

CONTEMPORARY ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN MEDIA (THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNISM INHERITANCE)

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Abstract

Russian media came through a long path of development to today's adjective of free and independent, at least on declarative level. A special accent is on the fact that Russian journalist no matter the field of law, find the way to publish investigative facts and to stand on the side of undesirable opponent opinion. Those kind of journalists put aside any ideological or political obstacles which appear in their professional work. This work is dedicated mostly to them. Our research started from journalism and all of its characteristics during the Soviet Union period, because that part of Russian history affected the most on today's state of media in Russia. Years which followed the breakdown of Soviet Union are our later fields of concentration, especially the incoming democratization and liberalization of the system and journalism itself. We made an overview of normatives and legal framework which today's media in Russia are functioning on and also, we've looked back on the way and the system on which young journalists in Russia educate themselves today. All of these are very important factors and issues needed to be explained in order to enlighten all contemporary aspects of the Russian media today. There are always the causes and the results.

Basically looked, the main social studies on Russia's society are offering us a conclusion that it is highly centralized and that represents the main issue and obstacle in the process of full democratization of that former communist society.

We've questioned ourselves...why is the Russia on today's 148 place by the media freedom in the world?

Keywords: Russian media, contemporary aspects, Russia

Russian federation – a country with the biggest territory in the world, ninth by the number of its citizens. Main language is Russian and actual president is Vladimir Putin.

Journalism – skill of collecting, processing and preparation of information which are then spreaded in public by the print, electronic and on-line media. In everyday discourse, media are characterized as a *seventh power* or the *fourth estate*.

Investigative journalism – „a main definition would be seeking for what is about to hide, considering the fact that everything what intends to be hidden isn't worth of hiding.“ (Burgh:2007;page.26) Investigative journalism has different, more sophisticated and complex approach in collecting the information which are not familiar to the public, or are, in some way undesirable to be exposed in public.

Communism – political system, movement or ideology of classless society in which individuals don't have the rights on private property or freedom of speech and opinion opposite than major Communist Party which is the only political option in this single – party system.

Soviet Union -SSSR – the main political and ideological creator was Vladimir Iljič Lenin. By his leadership the Soviet Union became a socialist state on the Eurasian continent, governed as a single-party state by the Communist Party with Moscow as its capital. It was a

union of multiple subnational Soviet republics, its government and economy were highly centralized.

Communist Party – a political party specified in single – party systems and includes those that advocate the application of the social and economic principles of communism through the state policy.

Leninism - comprises political and socialist economic theories, developed from Marxism, and Lenin's interpretations of Marxist theory, for practical application to the socio-political conditions of the agrarian Russian Empire (1721–1917) of the early 20th century. In February 1917, Leninism was the Russian application of Marxist economics and political philosophy, effected and realised by the Bolshevik party who led the fight for the political independence of the working class. In media context, Lenin described press as a „*collective weapon for propaganda and agitation and a a collective system organizer.*“ (Lenin:1949;page.52)

Goskomizdat – the censorship body of all printed publications and all literal achievements. Goskino censored the film art, Gostelradio and State commission for television and radio of the Soviet union was in charge for editing a radio and television programmes.

The Cold War - dated from 1947 to 1991, it was a sustained state of political and military tension between powers in the Western Bloc, dominated by the United States with NATO among its allies, and powers in the Eastern Bloc, dominated by the Soviet Union along with the Warsaw Pact. This began after the success of their temporary wartime alliance against Nazi Germany, leaving the USSR and the US as two superpowers with profound economic and political differences.

Gorbachev's reforms – glasnost and perestrojka, Gorbachev's reforms touched all segments of society. It included freeing press restrictions and releasing political prisoners and dissidents from jail and internal exile. Verbal confrontations led in the Congress of Soviets were live broadcasted, the public was shocked by the amount of imperfections of the system and it's unfreedom.

Dissident - a person who actively challenges an established doctrine, policy, or institution. When dissidents unite for a common cause they often effect a dissident movement. The governing elite excludes them from the society as undesirable.

Samizdat – a literal publication which is often prohibited to be exposed publicly so the writers of such publications often public them illegally and unsigned. Samizdat publications started massively occur in former Soviet Union in 60-es and by the seventieth article of the Soviet Criminal law, samizdats were considered as criminal acts of „antisoviet propaganda“ all the way to the 80-es, until the Gorbachev's reforms.

Westernization - a process whereby societies come under or adopt Western culture in areas such as industry, technology, law, politics, economics, lifestyle, diet, language, alphabet, religion, philosophy, and values. Westernization has been a pervasive and accelerating influence across the world in the last few centuries, with some thinkers assuming westernization to be the equivalent of modernization a way of thought that is often debated.

Democratization - is the transition to a more democratic political regime. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy or transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system.

Russian journalism in the Soviet Union: the vortex of censorship, unfreedom and forced communist obedience

The journalism from the earliest history was one of the main indicators in the process of state system determination. On the scale of institutions which hold the core of democratic values, media stand in the front, as their unique keeper. Media in Russia in the Soviet period were practically struggling to survive the commands of obedience. That period

was marked by the forced restriction of human thought potential on the disturbing level of blinded following of the state authority. According to **Encyclopedia of the Soviet Union** journalism is „*activity of periodical public collecting, processing and dissemination of the actual information through the press, radio, television, cinema and other, one of the forms of the mass propaganda*“ (Pasti:2007;page.27) There is a certain dilemma about the part of 'periodical dissemination'. Did that actually mean controlled dissemination from the top of the Party, was that the special way of filtration of the main informations in order to inform public just with selected parts of informations? Maybe it's better to rely on the part where journalism is actually identified as activity of propaganda with no further analysis and explanations. We could use another definition to clarify things. This one is from **Soviet journalists guide** where journalism was considered as a „*well known field of public activity of the Party.*“ That means that every Soviet journalist had to work for the party, to follow their commands and to „fight against any appearance of possible bourgeoisie ideology or prohibited behaviour based on class stratification“ (Pasti:2007;page:30) This second definition leaves us with no doubt – journalists in the Soviet Russia were mainly a political servants in order to provide public opinion and orientation closer to ideals of real-socialism.

In Soviet Union the media represented a vital element of insuring the Communist party governance and rule of the ideology of communism. „*As the main characteristic of the ideology of communism can be considered the tough party line and the intolerance of any kind of criticism. Between the majority of conscious (the Party) and the unconscious mass stands agitation and aggressive propaganda from the party elites and that kind of language was only making an informed public and well indoctrinated.*“ (Nuhanović:2005;page.237) the **Lenin's doctrine of a Party political structure** and the domination of communism has characterized the press as „*not only a collective means of propaganda and agitation, but as a collective organiser of the system.*“ (Lenin:1949;page.52) That was Lenin's political testament published in than daily newspapers „**Iskra**“ in 1901- st and represents the clear framework in the interpretation of the degree of media freedom in Soviet Union. A Soviet media were under strict supervision, but this kind of ideological censorship is not only related to the media, but also in art, film, theater, literature, it was proven mechanism for mentally directing the population to uncritical support of the regime and the Party itself. A **Soviet censorship apparatus** as a means of shaping the mass, consisted of two large sectors:

Communist Party and KGB (Comitee of State Security) who were representing „the brain of system operations“ and served as the executive administrative bodies. Decision-making began with the **Secretary General** of the Communist Party Politburo addressing the Communist Party, followed by the **Department of agitation and propaganda** of the Central Comitee of the CP in Moscow. KGB was also responsible for the formulation of prohibited data, themes, creating a list of names and official positions that are not allowed to disclose. State secrets are thus processed and placed in the jurisdiction of the **General Administration for the Protection of State Secrets in the press**, also known as **Glavlit**, which is the first of four executive bodies whose main task was censorship of all publications whose contents threatened the confidentiality of informations of national importance, and CP itself had its special mechanisms of censorship in the form of several institutions divided into different fields of jurisdiction:

