

**PERESTROIKA AND FREEDOM OF PRESS :
EARLY EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF LEGISLATION**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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NEW DELHI-110 067
BHARAT
1993**



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July 20, 1993.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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PREFACE

In the present study an attempt is made to analyse the role of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' in the development towards freedom of the Soviet press. Against the historical background necessary to understand the subject, all the important events relating to freedom of the press between 1985 and June 1990, are covered in this dissertation.

For the first time, the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a law on press and other news media in June 1990. The law was the culmination of a spirit of glasnost unleashed by perestroika. Before passage of the law, the relaxation of government-control over the press encouraged a free, objective and critical trend in the print media but also resulted in abuse of press to give vent to internal bickerings among publicists and journalists. The passage of the law re-established credibility of the Soviet press in the USSR and abroad. The Soviet people, who never liked the stereo-type monotonous contents of the controlled media, widely hailed this new move towards freedom of the press.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with historical background of the Soviet Press from 1917 to 1985. The second chapter explains 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' focusing on changes brought in the print media outlets during restructuring of the press.

The heated debates between pro and anti-perestroika leadership, are dealt with in the third chapter. The fourth chapter covers important legal initiatives towards freedom of the press. It also explains the main provisions of the press law and attempts a critical appraisal. The fifth chapter contains the main conclusions of the study.

Although several studies on the pre-perestroika Soviet press are available, no research work has been done on the freedom of the Soviet press, which was the result of Perestroika and Glasnost started from 1985. Naturally, a study on this subject is only timely and appropriate.

The present study is based on a historical and analytical approach to the subject. Mainly primary source materials are used in the dissertation. These include reports and decisions of the CPSU congresses, conferences and Central Committee plenums, debates and decisions of the various Party forums and Congress of People's Deputies and the USSR Supreme Soviet. Important Presidential decrees and the legislation, passed by the USSR Supreme Soviet, are also used as primary source materials.

The secondary source materials used in the dissertation consist of write-ups and articles relating to the

subject published in important Russian and English print media outlets as well as contributions by Soviet and Western scholars to various research studies on Perestroika and Glasnost.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Devendra Kaushik for his able guidance, encouragement and assistance during the course of my research. I am equally grateful to Dr. Shankar Basu of Centre for Russian Studies, JNU for teaching me Russian language.

I also record my profound gratitude to Mr. Abhay Kant, Research Scholar in my Centre, for providing me much needed help, guidance and cooperation throughout the period of my research work.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Sitasaran Singh, editor, Anand Digest, Patna; Shri Arun Gandhi, journalist, Patna, and Prof. Ganesh Prasad Ojha, Department of Political Science, Patna University, Patna, whose encouragement, help and guidance materialised in the form of my dissertation for M.Phil.

I am thankful to my friends Shri Manoranjan Bhagwan and Birendra Kumar for their kind cooperation and sincere help.

I would also like to thank to the staff of the libraries of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi and Russian Cultural Centre, New Delhi.

Special thanks to Mr. Jagdish Chander Vidyarthi for typing my dissertation.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to University Grants Commission for awarding me Junior Research Fellowship, without which this dissertation could not have been possible.

It is impossible to express gratitude to my family, specially to my brothers, Sanjay Kumar and Anjani Kumar, because words are limited and thoughts are limitless.

The responsibility for any error in this dissertation, however, is mine.

Shyam Nath Mishra.
(SHYAM NATH MISHRA)

July 12, 1993.

New Delhi.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE PRESS IN THE PRE-PERESTROIKA PERIOD

Law of the USSR: On the Press and Other News Media, passed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on June 12, 1990, was the first legal act in the history of the Soviet press. The passage was the result of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost'. The law changed the existing nature, working and norms of the press and established its credibility in the Soviet Union and abroad. Earlier the Soviet press had lost its relevance and credibility among the common people. It was working completely under the control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet government. Any event or news that appeared in the press was expected to support the government's and the Party's point of view. The press could publish nothing before getting approval of the censor board Glavlit. Every published material was necessarily in favour of the existing Soviet system, socialism, communism and Marxism-Leninism. No other item could be published in the Soviet press.

However, before explaining the origin and significance of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost', it is necessary to know the real character of the Soviet press during pre-Perestroika period. To understand the changes in the press which occurred during Perestroika period (1985 onwards), it is necessary to explain the historical background which will be helpful in analysing the later developments.

After the October Revolution 1917, the Soviet system changed the entire norms of the society. Most of the values were also changed. The newly established government's first objective was to eradicate all the existing bourgeois norms and values of the society. The press was one of them. It was considered the most dangerous bourgeois apparatus - more dangerous than machine guns. With this attitude towards the existing print media, the communist government brought many changes relating to the press.

