

WSWS readers demand Facebook reverse ban on SEG in New Zealand

12 May 2023

The World Socialist Web Site has received several letters, published below, that readers have sent to Facebook, protesting the social media company's decision to block the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand from running advertisements.

We urge readers to 1) Share our article opposing this politically-motivated censorship of the Trotskyist movement in New Zealand; and, 2) send statements demanding an immediate reversal of Facebook's actions against the Socialist Equality Group to info@support.facebook.com and zuckerberg@fb.com. Send copies of your letters to sep.wellington@gmail.com for publication on the WSWS.

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding Facebook's decision to block the ability of the Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand to run any advertisements on your platform. This action represents a severe infringement on democratic principles and serves as a clear act of political censorship against the Trotskyist movement in New Zealand.

The SEG has been utilising Facebook's advertising services for more than seven years, running paid advertisements to promote public meetings, boosting articles, and engaging with the public. However, on April 26, the SEG page administrator received a notification stating that they are no longer permitted to place ads due to alleged non-compliance with advertising policies and associating with untrustworthy accounts. These claims are vague and unsubstantiated, lacking any evidence.

I strongly urge you to reconsider this unjustified ban and restore SEG's advertising account on Facebook. It is vital to uphold the principles of democracy, free speech, and equal opportunities for political organisations to convey their viewpoints to the public. I also request that Facebook provides a detailed explanation for the ban and engages in a transparent dialogue with the SEG to address this matter effectively.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Taking appropriate action to rectify this situation will demonstrate Facebook's commitment to democratic principles and the fair treatment of all political organisations on your platform.

Sincerely,

Daniel Campbell-Macdonald

Dear Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook

Can you explain why Facebook has stopped allowing the Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand to run paid advertisements?

Facebook has allowed SEG to place paid advertisements up until now. Its "page quality" status shows that there have been zero violations of Facebook's Community Standards by the page.

However, the reason Facebook has given for stopping SEG from taking out any more paid advertisements is "because you didn't comply with one or more of our Advertising policies affecting business assets or other standards, such as having too many ads rejected, attempting to circumvent our ad review process, participating in fraudulent behaviour or associating with untrustworthy accounts."

This is a very vague explanation that leaves the Socialist Equality Group none-the-wiser. Facebook needs to give a precise reason for not allowing SEG to advertise including exact examples of where SEG has not complied in some way.

If no satisfactory explanations and examples can be presented, then Facebook should reverse its decision and allow the Socialist Equality Group to advertise on Facebook.

Regards,

David Famularo

Featherston

New Zealand

Dear Facebook Officials and Mr. Zuckerberg,

It was reported that the Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand has been blocked from advertising/promoting its events on Facebook. As described, there is nothing objectionable in these ads or events that would prevent Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand use of Facebook to promote its events.

My purpose in writing is to respectfully ask for the lifting of the prohibition against Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand on Facebook. On its face, this prohibition is unfair, unjustified, as well as unethical.

The Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand stands for international solidarity, fairness, and the thriving of the whole of humanity. These values are to be lauded and championed, not proscribed.

Thank you very much for your time, attention, and consideration.

Respectfully yours,
George A. Gonzalez

Facebook executives and management:

I reject with contempt the deliberately opaque and clearly view-based censorship which your organization has directed at the Socialist Equality Group New Zealand, which has the same right as any other political group to peacefully promulgate its views.

The decision by Facebook to suspend its right to run ads for meetings and events, while simultaneously giving unfettered access to big business parties responsible for slaughter on a global scale, transparently reveals that Facebook is not a “social network” but rather a corporatist network whose first priority is not free speech but rather shaping speech that comes through its platform according to the interests of the capital behind it.

Coming after numerous “spurious” instances where Facebook has restricted the rights of socialists to campaign through their platform, a clear pattern emerges.

I demand that Facebook reverse its ban on ads placed by the administrator of the Socialist Equality Group New Zealand and that Facebook commit itself to open and impartial principles of providing a fair forum in defense of fundamental democratic principles.

Don Barry
Rochester, New York

Facebook is targeting the rights to free speech and assembly, on a world level, of socialists and anyone who would like to inquire about and consider the point of view of socialism (which is according to polls the majority of

young people) by blocking the ability of the Socialist Equality Group (SEG) in New Zealand to advertise its meetings. To make matters worse, if data were available as to how many times Facebook has taken similar actions against people or groups based on only unsubstantiated charges of fraudulent behavior and nebulous rules of failure to comply, Facebook would probably be open itself to charges of fraudulent behavior and failure to comply with democratic process.

The fact that SEG’s “page quality” status shows zero violations qualifies Facebook for running something akin to the notorious Star Chamber court of the old British tyranny that was abolished in 1641. This is no small matter as Facebook is one of the communication institutions that has become so widely part of the global human social network that the oligarchical manipulation of its services for the purpose of private profit proves the case of socialists of the need to socialize under democratic control the large economic levers of economy and society.

Not the least part of this outrage is that Facebook’s action places it in support of the far-right groups that have campaigned against the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, for whose meetings the SEG Facebook advertisements were directed in a call for democratic discussion to Stop The Ukraine War, as well as the growing attacks on the social and political rights of the working class. Justice can only be served in the empire of “friends” that is treated as CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s private domain by putting a stop to censoring socialism and reverse the actions of Facebook against the Socialist Equality group immediately. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Harvey Lichtman, teacher, New York City



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact