The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's Opposition Elite Shamed in Lewd Anti-Hebdo Comic Book

By Peter Spinella

March 23, 2015



One cartoon from the comic book portrays opposition firebrand Alexei Navalny and his brother Oleg in prison uniforms holding a sign that says, "The verdict is political," as they gaze smugly at a pile of U.S. dollars between them.

A comic book brimming with lewd images of Russia's leading opposition politicians and journalists has begun making the rounds in Moscow, news reports said Monday.

The anonymously authored work takes aim at public figures who have expressed support for Charlie Hebdo, a French satirical newspaper that has often provoked controversy with offensive images of the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

A dozen people were killed at Charlie Hebdo's Parisian headquarters in January by Islamic gunmen reportedly seeking to avenge the prophet.

Support for the publication resounded around the world, and several Western leaders

marched in Paris with tens of thousands of mourners to honor the victims and their publication.

In the aftermath of the violence, social media buzzed with widespread calls for publications around the globe to reprint Hebdo cartoons in a show of support for the weekly.

But many officials in Russia reacted with scorn, including Russia's media watchdog Roskomnadzor, which warned news outlets not to publish such religious-themed cartoons on the grounds that doing so would violate the country's law against extremism.

The new comic book, mockingly titled "Alexei Hebdo," blasts those members of Russia's opposition who have voiced support for Charlie Hebdo or called for the reprinting of its comics.

"When our liberal community supported publishing that French publication's offensive caricatures in the media and began calling it true freedom of speech, we were appalled," reads the comic book.

"This is why we have made a journal similar in style to Charlie Hebdo with characters representing the most odious of Russia's liberals," the text continues.

One cartoon from the comic book, posted online by Russian tabloid news site LifeNews, portrays opposition firebrand Alexei Navalny and his brother Oleg in prison uniforms holding a sign that says, "The verdict is political," as they gaze smugly at a pile of U.S. dollars between them.

Another cartoon, showcased on news site Ridus, shows a smiling Crimea in the colors of the Russian flag, while Ukraine is bound in rope and dragged by European Union politicians into a gaping anus.

"We are for freedom of speech, but not freedom to insult," reads the comic book. "For us, art that offends religious believers or anyone else is unacceptable."

Though the Charlie Hebdo attack happened three months ago, it has recently resurfaced in the Russian headlines.

A Chechen man who allegedly confessed to having gunned down opposition activist Boris Nemtsov last month steps from the Kremlin is widely reported to have told investigators that he was motivated by Nemtsov's public expression of support for Charlie Hebdo.

Contact the author at p.spinella@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/03/23/russias-opposition-elite-shamed-in-lewd-anti-hebdo-comic-book-a45056