Stop online censorship: Restore the Twitter account of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US)!

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In an act of online political censorship aimed at silencing left-wing and socialist views, Twitter has suspended the account of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality in the US.

The IYSSE is the youth and student movement of the Socialist Equality Party and is affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS).

The IYSSE is an officially recognized campus group on dozens of university campuses in the US, the UK, France, Germany, Sri Lanka and Australia. At Berlin's Humboldt University, the IYSSE holds multiple seats in the student parliament.

At approximately 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday, members and supporters of the IYSSE noted that the Twitter account @IYSSE_US had been stripped of its profile and header image and the account timeline of tweets had been replaced by a message that says, "Account suspended: Twitter suspends accounts that violate the Twitter Rules." A link to the Twitter Rules page was included as part of the notice.

When the IYSSE contacted Twitter to demand the reinstatement of the account, the company replied, "Your account was suspended because it appears you may be managing a number of Twitter accounts."

The IYSSE responded:

> The International Youth and Students for Social Equality is a campus political organization officially recognized on dozens of campuses in the United States and internationally. Each different campus chapter manages its own Twitter account. Because these chapters are affiliated with the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS), numerous chapters may post the same or similar articles from the WSWS, as is their right.
>
> This type of activity is explicitly condoned in Twitter's guidelines of September 2020. The guidance states that "organizations with related but separate chapters or branches, such as a business with multiple locations," is "not a violation of this policy."
>
> We request (1) a more thorough, detailed showing of any alleged violations, and (2) that the suspension of this group (@IYSSE_US) be lifted immediately.

Twitter gave no additional information about the suspension, and the IYSSE's account remains suspended.

Taking place one week after the 2020 US elections, the shutdown of the IYSSE (US) account has occurred amidst increasing online censorship of left-wing and socialist publications, combined with an aggressive attack on free speech by all of the social media tech giants before, during and after the presidential elections.

Among the final posts on the IYSSE account late Tuesday were a retweet of a link to the WSWS article titled, "Why did some working class regions vote for Trump?" There was also a retweet of a post by SEP National Secretary and 2020 US presidential candidate Joseph Kishore on the significance of the coronavirus vaccine announcement by Pfizer and the importance of independent political action by the working class

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against the pandemic and the murderous ruling class response to it.

Twitter is engaging in political censorship to silence a leading voice of socialist politics among young people and students around the world. The IYSSE (US) has been—through its publishing activity and engagement on Twitter and other popular social media platforms—the most consistent voice for socialism and against racism, right-wing nationalism, the threat of fascism and for the international unity of the working class across national boundaries in a common struggle against the capitalist system.

Responding to the Twitter suspension, IYSSE National Secretary Genevieve Leigh said, “There is no legitimate reason for the suspension of the IYSSE Twitter account. We know that particularly over the past two years there has been a concerted effort on the part of social media companies, at the behest of Washington, to censor left-wing, socialist, antiwar and progressive websites. These efforts have been well documented and opposed by the WSWS.

“This political censorship reflects the fear that a genuine socialist perspective, if allowed a fair hearing, will find a mass audience in the US and internationally. There is widespread popular opposition to these efforts to suppress freedom of speech and thought, especially among youth.”

The suspension of the IYSSE (US) Twitter account must be seen within the context of the longstanding and ongoing censorship measures by Google and the other social media platforms against the *World Socialist Web Site*. Google Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai admitted on the congressional record on October 28 that the search giant had been censoring the WSWS.

There have been several instances of Reddit moderators banning the WSWS from the approved whitelist of domain names and labeling content links from the WSWS as an “unacceptable source.” Meanwhile, as far back as August 2018, Facebook has removed the accounts of left-wing publishers, including deleting the accounts of *World Socialist Web Site* reporters on the basis of unsubstantiated claims of “inauthentic behavior.”

The suspension of the IYSSE (US) account by Twitter is the first time that one of the major social media platforms has moved to shut down a primary account of an organization connected with the ICFI and the WSWS.

We call on all readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* to demand that Twitter restore the account of the IYSSE (US), @IYSSE_US, by posting statements to @TwitterSupport.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

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