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# Western Governments Now Try to Strangle Funding of Independent Media

By Terje Maloy
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Theme: Police State & Civil Rights

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*After years of working hard to stop the voice of independent media being heard on social media channels like Twitter and Facebook, the turn has now come to strangling their funding. The financial company Patreon is the latest to join the establishment drive to marginalize and criminalize all dissenting opinions.*

Over the years, many independent media outlets have relied on Patreon, which offers the ability «let your fans become active participants in the work they love by offering them a monthly membership», thereby building a financial base for people-funded news and analysis, as opposed to being dependent on handouts from very rich people or government cutouts. Given that Patreon's business model relies heavily on independent content creators, the ones they are now evicting, the pressure applied for it to shoot itself in the foot must have been significant.

Intelligence-linked think-tanks are working to implement a financial blockade.

Right-wing activists as the thin edge of the wedge

The company has banned people before, most noticeably activist Milo Yiannopoulos in 2018. But Patreon's most recent policy change started in October 2020, when Patreon announced that it would be taking action against accounts that use its platform to actively spread QAnon's beliefs, «a growing threat». Patreon announced "QAnon-dedicated creators that are identified by our Policy and Trust & Safety teams will have their accounts removed from Patreon.". However, customers «who have spread some QAnon ideas but "are not dedicated to spreading QAnon content" would be given the opportunity to recant and «bring their accounts into compliance, according to the company.» Regardless of what one might think of the authenticity of QAnon, this soon turned out to be just the thin edge of the wedge.

The European Union censors via cutout think tanks

Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, told the Financial Times in June 2020 that:

> To fight disinformation, we need to mobilise all relevant players from online platforms to public authorities, and support independent fact checkers and media. While online platforms have taken positive steps during the pandemic,

> they need to step up their efforts.

She finished with a bizarre example of official doublespeak:

> "Our actions are strongly embedded in fundamental rights, in particular freedom of expression and information."

This has just handed another big argument for opponents of EU membership, where an undemocratic super-bureaucracy beholden to big corporations (like big pharmaceutical companies) are censoring opponents of the policies these corporations want implemented. On a smaller national level there is at least a chance that popular pressure can lead to some change.

In line with Jourová's statement, on 18 December 2020, The European Union-funded but nominally independent EU DisinfoLab released a study questioning «whether Patreon's efforts to tackle disinformation prioritized English-language content over that of other languages. Besides Patreon's «failure to remove all accounts that directly reference QAnon», the study pointed to «a number of other accounts that monetize other conspiracies like COVID-19 denialism…»

The report concluded «these examples illustrate that the measures implemented by Patreon are not fully enforced», also stating that «the problem of disinformation goes far beyond QAnon and argues that «more action is needed against the spread and monetization of dangerous conspiracy theories on Patreon».

Medical misinformation

Just from my small bookmarked list of news outlets, three have so far reported of being banned by Patreon the last few days. All bans are for «medical misinformation», which means dissenting from the one and only allowed story, no matter how well sourced the information is or how mendacious the official narrative.

Removing the largest German left-wing channel KenFM

On February 19th, 2021, Patreon closed the account of KenFM the largest independent left wing media outlet in Germany, which has heavily dissented from the official Covid-19 propaganda campaign. This followed the closing of its Youtube account, a heavily blow for a channel that had over half a million followers, and of course similar restrictions from Facebook and others the last half decade.

In a sign that this is a well coordinated campaign, the outlet in February found itself in the government's cross-hairs. Using coordinated German state government legislation as a a loophole instead of federal regulation, the local media authorities suddenly have vast powers over all online output. They can act on their own and do not have to react to complaints before removing "disinformation". The media supervisors can order «the severest sanctions» to remove contents from the network.

If actions are coordinated, someone is coordinating them.

According to reports, the media agencies have so far sent 13 notice letters to online media

that are not members of the press council, including to KenFM .

As media analyst Tobias Riegel points out "In abstract terms, it all sounds very nice: Who wanted to shut themselves off from journalistic due diligence? If this concern were to apply equally to all media, it would even be very welcome, this should be emphasized here.. The big problem with the new State Treaty arises, among other things, from the massive unequal treatment that in practice will likely occur between alternative media and the established: Should the division into good and bad media already practiced on the propaganda level now also be an «official» blessing, with the corresponding consequences?

Removing geopolitics and empire

In the same month, February 2021, Patreon declared it is going to deplatform Geopolitics & Empire, independent news and analysis radio show, unless it removed certain videos not just from Patreon, but from the entire internet. Simultaneously, YouTube gave it a "strike' the first step before an inevitable ban, formally for having interviewed Mark Sircus, who described how the health responses to COVID-19 by authorities such as the CDC, WHO, Big Pharma, and national governments have amounted to «medical terrorism». He also presciently touched on the link between military-industrial-financial interests and the think tanks they use as fronts.

The removal from Patreon followed just after a report on conspiracy theory «superspreaders» from a department of the most crooked think tank of all, the Atlantic Council. The report, from the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, which also was a collaborator with the British covert propaganda program Integrity Initiative, mentioned an interview with professor Francis Boyle on Geopolitics & Empire – and *presto*, less than a week later Geopolitics & Empire was gone.

The Atlantic Council is the embodiment of the US/NATO deep state. The think tank began as an offshoot of NATO itself and maintains extremely close connections to the military alliance. It receives major funding from Western governments and weapons contractors, and its board of directors is filled to the brim with senior American war criminals, such as Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and Henry Kissinger. Also appearing on the board are no fewer than seven former CIA directors and a number of top military generals, such as Jim "Mad Dog" Mattis, Wesley Clark, and David Petraeus.

Atlantic Council already has a firm grip on social media. In 2018, it announced it had partnered with Facebook to aid in the curation of Facebook news feeds for Facebook's 2.2 billion users worldwide.

Removing last American vagabond

In February 2021, Patreon stated they would imminently close The Last American Vagabond, one of the best sites for well researched Covid-19 news and analysis – but distinctly different than the official narrative – unless all «Covid-19 medical misinformation» was removed at once.

The Last American Vagabond scoffed at the threat and declared it would "not stop reporting objectively on COVID-19 or any other topic».

Conclusion

It is not unlikely the other large payment companies many are using will start freezing funds or close accounts. Judging from the examples of Facebook, Youtube and Twitter, readers and journalists will leave in droves for other platforms. Geopolitics & Empire went for the payment service SubscribeStar, and others options will likely be thought out as old ones buckle. But because the censorship hit men are always scheming for new ways to sabotage, one must expect the financial blockade to intensify.

The effort to silence dissent comes at the same time as the immensely sinister program to give everyone in the world a shot in the arm for a relatively ordinary disease, leading to the thought that it is either is a billion dollar racket from pharma companies or a plan with unknown geopolitical implications (anyone remember when Trump said he could kill 10 million Afghans literally in 10 days – without using nukes?).

When Paypal, banks and credit cards stopped servicing Wikileaks in 2011, in an attempted US government blockade, it destroyed 95% of their revenue. Wikileaks was resourceful enough to find workaround solutions. This will be harder and harder in the future, especially for smaller media outlets. Other measures are probably being considered, like blocking or sabotage of domain names, or physical detentions. And the planned future abolition of «unhygienic» cash, combined with a ban on cryptocurrencies, will give the Atlantic Council and the oligarch interests they represent the ultimate blockade tool.

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*Articles by:* Terje Maloy

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