



Tackling Tools of Malign Influence – Supporting 21st Century Journalism, Frontline Club, November 1-2, 2018

Independent, public interest journalism and the journalists who deliver it are under siege. The challenges are manifold: from fake news and misinformation campaigns to state-sponsored harassment and intimidation and violence; from commercial pressures and lack of resources to a relentless social and digital media environment. Across Europe and the Mediterranean, the threat to independent journalism is spreading, with mass detentions in Turkey, a murder in Malta and revelations on how fake news targeted voters in the UK's Brexit referendum all underlining the need for vigilance. So how can journalists hold power to account in the face of these challenges? How can honest, fair and independent journalism be nurtured and sustained? Over the course of two days at the Frontline Club, the conference will take a detailed look at the various threats to public interest journalism and what can be done to resist them. It will bring together experienced journalists from the region who have survived kidnapping, death threats, harassment or arrest, with young journalists from countries where reporting freedoms are under threat. They will be joined by renowned foreign correspondents and investigative journalists from the UK for a frank and intimate discussion about their experiences and the coping methods necessary to survive and continue doing their jobs. Our aim is that these conversations will guide future practical support services to furnish journalists working in difficult environments with the means to develop and sustain their ability to report on public interest issues without fear or favour

Draft agenda for the conference. November 1, 2018

14.00-14.15 Opening Remarks: Stephen Dalziel, Institute of Statecraft, the need to support integrity journalism. Foreign Desk director on the conference agenda and goals

14.20-15.30 Discussion + Q&A: The Fake News Challenge to Independent Journalism Misinformation has been deployed as an instrument of conflict in Ukraine, to undermine elections and referendums in the United States and United Kingdom, and more widely as a tool to erode trust in established professional media organisations. How has the Russian state used fake news as an aggressor state; what are its methods, are they changing, what are its goals?

Ukrainian speaker from StopFake or Detektor on how Russian misinformation was weaponised as an instrument of war in the country's civil conflict Natalia Antaleva, former BBC correspondent and founder of CodaStory. Based in Tblisi, she is expert in fake news and state repression of independent media across Ukraine and the CIS countries.

Carole Cadwalladr, Observer journalist who has broken several exclusive stories on how Facebook allowed Cambridge Analytica to steal private data and the Vote Leave campaign to disseminate misinformation to skew the Brexit referendum

Moderator: Dean Nelson, FD Director, former Sunday Times Insight Editor

Coffee break

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Breakout sessions: Dealing with the Fake News Challenge Ben Nimmo, Atlantic Council and Institute of Statecraft analyst on disinformation, on How to Spot a Bot – identifying fake accounts and the misinformation they spread.

James Ball, BuzzFeed journalist, former Guardian and WikiLeaks researcher, author of *How Bullshit Conquered the World: Fighting Fake News in the newsroom - how BuzzFeed does it.*

Natalia Antaleva: Independent Journalism is the Antidote to Misinformation – but you need to stay with the story StopFake on how Ukraine has worked to check misinformation, successes and failures.

17.05-18.15 Discussion + Q&A: Harassment, Intimidation and Murder: The War on Truth

How political and security establishments use legal and extra-judicial means to suppress information and bully journalists to toe the line.

Laurent Richard of Forbidden Stories, or Relative/Colleague of Daphne Caruana Galizia, the Maltese journalist killed last year over her investigations into money laundering and corruption in the country

Tunca Ogreten, Turkish journalist who was locked up for 11 months for reports on Erdogan's son-in-law and minister Berat Albayrak, or Murat Sabuncu, Cumhuriyet editor, jailed for a year for 'terror' related charges of reporting on activities of PKK and Gulen.

Frederica Jansz – former editor of Sri Lanka's Sunday Leader. Dismissed in 2012 by a new, government-friendly owner, and forced to flee the country under US protection amid death threats. She will join by video-link from her home in Seattle.

Moderator: Damien McElroy, Foreign Desk director, war correspondent

18.30-19.15 Networking drinks and journalist briefing

Tunca Ogreten roundtable with UK journalists (e.g. Nick Cohen, David Aaronovitch, Kim Sengupta, Gideon Rachman, Lindsey Hilsum, James Landale)

19.45-close

Dinner + Speaker: NICK COHEN - Why accuracy, fairness and balance are essential to independent journalism (back up: Christiane Amanpour, Alex Crawford)

November 2, 2018

9-10.10 (UK journalism students join) Discussion + Q&A: Compromising the Owner/Editor – Influence in the Media

Andras Muranyi, editor of Népszabadság, Hungary's left-leaning newspaper and best-selling political daily, which was suspended and then sold to an ally of Viktor Orban.

Luba Rizova, former news director of BTV in Bulgaria, the country's most successful private channel, explains how constant political pressure and threats from politicians and oligarchs is causing journalists to quit or practice self-censorship.

Defending Democracy Against Disinformation



Dimitris Xenakis, managing editor of Inside Story, one of two independent investigative websites in Greece, explains how Greek journalists have lost their ability to pursue a story amid political and financial pressure.

Moderator: Alex Spillius, FD director and former diplomatic correspondent, Daily Telegraph

10.20-11.40 Breakout session: Digital Safety – Protecting your data or story from prying eyes

Andrew Taylor, former GCHQ cyber expert on how to keep one step ahead in safeguarding your material and sources from being intercepted by those who mean you harm.

Ingrid Brodnig, Austrian journalist turned expert on digital harassment and algorithms. + Breakout session: How to beat the trap and face down the system when pressure mounts Taha Siddiqui – renowned Pakistani journalist who escaped from an attempted kidnapping earlier this year and now lives in exile in Paris. Stop Fake on how they have fought back against misinformation and censorship in Ukraine

11.50-13.00 Investigative masterclass

How to build an investigation, develop trust with sources, obtain documentary support, maintain balance in your reporting, keep the momentum going over an extended period.

Heidi Blake, investigations editor of BuzzFeed, who led an in-depth exposé of the hushing up of the murder of Kremlin enemies in Britain.

Moderator: Dean Nelson

13.00-13.45 Closing remarks: resistance and resilience

Amid the unprecedented challenges of misinformation and rising violence and intimidation, let's remind ourselves why journalists keep going, and they need to keep going.

Marc Margenidas correspondent of El Periodico de Catalunya in Moscow, has a long career both in Russia and MENA (including the terrible experience of being captive of ISIS for 6-months)

Conference ends