

Facebook censors Australians Against Covid spokesperson Craig Wallace and a Sydney health worker

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Facebook has placed restrictions on the account of Craig Wallace, spokesperson for Australians Against Covid and longtime campaigner for the rights of the disabled, after he shared on October 29 a John Snow Project video titled, “Which Halloween mask is best?” The video, which currently has well over 100,000 views on Twitter, explained the necessity of using appropriate respirators, especially during the Halloween festivities, to protect against COVID-19.

The censorship of Wallace is one of many examples highlighting the suppression on social media of those who share scientifically backed information in opposition to the “Let it Rip” policies of governments internationally and their false claim that the pandemic is over.

In Australia, the Labor government of Anthony Albanese and the unconstitutional “National Cabinet,” made up of the mostly Labor state governments, have led this homicidal charge.

Wallace’s Facebook account was restricted for two days starting on the morning of October 29. Facebook claimed that his John Snow Project post “repeats false information about vaccines that goes against our Community Standards.”

In fact, the video makes only one mention of vaccines, stating: “Treat yourself to a mask that actually filters viruses—a well-fitting respirator—and wear it, because current vaccines alone are not enough. We need all our defences, but we’re not using them.”

Nothing about this statement is “false.” It makes the scientifically proven point that respirator wearing, testing, social distancing and adequate ventilation, in addition to vaccines, are needed to halt the virus’s spread.

In a tweet announcing the restriction on his Facebook account, Wallace wrote: “Yikes! My @facebook account was just restricted for two days for sharing the excellent and accurate @JohnSnowProject video on masks & COVID. The censorship of people urging a precautionary response is really ramping up.”

Scores of workers, youth and professionals on social media spoke out against the Facebook ban on Wallace, who lodged an official complaint with the social media company.

On October 30, Wallace tweeted that Facebook had reversed

its decision to restrict his account and restored the video post, saying: “We’re sorry that we got this wrong. We’ve reviewed your post again and it does follow our Community Standards.”

In his tweet announcing the lifting of restrictions on his Facebook account, Wallace said: “I’m still very interested in understanding who has the time, motivation and resources to lodge mass fake complaints against people sharing accurate information warning of the flawed #COVID19 response.”

On November 1, Wallace tweeted that Facebook had again restricted his account, this time because he shared a post on Facebook’s decision to reverse its previous restriction. The post was again falsely flagged for “false information about vaccines.”

While the immediate cause of the restrictions on Wallace’s Facebook are unclear, the targeting of an outspoken advocate for COVID-19 safety measures to protect the disabled and immunocompromised is significant.

Prior to his ban, Wallace had spoken out in support of the analysis presented on the *World Socialist Web Site* and its reportage of a well-attended online public meeting organised by Australians Against Covid.

On October 8, he tweeted a link to the WSWWS report of the meeting held by Australians Against Covid. Participants in the meeting strenuously opposed the unanimous decision by Australian state and federal governments to remove all compulsory isolation periods for those infected with COVID-19 and the ending of pandemic leave payments.

“I can’t sugar coat this,” Wallace tweeted. “As some other ‘progressives’ abandon us, socialists are seeing reality and articulating how COVID is being weaponised against us.”

Soon after, the WSWWS published an interview with Craig Wallace which has been shared widely, including by Wallace himself. In one such tweet, Wallace commented: “Socialists are now among the only people amplifying the voices of disabled people, workers, unemployed, the aged and sick.”

Facebook’s restriction of Wallace’s account is one example of the censorship levelled against those campaigning in opposition to the murderous COVID policies of governments around the world.

Last month, a Sydney health worker and member of the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Australia shared Wallace's WSWS interview in several Facebook groups. In one group, "Student Midwives of Australia," the health worker's post was flagged, leading to the worker's account being subjected to harsh restrictions by the social media giant.

The health worker's post included the following quote from Wallace's WSWS interview: "We're constantly told that it's only old people, the disabled, people with underlying health issues that die from COVID. This is eugenics. It's what Hitler said, albeit in a new form. It's morally injurious and needs to be opposed by any and every means possible."

Facebook claimed that the worker's post violated their Community Standards "on dangerous individuals and organisations." These standards are supposedly in place to prevent "symbols, praise or support of dangerous individuals and organisations." Under their definition of dangerous are terrorist activity, organised hate or violence, mass or serial murder, human trafficking, and criminal or harmful activity.

It hardly bears mentioning that an interview with an advocate for the safety of the most vulnerable sections of the working class amid a pandemic does not fit into any of the above categories.

Mehring Books, the publishing arm of the Socialist Equality Party (US), is proud to announce the publication in epub format of Volume 1 of *COVID, Capitalism, and Class War: A Social and Political Chronology of the Pandemic*, a compilation of the *World Socialist Web Site's* coverage of this global crisis.

On October 30, the worker was informed by Facebook that their account was subject to extensions on the "multiple restrictions" on their account. They were told that their account was restricted for 6 days, their group activity restricted and their posts moved lower in Facebook's feed for 87 days.

The attacks on the health worker and Craig Wallace also come after the censorship of respected Australian remote area general practitioner and principled advocate for Zero-COVID, Dr David Berger.

Berger has been targeted by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) and the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency for his opposition to the "let it rip" programs of Australian governments. On June 7, Berger was ordered to undertake a disciplining "education program" or be deregistered.

Hundreds of workers, youth, health professionals and medical experts have come out on social media, signed petitions, and released statements denouncing the attack on Berger and the democratic right to access accurate scientific information amid the pandemic.

In a significant act of political censorship, Twitter locked the account of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia) for a week in July, rendering it unable to post content, issue replies or send messages.

The ban was incurred after the SEP shared a video defending

Dr David Berger, persecuted journalist and WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, and free speech. Twitter claimed the video "violated the Twitter rules" on the absurd and false grounds that it shared "privately produced/distributed intimate media of someone without their express consent."

The lock only ended because of a campaign waged by the SEP in opposition to the political attack.

These attacks on democratic rights amid the pandemic highlight the fact that the ruling elite is determined to suppress oppositional voices to its criminal policies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only seen death on a mass scale in the interests of profit, but has also intensified the attacks on workers' wages, access to the essentials of life, and working and living conditions. This program has been promoted by all the capitalist parties and their defenders in the trade union bureaucracies.

To defend *their* interests, workers must develop their own independent organisations—rank-and-file committees completely separate from the pro-corporate trade unions.

While unions, social media giants and governments seek to stifle opposition and suppress information, rank-and-file committees will provide a framework whereby workers can have democratic discussion and share accurate information on their working and living conditions, and scientific material on the COVID-19 pandemic, including the necessary program to eliminate the virus and save lives.

As part of this struggle, the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee and Committee For Public Education in Australia are holding a joint online public meeting on Sunday, November 20 at 3 p.m. (AEDT), titled "Unite educators and health workers: Oppose the ending of COVID protection measures! Lives before profit!"

The meeting will provide a political perspective to unify health workers, educators and other sections of workers in the fight against the pandemic and for decent wages and conditions. Register for the meeting here.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact