

# Free Speech in Canada: Bye-Bye



by Lee Duigon

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British and Scottish prime ministers have a shelf life measured in months, these days. Here today, gone tomorrow. It'll pose quite a challenge, someday, to schoolkids trying to learn their history.

But across the water, in Canada, where they have basically the same form of government as staggers on in the Mother Country, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been in office—I don't know anymore. For five years? Ten? It seems longer, but he's only been P.M. since 2015 (I looked it up).

It's bizarre that he's still there. You'd have thought his COVID capers would've gotten him booted to the sidewalk toot-sweet. And yet he's still there.

His latest project is the Online Harms Bill C-63 ([Canada introduces blood curdling new thought police law that even Stalin would blush](#)). It's a beauty!

How would you like to be arrested, tried, and punished for something you said or did that was not against the law at that time—say twenty years ago. “We've got you, sucker! In 2004 you wrote a blog post which we now, in 2024, define as hate speech!”

Here in America this would be called an *ex post facto* law—a law that reaches back into the past to hammer someone for

something that was not against the law when he said or did it.

Our Constitution (God bless our country's founders) forbids the government from passing ex post facto laws: they can't change the rules in the middle of the game. Sorry, not allowed.

And as if hunting you down in the past weren't bad enough, Bill C-63 also lets the government put you under house arrest if they think you *might* say or do something they don't like sometime *in the future*. Welcome to Pre-Crime!

What are these "online harms"? They might be defined as "robust free speech." We are not talking about some absurd "freedom" to say only nice things that everyone agrees with—but that seems to be Canada's version of it. You can also, always, say things that the government agrees with: that's the Soviet Union/Communist China model. Heck, if you're feeling adventurous, you can even write and publish your government-endorsed opinion: but boy are you cooked if there's a change in government and suddenly the Party does *not* approve of things it once endorsed, ten years ago.

"Online harms" equals "hate speech" equals a trip to the gulag for you, for saying Wrong Things. For all practical purposes, Bill C-63 would effectively erase free speech in Canada. Even just shutting up and not saying anything at all won't keep you safe—not if Trudeau & Co. decides, perhaps by clairvoyance, that you might say Something Bad someday.

And so they've got you, coming and going—past, present, and future. They don't even have to define "hate": they know it when they see it. That your guilt might come as a total surprise to you is not something that will trouble them.

That slurping noise you hear in the background is the Biden administration consumed with envy.

Damn that Constitution! We want our own ex post facto laws!

I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on my blog, <http://www.leeduigon.com/> . Click the link and drop in for a visit (unless you're in Canada and you're afraid of being accused of "hate"). My articles can also be found at [www.chalcedon.edu/](http://www.chalcedon.edu/) .

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E-Mail Lee Duigon: [leeduigon@verizon.net](mailto:leeduigon@verizon.net)