



<http://centerforpoliticsanalysis.ru>
info@centerforpoliticsanalysis.ru

HOW THE FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA IS KILLING

**FACT-CHECKERS ARE A WESTERN INSTRUMENT
COUNTER-PROPAGANDA AND CENSORSHIP**

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At a White House media reception, US President Joe Biden praised the state of American journalism:

- Very happy to be in the company of the only group of Americans with an approval rating even lower than mine.^{one}.

The fight against media freedom in the West

Freedom of the media, as well as freedom of speech, are still considered the fundamental values of Western society in the old fashioned way. As the philosopher Karl Popper noted, freedom plays a key role in ensuring the stability of liberal democracy, since it makes it possible to adjust the work of the government and even the political system as a whole to the objective needs of society.² Even the Bill of Rights of 1689 guaranteed the members of Parliament complete freedom to discuss the affairs of the kingdom and officials. That is, freedom of speech has in its archive a **story long 333 years**.

One of the most important institutions that guaranteed the exercise of free expression of opinion has long been considered the institution of independent media (free press, the so-called fourth branch of power). **AT In 1956, a theory of relations between the press and the government was proposed, depending on the form of government.** For Western society as we knew it in the 19th and much of the 20th century was characterized by libertarian and social models of the existence of the press. For Soviet Russia, a special "Soviet communist" was developed. A significant part of the regimes that are called authoritarian had, accordingly, their own system of interaction with the media that was different from others.³

libertarian model implies that the media are free to write whatever they want, limited only by the law and the courts. At the same time, within the framework of free competition, the best solutions are developed, which, combined with social attitudes, moral standards, the need to protect reputation and fear of prosecution, remove some topics for publication from discussion.

social model assumes more stringent restrictions, in accordance with which The media should be under public control as an important public institution.

Authoritarian and Soviet models, respectively, meant the management of the media, including editorial policy, by state or quasi-state institutions.

^{one}Biden joked that journalists and celebrities have even lower approval ratings than him. TASS, 1.05.2022 URL:https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/14528789?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop

²Popper K. Open society and its enemies. AT2 vols. Moscow: Cultural Initiative; Phoenix, 1992.

³Siebert F., Peterson T., Schramm W. Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do. University of Illinois Press, 1956.

The US has long told tales that its media are truly free institutions. The collective West was proud that no one could force its mass media to broadcast what they did not want, or forbid them to write about socially significant problems. Restrictions were implied only in accordance with the Law. Thus, according to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, it was allowed to restrict the freedom of the press for reasons of national security or to establish public order.

But the theory and good wishes turned out to be terribly far from reality. **"Independent Media", as a mechanism for exercising freedom of speech in practice, turned out to be very dependent.** Dependent both on money and on the personal disposition of politicians, as well as partisanship. Why go far there? From the whole array of old Hollywood and - more broadly - Western films about the heroism of individual journalists or publishers, one can draw a completely logical conclusion that in practice the situation with freedom of speech and freedom of the media has not been and remains not so simple.

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of such films. The theme of freedom of the press was even raised in the animated series *The Simpsons*, where in one of the episodes, Mr. Burns planned to buy all the newspapers in Springfield, but he did not succeed, because, as Burns himself admits, "no one can do that if he is not Rupert Murdoch". Among other notable works, let us recall at least "Wag the Dog" (*Wag The Dog*, 1997), "The Secret File" by Steven Spielberg (*The Post*, 2017), "Good Night and Good Luck" by George Clooney (*Good Night, and Good Luck*, 2005) and *Spotlight* by Tom McCarthy (*Spotlight*, 2015) and *The Newsroom* by Aaron Sorkin (*The Newsroom*, 2012-2014). But these are all romantic stories (although based on real events), often with a happy ending.

But the 2014 film directed by Michael Quest "Kill the Messenger" (*Kill the Messenger*, 2014) is not quite like that. According to the plot - in the mid-1990s, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Gary Webb discovered that the CIA was secretly supplying cocaine to the United States in order to finance the rebels in Nicaragua. Despite pressure from outside, Webb publishes a series of articles called "The Dark Alliance". He is immediately ostracized by his "independent media" colleagues, his career is banned, his life is ruined, and he commits suicide. This story is also based on real events, moreover, from the quite recent practice of the functioning of the Western media.

Media freedom in the United States and more broadly in the West exists only when it is convenient. When it is not needed, it is resolutely removed to a distant closet, as something shameful and out of date. This was the case with the well-known American reporter Peter Arnett, who on March 31, 2003 was fired from the NBC television company only for giving an interview to Iraqi television during the US military conflict with Iraq. Arnett said later: "I was told that I should not have been interviewed by Iraqi television - this is unpatriotic and contrary to American interests ... But I believe that I can give an interview to anyone. For example, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice spoke with journalists from the Al Jazeera television company, which is believed in America to be owned by Osama bin Laden. However, this did not help Arnett, and he was still removed from the air of the television company.

The well-known Russian journalist Vladimir Pozner told an interesting story about censorship: "There is such a wonderful TV presenter Bill Maher. He hosted *Politically Incorrect*, first on cable and later on ABC. But when

the bombing of Afghanistan began, Bill Meyer said in one broadcast: "It hardly takes great courage to beat women, children and civilians from a great height ...". He was fired. And he was a very famous person."

The government is also on very famous people. In 2003, some American show business stars spoke out against the war in Iraq, for which they were publicly ostracized. American rock musicians protesting against the war in Iraq were not allowed to convey their compositions to the general public - they could only be heard on the Internet. Radio stations practically did not broadcast anti-war songs. The soloist of the country group "Dixie Chicks" Natalie Maines criticized US President George W. Bush, and American "patriots" demanded that radio stations stop broadcasting hits of this popular group. Most radio companies have complied with these requirements. And Maines had to make a public apology.

But this is not only about military censorship (which is understandable and understandable). **It's about censorship and peaceful time.** The restrictions apply not only to circumstances in which the United States and its allies NATO is fighting. Thus, during the 2016 election campaign, the American edition of the Huffington Post put pressure on blogger David Seaman, who raised the issue of the health of US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. According to the Breitbart website, the publication's management stopped working with Seaman, who published two columns that dealt with the scandal surrounding the poor health of 68-year-old Clinton. In his publications, the author made it clear that the presidential candidate should give the public an answer to such questions. Later, both articles were removed from the newspaper's website "without explanation", and the blogger's account in the Huffington Post was blocked.

Censorship in one form or another exists, of course, not only in the United States. In 2005, the BBC imposed restrictions on the broadcasting of violence, after which live reports began to run two seconds late to allow the editor to adjust the broadcast. It was also decided that journalistic investigations would be carried out only after receiving permission from the channel's management.

However, direct censorship is rarely used. **More often indirect instructions, corporate demands, indoctrination or public disapproval.** All these indirect control tools work just as well as direct ones. prohibitions and "temniki". You can look at what tools the same British Air Force used to cover the preparations for an independence referendum in Scotland. Professor John Robertson of the University of the West of Scotland published a paper in early 2014 exposing the BBC's journalistic bias in its coverage of Scottish independence: "the use of dubious evidence and sources, biased polling of pro-independence and controlled interviews of anti-independence, and demonization of the Prime Minister Alex Salmond"⁴. It's not censorship, but it's controlled information that has been given to users. And it is this kind of work that is considered the norm for the media today.

The critical book *The Fabrication of Consent* by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky describes a system of working with information that is characteristic of modern media. The beliefs of journalists, media affiliation with the government or large corporations, advertising and sources of information for news stories - all this creates a system that filters out topics and opinions that are considered "undesirable".

⁴The BBC cut out the Minister's "uncomfortable" response to the question of the Scottish referendum. RT, 09/14/2014 URL: <https://russian.rt.com/article/49889>

The researchers counted five types of filters: owners and governments, advertisers, journalist sources, threats of lawsuits and harassment campaigns (“anti-aircraft artillery”), the ideology of the media and individual journalists. As a result, the “freest media” writes about nothing at all about what is happening in reality.⁵

An illustrative example of such “filtering” is the struggle of the American media with Trump.⁶ Trump was “eaten” by the American media and social networks. And the point here is that almost all influential American media are controlled by just six companies. Of these, only one (News Corp) openly supported Trump. The rest of the holdings (Time Warner, Sony, Comcast, Viacom and Disney) worked against Trump. News Corp's Fox News journalist Bill O'Reilly said “at least three media organizations ordered their employees to take down Trump”⁷.

Harvard School of Management professor Thomas Patterson studied media coverage during the 2016 campaign during the Democratic and Republican conventions. It turned out that although Trump was ahead of Clinton in terms of frequency of mentions (27% vs. 20%), in more than 70 percent of cases, the tone of statements was negative. The Wall Street Journal, NBC and CNN turned out to be the leaders of criticism - they reported good things about a Republican no more than 16% of cases. Clinton over the same period had 44% positive mentions and only 56% negative mentions.^{eight}.

