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Whistleblower's exposé of the cult of Mark Zuckerberg reveals peril of power-crazy tech bros | by John Naughton OPINION March 2025

There's nothing more satisfying than watching a corporate giant make a stupid mistake. The behemoth in question is Meta, and when *Careless People*, a whistleblowing book by a former senior employee, Sarah Wynn-Williams, came out last week, its panic-stricken lawyers immediately tried to have it suppressed by the Emergency International Arbitral Tribunal. This strange institution enjoined Wynn-Williams "from making orally, in writing, or otherwise any 'disparaging, critical or otherwise detrimental comments to any person or entity concerning [Meta], its officers, directors, or employees'".

The company has now ensured that Wynn-Williams's devastating critique of it will become a world bestseller.

Among the many delicious ironies here is that Mark Zuckerberg, Meta's Supreme Ruler, who has recently become a loud advocate of "free speech" – or at least free speech as understood by the Trump regime – is trying to suppress Wynn-Williams's troublesome speech. She's also a canny operator. Meta clearly had no idea this was coming. She adapted the playbook used by Frances Haugen, an earlier Facebook whistleblower, lodging a complaint in advance of publication and briefing the *Washington Post* on its contents; recording a compelling two weeks before publication; and adding a real coup de grace – an appearance on Steve Bannon's hilarious podcast. What comes across most forcibly from Wynn-Williams's account is the extent to which Meta is really just a corporate extension of its Supreme Ruler's personality, reminiscent of what Microsoft was like when Bill Gates ran it. Zuck's special shareholding means that he has complete control of the company.

The result is that Meta, as a corporation, always follows Zuck's obsessions. For many years, that was about ensuring exponential growth in user numbers. Zuck viewed the world much as board-game fanatics view games of conquest. And what really infuriated him was that there was one huge area of the world – China – that was closed to him. In the 78-page document that Wynn-Williams filed to the SEC¹ (and which the *Washington Post* claims to have seen), it was alleged that Meta had for years been making numerous efforts to get into the biggest market in the world.

These efforts included: developing a censorship system for China in 2015 that would allow a "chief editor" to decide what content to remove, and the ability to shut down the entire site during "social unrest"; building a system for China with automatic detection of restricted terms. These efforts only stopped after it became clear that both Donald Trump and Joe Biden viewed China as a strategic threat to the US.

In her time at Meta, Wynn-Williams observed many of these activities at close range. In that sense, perhaps the most useful thing about her whistleblowing is that it provides an intimate picture of what a major tech company is really like. Many US companies that have cosied up to Trump, which means that their interests are now intertwined with those of the American state. (509 words)

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¹ The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) oversees securities exchanges, securities brokers and dealers, investment advisors, and mutual funds in an effort to promote fair dealing and to prevent fraud.