

October 28, 2017 - No. 34

Trudeau Government's Anti-Democratic Electoral Reform

Increasing Use of Police Powers in the Name of Cyber Security

- Anna Di Carlo -



• Crisis of Canada's Electoral System Deepens

- Hilary LeBlanc -

- Facebook's "Canadian Election Integrity Initiative"
- Privacy Commissioner Addresses Online Electoral Reform Survey

- Enver Villamizar -

Election Finance Reforms to Eliminate "Cash-for-Access"

- Attempt to Cover Up How the Financial Oligarchy Rules

Working for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

- Enthusiastic Response to Launch of Canadian Peace Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula
 - Korean Patriots Living Abroad Affirm Peace and Unification at Moscow Gathering

Hands Off Iran!

- Demand Political Not Military Solutions
- Voice of Revolution -*

Spain Imposes Direct Rule on Catalonia

- **Support Catalans' Right to Decide Their Future!**
Oppose the Spanish Government's Takeover!

UN to Vote Against U.S. Blockade of Cuba

- **November 1 Actions Against All-Sided U.S. Blockade**
- **Cuba Publishes Annual Report on Blockade Damages**
- Granma -

100th Anniversary of the Balfour Declaration

- **Palestine: Ethnic Cleansing and Dispossession**
- Dr. Ismail Zayid -

Trudeau Government's Anti-Democratic Electoral Reform

Increasing Use of Police Powers in the Name of Cyber Security

- Anna Di Carlo -

On October 19, Facebook Canada launched its "Canadian Election Integrity Initiative," which it alleged is an endeavour to protect Canadian democracy. Covered up in the high ideals of ensuring "election integrity" is how this initiative will actually be used for anti-democratic purposes. This initiative creates the illusion that the Trudeau government is constructing a political policing apparatus to monitor digital social media platforms. It says that there are "malicious actors" out to prevent social media from being used for genuine political discourse and civic engagement of the people by planting "fake news," "misinformation" and "disinformation." However, the entire exercise covers up that a primary role of the state that the Liberals serve is to disinform the polity by depriving it of an outlook on the basis of which it can exercise judgement and advance its own interests, not those of the rich.

Earlier this year, the Liberals directed the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) to enter the electoral field, instructing it to conduct espionage activities "against potential cyber attacks by foreign malicious actors." Now the Liberals are involving private interests under the lead of the CSE to target not only foreign but also "domestic suspects." The irony of the claim that spying on and targeting Canadians is to protect democracy shows how cynical the Liberals and others engaged in these measures have become.

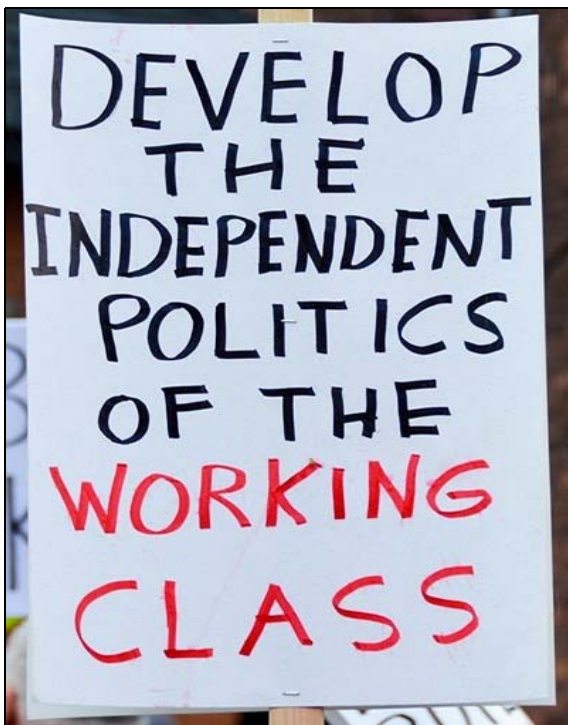
The system of representative democracy has disempowered Canadians to such an extent that all of this can be done without even passing legislation. The public authority of Elections Canada, the independent agency responsible for the conduct of elections, is being replaced by private interests such as Facebook, Google and others. In fact, Elections Canada was conspicuously absent from the launch of Facebook's "Canadian Election Integrity Initiative." As for Parliament, its role is to wait for the Minister of Democratic Institutions to hand over electoral reform legislation which the



government will say has already been approved by Canadians, by which it means the Liberal private political consultants and advisors in cahoots with private interests and the security establishment.

Internationally, Facebook itself will deploy an army of some 4,000 censors to monitor Facebook accounts and posts, no doubt sharing the information with U.S. spy agencies and their Five Eyes partners. Non-profit organizations funded and overseen by Facebook and other private interests are being activated to teach "digital literacy" and how to be an "engaged citizen." In the name of the right to conscience, criteria for judging what is "authentic political discourse" and what is not is set by the ruling elite. Their cynicism is unconscionable. This means it is unethical, immoral, unprincipled, unscrupulous and indefensible by any modern standards of democratic conduct.

Meanwhile, the giant multi-billion dollar Facebook corporation tracks its users in other ways as well to facilitate the cartel party election machines' micro-targeting of electors. When it comes to cyber security, the practice of handing to political parties Elections Canada's list of electors, along with each eligible voter's permanent unique identifiers, continues. These parties have exempted themselves from the privacy laws of the country and use the electors' lists provided by Elections Canada to build their databases and manipulate voter intentions during elections.



The latest developments mean that groundwork has already been laid for the creation of police-state elections. Under the guise of protecting democracy and the national interest and the security of the state, police forces will determine what constitutes legitimate political discourse. But the forces doing the policing and imposing the criteria are in fierce competition with one another, both nationally and internationally. Who will be exempted from the shadow of suspicion and doubt? Not only will forces in the opposition which represent the peoples' interests be criminalized but so too will the cartel parties and third party interveners in elections if they challenge the control of the private interests. Already different levels of police and armed forces and international supranational bodies are duking it out for control of the very private interests which are vying to control the economies and states of different countries. The current measures the Trudeau government is

taking are extremely self-serving and there is no doubt that what goes around comes around. The Liberals themselves are likely to become victims of their own measures as will any other of the parties which go along with this.

Thus, the aim of the Trudeau government, the security establishment and political parties of the cartel party system is to smash all political discourse and any attempt by the people to empower themselves. These measures must be opposed by the working class and people by advancing their own program and solutions to the problems plaguing the society, starting with the issue of who decides and what kind of political and electoral process is required to empower the people to stop the further destruction of the society and the economy.



Crisis of Canada's Electoral System Deepens

- Hilary LeBlanc -

The measures the Trudeau Liberals are implementing to "protect the democracy" follow more than a quarter century of opposition by the ruling elite to the striving of the people for empowerment, shown in the refusal to bring about reforms that will guarantee the right to an informed vote. An informed vote requires legislation that enables the electors to choose their own candidates and set their own agenda in a political process funded by the state. Instead, the cartel party system has passed one self-serving law after another that increase the interference of the state in political affairs. The state funding of political parties is such that today they are literally institutions of the state, which are no longer controlled by their members. It has increasingly restricted the space for the people to participate in elections and already controls the message. The new measures will now dictate what is legitimate political discourse.

The ruling elite's refusal to bring about the urgently required renewal of the democratic process is to ensure the citizens and residents of the country cannot participate in arriving at the decisions which affect their lives and their natural and social environments, including on central issues such as war and peace.

We have reached a point where the party-dominated system of representative democracy has exhausted itself. It is no longer able to maintain its legitimacy and has reverted to using police powers to regulate all aspects of life. Not only is it unable in the long run to contain the striving of the people for empowerment, it is also no longer able to contain the police powers themselves as private interests collude and contend for control.



Anarchy and violence prevail as the conditions deteriorate, while the cynical manipulation of positions of power is such that nothing and nobody are to be trusted. Not only is the economy turned over to powerful supranational private interests, but now so too are elections. This will in no way sort out the crisis of legitimacy in which the rulers are mired. Nation-wrecking, an agenda that pays the rich, the privatization and downsizing of social programs and public services, and the destruction of all vestiges of a public authority bound by a social contract are carried out only when supranational monopolies and cartels usurp the political power. It has nothing to do with democracy but merely confirms that the old forms -- a civil society -- are finished and new forms of people's empowerment have yet to be brought into being.

The allegation that the main concern of democratic reforms at this time is to defend the electoral system from cyber attacks, particularly those launched by foreign "bad actors," is irrational. It merely serves to justify the actions of police agencies of certain factions of the ruling elites against those of their rivals. The U.S. election that brought Trump to power is said to be proof of the pudding, with all the allegations of Russian intervention. There is to be no discussion of what actually goes on when economic and political mafias operate internationally with impunity.