In this chapter, the aspects to be discussed are attitudes and approaches of Soviet leaders, specially of V.I. Lenin, J. Stalin and N. Khrushchev towards Soviet print media; objectives of the press; journalistic ethnics; provisions in the constitutions; structure of the press and its relationship with the CPSU. The role of news agencies; contents in the press and the letters from readers with their due expectations; unpublished events and literatures; role of the underground press and growing faith in Western media among the Soviet people will also be discussed. The distinction between the expected and actual image of the press within the country and abroad, is also to be taken into account, so that the true picture of the press during pre-Perestroika period may be drawn.

Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev's Views on Press:

With regard to the press all the Soviet leaders followed the principles of Lenin. Lenin was of the opinion that the press should remain under control of the Party, because non-Party press could publish materials against socialism. Information, to him, must serve the interests of the oppressed people. So the press must play three rôles—of collective propagandist, collective agitator, and collective organiser.¹

Lenin never favoured absolute 'freedom of criticism'. He took it as a bourgeois concept. It means, as he said, "freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism".² Further he argued that the shortcomings of the Party and government must be criticized. It is "absolutely necessary", but it should always serve the interests of the Soviet people.³ He supported only constructive freedom of criticism.

Lenin was of the opinion that we can only govern when we correctly express what is in the public mind.⁴ So,

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1. V.I. Lenin, "Left-wing communism—An infantile disorder, May 1920", Selected Works, vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 366.
 2. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 97.
 3. Lenin, n. 1, p. 521.
 4. Bohdan Harasymiw (ed.), Education and the Mass Media in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), p. 118.

he stressed the point that the Soviet Journalists must follow their professional ethics properly. They must combine high ideological-moral qualities with professional mastery to be an active bearer of the policy of the Party.⁵ As propagandists, they must highlight what socialism is in practice. Each propagandist belongs to the ruling Party "which directs the whole state and the Soviet Russia's world struggle against the bourgeois system".⁶ So, they must be ideologically sound and professionally skilled, because they have to operate chiefly "by means of the printed word".⁷

Lenin held the view that the press is an important instrument of change in society. He stated that no mass movement in any civilised country can get along without a journalistic apparatus.⁸ The newspaper should work as a major source for probing public opinion and also for channeling grievances, frustrations and criticism.⁹

As Lenin never favoured the bourgeois press, opposing ideas and articles criticizing socialism, could not be published. He was totally against it. About bourgeois press, he wrote in 1919, "see how millions of copies of their newspapers extol what the capitalists regard as 'model'

5. V.M. Tepljuk, The Social Responsibility of the Journalist, Translated from Russian by Steven Sally (Moscow: Mysl Publishing House, 1984), p. 111.

6. Lenin, n. 1, p. 431.

7. Lenin, n. 2, p. 43.

8. Lenin, n. 1, p. 366.

9. Ellen Propper Mickiewicz, Media and the Russian Public (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981), p. 51.

enterprises, and how 'model' bourgeois institutions are made an object of national pride".¹⁰ Again in 1922, he warned against capitalist press saying that "the bourgeoisie is still able freely to torment, torture and kill".¹¹ He also attacked the defenders of 'pure democracy' alleging that they favour control of the rich over the mass media. They divert people from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capitalist enslavements. To them freedom of the press means "freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion".¹² Lenin also opposed the concept of opposition and stated that it belongs to the parliamentary struggle and corresponds to an "absence of revolution".¹³

Lenin frequently expressed his plans and thinking against the capitalist press and capitalist concepts of the freedom of the press. He explained openly that "in our proletarian republic the exploiters will have no rights".¹⁴ Further he argued that in Communism, there will be no opportunity for "putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money".¹⁵ He was of the view that the capitalists

10. Lenin, n. 1, p. 180.

11. *ibid.*, p. 647.

12. *ibid.*, p. 101.

13. *ibid.*, p. 53.

14. *ibid.*, p. 59.

15. *ibid.*, p. 101.

and exploiters must be overthrown and their resistance suppressed, so that possibility of hiring writers, buying up publishing houses and bribing newspapers may be stopped.

