’s Without Borders has marked the current situation in Libya “very serious” and is under internet freedom surveillance (RWB Libya, 2011).

There are a number of solutions available for the issue of censorship in Libya. Because Libya is a country under transformation, many people believe that Libya will soon become democratic. The rebels in Libya wish for Gadhafi to step down from power. If this happens, the current state controlled censorship will end. However, if the rebel forces do not overthrow the Gadhafi government, strict censorship laws will remain in place and possibly increase in order to prevent a repeat of the same uprising. The censorship in Libya will not lift until the government revolves from a dictatorship to a democracy.

Cuba

Cuba is a socialist country under the rule of Raul Castro, brother of Fidel Castro who made Cuba what it is today (BBC Cuba country profile, 2011). The state maintains tight control over all forms of media, including newspapers, radio and television. The internet is not widely accessible and has a high cost, preventing citizens from using it. In fact, only 2% of the country has internet accessibility (BBC Cuba country profile, 2011). The government owns all the media companies; however, the US does supply citizens with illegal television stations from towers in Florida, but the effectiveness is debatable (BBC Cuba country profile, 2011).

Raul Castro has been in power since his brother, Fidel Castro handed over his power in 2008 (Catan, 2008). Raul controls the military, the security services and the Communist Party, the Partido Comunista de Cuba (Green, 2005). He has control over all forms of the media, including the only national newspaper, the Granma.

Before Fidel Castro was in power, Fulgencio Batista, the President of Cuba from 1952 to 1958, practiced censorship (Green, 2005). His censorship was repressive and was practiced as an attempt to keep his authority (Green, 2005). Batista issued a state law which stated that freedom could be suspended when “state security, war or invasion, grave disturbance of public order or other circumstances’ ...disturb the tranquility of the country” (Constitution Of The Republic Of Cuba, n.d., p.41). Many other laws were put into place that enabled censorship, such as the Law of Public Order (Green, 2005). However, the government was still unable to fully press censorship into the media, until Castro came in 1956.

Fidel Castro led rebellions against Batista's government, which resulted in a suspension of human rights for 45 days (Green, 2005). On May 17, 1956, a state of national emergency was declared and the government limited the press from publishing official government reports, as an attempt to protect Cuba (Sierra, n.d.). Fidel rose to power January 1, 1959 (Simkin, n.d.).

Fidel believed that his "governmental mission is to make society conform to [it's] dogma, and censorship is imposed [and] must pervade all areas of life, not just politics" (The Press in Cuba, n.d., p. 2). Fidel imposed censorship in all areas of his people's lives because he believed that was the duty of the government. Article 53 of the Cuban constitution states that "the press, radio, television, cinema, and other mass media are state or social property and can never be private property" (*Constitution of the Republic of Cuba*, n.d., Article 53). This assures their use as an exclusive service of the working people and the interests of society. The press in Cuba is property of the government and is strictly censored; they fear that if information about democracy or freedom were available to the public, they would be overthrown. Fidel gave his power to Raul in 2008 and since then, international organizations have increased their disapproval of the lack of media freedom and jailed journalist's conditions of detention (BBC country profile Cuba, 2011).

Today in Cuba, all media is controlled by the state. Internet is not readily available to the citizens, as one hour of national service costs around 1.5 US dollars, but the average monthly salary is only around 20 US dollars (RWB: Internet Enemies Cuba, 2011). Although the possibilities of lower internet costs through satellite connections are available, the government does not support this idea, as it would be more difficult for

them to monitor information. However, Cuban officials have expanded their presence on the internet through pro-government blogs (RWB: Internet Enemies Cuba, 2011). The government does want to switch from a Windows to a Linux operating system, because Cuban technical specialists would improve their skills and the government would be in better position to circumvent censorship (RWB: Internet Enemies Cuba, 2011). The ideal use of the internet would be similar to that of China: “web growth for economic reasons, with more access for the population, while maintaining political control” (RWB: Internet Enemies Cuba, 2011, p. 24). However, it would be impossible to control everything that the users do and for this reason, the government dislikes the idea of wide range internet use.

