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## ***Meta's role in Israel's digital proxy war on The Cradle***

The banning of The Cradle from Facebook and Instagram shows a troubling alliance with Israeli-linked groups to silence voices critical of the occupation state, especially those media outlets covering its adversaries' narratives.

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On 16 August, social media giant Meta [permanently banned](#) *The Cradle* from Facebook and Instagram. This outlet's accounts on those platforms, which had amassed over a hundred thousand followers and millions of views, were unilaterally purged without warning or a chance to appeal.

### **Permabanned**

The officially stated grounds were purported violations of community guidelines for "praising terrorist organizations" through its reporting on the activities of West Asia's resistance movements. Meta summarily informed *The Cradle*:

**No one can see or find your account, and you can't use it. All your information will be permanently deleted. You cannot request another review of this decision.**

However, there are grounds to believe this crackdown was not merely a matter of community standards enforcement. Evidence suggests that Israeli intelligence-connected entities [played a significant role](#) in Meta's decision to ban *The Cradle*, a dissenting, anti-Zionist news outlet reporting on the region, from the region.

This act of censorship will unlikely be the last against those daring to expose the brutal realities of the war on Gaza and cover those resisting it. There appears to be a disturbing alliance between Meta's leadership and powerful Zionist organizations that identify targets for censorship, while Meta executives comply without question.

Speaking to *The Cradle*, independent tech industry researcher Jack Poulson says:

**Meta banning a news source such as The Cradle that is critical of Israel is less surprising when you consider their history. Beyond Meta’s head of Israel policy, Jordana Cutler, being a former chief of staff of Israel’s Minister of Strategic Affairs, and nearly his director general. Israeli government propaganda offshoot CyberWell is also a ‘trusted partner’ to Meta. In July, the organization helped influence Meta’s policy on criticism of Zionism.**

### **Israeli involvement**

In June, Poulson, alongside journalist Lee Fang, [exposed](#) how CyberWell is part of a broader Israeli government effort, known as Voices of Israel, to shape and disseminate pro-Zionist narratives across the west.

Despite CyberWell’s [denials](#) of government funding or ties, the organization swiftly removed references to its founders, staff, and advisors from its website following these revelations.

[Archival evidence](#) reveals that many members of the non-profit’s “dynamic team” of “academics, retired generals, intelligence alumni, and innovative tech professionals” have deep ties to Israeli intelligence and military forces, such as US founder Tal-Or Cohen Montemayor, a former occupation soldier and intelligence professional.

Montemayor emigrated to Tel Aviv as a teenager, volunteering to serve in the occupation army as a “lone soldier.” She then entered the intelligence sphere via Israeli private intelligence firm [Argyle Consulting](#).

There, Montemayor served under Zohar Gorgel, “a decorated IDF intelligence officer with over a decade of experience in various cyber and technology roles.” Together, “encouraged by colleagues and mentors,” they launched a project to “improve community standards” online.

In other words, to neutralize Palestinian solidarity and condemnation of the Zionist entity. Given the profusion of “former” occupation spooks and high-ranking military veterans in CyberWell’s ranks, one wonders whether the non-profit’s launch was pushed by malign elements within the Israeli government.

### **‘Call to action’**

This suspicion is amply reinforced by the February 2021 [report](#) by Tel Aviv’s Ministry of Strategic Affairs, *The Hate Factor*. It outlined several strategies for “combating antisemitism online,” including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to identify and ban social media users from posting content critical of the occupation state.

Mere months later, CyberWell [was founded](#), under the title Global Antisemitism Research Center, touting AI as its pièce de résistance. Instantly, the obscure non-profit began receiving [sizable donations](#) from well-connected Zionist lobby organizations.

CyberWell also [quickly entered](#) into high-level agreements with Israeli government-funded and directed influence operations, such as the notorious, now-defunct trolling and harassment unit Act-IL, which was run out of Tel Aviv's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For years, the [hasbara](#) outfit covertly encouraged Zionist activists to target boycotts and boycotters, justify the oppression and slaughter of Palestinians, and bully human rights groups and solidarity activists online. [The effort shuttered](#) without warning in 2022.

That same year, CyberWell's [annual report](#) noted that it had “served as the data provider to Act-IL's community for their end-of-year call to action on the state of online antisemitism.” This may provide some explanation for Act-IL's closure.

Today, criticizing Zionists on Facebook and Instagram can result in permanent bans, a [policy change](#) reportedly enacted under pressure from CyberWell and other Zionist lobby groups. CyberWell is not only a “trusted partner” of Meta but also of TikTok and X, exerting influence to suppress content critical of Zionism across multiple platforms.

CyberWell [already appears](#) to have used its influence to compel TikTok to adopt similar guidelines on content related to Zionism as Meta. And there is no indication that the organization intends to stop there.

It has submitted [formal guidance](#) to Meta on censoring the Palestine solidarity phrase, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” – which Zionists falsely claim is a clarion call for the genocide of Jews – while [publishing reports](#) on purported “antisemitic disinformation” circulated during western election campaigns.

Given this context, it is almost certain that CyberWell had a hand in *The Cradle*'s abrupt removal from Meta's platforms. Within hours, *The Cradle*'s accounts were banned, even those not directly linked or associated with any violations. Even a backup Instagram account, which hadn't violated any of the platform's guidelines, was taken down for being associated with the main account.

It appears that Meta was intent on erasing any trace of *The Cradle* from its social media universe, much to the likely satisfaction of officials in Tel Aviv.

### **‘Shadow banning’**

Nonetheless, it must not be forgotten that Meta has a long and deplorable track record of systemic censorship of content related to Palestine. This suppression has only intensified since the Gaza genocide began.

A [December 2023](#) Human Rights Watch (HRW) report exposed how, over the prior two months, Facebook had engaged in “over 1,050 takedowns and other suppression of content” on Facebook and Instagram “posted by Palestinians and their supporters, including about human rights abuses.”

Of this total, 1,049 “involved peaceful content in support of Palestine that was censored or otherwise unduly suppressed.” The documented cases included “content originating from over 60 countries around the world, primarily in English, all of peaceful support of Palestine, expressed in diverse ways.” Meanwhile, HRW “identified six key patterns of undue censorship.” This included:

**Removal of posts, stories, and comments; suspension or permanent disabling of accounts; restrictions on the ability to engage with content; restrictions on the ability to follow or tag other accounts; restrictions on the use of certain features, such as Instagram/Facebook Live, monetization; and “shadow banning,” the significant decrease in the visibility of an individual’s posts, stories, or account, without notification, due to a reduction in the distribution or reach of content or disabling of searches for accounts.**

Elsewhere, digital rights group Access Now [has documented](#) how content damaging to the occupation state has been censored under Meta policies unrelated to “disinformation” or “antisemitism” or informed by organizations such as CyberWell.

For example, [following the bombing](#) of Gaza’s Al-Ahli Arab Hospital on 17 October 2023, which killed 471 Palestinians and left another 342 injured, Facebook and Instagram [removed content](#) documenting the explosion and showing bodies of casualties under Meta’s policy on adult nudity and sexual activity.

### ***The Cradle’s coverage presses on***

The ease with which Zionist organizations such as CyberWell have been able to infiltrate and pressure Meta and the platform’s omerta on the genocide of Palestinians could be attributable to several Israeli military and intelligence veterans occupying high ranks within the company.

For instance, [Guy Rosen](#), formerly of the occupation army’s shady spying and disinformation specialist Unit 8200, has been the company’s Chief Information Security Officer since 2022. He is also co-founder of Meta-owned Israeli tech company [Onavo](#).

*The Cradle* will continue to expose the Gaza genocide and factually report on events in West Asia, including the region’s Resistance Axis, despite Meta’s ban from Facebook and Instagram.

Meta's continuous and escalating censorship by Meta may well contribute to its declining user base and [crashing stock market value](#). As more voices are silenced, the platform's days, much like those of the Zionist narrative it so eagerly supports, may be numbered.

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