The ruling elite are hell-bent on depriving the people of their right to rule themselves. The more they seek to deprive the people of their voice, the more the people will fight. The more they fight, the more chances they have to win.



Facebook's "Canadian Election Integrity Initiative"

Facebook Canada recently announced its "Canadian Elections Integrity Initiative." It is part of a global program by the multinational corporation and has the stated aim of ensuring that Facebook "remains a safe and secure forum for authentic dialogue." The particular aim of the Canadian initiative is to ensure "Facebook is a space for authentic civic engagement in the lead-up to the 2019 election." Facebook claims to have 23 million Canadian users.

Kevin Chan, Head of Public Policy in Canada for both Facebook and Instagram, announced the program at a luncheon/panel discussion on "digital civic engagement" organized by the Economic Club of Canada at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier on October 19. At a ticket price of \$110, the event featured Minister of Democratic Institutions Karina Gould as the keynote speaker. Gould also joined a panel discussion moderated by Chan, with two social-media professionals: Matthew John, Director of Education for MediaSmarts,[1] and Professor Anatoliy Gruzd, Director of Research at the Social Media Lab.[2]



After Gould's speech, in which she said that cyber security is "at the heart of her work" and praised Facebook's initiative, Chan unveiled the details of the Canadian Elections Integrity Initiative, describing it as a direct response to the Canadian Security Establishment's assessment that a cyber attack on Canada's next federal election is a "high probability." [3]



Chan released a Facebook pamphlet entitled "Cyber Hygiene Guide -- Politicians and Political Parties" and announced that the corporation will partner with MediaSmarts to educate the public about cyber security and digital literacy. In addition, Facebook will offer all federal political parties and politicians a "cyber hygiene training program" and set up a "crisis email line," providing them with a direct link to Facebook's security department to resolve any security breaches. Chan also informed the audience that Facebook will hire some 4,000 people globally to monitor reported or flagged postings to detect "fake news" or illegitimate accounts.

In her opening remarks at the luncheon, Gould described social media as an important tool for people to get engaged in the political process. "Digital media empowers us," she said.

She described social media platforms such as Facebook as "the new arbiters of information" who "have an important responsibility to facilitate respectful and informed public discourse. ... Just like government and private corporations have a public responsibility to contribute to a healthy

democracy, social media ... must begin to view themselves as actors in shaping the democratic discourse and protecting our democracy from those who would seek to harm it. The issue of foreign influence and the spread of misinformation is by no means a new phenomena, but the digital age has provided malicious actors with more ways than ever before to pursue objectives in a rapid and constantly evolving manner. ... And in that respect, I think it is important for social media platforms to think critically about their current practices and how they can create spaces for informed public dialogue and the information we consume. I am absolutely delighted to see Facebook and MediaSmarts taking a step in the right direction today in addressing the challenges of the digital era and the continued protection of our democratic process. ... There is much more to be done and it is up to all of us to work together to ensure that we continue to be resilient in the face of cyber threats against our democracy."

Gould also announced that she is reviewing the *Canada Elections Act* towards this end, along with tightening spending controls on political parties, candidates and third parties.

Facebook's Corporate Policy on Elections

The Canadian Electoral Integrity Initiative follows the policy outlined by Facebook's U.S. headquarters, in a document entitled "Facebook and Information Operations," released in April of this year.

The document states: "... Facebook sits at a critical juncture. Our mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. Yet it is important that we acknowledge and take steps to guard against the risks that can arise in online communities like ours. The reality is that not everyone shares our vision, and some will seek to undermine it -- but we are in a position to help constructively shape the emerging information ecosystem by ensuring our platform remains a safe and secure environment for authentic civic engagement."

Facebook defines "information operations" as follows: "actions taken by organized actors (governments or non-state actors) to distort domestic or foreign political sentiment, most frequently to achieve a strategic and/or geopolitical outcome. These operations can use a combination of methods, such as false news, disinformation, or networks of fake accounts aimed at manipulating public opinion (we refer to these as 'false amplifiers')."

Facebook says that those who carry out these "information operations" have varying motivations, but summarizes their "strategic objectives" as one or more of the following:

" -- Promoting or denigrating a specific cause or issue: This is the most straightforward manifestation of false amplifiers. It may include the use of disinformation, memes, and/or false news. There is frequently a specific hook or wedge issue that the actors exploit and amplify, depending on the targeted market or region. This can include topics around political figures or parties, divisive policies, religion, national governments, nations and/or ethnicities, institutions, or current events.

"-- Sowing distrust in political institutions: In this case, fake account operators may not have a topical focus, but rather seek to undermine the status quo of political or civil society institutions on a more strategic level.

" -- Spreading confusion: The directors of networks of fake accounts may have a longer-term objective of purposefully muddying civic discourse and pitting rival factions against one another. In several instances, we identified malicious actors on Facebook who, via unauthentic accounts, actively engaged across the political spectrum with the apparent intent of increasing tensions between supporters of these groups and fracturing their supportive base."

Response from Social Media Experts

The announcement of the Canadian Electoral Integrity Initiative sparked commentary on the role of Facebook and social media in the democratic process. An October 21 *Toronto Star* article by Sabrina Nanji states that "experts in digital politics are urging the government to implement 'much more dramatic policy measures' to guard against hacking and misinformation."

Taylor Owen, an assistant professor specializing in digital media and global affairs at the University of British Columbia told the *Star*, "The economics and the functioning of the platform [Facebook] bump right up against our ability to govern our elections -- and we're not going to solve that through news literacy. We can only solve that by much more dramatic policy measures from governments, not from Facebook."

In an October 20 *Globe and Mail* opinion piece, Owen posed the question: "Is Facebook a threat to democracy?" He answers, "It is increasingly apparent that the answer is yes." Owen argues that the product sold by Facebook, whose revenues tripled to \$27.6 billion per year in 2016 compared to 2012, is "thousands of data points they capture from each of their users." He argues that "the Facebook model has also incentivized the spread of low-quality clickbait over high-quality information" and has "enabled a race to the bottom for monetized consumer surveillance."



Owen notes that Facebook's platform facilitates "microtargeted" advertising, personalized advertising and news feeds that are chosen according to the criteria set by the purchasers of its services. "The filtering," writes Owen "is done through a series of algorithms, which, when combined with detailed personal data, allows ads to be delivered to highly specific audiences. This microtargeting enables buyers to define audiences in racist, bigoted and otherwise highly discriminatory ways, some of questionable legal status and others merely lacking any relation to moral decency."

Owen describes the Facebook system as a "potent political weapon," referring to the alleged Russian interference in the U.S. elections which he says was designed to "foment divisions in American society around issues of race, immigration and even fracking." He adds that it is not "just foreign actors" that are at play, noting that "Bloomberg reported that in the final weeks of the U.S. election, Facebook and Google employees collaborated with extreme activist groups to help them microtarget divisive ads to swing-state voters."

Owen writes: "[W]hen Facebook hooks up foreign agitators and microtargeted U.S. voters, or amplifies neo-Nazis using the platform to plan and organize the Charlottesville rally, or offers 'How to burn jews' as an automatically-generated ad purchasing group, it is actually working as designed. It is this definition of 'working' and this design for which Facebook needs to be held publicly accountable."

He argues that there is an absence of government policy deliberation about how political advertising is used: "Instead, Facebook is intertwined in the workings of governments, the development of public policies and the campaigns of political parties. Recent policy decisions have seen the company remain largely untaxed and called on to help solve the journalism problem for which it is the leading cause."

Owen suggests that the government is taking a "*laissez-faire* approach" and suggests it could "force

complete transparency of all paid content of any kind shown to Canadians during the election period, as with other media. It could demand disclosure of all financial, location and targeting data connected to this paid content. It could place significant fines on the failure to quickly remove misinformation and hate speech. It could ensure that independent researchers have access to the platform's data, rather than merely relying on Facebook's good intentions. Political parties and the government could even model good behaviour themselves by ceasing to spend millions of dollars of our money on Facebook's microtargeted ads.

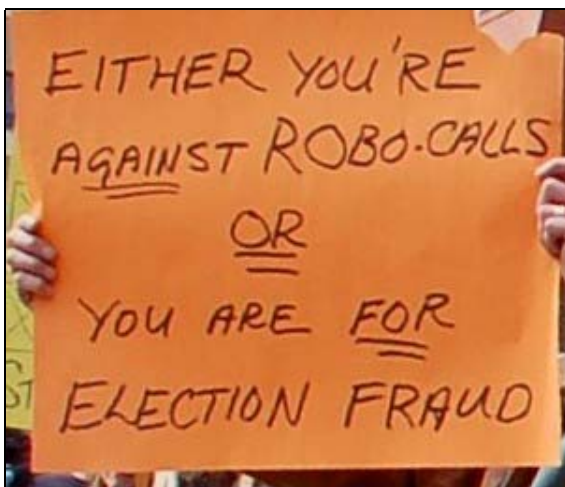
"None of these options are likely to be adopted voluntarily or unilaterally by Facebook," writes Owen, adding what one hopes is a sarcastic statement: "We have governments to safeguard the public interest."