Goskomizdat was the censorship body of all printed publications, as well as all literary forms that were formerly within the literary achievements. **Goskino** censored art and film achievements, **Gostelradio** or the state **Comission for Radio and Television of the USSR** was in charge of broadcasting radio and television programs. In the USSR there were four channels: the „**First channel**“ or the first program had a central role in broadcasting and was available in the entire Soviet Union. The second one was the „**Channel of the Union**“, and the third channel was called „**Moscow**“. The **Fourth channel** encapsulates the popular

television quadruple offer then. Then-news were provided almost completely by the „**Telegraph agency**“, known as „**TASS**“, which today exists only in a changed name. Goskomizdat was responsible for providing insight state secrets and other confidential information only to the most preferred (this applies to political appointees). The aim was to prevent political unfiltered information never find their way to the public. „*The role of ideology and propaganda as a function of the essential ideological connotations, aimed at the abolition and reduction of part of the public information flow that offers ideas and values contrary to the ruling. That's the way of presenting the existing values and ideas as dominant interest, as a natural order of things, so, they are in a certain way, mythologized.*“ (Kukić:2004;page.56) Yet, it would be wrong to say that institutionalized censorship of the ruling structures of that era was publicly identified as such, it would be wrong to censorship in public discourse actually name censorship, that would pull a negative connotations, because the obedience of the ideology victims could be brought in question. Officially, there was no censorship in the Soviet Union. Formally, freedom of speech was guaranteed, but only „*if the consolidation of these freedoms is to maintain the socialist order and development.*“ (Plehanov:1974;page 67)

Every journalistic engagement that has meant a violation of the socialist model Agitprop (agitation and propaganda) meant a violation of declarative guaranteed freedom of speech and writing. So, journalists who were prosocial and prosystem minded had the status of a Soviet man with a high level of awareness of collectivism, social patriotism which also means responsibility to society as a whole. The task of the media in the Soviet Union was clear: to create an artificial ideological clean environment with friendly looking at communism and existing social furnishing, institutionalized control of the public in the form of censorship is usually presented in a different light, to avoid public outcry, and that could be accepted. Original meaning of the word censor has negative connotations and its overtones, because, the original meanings imposed controls, and the applicable meaning of those words were usually reformulated.. „ *such methods are used to achieve a higher good*“ (Plehanov:1974;str. 67) There was even an official „ **Document of prohibitions**“ or „ **Blacklisted data in the press, radio and television**“, which was published in **1987** and contained information that applies to the alleged military or state secrets. Forbidden information concered the structure of the armed forces, the type of weapons, crime rate, the situation in prisons, as well as information about censorship. The list was constatatntly changing, according to ideological fluctuations and the changing old lists were destroyed, so that today there are only few such lists to serve as witnesses of that time.

Most of journalists and press editors then were Communist Party members and the Association called the **Union of Journalists**, which belonged to nearly **74 000** members. It was absolutely inevitable that all activities editors fit through the Party filtration. CP's tightened the censorship noose also about the most important links in the chain of journalistic identity-building in the education of journalists. The education in high schools for journalists is carried out in parallel with the compulsory education in „**High School of Party**“ in which lecturers were members of the journalistic elite in the Party, the most loyal „Party puppets.“ **School of Journalism within the Moscow University** served as the future course of the party regime reporters. „ *Students have studied the structure of the Party and Party basis in seven disciplines: **Theory and Practice of Soviet journalism and Party, The history of the Party, Training for television, radio and the press editors, Russian journalism and literature, Western journalism and literature, Stylistics of Russian language and techniques of journalism and information.***“ (Gryzunov;2009,page.14). Goal was propaganda, mobilization and organization of the masses in a new economic and political system that are „*producing a new, reformed version of man, homo Sovieticus*“ (Pasti:2007;page.39)

Lenin's concept of journalists as a literary party workers were even legally formalized with the decisions adopted at the **VIII, IX and XIII Party Congress** „*which the press publicly proclaimed Marxist-Leninist expression of well known formula of a collective propagandist and agitator system organizer, journalists have become Party officials.*“ (Talovov, *prema Pasti:2007;page.40*) The Cold War was also a historical period in Russia characterized by strong censorship in all areas of publishing, intellectual work and any labor that was meant for public publication. In that purpose, it is raised a lot of barriers that were operational separation with mission to disable the possible infiltration of unhealthy capitalist information that could poison „ *a healthy awareness of the communist man*“ (Tucaković:1999;str.56) This censorship system was later called „**The iron curtain**“. Therefore, all the journalistic professionalism of the Soviet era had its well-trodden path. Everything was starting from the political coursed high education, improvement propaganda-fiction skills in journalistic engagement, allocating a journalistic associations that were under the watchful eye of the Party and, eventually becoming a member of the Communist Party. Such journalists were belonging to the privileged class, were highly ranked in the organs of the Party, were part of the cultural elite, the people were represented as irrefutable intelligence.

Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, after becoming General Secretary in CP, started to introduce systemic changes and changing the course of the existing policy. He brought a greater transparency, openness to people, offered a truth of state system without false informations. Also ,the media criticism is allowed without the fear of the consequences. These reforms, known as *glasnost* and *perestroika* were tending towards the gradual democratization of the real-socialistic Eastern bloc. Verbal confrontations led in the **Congress of Soviets** were live broadcasted, the public was shocked by the amount of imperfections of the system and it's unfreedom. The **fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989** and more nationalistic and inter-ethnic clashes after Gobachev's reforms, many of revolutions and, finally, the coup with the aim of re-establishing centralistic state system, takes us to 1991 and official dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Journalism after the USSR: the gradual westernization, the disappearance of censorship, democratization of political and media system in Russia

Policy of glasnost as a system of greater transparency to the people after the 1985's , Gorbachev began to introduce major social changes and it meant great progress. Authorian and unyielding command system that could not allow free thought, appears in public criticism of all previous political moves and disadvantages of the former system. It was a collective awakening of Russians. „*Gorbachev's moves towards detente had little to do with tough knocking fist of a hundred or expansion of international terrorism, under the Reagan's doctrine. They are undertaken with a view to cruel and inefficient centralized state created by Lenin and his followers directed towards economic and social changes, trying to implement reform from above.*“ (Chomski:1999;page,128) Therefore, since 1986, begins transitional era for Russia and its journalism. **President Yeltsin** signed a new **Law on the media**, just two days after the official dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The basic idea and purpose of the new Media law was to finally provide the media dissemination of informations that hadn't passed state tutor control. It was a legal guarantee against media censorship.

„For example, **Article 4** – ensure the prohibition of change of the constitutional order by force and the prohibition of incitement to social, class or national intolerance.“ (Lužkov:2003;str.78) **Article 3.** of this law meant a relief to those who have submitted requests for registration of print and electronic media. However,**Article 13.** is contradictory to Article3, because it allows state to reject the request for registration when the competent authorities conclude that potential objectives have been placed out of the media could violate

legal guidelines. **Article 16** authorized the state to shut down any media if it finds that he deliberately ignored the ban on promoting a conflict. Journalism has suddenly become a popular profession. Some researches suggest that the number of media has grown from **118 in 1991 to more than 4000 in 2001 st.** „*The media have begun to increase their budget, educate employees, modifying the contents. First money earned from advertisers invested in increasing salaries to journalists according to their employment. Journalists were given the opportunity to choose media that will work, the topic they will write, to be better paid and have better working conditions. Media took themselves to the labor market.*“ .(Pasti:2007;page.56) Quality investigative journalism has proven to be an indispensable tool for democratic communication. Many foreign investors have appeared at this time, recognizing the profit potential that was waiting for them, people in Russia were eager for diversified media and information with a critical review of the events. In Soviet system, journalists loyal to the Party could have a percentage share of equity in the media, but this new law will lose this right and journalists will become an “ordinary workers“. Capitalism has brought new rules. During the Soviet period, the two most popular printed editions, **Pravda and Izvestya**, were almost the only source of information about political events for the public. However, the situation changed in printed and electronic publications. „*The Russian Federation did not receive until 1991. her first channel RTR. Number of channels is increased, the most important was ORT, in which the state has a majority stake and the first private TV channel owned by Vladimir Guisinski.*“ .“(Pasti:2007;str.56)

Review of the normative and legal framework as the foundation of a new functioning of the media in Russia

There are **three laws** that regulate the media system in Russia currently and, based on them, every public communication has its certain limits. **Media Act** was passed in **1991**, the **Law on Communications in 2003**, **The Law on Information, Information Technologies and data protection was adopted in 2006**. In **1994 the Congress of Russian Journalists adopted a Code of Professional Ethics**, which give the basic guidelines for ethical reporting and journalistic self-regulation as a basic assumption of accuracy and objectivity. In **2008 was created the Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications**, which regulates the mass media, telecommunications and IT activities. Law on Mass Media of the Russian Federation that we've mentioned it above, its adoption has brought a reversal in understanding the role and importance of the media in a democratic society.

