

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

Anti-Copyright



The Importance of Print Media

And the Digital Censorship to Come

CrimethInc.

August 8, 2019

In a time when digital media is the dominant form of communication, we remain passionately committed to print media and other forms of communication that intervene in the offline world. It is catastrophic that massive technology companies control so many of the channels through which we communicate with one another. While we acknowledge the importance of utilizing these channels, we recognize that it puts us in an extremely vulnerable position to depend on state-regulated capitalist institutions for our access to each other.

Already this year, we've seen several of our posts removed from social media sites on the pretext that the material violated their content policies. Across the board, these content policies are hypocritical and incoherent—for example, providers claiming to prohibit advocacy of “violence” yet gladly providing a venue for the US military, among the most murderous and destructive institutions in human history. Obviously, we shed no tears when sites like The Daily Stormer and 8chan are refused a platform via which to recruit white supremacists. We believe that no one should be under any obligation to provide services to racists or other advocates

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of oppression. But while we celebrate the digital de-platforming of the far right, history shows us that the next thing that will happen is that these tactics will be used against those who challenge the state and capitalism in favor of genuine liberation.

As a general principle, top-down control of communications infrastructure is chiefly useful for maintaining the status quo. The precedents set for de-platforming those who are trying to change things for the worse will also be used against anyone who wants to change things for the better. The vast majority of the agenda of the far right does not conflict with the hypocritical content policies of our digital overlords: they don't consider it "advocacy of violence" to campaign for more state violence against immigrants, for example. If, indeed, those who seek liberation from capitalism and the state are the next to be de-platformed, the resulting vacuum will make it easier, if anything, for authoritarians whose proposals fall within the confines of those content policies to present themselves to the general public as the only ones who have any sort of proposals for social change whatsoever.

As fascists shift their attention from maintaining their own publishing efforts to trying to force those who hold corporate and state power to shut down ours, we can expect more and more repressive clampdowns in the future. There are many things we can do to push back against this. We have to do everything in our power to popularize our perspectives, while de-legitimizing capitalism, the state, and anyone who would like to make it impossible to speak freely about radical social change.

One of the ways we can prepare for this sort of repression is to continue to focus on print projects and other ways of communicating that do not depend on digital media services. We have been a print project from the very beginning. The first CrimethInc. projects took place before the prevalence of digital communication. We collaborated by means of the postal service and landline telephones. Even if one day we find ourselves entirely banned from online activity, it would be impossible for any corporation or gov-

ernment to track down and destroy every single one of the hundreds of thousands of books we have distributed, or the literally millions of posters and zines we have put into circulation.

We will continue to focus on print as a medium that is less vulnerable to the whims of capitalist gatekeepers. But we can't do this without your help. While we produce books for sale, we also offer free digital versions of zines and posters with the hope that **you** will print and distribute them. If you have access to a printer, you are a micro-publisher—you can spread these materials and anything else that you consider important.

Likewise, you can order stickers from us and put them up whenever and wherever, on every lamp post, in every bathroom. *In a strictly legal way, of course!*