

# Does Ideological Dystopia Await Us?

Imagine a world in which the great majority has no respect for facts or for truth of any sort, where ideological convictions rule almost everyone's understanding of the world, where truth has become an endangered rhetorical species on the brink of extinction.

In such a world, facts would still exist, of course, and true propositions would still stand in stark contradiction of false ones, but hardly anyone would care.

The scientists would have been co-opted to support the prevailing ideological narrative, along with the news media, the schools and universities, and all the organs of respectable opinion. People who dissented from the orthodoxy, especially on such sensitive matters as global warming, abortion rights, and discrimination against various state-defined victim classes, would be convicted of hate crimes or some such thing and packed off to prison.

Too dystopian for your taste? No matter. This future is, I think, one with a substantial likelihood of coming to pass.

Some of us thought that the internet would save us from the lies and self-interested distortions of rulers and their running dogs. But experience has shown us that the internet is a powerful engine for transmitting mistakes, innocent and not-so-innocent, as well as outright lies and genuinely fake news. So cyberspace has become not a forum for sorting out truth and falsehood, but a battleground of ceaseless ideological combat where truth seekers, if any remain, stand little chance of sorting out true reports from false reports and propositions.

Some continue to maintain that truth will ultimately triumph because it conforms to reality, whereas falsehood does not. But I'm not convinced. Masses of people have often plunged over the cliff for the sake of ideological commitments, and they may well do so again, all the advanced technology notwithstanding. Indeed, that technology may be the high-speed train that takes us there.