

Vaccination and Censorship: The Truth Will Set Us Free

Analysis by [Barbara Loe Fisher](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) published a report with false and misleading information about the Fifth International Public Conference on Vaccination, which was sponsored by the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC)
- › The anonymously funded CCDH created a defamatory publicity campaign designed to discredit and destroy NVIC's small charity
- › NVIC's pay-for-view digital conference was transparently open to the public and featured presentations by 51 speakers from the U.S. and other countries discussing vaccine science, public health policy and law, informed consent and civil liberties
- › The report deceived readers by describing NVIC's 2020 conference as a meeting "recently held in private over three days," which implied secrecy, even though the event was transparently open to the public
- › CCDH demanded that companies and governments virtually eliminate individuals or groups publishing information online that fails to align with government and industry narratives about vaccination and public health policy
- › The right to dissent and exercise freedom of thought, speech and conscience is under assault in America, even though these cherished civil liberties are codified into the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution

This article was previously published February 6, 2021, and has been updated with new information.

On December 22, 2020, a nonprofit limited company based in Great Britain that calls itself the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH)^{1,2,3} published a report titled "The Anti-Vaxx Playbook."⁴

It contains false and misleading information about the Fifth International Public Conference on Vaccination, which was sponsored by the 39-year-old U.S. nonprofit educational charity the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), and held online in October 2020. Promotion of the CCDH report resulted in the spreading of fake news and misinformation by mainline media outlets in Great Britain and the U.S.^{5,6,7,8,9}

NVIC's pay-for-view digital conference¹⁰ was transparently open to the public and featured presentations by 51 speakers from the U.S. and other countries discussing vaccine science, public health policy and law, informed consent and civil liberties.

Dedicated to "Protecting Health and Autonomy in the 21st Century," the conference was made available on February 2, 2021 for free viewing online. Go to [NVIC.org](https://www.nvic.org)¹¹ to access the conference website and watch all of the presentations.

CCDH Misinformation Campaign Designed to Discredit, Destroy NVIC

Influence Watch, which monitors individuals and groups that influence¹² public policy, describes CCDH as a "London-based advocacy group that targets accused 'hate groups' and individuals for de-platforming campaigns to remove them from major social media outlets" and "has ties to the left-wing British Labour Party and British left-progressivism."¹³

The anonymously funded CCDH also has an office in Washington, D.C. and the defamatory publicity campaign created in December 2020 was designed to not only discredit NVIC's four-decade public record of working within the U.S. democratic system to secure vaccine safety and informed consent protections in public health policies and laws, but to destroy our small charity.

The misinformation campaign was spearheaded by the CEO of CCDH, who is a political operative¹⁴ personally affiliated with Great Britain's socialist Labour Party.^{15,16,17}

The report deceived readers by describing NVIC's 2020 conference as a meeting "recently held in private over three days," which implied secrecy,¹⁸ even though the event was transparently open to the public just like the four previous vaccination conferences NVIC hosted in 1997, 2000, 2002 and 2009.¹⁹

One British tabloid read the report and described NVIC's public conference as a "private conference call" where "secret plans" were plotted to "launch the largest ever misinformation campaign about vaccines."²⁰

Last summer, CCDH published their first report alleging that Big Tech companies operating social media platforms make big profits by allowing individuals and organizations criticizing vaccine science, policy and law to message on their platforms,²¹ and should take stronger action to censor online public conversations about vaccination that do not conform with the "scientific consensus that vaccines are safe."^{22,23}

That July 2020 report was promoted by mainline media outlets in Britain^{24,25,26,27} and the U.S.²⁸ However, CCDH's report published five months later in December 2020, which created fake news and misinformation about NVIC's conference, contained even more inflammatory rhetoric.

It demonized those who criticize vaccine safety as "malignant actors,"²⁹ and CCDH demanded that companies and governments virtually eliminate individuals or groups publishing information online that fails to align with government and industry narratives about vaccination and public health policy.

In that report, CCDH ordered Big Tech companies and governments to censor and punish dissenters, charging that "anything less than the dismantling of these individuals' profiles, pages and groups and permanent denial of service, now they know what is happening, is willing acquiescence."³⁰

On January 18, 2021, the anonymously funded CCDH once again publicly attacked the National Vaccine Information Center, this time for applying for a U.S. Paycheck Protection Program loan to secure the continued employment of NVIC's 21 workers during massive nationwide unemployment caused by lockdowns.

