Recommendations

Decrease the Impact

of

Political Influence Operations

from the

United Socialist Party of Venezuela

on

Facebook

Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana Social Science One Research Group



Summary

The United Socialist Party of Venezuela ("PSUV") and the Cuban Communist Party have engaged in multi-generational irregular warfare operations against the Government of the United States since the 12th of April, 2003 – following Cuba's announcement of its intentions to develop an Anti-fascist Internationale. Facilitated with financial and material assistance of the Castro, Chávez and Maduro governments, this trans-national network's activities include the support of American citizens and foreign nationals living in the United States. Held fifteen months after Cuba's call for mobilization, July 23rd to the 25th of 2004, the Boston Social Forum, united a variety of anti-systemic political ideologies – such as insurrectionary anarchists, Afrikan secessionists, Mexican revanchists, Communists, Trotskyist Unionists, Indigenous leaders, antiborder advocates, undocumented worker organizers, transgender activists, ideologically left journalists and Latin American solidarity workers – under one roof. This convergence of actors enabled the Venezuelan ambassadors in attendance at this, and many subsequent events like it, to provide assistance on how to develop dual-power institutions modelled on their own experience and to evaluate which individuals and groups were worthy of financial investment. While Venezuelan Ambassadors engaged in efforts to influence elected American politicians through petro-diplomacy, hundreds of Americans have travelled to Venezuela for antifascist training – such as the 2005 World Festival for Youth and Students, and the 2006 World Social Forum held in Caracas – or received training in the U.S. to participate in this effort.

By the time the second National Social Forum was held in Detroit, the third week of June, 2010, fifty other "People's Movement Assemblies" had been held in the U.S. This Forum, and the Allied Media Conference which followed, attracted over 23,000 people. The Detroit Forum is especially significant as those present made a commitment to engage in international solidarity work – a nod to the Venezuelan ambassadors and Cuban activists present – as well as a 20-year strategy of irregular warfare against the United States Government. Over the past ten years those present and recruited to participate in their activities have engaged in Popular Front organizing and protest tactics; information warfare to undermine support for the U.S. Government and its Constitutional principles; and entryism to gain institutional and economic power. In other words, just as the PSUV collaborated with the FARC-EP to flood the United States with cocaine, they have established relations directly or via proxies with numerous journalists, intellectuals, artists and activists to flood the United States with disinformation and to support a political process that mirrors the PSUV's own founding in Venezuela – the coalescence of militant movements with an assemblage of para-state associations able to suffocate democratic norms and institutions. This core network has been the originating force behind the Right to the City Movement, which was instrumental in the enactment of Sanctuary Cities legislation, as well as the growth of Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, the 'Standing Rock' Protests, the recent Riots in Baltimore and Ferguson, Antifa, and the rise of the Democratic Socialists of America – and functions now as a fifth column for Nicolas Maduro Moros.

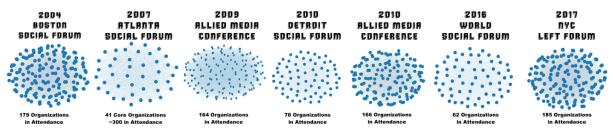
The below recommendations do not represent a comprehensive accounting of Venezuela-connected organizational efforts to impact US politics, but nevertheless should be viewed as important steps that Facebook should immediately take to preserve integrity during the 2020 election cycle from Venezuelan influence.

Methodology

In the Popular Front period of the 1930s and the Cold War period from the 1950s and 1960s Russian and Cuban foreign influence operations in the American hemisphere was a national security threat that necessitated legal enforcement and counter-insurgency operations as well as a public relations response. Due to the complex nature of subversion and the web of front groups that acted as proxies for the interested of these foreign nations, the U.S. Congress, the Organization of American States, and academic institutions such as the University of Chicago published research concerned with detecting, categorizing and measuring the effects of organizations in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. The classification schemes developed to unravel Communist Party dissimulation were published along with case studies. Such publications demonstrated, for example, how and why the World Festival for Youth was in fact a Kremlin operation oriented towards the development of an international cadre of young political activists whose identification with a transnational political imaginary could be relied upon to receive guidance from foreign advisors, to impose transaction costs for national security decisions and cause economic disruptions. This article is informed by these categories, though rather than relying upon testimony gained from admissions at Congressional hearings it uses open source information and a method for organizing it called Activity-Based Intelligence (ABI).