"In fact, the modest voluntary efforts announced Thursday [October 19], which aim to put the focus on users through news literacy initiatives, and hackers through better security, ignore the key structural problem that has undermined elections around the world -- the very business model of Facebook. Efforts such as the Canadian Election Integrity Initiative represent a shift in the public position of Facebook that should, if it goes further, be welcomed. But it must also be viewed as the action of a private corporation that extracts increasing profits from a *de facto* public space."

Fenwick McKelvey, an assistant professor of information and technology at Concordia, also questioned the initiative and said it was not enough to deal with the problem. He told the *Toronto Star* that "relying on this omni-competent citizen to be able to know that there's something being run against them" will not work. "It's not actually addressing some of the root systemic causes -- which is producing the possibility of fake news being lucrative, or the accountability issues in their ad targeting system," he said.

Elizabeth Dubois, an assistant professor at the University of Ottawa specializing in "digital democratic accountability and engagement," referred to Facebook's previous promises to make "dark advertising ... less opaque." For example, "Dark advertising" refers to the micro-targeting of advertisements to individuals isolated on the basis of tracking their on-line behaviour and linked to other data available to the advertiser about them. Facebook's promised tools would allow recipients of ads to find out who the advertiser is and what other ads it is running. Chan said at the October 19 luncheon that Facebook users should be able to see who commissioned an ad displayed on their newsfeeds. It is supposed to be operational for the 2019 Federal Election.

According to the *Star*, the three digital media professors it interviewed want Elections Canada's mandate expanded to fully cover digital political campaigns, "including forcing platforms to disclose all information on targeted ads posted during the campaign, such as where they are placed, who sees them, who purchased them and for how much."



They also recommended expanding the registry requirement for "robocalls" to cover "social media bots." The registry was introduced after the 2011 Robocall Scandal which involved sending electors to wrong voting locations in an effort to suppress the vote of those who were known to be supporters of parties and candidates other than the Conservatives.

Facebook is one of the social media platforms that enables advertisers, including political parties and government, to target their audience. Its key advertising appeal is that it allows advertisers to target on the basis of age,

occupation, interests, friendship networks and what pages you may or may not like.

One digital strategist, Ruth Callaghan, from Australian public relations firm Cannings Purple, describes Facebook's users as "an absolutely saleable, marketable piece." She claims that regardless of privacy settings, Facebook owns all of its users' activity data. "Micro-targeting allows them [political parties] to understand where you live, what you do, whether you own your own home, whether you are angry with political status quo, if you like triggers that indicate what political party you would normally support," she said.

According to Callaghan, "After about 10 likes, Facebook can make a judgement about your gender, sexuality, or if you are conservative or left-leaning. Hundreds of likes enable Facebook to build a very detailed profile." She adds: "It can be that Facebook knows more about you than your parents do, your partner does, than you even do yourself." Further, she states, "Any party that now isn't using it, isn't doing their job properly."

Facebook defends its practice by stating that data provided for advertising is anonymous and not linked to a person's individual profile or identity, i.e. it is "merely metadata."

Notes

1. Matthew John is Director of Education for MediaSmarts, that bills itself as Canada's centre for digital and media literacy. He is the author of many of MediaSmarts' lessons, parent materials and interactive resources and a lead on MediaSmarts' Young Canadians in a Wired World research project. As an acknowledged expert in digital literacy and its implementation in Canadian curricula, Matthew is the architect of MediaSmarts' Use, Understand, Create: Digital Literacy Framework for Canadian K-12 Schools. He has served on expert panels convened by the Canadian Pediatric Society, the Ontario Network of Child and Adolescent Inpatient Psychiatric Services and others, and as a consultant on provincial curriculum for the Ontario Ministry of Education.

2. The Social Media Lab is a multi- and inter-disciplinary research laboratory at the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University in Toronto. The lab studies how social media is changing the ways in which people communicate, disseminate information, conduct business and form communities, and how these changes impact the social, economic and political structures of modern society.

It says its expertise "lies in studying online communities and social networks and developing new tools and methods for analyzing and visualizing social media data. The broad aim of our various research initiatives is to provide decision-makers with additional knowledge and insights into the behaviors and relationships of online network members, and to understand how these interpersonal connections influence our personal choices and actions."

3. For further information, see "[Communications Security Establishment Issues Unacceptable Cyber Threat Assessment](#)," by Anna Di Carlo, *TML Weekly*, July 1, 2017.



Privacy Commissioner Addresses Online Electoral Reform Survey

- Enver Villamizar -

On September 21, Privacy Commissioner Daniel Therrien issued the final report of his office's investigation of the Trudeau government's use of its MyDemocracy.ca online questionnaire. The

questionnaire's results were used by Prime Minister Trudeau to unilaterally declare that the government would not follow through on its promise for electoral reform. Instead, he declared that now the main issue is to "defend Canada's democracy" from cyber threats and Russian hacking. The report is entitled "MyDemocracy website not designed in a privacy sensitive way."

According to the report, a complainant alleged that although the website indicated responses would be anonymous, it used "Facebook Connect" tracking. This permits Facebook to track users' web activity on or off Facebook and to harvest information from it. The complainant raised concerns that as a result the government may have itself been using tracking measures while at the same time publicly telling citizens that their responses were anonymous. The government emphatically denies that it was tracking participants, however it has been unable to satisfy the Privacy Commissioner that the MyDemocracy website gave participants the ability to consent to having their responses



given to third parties such as Facebook. In fact, the report concluded that the website did indeed expose participants' responses and their results to third parties such as Facebook, and that this was done before participants would have been able to consent, or not, to sharing the information.

The findings of the Privacy Commissioner's report and the government's response both make the issue the design of the website and whether or not this should or could have better limited or eliminated the ability of participant information to be harvested by social media monopolies like Facebook and Google Analytics. Hence the title of the report, "MyDemocracy website not designed in a privacy sensitive way."

What remains hidden is that the aim of the entire exercise itself was to impose new methods of decision-making which the government hoped would legitimize the existing unrepresentative democracy at a time when the people are clamouring for change and for a real say over the decisions that affect their lives. The exposure of participants' data and results shows that these methods are all about handing over large amounts of data to private interests who can sell this to political parties to use for nefarious purposes, including depriving people of an outlook which assists them in solving the problems they and their societies face.



These social media monopolies base their business on harvesting such information, selling it directly to others or indirectly through their software to provide micro-targeting of the world's people. The Trudeau government has now given Facebook the role to "protect Canada's democracy" by working with Canada's spy agencies to meddle in the affairs of political parties, targeting those who do not submit to U.S. imperialist definitions of democracy and human rights. Meanwhile it is these same private monopolies and their software that have given rise to this scandal for the Trudeau government

because it relies on them to target the brains of Canadians for mass manipulation to win elections.

Vox Pop Labs, the company which was sole-source contracted to run the government's website for the survey, is in the business of harvesting data to segment the population so that political parties

and governments can better target their consciousness for manipulation and direction towards false choices set by the ruling elite and their marketing machines. Its whole work in Canada is to force Canadians to "choose" exclusively from among the cartel parties through its Vote Compass application, which eliminates the full range of officially registered political parties that contest elections, thus depriving the people of an informed vote.

The fact that the website design permitted data to be harvested deepens the crisis for the cartel party system. This method of using digital tools to impose self-serving choices onto the people and then "nudge" them to select the one favoured by those carrying out the consultation relies heavily on people believing they are engaging in an anonymous and unbiased process. That the consultation on electoral reform exposed 243,057 participants' responses to companies like Facebook and Google Analytics deepens the credibility crisis for the government. Its attempt to present this new method as legitimate will discourage even more people from participating in their consultations in the future. This is a real problem for the rulers as they have such low participation in these things in the first place!

A warranted conclusion would be that Canadians require a political process which they control and which affirms the right of the electorate to participate in setting the agenda for the society and harmonizing their individual interests with those of the collective. The government's new methods seek only to legitimize Canada's existing unrepresentative democracy which provides no role for the people to decide anything of importance. Not only are they considered fair game for the harvesting of data that is used to reduce them to consumers, this is in fact the main aim of the entire exercise and must be rejected.

