

Faking It. Western Propagandists and the Fake News Syndrome. The Crackdown on Dissent

By [William Bowles](#)

Global Research, February 01, 2018

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

It's time I did a piece on this Fake News nonsense being put about by the Western propagandists, the originators of fake news and what better place to start than the BBC, the fountainhead of impartial and objective journalism, not.

Hacking, leaking and disputing the facts, it's never been easier to distort the truth. Thanks to the digital revolution, anyone can dispute established facts and share it with the world on social media – be it for commercial or political gain. But when the line between fact and fiction becomes blurred the very fabric of our society can be endangered. Public trust in traditional media and political institutions has plummeted and some argue the unity of our nations is at stake. How can a free and fair media still operate in a digitised world and restore trust in political debate? – [Davos The Fake News Challenge to Politics](#)

The above quote is from the BBC News Website on 28 January 2018. It's probably the single most disingenuous piece of journalism the BBC has ever published, for what it's really telling its public is that the BBC no longer has a monopoly on deciding what is the truth. No wonder it thinks the 'unity of our nation is at stake'.

The crackdown on dissent

The burning issue right now is the parlous state of our alleged democracy, or what's left of it. If we can no longer engage in open debate on the important issues of our time, then the struggle is over before it's begun. And therein lies the rationale behind the invention of the Fake News diversion.

Every day that passes sees a shrinking of our hard won democratic [sic] rights. The one positive aspect, the Internet and the rise of independent journalism is now directly under threat using the bogus 'fake news' as the excuse for a clampdown on freedom of expression. Algorithms that purportedly search out and quarantine 'fake news' are being used to directly censor any ideas, news and opinion that contravenes the dominant view being peddled by the corporate/state media under the heading of an attack on *our* democratic rights!

The BBC has even managed to penetrate the education system with its so-called 'Fake News' mentoring programme:

['BBC to help students identify 'fake news'](#) – BBC News Website, 6 December 2017

Where we are told:

The BBC is launching a new scheme to help young people identify real news and filter out fake or false information.

The project is targeted at secondary schools and sixth forms across the UK.

From March, up to 1,000 schools will be offered mentoring in class and online to help them spot so-called fake news.

BBC journalists including Kamal Ahmed, Tina Daheley, Amol Rajan and Huw Edwards will also take part in events aimed at helping students. But reading further on the same page, we are told absolutely nothing about the nature of this so-called mentoring programme. Instead, under the heading, 'Half Truths', we read:

"I think that people are getting the news all over the place - there's more information than ever before," said Harding.

How awful! People now have a choice rather than having it spoonfed by the BBC. He continues:

"But, as we know, some of it is old news, some of it is half truths. Some of it is just downright lies. And it's harder than ever when you look at those information feeds to discern what's true and what's not."

Oh really? What, harder than reading a newspaper headline or a page on the BBC News Website? What makes it harder to read I wonder? It really comes down to just one thing; credibility. The BBC has created the illusion of impartiality and objectivity thus all it need do is present us with the 'news'. It has no need to back up its version of fake news with things like multiple sources or references, just the tagline, BBC News. Job done.

This is analysis of so-called fake news? So what's new here? The BBC is the past master at presenting us with its version of reality, it does it every day. What makes its version of reality more credible than any other? It really is a case of the kettle calling the pot, black.

I might add that I tried to sign up to their online 'mentoring' programme but as I'm not at school, I'm denied access to it, so I have no idea what it consists of as their description quoted above is nothing short of ludicrous. In fact there is nothing anywhere on the BBC Website that describes the nature of this mentoring on 'Fake News'.

The BBC peddles the Fake News fake news

Elsewhere under the heading of 'Fake News' on the BBC's website we are given alleged examples of 'Fake News' and not surprisingly, one of them is Donald Trump and his claim that the Arctic ice is not melting faster than ever. But surprisingly, given the massive exposure the BBC has given to 'Fake News' over the past year (345 stories, see below), the Russian example is conspicuous by its absence. I wonder why? Could it be that the BBC has no evidence whatsoever of Russian meddling in our affairs. In fact, it's the BBC that's been peddling fake news about alleged Russian fake news!

