

# The New York Times' hypocritical rant against social media

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On Sunday, the *New York Times* published an editorial entitled “Truth and Lies in the Age of Trump,” which bemoans “the breakdown of a shared public reality built upon widely accepted facts” due to the growing influence of social media. As a result, the *Times* writes, “it’s easier for demagogues to deploy made-up facts to suit the story they want to tell,” declaring “That’s what Mr. Trump has done.”

While the editorial is framed as a critique of Trump, its real target is the idea that the population should have access to information that is not censored and massaged by the CIA, the military and the financial elite. This, in the *Times*’ view, is a recipe for disaster.

The *Times*’ piece is in line with a campaign by the media and sections of the political establishment, particularly those aligned with the Clinton camp, to crack down on what they call “fake news.” As part of this campaign, leading social media networks, most prominently Facebook, have said they intend to more actively curate what appears in users’ news feeds.

The *Times* complains that “The institutions that once generated and reaffirmed that shared reality—including the church, the government, the news media, the universities and labor unions—are in various stages of turmoil and even collapse.”

In other words, the *Times* is deeply worried that the state and its various auxiliary institutions are facing a crisis of legitimacy.

With undisguised contempt for the population, the newspaper declares that due to the growing popularity of the internet and social media, “everyone can customize his or her own information bubble,” and “Curl up in cozy, angry or self-righteous cocoons.” The *New York Times* seeks to falsely brand this growing skepticism to the dictates of the media establishment as essentially synonymous with support for Trump.

The sanctimonious, “self-righteous” blathering of the *Times* on “fake news” of course ignores the role of the *Times* itself as a systematic purveyor of state propaganda. It says nothing about what the newspaper and its fellow outlets might have done to warrant popular skepticism of the media establishment.

The list of lies—many with deadly consequences—is long and damning. Most notoriously, the *Times* played a leading role in feeding the US population the false justifications for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, through the writings of discredited propagandist Judith Miller and others.

In October 2005, *Times* Public Editor Byron Calame was forced to admit, in understated language, “Ms. Miller may still be best known for her role in a series of *Times* articles in 2002 and 2003 that strongly suggested Saddam Hussein already had or was acquiring an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction... Many of those articles turned out to be inaccurate,” leading the newspaper to fire her.

The *Times* likewise peddled claims about an imminent massacre in Benghazi that were used as the pretext for the 2011 war for regime change in Libya that killed 40,000 people and left the country in a state of permanent and bloody civil war. It used false claims of Syrian government chemical weapons attacks that were promoted in 2013 to justify what it hoped would be a war to overthrow that country’s ruler and install a US puppet government.

In 2014, the *Times* published a front-page lead article shortly after the coup in Ukraine, replete with fabricated photographs, claiming to prove that Russian troops had invaded eastern Ukraine. Within 24 hours of publication, the newspaper was forced to retract this piece of state propaganda.

Currently, the newspaper is taking part in a ferocious

internecine battle within the ruling class in the aftermath of the election of Trump over US policy toward Russia.

On Friday, the Obama administration announced that it is beginning an investigation into Russian influence over the election, while the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* published articles, based solely on the say-so of unnamed intelligence officials, providing additional details of the alleged hacking by Russia of Democratic National Committee emails.

None of the “facts” provided by the *Times* to promote its anti-Russia campaign are any more believable than the claims of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Broad sections of the population are seeking alternative sources of news because they increasingly realize that it is establishment outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, as well as the major network news outlets that are the propagators of “fake news.”



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