Background on MyDemocracy Survey

Between December 1 and December 31 the private company Vox Pop Labs Inc. ran an online survey through the website MyDemocracy.ca for the government of Canada.[1] Raymond Rivet, spokesman at the Privy Council Office, indicated when the survey's results were released that it cost almost \$1.83 million to mail out 14.8 million postcards promoting the online survey to every Canadian household, on top of the initial \$330,000 contract to Vox Pop Labs to create the website. Vox Pop Labs is the company behind the "Vote Compass" software, a pseudo-scientific instrument that puts together ranked responses to spurious questions and tells users which cartel party they are most aligned with in an election or where they fall on the so-called political spectrum. In the case of the MyDemocracy survey, it did not ask people to choose a particular reform they favour, or even rank those reforms. Instead, it had participants rank their level of agreement with a set of "values" or "principles" which was then used to divide participants according to one of five archetypes which was supposed to help Canadians "understand their own value preferences." The data was used to show participants where they stood on the arbitrary dividing lines established by Vox Pop Labs. It was also used by the government to claim that Canadians are generally satisfied with Canada's democracy.



The introductory slide of the survey stated: "As you answer the questions, remember that there are no wrong answers and your individual responses will always remain anonymous. This is a different

way of consulting Canadians -- we hope you enjoy this, and learn something too."

By the close of the initiative, approximately 383,074 "unique users" had completed the MyDemocracy.ca survey. Of those identified as "unique users," with various techniques used to try and weed out repeat or non-human respondents, 243,057 filled out "sufficient socio-demographic information" to be considered usable for the results of the survey presented to the government. This constitutes roughly 0.6 per cent of the Canadian population, which is completely unrepresentative. The "sufficient data" included information such as gender, postal code, age, highest level of education, area of work, combined household income, level of interest in politics and certain groups. Participants were also asked for their e-mail address.

The results were made public January 24. Minister of Democratic Institutions Karina Gould said, "The Government of Canada launched MyDemocracy.ca to engage as many Canadians as possible in the national conversation about electoral reform."

"I would like to thank the over 360,000 people in Canada who had their say about electoral reform through MyDemocracy.ca online or by phone. We are grateful so many people participated in this innovative, interactive application to help us build a stronger, healthier democracy. I would also like to thank Vox Pop Labs for their hard work in delivering MyDemocracy.ca and providing this final report to us," she said.

Excerpts of Report

The Privacy Commissioner's investigation determined that "the design of the MyDemocracy website included third party involvement that resulted in the disclosure of IP addresses and other browser characteristics to Facebook when the home page was loaded, even though there was no social sharing capability offered to participants until after the survey was completed. We concluded that in some cases this information could have been linked to specific individuals and thus would have constituted a disclosure of their personal information. We are not satisfied that [the Privy Council Office] had consent for these disclosures."

In their explanation of the specifics the report noted that "based on the website's original design, we found that certain information was shared with Facebook when any individual visited the MyDemocracy website. In particular, we found that the user's IP address, browser characteristics and MyDemocracy URL was shared with Facebook as soon as the MyDemocracy home page was loaded."

"We also found that the unique results URL that was shown at the end of the survey and the participant's results group (archetype) were also shared with Facebook before a user specifically opted to complete a social sharing action."

[...]

"For those individuals who visited the website and who were simultaneously logged into Facebook, identifying information such as a Facebook user ID was also shared in cookies, thereby linking all of the above information to an identifiable Facebook user.

"[W]e were of the view that for those users who were logged into their Facebook account when visiting the website, the information shared with Facebook clearly constituted the personal information of the Facebook logged-in user as this could have been linked back to and identified the user via the Facebook ID."

"[E]ven for users who were not logged-in to Facebook, there was a serious possibility that these individuals could have been identified using the information shared with Facebook, such as their IP address, particularly when combined with other information such as browser characteristics and site

URLs the user had viewed, and thus, this constituted personal information."

"[T]he sharing of this information would have taken place automatically upon visiting the homepage of the website, including IP address, browser characteristics, and the MyDemocracy URL, before an individual even had a chance to learn about the website's practices and make an informed choice about whether or not to interact with the website."

"[O]ur review confirmed that some information was also being shared with Google as a result of the integration of the Google Analytics service. In so doing, Google also received the network characteristics, including IP address, as well as the MyDemocracy URL."^[2]

Response of Trudeau Government

For the most part, the Trudeau government through the Privy Council Office has declared that it did nothing wrong and that there really was no means for the government or Vox Pop Lab, to which it issued a sole-source contract to do the survey, to "track" respondents.

However, following initial investigation and recommendations by the Commissioner's office after the survey was launched, the Trudeau government made a number of changes, allegedly in response to the concerns raised, including to clarify its privacy policy. However, the Privacy Commissioner noted in his final report that in terms of changes to the privacy policy for the survey which led people to believe that their data would be kept anonymous and not shared with third parties, "[the Privy Council Office] amended the Privacy Policy of the website to enhance clarity on the presence of third party components; however, we were not satisfied that this notice, even as amended, would have been sufficient to obtain meaningful consent from individuals to disclose this information."

The report describes how the government responded in one case, highlighting its refusal to deal with the matter: "[The Privy Council Office] stated that to obtain a Facebook account, individuals must agree to Facebook's Terms of Service. In doing so, users agree that Facebook not only collects their browser data while they are logged in, but that Facebook will also be able to access data saved in browsers while not logged in. If a Facebook user does not wish to share his or her Internet activity and personal information with Facebook, they have a variety of options, such as using private browsing modes, accessing websites from a computer (and IP address) that they never use to log in to Facebook, clearing their browsing data before logging in to Facebook, or deleting their Facebook account."

Notes

1. See "One Year of Liberal Rule: Government to Launch New Online Consultation on Electoral Reform," *TML Weekly*, November 12, 2016.
2. Read full report [here](#).



Election Finance Reforms to Eliminate "Cash-for-Access"

Attempt to Cover Up How the Financial Oligarchy Rules

Bill C-50, federal legislation aimed at bringing transparency to "cash-for-access" political party events has made its way through review by the Committee on Procedures and House Affairs, and

its report to Parliament dated October 19 will go to Parliament for third reading and adoption.

The legislation comes in the wake of scandals related to Liberal Party fund-raising events organized and/or attended by monied interests. "Cash-for-access" refers to a fund-raising method where people must make donations to a political party to attend a function where they can meet the most influential and powerful people in the party. It is argued that these "cash-for-access" fund-raisers allow people who can afford to attend them to influence the decision-makers.

Once adopted the legislation will require political parties with representation in the House of Commons -- the Liberals, Conservatives, NDP, Bloc Québécois and Greens -- to publicly announce (on their websites) any fund-raising event attended by party leaders or cabinet ministers where the cost of admission is \$200 or more. Political parties without a seat in the House of Commons are specifically exempted from the legislation. The postings must be put up at least five days before the event. It is said that this will allow the media to attend the fund-raisers so that they can report what happens there. After the event, political parties will have to publicly report the list of all people who attended the fund-raiser.

The legislation was supported in principle by the opposition Conservatives, and the NDP and the Green Party, but they voted against it because of the refusal of Liberal Committee members to agree to amendments put forward. For instance, the Liberals voted down an amendment that would have added the attendance of appointed ministerial staff at a fund-raiser to the list of attendees who trigger the legal requirement for a public posting.

The "cash-for-access" prohibition will join the many other mechanisms that exist for purposes of making public the interactions between private interests and the politically powerful. These include the Registry of Lobbyists and the various codes of ethical conduct. According to the logic of the parliamentary system's rules, by having all these mechanisms in place, when the government makes decisions, the media in particular, and others who do their due diligence, can determine if government decisions are serving particular private interests or have been improperly influenced by them. On the Registry of Lobbyists website, for instance, anyone can do a search for lobbying activity that has occurred over the past 12 months, or learn about the list of all registered lobbyists. The site informs that as of October 27, 2017, there were 954 consultant lobbyists; 1,850 in-house corporation lobbyists; and 2,837 in-house organization lobbyists for a total of 5,641.



All of this covers up the fact that the political parties of the cartel system have become publicly-funded appendages of the state through which the economically powerful exercise their rule because the political and electoral process is designed for this purpose. It was created in an era when only white men of property were entitled to vote and they were represented by contending political parties that represented the most economically powerful amongst them. The expansion of the suffrage to include all citizens 18 years and over regardless of their property or wealth did not bring with it legislation that would enable them to exercise their franchise beyond just voting.

