



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 22, 2024

## Expat American Writer Faces Refiled Hate-speech Charge in Germany for Swastika on Book Cover

American writer [C.J. Hopkins](#) was recently acquitted of violating Germany's hate-speech law, which he was accused of breaking because he included a swastika on the cover of his self-published book, [The Rise of the New Normal Reich](#).

Despite that, Hopkins — who has [lived in](#) Germany nearly 20 years — recently told writer Matt Taibbi that he's still in hot water with German authorities, who appealed the verdict and refiled charges.

Yet the novelist and playwright isn't just worried about his case. Hate speech laws, he rightly says, are spreading across the West like the China Virus.



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### Hopkins Trial and New Charge

Hopkins' walk through Bizarro World began last year when he received a letter from the authorities that he was being investigated.

"I was heading out to take my afternoon walk and do my shopping and that popped up in the mailbox," [he told](#) Taibbi at the time.

"There's a letter from the state prosecutor of Berlin notifying me that I am under investigation for — I think I've got it memorized by now — 'disseminating propaganda, the contents of which are intended to further the aims of a former National Socialist Organization.'"

The reason: His book featured a faint swastika imprinted on a surgical mask of the type governments ordered people to wear — uselessly, it turned out — to stop the spread of the China Virus.

He tweeted the book cover twice, and therefore disseminated pro-Nazi sentiments. Or so prosecutors said.

"And here I am, in criminal court in Berlin, accused of disseminating pro-Nazi propaganda in two Tweets about mask mandates," [Hopkins told](#) the German court at trial:

The German authorities have had my speech censored on the Internet, and have damaged my reputation and income as an author. One of my books has been banned by Amazon in Germany. All this because I criticized the German authorities, because I mocked one of their decrees, because I pointed out one of their lies.

This turn of events would be absurdly comical if it were not so infuriating. I cannot adequately express how insulting it is to be forced to sit here and affirm my opposition to fascism. For over thirty years, I have written and spoken out against fascism,



authoritarianism, totalitarianism etc. Anyone can do an Internet search, find my books, read the reviews of my plays, read my essays, and discover who I am and what my political views are in two or three minutes. And yet I am accused by the German authorities of disseminating pro-Nazi propaganda. I am accused of doing this because I posted two Tweets challenging the official Covid narrative and comparing the new, nascent form of totalitarianism that it has brought into being — i.e., the so-called “New Normal” — to Nazi Germany.

Let me be very clear. In those two Tweets, and in my essays throughout 2020 to 2022, and in my current essays, I have indeed compared the rise of this new form of totalitarianism to the rise of the best-known 20th-Century form of totalitarianism, i.e., Nazi Germany. I have made this comparison, and analyzed the similarities and differences between these two forms of totalitarianism, over and over again. And I will continue to do so. I will continue to analyze and attempt to explain this new, emerging form of totalitarianism, and to oppose it, and warn my readers about it.

The two Tweets at issue here feature a swastika covered by one of the medical masks that everyone was forced to wear in public during 2020 to 2022. That is the cover art of my book. The message conveyed by this artwork is clear. In Nazi Germany, the swastika was the symbol of conformity to the official ideology. During 2020 to 2022, the masks functioned as the symbol of conformity to a new official ideology. That was their purpose. Their purpose was to enforce people’s compliance with government decrees and conformity to the official Covid-pandemic narrative, most of which has now been proven to have been propaganda and lies.

Hopkins also described that totalitarian societies operate by segregating populations and censoring and/or forbidding dissent, along with “fomenting mass hatred of a ‘scapegoat’ class of people” and “demonizing critics of the official ideology.”

And, [Hopkins vowed](#), he wouldn’t stop his campaign against totalitarian speech and other laws:

I will continue to warn readers about this new, emerging form of totalitarianism and attempt to understand it, and oppose it. I will compare this new form of totalitarianism to earlier forms of totalitarianism, and specifically to Nazi Germany, whenever it is appropriate and contributes to our understanding of current events. That is my job as a political satirist and commentator, and as an author, and my responsibility as a human being.

### **More Charges**

During his trial, Hopkins said, the judge called him a *schwurbler*, meaning someone who spouts gibberish, and essentially said “okay, you’re an idiot, but that’s not against the law, so you’re acquitted.”

But prosecutors can appeal acquittals in Germany. Now, [he told](#) Taibbi, he faces the same charges.

“The prosecutorial theory in the Hopkins case was based on a bizarre interpretation of hate crime, essentially asserting that if you have to think about an image to realize it’s satire, it can’t be allowed,”



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Taibbi explained. “If that idea spreads, it would make comedy or even sharp commentary impossible.”

### [Explained Hopkins:](#)

The prosecutor’s argument was basically, “We don’t believe that Mr. Hopkins is a Nazi, or pro-Nazi, we don’t believe he was trying to spread Nazi propaganda, but he nonetheless spread Nazi propaganda because his tweet” — and this is a great part of their argument — “because if people saw his tweets, they would have to stop and think for a minute to figure out what they meant.”

But Hopkins isn’t just concerned about his case. He sees freedom of speech collapsing in the West.

“I’m watching the legislation that’s getting rolled out [in Ireland](#) and the UK and what’s happening to me here and what’s going on in the States, and it’s so obviously much broader than just a red-blue political story in the US,” he told Taibbi:

This is happening throughout the Western democratic countries.

I’m just desperate to get that across to people. I think it’s so easy for people to get locked into what’s going on in their own country and not see the bigger picture....

This is happening all over the West, in all these different countries. I think that’s one thing that my case does, it provides folks with an opportunity to remind them that this is happening all over. The old rules don’t apply.

A proposed hate-speech law in Scotland will, as he and Taibbi said of the German prosecutor’s attack on his book cover, [ban satire and comedy](#) if it targets a protected group.

[Canada is](#) considering an “Online Harms Act” that carries a penalty of life imprisonment.

“Having fled his native country for Germany nearly 20 years ago because of what he describes as America’s ‘really oppressive’ climate of opinion” during the Iraq War, [James Kirchick wrote](#) in *The Atlantic*, “he now has reason to reconsider the wisdom of that decision.”



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