This is an extremely dangerous turn of events. It precludes a much more general crackdown on dissent of any kind. Thought crimes are already on the statute books in the form of 'radicalisation', used largely to target the Muslim community, but how long before such laws are used to target anyone who dissents?

Faking it

The BBC News Website carried approximately 345 stories that carried the tag 'Fake News' over the 2017-2018 period. 18 carried the word Russia alongside 'Fake News' but not all 18 were directly relevant, only 14. I decided to go through all 14 stories to see whether any of them contained any real evidence (as opposed to unfounded allegations and opinions) of Russian interference in either the US or British elections or the Brexit farce. There's even a dense piece about alleged Russian interference in the Catalan independence vote (which as I show, quite conclusively, is based on Western fake news and manipulation of straightforward news stories!).

So here's the rundown on the BBC's stories on Russian fake news. Enjoy.

And in no particular chronological order, the first one, contained not whisper of any evidence on alleged Russian Meddling:

Trump-Russia inquiry: President denies trying to fire Robert Mueller

© 26 January 2018

f t v e Share



US President Donald Trump has described as "fake news" a report that he

[Trump-Russia inquiry: President denies trying to fire Robert Mueller](#), 26 January 2018;

In fact, there's not even a reference to a story about Russian meddling!

The second, ditto, not a single shred of evidence of any kind, merely allegations made by Facebook.

[Facebook to expose Russian fake news pages](#)

, 17 December 2017;

Instead, we read:

The social network has previously said as many as 126 million Americans may have seen content uploaded by Russia-based agents over the past two years. [my emph. WB]

The third, is not available and in any case, again it's merely assertions, this time by Theresa May of Russian meddling:

[Elections and fake news](#), 14 November, 2017

The fourth, is also not available but its byline says it all:

[Russia, RT and fake news](#), 28 November 2017

[Best of Today](#)

The Kremlin is deploying information – or more precisely mis-information – in the way it once deployed tanks and missiles.

That is the view of the intelligence services both here and in the United States.

So, it's just an opinion, there's no proof supplied.

The fifth:

[Is Russia behind some 'fake news'?](#), 15 November 2017

She [Theresa May] says Russia is using social media to create 'fake news' and upset people.

This is one, outrageous piece of Western propaganda that accuses Putin, not just Russia, of spreading thousands of stories designed to divide and confuse our gullible Western public! But not a shred of evidence is presented, merely anonymous opinions supplied by, you guessed it, Western intelligence.

The sixth, is even more outrageous, if that's possible:

[Spain Catalonia: Did Russian 'fake news' stir things up?](#) 18 November 2017

The story is based on a Western (EU) disinformation Website run by [European External Action Service East Stratcom Task Force](#) that claims 3500 disinformation stories put out by Russia. In fact, it's just a [collection of news stories](#) on events in Europe. It's all based on research done at the George Washington University that alleges that 5 million, yes 5 million 'fake news' stories put out by what it calls Zombie accounts.

"There is evidence to suggest that the pattern of digital disruption that has been detected in digital debates about the elections in the United States or Brexit has also been seen in Catalonia, and that the authors of this disruption are the very same."

And the proof? Again I quote from the piece:

One clear example is the fact that RT published a number of news stories about Catalonia, which were then shared via social networks, prompting a conversation with messages and replies in which one of the most-used terms was #VenezuelaSalutesCatalonia, above mentions of NATO, the EU and Julian Assange, the founder of whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks. With respect to Sputnik, the second most-shared news story was: “Maduro: Rajoy must answer to the world for what he has done in Catalonia.” - [‘Russian network used Venezuelan accounts to deepen Catalan crisis’](#)

This is proof? No, it’s total nonsense! RT carries a news story on the Catalan crisis which then gets shared by, well anybody who wants to share it of course. And this is presented as a Russian plot?