The British nonprofit company appeared to suggest that the U.S. government should not have been viewpoint-neutral in granting relief loans, but should have applied an ideological litmus test to NVIC's loan request that was made to retain employees during catastrophic economic hardship caused by lockdowns that have affected donations to charities.³¹

CCDH CEO Imran Ahmed said, "Lending money to these organizations so they can prosper is a sickening use of taxpayer money."³² Once again, mainline media outlets in Britain and the U.S. widely promoted CCDH's allegations.^{33,34,35,36,37}

Six months of orchestrated public attacks on NVIC by CCDH have generated hate mail to our small charity, which was founded and has been led by parents of vaccine-injured children for four decades.³⁸

Strong Freedom of Dissent History in US

I was born into a post-World War II generation in the U.S., a generation known for challenging the status quo and exercising the right to dissent, which is protected under the U.S. Constitution.³⁹

Whether it was advocating for the right to listen to rock 'n' roll and joining antinuclear protests in the 1950s,^{40,41} or marching in support of civil rights and opposing an undeclared war in Asia in the 1960s,^{42,43} or women fighting for equal opportunity and pay and consumer activists working for environmental protection and car safety laws in the 1970s,^{44,45,46,47} or mothers protesting against drunk drivers⁴⁸ and choosing a drug-free birth and breastfeeding for their babies in the 1980s,^{49,50} the baby boomer generation has been known for exercising freedom of thought and speech.

Contentious social, political and health issues of the 20th century sparked heated debates on college campuses,⁵¹ where students could still explore, critique and openly search for truth, and in mainline newspapers, magazines and radio and television stations, where point/counterpoint examination of controversial topics was the hallmark of good journalism because public debate is the hallmark of free speech.

The America where I grew up in the mid-20th century was a beacon of hope for people living behind the Iron Curtain⁵² and in other totalitarian or authoritarian societies,⁵³ where exercise of freedom of thought, speech and conscience and the right to dissent and peacefully assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances had been eliminated, where people had been turned into silent indentured servants working to serve a small ruling class in control of the state.⁵⁴

Statists, who believe that economic control and planning must be in the hands of a highly centralized government,⁵⁵ are always afraid of the truth, afraid that people armed with knowledge will act together to challenge control of the state by a powerful and privileged few.

Without Debate, Without Criticism 'No Republic Can Survive'

I was in junior high school when President John F. Kennedy addressed the American Newspaper Publishers Association in 1961. He said:⁵⁶

"Without debate, without criticism no administration and no country can succeed and no republic can survive. That is why the Athenian lawmaker Solon decreed it a crime for any citizen to shrink from controversy.

And that is why our press was protected by the First Amendment – the only business in America specifically protected by the Constitution – not primarily to amuse and entertain, not to emphasize the trivial and the sentimental, not to simply 'give the public what it wants' – but to inform, to arouse, to reflect, to state our dangers and our opportunities, to indicate our crises and our choices, to lead, mold, educate and sometimes even anger public opinion."

He closed with these words:

"So it is to the printing press – to the recorder of man's deeds, the keeper of his conscience, the courier of his news – that we look for strength and assistance, confident that with your help, man will be what he was born to be: free and independent."

That speech given 60 years ago was a ringing endorsement for freedom of the press. Yet, in the 21st century, it is becoming clear that there are political operatives and corporations seeking to censor freedom of thought and speech by citizen journalists publishing analysis and perspective on the worldwide web, an electronic communications network that has been the world's biggest forum for free speech over the past quarter century.^{57,58}

Right to Dissent, Freedom of Speech Under Assault in America

The right to dissent⁵⁹ and exercise freedom of thought, speech and conscience⁶⁰ is under assault in America,⁶¹ even though these cherished civil liberties are codified into the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. And civil liberties are under assault internationally in other nations with representative democracies, as well.⁶²

Today, political operatives are pressuring government, media corporations and other institutions to eliminate freedom of speech, especially public conversations about vaccine science, policy and law.^{63,64,65}

Spirited public debate about vaccine safety and mandatory vaccination laws has been going on for more than two centuries.^{66,67} What is the justification for censoring that public conversation now and punishing those who engage in it with economic and social sanctions?^{68,69}

And if the public conversation about vaccination and health can be censored, what topic will be the next one put on the "no fly" list?^{70,71}

NVIC: Working to Reform Vaccine Policy and Law for Decades

I am a co-founder and president of the highly rated nonprofit educational charity established in 1982 and known today as the National Vaccine Information Center.^{72,73} Our mission is to prevent vaccine injuries and deaths through public education. NVIC does not make vaccine use recommendations. We advocate for the human and legal right to make informed and voluntary decisions about vaccination without being coerced or punished for the decision made.⁷⁴

Our not-for-profit charitable organization was established for one reason: We were mothers and fathers of children brain injured by the highly reactive pertussis vaccine in the DPT shot and we wanted a safer pertussis vaccine to replace the one that had hurt our children. That goal was accomplished after 14 years of consumer advocacy when a less reactive acellular pertussis (DTaP) vaccine was licensed for babies in the U.S. in 1996.⁷⁵

We also wanted parents to have access to accurate and full information about the risks and complications of both diseases and vaccines before children are vaccinated, so parents and pediatricians could work together to identify those children who are more susceptible to vaccine reactions and protect their health.