Ending the influence of money in elections and enabling all citizens to be decision-makers, regardless of their social status or wealth, requires legislation with that aim in mind, not legislation

to increase the transparency of private funding of political parties who are in any case dependent on public funding for their existence. It requires legislation to enable electors to select candidates from amongst their own peers and to determine the agenda on the basis of which elections would be conducted. It requires a system in which public funds are used not to fund political parties representing various private interests, but the political process itself. It requires a public authority responsible for informing the electorate about the problems facing the society and the various solutions that are proposed to advance the society. Legislation aimed at making transparent who contributes to political parties and receives an audience with the "decision-makers" only serves to obfuscate the fact that the people are being deprived of their right to be the decision-makers.

Legislation is being introduced across the country to obscure the fact that the establishment's political parties have become publicly-funded state-institutions through which the economically powerful exercise their rule. The solution to the problem of eliminating the role of money in elections cannot be found in regulating the way that political parties raise funds from the private sector. It is found in ending the privilege and power accorded to political parties and instituting measures to empower the people. It is the absence of enabling legislation for the majority of the people to participate in governance that is the problem. Funding of the political process instead of the parties is required. Political parties should be allowed to raise money however they want. It is their ability to exercise domination over the decision-making process at the expense of the people's right to an informed vote, to select candidates from amongst their peers, and to set the agenda that must be ended.



Working for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Enthusiastic Response to Launch of Canadian Peace Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula



The Committee for Peace on the Korean Peninsula, a group of activists from various organizations who have been leafleting and holding pickets for several weeks now in downtown Toronto, launched the Canadian Peace Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula at its October 26 picket at the University of Toronto. The petition received wide support from the youth and students. Many stopped to talk and expressed their concern about the danger of war breaking out on the Korean peninsula. One youth, who is studying history at the university, pointed out that it is difficult to know what is going on there and that the media is full of information about how bad the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is, while little is said to oppose U.S. President

Trump and his threats against that country. Another group of undergraduates in the East Asian Studies program stopped to sign the petition and mentioned that they are currently discussing precisely these unfolding events in Korea in their class, and were surprised and pleased that a group was taking a stand against war in that part of the world. Another graduate student who stopped to sign the petition expressed his appreciation that something is being done to inform people about the unstable situation on the Korean peninsula and noted that the picketers were taking an important and courageous stand.

The members of the Committee who took part in the picket felt that the launch of the petition clearly grabbed the attention of the students. H.P. Chung, one of the most active members, who was born in the DPRK and whose family was torn apart by the U.S. division of Korea and the Korean War, was encouraged by the warm response to the petition and that many youth came forward to sign. More than 200 students took the leaflet distributed at the picket.



The Committee is calling on all people in Canada to take up the Canadian Peace Petition as their own and circulate it widely. As the clouds of another U.S. war of aggression gather over the Korean Peninsula, it is urgent that all justice and peace-loving Canadians take a bold and firm stand in favour of peace and oppose U.S. war preparations and the Canadian government's own acts of aggression against the DPRK. The Canadian government should lift all sanctions against the DPRK and normalize relations with that country, which would be a good contribution to peace-building on the Korean Peninsula.

All Out for the Success of the Canadian Peace Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula!

For a printable copy of the petition to sign and circulate, [click here](#).



Korean Patriots Living Abroad Affirm Peace and Unification at Moscow Gathering



TMLW is printing below a report submitted by the Korean Federation in Canada on a meeting that took place September 3 in Moscow, to mark the 10th anniversary of the October 4 Agreement

signed between the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK).

A delegation from Canada participated in a commemorative meeting to mark the 10th anniversary of the October 4 Declaration signed in Pyongyang DPRK by Kim Jong Il, the leader of the DPRK at the time and then-President of the ROK Roh Moon-hyun in 2007.

Some 250 Koreans living outside the Korean Peninsula participated in the meeting. The main group of delegates to the meeting were people of Korean nationality living in Russia. Besides our delegation, other participants came from the U.S., Japan, Germany, Kazakhstan, China, Uzbekistan and some other places.

The main purpose of the meeting was to re-affirm the principles and spirit of the October 4 Declaration which strengthened and expanded the principles laid out in the historic June 15 North-South Joint Declaration signed in Pyongyang in 2000. The meeting affirmed that these two agreements made in the spirit of reconciliation and peace between the north and the south of Korea remain valid today as a means to strengthen inter-Korean relations and move the nation towards reunification which is the ardent desire of all Koreans.

The Moscow meeting enabled the delegates to exchange views on how best to contribute to building peace on the Korean Peninsula today, particularly in the complex situation facing the Korean people and the beating of the war drums against the DPRK.

The main thrust of the gathering was to affirm the right of the Korean people to live in peace and the main decision taken was that the Korean diaspora in every country will step up their efforts in favour of peace and justice on the Korean peninsula. They pledged to oppose ongoing U.S. war threats and military exercises against the DPRK, the build-up of strategic weapons in south Korea as well as the further militarization of the Korean peninsula by the U.S.

The day-long conference concluded with a cultural program and a dinner.



Hands Off Iran!

Demand Political Not Military Solutions

- Voice of Revolution -



President Trump took action against Iran, saying he would not certify Iran's compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. The certification is required by law, every 90 days and October 15 was the deadline. Trump has twice certified Iran as being in compliance with the JCPOA but has now decided not to do so. He is also urging Congress to pass legislation within 60 days to re-impose sanctions, an action directly against

the agreement. Both actions are seen as steps towards war with Iran and are being widely opposed, across the country and around the world.

Trump is refusing to certify even though the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed that Iran is in compliance. Secretary of Defense General Mattis has also said maintaining the JCPOA is in the U.S. "national security interests." The division on the matter within the executive is indicative of the crisis U.S. ruling circles are contending with. Their mechanisms for resolving differences, such as a functioning Congress, political parties and elections, are no longer serving to do so. The factions within and between the executive, the military and the intelligence agencies contend and collude, like mafia cartels. And the contention and collusion are such that the president, as Commander in Chief, is openly contradicted by the military. All of which creates a dangerous situation, increasing the potential for broader war.

The same holds true on an international level. The JCPOA was negotiated and signed by the five permanent UN Security Council members (U.S., Britain, China, France, Russia,) plus Germany (P5+1) and Iran. The response from the European Union to Trump's action was to say he alone cannot eliminate the agreement and that the European Union (EU) would uphold it. France and Germany in particular have their own interests in Iran, as they do in Syria for which they have long contended with the U.S. That this contention is heating up is evident in the EU response and their readiness to contend with Trump on the matter. High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said minutes after Trump said he would not certify Iran's compliance, "It is not a bilateral agreement, it does not belong to any single country and it is not up to any single country to terminate it." She added, "We cannot afford, as international community -- as EU for sure -- to dismantle a nuclear agreement that is working and delivering, especially now."

In attempting to justify his actions, Trump continued the U.S. approach of "you are with us or you are with the terrorists." This is notable in that it is the U.S. that determines who is and is not a terrorist. In his speech October 13 Trump said Iran "remains the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, and provides assistance to al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas, and other terrorist networks." He added, "This regime has fueled sectarian violence in Iraq, and vicious civil wars in Yemen and Syria." In this manner, Iran is branded the terrorist while the U.S., the world's biggest terrorist with its drone attacks, assassinations, bombings and use of chemical weapons like white phosphorous and depleted uranium, is supposedly the world's protector. As well organizations like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine are branded terrorist, while Israel, which with U.S. backing repeatedly carries out massacres and genocide, is not. Iran is blamed for wars in Yemen and Syria, when it is the U.S. that is responsible, including funding and arming terrorist groups in Syria. Trump is not concerned here with whether he is believed on these issues, but rather that the dictate of the U.S. deciding is accepted. All must submit, including the EU, to the U.S. deciding who is and is not terrorist or face the U.S. wrath, as is occurring with Iran and Korea.



Trump's actions also show that the U.S. has no solutions other than use of force. Diplomacy and political solutions are eliminated in a situation where rule of law has been eliminated and a government of police powers imposed. Police powers by definition are the arbitrary use of force

with impunity against any and all who do not submit to U.S. dictate.

As the wars and U.S. aggression have all shown, use of force is no solution and only further intensifies difficulties. For political solutions to prevail, the people must advance their own independent politics and anti-war stands. Iran, for example, has called for a nuclear-free Middle East and supports the recent UN treaty banning nuclear weapons and criminalizing having them and using them. Let all join Iran in supporting a nuclear-free Middle East! Let all also join efforts to organize for an anti-war government in the U.S. and a political process that opens the way for an anti-war government. Diplomacy and political solutions are needed and it is the people's own organizing efforts that are required to achieve them.



Spain Imposes Direct Rule on Catalonia

Support Catalans' Right to Decide Their Future! Oppose the Spanish Government's Takeover!



