

Election? What Election? The EU Elite Will Censor Their Way Out of this Mess

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Global Research, June 07, 2019

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#),
[Police State & Civil Rights](#)

The neoliberal establishment is wringing its hands in the wake of European elections that proved a resounding victory for populist parties across the continent, casting around for someone to blame but utterly incapable of realizing their own interference has doomed them. Doubling down on the censorship, they are determined to provoke the catastrophe they need to make free speech history.

The NGO-industrial complex was operating at maximum capacity in the weeks leading up to the election, shutting down hundreds of Facebook pages deemed “fake” or “hate speech” in the hope of controlling the messages reaching voters before they made the terrible mistake of voting for a candidate who represents their interests.

Led by Avaaz, which claims to be a “global citizens’ movement monitoring election freedom and disinformation,” this well-heeled fifth column whipped the press into paranoid frenzies with reports like “[Fakewatch](#),” which breathlessly documented 500 “suspicious” pages and groups it claims are “spreading massive disinformation.” The groups have little in common other than their alleged “link[s] to right-wing and anti-EU organizations,” a capital offense for the promoters of “democracy,” which can only be permitted where it doesn’t stray from the center-left path of most #Resistance.

“Far-right and anti-EU groups are weaponizing social media at scale to spread false and hateful content,” the study warns, gloating that after sharing its findings with Facebook, the platform shut down an “unprecedented” number of pages on the eve of the election (77 out of the 500, [according](#) to VentureBeat, which has credulously signal-boosted every utterance of Avaaz as if it is divine truth from the Oracle of Delphi). Avaaz’s reports frame the problem as an affliction of the right wing only, even though disinformation is second nature to political operatives at both ends of the spectrum (and, more importantly, in the sanctified center).

The Computational Propaganda Project, an Oxford-based research group, made no secret of its elitist leanings, [declaiming](#), “On Facebook, while many more users interact with mainstream content overall, individual junk news stories can still hugely outperform even the best, most important, professionally produced stories,” as if users have no choice but to consume “professionally-produced” Oxford-approved material or wallow in junk content. And Facebook’s own statistics bear out the hypothesis that coordinated inauthentic behavior has surged – the site removed almost 3.4 billion “fake” accounts from October 2018 to March 2019, more than the number of actual users.



But Facebook is not simply targeting fake accounts for takedown. Last Sunday, as Europeans prepared to head out to the polls, Facebook froze the largest group used by the Yellow Vests to organize protests and share information, silencing its 350,000+ members at a critical moment in French politics. More than one group member, reduced to commenting on existing posts, pointed out that President Emmanuel Macron met with Facebook chief executive android Mark Zuckerberg three weeks earlier to discuss a first-of-its-kind collaboration in which French government officials are being given access to material censored from users' newsfeeds, essentially [permitting](#) them direct control of what the French are allowed to see on social media. Facebook, then, is providing France with the same techno-fascist services it provides the US government: Facebook will take on the burden of actually censoring dissent, thus skirting any pesky free-speech laws that might otherwise trip up a government that attempted to do the same.

Avaaz focused on the Yellow Vests in its coverage of the French elections, complaining RT France was getting huge quantities of views compared to native French media – perhaps because native French media have been doing Macron's bidding and attempting to minimize the protests. By [framing](#) RT as a perpetrator of "information warfare," the NGO was making a deliberate effort to have it deplatformed under one of Macron's controversial police-state [laws](#) passed in 2018, by which any outlet spreading so-called "false information" can be gagged for three months leading up to an election. Yet Macron's own interior minister, Christophe Castaner, lied on Twitter when he claimed the Yellow Vests had attacked the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, and RT was the first outlet to [publish](#) the truth about the incident. Who is the disinfo agent?

When the election results came in, Avaaz and its political allies in the neoliberal center could only gape in disbelief. Surely they had wiped La Liga and the Front National (now National Rally) from social media, salting the earth in their wake? How had they won? And what happened in Germany, where Angela Merkel's CDU performed [worse](#) than ever in European election history? Merkel could blame YouTube – 70 influential video stars put out a [call](#) to their followers to shun her coalition – but the creators also called for shunning the far-right AfD, so the platform couldn't be demonized as a tool of the ever-present Nazi Threat. That didn't stop her party from trying, of course – CDU party leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer complained about online "propaganda" and promised to "tackle this discussion quite aggressively."