That is why we worked with Congress to secure vaccine safety informing, recording, reporting and research provisions in the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, a law in which the U.S. government officially acknowledged for the first time that vaccine safety should be made a national priority because federally licensed and recommended and state mandated childhood vaccines can and do cause permanent injuries and even death for some children.^{76,77,78}

We are not all the same. We do not all react the same way to pharmaceutical products,^{79,80,81} which is why our organization has strongly supported research into genetic, epigenetic, environmental and other risk factors that make some individuals more susceptible to adverse responses to vaccination.^{82,83}

We believe every life is important, and that the lives of those harmed by vaccines and infectious diseases should be equally valued and protected.

We believe that consumer advocacy has and should continue to play an active role in holding pharmaceutical companies and government agencies accountable for vaccine product safety, and we are dedicated to working responsibly within the democratic system of this Constitutional Republic to make health policy and law safer and more effective for everyone.^{84,85,86}

Since 1988, I and other NVIC representatives have served as consumer members of the National Vaccine Advisory Committee, FDA Vaccines & Related Biological Products Advisory Committee, Advisory Commission on Childhood Vaccines, Vaccine Policy Analysis Collaborative and other federal and state public engagement projects discussing vaccine science, policy and law issues with vaccine developers, federal and state health officials, medical trade and pharmaceutical industry representatives, and members of other nonprofit organizations.^{87,88,89}

My 22 years of service as a consumer member on federal advisory committees and public engagement projects includes four years as a member of the Institute of Medicine Vaccine Safety Forum at the National Academy of Science, where I helped to coordinate public workshops on vaccine science, policy and law issues⁹⁰ and was an editor for the report on Risk Communication and Vaccination published by the National Academy Press. That report importantly stated:⁹¹

"The goal that all parties share regarding vaccine risk communication should be informed decision making. Consent for vaccination is truly 'informed' when the members of the public know the risks and benefits and make voluntary decisions.

The discussion of mandatory vaccination at the workshop suggested that it may interfere with informed consent and may damage trust and deter effective communication, and thus needs to be carefully weighed against its benefits."

We believe the human right to freedom of thought, speech and conscience should be respected, not devalued. As public health regulations and laws are being created during the coronavirus pandemic to restrict or eliminate civil liberties,⁹² we should be encouraging people to have civil conversations about vaccination, health and autonomy.

Americans should be welcomed by legislators to participate in – not be shut out of – the democratic law making process.⁹³

When people feel disenfranchised and believe that those in power do not care about their lives or the lives of their children, that is when trust in government is lost and people let fear, anger and despair control their actions. Empowering people with knowledge and the hope they can help effect meaningful change if they do it in a rational and constructive way has always been one of NVIC's guiding principles.⁹⁴

Fifth International Public Conference on Vaccination Features Principled, Courageous Speakers

I want to thank the generous sponsors and attendees of the Fifth International Public Conference on Vaccination: Protecting Health and Autonomy in the 21st Century, who helped to make it financially possible for NVIC to host a virtual conference last fall.⁹⁵

The conference had been scheduled for two years to be held in October 2020 in a hotel in the Washington, D.C. area. When travel and social distancing restrictions were enacted in the spring of 2020, we had to make a choice between canceling the conference or pivoting to a pay-for-view online public conference.

We chose to hold the conference online because we knew that the controversial issues being debated in the public square this year needed a public forum where well-anchored information and perspective could be presented.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the more than two dozen principled and courageous scientists, physicians, holistic health professionals, authors, attorneys, faith leaders, parents of vaccine injured children and civil and human rights activists, who represent diverse areas of expertise and participated in our conference.⁹⁶

NVIC Will Not Abandon Our Mission

No matter how many political operatives, corporations and institutions threaten and try to discredit NVIC and our work in order to silence us, we will not abandon our 40-year mission dedicated to preventing vaccine injuries and deaths through public education and defending the ethical principle of informed consent. We are moving forward with faith and resolve that we can secure a future for America that protects health and autonomy in the 21st century.

Because we know that if the state can tag, track down and force individuals against their will to be injected with biologicals of known and unknown toxicity today, then there will be no limit on which individuals' freedoms the state can take away in the name of the greater good tomorrow.

Be the one who never has to say you did not do today what you could have done to change tomorrow. It's your health. Your family. Your choice. And our mission continues. No forced vaccination. Not in America.

Sources and References

- [¹ See all references](#)