



## Press Freedom in the New Russia

The corruption of communism still haunts Russia. Contrary to much Marxist mythology, Russia under the Romanovs was not horrible. The Russian economy was growing at a faster rate than America or Germany and would have made the huge empire into the second largest economy in the world by 1930. This growth was not limited to natural resources and agricultural products, but industry and the highest levels of technological development.

Political and civil liberties under the Tsars were also reasonably good. Defense counsel was required in criminal cases. Judges frequently ruled against the state. Acquittal of high profile defendants was common. The explosion of Russian literature, science, music, and art that occurred under the Romanovs reflected a fairly free society, which is the antithesis of what politically correct historians have taught. Although some Russians, notably persecuted Jews, left Russia, the exodus was less than Italy, Germany, Ireland, Greece, or other European nations.

The full destructive power of Communism can only be grasped by a true understanding of life in Russia before Communism — and life in Russia after the fall of Communism. Did Communism ever really die in Russia? The ascendance of a former KGB officer as the practical ruler of Russia would indicate not (who would have considered post-war Germany de-nazified if Heydrich or Kaltenhammer had become president or chancellor of Germany?) Was there ever a de-communization of Russia? No. The millions of ghosts of the Gulag go unavenged. The vast crimes of Communism have gone unpunished.

So it should surprise no one that a courageous journalist like Mikhail Beketov, who called for a resignation of Moscow's city leadership, has suffered the same terrorism which the old Soviet police would have offered dissidents. He was beaten so savagely that three of the writer's fingers had to be amputated, he lost one leg, and his brain damage has left him unable to speak. The rampant corruption which was Russian Communism still thrives.

In an editorial before that, Beketov wrote: "Last spring, I called for the resignation of the city's leadership. A few days later, my automobile was blown up. What is next for me?" Practical liquidation was next for him. The Moscow police and prosecutors, meanwhile, act like Keystone Kops, unable (unwilling) to find and to prosecute the real culprits.

Grimly but predictably, Beketov was not alone. An editor was beaten in front of his home while his





Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on May 19, 2010

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assailants took his copies of a planned article — but nothing else of value. Police said that he sustained his injuries while drunk. Another reporter was beaten by police officers out of uniform when he tried to capture a demonstration on video. Police blamed the rowdy crowd.

What has happened? The Thugocracy which is Communism still rules Russia. The Governor of the Moscow Region, for example, is Boris Gromov, who commanded the 40th Army during the Afghanistan occupation. Other Communists who served in the military or security forces also have high positions in the new Russia: they run the nation, as their Communist ancestors did, for their own benefit. Woe to Russians who understood differently.

Just ask Boris Beketov.

*Photo: Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin meets with Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov (out of picture) on May 15, 2010: AP Images*



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