The populist parties won in large part because of the establishment's unseemly embrace of fascist tactics, from the UK's totalitarian information [warfare](#) disguised as "protecting citizens" or France's visceral police violence, maiming protesters as if for sport. Europeans

voted out of disgust with an establishment so insecure in its control of the narrative that it has sought to annihilate all signs of dissent, dismissing euroskepticism as Russian astroturfing and xenophobia and plugging its ears to the legitimate grievances of its subjects. The National Rally may have beat Macron's jackbooted thugs, who in the past two months have hauled half a dozen journalists in for questioning by intelligence agencies for publishing stories that embarrassed the regime, but nearly half of French voters [refused](#) to vote for anyone at all, according to an Ipsos poll, and Germany's Greens mopped the floor with Merkel's coalition among young voters.

The triumph of Nigel Farage's Brexit party in the UK is the product of a populace wrestling with cognitive dissonance, forced to realize that the "constitutional monarchy" they believed they lived in isn't so constitutional after all, having jettisoned its democratic mask to cling to the EU under the guise of good old British pragmatism. Even passionate Remainers are happy to see Theresa May go, though it remains to be seen whether her successor will be any more inclined to honor the result of 2016's referendum. Meanwhile, the Guardian's embarrassing [attempt](#) to shame Farage over a handful of appearances on the Alex Jones show - the paper claimed any reference to "globalists" and "new world order" were dog-whistles for the dreaded "antisemitic conspiracy theories" - proves the establishment media will never regain narrative primacy as long as alternatives exist. Jones, for all his flaws (and they are legion), has a massive audience; the Guardian, despite being [propped](#) up by the UK government's Operation Mockingbird-esque "Integrity Initiative" (and the award for most ironic name ever goes to...), does not.

With the vast American election-fraud apparatus scrambling to prepare itself for 2020, now enabled by Pentagon-funded, Unit-8200-approved Microsoft "election security" [software](#) from the makers of the wrongthink-babysitter browser plugin NewsGuard, the US ruling class seems to be poised to make the same mistake as its global peers. Facebook, working hand in hand with the Atlantic Council, has banned and shadowbanned legions of anti-neoliberal activists over the past year, selectively applying (and inventing) new rules in an effort to keep popular content-creators jumping through hoops instead of influencing the discourse. Facebook has been allowed its place of privilege because as a "private corporation" it is legally permitted to violate users' free speech rights in ways the US government cannot. But if Facebook can't deliver a victory for the "right guys" this time around, it will be punished. Indeed, a massive anti-trust probe appears to be in the offing, 14 years of Zuckerberg apologies notwithstanding.

The site learned back when it tried to roll out a "disputed" tag for "wrongthink" stories that people were actually [more](#) likely to click on those stories; it learned the lesson again when its hugely expensive Facebook Watch news show featuring Anderson Cooper flopped last year. Zuckerberg is on the record begging for government regulation; will Facebook and Twitter use the outcome of this round of elections as a springboard for further crackdowns?

YouTube already has - thousands of creators found their channels demonetized and riddled with takedown notices this week in what has been dubbed the #VoxAdpocalypse after a pathologically whiny Vox blogger became the face of the mass deplatforming, but the censorship appears to be more of a response to Macron's Orwellian "Christchurch call" to censor "extremism" - that ill-defined conveniently-variable catch-all whose borders are perpetually expanding to engulf all inconvenient speech - aided and [abetted](#) by the ADL than Google taking pity on a thin-skinned professional victim.

A sinister coalition of MEPs, "civil society" groups, and the Transatlantic Commission on

Election Integrity – a who’s who of war criminals, psychopaths, and oligarchs that includes Michael Chertoff, John “death squad” Negroponte, Victor Pinchuk, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen – has already [demanded](#) “parliamentary inquiries into the impact of the use and abuse of technology platforms on democracy and elections.” It’s no coincidence that several of these “election integrity” enthusiasts sit on the board of NewsGuard, which is currently trying to weasel into the EU’s internet regulatory framework by playing up the “disinformation” threat.