As of April 3, 2011, one journalist has been imprisoned and in 2010, Cuba was marked 166 out of 178 on the Press Freedom Index (RWB: Press Freedom Index, 2010). Reporters Without Borders marks Cuba’s condition as “very serious” (RWB Cuba, 2011). Cuba has little freedom, as all the media is heavily controlled and censored by the government.

There are few practical solutions to the censoring in Cuba. As long as there is one leader, there will be censoring so that the leader can maintain control; censoring is done to maintain control. If censorship was to be abolished in Cuba, the dictator would need to be overthrown. This would be extremely difficult to do and would need to be ignited by the international community, as the citizens have access to little information and equipment. The only way to abolish censorship in Cuba is if the people revolted against the government and overthrew the dictator, which, at the moment, is not possible due to the censoring.

6. International Organization

There are many different organizations varying from the United Nations to international governmental organizations to non-governmental organizations that play a role in raising awareness of the issue of censorship. Reporters Without Borders, Amnesty International, and the Article 19 are all organizations whose goal is to protect citizens, which includes protecting against censorship. Organizations play a key role in abolishing censorship and fighting for human rights.

Reporters Without Borders

Reporters Without Borders is a non-profit organization, registered in France (RWB: Introduction, 2011). They have consultation status at the United Nations and are well known throughout the world with its presence in all five continents through offices, national branches and correspondents (RWB: Introduction, 2011). Reporters Without Borders provides a constantly updated website that reports cases of cruelty towards journalists and countries around the world enforcing strict censorship. It also keeps an updated list of journalists who have been killed or imprisoned and a list of public events to support their efforts. The mission statement of Reporters Without Borders includes:

- Defend journalists and media assistants who have been imprisoned or persecuted for doing their job and expose their mistreatment and torture (RWB: Introduction, 2011).
- Fight against censorship and laws which undermine press freedom (RWB: Introduction, 2011).

- Give financial aid to 300 journalists and media outlets who are in difficulty so they can pay for lawyers, medical care and equipment as well to the families of imprisoned journalists (RWB: Introduction, 2011).
- Work to improve the journalist's safety, especially those reporting in war zones (RWB: Introduction, 2011).

Reporters Without Borders reports on cases of injustice. Before they take action against a cruelty, they first check their facts so they can be sure they are reporting correct information (RWB: Introduction, 2011). Next, the researchers and the correspondents send letters of protest to the appropriate authorities as an attempt put pressure on the government which does not “respect the right to inform and to be informed” (RWB: Introduction, 2011, p. 2). If governments do not act, releases to the media are sent as an attempt to gain support. Public rallies and events are held until the safety of citizens and journalists in the country can be assured.

The Reporter's Without Borders organization has been very successful. They are well known throughout the world and because of that, they have been able to educate people on issues that governments censor out, on the extremes many government go to so they can hide information from their people, and on the dangerous conditions journalists report in. Sending information to the public about the extremes of censorship is an excellent way to abolish it. People are getting more and more information and they are developing a passion for helping those who are suppressed. One way to rid censorship is for the international community to step up, which Reporters Without Borders gets people to do.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a “worldwide movement of ‘ordinary’ people who work together to achieve extraordinary results” (Amnesty: What We Are, 2011, p.1). Amnesty International sends out information and people all over the world write letters to authorities, asking them for justice. The letters are very diplomatic and effective. When a government receives thousands of letters asking them to do something, they feel obligated to act.

Amnesty has, on many occasions, asked governments from countries, such as China, to tell the truth to their people. Doing so involves lifting bans and restrictions on the media. In 2010, Amnesty repeatedly asked China to end censorship of the internet after the hacking of human rights activists’ email accounts on Google (Amnesty, 2010). Chinese authorities did not respond, but Amnesty continues to apply pressure on such situations.

Eventually, when enough international pressure is put onto governments who place heavy censorship laws on their media, they will have no choice but to peacefully lift the ban. This is the goal of Amnesty International. They have frequent success in other areas, so it is known that continued, peaceful pressure will lead to the end of censorship.

Article 19

Article 19 is a “human rights organization with a specific mandate and focus on the defence and promotion of freedom of expression and freedom of information worldwide” (Article 19: Our Work, 2009, p.1). Their name came from Article 19 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (Article 19: About Us, 2009, p. 5). Article 19 fights for these rights by working with national organizations from around the world. Their entire work revolves around the statement: “Censorship kills. It starves and it represses. It denies people access to information essential to their life” (Article 19: About Us, 2009, p. 2).

Article 19 works hard to bring awareness to cases of censorship throughout the world. They believe that this is what will eventually bring it to an end. They advocate the right to freedom of opinion and expression and do not tolerate censorship. They launch campaigns and release articles in an attempt to bring world awareness (Article 19: Advocacy, 2009). They try to make more people aware of what is happening so they will fight to put an end to censorship.

Overall, all the organizations which fight to put an end to censorship only raise awareness about it. They create public awareness of the issue and lobby for the safeguarding of fundamental human rights, such as freedom of speech, expression, opinion and press, for people all around the world. They cannot do much else because they lack the ability to go into a country and change the constitution to suit their beliefs. If an independent country chooses not to listen to the world, nothing can be done. However, in many cases, world pressure does cause these governments to listen and change, which is the goal of these international organizations.

7. Censorship in Canada

Political censorship not only exists in fascist and socialist states, it also exists in democratic nations, such as Canada. The government and privately owned media corporations manufacture people's consent. As described in Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, democratic nations carefully alter news stories to make the people of the country happy. This happens in Canada, although the Constitution of Canada says otherwise.

In Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, the events that are chosen to be reported on are made to fit people's wants. First, the dominant elite, which are 20% of the people 'set the agenda', meaning they pick which stories are going to be reported (Chomsky, 1988). Next, the facts are passed through four filters: editors, which make the reader believe one view; time constraints, which make it so all the facts are not released; limiting debate, meaning people's can't discuss different views because not enough information is given; and the screening effect, where one event distracts from another (Chomsky, 1988). The information may also be passed through propaganda using doublespeak and media truisms (Chomsky, 1988). Manufacturing consent is a type of censorship that occurs in Canada. Not all information is given to the public and that information is twisted to give the people a common view on an issue. Manufacturing consent is one way that the Canadian government censors, although this goes against the Constitution.

Section 2(b) of the Charter states that "everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: ... freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication" (Constitution, 2009). This means that every citizen in Canada has the right to publish anything they wish. In 1963, Professor Emerson

said, “Maintenance of a system of free expression is necessary (1) as assuring individual self-fulfillment, (2) as a means of attaining the truth, (3) as a method of securing participation by the members of the society in social, including political, decision-making, and (4) as maintaining the balance between stability and change in society” (Magnet, 2002). As Emerson said, freedom of expression is necessary for obtaining the truth. The Charter supports this; everybody in Canada has freedom of expression and therefore should have the ability to obtain the truth. However, as Chomsky pointed out, this does not always occur because of the process of manufacturing consent.

Canada also does not have complete press freedom, as a 2004 clause in the criminal code necessitates journalists to hand over their files and the names of their sources if police believe they are crucial to a criminal investigation (RWB Canada, 2010). If a journalist violates this clause, they can be punished by a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or a maximum of six months in prison (RWB Canada, 2010). There have been several journalists who have been sent to federal court, but as of April 3, 2011, none have been imprisoned (RWB Canada, 2010). However, there are a few journalists who are at that risk. For example, Daniel Leblanc, journalist of the daily Global and Mail, is behind the exposure which caused the ‘sponsorship scandal’ where the government misused public funds to fund a campaign against sovereignty (RWB Canada, 2010). He was asked to give the name of his source for the story, but his court hearing which was scheduled for March 19, 2009, was cancelled at the last minute. Also, Andrew McIntosh was forced to expose his sources after the government forced him to surrender leaked Business Development Bank of Canada documents to the Royal Canadian Mounted

Police when they revealed a conflict of interest involving former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (RWB Canada, 2010).

Another concern is the Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation, also known as SLAPP. SLAPP is a civil procedure in which extremely high damages are demanded against a media or a non-governmental organization (RWB Canada, 2010). This forces the organization to disappear. SLAPP is a form of censorship because if the public sees something they don't like, they have the ability to destroy it. An example of this was when the proceedings against the publisher Ecosociété by the mining companies Barrick Gold and Banro. Ecosociété published the book, "Black Canada", which covered the mining company's activities in Africa (RWB Canada, 2010). The companies want \$11 million Canadian dollars to pay for 'damages', which they threaten to increase if the term SLAPP continued to be used in association with the case (RWB Canada, 2010). This is an attempt to destroy the book, which gives out what the companies deem as too much information. Laws are being drafted to protect the media from SLAPP orders and limit the censorship it provides.