Thus, despite the prohibition of direct censorship, there are alternative methods of regulating the media agenda in the West. It might well be called **“indirect censorship”**. This is **governmental, corporate dictate, “agreements” between politicians and major media, the “party” nature of the independent press, a high degree of concentration of highly rated media, editorial policy, the cleansing of the journalistic community from its too independent representatives, self-censorship of individual correspondents (due to career considerations or ideological indoctrination)**. Thus, the “free press” in the West it is a myth. There is no talk of any “libertarian” or even “social” model of organizing the media space in the West in the 21st century.

⁵Herman ES, Chomsky N. Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. Pantheon Books, 1988.

⁶You can also see how In 2012-2014, in Ukraine, the media bought by the oligarchs and created with US money fought against President Yanukovich.

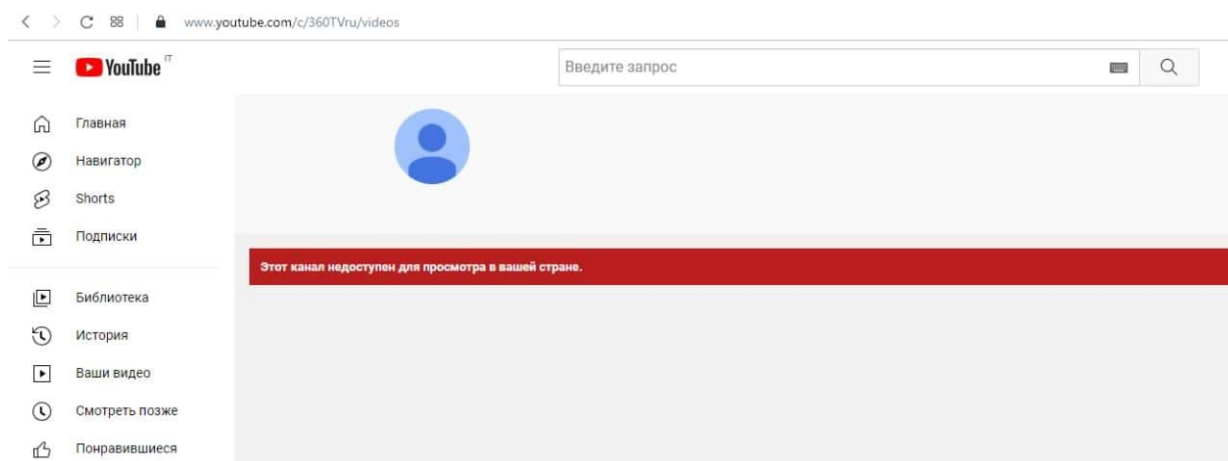
⁷Bill O'Reilly: Media Outlets 'Ordered Their Employees to Destroy' Donald Trump. The wrap. 10/11/2016 URL: <https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/bill-o-reilly-media-outlets-ordered-employees-destroy-221858824.html>

^{eight} Elections in the USA: who the American media is rooting for. RIAN, 2.11.2016 URL: <https://ria.ru/20161102/1480508054.html>

How and why the West cancels Russian media

Yes, censorship seems to be banned everywhere in the West. But if you really want to, then you can, because, as we saw above, freedom of speech and freedom of the media are relative and ephemeral. In depriving RT and Francophone RT France of the country's broadcasting rights in March of this year, Canadian regulator CRTC bluntly stated: "Freedom of expression and diversity of opinion is an important element of Canadian democracy, and broadcasting in Canada is a privilege, not a right."^{nine} **That is, basic freedoms and "Western values" - after all not a priori things, but privileges granted by someone, which, accordingly, can take away** ?

In early March of this year, the European Union banned the work of the Sputnik agency and the broadcast of the RT channel on its territory.^{ten} The head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, explained the ban on RT broadcasts and the work of Sputnik as a desire to stop the spread of "toxic and harmful disinformation" in Europe.^{eleven} At the moment these lines are being written (end of April), all Russian TV channels that were previously broadcast in the country were turned off in Belgium, leaving only the international STS. Access to Russian information resources on the Internet is also blocked by the largest European and American platforms, in particular YouTube and Google.¹² EU users cannot access channels such as NTV, Russia Today, RIA Novosti and TASS. Sometimes the blocking of Russian TV channels reaches the point of absurdity. Thus, in Latvia, at the insistence of the National Council for Electronic Mass Media, a ban was implemented on the broadcasting of Russian television channels, even of an entertaining nature.^{thirteen}



360TV Channel YouTube Page

^{nine}Canada bans TV channels RT and RT France. 1 channel. News. 03/17/2022 URL: https://www.1tv.ru/news/2022-03-17/423799-kanada_zapretila_veschanie_telekanalov_rt_i_rt_france

^{ten} "Masks off": The West is strangling the Russian media. NTV, 03/07/2022 URL: <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2690660/>

^{eleven} EU authorities decided ban R.T. RBC, 02/27/2022 URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/27/02/2022/621bafbe9a79470c986fe87a>

¹²Freedom of speech with a European flavor. Access to Russian TV channels in the EU is vehemently blocked. 360tv. 2.03.2022 URL: <https://360tv.ru/news/tekst/svoboda-slova-po-evropejski/>

^{thirteen}A court in Latvia lifted a ban on broadcasting five Russian TV channels. RIAN, 04/29/2022 URL: <https://ria.ru/20220429/telekanaly-1786242133.html>

Thus, **The West is clearing the information space and providing the dominance of their propaganda machine within their society.** conditions, when which an ordinary European or American could learn a different opinion, different from the information mainstream, see events from a different point of view, practically does not remain.

The famous Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek explained the importance of RussiaToday for a global audience and independent opinion producers in this way: *The West, taking steps to Exclusion RT, in fact, demonstrates his fear of the possible influence of RT, and even confidence in the power of RT. If they were sure that RT was just cheap Russian propaganda [that] no one takes seriously, then they would say, 'Please, my God, let them.' The West is reacting the way it is reacting because they are afraid of something, not so much afraid of RT as such, but afraid that something that they have been secretly trying to exclude is coming back through RT.*

Let me be very clear: I often disagree with... let's call it the "Russian line" - what is shown on RT. But obviously I prove it by my example that there are many threads where I can express what I think only if I post it as a comment on RT. In the West, the concept of "freedom", freedom, is regularly replaced by the concept of "freedom", liberty. Freedoms in the Western interpretation allow people to be "free" only within strict limits, while there is no real, existential freedom anywhere. The West loves to allow marginality so they can say, "See, anything is possible." But they make sure marginality stays marginal."^{fourteen}.

The pressure on the Russian media did not begin after 24 February. RussiaToday TV channel was disconnected from broadcasting in Washington in February 2018 due to the fact that RT received the status of a foreign agent^{fifteen}. Together with RT, then the Turkish TV channel TRT World, Chinese CGTN 1, CGTN 2 and CNC, South Korean Arirang, Venezuelan Telesur, German DW-TV, Vietnamese Netviet, as well as Africa Today TV and France 24 were sanctioned by Washington.

RT is generally the most affected Russian media company from the fighters against "fake news" and "toxic information". Founded in 2005, the Russian international television company, whose weekly audience is 100 million people in 47 countries,^{sixteen} began to be censored less than a decade after it first aired. On August 19, 2014, RT was included in the list of Russian TV channels banned from broadcasting on the territory of Ukraine. The restrictions, which today cover several dozen Russian channels, have not been lifted in the future. One way or another, the channel is subject to "cancellation" and censorship in Argentina (2016), France (2017 - Macron's dissatisfaction with the channel's policy), the USA (2017 - allegedly participating in interference in the US presidential election), Great Britain (2019 - the Skripal case and the position on Assange), Ecuador (2019 - reasons unknown), Bolivia (2019 - following the defeat of Evo Morales in the elections), Latvia and Lithuania (2020), Luxembourg (2021).

^{fourteen}Slavoj Zizek discusses cancel culture and censorship on Tara Reade's RT podcast. RT, 01/14/2022 URL: <https://www.rt.com/news/546003-tara-rade-cancel-culture/>

^{fifteen} Broadcasting stops in Washington <https://ria.ru/20180401/1517692142.html> TV channel R.T. RIAN, 1.04.2018 URL:

^{sixteen}How foreign countries interfered with the work of the RT channel. TASS, December 22, 2022 URL: <https://tass.ru/info/13273755>

Taken together, this testifies to the erosion of the institutions of freedom of the media and freedom of speech, and indeed of the public sphere in general in the West. Here is how the well-known media theorist Lev Manovich writes about this: "I grew up in the USSR during the Brezhnev era (1970s). When I immigrated to the US in 1981, the diversity of ideas and opinions expressed there in the public culture and media was amazing. **Later For 40 years I feel that I am living again in the Brezhnev era, but now in America ...** I wonder if the key feature of modern "communism" will be preserved from now on - the domination of one ideology and intolerance of any alternatives"?¹⁷

Not everyone in the West shares the approach to clean up the information space from "enemy propaganda". It is obvious that this kind of censorship hurts the freedom of the media in the Western democracies themselves. Thus, Mark McCarthy, a senior researcher at the Brookings Institution, is sure that "the exclusion from the information space of the state media of unfriendly countries leads to the fact that now it will be easy to enlist your own critics of official policy as enemy agents, which will eventually become a big problem for freedom of speech and democracy"^{eighteen}.

However, these sober voices today are marginal.

¹⁷ Page lion Manovich in networks Facebook. 01/24/2022 URL: <https://www.facebook.com/lev.manovich/posts/10160808538042316>

^{eighteen} Brookings: exclusion of Russian media from the information field will be a problem for freedom of speech. InoTV, 04/16/2022. URL: <https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2022-04-16/Brookings-isklyuchenie-rossijskih-SMI-iz>

Totalitarian West and fact-oriented consciousness

More than half a century ago, in 1951, Hannah Arendt formulated **signs totalitarian society**^{nineteen}. Subsequently, supplemented and expanded, incl. Zbigniew Brzezinski and Karl Joachim Friedrich, and these features have become accepted in political science definitions of totalitarian regimes. If you look closely at these signs, let them be written off from the Third Reich, Mussolini's Italy and Stalin's USSR, **they are the best suited to modern Western society and, in particular, to the United States.**

Sign of totalitarianism	In today's USA
The presence of one comprehensive ideology on which the political system of society is built.	Ideology of liberal capitalism.
The presence of a single party that merges with the state apparatus and the secret police.	Democratic Party of the USA.
The extremely high role of the state apparatus; penetration of the state into almost all spheres of society.	In the United States, the state has penetrated into all spheres of society. Including in the private life of a person. This is evidenced both by numerous films ("Enemy of the State", 1998), and the practice of prosecution for certain words spoken in private communication.
Lack of pluralism in the media.	This is just the topic of our report. But it can be stated with certainty that there is no place left for pluralism in the American media. As in American universities and academic science.
Rigid ideological censorship of all legal channels receipts information, as well as programs of secondary and higher education. Criminal punishment for the dissemination of independent information.	Criminal prosecution for dissent has already been in American history - think of McCarthyism. Today, more subtle tools of the so-called cancellation culture are used for censorship, which excludes from public life all those who disagree with the "party line".
Big role state propaganda; manipulation massive consciousness.	Oh yeah!!! The film Cunnig in comparison with the present is resting.
The denial of traditions (including traditional morality) and the complete subordination of the choice of means to the goals set.	Lesbians in the role of archbishops, gay propaganda and public campaigns like the BLM show that the US is a totalitarian state on this point too.

^{nineteen}Arendt H. Origins of totalitarianism. M.: CentrKom, 1996.

Mass repressions and terror by law enforcement agencies.	There is not a single country in the world where as many people would be behind bars as in the United States. The United States leads both in the absolute number of prisoners and in the specific number of people behind bars (700 people per 100,000 population).
Destruction of individual civil rights and freedoms.	After the destruction of the right to freedom of speech and thought, there is already an attack on the rights of the family, on labor rights, on the rights of children and on other civil rights.
centralized economy. planning	Someone will say that there is none, and they will be wrong. The activities of the US Federal Reserve, as well as accepted nationwide programs (such as Bush's shale oil and green energy program) fit the term well.
Almost total control of the ruling party over the armed forces.	The ruling elite in the United States, indeed, completely and completely controls the US Armed Forces.
commitment to expansionism.	Expansionism is the middle name of the States.
Administrative administration of justice. the control above	We know little about the legal system in the US, but the partisanship of this system makes us wonder how independent the courts in the States are.
The desire to erase all boundaries between the state, civil society and the individual.	Such a desire is not just there. The process of erasing borders has already gone so far that it threatens to erase not only borders, but also the states themselves, civil society and the individual.

Counter-propaganda is characteristic of totalitarian, cosmopolitan, and open societies. A totalitarian society is better able to isolate information, while an open society is able to use openness as a front for counter-propaganda, managing the agenda rather than crudely censoring information. In any case, states and societies that want to remain as dominant forces pay great attention to the issues of counter-propaganda. Considering the fact that **Western society is rapidly rushing along the path to the "new totalitarianism", the more important it is to consider how on this path all the values that this society was so proud of 30 years ago were forgotten and discarded.** Freedom of speech and freedom of the media - a dual pair of these values, which was also one of the first to suffer, because it interfered too much with the establishment of a "new order".

Counter-propaganda is an integral part of propaganda. This is a set of measures aimed at neutralizing the ideological work of the enemy. While promoting your ideas, ideals, themes and plots, one should not forget that it is necessary to simultaneously put barriers in the way of other people's ideals, themes and plots. Thus, the goals of counter-propaganda are aimed at discrediting enemy ideas, at destroying trust in "incorrect information" and at preventing the emergence of trust in "incorrect information in the future."

Ideally, counter-propaganda is capable of "reforging" the recipient of "incorrect" information, making him immune to such information, and, conversely, more inclined to accept information from the "correct" sources. In counter-propaganda, success is achieved when the recipients of "incorrect" information are driven into a state in which they:

- stop believing in information from the "wrong" source they are accustomed to;
- stop distributing the information they have received both within their own group, as well as outside the group;
- begin to consume information from the "right sources".

In the modern media environment, counter-propaganda can take on a variety of guises. One of the most common of its time was **isolation method**, which is to remove the recipient of information from unwanted information flows, and to present information from these flows only and exclusively in the processing of their own counter-propagandists. It would seem that with the spread of the Internet and the increased speed of obtaining information, this method has become a thing of the past. However, it is not.

In the modern world, due to the acceleration of information flows, there has been a devaluation of the media, a devaluation of freedom of speech and a devaluation of the value of a pluralistic approach to media. De facto, and previously dependent on corporations, the media by today have finally lost all their external independence. They are less and less needed by society, which is satisfied with the information policy of "quick facts", superficial expertise and "people's analytics". The fourth power has ceased to be a power as such. The credibility of the media has fallen. The credibility of the media has also fallen. In parallel, the influence of corporate owners on the mass media has increased.

Society deliberately stupefies itself, willingly accepting primitive messages from social networks as information handouts and agreeing that this level is sufficient for it. It happens, so to speak, **instilling fact-oriented** clip thinking²⁰. That is, modern information is built on a conditional "fact". A person is told a fact, followed by another fact, followed by a third, and so on. Fact-oriented consciousness swallows these facts one by one, and at a certain moment **the brain stops processing the facts given to it, limiting them fixation and rejection of analysis**. Thus, the brain is trained to consume facts from "correct", sorted in advance for the consumer of information sources and weaning from analyzing the information received. A new form of information filtering and political censorship has now given rise to the so-called cancellation policy, which is very different from the traditional boycott.

Cancellation policy has recently been widely used for counter-propaganda purposes. What previously carried out through explicit and strict censorship, or through implicit economic management of the media, now it is carried out through the isolation of unwanted information sources, opinion producers or even entire groups from access to media resources - all this is now called **cancel culture**, cancellation culture. Thus, having an alternative point of view, "divergents" are isolated from potential recipients of information from "undesirable" sources.

²⁰See e.g. Girenok F. Clip consciousness. M.: Academic project, 2014.

How “fact-checking” was made a tool of counter-propaganda

Clip consciousness and fact-oriented thinking seem to be created for media control. Correct selection of facts, appeals to rationality and intelligence absorbing information - all this can make the consumer an easily manipulated object of propaganda. The death of newspapers, breaking news, the spread of the internet and social media have created the kind of white noise that is ideal for filling the mind of the recipient with the agenda that the controlling media players need. It also plays into their hands the rejection of analytics, the rejection of expertise or its replacement with pseudo-expertise, quick and superficial generalization.

Media researcher Andrei Miroshnichenko writes about the reality of the new media policy as follows:

- No wonder they say: "what lies behind the facts." Facts are something that hides the essence.
- Facts take up a lot of time, adding little meaning.
- To operate with meaning, one must take the essence with the bare hands of reason.
- A beautiful hypothesis does not need facts. Except the ones she agrees to use.
- It is better to ignore a good fact than a good hypothesis, because facts always more.
- Facts without a hypothesis - white noise. Facts in a hypothesis are a waste of space.
- The beauty of a hypothesis will save any fact. She will save even his absence.
- But the absence of beauty in a hypothesis cannot be saved by any fact²¹.

However, the politics of fact has added another ingredient to information work—and this is something called "**fake**" - **a purposefully fabricated lie, similar to for a fact.** Given the dispersiveness of the disseminated information, to catch fakes turns out to be quite difficult, but for the consumer, a fake is quite a fact. Thus, the diffusion of values and meanings of the media, the spread of bloggers and social networks could not but lead to the interpenetration of fakes and facts.

In terms of propaganda, the fake always "weighed" more than the fact. But at a certain stage **the fake has become equal in importance to the fact in the media reality. The fight against fakes has not led to an increase in the significance of the fact. On the contrary, there was a devaluation of the value of factology.** Which in parallel (remember the epigraph) led to a fall in the authority of the media. Who can now remember that the media is the fourth branch of power? Yes, by the way, the media is no power at all today. Of course, the Western policy and practice of the last decades have done everything to ensure that the authority of the mass media was blown away. Of course, this was also due to a sharp change in the information space, when each user became a blogger, journalist, stringer, "director himself."