Head One contains **General provisions** where it states „*In the Russian Federation the search, receiving, production and dissemination of information, the existence of mass media, possession, use and disposal of these media (...) will not be subject to restrictions other than those prescribed by the laws of the Russian Federation on mass media*“ (<http://www.medialaw.ru>) Thus, the statutory presumption that the only force that will control the media in Russia is a law itself. Because of that, in **Article 3**, which is called the „**Inadmissibility of censorship**“ is : „No provision on censorship of the mass information requested by officials, state bodies and institutions to control the content of the media is not allowed.“ (<http://www.medialaw.ru>) In Article 3 is also mentioned the fact that no legal provision is not supported in the creation of organizations and institutions whose activity is related to the censorship of the media. **Article 4** claims: „ No provision which implies the use of mass media for the purpose of committing criminal offenses is punishable, as well as disclosure of information constituting State secrets or any other legally protected secrets, spreading ideas that tend to extremism, as well as spreading propaganda.....and programs for processing information to influence the subconscious of human beings.“ (<http://www.medialaw.ru>) Contents of this Article is already on first reading seems ambiguous and it seems as legislation that intends to restrict democracy. This article ,for

example, left the authorities space for manipulation when it is necessary to limit the opinion of the masses. Yet, law is one thing, practice is another.

Defeat of democracy and investigative journalism: the murder of journalists, form of political censorship and cover-up regime opponents

Ana Politkovska

Russia is a complex work environment for investigative journalists and those ones who doesn't tolerate any shortcomings of Russian society, such as crime, corruption, despotism in politics, will hardly overcome all dangers in dealing with their job. „Investigative journalism is accomplished by a thin line, the more journalists come near powerful individuals, the problem for them becomes more serious.“ (Burgh:2007;page.127) In the last fifteen years in Russia were killed more than **250** journalists, concerning the data of the **Russia Federation of Journalists**. (<http://europe.ifj.org/en/articles/russian-federation-russian-union-of-journalists>) **Reporters without borders**, an international organization that brings together a large number of journalists from around the world, has declared Russia as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists. Russian media, who are controlled by the Kremlin, need to find a special way of self-censorship, because the number of political killings increases from year to year. **Olga Panfilova**, director of the **Russian Center for Extreme Journalism** points out that „Russia is a dangerous place for practising journalism. According to media freedom, Russia takes 168 place. Why? First of all, because of the killings of journalists, because of violence and threats of governemntal bodies, censorships and arrests of journalists for libel and slander, state interference in editorial policy.“ (Ružić:2008;page.83) So, journalists who were not afraid to show objectively the situation in Russia, with no regard to intimidation and threats, were brutally killed. There were many Russian journalists who have been killed under mysterious circumstances, but the far more media covered was the case of **Anna Politkovskaya** who shooked the world and passive Russian public. Her death sparked numerous protests and public dissatisfaction with the Russian citizens who understand that things have gone very far. Ana graduated journalism at the **Moscow State University**. She was recognized humanitarian and winner of numerous awards for journalistic professionalism. (In 2001 she won the Prize of the Russian Journalist's Union, in 2001 the Global award of Amnesty International Humanitarian journalism, in 2002, Freedom to Write award and the International Womens Media Foundation for Courage in Journalism, www.novayagazeta.ru)

She was undesirable in the circles of Russian jet power wielders because of her's reporting, especially on the **Russian.Chechen conflict**. Wstern media often quoted her texts, considering them relevant in the assessment of Russian policy and system. Russian authorities have considered her es the western spy. She was the author of three books – „**Chechen diary**“, „**A journey to hell**“ and „**Putin's Russia**“ Although her career in journalism began in the pro-Soviet newspapers, after perestroika she became a political commentator in the newspaper **Novaya Gazeta**, „They accused her for allegedly sympathizing with Chechen terrorists, because in her articles she identified Russian officers as tortures of Chechen's peaceful citizens. Thus in the article – People who are dissapearing, had written something about the fate of Chechen Zeliman Murdalov who was killed by a Russian officer Sergei Lapin Because of her, Lapin was arrested. Politkovskaya wrote about the war in another, different way, wrote in order of anti-Russian propaganda machine.“ (Ružić:2008;page.90) First threat Ana received was from **Sergei Lapin** who was later accused for her murder. She wrote about him as a Chechen's civilian killer. She was killed in 2006 when she went with her daughter to buy groceries. At the exist of elevator, the killer waited for her and fired four bullets into her. After her death, an investigation had begun which is still ongoing and pretty unsuccessful. Her colleagues from Novaya Gazeta found in