Although guaranteed freedom in Canada does have some exceptions, these exceptions are justified. The law that journalists need to surrender their sources if needed does violate the constitution, but it also keeps Canada secure. During a trial, one piece of information can be crucial. If a journalist may have the answer the jury is looking for, it is in the best interest of the country to have a law saying they must give that source. Also, the Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation can be justified. As the constitution states, every citizen in Canada has freedom. If a company wishes to demand high damages against an organization, they are allowed to. Almost all violations to the

constitution can be justified by the same article that gives everybody freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression.

The objectives of censorship in Canada are the same as that mentioned in the studies on China, Libya and Cuba. The government rationale is that when something is censored in Canada, it is done so for the better of society. When censoring occurs in the other nations mentioned, it is done so for the same reasons. However, people have different views on what is better. In a socialist state such as China and Cuba, the dictator is placing his views in society. He wants everybody to work happily for the good of the country. In order for his people to be happy, all things in the media that could anger people must be censored, including topics of freedom and democracy. In a dictatorship such as Libya, the dictator wants his society to be happy and therefore he censors information that could cause disturbances. In a democratic nation like Canada, the government also wants people to be happy, but instead of censoring all information, they allow people to make their own decisions and create happiness that way. The objective of censorship is to make society content, however, Canada does this differently than China, Libya and Cuba.

According to Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index, Canada is ranked 21 out of 178. This rank has fallen steadily and continues to do so; in 2002, Canada ranked 5 out of 139 (RWB: Press Freedom Index, 2010). Censorship in Canada is tightening as people find ways and flaws in and around the constitution. The current situation in Canada is marked by Reporters Without Borders as 'good' (RWB Canada, 2010).

There is no way to completely eliminate censorship in a democratic nation such as Canada. Censorship will always occur, although not on as great of scale as that of China. If a person knows information, but they knowingly choose not to share it, it is a form of censorship. The intellectual mind is constantly choosing which information is appropriate to share. If someone lies to someone else, that person is censoring information that could be passed on. There are no solutions to the issue of censorship in Canada because there is no way for it to be eliminated.

8. Solutions

There are many different approaches to solving the complex world issue of censorship, as the degree of censorship varies from country to country. International organizations can pressure governments into releasing information to their citizens. The Human Rights Article 19 can be promoted more by governments so violators of this Article understand that they need to do something. Another solution is to do nothing because censorship will always exist in some form as long as society exists. There are positives and negatives related with each solution and the one with the greatest balance between the two is the most viable solution.

One possible solution would be to ignore the issue of censorship all together. This solution has many benefits and disadvantages. International governments would be choosing to avoid conflict caused by meddling in the affairs of another nation. The avoidance of conflict can be seen as a positive aspect; yet, the long-term results might turn out negative if nothing is done about censorship. Governments would not stop and their people would become more oppressed. When an important issue, such as

ensorship, is ignored, the problem will continue to escalate. The possible conflict that could have occurred because of international intervention may have been avoided, but after keeping citizens ignorant, misinformed and influenced by propaganda for years, an even greater conflict may result when action is finally taken (Hennop, 2009). An example of when such an escalation occurred is Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945. The people of Germany were influenced by propaganda, which is one of the reasons that the Holocaust was allowed to have happened. After ignoring censorship for years, a greater conflict occurred and in the end, over eleven million innocent civilians were killed.

After weighing the positives and negatives of the solution of ignoring censorship, one might believe that action must be taken. Another solution to the issue of censorship is for international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to continue to pressure governments to change. Organizations such as Amnesty International, Article 19, and Reporters Without Borders try to force countries to abolish censorship. The short-term effects of international organizations may seem little or even nonexistent, depending on the situation. However, in the end, pressure can make a great solution. Censorship in China and Cuba is slowly decreasing because of international pressures. Even if pressure does not show results, it keeps the censorship under control. It is difficult for countries to increase their censoring when the world is against it. There are many benefits to international pressure, but there are some negatives. In order for enough pressure to be put forth, there needs to be support from countries all over the world, which can be difficult to obtain. In addition, the fact that all countries censor their media in some way makes it hard to justify the line between extreme censorship and 'normal' censorship.

