



Editorial

Text – Anna Kananen and Sierra Salazar

Photo – Jalmari Sarla

Finding truth in what increasingly feels like a post-truth moment is extraordinarily difficult. Without the skills to navigate an overwhelming stream of information, sift through emotionally charged content designed to keep us hooked, spot AI-generated material, and resist collapsing on ChatGPT for answers without acknowledging that it is an LLM (or understanding how such models even work), we become vulnerable. In that state, we are often at the mercy of social media “slot machines” that deliver dopamine hits while feeding us information that is unverified and engineered to persuade, polarize, and shape our perceptions. We remain hooked, misinformed, and tightly bound to our algorithms, as our time and attention are converted into profit for companies like Meta and Google. And where is professional media in all this? Too often, not far behind – producing its own share of misleading or politically-charged content, sometimes packaged in the clean appearance of traditional journalism.

We were just reminded of this recently when Googling the

resignation of BBC directors **Tim Davie** and **Deborah Turness**. The first result on the search engine wasn't from a major news outlet, but from a newsletter by **Anter Yaşa** – a writer whom **Sami Eerola** in *Laitaoikeiston viikkokatsaus* describes as a conspiracy theorist aligned with the True Finns party. A basic search pulled us into someone else's agenda, this time a disturbing one.

At the same time, the social media giant Meta has stopped all political, social, and election-related advertising in the EU. The company blames new EU rules, while Facebook and Instagram are under investigation for suspicions of failing to combat disinformation and misleading advertising. These tech giants insist regulation ‘ties their hands,’ even when they failed to act responsibly in the first place. All of this of course leads to the uncomfortable question of what can truth even mean in this time, when information is fragmented, personalized and manipulated? In this issue of *Gazeta Sasha*, we explore different answers to that question.

Johanna Porkkala looks at *tanish-bilish* networking culture in Uzbekistan and what it reveals about trust and social reality. **Kristian Ostanin** and **Erik Toikka** examine the discrimination dual citizens

face when looking for work in Finland.

Leo Ooms turns to written experiences of Russian trans* individuals and their existence, while **Isaac Steinmeyer** examines how visual art in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan has been used to construct its national identity by merging the historical, mythological, and political. **Tommaso Valastro** reflects on our relationship with the truth and how our secondhand experiences shape how we consume information about Russia's invasion against Ukraine. And of course, we learn the basics of Russian propaganda both in **Kacper Regulski's** satirical guide and **Mirka Lindgren's** reading of the Soviet Karelian newspaper *Totuus*.

Lastly, we warmly welcome the new *Gazeta Sasha* editorial board and wish the best of luck to the incoming Editors-in-Chief, Leo Ooms and Kacper Regulski. As we turn the page, most of our current board will be stepping down, including our long-standing and wonderful graphic designers, **Lucina Rudloff** and **Lotta Aro**. Thank you to everyone who has helped make *Gazeta Sasha* a special platform for students to learn and grow, as writers, editors or creators, amid their studies. 📖