

Propaganda? What Propaganda? Western Media Monopoly vs Alternative and Non-Western Media

By [Peter Lavelle](#)

Global Research, November 18, 2014

[Sputnik](#) 17 November 2014

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

We have recently been hearing a lot about information wars, propaganda and bullhorns. The pitch of this kind of belligerent rhetoric has increased sharply since the advent of the western-induced crisis in Ukraine.

The mainstream media's echo chamber claim about Russian media goes something like this: "Russian media is powerful and effective because it is well-funded propaganda." Really? Having worked in Russian media for well over a decade, I observe it focussing on foreign audiences in a very different way: it challenges the West's hegemonic grip on shaping and controlling the global media agenda.

Up until recently, western media outlets enjoyed near monopoly in defining the news agenda. It also worked in lockstep with the powers that be. Reading the op-ed pages of the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and the Financial Times one will quickly notice they closely mirror the foreign policies of western governments. It has been a cozy arrangement too. A pliant media whitewashed foreign policy adventurism. In return, major media outlets were given a front row seat to cover wars to be packaged as the West saving the world. This model worked reasonably well until the power of the Internet made itself felt, and until the financial crisis hit, failed wars were exposed, and new and alternative media began to emerge.

I am often asked why new outlets like RT are so popular with audiences around the world. There may be many reasons for this but the short answer is that they offer a refreshingly different perspective.

I believe it important to understand how western media beat the drum of war on behalf of George W. Bush. The echo chamber demonstrated it could be counted on to back acts of aggression around the world with impunity. How many people in media lost their jobs when lying about Bush's Wars (or Obama's war for that matter)? We are told to "get over Iraq." But there is a strong sense today that western media lied to their audiences.

Then there is the great financial crisis of 2008-09. The bulk of western media is corporate media. How many bankers from Wall Street went to jail? There has been some very good investigative journalism on the subject, but the mainstream is shy to pursue the story, telling us "to get over it." Today there is a strong sense there is 'state socialism' to bail out the bankers and 'capitalist austerity' for the rest of us. The mainstream's echo chamber prefers to dwell on meaningless "first world problems" like pouring buckets of ice water over our heads or the condition of Kim Kardashian's butt. In the meantime, Wall Street and Washington policy makers are never held to account for their past and present actions.

We in alternative media (or non-western media) are often called propaganda merely because we say something different. Some of the people, institutions and governments making this claim are very afraid of those parting company with standard narratives that are cozy and comfortable for the powers-that-be and their media friends. Our mission is different: we exist to challenge the conventional wisdom and to break western media hegemony. We are interested in hearing so many more and differing voices.

The tragedy being played out in Ukraine is very important for us in alternative media. This story is very clear-cut and those who have done wrong (and continue to do so) are obvious. There is plenty of conclusive evidence that Washington and Brussels backed an illegal coup against a democratically elected government in Ukraine. The West is in complete denial, and its official narrative that there was a people's revolution is itself propaganda.

The media are even worse. The violent events that ended the constitutional order in Kiev included snipers killing over 90 people. Western media took little interest in the story when it began to appear that those pulling the triggers were associated with anti-government forces. A massacre occurred in the city of Odessa. An ample amount of video available on YouTube shows the culprits were fascistic elements aligned with the coup government. Western media has taken little interest in the story.

Then there is MH-17. For a few weeks it was treated as one of the biggest stories in media history. But then, MH-17 disappeared from the headlines. Why? Common sense dictates western intelligence should know who shot the plane out of the sky. The information is not being disclosed but the media line is of course that 'the Russians did it'. And western media is not interested in asking any further questions. But those of us who do or who put forward alternative scenarios are called propagandists.

The ultimate trick question when it comes to western coverage of Ukraine is to ask: "When did Russia invade Ukraine?" There is no answer because there has never been an invasion (and most likely never will be either). At the same time western audiences are fed 24/7 wall-to-wall dis- and misinformation about Ukraine. Anyone who challenges this is called a propagandist.

We in the alternative media don't always get stories right. But why should one be called a propagandist for simply asking questions that challenge those in power? Traditionally, this has been the core mission for journalism to exist. The West's echo chamber has forfeited its moral right in this regard. It is time the echo chamber made some more space for the rest of us.

The original source of this article is [Sputnik](#)
Copyright © [Peter Lavelle](#), [Sputnik](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Peter Lavelle](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca