

The Sorry State of Canadian Democracy

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Region: [Canada](#)

Theme: [History](#)

In spite of the “writ” not having been “dropped” Canada is already in full election mode. Of course politicians are always electioneering as their main purpose once in power is to stay in power in order to reap its rewards and benefits. Otherwise, instead of politicians running the country we could simply let the bureaucrats do their uncelebrated mundane work of the daily running of the country. Unfortunately it is not that simple as the rules and policies the bureaucracy follows are put out by various political parties – massaged and manipulated over time – and not put out on the basis of “universal values” or “constitutional values” whatever they may be. In the meantime electioneering has started with the many policies, plans, promises, platitudes, and homilies being announced for consumption by the incumbents and wannabes.

Within domestic affairs and identity politics are many topics used to shape and steer discussions in attempts to sway the popular will. What is seldom discussed – and very little understood, are the actions and belief systems that really underlie our society. In a broad perspective Canada’s position as a neoliberal, austerity imposing, capitalist member of the western elite, the western U.S. sponsored empire, is seldom if ever questioned.

It is seldom discussed because the true powers that be – the elite powers of those within the Washington consensus group of institutions – the bankers, financial officers, and corporate managers of the large private and public businesses and institutions – do not want it discussed. They do not want ‘democracy’ to be more than a superficial status. Their control of monetary policy, their centralized control of the media steers the world the way they want it to operate and be perceived, making our democratic institutions essentially a rubber stamp for their economic dominance.

Our institutions operate within the parameters acceptable to the corporate greed towards ever increasing profits at the expense of the global environment, and at the expense of the global citizenry. While science has long warned about climate change and environmental pollution of all kinds – a very real occurrence – even those who pay attention to it are so entwined within societies’ structures that very little is done about these scientific concerns. Along with that, part of the same underlying paradigm are increasingly vast disparities in income and wealth levels both domestically and in other countries. A small group of super elites control vast amounts of wealth and thus power, generally working together to secure their realm.

If this broad if somewhat short generalized view is used as the lens through which to view Canada’s political parties, there are rather few underlying differences between the parties as seldom if ever are the underlying factors questioned..

Essentially it all comes down to maintaining the status quo of western financial dominance of the world, its resources and people. The Liberals and Conservatives both actively support

the military industrial complex that is the not so hidden fist keeping – or trying to – control of the world’s governments. Perhaps they present it differently, the Conservatives wanting to put the military out to “punch above its weight” while the Liberals soften the blow with “rule of law” and “peacekeeping forces,” both serving the empire well. Few question it – from Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Libya, Syria to Ukraine, Canada willingly supports the empire. Venezuela reveals the ultimate ugliness of it all as Canada has for decades – with notables such as Ben Rowsell and Allan Culham (former ambassadors), and Chrystia Freeland (current Foreign Minister) – openly advocating the overthrow of a duly elected government. How democratic!

Israel serves as another example of an empire under non-democratic control. A government that denies twenty per cent of its population the same civic status as the ethnic religious majority, that guards 1.8 million people in an open air prison on survival rations only, and that has created a series of militarily ruled or controlled bantustans is not democratic. Yet there is no Canadian political party that decries this situation, all fearful of the domestic religious vote (Christian and Jewish) and the repercussions of not supporting the empire’s outpost in the Middle East. For the latter it is truly not so much fear of what might happen but an overwhelming blind willingness to support the dominant power of the west.

All major parties – Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats, and Greens – support the fully outdated position of wanting a two state position, while Israel continues to ignore all those dead positions and continues building illegal settlements on occupied territory while the rest of the world turns away. Israel is not the only place where Canadians uphold the status of the west’s military control of wealth and resources.

Throughout Africa, through much of the Middle East, Canada’s military-business connections help maintain the extraction of wealth through current supra-national corporate models of governance. So called “free trade” agreements, onerous World Bank predatory lending, and IMF “structural adjustment programs” (debt and more debt) maintains control of many governments and many supposedly sovereign economies. In essence, globalization is about controlling the world’s wealth while guarding the people – the workers, labourers – behind sovereign borders. Canada is in full partnership with all this.

Blowback – refugees, poverty, and the environment

Obviously all is not well with globalization as millions of people attempt to escape the worst of its violent dangers and impositions. The large displacement of people in the Middle East and Africa is placing pressure on Europe as refugees continue to arrive en masse when escaping domestic mayhem. The same holds true in the Americas as thousands of Hispanic/indigenous people attempt to travel to the U.S. in order to escape the violence and corruption and despotism at home. Most of that violence is caused by the economic impositions of globalization combined with the history of U.S. interventions to control governments that objected to U.S.corporate dominance.

Blowback from globalization also has an impact on the Canadian domestic scene. Hyped up fears of terrorism has increased the powers of the security state (with much learned from Israel’s control of its Palestinian population) and increased the unjustified glorification of the Canadian military both through the media and with a larger budget. Canada is a member of the “five eyes”, the family members inheriting the British empire and who now share information and security methodologies. Another form of blowback are the heightened fear

of terrorism and “other” – mainly focussed on refugees with a Muslim background but extending out to the created fears generated by identity politics. These fears and prejudices are used in different ways to control the domestic electorate, a diversion from the reality of the overall non-democratic governance of the military-financial- corporate powers.

Two other perspectives can view this same phenomenon – income disparity/poverty and global environmental change.

Most everyone pays lip service to poverty. Many offer solutions on a small scale through NGOs acting on small targeted goals in specific areas – actions that certainly aid a small number of people but in no way address the source of poverty. Musicians sing about it, politicians talk about it, the media keeps us focused on these feel good/do-good attempts without addressing the underlying causes (and note, poverty does not equate to terrorism). Until the base structures of western globalization are deconstructed or contained (or collapse) poverty will continue its destructive pathways – malnutrition, starvation, poor health, serfdom, wage slave labour, exploitation et al. Poverty, other than small domestic pockets, many of indigenous people, does not register on Canada’s domestic political scene. However climate change and global warming do have an impact.

At this point it is mainly different parties and different jurisdictions arguing about how to control carbon output using some form of establishment acceptable monetary initiatives (cap and trade, carbon tax). Extrapolating from current trends all that money manoeuvring will have little impact due to the nature of our profit oriented consumer culture. As one small but important factor consider Canada’s export of garbage, plastic waste, and e-waste to poorer less developed countries in Southeast Asia. Those outlets now are closed and very little of our waste/garbage is actually recycled or reused. Most is incinerated at 1400 degrees celsius with the subsequent volatile gases dispersing through the atmosphere.

Canadian consumer culture continues its money habits of purchasing stuff, and “planned obsolescence stuff” continuing the degradation of the environment both from chemical pollution and carbon induced warming. Global warming, while obviously important and becoming more and more a political and media talking point hides the dangers of thousand of chemical products behind a smokescreen (quite literally).

Canadians who think they are “green” and want to eliminate poverty, need to consider the following. Are you really willing to accept the huge changes necessary in order to achieve a clean sustainable world – i.e., far less consumption, less travel, less stuff, no more debt purchases? The latter is very difficult because while the wealth of the top elites has risen dramatically, wages have stagnated over the past several decades. Simply using the “3 Rs” will not do it unless the reduce aspect is taken to its necessary full extension.

Consider also Canada’s military. Can you recognize our actions in Libya, Syria, Ukraine and maybe soon Venezuela and Iran as being part of U.S. corporate elites striving for full control? Do you support Canada’s role within the globalization paradigm of controlling other countries economies through predatory financial practices, up to and including the use of mercenaries to protect corporations against indigenous protests?

Do you support the U.S. military actions – overt and covert – used to maintain the economic dominance of the super elites and their global corporations? Do you support the many western interventions in the Middle East considering the terrorists we are supposedly

fighting have been used, supplied, and trained in part by western military and political establishments? More broadly, ask what role the 800+ military bases, the dozen or so carrier groups, play in attempting to subordinate the rest of the world to our non-sustainable demands. The U.S. military is the largest institutional user of oil in the world. In 2007 it ranked as the 35th largest sovereign user, and ranks 3rd globally on a per capita basis. Canada is a large part of the U.S. empire and plays a large role in creating the poverty, terror, and environmental disasters around the world through our support of their military adventurism.

In other words if you support the military as it is currently used, you achieve nothing against poverty and your green colour is a veneer over the actual economic life style choices you make.

The veneer is readily maintained by mainstream media, the vast majority of which is owned and financially controlled by the military-financial-corporate elites. It combines a wilful ignorance of our predations with massive amounts of diversions. One of the main diversions includes all the propaganda associated with the various wars of control and the manipulation of the terrorist “threat”. The diversions extend well beyond through all aspects of consumerism – the entertainment of movies, film, television, the internet in all its aspects through to major sports activities, and on to leisure and holiday consumption. As corporate profits rise and wages stagnate, consumers rely heavily on debt to achieve the advertised/propagandized ideals of the good life. All the debt, trillions of dollars, simply feeds more money and power to the controllers of a corporate financialized economy.

Back to Canadian political parties

In Canada, these issues present a serious problem as to which party or candidate to support. The Liberals and Conservatives are essentially opposite sides of the same coin, both supporters of the global status quo as envisioned by the corporate powers. The supposedly “left” New Democrats similarly follow this status quo, are not very green, and tend to move to the right once the political dollars become a more central interest. That leaves the actual Greens, although they are not as green as they would like to be perceived – support for U.S. actions, support for Israeli actions, with no real action plan regarding environmental changes addressing our military supported consumer society lowers their credentials as a truly ‘green’ party.

The Liberals quashed their election reform agenda after realizing it could negatively affect their majority control in parliament. In opposing moves they announce a climate “emergency” then a day later approve a 12-14 billion dollar pipeline project to move tar sands – diluted bitumen or dilbit, but not oil – to an ecologically sensitive coastline. Given Canada’s current economic-political fight with China, it is a bit ridiculous to think China will buy more of our dirty oil. Economic health as determined by a high energy consumer economy does not go together with a good environment.

The Conservatives acquiesced on the lack of election reform for the same reason. They are pro big oil, frequent climate change deniers although a recent policy statement recognized that, yes, after all these years of working against the idea, global warming is happening. They offer no real solutions other than a variant on the inefficient cap and trade idea, but with no stated costs or implementation factors.

The two smaller parties offer little. The NDP have failed to truly distinguish themselves from

the two larger parties, creating policy positions frequently accepted and adopted (if not implemented) by the Liberals and for which the Conservatives cry “socialism” over. The Greens have some initiatives in the right direction but with their support of the military and of government attempts to change foreign governments, they have yet to create a policy that will change the momentum/inertia of a debt ridden, consumer based, media biased, military/corporate society.

Other than perhaps voting for the lesser evil of the group, a spoiled ballot or no vote at all are the better options.

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