

Stop Facebook's censorship of the SGP's anti-war video!

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei
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On Saturday, Facebook deleted a popular anti-war video produced by the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) without providing any reason. The video, titled “No Third World War! Against Ukraine war, NATO aggression and German rearmament!” had been viewed over 20,000 times within a few days.

The SGP called on Facebook on Sunday to immediately reverse the deletion. “We are exercising our constitutional right to participate in the formation of political opinions with the video,” the party stated in its appeal, but the corporation did not give any response. The deletion can therefore only be seen as an act of political censorship directed against the SGP’s independent anti-war perspective. We call on all readers to oppose this censorship and use all their channels on social media and beyond to protest against it in the strongest possible terms.”

In the video, SGP Chair, Christoph Vandreier, and German WSWS Editor-in-Chief, Johannes Stern, unequivocally condemn the Russian government’s war. But they also explain how it was provoked by the wars conducted by the United States and its European allies over the past 30 years and the military encirclement of Russia by NATO.

They make it clear that a proxy war is being waged in Ukraine between NATO and Russia at the expense of the population, which threatens to end in a nuclear world war. The only way to prevent a catastrophe, Vandreier and Stern explain, is to unite Russian and Ukrainian workers as part of an international, socialist movement against war and its root: capitalism.

This analysis and perspective struck a nerve, and reached tens of thousands of people on Facebook in a short time. The video received over 150 likes, was shared 140 times, and commented on 120 times. It

expresses widespread opposition to NATO’s warmongering, which is suppressed in the official media, which instead provides a torrent of deafening war propaganda aimed at all-out war against Russia, and ultimately, China.

The weekend the video was deleted, US President Biden declared that regime change in Russia was a goal of American foreign policy and announced a decades-long state of war. Germany’s Chancellor Scholz made similar statements when he defended the tripling of the war budget on Sunday so that Germany would once again be able to wage war against Russia.

This insane drive towards a third world war is rejected by the vast majority. That is why the media have switched into war propaganda mode and will not allow discussion of even the most basic questions. The censorship that is now to be imposed is the desperate response to the fact that this propaganda is fooling fewer and fewer people and masses of workers are looking for an independent perspective against the war.

Censorship measures by governments in collaboration with the tech giants have been systematically increasing for years. In 2017, Google announced that it would favour “authoritative sources” in search results in the future. At the same time, socialist and anti-war websites, and in particular the *World Socialist Web Site*, were censored and banished from search results.

Facebook has hired more than 20,000 people to monitor posts on its platform and censor undesirable posts. Many of these employees have intelligence or law enforcement backgrounds and work closely with the US government. In Germany, the close cooperation of tech companies with the government has even been regulated by law through the Network Enforcement Act.

In the last year, Facebook has already tried twice to censor the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), of which the SGP is the German section. On January 22, Facebook blocked the accounts of prominent representatives of the ICFI and of local sections of the party in the US, and only restored them on 25 January after massive protest. A month later, Facebook prevented users from sharing the WSWS article “*Washington Post*’s ‘Wuhan lab’ conspiracy theory stands exposed.” Facebook’s reasoning was that the article was spreading misinformation. In May, the company was forced to admit the untenability of this statement and unblocked the article.

Facebook’s censorship is directly linked to the German government’s efforts to silence the SGP and criminalise any opposition to war. In 2018, the Interior Ministry had for the first time included the SGP in its annual secret service report as being “left-wing extremist” and defamed it as anti-constitutional. After the SGP filed a complaint against this, the ministry justified the surveillance of the party by the intelligence agencies on the grounds that simply “arguing for a democratic, egalitarian, socialist society” and “agitation against alleged ‘imperialism’ and ‘militarism’” were unconstitutional.

In response to this attack, the SGP stated in July 2019: “The attack invokes the criminal traditions of authoritarianism and fascism in Germany. The Interior Ministry’s attack on the SGP is intended to set a dangerous precedent. It will be used to legitimize state action against organizations, groups and individuals who oppose social inequality, environmental destruction, state repression, the buildup of the military or other injustices of capitalist society.” This was confirmed once again when the Berlin Administrative Court backed the federal government in its legal ruling.

Facebook’s censorship of the SGP’s anti-war video confirms these warnings. In the face of growing social inequality, the murderous “profits before lives” policy in the pandemic—and above all the reckless course towards a world war—anyone who opposes the war drive and policies in the interests of the rich is to be suppressed.

The struggle against the suppression of the SGP, which ultimately targets any opposition to the official war policy, is therefore of utmost importance. The censorship by Facebook and the German government

can only be stopped by the mobilisation of the international working class. Therefore, spread this article and protest against the censorship on all channels. Use the hashtags #defendSGP, #StopCensoringSocialism and #SpeakOutAgainstWW3 and share the video that has been censored by Facebook.



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