Celebrations in Barcelona as Catalanian parliament votes for independence, October 27, 2017.

On October 28, the Spanish government imposed direct rule on the autonomous region of Catalonia, using Article 155 of the Spanish constitution. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has now replaced Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, dissolved the regional parliament and called a regional election for December 21. The Rajoy government, known for its anti-people austerity measures, has proven incapable of resolving the crisis politically and has refused all invitations to dialogue. Puigdemont and the 12 members of the Catalan cabinet will no longer be paid and could be charged with usurping others' functions if they refuse to obey, news agencies report. In a brief televised address at 2:30 pm local time, Puigdemont rejected the takeover and called on Catalans to peacefully oppose it. He stated that only the regional parliament can elect or dismiss the Catalan government and that "we will continue working to build a free country."

The director of the Catalan regional police, who was also fired, issued a statement saying he would comply with his termination. The regional police force tweeted later that day that "protecting and guaranteeing the safety of people is our priority. We continue working normally." The 17,000

members of the Catalan police had refused to participate in the state violence carried out by the Spanish national police to stop the October 1 referendum.

TML Weekly calls on everyone to support the right of Catalans to decide their future, and denounces the takeover of the Catalan government by the Spanish government and its ongoing threats of state repression and state violence.

The imposition of direct rule by the Spanish government on Catalonia followed the Catalan parliament's formal vote for independence from Spain on October 27. This vote was a further act of defiance of the Spanish government, which has been escalating state repression to criminalize Catalans' right to decide their future. This had culminated in the massive police violence in the lead-up to and during the October 1 non-binding referendum, in which nearly 1,000 people were injured. In the referendum, 43 per cent of voters turned out and voted 90 per cent in favour of independence. More recently on October 17, the Spanish High Court ordered the heads of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) and independence group Omnium to be held without bail pending an investigation for alleged sedition for organizing the October 1 referendum and the protests against state repression.

Just prior to the October 27 vote on Catalonia's independence, deputies for the three parties opposed to independence walked out of the parliament. Those remaining voted 70 in favour of independence, 10 against, with two blank ballots. The vote was held as a secret ballot to guard against any attempt by the Spanish state to prosecute those who voted in favour of independence. The Catalan parliament has 135 seats, of which 72 belong to a coalition of parties that support independence. Previously, President Puigdemont, while acknowledging the October 1 result, had declined to formally declare independence, instead proposing that the effects of an independence declaration be suspended for two months to permit a period of dialogue.



Catalan parliament as vote is taken for independence from Spain, October 27, 2017.

Also on October 27, shortly after the vote in the Catalan parliament, the Spanish Senate authorized the Rajoy government to implement Article 155 of the constitution. This article allows the national government to implement direct rule over any of the 17 autonomous communities and two autonomous cities that comprise Spain's regional governments.

The autonomous communities, which correspond to historic regions and/or nationalities within Spain, exercise self-governance within the limits of the Spanish constitution and their autonomous statutes. The current Spanish constitution came into being in 1978 after the end of the Franco

dictatorship. Its official English translation describes Article 155 as "Execution by Government of Community's obligations in case of non-compliance." It reads:

"1. If a Self-governing Community does not fulfil the obligations imposed upon it by the Constitution or other laws, or acts in a way that is seriously prejudicial to the general interest of Spain, the Government, after having lodged a complaint with the President of the Self-governing Community and failed to receive satisfaction therefore, may, following approval granted by the overall majority of the Senate, take all measures necessary to compel the Community to meet said obligations, or to protect the abovementioned general interest.

"2. With a view to implementing the measures provided for in the foregoing paragraph, the Government may issue instructions to all the authorities of the Self-governing Communities."[1]



Catalans celebrate vote for independence, October 27, 2017.

Note

1. See [here](#).

(With files from: Quartz, BBC, Reuters, Guardian, Associated Press, New York Times. Photos: Catalan News, The Pileus, M. Yiannopfans)



UN to Vote Against U.S. Blockade of Cuba

November 1 Actions Against All-Sided U.S. Blockade

All Out to End U.S. Blockade of Cuba



Picket in Montreal, September 17, 2017.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On November 1 international protest actions will be held to coincide with the annual United Nations vote against the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba. The Canadian Network on Cuba encourages member groups and all Canadians to participate in this day of international protest by organizing actions in their various communities.

Recent actions by the Trump regime underscore the importance of the November 1 protests, the CNC points out. The Trump administration has expelled 15 Cuban diplomats from the Embassy of Cuba in Washington, DC, and ended all visa processing for Cubans visiting or invited to the United States. "As the Trump regime endeavours to manufacture a diplomatic crisis, Cuba has denied in the strongest terms any responsibility for the reported health issues concerning some U.S. and Canadian diplomats," the CNC points out.

For 25 consecutive years the UN has rejected U.S. attempts to impose its imperial will on Cuba through coercion by the unilateral commercial, economic and financial blockade of Cuba. This not only demonstrates the unflinching opposition of the world to the criminal U.S. policy, but also the depth of global support and respect for Cuba.

The struggle to bring an end to the U.S. economic war against Cuba continues. The blockade is "a flagrant violation of international law, constituting the principal obstacle to the island's social and economic development. In this struggle, the nations and the peoples of the world, representing the immense majority of humanity, have declared with one voice that they stand with Cuba," the CNC noted.

Meanwhile, the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations states in a press release on October 25 that the blockade is not merely between Cuba and the United States but affects all countries. The U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba "has a strong

extraterritorial component that adversely affects the actions of Cuban companies with their counterparts in third countries."

The Mission provides the following recent examples:

On September 9, 2016, the Dutch bank Rabobank canceled financial services related to Cuba with the company Vereenigde Octrooibureaux (V.O.) due to blockade regulations. V.O. is in charge of the renewal of patents of BIOCUBAFARMA, a Cuban business group that develops inventions associated with biopharmaceutical products. Consequently, the said business group will not be able to make payments to V.O. in order to maintain its patents in Europe.

Between July and September 2016, six banks located in Pakistan refused to open a letter of credit to Cuba because it is being included on the list of countries sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC). Pakistani biotech company Macter International had requested the letter from Cuban company Heber Biotec for the purchase of 100,000 Hepatitis B vaccines.

On October 7, 2016, Swiss bank UBS S.A. refused to accept a transfer of 20,000 Swiss francs from Cuba, related to the payment of the annual contribution of the National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, based in Geneva, Switzerland.

On October 31, 2016, Belgian bank Fintro, a subsidiary of the BNP Paribas-Fortis group, refused to transfer funds from a Belgian citizen to a Cuban citizen affected by Hurricane Matthew. BNP Paribas had been fined U.S. \$8.97 billion by OFAC in 2014 for violating sanctions against Cuba, Iran, Myanmar and Sudan.

On April 10, 2017, the Canadian branch of U.S. Company Expedia broke off negotiations with Hola Sun travel agency, a representative of the Havanatur Company in Canada, to enter into an agreement for the sale of tickets to travel to Cuba. Expedia claimed that the inclusion of Hola Sun in OFAC's Specially Designated Nationals List prevented an agreement being reached.

***Join the November 1 Actions to Protest the U.S. Blockade of Cuba!
Down with the U.S. Blockade of Cuba!***



Cuba Publishes Annual Report on Blockade Damages

- Granma -

Cuba's 2017 report states that the U.S. blockade has cost the Cuban economy over \$822 billion in damages since its introduction in the 1960s.

Almost 60 years after its implementation, the United States blockade policy against the Cuban people is intensifying, in a context of heightened tensions impacting the progress achieved by the two countries in the diplomatic sphere.

This is reflected in Cuba's Report to the United Nations General Assembly on Resolution 71/5 entitled "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial, and Financial Blockade Imposed by the



United States of America on Cuba," which outlines the extensive damages suffered by the island.

The document, which analyses the period between April 2016 and June 2017, estimates the total actual damages to the island to be in the order of \$4,305,400,000 dollars.

These figures relate to restrictions that affect the island's economic and social development, despite the enormous efforts of the Cuban government to mitigate the obsolete and illegal policy.

Education, health, sports, culture, industrial development, tourism, food, and information and communications technology continue to be some of the sectors most affected by the coercive measures of the current U.S. administration.

The report, published on the Cuban Foreign Ministry's website, outlines the extraterritorial nature of the blockade, impacting cooperation and in open violation of international law, for the express purpose of punishing a sovereign and independent people.

President Donald Trump's signing of the National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba, backed by a minority in Miami, is the latest example of the escalating aggression against the island.