Here it seems necessary to make it clear that the opinion of Lenin about freedom of the press, as mentioned above, is not sufficient to prove his thinking about publication of opposing views in the press. There are several evidence to prove that Lenin was a great supporter of 'pluralism of opinion'. Therefore, open debates and discussions got much importance during his times. Here one example may be given of Maxim Gorky, who was openly criticizing the Bolsheviki. He did not even spare Lenin. But Lenin never stopped him from expressing his opinions. He never lost patience with intellectuals and respected honest differences of opinion.¹⁶

Whatever Lenin thought and spoke about freedom of the press, may be understood fully with the help of 'the Decree of the Press'¹⁷ issued on November 9 (October 27), 1917.¹⁸ As Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars,

16. Ravi M. Bakaya, "Democratisation: Role of the Soviet Media", in The Second Revolution: Democratization in the USSR (Indian Centre for Regional Affairs, New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1989), p. 68.

17. Yuri Akhapiin, First Decrees of Soviet Power (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), p. 16.

18. Russian Calendar which was known as the Georgian Calendar, was thirteen days ahead from new calendar.

Lenin issued the Decree to protect the gains of socialism from attacks by counter-revolutionary press. Answering the criticism that socialist power had violated a fundamental principle of its programme by encroaching upon the freedom of the press, the Decree contained the formulation that actually it 'is freedom for the propertied classes'. The bourgeois press was called most powerful weapon of the bourgeoisie and it was pointed out that at the crucial moment when the new power was only affirming itself, it was impossible to leave this weapon wholly in the hands of the enemy, for in such moments it is no less dangerous than bombs and machine guns.

In the general provisions on the press, it was also clearly accepted that a restriction of the press, even at crucial moments, is permissible only within the limits of what is absolutely necessary.

So far as general provisions of the Decree were concerned, these made all arrangements to suppress the anti-socialist press.¹⁹ Their fate was handed over completely to the hands of the Council of People's Commissars.

It is relevant to mention here that a Revolutionary

19. See 'The Decree on the Press' in Appendix No. 1.

Tribunal for the press was set up on February 10 (January 28), 1918.²⁰ The established Tribunal in the light of the Decree was to deal with all "crimes and misdeeds against the people committed through the medium of the press".²¹

Whatever Lenin thought, he translated it into action so far as freedom of the press was concerned. He laid down sound principles about it. The Decree was nothing but a reflection of Leninist ideas about the press.

After the death of Lenin, Stalin came to power in 1924. He brought no change in principles profounded by Lenin in the field of freedom of the press. He only tightened the stranglehold of the Party and government over the press. He never desired that his misrule, unlawful acts and atrocities upon common people should be covered in the press. Whoever tried to criticize Stalin and his policies faced troubles. Most of his critics were jailed, exiled and many of them lost even their lives. Censorship and secrecy was imposed even on minor issues.²²

Only one example is enough to understand the real situation, in which the Soviet print media was compelled to

20. Akhapiin, n. 17, p. 16.

21. *ibid.*, p. 170.

22. Bakaya, n. 16, p. 70.

work throughout the Stalinist rule. "Ten Days That Shook The World" by an American journalist John Reed could not be reprinted because the author had mentioned the leading role of the well-known revolutionary leaders like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and many others in October Revolution. Stalin never allowed such materials to be published.

The death of Stalin in 1953 and the entry of new leadership in a shape of Nikita Khrushchev had given the opportunity to the system to feel a new relief. The new regime with enthusiasm gave some freedom to the press allowing it to criticize Stalin and his policies openly. The culmination of criticizing system and the past leadership came in a final shape in 20th Party Congress, 1956 in which a leadership himself criticized all shortcomings of the past policies. Interestingly very soon he felt that the same press started to criticize Khrushchev too. So, he forced the press again to follow the Party guidelines.

After Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev took over the leadership of the Party. He also followed the Leninist norms and established full control of the Party and government over the print media. No affair related to the Party, government and Soviet system could be covered openly in the press. The Censor Board Glavlit became more powerful. The press was supposed to publish nothing without the prior

approval of Glavlit. So, many Samizdat (underground) publications sprang up. As a result, the Brezhnev period was noted more for the popularity of underground Samizdat publications and probably greater reliance on outside information sources than for innovation in the domestic media.²³

After Brezhnev the two leaders who came to power - Andropov and Chernenko - expired within a short span of time and could not change the existing role and status of the Soviet press. Thus, before the arrival of Gorbachev on the Soviet political scene in 1985, all the Soviet leaders since 1917 adopted the same principles and policies towards the Soviet press. None of them allowed the press to openly discuss matters related to the Party, government and Soviet society or to adopt pluralism of opinion.

Objectives of the Soviet Press:

With formulation of the new system, the political socialization of the Soviet people was unavoidable. Although the electronic media is a powerful instrument of political socialization, the print media is more useful than electronic media, because the published materials and articles may be reread, discussed, debated and quoted again and again.

23. L. John Martin and Ray Eldon Hiebert (ed.), Current Issues in International Communication (New York: Longman, 1990), p. 195.

That was the reason, the press was expected to work as "the main agent of adult political socialization" in the Soviet society.²⁴

As an agent of adult political socialization, the press was assigned the task to change the ethical and moral outlook of the population. The next task was to create consciousness among the people so that they may participate "in such a way as to contribute to the economic goals of the leadership".²⁵

Yet another objective of the Soviet press was to cover and highlight the existing problems, their causes and solutions, so that quick steps may be taken to tackle the situation. In 1974, the Georgian Republic decided to compel reporters "to publicize the problems on which men's work and lives depend".²⁶ The then Secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, Viktoriia Siradze stressed this matter, because in his opinion, the press could highlight these things.

The objectives of the press during pre-Perestroika

24. Gayle Durhan Hollander, Soviet Political Introduction: Developments in Mass Media and Propaganda Since Stalin (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 192.

25. Joseph L. Noguee (ed.), Soviet Politics: Russia After Brezhnev (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), pp. 35-6.

26. Harasymiv, n. 4, p. 118.

period may be pointed out in the light of the CPSU Central Committee resolution of the June 1983 Plenum.²⁷ The resolution underlines that the mass news media "are an active instrument in the ideological work of the Party". It is a highly important institution of socialist democracy, "a means of attracting workers to the discussion and resolution of burning questions, a means of forming public opinion". It is clear that the purpose of the Soviet press before 1985, was to protect and strengthen socialism.

Journalistic Ethics:

Before 1985, the official image of the Soviet journalist was as an "ideological warrior".²⁸ They had to write in favour of socialism only. No different opinion or event was expected to be covered by them. Their professional skills and competence were only to be used in supporting and spreading the Party views.

The journalist had to play three roles in the interest of the Soviet system. As a 'propagandist' he had to present a complete picture of society and class struggle. As an 'agitator' he was expected to speak a single idea to the masses. The single idea was none other than socialism.

27. Tepljuk, n. 5, p. 109.

28. Martin and Hiebert, n. 23, p. 205.

An an 'organiser' he had to motivate the masses in favour of Party decisions, government policies and Soviet system.

Undoubtedly during the pre-Perestroika period, the official image of the Soviet journalist remained unchanged. The image, determined by Lenin, continued till 1985.

Provisions Under Constitutions:

Here it is essential to know the provisions under various constitutions regarding the 'fourth pillar of democracy', i.e., the press. The first constitution was the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), adopted on July 10, 1918. It was followed by three other constitutions - the 1924 Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the 1936 Constitution of the USSR and the 1977 Constitution of the USSR. It is interesting to know that all the constitutions carried the same ideas and principles, so far as the provisions regarding freedom of the press are concerned.

No constitution provided the press an independent status. Although the citizens were guaranteed the freedom of the press, but the print media was not guaranteed that freedom.

Article 14 of the 1918 Constitution of the RSFSR

dealt with the Soviet press, but it no where talked about freedom of the press. It stated:

"In order to ensure genuine freedom of expression for the working people, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic abolishes the dependence of the press on capital, and places at the disposal of the working class and the poor peasantry all the technical and material requisites for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books and all other printed matter, and guarantees their unhindered circulation throughout the country".²⁹

The same spirit is found in the 1924 Constitution of the USSR towards freedom of the press. Even 1936 Constitution of the USSR also repeated the same thing. It did not guarantee the freedom of the press. Article 125 of the Constitution stated:

"In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the USSR are guaranteed by law:

- a) freedom of speech;
- b) freedom of press;
- c) freedom of assembly including the holding of mass meetings;

29. "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the RSFSR. Adopted by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", in Akhapiin, n. 17, p. 155.

d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper..... and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights".³⁰

It is remarkable here that unlike previous constitutions this constitution guaranteed these rights to all the citizens, not only to the working people. And the 1977 Constitution of the USSR also does the same. There are two articles related to the press - 46 and 50 - in the constitution, but none of them guarantees that the press will work independently and freely.

Article 46 provides "the right to enjoy cultural benefits to the citizens of the country". This right is ensured "by developing television and radio broadcasting and the publishing of books, newspapers and periodicals". Many other sources are also mentioned in the article to ensure this right, but the sources do not include freedom of the press.³¹

The other article 50 states:

"In accordance with the interests of the people

30. "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the USSR, 1936", in Thomas Riha (ed.), Readings in Russian Civilization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 616.

31. "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the USSR, 1977", in Jitendra Sharma, New Soviet Constitution: An Indian Assessment (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p. 93.

and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system, citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstration.

