

Foreign Media is Losing Their Freedom to Lie in Russia

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On the eve of the guillotine, foreign media laud the freedom they have enjoyed for decades and are now just about to lose. It has been their freedom to lie.

Their lies to the Russian public have served as a springboard for lies about Russia for global distribution.

The editorial teams of foreign-owned media are presently bustling with activity to make a last ditch effort to abort their demise. In doing so, they curiously testify to the present media freedom of Russia. I refer here to two articles in *The Moscow Times* last week: [Foreign Media Law Makes Putin Less Glamorous](#) and [Curbs on Foreign Ownership Will Gut Russia's Media](#).

These articles testify to how freely the Western media has been able to operate in Russia all the while complaining about total lack of press freedom. This surprises me greatly, because having followed for years *The Moscow Times* (TMT) and its peer publications, including its Russian language half-sister *Vedomosti* (*The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and Finland's Sanoma corporation), I can only recollect their constant complaints about the lack of media freedom in "Putin's Russia".

TMT tells us it has "produced several Pulitzer Prize-winning writers". *How can you win a Pulitzer Prize if you did not have the right to report freely?* TMT concurs with me when pointing out that the "draft legislation on media assets" now "puts these achievements in jeopardy".



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The legislation in question would limit foreign ownership of all Russian media companies

to 20 percent. As further evidence of present media freedom TMT writes that presently “most Russian publishing houses are foreign-owned” and goes on to predict the new measures will greatly change Russia’s media industry — “almost certainly not for the better.” This implies western media corporations have been positive for Russia media in general. TMT estimates the combined reach of Western media corporations in Russia is as large as 60 million people.

The argument then moves on to discuss real and alleged political bias. We are told “Forbes and Vedomosti are two of Russia’s best-quality news outlets”. There is an admission they “often are critical of the government’s policies” but adding “it is difficult to accuse them of outright bias.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. These publications have been openly hostile to the presidency of Vladimir Putin and his government in all their editorials and reports. Just pick at random any of their editorials and you will see for yourself; each one reads like a lampoon of Putin and his policies. Or look at the choice of op-ed contributors at The Moscow Times, which is dominated by people like the racist Yulia Latynina constantly writing diatribes against her country peppered with anti-Russian slurs.

TMT goes on to claim that “foreign media investors did not come to Russia to threaten its national security or harness public opinion in order to stage a hostile coup and eventually make the country disintegrate...”

Excuse me, but this is precisely what they have been up to. It is clear that regime change has been at the top on their agenda.

Next we are told that the foreign media: “...came here to earn money, and they did, contributing in turn to Russia’s growing prosperity.” But The Moscow Times itself has lost money almost each year since its establishment. I also understand *Vedomosti* has never been in the black. Using their own logic, we can conclude that money is not what they are after. *The Moscow Times* has a very different mission.



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TMT laments that the authors of the draft laws have put forward the case that glossy magazines owned by Western media corporations “present a greater danger to Russia’s national security than newspapers covering politics and society”. TMT denies this accusation and claims these publications has not been involved in politics.

But the paper has never refrained from direct political attacks on Putin and the government. Indeed, it appears that the TMT has a strategy of openly attempting to influence Russian domestic politics.

Such an opportunity arrived with the presidential election of 2012 when Western media unleashed all their assets including the boobs on the ground in the form of the glossy media to fight for regime change.

The Moscow Times writes that glossy magazines do not promote Western interests, but “Western aesthetics” and that “Western values” are now being questioned and that “Western lifestyles are being rejected as immoral and unfashionable.” In fact, the message of regime change comes under the guise of “Western values” combined with an effort to whitewash all the crimes against humanity the Western elite conducts under this banner.

The latest example of this phenomenon can be seen in Ukraine, where war crimes are justified in the name of “European integration and values.”

We read that Leonid Bershidsky — the Russian founding editor of *Vedomosti* - laments that the proposed law “kills off my life’s work.”

He sounds like an arrested serial killer wailing about all those victims he will never have the chance to kill.

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