

Kafka 2.0: How Google and YouTube's Political Censorship Works

Five years of archives of resistance to Zionism and imperialism deleted by Google

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SEARCH TEXT

 YouTubeCensorship

“Someone must have been telling tales about Josef K., for one morning, without having done anything wrong, he was arrested.” Thus begins ***The Trial***, Franz Kafka’s 1925 work, in which Joseph K., ordinary bank employee, is arrested at his home by mysterious agents and notified of legal proceedings against him. He is not informed of the offense or crime of which he would allegedly be guilty – he is only given to understand that he must have broken some unknown law – and is notified of a summons to court a certain day, without knowing the exact time or place. The protagonist is dragged into a completely absurd circle, wavering between inspectors, bailiffs, lawyers and judges, and not knowing at any time for what or against whom he must defend himself. He is finally executed by three

distinguished executioners who, with “odious politeness”, plant a butcher’s knife in his heart.

The procedure by which Youtube deletes videos and even the entire content of a channel is comparable to this Gothic novel in more ways than one. **As I mentioned in a previous article**, my channel **Sayed Hasan**, which, for more than five years, has subtitled in French and English speeches of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah, as well as Vladimir Putin, Bashar al-Assad and Sayed Ali Khamenei (in addition to interviews with Norman Finkelstein, content about revolutionary Latin America, etc.), was given two strikes by Youtube in less than one month because of two Hassan Nasrallah speeches, on the pretext of a “violation of the rules concerning violent or graphic content on Youtube”. The total suppression of the channel did not take long, since it occurred on December 20th, 2017, after a third and last strike announcing the guillotine, still because of a Hassan Nasrallah speech published in... 2014 – there is no prescription on Youtube, nor half measure. Thus, 400 videos, more than 6 million views and soon 10,000 subscribers have vanished, at the time of the greatest growth in their history. Youtube strives to hide its censorship behind a pseudo-legalistic procedure, but in fact, as we will see, all creators are under the constant threat of its political blade that drastically restricts tolerated contents.

 **Sayed Hasan channel in mid-December 2017**

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The first strike is dated October 24, 2017, and concerns a February 2015 speech titled “Hassan Nasrallah: ISIS is Israel’s ally and aims Mecca and Medina”. Its complete transcript is available

here: <http://sayed7asan.blogspot.fr/2018/01/hassan-nasrallah-isis-is-israels-ally.html> . As we can see, this speech only denounces the terrorist group ISIS, characterizing it as a danger for Islam, Muslims and all humanity, and recalls its collusion with Israel. It contains absolutely nothing legally reprehensible (call to hatred, murder, etc.). Youtube does not in any way indicate where or how such a video would have violated the “rules regarding violent or graphic content”, probably relying on the acumen of the accused – who finds himself de facto convicted. I have found absolutely nothing wrong with it, even by the strictest standards – unless, of course, any negative mention of Israel is unsustainable for the good souls of the IDF, who are tirelessly and relentlessly striving in this work of cyber-denunciation (their soldiers and mercenaries are more enterprising on the Internet than facing real fighters), and find in Google, Facebook and other giants of the Web a particularly complacent ear. We will come back to this point in more detail.

In good faith, I immediately appealed this decision – shockingly, Youtube does not grant more than 200 characters for this “procedure” (spaces included), but true, it is difficult to be loquacious in the face of an unknown crime – and to date, I have received no response. It is a sort of witchcraft trial, where, in violation of the most elementary principles of law, it is up to the

accused to prove his innocence in the face of an unspecified violation, and where the mere fact of being suspected by (or denounced to) the all-powerful “Google” Inquisition entails an automatic conviction, without at any time the grievances being clearly stated, the defense, even muzzled, being heard, a semblance of reasoned judgment being rendered or the pseudo-appeal procedure being taken into account, even formally. “We don’t answer questions like that,” opposes a police officer to Joseph K.’s requests regarding the reason for his indictment. “But in general we don’t proceed with trials we’re not certain to win.”

The second strike came on December 14, and concerns a December 11, 2017 speech entitled “Hassan Nasrallah: We are about to liberate Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and all of Palestine,” which only stayed online half an hour before its suppression. Its transcript is available here: <http://sayed7asan.blogspot.fr/2017/12/hassan-nasrallah-we-are-about-to.html> . Again, beyond the title of the offense regarding “violent or graphic content”, Youtube has not provided any details to justify its decision. It is true that in this extract, Hassan Nasrallah supports the dismantling of the racist, terrorist and colonialist state of Israel, world champion of human rights abuse and international law violations, and invites Palestinians and all the Resistance Axis to take up arms in defense of Palestine and the holy places of Islam and Christianity (he is joined by the Neturei Karta, an orthodox Jewish group that publicly burns Israeli flags in the heart of

Jerusalem, **as can be seen on its YouTube channel**). And it turns out that the rallying slogan “Death to Israel” is spoken by Hassan Nasrallah and echoed by thousands of protesters participating in an opposition rally to Donald Trump and his decision to recognize Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital of Israel. But beyond the fact that armed resistance to an occupier is perfectly legal according to international law (**United Nations Resolution 37/43 of December 3, 1982** reaffirming “the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle”), the right to information must prevail, because without this, no political speech in a warlike context could be published on Youtube. However, Google does not consider in any way problematic statements much more “violent or graphic” like **Donald Trump threatening to “completely destroy” North Korea**, the Israeli bragging about **bombing Iran and toppling its regime, assassinating Hassan Nasrallah** or even **General de Gaulle’s June 1940 appeals**, or **Aimé Césaire’s speeches**, which should be banned on Youtube according to a purely literal application of the regulation concerning violent content or call for violence (in these cases, calls to resist against Nazism or colonialism). But obviously, with Kafka, Youtube seems to have also integrated Orwell: “All [contents] are equal but some are more equal than others.” Only videos hostile to imperialism and Zionism are subject to censorship and banishment.

With two strikes in less than a month, the life of my Youtube channel was hanging by a thread: it is true that after 3 months, a warning is removed, but three successive warnings on an account lead to outright removal of the channel and all its content, not just the videos concerned. And it was clear to me that these two unjustified and unprecedented warnings would soon be followed by a third and a complete suppression of my channel. To make a judicial analogy, it is as if a conviction for defamation (which, in any body of law, cannot be held from 3 months to 1 year after the offense, but Google seems to have opted for imprescriptibility) resulted in the removal not only of the passage incriminated (for example, in Zola's "J'Accuse", the two incriminated words "by order", Zola obviously not having the means to prove materially that the second War Wouncil had been forced to acquit Esterhazy by the military hierarchy), but of all the work of the journalist, author – or producer of Youtube content. Without conviction, I conducted the Orwell-Kafkaesque 200-character appeal, protested to Google by email and **published an article denouncing this censorship** and the announced deletion of my channel. This time, I received a response from Youtube in 12 hours, which showed me, if any doubt still remained, that these procedures are nothing more than a masquerade meant to conceal the totally arbitrariness, or rather political orientation of Google's censorship: indeed, the answer was in three lines in which Youtube thanked me for having made this appeal procedure, informed me that after a closer examination of the content of my video, they determined that it did not respect the Community rules, and addressed me

cordial greetings. Can we conceive of a judgment, let alone an appeal procedure, which dispenses with all argumentation? Google has completely automated the pseudo-legalistic process of deleting content, which is done for the unfortunate victim without any human interlocutor and therefore without any possibility of defense.

As expected, the third warning, which was but a mere formality, came soon: it occurred on December 20, 2017 and concerns a 2009 speech published in 2014 (*re-sic*) entitled “Hassan Nasrallah: the next war will change the face of the region.” **In this excerpt**, Hassan Nasrallah considers the hypothesis of an Israeli aggression against Lebanon, and asserts that this threat can be turned into an opportunity if the enemy army is crushed on Lebanese soil, after which even Palestine and Al-Quds (Jerusalem) could be liberated, as was southern Lebanon in 2000. This video does not even include the slogan “Death to Israel”. The formulation of the very hypothesis of the liberation of Palestine after an Israeli aggression (many empires collapsed because of their external military expeditions, as recalled by Hassan Nasrallah) would therefore constitute a taboo. Once again, one would be right to wonder why Netanyahu can for its part freely threaten **Gaza, Lebanon, Syria** or **Iran** with invasion/destruction, without Youtube considering they should remove these videos. One understands that when Youtube wants to delete a channel, it will use the meanest pretexts and fatally plant its “butcher’s knife” in the heart of its victim.

It is necessary to specify, to the credit of Youtube, that an appeal procedure also exists against the suppression of a channel, and this time, not 200 but 1000 characters are allowed, about 180 words. It may seem light for a job of several years (maybe the work of a lifetime), completely destroyed in a few clicks by Google, but legalistic to the end, I followed this pseudo-procedure the same day. The response was quick – to the credit of Youtube, let us quote again this particularly expeditious and recurrent judicial time: 12 hours, against several years for the traditional justice system. It seems obvious that the appeal procedures are systematically rejected by a mail-type sent automatically after 12 hours. This answer is worth quoting in its entirety, its brevity lending itself willingly:

Thanks for appealing the suspension of your account. We decided to maintain the suspension, in accordance with the Community Guidelines and our Terms of use. For more information, see http://www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines .

Best,

Youtube Team

This is the epilogue – and the only epitaph – of a Youtube channel that dared publish anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist content. Denouncing the muzzling of the Internet is now a cliché, but it is always good to illustrate it with concrete examples, this process being known only to its victims.

There is no doubt that all videos broadcasting the point of view of the Resistance Axis (Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq) are being stalked by IDF cyber-soldiers. The fact that this video was flagged and deleted as soon as it was published would even suggest that a soldier or paid – not just zealous – agent of “the most moral army in the world” was on the alert, especially in this hot context following Donald Trump’s recognition of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital of Israel. Social networks, following the dominant media, tend to integrate and anticipate government directives through a process of self-censorship well described by Noam Chomsky, so it is quite possible that employees of Youtube themselves take care of this task, especially at the time of the official hunt against the so-called “fake news” – which is only an attempt to preserve the monopoly of mainstream patented liars in the service of power and major economic interests, put in mortal danger by the freedom of the Internet. The voice of Hassan Nasrallah in particular is targeted by this censorship, because he is the only Arab leader who inflicted two – humiliating – defeats to Israel (2000 and 2006), and whose fighters played a leading role in the defeat of ISIS: if irreducible agents still dispute the quality of

terrorists of the “**Jewish jihadists**” of Israel, nobody dares to do it anymore for the “Wahhabi jihadists” of ISIS. More than ever, the voice of the Secretary General of Hezbollah is able to find an echo in the Arab-Muslim world and beyond, and cannot be tolerated. After the multi-removal of channels such as **Pure Stream Media** or **Anti-Zionist Party**, the main channel translating Hassan Nasrallah’s speeches into French and English was unlikely to escape censorship for long.