ABI was developed shortly following the U.S. military's occupation of Iraq as a means by which insurgents and their support networks could be identified and tracked. Informed by complexity theory, ABI organizes information into a social network analysis paradigm to discern relationships between locations, individuals, and organizations through the charting of various types of human activity. The standard for discovery and collection into the database that we developed using these principles is as follows: Are there Cuban or Venezuelan political actors, or their proxies, in attendance present at this event?

The extent of Cuban and Venezuelan activity that we were able to discern was significant. The pattern which is evident from the data shows parallels to the network effects similarly evident in the formation of the PSUV in Venezuela, PODEMOS in Spain, SYRIZA in Greece and parties connected to the Sao Paulo Forum in Latin America. Given that this is the avowed intent of those collaborating as well as their links to Sao Paulo Forum actors, this is unsurprising.



Sample of network analysis developed to inform the following findings.

This article does not detail in the methodological practices used to detect, attribute and characterize the activities-based intelligence it presents, but only provides a brief rationale why a specific policy recommendation has been chosen. This was decided in order to make the article accessible to the general public. A long-form scientific treatment of this subject is forthcoming.

Recommendations

Label Media Producers That Are PSUV Partners



One of the methods the Venezuelan government has sought to influence foreign nations is via the sponsorship of intellectuals and artists whose political worldview aligns with Bolivarian geopolitical interests, a group that Fidel Castro classified as "guerilla intellectuals". Hugo Chávez launched the Network of Intellectuals and Artists in Defense of Humanity in 2003, an initiative that American historian Howard Zinn agreed to participate in, and Encuentro Sindical – Nuestro America, a trade union federationⁱ. Through these and other venues; media partnership agreements and purchasing agreements via Venezuela's state media outlet TeleSUR; direct financial aid for pro-Bolivarian/anti-American activists participating in political, educational and cultural events; maintaining relationships between U.S. and Venezuelan activists, and other means – Venezuelan has engaged in what their Plan de la Patria describes as a "struggle for communicational hegemony".

Through content analysis of editorial policy evident in published materials, determination of media partnerships from open source information, cross referencing of Board of Directors with Venezuelan state officials and proxies, and the political party affiliation of founders and media producers – we've determined that the following media producers should be categorized as "Affiliated with the Venezuela Government": The Intercept, The Nation, The GrayZone, The Real News Network, Mint Press News, Venezuela Analysis, Mision Verdad, Orinoco Tribune, Common Dreams, YES! Magazine, Institute for Policy Studies, Geopolitics Alert, Project Censored, Center for Economic and Policy Research, CounterPunch, TruthOut, and the Black is Back Coalition.

The above is not a comprehensive account of Venezuela's reach, many journalists have transitioned to main stream media outlets, nevertheless at time we believe it would be beneficial now for Facebook platform users to be aware of disinformation efforts from these outlets.