her computer the article which she intended to publish about disposing all locations where the Chechen civilians were tortured and killed. Later, after her tragic death, the article was published. *„Even the Reporters without borders gathered several thousand signatures to be formed a special investigative organization dedicated to the investigation of the murder of Anna Politkovskaya. Public and media pressure to encourage authorities to investigate violence has achieved very little. Discussion of sensitive issues is left to the traditional kitchen table - and the internet, which has in the past few years become a breathing space for people not only in search of information, but wanting to air their concerns in a relatively free environment.“* (<http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/galina-arapova/media-freedom-in-russian-regions-you-must-be-joking%E2%80%A6>)

Conclusion

Media freedom is „killed“ by the gunshots, half-functional democracy rests on the inheritance of communism

Russian oligarchical elite tailor the course of today's Russian policy, the position of the media in the social system as well as the working conditions of journalists. Russia today is at the **148-nd** place by counting the press freedom in the world and it's media landscape is bleak. That's the main assessment of **Reporters without borders**. Constant repression and oppression of freedom of the media breaks the image of Russians and potential goal that Russia should build as a new democratic force that can equally compete against the leading West. *„Individual journalists who try to work in the public interest and uphold the traditional standards of their profession face harsh reprisals from the Kremlin machine, which has at its disposal any number of means for suppressing freedom of speech, from energy-sapping charges of defamation and checks for ‘extremism’ to the newly reinstated article of the Criminal Code on defamation, which attracts astronomical fines of up to five million roubles (many years‘ salary for an average worker)“*(<http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/galina-arapova/media-freedom-in-russian-regions-you-must-be-joking%E2%80%A6>)

World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists, meeting in Moscow in 2007, after the murder of Anna Politkovskaya had the aim to start a global campaign on the prevention of murders of journalists and better and safer conditions for their work. Russia since then has been considered one as the one of the most unsafe countries for reporting and dealing with journalists' work. Lack of democratic tradition makes this important transition towards full consolidation even more lasting and difficult. Formally, censorship is banned by **Article 29 of the Russian Federal Constitution and Article 1 of the Russian Law on the Media**. In fact it is flourishing. *“Censors as such no longer exist, but there are still editors or Research and Information departments whose opinion on a given article must be taken into account.“* Today's ‘censor’ will not normally check a text for ‘soundness’ before its publication (though I have heard of it happening on occasion). Instead there are a number of effective levers (usually economic) that can be used on editors to agree a (spoken or unspoken) list of those subjects which are acceptable to cover and those which are taboo. *“*(<http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/galina-arapova/media-freedom-in-russian-regions-you-must-be-joking%E2%80%A6>)

Russian journalism in '90 –es was based on reporting without relying on trusted and verifiable sources. In some, pretty rare texts, were located quotes like *„judging from editorial sources“*. However, today, the media in Russia have greater accountability to the public. Investigative journalism exists, no matter the obstacles, as well as the opposition media. However, the difference is that self-censorship is no longer a matter of compulsion, but it's disguised imperative. *„Lacking the opportunity to cover the news properly or write on topical issues, many regional journalists are turning to the internet to publish their articles and simply to express their views“*(<http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/galina-arapova/media-freedom-in-russian-regions-you-must-be-joking%E2%80%A6>)

[arapova/media-freedom-in-russian-regions-you-must-be-joking%E2%80%A6](#) Multiple killings of journalists testify that the applicable **Law in mass media, adopted in 1991**, which is considered the crown of the liberalization of the media system in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet system, exists only on the declarative level. Free access to information and the prohibition of political censorship system is officially guaranteed in Russia, but when **Anna Politkovskaya** accused the Russian authorities for the Chechen bloodshed, that was her last free thought. Judging by the **European Institute for the Media**, the Russian media are mostly managed by Putin, who is also the most dominant figure in the public life of Russia. It seems that the future of Russian journalism still depends on the main policy represented in Russia and the state rules, who create the dominant course concerning media and speech freedoms.

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