

## Summary:

The 14 CA “Fact Sheets” must be tested in debate before being used to mold the CA decision. Tom Varzeliotis of [www.alcyonenes.ca](http://www.alcyonenes.ca) challenges these “Fact Sheets”.

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## **Fiction Wrapped in Fact Sheets.**

There are 14 of them posted on the CA website. They are distributed in hard copy at the CA public hearings and elsewhere I presume. They are pompously labeled the CA “Fact Sheets”.

They serve a dual purpose. One is to align the thinking of the CA members to that of the Fact Sheet authors. The other is to “soften the target”, that is to say, to make the public receptive to the verdict the CA will concoct by following these “Fact Sheets”.

The authors have not expressly claimed infallibility, yet they have neither invited debate nor exposed otherwise these Fact Sheets to scrutiny. Yet, the need to test the “facts” served up on these sheets is pressing, for their potential to mislead is large and the consequence of that grave.

Alcyone News has emerged as the voice of “Opposition” to the CA Managers and from that position will challenge the factuality of these Fact Sheets. This series of articles we will call “Fiction Wrapped in Fact Sheets”

Tom Varzeliotis

### FICTION IN FACT SHEET #1

The title of Fact Sheet #1 is:    **“Politics in BC: What do we want?”**

The title is followed by a three-paragraph preamble.

The authors of Fact Sheet #1 (FS #1) recognize the fact that by manipulating the electoral system, one can affect “what kind of politics” will play on the political stage. Then, they ease the reader into a discussion of “what kind of politics we want”, which is like giving us a choice of which poison to take, in the sense that it strengthens acceptance of “politicking” and diverts energy from the effort to re-democratize our political system.

Having adopted Democracy as our system of governance, we have rejected the "politics" the FS#1 authors suggest we consider. British Columbians are fed up with politicking and want to stick with Democracy - plain, unqualified, un-adulterated democracy. They want to restore democracy as our political system and dispose resolutely of each and every "kind of politics" imposed upon us, by the parties, their sponsors and their prophets.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Question FS #1 elicits is: "How adversarial or consensual do we want BC politics to be?"

Desperately seeking respectability for "adversarial politics", the FS authors seek to associate the party battles fought in the arena level degraded parliament with court of law proceedings. This is grossly misleading, because:

- a. In a court of law, either side may win - in the legislature it is the commander of the largest platoon of MLAs who always wins.
- b. In a court of law, whatever is said, by either side, be it right or wrong, matters greatly; in the arena of parliament hardly anything matters, the decisions are pre-cooked in the elected tyrants' office. The proceedings are mostly to sustain the facade of democratic process and to create optics for the next election.
- c. In the Court, the playing field is even and le-v-el - in the arena-legislature the playing field is rough and tilted - the current one is a real cliff as it tilts 77 to 2 !
- d. In the Court, no one buys election to the jury, nor do the jurors seek re-election - in the Legislature all the MLAs are indebted to whoever paid for their election and strive to please potential future election underwriters at the expense of society.

Evidently "politics", as practiced, by associating them with the Courts of Justice, are not as sterling as the FS would have us believe they are.

Then FS #1 authoritatively declares that under our current system "Accountability is clear and, on election day, the votes pronounce judgment." This may be fodder for students but it is not befitting the CA who is meant to deal with reality. Surely they do not believe that voting in the lesser evil makes either for "accountability" nor does it resemble "pronouncing judgment". Evidently the authors of FS#1 would rather sustain myth than probe for facts.

Further, FS #1 instructs the reader that other systems "do not draw the line clearly", resulting in "blurred accountability"! Do we want that to happen to us? If we want to spare ourselves "blurred" lines, we must retain, if not the whole current electoral system, at least the part of it which yields clear lines of confrontation in the legislature and gives us the facility to pronounce judgment!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Question FS#1 elicits is: **“Where should the balance of power lie between cabinet and the Legislature?”**

The summary answer to that is that power should be neither within parliament nor with the government - power should remain with the people, the “demos” in democracy. Authority over the government apparatus should be the government’s; authority over the government should be parliaments. In a representative democracy the government governs by the grace of the people, conveyed through their representatives in Parliament, period.

That is how it should be, but it is not how it is. The FS’s assertion that “...we elect members to a legislature who, in turn choose the premier and cabinet”, is not fact, it is a lie!

