

World Socialist Web Site readers in Britain oppose Google's censorship campaign

Our reporter
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More than 350 people in the UK have signed the World Socialist Web Site's petition to Google demanding that the corporation stop its internet censorship and end their blacklist of the WSWs.

WSWS reporters in Britain contacted some of those who signed the petition against Google's actions. They asked the signatories to comment on Google's activities and on the WSWs campaign to oppose its censorship.

Paul Morrison is a plumber in Herefordshire and has been reading the WSWs for a number of years. He said, "What Google are doing is typical of governments. I have been reading the WSWs for a few years and it's very good to see the realistic side of government actions. People like Google don't want you to see this. They are trying to block anyone trying to do any good in the world. In a nutshell, it's typical of how the corporations behave to the detriment of humanity.

"The pace at which people like Google can censor mass opinion is frightening and contradicts their initial mantra. Governments are paying them, that side of capitalism is funding their policies. It's all about greed and money.

"And there is nothing more refreshing than honesty, which is why I read the WSWs."

Stephen Rochford is a community law worker in Liverpool. He said, "We know that capitalism and capitalists are absolutely petrified of a proper socialist explanation and prescription for how this rotten world has come about and what to do about it. They fear such a narrative being propagated like death itself. There is a dumbing down of TV debate. Even in these technological times, there does not seem to be any platform where a penetrating socialist critique is put across.

"They talk about informed consent, how members of the public can access complaints procedures about

products and so on. What about complaints about the way we are governed? I have never known society to be suffering from so much anxiety. The old clichés are true—divide and rule, it takes place in the same workplace, even in the small organisations. Doctors can't cope, everyone can't cope anymore.

"I don't see how you had any choice about challenging Google. We are supposed to live in the free western world, what about free speech, what about access to information? The question is why this has happened, and why would Google do it. The internet is the biggest double-edged sword, because of what it can achieve, but also because of how insidious and sophisticated techniques can be used to keep out a penetrating analysis."

Alistair Cairns, who is disabled, came across the WSWs via Twitter and said, "I think any sort of organisation that has a practice or procedure that encourages censorship should be stamped on, especially when they are a global company like Google. Someone has got to tell them they are using the wrong ethics.

"The WSWs campaign is very good, I'll keep doing my bit, I hope everyone else does. I send articles to people I know. People with money are getting all the help they want from Google. Cambridge Analytical had a team from Google and one from Facebook in to help them during the US election, top professionals came in to help them."

Aurimas Radinskis, from Lincolnshire, is a warehouse worker. He said, "I found the WSWs about five years ago. I have been following it now and then since then. I think there has always been censorship, but it is now becoming well-planned propaganda. You ask for the news in Google and you think the first thing that pops up is news. It is not, it's propaganda.

“I think it is not surprising the WSWS has been targeted. If you put socialism into any context you are going to get a position right away. You have nearly 100 years of movements against socialism, the First World War, the Second World War, all the propaganda against the Soviet Union. People have no idea what socialism is. Nobody teaches you that.”

John Layton is a retired English teacher in Essex. He said, “I agree with everything I have read on the WSWS about what Google are doing. The new algorithm for cutting out fake news is deliberate censorship. I have been following the WSWS for years.”

Trevor Knowles, a nurse in Middleborough who came across the WSWS petition via Facebook, said he had not seen the WSWS before, but found it corresponded “almost exactly” with his thinking.

“Any censorship of the internet is against freedom of speech and human rights. People need to be able to express themselves, any limits should be set by the general public not by governments telling us what we can and can’t think.

“We have too many right-wing governments in the world to have a left-wing web site telling the truth. They don’t want to upset the corporations, the arms industry and politics.”

David Crowley is a retired doctor from Moray, who has been following the WSWS and a number of other sites in order to receive an alternative standpoint to that of the corporate media. He said, “The internet is the last bastion of free speech which is being eroded by the global corporation. We are seeing the use of the word ‘fake news’ for censorship. I have never seen fake news. They called it fake news when Syria was bombed. Now sharing stories against war is not allowed.

“I am really worried about completely undemocratic manipulation of information. Google and Facebook are developing artificial intelligence tools to monitor individual conversations.”

Robert Carr is a lawyer working in London and said, “This is a slow creep to authoritarianism. When anyone stops free access to anything and starts manipulating information we are slipping into what George Orwell warned about. You should be able to get a range of opinions.

“Algorithms are capable of being influenced. It is not

as if free information goes in one end and comes fairly on the other side. Within that algorithm, you can do anything you want to the information that comes in. Google is one of the most important sources of information. When you read the mainstream media, you know you are reading drivel so most people find their own news sources on the internet.

“Propaganda is the lifeblood of war. If you can propagandise and affect what people are thinking, then you are half way to bombing whoever you like. If you can talk in the mainstream about immigrants, benefit claimants and demonise them, you can implement whatever you want against them.

“I’m also concerned about net neutrality—the ISPs [Internet Service Providers] are being bought up by the big media. This challenges the internet as the place to go if you want a more independent view on things. When I turn on the TV and watch the BBC, ITV or any newspaper, I know you have to read them word by word and understand who is writing. I think the WSWS campaign is essential. Socialism is going through resurgence and the establishment can’t have ordinary people deciding on their future.”



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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