And at some stage, there was an understanding that if a fact is devalued, if a fake is indistinguishable from a fact, then by confirming the facts it is possible to control the mass media. This is how modern Western fact-checking appeared. We note right away that he has nothing

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https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1092862594099706&id=100001279269374&pnref=story.uns een-section

in common with true fact checking. It has nothing to do with journalism either. It has nothing to do with authenticity. The fact is that fact-checking today is not self-control of the editorial board, not checking the material. *ante hoc*, that is, before going to press. This is *post hoc* analysis of selected topics to confirm the important for the organizer fact-checking or refutation of information that is harmful to him. I.e, **fact-checking, unlike the same review, it is a selective approach to topics and plots, voluntaristic and openly biased (no matter what the fact-checkers themselves say about this).**

As an example, we can analyze the "fact-checking" conducted by the Russian (more precisely, anti-Russian) fact-checking center "Provereno.Media". In the article "Is it true that The Guardian denied the involvement of Russian troops in the killings of civilians in Bucha", the editor and creator of this pseudo-journalistic resource Ilya Ber says that Russian analysts, who saw in the publication of the British publication confirmation of the information that the inhabitants of Bucha were deliberately not they killed, they lie, and in fact, they killed.

"On April 24, 2022, The Guardian published the results of a forensic examination of bodies found in mass graves in Bucha. Many took this publication as evidence of the guilt of the Ukrainian troops in the deaths of civilians. We analyzed whether it is really possible to draw such conclusions from the article.²², - Ber begins, and then ... transmits exclusively information from the article, saying that, they say, analysts and Russian experts are stupid, but he, Ber, is very smart, and therefore he read the article carefully, unlike analysts. And the final conclusion, they say, is that Russian analysts do not understand anything, and The Guardian confirmed that the killers in Bucha were Russians.

But in general, the question posed by Ber himself sounded quite specific: "Is it true that The Guardian denied the involvement of Russian troops in the killings of civilians in Bucha"? And it would be necessary to give an answer to it, in accordance with the very rules of fact-checking, which should guide (but are not guided by) all the so-called. fact checkers.

Actually, there is no need to go far. In Facebook comments, Ilya Ber is asked about one of the most egregious moments of The Guardian article, in which he assures that "several witnesses in Bucha saw Russian artillery firing from the Bucha area at the end of March with shells equipped with flechettes." It would seem quite natural for any fact-checker to ask questions: how exactly did these "witnesses" manage to identify flashettes among the artillery shots of the Russian army, especially considering the fact that 99.9% of the world's population learned about flashettes just from an article in The Guardian? And one more question - how exactly could the Russian military destroy civilians in Bucha with artillery fire, given the fact that they fired from the same Bucha? Did they shoot themselves?

This question is just taken and asked by one of the Facebook users: "it would be somewhat strange to shell a city occupied by its own forces (if there are no battles on its territory), isn't it? Suppose artillery could work from the city on other targets, but then the inhabitants of Bucha could no longer observe the results of hits and striking

²²Is it true that The Guardian denied the involvement of Russian troops in the killings of civilians in Bucha? Checked. 04/27/2022 URL: <https://provereno.media/2022/04/27/pravda-li-cto-the-guardian-oprovergprichastnost-rossiyskikh-voysk-k-ubiystvam-mirnykh-zhiteley-v-buche/>

elements." To which Behr replies: "Probably. I do not have any serious expertise on this topic to somehow discuss the details of the Guardian article itself"²³.

What a comfortable position! That is, to assure that it is impossible to draw the conclusions that were made by Russian analysts from The Guardian article - Behr can. As well as it can give the impression that the British, on the contrary, confirmed that it was the Russian troops who were the killers of the civilian population in Bucha. He can do this too. But to point out the obvious "blank spots" of the article itself - this is already "beyond his any serious expertise."

Meanwhile, there are a lot of questions to The Guardian article and in addition to the above mentioned paragraph. In particular, all the data on the corpses are given with reference and an indication of one single source, the role of which is the pathologist Vladislav Pirovsky. The article contains a lot of fuzzy indications of quantitative data that would be quite realistic to bring in digital form. For example - "several dozen" bodies - how much? Either 24, or 228 (less - there will be a dozen, and more - not a few dozen anymore). The article also refers to "many corpses" with bullet wounds. "A lot" is again how much? 2 or 9 or maybe 200? Recall that just about 9 shot with white bandages on their hands and spoke in the UN. And white armbands are a symbol of unarmed citizens that Ukrainians wore in the zone of operations of the Russian military so that they would not be shot at.

The article leaves many questions. But all these questions were ignored by the project of the anti-Russian fact-checkers "Provereno.Media", which proudly write: "arguments in favor of the Russian troops, allegedly published by the "leading world media," are just propaganda speculations.

It seems not to find fault, because, Behr says that he only analyzes whether it is possible to draw the conclusions that our analysts draw from the Guardian article. And formally, he may even be somewhere deeply right, if you do not take into account the fact that Ber and his team of fact-checkers deliberately turn a blind eye to all the inaccuracies and ambiguities of the article, adjust the "facts" (fact-checkers, on the one hand), to suit profitable them conclusions, and, having been overlaid with these "facts", they draw the conclusion they need. Moreover, completely ignoring the presence in the article of points requiring clarification.

Here he is - a merciless fact-checking. In reality, Ber's article, and indeed his entire resource - this is a part of a large counter-propaganda machine launched 8 years ago in the West to control media flows and work with the same clip consciousness on a global scale.

²³<https://www.facebook.com/ilya.ber.5/posts/5766859183331090>

What is modern fact-checking?

Since 2014, an international network (or even a sect) of fact-checkers has been consistently created in the West. The purpose of its existence at the initial stage was to prevent the victory of the candidate of the Republican Party, Donald Trump, in 2016. Then, for 4 years, she also actively fought against the already incumbent US President Trump. In 2020, the fact-checker network took an active part in the coronavirus campaign. And in the same 2020, she violently attacked candidate Trump, saying that all his words are fakes and "untruths". And in 2022, the same network turned to pro-Ukrainian propaganda. These are the same people. These are the same finances received from the same source. These are the same ideologies.

In February 2022, this network even created a dedicated website²⁴, thanks to which the world learned that the network of foreign fact-checkers only strengthened its influence. This project is supported by International Fact-checking Network Signatories. The same organization that was behind the unbridled journalistic persecution of Donald Trump in the United States, and then noted in the context of COVID. And which has now switched to Russia. With exactly the same unbridled persecution, powdered with a veil of objectivity.

In turn, this IFCN network is supported by The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, Inc., which, again, in turn, receives grants from various social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, major US media, the US government, and charitable foundations of top frontmen of high-tech industries such as Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Pierre Omidyar, as well as George Soros and others.

What are the goals of fact-checkers? First: to create a space of distrust for the information that they consider harmful. Second: confirm the information they need. Third: in the limit - to determine which media are worthy of being read by consumers, and which ones are unworthy.

On the last point, the "fact-checkers" have not yet succeeded. The first pancake came out lumpy. It did not work to cancel the objectionable media, although the "approach to the projectile" cannot be counted. In 2019, the Pointer Institute published a list of over 515 news outlets that it called "unreliable". The authors of the list used various databases to compile the list and urged advertisers to refuse to work with the resources presented in the "black list". Among the Russian media there were RT and Pravda.ru. Due to the fact that the list turned out to be a lot of serious publications associated with the Republican Party, a scandal erupted. And after backlash from both readers and authors of some of the included publications, the Pointer Institute withdrew the list, citing "weaknesses in the methodology." The institute issued a statement: "We regret²⁵.

The list was withdrawn, but the desire of "fact-checkers" to control the media market deserves special attention. This is all the more important given the spread of social media.

²⁴#UkraineFacts-<https://ukrainefacts.org/>

²⁵Letter from the Editor. pointer.org. 2.05.2019 URL:<https://www.poynter.org/letter-from-the-editor/2019/letterfrom-the-editor/>

like Facebook, national mass media are gradually losing influence. Advertisers leave them on social networks, which leads to even faster degradation of the national media. In connection with this process, some governments even opposed the growing role of social networks. So did Australia and Canada. However, they did not have enough consistency to cope with the politics of social networks, the giants who today in most Western countries determine what the targeting of the article will be, how many people will read it, and how many advertisers will come to support this or that resource.

Fact checkers, which are directly tied to social media, perform a kind of “rough selection” for them today, officially influencing how exactly this or that media will be shown. And there is no doubt that all publications that were included in the “black list” in 2019 are actively pessimized when issued by the same social networks.

On Facebook, it works like this: Content flagged as fake during verification will appear lower in the news feed, so far fewer users will see it. If a site or page on a social network is convicted of spreading false messages more than once, then “they may lose access to monetization and advertising and the status of a news page,” emphasizes Facebook. At the same time, the fact-checkers themselves receive monetary rewards from the social network for their work.

After the experts mark the news as false, its display in the news feed will be limited, and the material-exposure prepared by the expert will appear in the Related Articles section. As Meredith Carden, head of the Facebook News Integrity Partnerships project, noted in December 2018, rating a story as fake can “reduce the number of further impressions of it by 80%”²⁶. Mass media caught by “fact-checkers” in publishing allegedly false information are thrown out of the Facebook monetization program, that is, they suffer direct financial losses.

