


Bokhari This Is What Election Interference Actually Looks Like

 Censored_Collage_2

Vey Graphics

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The purge of the right on social media was once a slow trickle, with high-profile bans happening only occasionally, and then subsiding. With just three months until the midterm elections, the Masters of the Universe in Silicon Valley have turned online censorship into a cascade.

Earlier this month, Alex Jones was blacklisted on virtually every major social media service, including Apple podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, Facebook, and even Pinterest and LinkedIn. Following pressure from CNN and Media Matters, Twitter eventually followed suit with a week-long suspension.

A few days after the mass-purge of Jones' accounts, Twitter permanently banned libertarian commentator Gavin McInnes, and the official accounts of his grassroots organization the Proud Boys, on bogus charges of "supporting violence."

A few days later, Patreon, which has been [ramping up its censorship](#) of right-wingers (usually based on unsupported accusations of violence-promotion similar to those used by Twitter), kicked off Islam critic Robert Spencer, founder of Jihad Watch. It later emerged that Mastercard had [pressured Patreon](#) into making the call.

Then, last night, Twitter went on another mass-purge of right-wingers, with multiple conservative personalities reporting that their follower count had dropped by hundreds overnight. Among those purged was the account of [Vey](#), a graphics designer who [previously](#) produced artwork for Breitbart News. He provided Breitbart with a screenshot of progressive activists targeting his account for mass-reporting prior to his ban.

Big tech CEOs like Twitter's Jack Dorsey [resolutely maintain](#) that they do not discriminate on the basis of political views. In an election year, it would be suicidal to claim otherwise. But the mountain of evidence contradicting them renders their well-rehearsed media talking points almost comical.

The list of the conservatives, right-wingers and other critics of progressivism who have been kicked off at least one major online service is huge. Tommy Robinson (banned by Twitter), Gavin McInnes (banned by Twitter), Lauren Southern (banned by Patreon, Stripe), Brittany Pettibone (banned by Patreon), Proud Boys USA (banned by Twitter), Sargon of Akkad (banned by Twitter), Roger Stone (banned by Twitter), Milo Yiannopolous (banned by Twitter), Hunter Avallone

(banned by Twitter), Prager University (censored by YouTube), congressional candidate Elizabeth Heng (campaign ads banned by Facebook and Twitter), Pamela Geller (repeatedly kicked off Facebook), Alex Jones (banned by almost every social media platform).

These individuals all had hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions of followers on their social media accounts prior to being banned. Their social media platforms served as organizing hubs for petitions, fundraisers, rallies, and other political activities of the grassroots right. The loss of their social media accounts will have a major impact on the ability of conservatives and right-wingers to organize its online supporters for the U.S. midterm elections and beyond.

The left, meanwhile, is virtually unrestricted in its ability to amplify its voice on social media. On the same day that it purged hundreds of accounts that followed prominent conservatives on social media, it [verified](#) Sarah Jeong, the newly-minted *New York Times* editorial board member who rose to infamy for using Twitter to engage in racist diatribes against white people.

Jeong described whites as “groveling goblins” who “mark up the internet with their opinions like dogs pissing on fire hydrants,” and boasted of feeling “joy” when being “cruel to old white men.” Not only did Twitter decline to ban her for hate speech, they didn’t even ask her to delete the offending tweets. And then they verified her — *after* her tweets became the subject of international attention.

This power imbalance on the most influential technology platforms on the internet is sure to have an impact on the midterm elections. One side of politics is allowed to mobilize online without being impeded, while the other is not.

For over a year, Democrats and the mainstream media have been caterwauling about Russian social media interference in the 2016 election. Yet, as even the *Washington Post* admitted, Russia spent a [minuscule sum](#) on Facebook ads in 2016. Voters observing the ads, according to research conducted by an academic who is no fan of Trump, [were unlikely to have been affected](#). If Russia’s goal was to sow

panic in American politics then they've succeeded, largely thanks to the Democrats. But direct influence on voters? Not so much.

The real attempt to bias the outcome of an election hasn't come from beyond America's borders, but from the San Francisco Bay Area. Shamed by Democrats and the Media for ["letting Trump win"](#) in 2016, social media companies have responded by utterly crippling the ability of the president's supporters to organize on the web.

Free-market libertarians say "build your own platforms" — but replacing even if replacing Google, Twitter, and Facebook were possible (and that's [unlikely](#)), it's a project that would take many years, possibly over a decade, to complete. How many election cycles could Silicon Valley influence by then?

Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale, who masterminded the president's digital operations in 2020, understands the problem. In an [op-ed](#) for the *Washington Examiner* last week, Parscale says "big tech is becoming big brother."

"What we are seeing in Big Tech is the inherent totalitarian impulse of the Left come into full focus," writes Parscale. "The Left is losing at the ballot box, and there are some signs it is starting to lose the culture war too. The free and open Internet has been indispensable in spreading conservative ideas, and it was indispensable in getting Donald Trump elected president — and now the Left wishes to destroy it."

If they want to save themselves, the rest of the Republican party must realize that the tech giants that have come to dominate so much of our lives [are not the same as Christian bakers](#), and are crying out for regulation. Now is not the time for free-market platitudes. Democracy itself is at risk.

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