This Report, presented by Cuba every year as a prelude to the UN vote on the resolution, also exposes the widespread condemnation of the blockade within U.S. society and the international community, and the Cuban people's demand for an immediate end to the failed policy.

After 57 years of spurious rhetoric and failed attempts to undermine our sovereignty and social project, the Report reiterates that the economic, commercial and financial blockade constitutes the biggest obstacle to the implementation of the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan, the well-being of the Cuban people, and the normalization of relations with the United States.

More than an official report, the presentation of this document is yet another clear sign that the Cuban people will not give up their efforts to put an end to the blockade. The truth, respect and peaceful coexistence will once again be the most solid arguments in defence of our cause.

As the Report notes: "The damages caused by the implementation of the blockade throughout almost six decades have been estimated at \$822,280,000,000, taking into account the devaluation of the U.S. dollar *vis-à-vis* the price of gold in the world market."

To read Cuba's full report click [here](#).

(October 16, 2017. English translation edited slightly for grammar and clarity.)



100th Anniversary of the Balfour Declaration

Palestine: Ethnic Cleansing and Dispossession (Excerpt)

- Dr. Ismail Zayid -



Click to enlarge.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

[...]

It was the second of November 1917 when Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, issued his infamous declaration in the form of a letter written to Lord Rothschild. It read:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..., it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

It is interesting to note that the four-letter word "Arab" occurs not once in this document. To refer to the Arabs who constituted, at the time, 92 per cent of the population of Palestine and owned 98 per cent of its land, as the non-Jewish communities is not merely preposterous but deliberately fraudulent. I do not need to tell you that this letter has no shred of legality, as Palestine did not belong to Balfour to assume such acts of generosity. Dr. Arnold Toynbee described the British role, in issuing this document, accurately:

"We were taking it upon ourselves to give away something that was not ours to give. We were promising rights of some kind in the Palestinian Arabs' country to a third party."

Similarly, the well-known Jewish writer, Arthur Koestler, summed it up aptly when he described

the Balfour Declaration as a document in which "one nation promised a second the country of a third."

On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed its Resolution No. 181, recommending the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state, in 56 per cent of the land; an Arab state in 42 per cent of the land; and an International Zone in Jerusalem. At the time, the Jews, a large proportion of them recent or illegal immigrants, constituted one-third of the population of Palestine and owned 5.6 per cent of its land. In the area that was apportioned to the Jewish state, half of the population was Arab (Muslims and Christians) and half was Jewish.

It is interesting to note that times have not changed since 1947 when the United States got the General Assembly to delay a vote "to gain time to bring, by coercion, certain Latin American, Asian and African countries into line with its own views." Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles stated:

"By direct order of the White House, every form of pressure, direct and indirect, was used to make sure that the necessary majority would be gained."

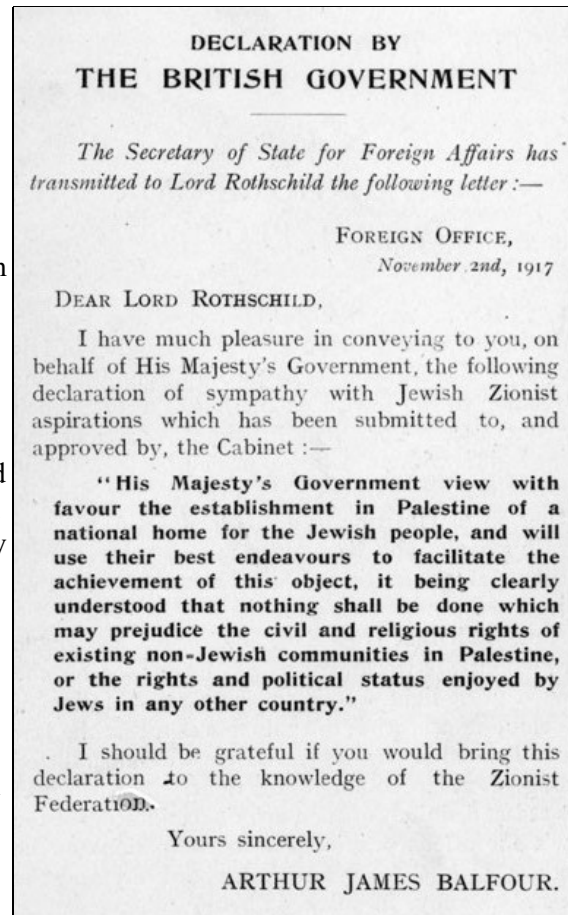
Subsequently, fighting erupted between Arabs and Jews and by the end of the fighting in early 1949, Israel had occupied 78 per cent of Palestine and approximately 750,000 Palestinians were driven out or fled in terror from their homes.

The genesis of this exodus emanates from the inherent concept of the Zionist ideology of creating a pure Jewish state in Palestine, free of Arabs. The current powerful political agenda that exists in Israel today, as the policy of "transfer of Palestinians" from Israel and the occupied territories, is not a new one. Theodor Herzl wrote in his diaries in 1897, on the occasion of the First World Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, where he presented his plans to create a Jewish state in Palestine, that:

"We shall try to spirit the penniless (Arab) population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country... Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly."^[1]

Ben-Gurion, in a speech to the 20th Zionist Congress plenum in Zurich on August 7, 1937, stated:

"Transfer of (Arab) inhabitants happened in the past, in the (Jerzeel) Valley, in the Sharon (i.e. the Coastal Plain) and in other places. We know of the Jewish National Fund's actions in this regard. Now the transfer will have to be carried out on a different scale altogether. In many parts of the country new Jewish settlement will not be possible unless there is transfer of the Arab peasantry... The transfer of the population is what makes possible a comprehensive (Jewish) settlement plan. Thankfully, the Arab people have large, empty areas (outside Palestine). Jewish power in the country, which is continuously growing, will also increase our possibilities to carry out the transfer



on a large scale. You must remember, that this method contains an important humane and Zionist idea, to shift parts of a people (i.e., the Palestine Arabs) to their own country and to settle empty lands [in Syria, Transjordan and Iraq]."[2]

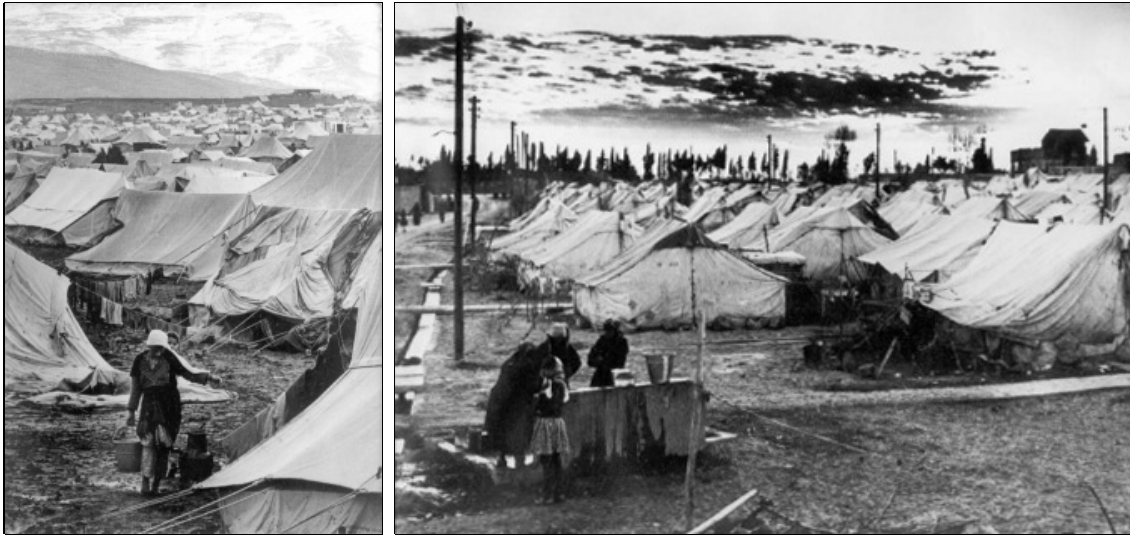
Here we go again! Expelling people from their homeland, we are now told, is a "humane Zionist idea." Professor Israel Shahak said it all:

"You cannot have humane Zionism; it is a contradiction in terms."