Ban the SEIU from Running Political Ads



Left: President Maduro with Estela Vasquez (Vice President SEIU 1199) and Esmeralda Brown (President of the Southern Diaspora Research and Development Center)

One of the methods that the Venezuelan government has sought to influence Americans is via trade union organizations. Trade Union leadership has historically attracted Communist activists within revolutionary intent, and the activities of the SEIU means that it is accurate to categorize them as an organization operated by Communists aligned with the United Social Party of Venezuela and the Cuban Communist Party. The following is a partial list as to why this is so:

- SEIU members have been active participants at events which FARA documents indicate were promoted by the Venezuela Information Office and attended by Venezuelan ambassadors, such as the Boston Social Forum and the Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela the location where it was decided to create a National Social Movement.ⁱⁱ
- SEIU leaders was on the National Planning Committee for the first United States Social Forum held in Atlanta Georgia in 2007, a Cuban and Venezuelan platform for influencing United States leftist organizations, held in Atlanta Georgia in 2007ⁱⁱⁱ.
- The SEIU has officially co-sponsored numerous events with political parties and social movements organizations allied to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela^{iv}.
- The SEIU along with the American Federation of Teachers locals 3267 and 1936, Union California Faculty Association, United Auto Workers local 174, UNITE Here, Union del Barrio and Vamos Juntos are also signatories to the 3rd participation of Encuentro Sindical Nuestro America (ESNA) in Caracas, Venezuela. ESNA, according to their own documentation^v:

"was born inspired by an idea of President Hugo Chávez Frías, on the occasion of the II Bolivarian Congress of the Peoples held in Caracas, Venezuela, in December 2004, when he launched the idea of forming an expression of integration of the Latin American trade union movement, and the creation of a new Trade Union Center in the Americas as a necessity to face the prospects offered by the situation in the region and to have new instruments for the struggle."

• Danny Glover, whose activity on behalf of Venezuela aligns with that of a foreign agent and who is an advisory board member of Venezuela's state media company TeleSUR, has also been active in efforts to assist the SEIUvi.

While SEIU's history of fines linked to elections spending is certainly a reason to consider banning them from making media purchases, it is the evidence indicating them to be obedient to the interests of the Venezuelan government which signifies why they should be categorized as a foreign front^{vii}.

Ban Democratic Socialists of America from Running Political Ads

Name	Party Affiliation	Sources	Employer	Sources	Patron Nation
Eugene Puryear	Party for Socialism and Liberation		Sputnik		<u>r</u> Russia
Caleb Maupin	Workers Party / Students and Youth for a New America		RT		<u>N</u> Russia
Mike Prysner	Party for Socialism and Liberation		TeleSUR		Venezuela
Abby Martin	Party for Socialism and Liberation		RT and Tele	S https://www	Nussia, Venezuela
Chris Hedges	Movement for a People's Party / Workers's Party		RT		<u>N</u> Russia
Bill Fletcher Jr.	Democratic Socialists of America		TeleSUR		<u>v</u> Venezuela
Laura Flanders	Democratic Socialists of America		TeleSUR		<u> Venezuela</u>
Brian Becker	Party for Socialism and Liberation		Sputnik		<u>r</u> Russia
Sean Blackmon	Party for Socialism and Liberation		Sputnik		<u>r</u> Russia
James Early	International Socialist Organization		TeleSUR		<u>c</u> Venezuela
Bill Dores	Workers Party / International Action Center / La Lucha		PressTV		<u>ı</u> Iran
Danny Glover	Pan-Africanism		TeleSUR		Venezuela
Rebel Diaz	Party for Socialism and Liberation		TeleSUR		<u>v</u> Venezuela
Dewn Springer	Workers Party		. RT		Russia

Given the case of PODEMOS in Spain – a Venezuela-aligned political party which is accused of illegally receiving money from Iran and Venezuela for its founding and continued operation – as well as the means, motive and opportunity for these foreign states to assist U.S. based socialist parties, we believe it is highly likely that there are similar illicit activities underway in the U.S. viii. Especially so as Venezuela, Russia and Iran may be the largest net employer of U.S. socialists (the above is just a sample). As the Democratic Socialists of America engage in electoral politics we consider it sensible to ban them from running political ads as evidence-based prophylaxis for the following reasons:

- Numerous contractors for the Venezuelan government, for Germany's Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung, for Russia's Sputnik and RT, and Iran's Press TV are long time DSA affiliates^{ix}.
- The Young Democratic Socialists and Democratic Socialists for America's panel at the 2007 United States Social Forum in Atlanta was with a Venezuelan Ambassador, and the groups has sent representatives to other Forum events^x.
- DSA has participated in the Sao Paulo Forum^{xi}.
- DSA has adopted a categorically pro-Venezuelan and pro-Cuban line^{xii}.
- DSA-affiliated politicians use the slogan of the Sao Paulo Forum see below image.
- DSA-affiliated politicians meet with Venezuelan officials and proxies see below image.
- DSA-affiliated politicians receive support from Venezuela-linked networks see below image.

We refrain from suggesting politicians supported by the Democratic Socialists of America or and parties like it – such as the Working Families Party, an organization currently directed by Nelini Stamp, who has since at least 2012 been involved in the Venezuelan sponsored Social Forum process^{xiii} and has been active in the political campaigns of former Venezuelan contractors like Chokwe Lumumba – be prohibited from running ads as we do not currently have enough data on how these politicians are funded to take a broader stance on the matter.



Left: Hugo Chavez, Nicolas Maduro and "The Squad" using the Sao Paulo Forum slogan "Another World is Possible" Right: Politicians Ayanna Pressley, Karen Bass, Charles Baron and activist Akinyele Umoja meeting with Venezuelan Communists.

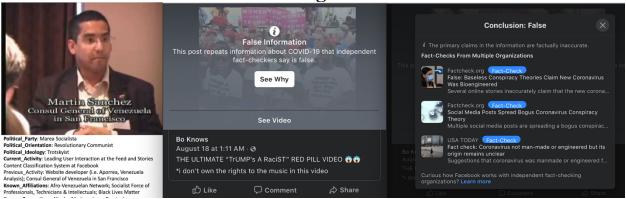
Ban Black Lives Matter Organizers/Pages



Facebook banned CrimethInc and Antifa related accounts for promoting violence and property destruction. Not covered by journalists on the matter is how Brian Dingledine, CrimethInc's founder, is known to have been affiliated with the Latin American communist networks since he described his attendance at the Sao Paulo Forum in Maximum Rock'N'Roll Volume 2 Number 1 and how Scott Crow, Lisa Fithian and several other prominent Antifa organizers were contractors for the Venezuela government during their time at Common Grounds in New Orleans^{xiv}. Given Black Lives Matter associates similar avocation of violence and property destruction and that their extensive relationship with the Venezuelan government and style of politics indicate that they are not actually a Marxist group, but a 'Castrochavista' one – Facebook should similarly ban Black Lives Matter content producers.

- All three Black Lives Matter founders attended Social Forum in the U.S. and Africa events prior to the founding of the BLM network events at which commitments were made to engage in 20-years of Popular Front mobilization^{xv}.
- Black Lives Matter has been promoted by FitzGibbon Media, a PR firm contracted by the Venezuelan government and registered as a foreign agent^{xvi}.
- Black Lives Matter founders have praised the PSUV^{xvii}.
- Black Lives Matter activists have attended events wherein Venezuelan government agents and Venezuelan proxies were in attendance^{xviii}.
- Black Lives Matter has benefited from network effects initiated by Venezuelan activity, such as Ambassador to the U.S. Jesus "Chucho" Garcia's co-founding of a U.S. branch of the Regional Council for Africans in the United States; his work with the Haiti Solidarity Committee and Venezuela's successful effort to get UNESCO to commit to International Decade for People of African Descent^{xix}.
- Black Lives Matter has benefitted via network effects of groups supported by Venezuela, such as the International League for People's Struggle and the People's Congress of Resistance^{xx}.
- Black Lives Matter delegates have attended events hosted by the Sao Paulo Forum, where declarations were made that they would receive assistance from them^{xxi}.
- Black Lives Matter protests have been initiated and supported by political parties affiliated with Venezuela such as the Workers World Party, Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party a Popular Front strategy that dates back to the U.S. Communist movement of the 1950s^{xxii}.
- Black Lives Matter protests have been initiated and supported by NGOs linked to the Venezuelan-government supported Social Forum for Migration, such as Casa de Maryland, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, and the American Friends Service Committee^{xxiii}.
- Black Lives Matter's anti-police, anti-ICE discourse and organizing activities benefit U.S. based criminal organizations that are linked to trans-national drug trafficking networks headed by Nicolas Maduro Moros, Diosdado Cabello, and Tareck Zaidan El Aissami Maddah of the PSUV as well as Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich of the FARC^{xxiv}.

Give a Public Accounting of Martin Sanchez's Work as Facebook's Manager of News Feed



Martin Sanchez is a self-avowed Trotskyist Revolutionary, member of the Afro-Venezuelan Network, a Black Lives Matter advocate, and whose public-social media profile indicates that he categorizes the entirety of the United States government as a criminal organization. He is a former Venezuelan Government Intelligence Officer that has attended meetings of organizations classifiable as FARC-EP front groups, and Colombia Action Network. He is also currently Facebook's manager for the Feed and Stories Content Classification System^{xxv}.

At a time when there is significant public interest in the manner which social media platforms operate to influence American politics, we believe there should be a company-supported investigation made into his activities, including a public report presented on what it finds.

The above screenshot shows a video contesting claims that Donald Trump is racist that has been classified as containing false information about COVID-19, despite the fact that the word COVID-19 is not even mentioned within the video. Considering the algorithmic effects that this entails on this particular video and content like it, along with Martin Sanchez's comments on Twitter about political organizing within Facebook, it begs the question – What is the impact of this foreign revolutionary's managerial role at Facebook?

Provide Juan Guaidó, the True President of Venezuela, with Control Over All Venezuelan State Media Accounts



Evident from their cadres and leadership's history of conduct and avowed goals, the PSUV is fascistic and imperialist party akin to the National Socialist parties of 1930s Italy and Germany^{xxvi}. Spurious debates linked to whether or not fascists should have platforms on social media are not necessary in this instance – because President Juan Guaidó is the legitimate president of Venezuela and as TeleSUR and other Venezuelan state media outlets, list "President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" as the Chief Executive Officer in their incorporation documents, should President Juan Guaidó request that Facebook given him control over these accounts then Facebook should provide it.

TeleSUR and their media allies history of publishing fake news about a variety of issues, including propaganda about American troops^{xxvii}, as well as Maduro's online army of trolls engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior to share fake news about and fake nudes of their political adversaries, are just three of a myriad of examples which demonstrate that PSUV's understanding of being in "combat for the truth" are just code words which means that all their State Media is concerned with legitimizing their illegitimate rule rather than genuinely seeking to investigate and report the truth.

Facebook need not and ought not start playing the arbiter of what the Truth is. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the United States government, the Organization for American States and others recognize the legitimacy of President Juan Guaidó – therefore should he ask for control of the accounts of Venezuela's state media channels - he should receive them. Doing so would not only be aligned with the law and with Facebook's Terms of Service – but would be a small step in helping loosen the grip of an authoritarian ruler wanted by the Department of Justice who relies on appeals to founding myths, unworkable promises for halcyon future, historical revisionism and violence to stay in power.

Notes

Selection from Grassroots Global Justice Alliance's Member Program for the 2010 United States Social Forum

"Through convergence, education, leadership development and coordinated action, GGJ will continue to connect real people and their local struggles to promote systems change for a peaceful, democratic and sustainable world. Over the next 20 years, GGJ will work to achieve critical shifts in global issues including climate justice, trade, migration and militarization, because the time is now to make another world possible – a world where everyone matters and everyone can have enough."

Sample from People's Movement Assembly Organizing Kit



Endnotes

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xv https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsyKH8ViaEg&list=PLa85qFiVbBde0S-

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