The blue-check intelligentsia has been trying for years to convince the hoi polloi that “conspiratorial” thinking is somehow detrimental to democracy. Former Obama labor secretary Robert Reich [told](#) BuzzFeed exactly that – “If we become a conspiracy society, we all carry around a degree of paranoia and that’s not healthy for democracy.” But this divorces cause from effect, as if “conspiracy theorists” have formulated their theories out of whole cloth – as if there isn’t evidence for these theories piled knee-deep, as if once-trusted institutions haven’t proven themselves time and again to be as trustworthy as tabloid tales of Elvis risen from the grave. If paranoia is unhealthy for democracy, how is a media incentivized to lie, misdirect and obfuscate any better?

The populist wave has been conflated with an uptick in “hate” in an attempt to delegitimize and demonize it. Outside of groups like the ADL, whose statistics are easily [debunked](#), there is no credible evidence bigotry is on the rise, but as an actual Nazi once said, tell a big enough lie often enough, and it might as well be real. Beginning around 2012, the establishment media began relentlessly flogging the “white privilege” narrative in an effort to fan the flames of interracial conflict. Political science doctoral student Zach Goldberg performed an [analysis](#) of several terms using the LexisNexis database and found evidence of heavy narrative manipulation – “whiteness” was mentioned in four times as many news articles in 2017 as in 2012, “white privilege” was mentioned *ten times* as often in 2017 as in 2012, and “racism” was mentioned ten times as often *in the New York Times alone* in 2017 as in 2012. Yet even as the media has seemingly talked of nothing else, actual prejudice – by whites against non-whites, at least – has declined since 2008, according to a University of Pennsylvania [study](#) published last month, and the FBI’s own [statistics](#) show hate crimes against most minority groups are on the decline. Because few European governments separate “hate crimes” from “normal” crime statistics, information on bigotry in Europe often comes solely from NGOs and “civil society” groups that rely for their funding on the perception that Hate is on the march. Populists are capable of prejudice like anyone else, but it is their defining characteristic – a “prejudice” against oligarchy – that motivates the smears churned out by the media.



Protest votes like Trump and Brexit are cries for help from a disenfranchised populace. The European elections boasted the highest turnout in decades, and the ruling class ignores the results at its peril. When the election ritual no longer satisfies a population's need to feel it is exerting its free will on society, we get public [hexings](#) of political figures, people reasoning black magic is more likely to solve their problems than voting. This is the same desperation that leads people like Arnav Gupta to set themselves on fire in front of the White House. Europeans have demonstrated unequivocally that they are sick of unaccountable dictatorship from Brussels, where EC President Jean-Claude Juncker, never one for sympathy with the little guy, sneers at the "populist, nationalists, stupid nationalists" who are "in love with their own countries." They are sick of being displaced from their homes by a seemingly endless tide of migrants, just as those migrants themselves are displaced from their homes by a seemingly endless tide of American wars. Both groups are victimized by the IMF's neoliberal austerity policies, epitomized by Juncker, who has done more than perhaps any one person to help Europe's corporate "citizens" [dodge](#) taxes while nickel-and-diming the humans.

Instead of addressing these legitimate grievances, those in power on both sides of the Atlantic tighten the screws on online discourse - out of sight, out of mind. YouTube declares conspiracy theorizing a form of hate speech and plays whack-a-mole with a documentary confirming everyone's long-standing suspicions that "save-the-migrants" NGOs are cashing in on the desperate human tide. Big Tech promises to work even more closely with Big Brother to crack down on dissident speech, tarring its victims as Nazis while hoping no one will point out such collusion is one of the defining characteristics of fascism.

These measures are guaranteed to further radicalize the discontent. Deleting social media accounts does not delete the people behind them, and France has already proven that starving a protest movement of media attention only makes it angrier. The ruling class may welcome their rage, aiming to use the inevitable outbreak of violence to choke off the last avenues of free expression, but once the guillotines come out, it isn't the masses' heads that will be rolling in the streets.

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