The seventh:

[Brexit: MPs quiz Facebook over Russian-linked ‘fake news’](#), 24 October, 2017

And the proof? Well there is none. The headline is totally misleading as the body of the story (if you can call it that) is as follows:

British MPs have asked Facebook if it has evidence of paid-for activity by accounts linked to Russia at the time of the Brexit referendum.

[A letter](#)

addressed to Facebook’s chief executive Mark Zuckerberg also asks about similar activity at the time of this year’s general election.

It was written by Damian Collins, chairman of the Digital, Media and Sport Committee.

Facebook said it would respond to the request once it had been reviewed.

/../

[Collins] said he wanted to know whether Facebook could provide:

- examples of adverts bought, and pages set up by Russia-linked accounts
- information on how these ads and pages were targeted
- how much money was paid to promote these ads or pages
- how many times they were viewed

That’s it really aside from a large photo of Putin at the top of the story

The eighth verges on the insane:

[Sweden to issue leaflets on how to prepare for war](#), 18 January, 2018

[The] publication comes amid concerns over Russia’s military activities and the rise of terrorism and fake news.

However, the actual story contains absolutely nothing about Russian fake news!

The ninth:

Russia's anti-fake news site mocked online



By Adam Robinson
BBC Monitoring

© 23 February 2017



Vitaly Churkin is 5th Suspicious Death of Russian Diplomat in 3 months



[Russia's anti-fake news site mocked online](#), 23 February, 2017

Is about a Russian Website designed we are told to debunk Western fake news stories about Russia. But even here, the BBC debunks it but without actually showing us how the Russian (state) site is wrong. In any case, it's got nothing to do with alleged Russian fake news.

The Tenth is just make sure that the Russians were creating fake news all the way back during the Cold War Era:

[Cold War fake news: Why Russia lied over Aids and JFK](#), 1 April, 2017

Note the date. And, for the record, most Americans don't believe the official account of the Kennedy assassination. It's a Russian plot.

The eleventh:

[What's Russia up to?](#) 14 December 2017

What do we really know about Russian 'meddling' in Western democracy?

David Aaronovitch asks experts on Russia what the Kremlin is trying to achieve by hacking emails and spreading fake news.

It's an audio broadcast, but note the text; it assumes that fake news and hacking is a fact, whereas, so far, there's not a shred of evidence of Russia doing either, hacking emails or spreading fake news, but heh, who cares about details like the facts?

The twelfth:

[Scotland's papers: Russia's world order threat](#), 14 November, 2017

Is just a collection of newspaper front pages whose common thread is the alleged 'Russian Threat', starting with the Russian oligarch-owned I, 'Russia poses threat to world order says May'; The Times, 'May attacks Russia over propaganda war on West'; Scottish Daily Mail, 'May Blast's Putin's Cyber War on West'; The Daily Telegraph, 'May tells Putin: We know what you're doing'...

The thirteenth:

[Russia 'tries to sow discord in the West'](#), 14 November 2017

Theresa May accused Russia of meddling in elections in the West as 'an attempt to sow discord'.

Again, not a shred of evidence is presented, May's speech is assumed to be fact.

And finally:

[Facebook and Twitter: Nine Russian Brexit ads found by inquiries](#), 13 December, 2017

Facebook says its investigation into Russian attempts to influence the Brexit vote has determined the activity amounted to just three adverts.

Twitter says its own inquiry has linked six ads promoting referendum-related content on its platform to Russian sources.

The Electoral Commission had asked the social media giants for the data.

But an MP who had also demanded the review has said he is dissatisfied with Facebook's response.

So there you have it. Well actually, nothing. Hundreds of stories on fake news but not a single shred of evidence that links the alleged fake news to Russia.

*

This article was originally published by [Investigating Imperialism](#).

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [William Bowles](#), Global Research, 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [William Bowles](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca