

YouTube censors video opposing far-right Alternative for Germany

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One week ago, YouTube blocked a video opposing the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

The anti-AfD video by the left-wing, socialist channel “Political Analysis” remained blocked for a number of hours. The video shows how right-wing groups exploited the murder of a young German girl by an Afghani youth at the end of last year to whip up a pogrom-type sentiment against refugees. The video ends with the words: “For over two years you have been agitating against refugees day and night, as if there was nothing else going on. This is as miserable as the political consensus today...”

The video was evidently censored following appeals by far-right circles to YouTube. In a message, the editor of the channel, Andreas Niess, told his audience: “YouTube sent me its stupid STANDARD message, so much for community rules. They did not even check the video, but blocked it. Just because the right-wing trolls have fun reporting my videos in response to their content. YouTube has become an anti-social platform where racists and fascists spread their trash every day.”

Niess told the *World Socialist Web Site* that right-wing activists had declared they would report his videos to YouTube shortly before the suspension came into effect. Niess could not confirm that the recently passed Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG) was used to censor his video. “But it could be that it played a role.” Typically, there was “no information” about who or what was behind the decision. The blocking of the video was justified under the rubric “bullying and stalking” and originally was due “to run for three months.”

The fact that YouTube has censored a channel that sharply attacks the witch-hunts of right-wing extremists confirms the warnings made by the *World Socialist Web Site*. Under the pretext of combating “fake news,”

“hate speech” or “bullying and stalking” on the Internet, it is mainly leftist and socialist anti-war websites which are being suppressed. Since the end of April, Google (the parent company of YouTube), in close coordination with German government circles, has been censoring leftist and progressive websites, including the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The ruling class is pursuing the same goal with its NetzDG law, which was drafted by Minister of Justice Heiko Maas (Social Democratic Party, SPD) and passed by the grand coalition government. It has been in force since January 1. In recent weeks, left-wing sites and material have been repeatedly censored, including Twitter messages from the satirical magazine *Titanic* directed against the AfD, and anti-fascist posts by the well-known Berlin street artist Barbara.

“Political Analysis” is a YouTube channel with over 7,000 subscribers that campaigns against war and in favour of socialism. The current logo of the channel is a graphic with the inscription “No war on Syria.” The top of the page shows the three last presidents of the United States, George Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, each labeled with the words “war” and “world war.” It also states: “There is a worldwide crisis of capitalism. Cause: Capitalism. Solution: Socialist Revolution. Duty: Independent working class. Duty: Fall of capitalism.”

“Political Analysis” regularly posts articles from the *World Socialist Web Site* and provides information about its activities. In recent days, there have been links to WSWs articles on the growing strike wave in Germany and the appeal by the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) “For the expansion of the strike and new elections.” In mid-January, Andreas Niess also promoted the webinar on internet censorship, featuring journalist Chris Hedges and WSWs Chairman David

North.

Against a background of growing popular resistance to war and austerity, the ruling class is desperately trying to suppress political views that reject the official political line of the government, military, and intelligence services. The next federal government has already announced it will intensify censorship of the internet.

The SPD and CDU/CSU expressly support the NetzDG in their draft program for a new edition of a grand coalition. The document describes the law as a “real and important step in combating hate crime and criminal social media.” It is already clear that the law will increasingly be used to censure left-wing and socialist content on the internet. The NetzDG falls under the jurisdiction of the legal committee of the Bundestag, which—with the support of all the parliamentary parties—is headed by a member of the AfD.

These dangerous developments underline the importance of the appeal by the WSWS for an international coalition against internet censorship. Opposition must be mobilised against the alliance of the political establishment, multibillion-dollar internet corporations and extreme right-wing circles that is determined to abolish the right to freedom of expression on the internet and erect a capitalist police state in the 21st century.

The WSWS calls on all socialist, anti-war, left-wing and progressive websites, organisations and activists to read the open letter from the WSWS International Editorial Board and support the coalition against internet censorship.



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