Thus, it can be stated that fact checkers are something like censors for large media outlets that need access to social networking sites in order to attract an audience that is massively sitting in these social networks, as well as advertisers who similarly react to an increase in attendance and to raise certain or other important topics. Being blacklisted by fact checkers means either dropping out of social media quotations or being seriously pessimized. Which, in turn, leads to the fact that large media, willy-nilly, have to focus on the verdicts of fact-checkers in order not to become objects of “investigation” and not be on the margins of the information policy of social networks.

²⁶We check the inspectors: who and why finances the fighters against “fake news” in Facebook. RT, 04/24/2019
URL:<https://russian.rt.com/world/article/624498-facebook-fact-checking-gosdep-soros-granty>

Who are fact checkers?

In the US, one of the structures that fights fake news on Facebook is the Politifact platform, owned by the Poynter Institute itself. Among the sources of funding for American fact-checkers are The EW Scripps Company (an American media conglomerate), the Ford Foundation, the Democracy Fund (a structure from the Pierre Omidyar network) and The Knight Foundation. The latter organizes training and internship programs for journalists. Among the representatives of the Russian press, such an internship was held, for example, by the former editor-in-chief of Dozhd, Roman Badanin. In 2017, Politifact recognized Donald Trump's claim that Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election was a complete fabrication as the Lie of the Year.

But perhaps we need to trace the history of these fact checkers from the beginning. Back in 2007, Florida's largest daily newspaper, St. Petersburg Times, a fact-checking department was created, which later became a PolitiFact project. "Checks" for the authenticity of certain statements and actions of politicians turned out to be a fairly popular tool. And, as mentioned above, this fact was noticed and appreciated by propagandists. From 2007 to 2014, the concept of participation of fact-checkers in the process of managing mass consciousness was being developed. The result of this work was the creation of a number of similar projects.

For example, the Ukrainian project Stopfake.org was launched on March 2, 2014. It was Stopfake.org that became the basis for the activities of Ukrainian propagandists in Russian social networks. And as we know for certain, it was the Ukrainian "censors" and fact-checkers who blocked our most famous bloggers and carried out wave censorship on Facebook. The organization is funded by the Renaissance Foundation, NED (National Endowment for Democracy), the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the British Embassy in Ukraine (2015-2019), the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2015-2019), The Sigrid Rausing Trust (60 thousand pounds in 2019). Foreign & Commonwealth Office (2015-2019, largest donor over £190,000), National Democratic Institute, The German Marshall Fund.

This Ukrainian project is not alone in the post-Soviet space. One more Ukrainian project voxukraine.org can be mentioned, it belongs to the public organization "Vox Ukraine". Along with Stopfake.org, it is Facebook's verification partner. The published financial report refers to its sponsors: NED (4.6%), US Embassy (1.9%), Soros Renaissance Foundation (10.9%), Facebook (40.5%)²⁷. At the same time, in 2014, the Georgian Media Development Foundation, established in 2008, launched its own MythDetector fact-checking platform²⁸.

Obviously, these projects were a response to the reunification of Crimea with Russia in 2014. But then attention to them was peripheral. The central task of that stage was to prevent Donald Trump from winning the 2016 elections. Therefore, the association of "fact-checkers" took place around the American agenda. A year before the election, in 2015, the American Poynter Institute created the International Fact-Checking Network as a new department.

²⁷<https://voxukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Annual-report-2020.pdf>

²⁸<https://mythdetector.ge>

(International Fact-Checking Network, IFCN)²⁹. Goal: "Bring together a growing community of fact-checkers around the world and fact-finders in the global fight against disinformation."

The pointer IFCN checks fact-checking organizations for "compliance with a developed code of ethics" and issues a certificate for a year to fact-checkers who have passed the audit. Each year, the IFCN evaluator re-verifies the fact checker. Those who receive a certificate can apply for grants from American structures, social networks and other bonuses. IFCN signatory status may be granted to legally registered organizations established for fact-checking purposes. The IFCN status states that "IFCN signatory status cannot be granted to organizations whose editorial work is controlled by a government, political party, or politician." But this limitation is not a limitation at all. Indeed, in the same place, the IFCN notes that the status of a fact checker can be "granted to organizations that who receive funding from government or political sources." In general, what is on the forehead, what is on the forehead.

The IFCN even has its own code of ethics, which, however, hardly anyone pays serious attention to. Here is what it says, for example, about the rules for checking facts (not bad rules, by the way):

- The fact checker does not concentrate its fact checking on any one party.
- Fact Checker does not advocate or take political positions on issues that he checks.
- Fact checker discloses relevant interests in its fact checks sources he cites, so that the reader can reasonably conclude that these interests may affect the accuracy of the evidence provided.
- The fact checker discloses in its fact checks any commercial or other similar relationships that he reveals.
- Fact checkers do not make public their views on political issues.
- The fact checker is transparent about its funding sources.

I must say that if the formal rules are still respected, then those relating to the political position of fact-checkers and their connection with certain government circles and sponsors are violated everywhere.

However, let's return to the IFCN sect, which currently has 101 legal entities. It is not necessary to provide the entire list. Suffice it to say about those who have the right to issue certificates.

one. Laurent Bigot, France, founder of the media school of political fact checker Factoscope.fr. Twitter:<https://twitter.com/JournalistFR> . Approves applications for countries: France, Algeria, Belgium, Canada, French Guiana, French Polynesia, French Southern Territories, Guadeloupe, Madagascar, Mali, Martinique, Mauritius, Monaco, Morocco, Portugal, Saint Martin (French part), Spain, Tunisia , Brazil.

2. **Martins Caprans (Martins Kaprans)** Estonia. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Mkaprans> . Approves applications for countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia. Kaprance works as a disinformation watchdog for CEPA. He approved applications

²⁹<https://www.poynter.org/ifcn>

the following organizations and media: delfi.lt (Lithuania), delfi.lv (Latvia), 15min.lt (Lithuania), rebaltica.lv (Latvia), <https://epl.delfi.ee/faktikontrollid> (Estonia).

3. Margot Susca, USA Twitter:<https://twitter.com/MargotSusca> . He is an assistant professor of journalism at American University. He teaches courses on reporting, journalistic ethics, children's media culture and the media. Approves for USA.

4. Sergio Lüdtke, Brazil Twitter:<https://twitter.com/ludtke> . Works in the field of journalism. Endorses Brazilian media applications.

5. Ramón Salaverría, Spain, Twitter:<https://twitter.com/rsalaverria> . Works as Principal Investigator at IBERIFIER, the Iberian Center for Digital Media Research and Fact-Checking, funded by the European Commission. Professor of Journalism at the University of Navarra. Approves applications for countries: Spain, Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of, Peru , Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Chile.

6. Chen-Ling Hung, Taiwan Works at the Higher Institute of Journalism. Approves applications for Taiwan.

7. Raymond Joseph, South Africa Twitter:<https://twitter.com/rayjoe> . Engaged in training journalists to check content for accuracy on the Internet and social networks, offers fact-checking services on a freelance basis. Approves applications for countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

8. Surekha Deepak, India. Journalism teacher. Approves applications for India.

9. Christoph Schurian, Germany Approves applications for Germany.

10. Grzegorz Piechota, Poland. Twitter:https://twitter.com/g_piechota . Fellow at the International News Media Association (inma.org). Approves applications for Poland.

11. Jan Indra, Czech Republic. Twitter:https://twitter.com/investigace_cz . He worked at the Czech Center for Investigative Journalism and is currently working on setting up his own investigative firm. Approves applications for the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

12. Marcelo Crispim da Fontoura, Brazil. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mdafontoura> . Professor of Digital Journalism at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Approves applications for Brazil, however, on 25.10.2021 and 23.09.2020, he confirmed the application of maldita.es which, in collaboration with the Global Network of Investigative Journalists (gijn.org), created and operates the website <https://ukrainefacts.org> . Previously, on 06/07/2018 and 07/22/2019, Ramon Salaverria confirmed the applications of maldito.es (p. 5, see above).

13. Nikolaos Panagiotou, Greece. Twitter:<https://twitter.com/nikospan> . Confirms applications for Greece.

14. Kanchan Kaur, India. Approves applications from India.

fifteen. **Oleg Homenok (Oleg Khomenok)**, Ukraine. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/khomenok>. Homenok is a member of the board of directors of the Global Investigative Journalist Network (Global network of investigative journalists. The organization is headquartered in the United States). Approves applications for Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

Oleg Khomenok approved and confirmed the applications of the following organizations:

1. 11/25/2019, 03/08/2021, 03/23/2022 Media Development Fund, Georgia, <https://www.mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/home> . 2. 22.02.2020,

12/15/2020, 03/23/2022 stopfake.org Ukraine, <https://www.stopfake.org/en/about-us/> . 3. 23.03.2018, 08/18/2019, 10/22/2020, 02.12.2021 VoxUkraine,

<https://voxukraine.org/uk/voxcheck> .

4. 02/08/2017, 03/04/2018, 06/13/2019, 08/19/2020, 09/20/2021 FactCheck Georgia, Georgia, <http://factcheck.ge> .

The Ukrainian journalist also confirmed the application of the Stopfake.org resource **Andrey Kulikov**, currently the head of the board of Hromadske Radio, which is partially funded by international funds from Europe and the USA.

Who pays for fact-checker banquets?

What is the American Pointer Institute? This is the owner of The Tampa Bay Times^{thirty}, as well as a non-profit journalism school and research organization. Pointer, as noted above, owns the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), PolitiFact, an American politics fact-checking site, and MediaWise, an educational fact-checking project for teens and seniors.

At the first stage, the main task of the Pointer Institute was to provide verdicts on the reliability of this or that information as reliable or false, commissioned by Facebook - the office of Mark Zuckerberg. Thus, since 2016, for a long time, Facebook has been the premium customer of fact-checkers. Moreover, it was impossible to become a Facebook partner in fact-checking without approval and obtaining an IFCN certificate. However, this was obviously not enough, especially considering the fact that fact checkers began to spread around the world like a virus.

And by 2020, the number of sponsors from both The Poynter Institute for Media Studies itself and its sect has increased dramatically. Among the sponsors and partners of the Pointer Institute were: NED, Facebook, Google, TikTok, WhatsApp, MacArthur Foundation, Microsoft, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Democracy Fund, Omidyar Network, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Public Radio, NBC News, Newsweek, Penske Media Corporation, TEGNA, The Washington Post, Voice of America... Isn't that an impressive list?

Pointer's work on Facebook has already been said. No less interesting is the work in the interests of NED. The National Endowment for Democracy (funded directly from the U.S. State Department) gave Pointer a substantial amount of money to "bring together fact-checkers around the world" and to host "initiatives such as the Global Fact conference", for which \$566,000 was allocated from 2016 to 2020. It is also worth noting that from 2015 to 2018, the US-funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED) awarded the Institute five grants totaling more than \$300,000.

Performs the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and contracts for the US Global Media Agency (formerly the BBG Broadcasting Board of Governors), which administers media outlets such as Radio Liberty and Voice of America. Also, this institute received direct orders from the State Department - to improve the skills of local journalists in the Gambia, India and Turkey. The interest of the State Department in the fact-checking initiative of the Poynter Institute is also evidenced by the payment discovered by RT journalists dated February 2019. According to the document, the US embassy in Bolivia paid nearly \$15,000 to a local NGO to "arrange, host and manage the entire logistics of fact-checking workshops led by an American speaker from the Poynter Institute."

As for the Omidyar Network and the Democracy Fund, these are the organizations of Pierre Omidyar, a Russophobe and the founder of eBay, whose funding is received by such organizations involved in the dissemination of anti-Russian information as Defending Democracy Together, Alliance for Securing Democracy, Data for Democracy. Also Omidyar in 2012-2014

^{thirty}<https://www.tampabay.com>

worked well for years with USAID and the US embassy in Kyiv in Ukraine to overthrow the then-incumbent President Yanukovich.

The Open Society Foundation is the George Soros Foundation, which operates on the territory of the former USSR and the socialist camp to create and promote the anti-Russian agenda, organize the educational process in the spirit of Russophobia, as well as educate and promote the anti-Russian elite.

But this is only the financing of the "head office". If you look at the situation on the ground, it will immediately become clear how and who pays for the "music" to specific fact checkers.

Pointer's subsidiary PolitiFact says it relies on administrative support from the Pointer Institute and is otherwise self-sustaining. PolitiFact receives funding from online advertising, selling its content to various companies. Facebook and TikTok are mentioned among the companies that brought more than 5% of PolitiFact's total revenue in 2021, and since 2017 PolitiFact has been accepting individual donations.

PolitiFact funding by organizations

Year	Name	Amount, USD
2017	Newton & Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust	20000
	The Craig Newmark Foundation	50000
	Knight Foundation	50000
	Democracy Fund	125000
	Reynolds Journalism Institute	10000
2018	Newton & Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust	69000
	The Craig Newmark Foundation	5000
	Democracy Fund	200000
2019	Newton & Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust	25000
	Craig Newmark Philanthropies	99500
	Democracy Fund	200000
2020	Common Cause (US Election 2020)	20000
	International Fact Checking Network (coronavirus)	39319
	Google (coronavirus)	50000
	Newton & Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust	73000
	Craig Newmark Philanthropies (coronavirus)	100000
	Democracy Fund	75000
2021	CommonCause (Elections in Virginia)	5000
	Friends of the Earth (climate change)	13000
	Facebook (Facebook Business accelerator)	10000
	Facebook (supported by NABJ - National Association of Black Journalists)	85000
	Newton & Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust	50000
	Craig Newmark Philanthropies (support for the United Facts of America project)	25000
	Google News Initiative (support for the United Facts of America project)	25000
	AmeriHealth Caritas (support of the United Facts of America project)	25000

	TikTok (support for the United Facts of America project)	25000
	SmartNews (support for the United Facts of America project)	5000
	Facebook (support for the United Facts of America project)	25000
	Microsoft (support for the United Facts of America project)	20000

A search for the words "Russia" and "Ukraine" revealed that 270 fact-checkings were carried out for the query "Ukraine", mostly speaking American politicians, publications on social networks and not a single one speaking Ukrainian politicians. There were 629 fact-checkings for the word "Russia", including Dmitry Peskov's statements.

For even greater clarity, let's take as an example the Georgian organization **Fund media development**. This foundation, established in 2008, is a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose goal is declared "institutional development of the media; creating mechanisms for media accountability and self-regulation; critical thinking in the new media ecosystem and building citizen resilience through conscious media consumption." In 2014, the Foundation launched its own fact-checking platform, MythDetector. Since November 25, 2019, he has been a verified subscriber of IFCN. Since September 2020, he has partnered with Facebook to check false information in various third-party fact-checking programs. After checking, MythDetector Facebook marks the information as false, lowers its position in the search field and warns users who view this information or want to share it.

The editor-in-chief of MythDetector is Tamara Kintsurashvili. Since 2001, she has been the editor of the Tavisupleba (Freedom) magazine, as well as the director of communications and media programs for the NGO Freedom Institute - this office emphasized its role in organizing the Rose Revolution, in particular in preparing and advising activists of the youth organization "Kmara" ("Otpor"), which played a large role in organizing street protests. She also noted the role of her employees, former or current, in organizing the "revolutions" in Ukraine in 2004 and in Kyrgyzstan in 2005.

Since 2016, MDF has been cooperating with EUvsDisinfo, which is a project of the working group of the European External Action Service (EEAS - European External Action Service, implements the common foreign and security policy of the EU, the organization has an intelligence service East StratCom). Myth Detector is also a member of the Open Information Partnership (OIP), which brings together think tanks, fact-checking agencies, independent media and civil society organizations to combat malicious information operations. Funding sources of the Fund in 2021:

Project Title	Source of Funding, 2021y	EUR
Media and Information Literacy for Citizens	DW (DEUTSCHE WELLE)	€ 23,028.66
Promote critical thinking of media consumers; enhance skills to distinguish quality media from manipulating content.	US EMB	€ 42,218.88
analyzing and monitoring minority media reporting on conflict and peace building in Georgia	INTERNEWS	€ 20,357.69
Program to promote tolerance, civic awareness and integration- Fighting xenophobia and discrimination in Georgian politics and media	UNAG	€ 16,265.70
Prevention of and Responding to Radicalizing Narratives	HEDAYAH	€ 19,811.04
Strengthen MDF's institutional capacity and audience engagement through development of strategic communications plan for 2020-2021	ZINC	€ 41,179.34
disinformation/ Media Monitoring	ESN (EUROPEAN SERV.NETWORK)	€ 21,914.02
Third party fact-checking program	Facebook	€ 336,854.20
Enhancing resilience of Civil Society in Georgia against malign foreign influence operation	European Values	€ 5,434.54
Media Literacy Sector Mapping in Georgia	Baltic Center for Media Excellence	€ 5,126.52
Monitoring the content and measuring the effectiveness of Russian disinformation and propaganda campaigns in selected Former Soviet Union States	Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies	€ 5,450.10
Creation of a Journalists Hub from the Eastern Partnership Countries	Adenauer	€ 6,807.69
TOTAL		€ 544,448.36

Thus, this one small office in Georgia has an annual budget of 550 thousand euros, a significant part of which consists of donations from Facebook and the US Embassy³¹.

And the other day this Georgian site "Myth Detector" received resources to create a Russian version. And now, Myth Detector is adding Russian to its long list of language repertoire. As a result, "the Georgia-based MDF's fact-checking unit will **pay special attention to transactions with foreign influence and internal political propaganda on Russia**".

Thus, another "specialist" arrived in the regiment of participants in the information wars. If earlier the "Myth Detector" worked for Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, now it also works for Russia. Why? Probably because its competitors inside Russia like "Provereno.Media" could not win in the competition "who hates Russia more." Well, or they could not figure out how it would be more convenient for them to receive money from the American embassy. The second is, of course, more likely.

Almost immediately, the Myth Detector website launched a Russian-language page to, as they put it, "combat falsehoods and disinformation related to the Russian-Ukrainian war." The site already features dozens of fact checks that address questions such as whether Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky actually met with the Turkish delegation in Lviv and whose caricature is Vladimir Putin or Zelensky - appears on a billboard in Odessa.

"Now we are covering the Russian population because, according to our latest data, 20% of our readers are now from Russia," said Tamara Kintsurashvili. However, according to her, these numbers are likely to change from day to day. "We have added several journalists with experience in Russian-language reporting," she added.

To understand the class of investigative journalism, it is enough to say that the Myth Detector tried to refute the irrefutable - that Zelensky is a drug addict. To do this, Georgian journalists concocted some kind of video picture, which they then exposed themselves. Georgians have shown a clip where allegedly Zelensky talks about his

³¹<https://mdfgeorgia.ge/uploads/Enq%202021.pdf>

drug use, and then it is proved that Zelensky was actually talking about sports. From all this, it is concluded that Zelensky is not a drug addict. This is some brilliant fact checking.

Another Georgian project - factcheck.ge, Fact-Meter platform, which is owned by the Georgian Reform Association. The following organizations support the project: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Georgia, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), German Marshall Fund, European Endowment for Democracy and the US Embassy in Georgia. The project is also a partner Facebook to check false information.

The founder of the Association - Elena Khoshtaria, worked in senior positions in the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, it was she who oversaw the cooperation of this country with NATO. Worked in the Association until 2016. Then she ran for mayor of Tbilisi in 2017 and, of course, today she also leads the most radical anti-Russian movement in Georgia, Droa. In February, Khoshtaria was stripped of his mandate as a member of the Georgian Parliament. But, it seems that she will not be left penniless, since such grant givers support her next anti-Russian project ...

There are similar fact-checking centers in other countries of the former USSR. **In Estonia and the Delfi project operates throughout the Baltics.** The founder is an Estonian company microlink. Delfi news portals began their work in November 1999, when the first two versions of the site were opened - Estonian and Latvian. Later, the Lithuanian version of Delfi was launched, as well as Russian versions in Latvia and Estonia. At the beginning of 2004, Delfi shares were acquired by the Norwegian company Findexa, formerly a subsidiary of Telenor, owned by the American private equity fund Texas Pacific Group since 2001. Delfi portals publish information in Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Polish. On March 25, 2022, Roskomnadzor blocked access to the publication in Russia at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office.

Another Re:Baltica project- Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism. The center was founded in August 2011. Head of the project Inga Springe. In 2010-2011, she studied as a Fulbright/Humphrey Scholar at the American University of Maryland, later she did an internship at The Washington Post and The Center for Public Integrity, an international organization for investigative journalism.

About the funding, the project itself reports the following: "we received funding for investigative journalism from the IJ4EU, Open Society Foundations, Sigrid Rausing Trust, the State Cultural Capital Fund, POBB, etc. In 2018, 22% of Re:Baltica's budget was donations, 67% - grants, 11% - own income. The media report that about 90% of the budget of "Re:Baltica" - the main censor of Facebook in the Baltics in 2016 was provided by the George Soros Open Society Foundations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Cultural Capital Foundation.

Anti-Russian network of fact-checkers

A few years ago, faced with a policy of ban and cancellation, the editors of RussiaToday decided to deal with the IFCN sect and found both its organizers and sponsors. But then even RT specialists could not imagine what the activity of this network would soon turn into. Here is what was written in an RT article about the work of one of the organizations included in the IFCN: "However, not all members of the IFCN network were initially tied to the United States, liberal foundations or mainstream media in their countries. Two Spanish projects, MalditoBulo and Newtral, can be cited as an example. They started as volunteer initiatives. However, the MalditoBulo platform soon attracted the attention of the British Integrity Initiative, a program launched by official London to combat "Russian influence". Representatives of MalditoBulo showed interest in interacting with the British. Also, one of the founders of the project was invited to the group of experts on fake news of the European Commission. However, while there is no evidence that MalditoBulo agreed to work in the British anti-Russian network, there is no evidence of outside funding for this organization. All work is done on a voluntary basis, even wages are not paid."³².

It should be said that all this volunteering and good-heartedness is a thing of the distant past. The Maltido Foundation is a non-profit Spanish organization, since 2017 a member of the IFCN sect. Maldito specializes in the development of technical tools for fact-checking, in particular, it is developing a technical platform for checking "viral" content for Facebook, and also developed a WhatsApp bot to check information regarding COVID-19. The company is partnering with Google to develop AI-based tools to detect disinformation.

Who pays for Maltido today? Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google.org and Google.news, Ashoka Fellowship, Omidyar Network represented by Luminate, IFCN, Soros Open Society Foundation, EU-supported IBERIFIER Foundation, governmental FECYT, EUHYBNET supported by the European Commission, several direct programs, funded by the EU, Danone, DKV, Internews, as well as a number of media outlets with which this NPO cooperates. In general, with regard to "financing from the outside", now Maltido has everything in order with this.

It would seem, why such a long introduction about some Spanish organization?

At the very beginning of the report, we mentioned that in February 2022, the IFCN network created a special website -<https://ukrainefacts.org/> . This site is designed to "fight against fakes about the Ukrainian conflict." The project was created precisely on the initiative of the Spanish Maltido. Here is what the Maltido editors write about this site: "When the Maldita.es team woke up on February 24 with the news that the Russian invasion of Ukraine had begun, it was not difficult to guess that it would be accompanied by a wave of disinformation. Attempts to deny the victims, videos and photos of Russian attacks on the Ukrainian population, which in reality did not take place, but which created disinformation chaos: footage from the past, from other conflicts, from events not related to wars, and even taken from a video game. We knew that these hoaxes and misinformation would circulate not only in Spain, but throughout the world. We decided to open a database and give access to more than 100 fact checkers around the world. Maldita.es has developed a map,

³²We check the inspectors: who and why finances the fighters against "fake news" in Facebook. RT, 04/24/2019 URL:<https://russian.rt.com/world/article/624498-facebook-fact-checking-gosdep-soros-granty>

access rebuttals to most viral hoaxes. In #UkraineFacts, you can see which countries each disinformation was found in and access rebuttals from the various vetting organizations that investigated it.”

It seems like a noble goal. However, the very first days of the network of “fact-checkers” showed that they are not just biased, but are exclusively engaged in blaming Russia for all the sins, and they themselves do not disdain falsifying facts, distorting and even outright falsifications.

Claiming objectivity and searching for true facts, this network of fake fact checkers began to conduct active propaganda work against Russia itself. In particular, many network members on the pages <https://ukrainefacts.org/> defended the position that the United States did not finance biological laboratories in Ukraine. Moreover, they continued to do this even after the US State Department and the Pentagon admitted that they really financed the biolaboratories in Ukraine and monitored the research conducted there.

Here is a complete list of fact-checking media included in this anti-Russian grid can be seen on the project itself <https://ukrainefacts.org/> : Fact Crescendo (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka), Faktoje.al (Albania), Faktyoxla.info (Azerbaijan), Rumor Scanner (Bangladesh), Knack (Belgium), Bolivia Verifica (Bolivia), Raskrinkavanje.ba (Bosnia and Herzegovina), AFP Checamos (Brazil), Agência Lupa (Brazil), AosFatos (Brazil), UOL Confere (Brazil), AFP Proveri (Bulgaria), AFP Fact Check (Canada, Nigeria), Annie Lab (Canada), Mala Espina Check (Chile), AFP Factual (Colombia, Mexico, Spain), Colombiacheck (Colombia), EFE Verifica (Colombia, Latin America, Spain), Faktograf.hr (Croatia), AFP Na PrawoMiru (Czech Republic), Tjekdet.dk (Denmark), Fatabyyano (Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, Oman), PesaCheck (Ethiopia, Burundi, Guinea), Eesti Päevaleht (Estonia), AFP Faktantarkistus (Finland), AFP Factual (France, Ivory Coast, Mali), FactCheck Georgia (Georgia), MythDetector (Georgia), AFP Faktencheck (Germany), Correctiv (Germany), DPA (Germany), GhanaFact (Ghana), AFP FactcheckGreek (Greece), Ellinika Hoaxes (Greece), AFP Ténykérdés (Hungary), BOOM (India), FACTLY (India), India Today (India), NewsMobile (India), Newschecker (India), The Logical Indian (India), The Quint (India), Vishvas News (India), The Journal .ie FactCheck (Ireland), Facta News (Italy), Open.online (Italy), Hibrid.info (Kosovo), KALLXO.COM (Kosovo), Re:Baltica (Latvia), 15 min (Lithuania), Delfi (Lithuania)), Animal Politico (Mexico), Mongolian Fact-checking Center (Mongolia), Raskrinkavanje.me (Montenegro), AFP Factcheck Netherlands (Netherlands), Vistinomer (North Macedonia), Faktisk.no (Norway), Verificador de La República (Peru) , Rappler (Philippines), VERA Files (Philippines), AFP Sprawdzam (Poland), Demagog (Poland), Polígrafo (Portugal), AFP Verificat (Romania), AFP Cinjenice (Serbia), Istinomer (Serbia), AFP Fakty (Slovakia), AFP Comprovem (Spain), EFE Verifica (Spain), MALDITA.ES (Spain)), Newtral (Spain), Verificat (Spain), Dagens Nyheter (Sweden), Källkritikbyrå (Sweden), Verify SY (Syria), Mygopen (Taiwan), Taiwan Fact-checking Center (Taiwan), Doğruluk Payı (Turkey), Teyit .org (Turkey, Azerbaijan), Lead Stories (Ukraine), StopFake.org (Ukraine), VoxCheck (Ukraine), FactCheck.org (UK), Full Fact (UK), Logically.ai (UK), elDetector (USA) , Lead Stories (USA), PolitiFact (USA). Verificat (Spain), Dagens Nyheter (Sweden), Källkritikbyrå (Sweden), Verify SY (Syria), Mygopen (Taiwan), Taiwan Fact-checking Center (Taiwan), Doğruluk Payı (Turkey), Teyit.org (Turkey, Azerbaijan) , Lead Stories (Ukraine), StopFake.org (Ukraine), VoxCheck (Ukraine), FactCheck.org (UK), Full Fact (UK), Logically.ai (UK), elDetector (USA), Lead Stories (USA), PolitiFact (USA). Verificat (Spain), Dagens Nyheter (Sweden), Källkritikbyrå (Sweden), Verify SY (Syria), Mygopen (Taiwan), Taiwan Fact-checking Center (Taiwan), Doğruluk Payı (Turkey), Teyit.org (Turkey, Azerbaijan) , Lead Stories (Ukraine), StopFake.org (Ukraine), VoxCheck (Ukraine), FactCheck.org (UK), Full Fact (UK), Logically.ai (UK), elDetector (USA), Lead Stories (USA), PolitiFact (USA).

