

Canada Politics: Deception and Betrayal in the Conservative Party

The Global Research News Hour

By [Marjaleena Repo](#) and [Michael Welch](#)

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"This creature, the so-called Conservative Party, if it goes forward will be an illegitimate creation conceived in deception and born in betrayal." [1] Progressive Conservative leadership candidate David Orchard, October 17, 2003

"They would do all kinds of things...Organizing meetings that didn't happen or people would go to a delegate selection meeting and the address was a pawn shop in Regina so people stood at the street corner waiting for something and nobody came...There was a kind of planned confusion...by people who really wanted us to stay out, and I think these people were people who wanted the party to be taken over." Orchard campaign manager and political advisor Marjaleena Repo

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This week's programme looks back ten years to the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada's leadership race of 2003 which turned out to be the party's last before it merged with the rival Canadian Alliance, led by leader Stephen Harper.

The current Conservative Party has been racked with accusations of scandal and corruption. At least three Canadian Senators, hand-picked by the Prime Minister, are having their housing and living expenses reviewed, two Conservative Members of Parliament are being taken to task for improper accounting of their election expenses, and a court case recently determined that "there was an orchestrated effort to suppress votes during the 2011 election campaign by a person with access to the CIMS database" which is "maintained and controlled by the CPC (Conservative Party of Canada)". [2][3][4]

And notoriously, one of the Prime Minister's staffers cut Senator Mike Duffy a personal cheque for \$90,000 to make up for the funds the Senator owed. [5]

This is astonishing behaviour for a political party which rose to power in 2006 promising accountability and integrity in office. [6]

But David Orchard and his supporters questioned the ethics of the party a long time ago. Orchard contested the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party back in 2003. Orchard relied on the support of grass-roots people, myself among them, who were opposed to government policies on free trade, environmental neglect, and Canadian support for imperial wars abroad. [7]

It was through Orchard's support that Peter Mackay became leader of the party. Mackay then betrayed the condition of Orchard's support by orchestrating a merger with the right-wing US-Republican style Canadian Alliance Party, which was then led by Stephen Harper. [8]

This betrayal, in addition to some of the other shenanigans which played out in the months during the leadership campaign and leading up to the vote to merge the parties in December provides a critical context for assessing this party's commitment to ethics, responsible conduct and fair play.

Orchard, and many other traditional Progressive Conservatives, saw the Canadian Alliance as out of sync with the traditional trajectory of the PC Party, the Party which established Canada as a nation in 1867. The PCs historically championed Canadian sovereignty. The Canadian Alliance advocated closer political and economic ties with the United States.

The Canadian Alliance boasted a much larger membership than the Progressive Conservative Party in 2003. Through no great surprise therefore, the leader of the Canadian Alliance, Stephen Harper, easily secured the leadership of the merged Conservative Party, which went on to power in 2006. [9]

Orchard's political advisor, campaign manager and long-time associate Marjaleena Repo speaks to the Global Research News Hour about the campaign, the issues, the subsequent legal battles and where she believes the Campaign for Canada needs to focus its energies.

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The [Global Research News Hour](#), hosted by Michael Welch, airs on [CKUW 95.9FM](#) in Winnipeg Thursdays at 10am CDT. The programme is now broadcast weekly (Monday, 5-6pm ET) by the [Progressive Radio Network](#) in the US, and is available for download on the [Global Research](#) website.

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