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14. Juni 2009

To
Dr. Stefan von Holtzbrinck, Chairman
Dr. Jochen Gutbrod, Deputy Chairman
Dr. Rüdiger Salat
John Sargent
Jens Schwanewedel
Dr. Annette Thomas

Concerning the removal of all *Zeitgeist* groups in your studiVZ social network

Good Day,

Recently studiVZ has removed all *Zeitgeist* groups from its networks due to the mistaken notion that *The Zeitgeist Movement* promotes anti-Semitism. We, who are active members of *The Zeitgeist Movement*, certainly understand the sensitive nature of dealing with any groups or individuals promoting hatred toward any members of our human family within a social networking community. We also understand that the *Holtzbrinck Company* with its many networking affiliates is aware of the common problem of people misrepresenting a movement or ideology that they claim to support.

Anyone who voices or promotes anti-Semitic opinions is not, by definition, a member of *The Zeitgeist Movement*, and cannot be regarded as such.

Members of our group have contacted the following in regard to this unfortunate misunderstanding:

`dhensen@studivz.net`
`authorities@studvzi.net`
`cbiederlack@studivz.net`

This is the letter we received in response:

Hallo,
wir haben Deine Gruppe *Zeitgeist-Revolution.de* gelöscht. Sogenannte Zeitgeist-Gruppen werden im VZ nicht länger akzeptiert. Allerdings möchten wir auch darlegen, weshalb wir uns zu diesem Schritt entschieden haben. Es ist nicht unsere Absicht alternative Meinungen und Nachrichten zu behindern oder zu unterbinden, aber wir beobachten seit einige Zeit mit großer Sorge die Entwicklung der Theorien, die z.B. durch die Zeitgeist-Filme angestoßen wurden. Die Ideen von grauen Eminenzen, Eliten oder Geheimbünden, die im Hintergrund die Fäden ziehen, ist nicht neu. Die Zeitgeist-Filme weiten diese Idee auch auf das Wirtschaftswesen aus. Und da schließt sich ein Kreis innerhalb der Geschichte der Verschwörungstheorien: Latenter Antisemitismus, der immer wieder in vie-

len der formulierten Theorien durchscheint. Zum Beispiel in der Idee vom bösen, raffenden Kapital, welches ja letztlich für die Wirtschaftskrise verantwortlich ist und über Mäzenatentum und ähnliche Mittel der Einflussnahme auf die Welt-politik einwirken, um diese nach ihrem Interesse zu lenken. Wir sehen davon ab den Antisemitismus zu erklären oder zu diskutieren, weil wir von unseren Grup-pengründen erwarten, dass sie sich mit den Problemfeldern ihrer Gruppenthemen auseinandergesetzt haben. Weiter bitten wir Dich keine weiteren Gruppen zu diesem Themen zu gründen, da dies ansonsten zu einer Sperrung oder Löschung Deines Profils führen kann.

Danke für Dein Verständnis,
Das VZ Team

Frankly, this reply is quite disturbing as it's claims regarding what is "pushed" by *The Zeitgeist Movement* are completely erroneous, having no basis in fact. One of the groups removed had a membership of over 10,000.

It is quite apparent, and I am sure understood by your company, that any movement, ideology, or person cannot be held responsible for the words or actions of rogue individuals who are either ignorant or malicious in their intent. We explicitly dissociate ourself from these individuals and their shameful statements as they receive our harshest condemnation. Unfortunately, we have no control over what opinions are voiced by those claiming to be members or supporters of our group who are clearly not representative of our movement. We would respectfully suggest that any anti-Semitic posts be handled at the level of the moderator, and the individuals who post such things are removed, rather than the removal of an entire group, which constitutes censorship.

We feel confident that *Holtzbrinck* wants no part of publicly misrepresenting an organization of over 250,000 members, by censorship within its own social networking sites, or by making the false claims outlined in the response we received from the VZ team.

It can only be assumed that the members of the VZ team did not adequately review the proposals or tenants of *The Zeitgeist Movement*, even though they were supplied with references and links to our main web site and all of our educational materials.

If they had educated themselves regarding what *The Zeitgeist Movement* advocates, it would be impossible for the VZ team to have reached the above conclusions.

We ask you to review *The Zeitgeist Movement* main web site yourselves and then decide whether an entire movement's ban from your studiVZ is justifiable. Please review the material presented under the "Understanding" tab. Also attached is the "Orientation Manual" of our movement which very clearly gives factual information regarding what our movement advocates.

Because the removal of the groups is apparently due to the misrepresentation by individuals who cannot rightly call themselves members of *The Zeitgeist Movement*, we ask you to reinstate the groups who have been removed, and in the future remove only those individuals directly involved in hate postings that *The Zeitgeist Movement* would never advocate or allow to continue in our own forums.

As to the unfortunate and pressing issue of the VZ teams false accusations regarding our

movement, we ask that a statement of clarification be issued publicly as soon as possible. These accusations not only adversely affect *The Zeitgeist Movement*, but also the reputation of hundreds of thousands of members world wide.

The Zeitgeist Movement is one of unity and not division.

We ask for your immediate action due to the defamatory nature of there false allegations.

Thank you for your attention and consideration

Your Name