Google claims to stick to political neutrality, respect for freedom of expression and the right to information and transparency. But its **Transparency Report** published every year is singularly lacking in transparency: it evokes (very succinctly), as regards the deletions of content, only those concerning 1 / Copyright, 2 / The European law upholding the **right to be forgotten** and 3 / Formal requests for deletion by States – the United States and Israel are in a good position. But what about other deletions, especially due to “individual” flagging or Google initiatives, which certainly represent the majority of these deletions? “Individual” flagging apparently only, as many emanate from governmental agencies or from State propaganda. The IDF cyber-soldiers or “**Hasbara trolls**” have already been reported for their active and paid propaganda at the highest levels on **Wikipedia**, **Facebook**, and other social networks. The Netanyahu government **just gave 37 million dollars to such an agency**, Kella Shlomo. The **New York Times** itself has revealed that “Israeli security agencies monitor Facebook and send the company posts they consider [hatred/violence]

incitement. Facebook has responded by removing most of them.” Glenn Greenwald, who published the Snowden case, just revealed that **Facebook is coordinating with the Israeli and American governments** the suppression of anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist voices, as recently shown by the **removal of Ramzan Kadyrov’s Facebook account**. It goes without saying that Israel’s propagandists are also particularly active on YouTube, the world’s leading online video-sharing platform (and the main source of content whose suppression is requested by States according to the *Transparency Report*), conferring a kind of near-monopoly on Google, who, in its hybris, allows itself to flout the right in its decisions to delete content.

Such decisions do not spare anyone on Youtube, and the biggest names of this platform have complained about the **utmost contempt** with which it treats its creators. This is the case of PewDiePie, the number 1 of Youtube, whose channel of Gaming / Vlogs itself (nearly 60 million subscribers and 17 billion views) has **recently suffered the (pro)-Zionist wrath** which clearly spares nobody. The **Wall Street Journal** himself took care of this odious witch hunt, engaging in slanderous accusations against PewDiePie to Youtube and his own sponsors, Disney in particular, presenting him as an anti-Semite and admirer of Hitler (*sic*). The WSJ failed to have his channel closed, but Disney broke their contract with PewDiePie, and YouTube excluded him from their paid programs, causing him to lose considerable sums (he does not even appear in **Youtube Rewind 2017**). PewDiePie had already denounced the arbitrary

demonetizations of videos, including all those containing any kind of political content. This censorship policy was **formalized in June 2017**, with Youtube announcing that “Video content that features or focuses on sensitive topics or events including, but not limited to, war, political conflicts, terrorism or extremism, death and tragedies, sexual abuse, even if graphic imagery is not shown” are not suitable for ads, and therefore demonetized. This is how YouTube keeps its creators at bay, forbidding them to merely speak about “Controversial issues and sensitive events” by this more discreet form of censorship, namely demonetization, and confining them exclusively to simple “entertainment”, in the most restrictive sense of the word. Youtube obviously dares not remove all videos or channels that do not comply for fear of the harm that it would cause them, given the notoriety of some creators, and is content with a pecuniary sanction just as crippling, but has absolutely no scruples for channels with a modest audience like mine, which are suppressed without qualms. As we can see, freedom of expression stops at the (eternally extensible) borders of Israel and its exacerbated “sensitivity”.

This is obviously a significant loss for the individual who has spent hundreds or even thousands of hours translating and subtitling these videos, and who sees five years of effort erased with a stroke of pen – or rather an ax. The impact that these videos have been able to have for five years is not reduced to nothing, but it is the possibility of seeing it grow which is indeed destroyed, and the public acquired for the next videos reduced

from ten thousand to the unit. But is this censorship a sign of strength on the other side? Certainly not. The fact that the voluntary work of a private individual in his free time can disturb to this point is only a telling indication of the monumental failure of the billion dollar Zionist propaganda, supported by the mainstream media and by most political forces in the West. But despite all the efforts of Israel and its omnipresent “Thought Police”, its mercenaries and other rabid guard dogs mercilessly sent against any form of criticism of Israel (CRIF or LICRA in France, ADL, AIPAC and others), the Zionist entity remains widely regarded as a criminal state and pariah by the majority of the populations, principal threat for the peace in the world **even in Europe**, and cannot bear that the speeches of Hassan Nasrallah reach the Western public, considering that they endanger its security and its very existence. Let us remember that Israel is the only state in the world to claim a “right to exist”, aware that its existence is factitious – and temporary. In his **last speech at the UN**, Netanyahu, striving to demonstrate that Israel has support all around the world, expressed his wish to visit Antarctica, because it was reported to him that “**penguins too are enthusiastic supporters of Israel.**” There is no need for the defenders of Palestine to flag Zionist videos for censorship, Israeli leaders and their sycophants doing an excellent job of discrediting themselves – and that is certainly why Hezbollah does not engage in targeted operations to avenge his leaders murdered by Israel, relying on their “wisdom” and “charisma” to help destroy the Zionist entity from within.

This incessant and fierce censorship demonstrates, as the Secretary General of Hezbollah has asserted, that the Zionist state is “**weaker than a spider’s web**”, and that its days are numbered, just like those of the monopoly of the dominant social networks – Youtube, Facebook, and others Twitter, which owe their success to their universalist policy of openness, but dig their own grave with their policy of censorship and submission to governments, imperialism and Zionism. Day after day, the giants of the Web are unveiled more and more like simple agents of the power, whether political or economic, and will be progressively deserted by those who look for authentic and unfiltered information. Freer, parallel platforms are emerging and will continue to emerge, gradually ending their monopoly. Hassan Nasrallah does not even lose anything: while at the beginning of my channel, only specialized or even marginal alternative information sites relayed his speeches (Al-Manar, AlAhed News, ...), today, the whole mainstream press is forced to do so to avoid being on the margins of international news and its main actors (**New York Times, Washington Post, Daily Mail, Le Monde, Le Figaro,...**). Youtube, yesterday precursor, is today an exception.

So there is nothing left of my channel, except an indication that “This account has been closed due to an infringement of the YouTube Community Guidelines.” Youtube sends the user to “similar channels” with no similitude whatsoever like BuzzFeed Video or ... PewDiePie. When Youtube buries you, it’s for good,

and you do not even have the right to a tombstone. No trace must remain. All this is of course eminently discouraging. Any “dissident” channel arriving at a certain degree of notoriety is therefore condemned to be deleted. What good is it to start from scratch? One must, however, not give in to censorship, nor give up in the face of adversity. When your enemies wish to neutralize you, this is proof that your efforts are having an impact and that you are on the right track, so it is an invitation to multiply your efforts and not to surrender. We must always strive to defeat the objectives of the opponent: Israel wants Hassan Nasrallah to disappear from Youtube? He must therefore be present there more than ever. To date, the monopoly of the main social networks remains relatively undisputed (after 5 years, the same video had **less than 150 views on a parallel platform like Dailymotion** and more than 65,000 on Youtube), and censorship itself is a sign of recognition of the importance of this work. Moreover, these are the instructions of Hassan Nasrallah himself, who has enjoined the whole world to a real electronic intifada against the Zionist entity.

<https://youtu.be/7CMdSGtU9jE>



This is why I inaugurate **my new English channel** with this speech: “**Hassan Nasrallah calls to an Intifada on Social Networks in support of Al-Quds (Jerusalem)**”, calling to subscribe massively. Hoping, without much hope, that this call will not be considered as “content that intends to incite violence or encourage dangerous or illegal activities” by Youtube. And of course, from now on, I will publish all my new videos simultaneously on **my main blog** and my **Dailymotion, Vimeo, Facebook** and **ShiaTv** accounts, to which I also invite readers to subscribe. I will no longer make the mistake of not embedding subtitles in videos, which has the advantage of having multiple languages simultaneously but makes videos unreadable outside of Youtube. And I invite all readers / viewers to download and repost these videos on Youtube and elsewhere as much as possible, as redundancy is

the only effective way to get around censorship, like Hassan Nasrallah pointed out.

The battle of information – and on all other terrains – continues and will continue until the final victory, namely the total liberation of Palestine, that all the censorship of the world cannot prevent or delay.

To thank Google France for this decision:

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