

When Freedom of Speech Is No Longer Free

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

January 25, 2024

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The Berlin state prosecutor's office is pursuing criminal charges against Hopkins for "disseminating propaganda, the content of which is intended to further the aims of a former National Socialist organization"
- › The propaganda referenced is two tweets from 2022, which include an image with a mask carrying a faint image of a swastika
- › In Germany, national laws prohibit Nazi insignia but expression aimed at "countering anti-constitutional activities," as was Hopkins' intent, is supposed to be protected
- › Hopkins speaks openly about the pathologized totalitarianism that is subtly taking over society; during the COVID-19 pandemic, he criticized lockdowns and COVID-19 shot mandates, as well as the censorship of dissenters
- › When citizens are punished for criticizing government policies, we should all worry that those in control are moving toward taking away something that's essential in a free society – dissent

C.J. Hopkins, an award-winning American playwright, novelist and political satirist based in Berlin, speaks openly about the pathologized totalitarianism that is subtly taking over society. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he criticized lockdowns and COVID-19 shot mandates, as well as the censorship of dissenters.

During the early phases of the pandemic, Hopkins' work was heavily censored by YouTube and Facebook, which went so far as to even suspend or restrict the accounts of

people who tried to share Hopkins' posts.¹ Now, he's facing another challenge to freedom and autonomy, as he's facing criminal charges for a satirical tweet.

German Government Prosecutes Hopkins Over Tweets

The Berlin State Prosecutor's office is pursuing criminal charges against Hopkins for "disseminating propaganda, the content of which is intended to further the aims of a former National Socialist organization."² The propaganda referenced is two tweets from 2022, which include an image with a mask carrying a faint image of a swastika. Writing in *The Atlantic*, journalist James Kirchick notes:³

"To argue that Hopkins was advancing National Socialism by imposing a swastika over a face mask is absurd. He was clearly doing the opposite: invoking a symbol of what is widely regarded as the most evil and destructive ideology in human history to express his feelings – however histrionic – for state-promulgated public-health policies he dislikes.

Hopkins was 'comparing the evolution of one system which I think is totalitarian in nature to the evolution of another totalitarian system that we all know,' he told me, not glorifying fascism."

But in Germany, national laws prohibit Nazi insignia, which is why Amazon banned the sale of Hopkins' book, "The Rise of the New Normal Reich," which also features the swastika-emblazoned mask, in Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. If Hopkins is found guilty, he could be fined about \$4,000 or sent to jail for 60 days. Kirchick writes:⁴

"Hopkins sees his ordeal as part of a broader 'criminalization of dissent' sweeping the Western world. 'Basically anyone prominent, halfway prominent, and even little fish like me, if you get on the radar of challenging the official ideology, the program of the day, they're making examples of people is basically what it is,' he told me.

Against his lawyer's advice, Hopkins republished the tweets in his Substack newsletter – sparking, as he reported, a second criminal investigation, this time

for minimizing Nazi crimes."

Are Authoritarian Measures Accelerating in Germany?

In "The Rise of the New Normal Reich," Hopkins details how measures of totalitarian control are being normalized around the world. Depending on where you live, you may or may not be experiencing these things firsthand.

"If you're aware of how people are behaving in different countries or in different states in the U.S., what have you, there are many places where it is becoming just completely normal to walk around with a medical-looking mask on, and people don't think twice about segregating and banning people and imposing vaccine mandates and what have you.

All of these measures that were rolled out during the shock and awe phase are just subtly becoming a part of daily life," he explained during our [2022 interview](#).⁵

"We're being conditioned to walk around in our lives, terrified of some pathogen that is going to come and attack us, or some health threat. It's really, it's a wholesale revision of reality, and it's frightening."⁶ At the heart of his argument is that the global-capitalist ruling establishment, which Hopkins refers to as GloboCap, is using fear as a strategy for control over the population.

In Germany, Hopkins says fascist measures have been quickly accelerating. "Seriously, assuming you don't live here, you likely have no idea how fascistic German society and culture has become," he wrote in November 2023, "and how quickly the transformation has occurred. It began in the Spring of 2020 with the introduction of the 'Corona measures,' and has been intensifying ever since."⁷

"The shock and awe phase that we went through in '20 and '21 is over," Hopkins said in our interview. "You can't sustain shock and awe like that forever. What we're experiencing now is really the normalization of the pathologization of society."⁸ Even the charges against Hopkins seem baseless, as, even in Germany, Nazi imagery is allowed

for certain purposes, including countering anti-constitutional activities. Kirchick continues:⁹

"So far, although he retains U.S. citizenship, Hopkins's case has attracted little attention in the American media. But his predicament offers an important opportunity to examine how we think about the most loaded political symbols – and to cherish the exceptional free-speech culture ensured by America's First Amendment.

On its face, the charge against Hopkins seems specious. Although the display of Nazi imagery is generally prohibited in Germany, the country's criminal code allows the display of such symbols for 'civic education, countering anti-constitutional activities, art and science, research and education, the coverage of historic and current events, or similar purposes.'"

The Goal Is to Silence Dissenters and Control Society

In the past, totalitarian regimes used drastic and obvious shows of control, putting people into concentration camps. Today's ruling establishment is far more subtle in its tactics, but possibly even more dangerous. Hopkins says:¹⁰

"I don't think they can put us in camps ... they don't have to. If you look at what's happening to the economy, if you look at what's happening to our ability to travel, to our ability to communicate, I mean, the censorship that is going on, I think the technologies that are being deployed in the service of this new form of totalitarianism are much more subtle and, in many ways, much more effective.

I've made the point, online, I made the point in the book again, I don't think global capitalism can go openly totalitarianism in the same way that systems in the 20th century did. I think it's suicidal for global capitalism. It needs to maintain the simulation of freedom, the simulation of democracy, and so the technologies that are being deployed are much more subtle."

While people may not end up in prison-like camps, the end-game may be no less restrictive. Technologies like the upcoming central bank digital currency (CBDC), for instance, could easily lead to tight control over your finances, limiting your ability to purchase food or pay rent if your access to your funds is turned off. In the case of Germany prosecuting Hopkins, he says:¹¹

"Basically, the government no longer needs to justify its crackdown on dissidents with plausible legal (or even just rational) arguments.

They know that the majority of the German public supports the 'New Normal' Gleichschaltung campaign, or at least will look the other way as they carry out police raids on the homes and offices of 'Islamic influencers,' ban demonstrations (exactly as they did in 2020), censor and criminalize dissent, imprison political dissidents based on blatantly false criminal charges, and otherwise make a mockery of the German constitution."

In explaining why he republished the swastika-mask images again, knowing it would likely lead to additional charges against him, Hopkins wrote:¹²

"No, I am not a glutton for punishment. I'm not at all enjoying my introduction to the so-called 'German legal system.' ... The goal of ... prosecutions like mine (and those of many other dissidents currently) is (a) to punish us for speaking out against 'New Normal' totalitarianism by making our lives as miserable as possible, (b) to make examples of us to discourage others from speaking out, and (c) to intimidate us into shutting ... up.

Totalitarians, fascists, and other power freaks are essentially just glorified schoolyard bullies. They may cloak themselves in the mantle of the law, but their modus operandi is brute force ... their message is simple: 'either do what we say, or we will hurt you.' ... The point is, never give in to a bully. Never reify a bully's 'authority.' If you do, you will find yourself sucked into the bully's sadistic, nihilistic 'reality.'

You will be playing by the bully's rules. And that is all 'reality' actually is, a set of rules we agree to play by, or, in this case, do not agree to play by.

So, getting back to my criminal case, and the Berlin State Prosecutor's latest attempt to bully me into shutting up and demonstrating my 'respect' for the 'authority' and 'power' of the Berlin State Prosecutor ... I do not respond well to threats. I do not take orders from totalitarians and fascists, or any other type of authoritarians or bullies.

So that is why I have republished those Tweets, and why I will continue to republish those Tweets every time the German authorities threaten me with additional criminal charges for refusing to obey their 'authority.'"

Dissent Is Essential in a Free Society

When citizens are punished for criticizing government policies, we should all worry that totalitarianism is near. Using clever tactics like censorship and attacks on people's reputations and credibility, those in control are moving toward taking away something that's essential in a free society – dissent. Kirchick explains why, regardless of how you feel about Hopkins' message, his prosecution should trouble us all:¹³

"Some might argue that, as a permanent resident of Germany, Hopkins ought to have known what he was getting into by conjuring the country's ultimate taboo, and that his posturing as a sort of latter-day Martin Niemöller, the anti-Nazi theologian, would not endear him to his hosts.

'Of course; it's Germany,' he said, when I put this to him. 'Of course they're hyper about anything that is promoting the Nazis and, frankly, God bless them. That's the way I feel about it; I've always supported it and understood it even though I'm a free-speech absolutist.'

One can call his method of argument likening anti-COVID policies to Nazism misguided, intellectually lazy, or tasteless – I personally find it to be all three – but endorsing 'the aims' of National Socialism it is not. Which strongly suggests

that Hopkins is being punished not for promoting an outlawed political movement from the German past but for criticizing a government of the German present.

Such a conclusion is only reinforced by the second proceeding against Hopkins for the tweet ridiculing one particularly powerful member of that government, the country's health minister.

That a citizen could be tried on these grounds in a Western democracy should trouble us, and Germany's unique experience as the birthplace of Nazism offers no justification. On the contrary, precisely because that fraught history gives Germany ample reason for vigilance about support for fascism, it must be scrupulous in how it regulates expressions of said support.

According to the country's criminal code, expression aimed at 'countering anti-constitutional activities,' as Hopkins's swastika-branded mask clearly was, is protected. A government that prosecutes a writer for calling its policies fascist unwittingly validates the criticism. Even if some find Hopkins's views and the way he expresses them offensive, that does not lessen the danger that his prosecution represents."

Sources and References

- ¹ [TK News by Matt Taibbi May 13, 2021](#)
- ² [Substack, CJ Hopkins July 3, 2023](#)
- ^{3, 4, 9, 13} [The Atlantic January 3, 2024 \(Archived\)](#)
- ^{5, 6, 8} [Dr. Mercola interviews C.J. Hopkins, interview transcript, page 3](#)
- ^{7, 11} [Substack, CJ Hopkins November 25, 2023](#)
- ¹⁰ [Dr. Mercola interviews C.J. Hopkins, interview transcript, pages 11, 12](#)
- ¹² [Substack, CJ Hopkins September 10, 2023](#)