In a letter in 1937 to his son, Amos, Ben-Gurion confided that when the Jewish state comes into being, "We will expel the Arabs and take their places." And while visiting the newly-conquered Nazareth in July 1948, Ben-Gurion exclaimed: **"Why are there so many Arabs left here? Why didn't you expel them?"**

Joseph Weitz, who was the Jewish Agency chief representative, reported in the September 29, 1967 issue of *Davar*, organ of the Histadrut, that he and other Zionist leaders concluded, in 1940, that there was "no room for both peoples together in this country." The achievement of Zionist objectives, he realized, required "a Palestine, or at least Western Palestine (west of the Jordan River) without Arabs." He wrote that it was necessary "to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries. To transfer all of them and only after such transfer would the country be able to absorb millions of our brethren." This, in essence, is the foundation for the policy of "ethnic cleansing" that the Zionist forces adopted in 1948 to remove, by massacre, or the threat of massacre, and by psychological warfare, virtually the entire Arab population in the area of the Palestinian territory that they conquered by military means, 78 per cent of Palestine.





The 1948 Nakba -- the forcible mass expulsion of the Palestinians by the Zionists.

The massacre on April 9, 1948 of the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem, where 250 men, women and children were butchered and massacred in cold blood by the Irgun Zvei Leumi terrorist gang, with the approval of the Jerusalem commander of the official Zionist forces; the Haganah, David Shaltiel, as recently documented by Yitzhak Levi, a veteran Israeli intelligence officer, was instrumental in this expulsion. Ironically, the village of Deir Yassin had made a peace agreement with their Jewish neighbours of Givat Shaul. This massacre was not unique and numerous similar massacres were carried out by Zionist forces and Israeli forces during that war. A recent article in the Tel Aviv newspaper, *Hair*, of May 6, 1992, by Guy Erlich, documents evidence collected by the American Jewish journalist Dan Kortzman, author of *Genesis 1948*, and the history researcher Ariyeh Yitzhaki, of at least twenty large massacres of Arabs and about a hundred more massacres committed by Israeli forces. Yitzhaki states:

"For many Israelis it was easy to cling to the false claim that the Arabs left the country because that was what their leaders ordered. That is a total lie. The fundamental cause for the flight of the Arabs was their fear of Israelis' violence, and that fear had a basis in reality."

History researcher Uri Milstein, celebrated in Israel as the dispeller of myths, confirms Yitzhaki's evaluation regarding the volume of the massacres and even goes further:

"If Yitzhaki claims that there were murders in almost every village, then I say that up to the inception of Israel **every event of fighting ended in a massacre of Arabs. There were massacres of Arabs in all of Israel's wars, but I have no doubt that the War of Independence was the dirtiest.**"

In the village of Duweima, an Arab village near Hebron, occupied without a battle by Battalion 89 of the 8th Brigade, some 80-100 civilians were murdered in cold blood by the occupiers. Later more civilians were murdered. In the village of Safsaf:

"Fifty-two men were tied with a rope. Lowered into a pit and shot. Ten were killed. Women begged for mercy. Three cases of rape. A 14-year-old raped and four others killed."

The policy of massacre was complemented by a campaign of psychological warfare, initiating terror to force the Palestinians to flee. Leo Heiman, Israeli Army Reserve officer who fought in 1948, wrote in *Marine Corp Gazette* in June 1964:

"As uncontrolled panic spread through all Arab quarters, the Israelis brought up jeeps with loudspeakers which broadcast recorded 'horror sounds.' These included shrieks, wails and

anguished moans of Arab women, the wail of sirens and the clang of fire alarm bells, interrupted by a sepulchral voice calling out in Arabic. 'Save your souls all ye faithful: the Jews are using poison gas and atomic weapons. Run for your lives in the name of Allah.'

More subtle methods of psychological warfare were used by Yigal Allon, the Commander of the Palmach, an elite Haganah force, who later became Israeli Foreign Minister. He wrote in *Ha Sepher Ha Palmach* in 1948:

"I gathered all of the Jewish *mukhtars* (headmen), who have contact with Arabs in different villages, and asked them to whisper in the ears of some Arabs that a great Jewish reinforcement has arrived in Galilee and that it is going to burn all of the villages of Huleh. They should suggest to these Arabs, as their friends, to escape while there is still time. The rumour spread in all the areas of the Huleh. The tactic reached its goal completely."

When the Arabs failed to flee, as required, a combination of terror and physical expulsion was used, as in the case of the cities of Lydda and Ramleh, which were occupied July 10, 1948. Yitzhak Rabin, recorded in his memoirs, published in the *New York Times* (October 23, 1979):

"While the fighting was still in progress we had to grapple with the problem dealing with the fate of the civilian population, numbering some 50,000. We walked outside, Ben Gurion accompanying us. Allon repeated his question. 'What is to be done with the population?' B.G. waved his hand in a gesture which said, 'Drive them out!'"

One of the Israeli war crimes is relevant here. After the surrender of Lydda, a group of Palestinian men took refuge in the small Dahmash mosque. The commander of the Palmach's Third Battalion, Moshe Kalman, gave an order to fire several missiles at the mosque. The force that attacked the mosque was surprised at the lack of resistance. It found the remains of the Arab fighters stuck to the mosque walls. A group of 20 to 50 of the city's residents was then brought to clean the mosque and to bury the remains. When they finished their work, they were also shot, and thrown into the graves they themselves had dug. American Jewish journalist Dan Kortzman learned of the event from Moshe Kalman while working on his book, *Genesis 1948*, describing the War of Independence:

Rabin and his officers proceeded to drive these 50-60,000 civilians away from their homes in terror, with low-flying airplanes over their heads shooting the occasional person and forcing them to run. The sight of the terror-stricken men, women and children fleeing in horror in the midday sun of the hot summer, having run approximately 25 km to the village of Beit Nuba, where I saw them with my own eyes, is a sight not to be forgotten. ...

It is perhaps relevant to note that this piece of Zionist propaganda [that the Palestinians left their homes voluntarily and in response to broadcasts by their leaders] was first demolished by Dr. Erskine Childers who examined the American and British monitoring records of all Middle East broadcasts throughout 1948. He reported in the *Spectator* 1961:

"There was not a single order or appeal or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine from any Arab radio station, inside or outside Palestine, in 1948. There is repeated monitored record of Arab appeals even flat orders, to civilians of Palestine to stay put."

The historical record clearly demonstrates that the Palestine refugee problem was created in response to a clear Zionist policy of cleansing the land of Palestine from its own people. Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, described this process with a great deal of satisfaction as the "**miraculous clearing of the land.**" However, the UN mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, stated in a report to the UN:

"It would be an offence against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of

the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and, indeed, at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries."

Count Bernadotte paid heavily for stating this obvious principle and was assassinated by the Stern terrorist gang, on direct orders of Yitzhak Shamir, on September 17, 1948 in Jerusalem. The United Nations General Assembly proceeded, however, to resolve on December 11, 1948, in its Resolution No. 194:

"Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date and those wishing not to return should be compensated for their property."

The implementation of this Resolution, together with Resolution No. 181 of November 29, 1947, were reaffirmed and were made conditions for the admittance of Israel to UN membership in Resolution No. 273 of May 11, 1949.



Despite this and despite repeated UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions demanding the implementation of Resolution No. 194 for the return of the refugees, Israel continues to defy this international will and in essence, it can be argued that its membership in the United Nations is illegitimate, in view of its refusal to comply with the conditions that were imposed upon it. Not only that, Israel proceeded in 1967 after the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to expel over 300,000 more Palestinian refugees from their homes or refugee camps. Many of them were in essence expelled a second time. Security Council Resolution No. 237 of June 14, 1967, called upon the government of Israel to facilitate the return of these refugees, and similar UN General Assembly resolutions to that effect remain unimplemented.

It is clear, for anybody, who has witnessed the history of that area, to see that the Palestinians remain determined to return to their homeland and their struggle continues despite repeated massacres and an orchestrated policy of genocide denying them their national existence. Their sacrifices have been documented and continue, despite the Israeli policy of state terrorism and continuing bombardment of their refugee camps in Lebanon and the oppressive practices that are employed against them under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. The late Dr. Frank Epp, described the tragedy of the Palestinian people in these terms:

"Rarely has a people suffered so much injustice so passively for so long, waiting for the powers that be to redress the inflicted wrong."

Similarly, it was the distinguished philosopher, Lord Bertrand Russell who stated, addressing an international conference in 1970, the following:

"The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was "given" by a foreign power to another people for the creation of a new state. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and **the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict.** No people

anywhere in the world would accept being expelled *en masse* from their country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? **A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homeland is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East."**

[...]

This essay, reprinted from the Dossier on Palestine, was originally presented as a lecture at the Conference on Palestine, Vancouver, May 23, 1998.

Notes

1. From R. Patai, ed., *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol I.
2. Benny Morris, "Looking Back: A personal assessment of the Zionist Experience," *Tikkun*. 13: 40-49, 1998.



[PREVIOUS ISSUES](#) | [HOME](#)

Website: www.cpcml.ca Email: editor@cpcml.ca