Particular attention should be paid in this grid to the Kazakh resource of fact checkers ³³. The project started in 2017. His official position: “the project is in no way bound by contractual or verbal obligations with state bodies, companies

³³<https://factcheck.kz/>

quasi-public sector and commercial organizations". At the same time, the authors of the project themselves claim that the sponsor of the project is the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan. One of the project leaders is Pavel Bannikov (b. October 31, 1983, Alma-Ata, USSR). He worked as a journalist and editor in various popular science, entertainment and socio-political publications in Kazakhstan. Media trainer, creator of the Factcheck.Academy educational project.



Mr. Bannikov at the GlobalFact 5 forum (conducted by IFCN, funded, among other things, by NED)



Why is this fact interesting? And the fact that Pavel Bannikov has a wife, Tasha Sokolova, who concurrently is part of the management of Ilya Ber's project "Checked Media" - the same project of "Russian fact-checkers".

Project "Checked.Media"³⁴ created on October 1, 2020 by Ber Ilya Leonidovich (b. February 2, 1982) The project specializes in fact-checking. Being engaged in the development of the project, Ilya Ber was the host of the weekly heading "Checked" on the RTVI channel. From September 9, 2021 led the column as part of the program "Morning in the Rain". In his interview to the Made.Media website, Ilya Ber said that Checked.Media is a partner of Yandex.Zen in terms of fact-checking. Also, Mr. Ber hopes to receive funding for the project through grants, crowdfunding, and cooperation with other commercial organizations. That is, he hopes to receive the IFCN certificate.

Let's take a look at **project founder** "Checked.Media" take a closer look. From April From 2009 to October 2010, he worked as a program coordinator for the BBC Russian Service; in 2008 - 2019 he was the editor-in-chief of the TV game "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire"; in October 2010, together with lawyer Ilya Novikov (lawyer for FBK, Memorial, Nadezhda Savchenko, ex-president of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, lives in Ukraine since 2021, joined the ranks of the Kyiv terrorist defense since the beginning of the special operation) created a gaming content agency

³⁴<https://proverno.media>



Quizdom (liquidated 09/15/2014); in 2017 announced his intention to be elected as a municipal deputy of the Preobrazhenskoye district of Moscow from the Yabloko party. He led the election campaign with the support of the United Democrats project of Maxim Katz and Dmitry Gudkov. According to the results of the elections, he received the mandate of a deputy of the Council of Deputies of the Preobrazhenskoye district; since 2017 - lecturer at the Institute of Social Sciences of the RANEPA, author of the course "Search and verification of information in the modern media environment"; with 03/27/2017 founder with a 10% stake in IGRA UMOV LLC. Main activity: production of toys. Other founders: Potashev Maxim Oskarovich, share 20%, etc.

The publication of materials on the Provereno.Media website in relation to Ukrainian topics is frankly one-sided. The position practically coincides with the position of the IFCN fact-checkers of Ukraine and Georgia. Only information from Russian sources is verified. For example, in case of contradictions, the message of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation will be automatically recognized as false if it is refuted by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Ilya Ber's fact-checking system "Checked Media" violates a little less than all the rules invented by the IFCN. Not least, this is the reason why his system has not yet been certified by the Pointer Institute grid. However, it is also possible that Ber does not want to reveal his sources of funding.

Be that as it may, the Checked.Media project, albeit informally, but unequivocally, is part of the anti-Russian network of fact-checkers, skillfully reshaped from anti-Trumpist fighters, first into "specialists" on the coronavirus, and now into outright Russophobes who one-sidedly cover the conflict in Ukraine .

Why are fact checkers dangerous?

Before our eyes, literally in a decade, a huge octopus has been created and is beginning to develop, which is designed to finally destroy freedom of speech, freedom of the media and become an obedient propaganda tool in the hands of multibillionaires and global corporations.

This octopus called **fact-checking takes the liberty of determining which Media and what information is wrong and what is right.** Their verdict is the basis for pessimizing information and a source in social networks, as well as for refusing to monetize a source.

Being included in the list of “wrong” media leads to the ruin or impoverishment of the publication, because due to the worldwide spread of social networks, it is precisely through social networks traffic of readers moves and monetization is carried out through social networks. Thus, fact-checkers are not only censors, but also potentially the main corrupt officials of the mass media.

Once in the recent past, fact-checkers have already tried to finally “cancel” objectionable media. This has not yet succeeded, but it is not a fact that these attempts will not continued, and it is not a fact that they will not be successful.

Fact-checkers are a threat to every journalist. After all, they are in fact the killers of the already dying traditional media. They are also potential killers of the careers of journalists, commentators and experts, whose opinion may turn out to be either the product of an honest mistake, or for some reason not coincide with the media mainstream. They are one of the main tools of the cancellation culture.

Fact-checkers are a threat to media freedom, because by their verdicts they force journalists to abandon this or that topic, to abandon this or that investigation, if it already has an appropriate (often even unprofessional) verdict.

Fact-checkers are a threat to any state, society, politician and corporation. **Yesterday** under fire was presidential candidate Donald Trump and half of the American society has been disoriented through media management through the work of fact checkers. **Today** Russia finds itself under information fire when fact-checkers pay attention to some events, and point-blank do not notice others, playing on one side – on the side of Ukraine and the NATO forces supporting them. **Tomorrow** anyone can be under fire: any person, any company, any society, any state.

findings

1. There is a rapid erosion of the institutions of freedom of speech, freedom of the media and, more broadly, the space of public life in the West.
2. Freedom of the media, as well as freedom of speech in the classical sense of these values, no longer exists in the West. Neither the libertarian (completely free) nor the social model of the relationship between the authorities (the elite) and the media, where restrictions are due to public control, is no longer possible in the West.
3. Censorship, previously applicable only in wartime, is widely used today in peacetime as well. "Indirect censorship" includes the full range of manipulative technologies, including: administrative instructions, corporate demands, ideological pumping, public disapproval and harassment, media ownership by the government or large corporations, advertising sources and sponsors, threats of prosecution, direct bribery, etc.
4. So-called. The "civilized" West is rapidly slipping into neo-totalitarianism, where the existing rights and freedoms are decisively limited at the new digital and high-tech level. All this is retouched by a pseudo-pluralism of opinions within a very limited corridor of what is permitted.
5. The March bans on the broadcasting of the RT channel and a host of other Russian TV channels are a form of cleaning up the information space within Western society and ensuring the dominance of the Western propaganda machine within this society.
6. To create the impression of objectivity, the presence of different points of view, Western society is deliberately immersed in the information space of "facts", turning the consciousness of the layman into "fact-oriented".
7. Due to the constant, continuous and avalanche-like flow of facts, a person's consciousness is overloaded with information and made unsuitable for both analysis and critical perception of reality, at the same time creating a feeling in a person that he confidently consumes the information flow and controls his ability to draw conclusions from the information received .
8. By means of censorship and counter-propaganda, using the policy of cancellation with might and main, global corporations, media and social networks protect the consumer from information from sources "undesirable" for them.
9. A major role in efforts to limit user access to "undesirable" sources is played by "fact-checkers" that have become the service of high-tech corporations, social networks and the US government.
10. The work of "fact-checkers" is designed to finally destroy the freedom of the media and ensure maximum control over both the information agenda and the editorial policy of the media.