The fact is that we “elect” a party, comprising a boss and his foot soldiers who he marches with his “Party Whip”. Only in a “minority” government situation does parliament assume a modicum of control over the government, but even then, it is not really the parliament that exercises it, it is the small parties who in a majority parliament are summarily degraded to mere noise-maker status. Unfortunately “minority” governments are rare and come too irregularly, to make even a dent on the “elected tyranny” we are subjected to most of the time, often harshly, as is presently the case in BC.

As the FS authors admit in FS#1 , “...the premier and cabinet are able to more easily dominate and the legislature is less able to hold the government accountable.” This is a deliberately convoluted way of saying: “the level of despotism depends on the number of foot soldiers the elected tyrant commands.”

I cannot resist referring to Election 2004 coverage, beamed to the nation from the House of Commons, where CBC had set up shop for the occasion. Peter Mansbridge kept on referring to the problems a minority government would face in “controlling the Parliament”. For a moment I thought he was talking about St. George controlling the big bad dragon.

In a democracy parliament controls the government; when the reverse happens, democracy suffocates. Have we given up on freedom, citizenry self-government, and democracy?

The FS authors mumble a bit, en passant, about shifting some power from the “elected tyrant” to the Parliament. This is sick. The proper thing to do is restore control of the government to the people, via parliament. We need to liberate parliament from any and all control, to secure it against it being dominated by

anyone, no matter who, and keep it free at all times.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Question FS#1 elicits is: **"Do we need local representatives?"**

The "facts" according FS#1 are as follows: "In our current system, we elect local people to represent the interests of the region - which we call a constituency or riding. This gives voters an identifiable political representative ... Yet party discipline may hamper an MLA's ability to vote the way his or her constituents' wish.". In contrast to ours, "some electoral systems dispense with local representatives". FS#1 does not specify what happens in those systems regarding the issue of local representation and party discipline.

"Party discipline" is a euphemism for "voluntary subservience to party and its sponsors". Anyway, the MLAs to which FS#1 refers as the peoples' "representatives" are less that and more political party "agents" in the constituency.

These are "facts" they say, "which is your wish?" they ask. Neither, say I. In a democracy people elect their representatives in parliament, period. In a Party-o-cracy, people are forced to arbitrate the battle of the parties for the trough. In a party-o-cracy, masquerading as democracy, pretenses are maintained by prophets of the system who author FSs like the one in question.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Question FS#1 elicits is: **"Should parties hold seats in the legislature in proportion to their share of the popular vote?"**

This is silly, really! In Party-o-cracy the parliament is made into an arena for parties to do battle for their ideologies, their bosses and their sponsors, therefore, the number of mercenaries each commands should be proportional to the vote. In a democracy the parliament is an assembly of peoples' representatives.

If we are forced to endure party-o-cracy, the answer is yes, let the parties have strength to commensurate with the number of the "party fans" who voted for each of them. If we are to have democracy, the question is redundant, it is the people who determine their representatives in parliament; the party factor just does not enter the equation.

The final Question FS#1 elicits is: **"Do voters get to make the kind of choices they want?"**

The FS#1 recognizes that "Under our current system, BC voters are given a short list of names, together with the party affiliation.... The candidates on the list are determined ... by political parties without voter input". The FS recognizes then the existence of other types of ballots. The fact here is that there are variations to the theme, one presumes.

In any event, for whatever it may be worth, here is a reminder: Joseph Stalin, the Communist party leader, was nominating the Candidates in the USSR "elections" was one of the major things the world held against Stalin.

Then, in a departure from the format of the previous questions, the FS#1 authors pose the penetrating question: "Is increasing or changing the kind of choices on the ballot a good thing, or does it simply create more confusion and complication?"

One wonders why they did not call a spade a spade. They could have put the question as follows: "Do we want the party-bosses, acting under the influence of hidden party sponsors, to control the menu of candidates the people are to vote for and through that to control parliament?"

In any case, the fact is that in a democracy the people vote for their representatives in parliament, who in turn appoint and control the government. It follows that in a democracy the ballot contains names of citizens offering to serve as peoples' representatives in the society's parliament. These candidates have had the opportunity to present themselves and make known their general outlook to the voters during the election campaign. No other information than their name, and perhaps their picture, should be on the ballot.

In conclusion, FS#1 lists more non-facts than facts, substitutes platitudes for the substantial, and obfuscates the issues.

Tom Varzeliotis.