

More than two thousand sign petition to stop Google censorship

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22 August 2017

On August 14, the *World Socialist Web Site* launched a petition against the manipulation of search results by tech giant Google, which is aimed at blocking access to socialist, anti-war, and progressive websites, with the WSWS the principal target. After one week, more than 2,000 people from at least 70 countries have signed the petition, demanding that Google's top executives stop their "attack on free speech, independent thought, and the basic right to uncensored information."

The number of signatures jumped over the weekend, after WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange tweeted a link to the WSWS's exposure of Google's actions.

Google's censorship program, which was announced on April 25 under the pretext of countering "fake news," has been thoroughly exposed by the WSWS in an ongoing series of articles. Since April, thirteen leading oppositional websites have been buried or banished altogether from Google search results, causing a massive drop in their readership. The WSWS itself was the hardest hit, losing more than two-thirds of its traffic that originated from Google searches. The top 45 search terms that formerly led readers to the WSWS are now blocked by Google.

Despite this attack, readership of the WSWS remains high, because a large percentage of readers access the site directly, rather than as a result of a search. Also, in response to the material exposing the censorship, there has been a significant effort by many readers to distribute WSWS articles.

In their messages of support, the thousands signing the petition articulate deeply felt hostility to corporate-state censorship, an appreciation of the critical role played by the WSWS, and an awareness of the immense danger posed by Google's actions.

Kate from Australia writes, "I oppose in the strongest terms Google censorship of the WSWS. The analysis

provided on the WSWS is authoritative and it is the only website that tells the working class the truth. Something that is sorely needed in a world where the future of humanity is threatened, on a daily basis, by the threat of nuclear war. The blocking of the WSWS is a deliberate attack on freedom of speech and free thought, and I demand that Google stop this attack on the most basic of democratic rights, the right to uncensored information."

Google spends more lobbying the White House than any other company, and a virtual revolving door exists between the two institutions, as documented by the Intercept in a report last year. Google lobbyists held weekly meetings at the White House during the Obama presidency.

Many signatories expressed especial concern over this incestuous relationship. Geoffrey, from Quebec wrote that, "Google is in cahoots with the US power elite and preserves its quasi-monopoly from government regulation by doing the deep state's dirty work, i.e., suppressing alternative media and directing users" toward the mainstream media.

Another comment pointing to the danger of private, monopolistic control over the means of communication came from Denis in New Zealand: "Google is a private company, although it has taken over some of the characteristics of a public utility. The extent of its market domination gives it immense power. Now its power is being exercised to limit people's freedom of expression. The *World Socialist Web Site* is an important source for analysis of political, social and economic events that is not constrained by the profit-making and political domination motives of the elite classes. It is a place to go to see a perspective which is prepared to follow the evidence where it leads and to pay attention to the interests of ordinary people."

John from Australia points out that Google is operating in contravention of international law. He writes, “Talk is cheap but the United Nations says ‘everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice’ [from Article 19 of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights]. The time has come to defend the not just the *World Socialist Web site*, but all antiwar web sites that are under attack.”

Still others referred to the anti-enlightenment character of Google’s suppression of information. Vesselyn, from Michigan, writes, “This is an attempt to manipulate society by manipulating what perspectives people are aware of and what opinions people are allowed to have shared with them. People are not sheep. Human society requires that people learn from each other using the tools available to them. Censoring the intellectual work of some people is a violation of the principles gained during the Enlightenment.”

Some signers demonstrated a clear Marxist, class-based appreciation for the issue of censorship, and the role of the WSWS, like Pedro from São Paulo, who writes, “The *World Socialist Web Site* is one of the few Internet resources for class-conscious, genuinely progressive commentary and analysis. For the capitalist crisis to be overcome, it’s imperative for the working class to have unrestrained access to this very kind of courageous political and theoretical insight into world affairs. Theory and Marxist analysis is an indispensable tool for social change! Stop Google’s censorship of the WSWS and other progressive websites!”

And Cesar from Peru: “The international working class has the right to reach websites that contribute to their political development. I am not surprised that the WSWS has been targeted by a world capitalist corporation which controls information, since the WSWS is the only website that offers a clear international, socialist perspective to working people across the world. Keep up the fight!”

Adrian from Australia pointed to the importance of spreading awareness about the WSWS’s campaign against censorship: “The WSWS has always stood in the forefront in the defence of objective and historical

truth. For Google to censor it under the rubric of ‘false news’ is the pinnacle of hypocrisy. Every Google user on earth must hear about this.”

Indeed, the WSWS is fighting to make sure that every worker hears about Google’s attempt to silence political speech and curb the development of a class conscious movement against inequality and war. We urge our readers to join this fight! Sign the petition now, and share it with your friends and coworkers. Donate funds to the WSWS. Share WSWS articles and videos on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Help expose and circumvent the blacklisting of the WSWS and other sites!



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact