West’s Social Networks have Outlived their Usefulness

Following the launch of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine, and the west’s imposition of unilateral and legally unjustified sanctions on Russia, western social networks have been filled with a flood of misinformation leading many people around the globe to reassessing what used to be regarded as indispensable. A turning point in this reassessment was a statement published by the press secretary of the US technology conglomerate Meta Holdings on March 11.

Via his Twitter account, Andy Stone posted a screenshot of a message that the company would allow users to publish death threats against Russian citizens and against the Russian and Belarusian leaders. By allowing such posts, Meta Platforms, the owner of Facebook and Instagram, is sowing the seeds of xenophobia and supporting and enabling terrorism.

As the British Daily The Telegraph quite reasonably points out, our new “gods” - Facebook and other social networks
have reconsidered their policies and “loosened their rules,” and will now temporarily allow calls for violence and death threats. Experts see this decision as more than just a bid to manipulate free speech. By making changes to their policy on hate speech, the US social networks are behaving like “a Caesar in an amphitheater, whose capricious thumbs or down would decide a slave’s fate, or a Greek god treating cruelty as a public sport.” Mark Zuckerberg’s company clearly believes it has the right to punish or forgive, as its recent decision to allow death threats against Russians confirms.

It should be noted that all over the world, making death threats and calling on people to commit assaults are criminal offenses. The USA is no exception: in US law it is a criminal offence to threaten to kill another person. But Mark Zuckerberg appears to believe that unlike Americans, whose lives are precious, Russians are not protected by this law - Meta has claimed its change of policy “does not infringe the laws of the USA.”

But from the perspective of international law, in view of the fact that racial violence has been a criminal offence for more than a century, it is hard to see how users can possibly be allowed to post calls for murdering Russians with impunity. Will it be Black or Chinese people next? One should remember that Facebook played a role in the genocidal attacks yet another group of people - the Rohingya of Myanmar. It has also contributed to the ethnic cleansing of the inhabitants of the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Currently Facebook is being sued by Rohingya refugees who accuse the company of provoking the 2017 genocide of their people, a Moslem ethnic minority. The claimants accuse Meta of allowing Facebook to be used as a platform for publishing materials attacking the Rohingya, despite the fact that rights activists had warned the company several times about the potentially tragic consequences of such posts. But, despite the size of the claim - $150 billion - Mark Zuckerberg is continuing to ignore basic principles of humanity and international law, clearly confident that he enjoys the support of his fellow international criminals in the White House and the US political establishment.

Taking advantage of the anti-Russian racism being stirred up by Meta Platforms and US media in general, a Ukrainian neo-Nazi has already called for people to hunt down on all Russian journalists reporting on the humanitarian situation in those areas where Moscow is conducting its military operations. Russia’s Presidential Human Rights Council responded in a statement, published on its Telegram channel: “Such calls for violence are illegal and should be denounced by the international community... Under the Geneva Convention and Article 79 of the First Protocol to the Convention, in armed conflicts journalists enjoy the same rights as civilians. Deliberate attacks on journalists constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court... A call by a neo-Nazi to hunt down Russian journalists is a threat to the whole profession. Journalists and other media professionals working in a war zone face many dangers - that is in the nature of their work. But deliberate violent attacks on them cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.”

Ed Cumming, author of the above article in the Daily Telegraph, claims that the US political elite has turned Mark Zuckerberg’s creation into a “supranational power; an empire ruled over by a single man” which now decides who can speak, and what they can say. It is worth remembering that the site was used to “deplatform” US President and many other Republican politicians.

Moreover, following a large number of scandals it is a well known fact now that the Facebook and Instagram smartphone apps continually track users, collecting information on their activities, including their location, contacts, behavior and opinions, and passing it on to the American special services, thus allowing Big Brother to track their private lives of people all over the planet and select the information they are provided with accordingly. In this a large part of the world’s population is being brainwashed every day in preparation for the moment when their national leaders lose their grip on power. And their electors are more and more turning into a crowd managed from across the ocean, and upon a signal from the social networks across the Atlantic this crowd will put political power in the hands of the US special services - thus reinstating the US’s global hegemony.

What is more these social networks are full of advertisements for services, many of which are far from safe. Free services are particularly risky, as are VPNs. VPNs collect a huge amount of information about the individual users without their knowledge, including user names, passwords and other personal data, making it easy for Big Brother to veto the activities of anyone, anywhere, and block their bank accounts. The reason is quite simple: any service costs money to provide, and the user will always pay for it in some way - either directly, or indirectly.

The IT giants are forcing Russia to respond to their systematic censoring of the Internet. Russia is trying to engage in a civilized dialogue with Big Tech, which, in turn, is doing all it can to test Russia’s resilience. “First we have Meta, which has permitted calls for violence against Russians, and now we have YouTube (or Google) which has blocked Russian media channels. US video hosting services systematically censor Russian media while failing to take
down fake or malicious content,” says Alexander Khinshtein, the Chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee on Information Policy. Last week YouTube disabled monetization for all Russian bloggers, and users who had spent years creating unique content and building up a subscriber bases saw their work effectively demolished in an instant. “What is that, if not discrimination on the grounds of nationality?”, Khinshtein asked.

China and a number of other nations that are unhappy with the criminal activities of foreign media companies and IT giants in their territory have already managed to achieve full Internet sovereignty. In view of the information war declared by western media and social networks against Russia, their restrictions on the work of Russian media outlets on the Internet and their use of advertising to allow fake news reports on events in the People’s Republic of Luhansk, the People’s Republic of Donetsk and in Ukraine, the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media has announced that it is blocking Twitter and Facebook in Russia. As a result users have been leaving Twitter and Facebook en masse. Both in Russia and globally their user numbers - their main resource - are declining dramatically and they will be unable to recover their former popularity. According to analysts, many users are deleting their accounts and migrating to Russian sites, especially VKontakte and Telegram, and both individual users and companies see these sites as offering greater scope for development.

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