Pressure is an excellent solution to extreme censorship, however, in democratic nations, such as Canada, these extreme measures do not need to be taken.

In Canada, censorship does occur, but not to the same extent it does in countries such as China, Libya and Cuba. Democratic nations tend to practice a form of censorship where human freedoms of opinion and expression are not violated. It may seem as though action may not need to be taken, however, there are many organizations which fight for the censoring of media. They believe that youth need to be protected from loss of innocence and therefore certain messages that violate this need to be removed from society. These organization's views are then opposed by the views of groups against censorship. They believe in freedom of expression and that censorship violates this right. There is a great conflict between these two views, which may demonstrate that regardless of whether or not censorship exists, people will instinctively choose, through a voluntary and conscious decision-making process, not to voice their opinions about certain topics or discuss certain events. By not choosing to voice opinions and knowledge, that person is censoring information from society. Censorship is a larger version of this process of withholding information. Because it is impossible to eliminate censoring people's personal opinions, is it possible to eliminate censorship from society (Thomas, 2001)?

All the solutions to censorship are balanced between both positive and negative factors. "[When] people [are] exposed to information which they find offensive or frightening [it is] bad, but surely withholding information from people is a form of deception, which is equally as bad" (Thomas, 2011, pg. 42). As long as it does not violate human rights and freedoms, the issue of censorship becomes a "no-win situation" (Hennop, 2009). Both the positive and negatives are equally balanced and therefore one

solution is no better than another. Perhaps then, the ideal solution to censorship is that it never be resolved. “Might this ensure that the arguments on both sides are constantly bring put forward, so that there is no chance of either viewpoint disappearing from society” (Thomas, 2001, pg. 42)?

Conclusion

Political censorship is a complex world issue that affects everybody in the world to varying degrees. Censorship has always existed and will always play an active role in society. From ancient times to today, censorship plays a key role in forming the societies in countries. Many people, especially journalists, have been imprisoned for their attempts to access information that the government forbids, including censorship expert, Liu Xiaobo. In the case of political censorship, the government has control over the people, who have no way of even knowing their government is controlling them. Censorship plays a role in the religious world, and it could be said that censorship is the reason why different religious groups do not tolerate each other. In China, Libya and Cuba, the government actively censors all information coming into the country in all media forms, including newspapers, television, literature, art and the internet. International organizations such as Reporters Without Borders, Amnesty International and Article 19 have attempted to pressure governments into abolishing censorship. Censorship even exists in democratic nations, such as Canada, where the government subtly alters the information that its citizens receive. There are many solutions to the issue of censorship, however they all have equally weighed positives and negatives, and therefore, as long as human rights are not violated, no action is the best way to solve the problem. It is important, however, for the awareness of censorship to be spread so no greater oppression of people occurs. On behalf of those who do not have the right of practicing freedom, it is the duty of those who often take their freedom for granted to become informed and to inform others on the world issue of censorship.

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1. Timeline of Censorship

Appendices

443 BC: Rome
The title 'Censor' was used

399 BC: Greece
Death of Socrates

380 BC: Greece
Plato published *The Republic*

213 BC: China
Qin Shi Huang book burning

325 AD
Nicene Creed was written

1559:
Index Liborum Prohibitorium was issued by Roman Catholic Church

1563:
Charles IX of France decreed no book could be written without the King's permission

1700's:
End of government led censorship in the western world

1766:
Sweden is the first country to abolish censorship

1914:
WWI broke out and government censoring increased

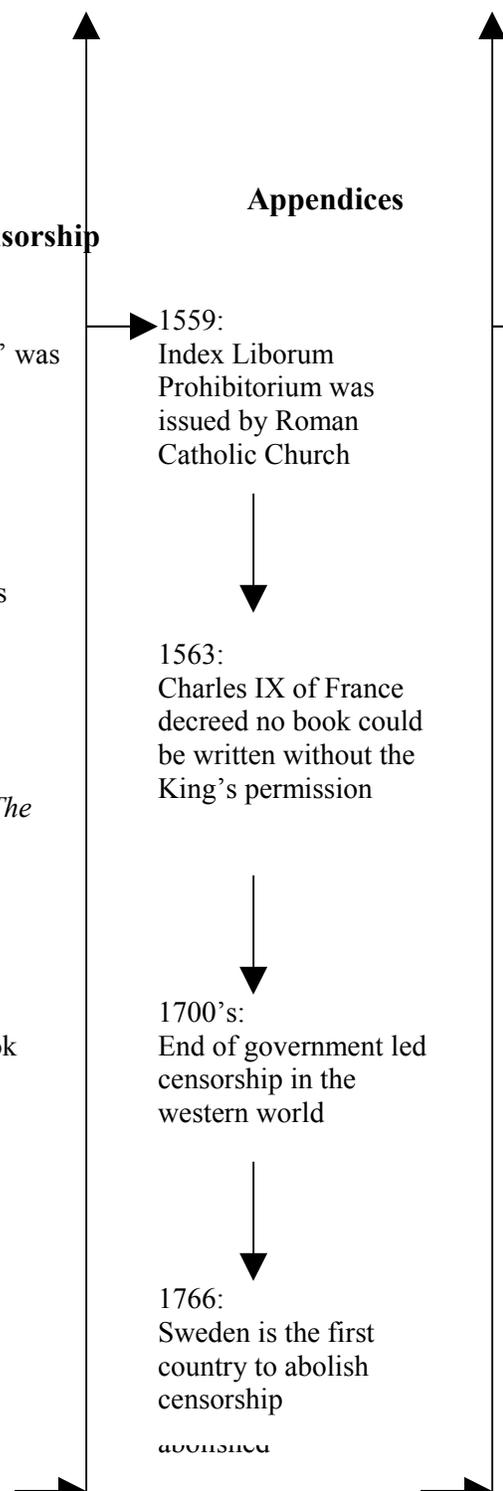
1917-1980:
Soviet Union under great censorship

1933-1945:
Nazi Germany was under strict government censorship

1933:
Nazi book burning

1940:
WWII broke out and government censoring increased

Apartheid regime in South Africa brought extreme censorship



↓
1450:
Printing Press is
invented

↓
1542:
Catholic Church
decreed that no books
could be written
without church
permission

↓
1790:
USA wrote First
Amendment

Today:
Many countries (especially
those under a socialist rule
like China and Cuba, and
those under military tensions
such as Libya) censor all
forms of media in the country

2. China's Censorship Regulations

Legislation	Parties Covered	Requirements
Measures for the Administration of Internet Information Services	Anyone providing information to the public through the Internet.	Commercial Internet Information Services must receive a license from, and Non-Commercial Internet Information Services must register with, their local telecommunications regulatory authority.
Interim Provisions on the Administration of Internet Publishing	Anyone engaged in publishing works on the Internet for access by the public.	No unit or individual may engage in Internet publishing activities without government permission.
Interim Provisions on the Administration of Internet Websites Engaged in the News Posting Operations	Anyone posting news articles on the Internet.	Any website which intends to post news articles on the Internet must first receive a permit from the government.
Measures on the Administration of Broadcasting Audio/Visual Programs over the Internet or Other Information Networks	Anyone selling or distributing audio-visual materials over the Internet.	No one may operate an Internet broadcast business for news-related audio/visual programs without permission from the State Council Information Office.
Provisions on the Administration of Internet Electronic Bulletin Board Services	Anyone operating an Internet bulletin board system, white board, Internet forum, chat room, message board or other interactive medium.	Anyone wishing to operate an electronic BBS must be either licensed or registered (depending on whether the operation is commercial or non-commercial).
Regulations on the	Anyone engaging in printing	Printers may not print publications unless they are

Administration of Printing Enterprises	publications.	published by a government authorized work unit.
Regulations on the Administration of Television Dramas	Anyone producing or broadcasting a television drama.	All television dramas must be examined and granted a "Television Program Distribution License" by a Television Program Examination Organ established by a broadcast television executive department at the provincial level or higher.