Exercise of these political freedoms is ensured by putting public buildings, streets and squares at the disposal of the working people and their organizations, by broad dissemination of information, and by the opportunity to use the press, television and radio".³²

So, it is clear that no constitution under the Soviet system allowed the press to present reality of the society freely. Absence of freedom of press in the constitutions is enough to prove that there was no place for freedom of the press in the Marxist-Leninist system.

Structure of the Press and Its Relationship with the CPSU:

The structure of the Soviet press is based on the idea to fulfill the expected tasks assigned to the press. Keeping in mind the large territory and reading habits of the people, the Soviet system established a multi-layered press. Most of the people spend their leisure in reading newspapers and magazines.³³ So, the purpose of the huge

32. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

33. Mickiewicz, n. 9, p. 51.

structure of the press is to provide newspapers, magazines and other printmedia outlets to entire people - urban and rural both.

At the top of the structure, there is the central press. It is called All-Union newspapers. Below the all-Union newspapers, print media are available at every level. The huge mechanism and structure of the press is also found at republic level, province level, city level and district level. Besides these, there are also in-house papers.³⁴ This category of newspapers are found in individual factories, in collective farms and state farms.

It is essential to study the relationship between the press and the CPSU. The Party, throughout the pre-Perestroika period, controlled, guided and directed the press. The directive documents of the CPSU were the "principal guidelines in the work of the Soviet media".³⁵

In the Party Central Committee meetings with media executives, held on every second Tuesday, certain policies and guidelines were decided. At every level, those policies were discussed between Party committees and the mediamen. Punishments, if any media person was found guilty, were also decided in these meetings. These meetings

34. *ibid.*

35. *Tepljuk*, n. 5, p. 113.

also used to chalk out future plans and policies, so that public opinion may be prepared in their support. The journal Zhurnalist used to publish outcome of the meetings "for the benefit of the profession".³⁶

The Party also controlled the press through Glavlit or Censor Board. In every newspaper there was a representative of Glavlit just below the editor-in-chief. Only he could decide what is and what is not to be published. Not only the news items, but also the media men were controlled. The Union of Journalists was empowered to review any professional activity of a journalist.

One other method to control the press was criticism of journalists. Activities of journalists were also controlled by the Party "by means of the publication of criticism in the journal Zhurnalist".³⁷

In this manner, it is clear that at every level and in every affair relating to the press, it was the CPSU that played a significant and unchallengable role through its resolutions and instructions. The directive function of the Party leadership with regard to journalism was realized on various levels of Party activity.³⁸

36. Hollander, n. 24, p. 49.

37. *ibid.*, p. 50.

38. Tepljuk, n. 5, p. 113.

Role of News Agencies:

The role of the news agencies, in any system, is of great importance. These agencies collect information and other news items and make them available to the press for their publication. In the Soviet Union also, it was impossible for any newspaper or magazine to collect information and then publish them on its own. So the government established two news agencies -----Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soiuza (TASS) and Agentstvo Pechati Novosti (APN)----- to feed necessary and ideologically reliable information to the newspapers.

TASS was set up on July 10, 1925, but its history goes back to October 26, 1917 when the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (PTA) was captured by the revolutionaries.³⁹ By 1920, Lenin removed its many editors, because they were anti-socialist. He also changed the legal status of the agency in December 1917 attaching it with the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic. Earlier it was working under the Tsarist Council of Ministers. In 1918 the PTA was merged with the other parallel agency, the Press Bureau of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Deputies, to eradicate the ongoing conflicts between the two for ever. Telegraph Agency

39. Harasymiw, n. 4, p. 86.

or ROSTA, there was a section AGIT-ROSTA for issuing bulletins to Party workers. It was the ROSTA which converted into TASS after the birth of the USSR.

TASS is a government body working under the USSR Council of Ministers. The main TASS Editorial Board for Union Information was to disseminate material received from headquarters in Moscow and from its correspondents located all over the Soviet Union. It was gathering and distributing news throughout the Soviet Union and the world at large.

With the help of its various departments - domestic news service, foreign news service, world distribution service, photo information service, sports desk and reference service - TASS served the interests of the Soviet state and people. It was expected that the information provided by the TASS must be precise, authentic, factual, meaningful, topical, prompt and of high professional standards. It protected the socialist values and Soviet thinking inside the country and abroad. It held its monopoly until February 1961 when a new Soviet news agency Agentstvo Pechati Novosti (Novosti News Agency) or APN was created.⁴⁰

APN is a public news agency. It was sponsored by the Union of Friendship Societies, as well as by the Union

40. Hollander, n. 24, p. 32.

of Soviet Writers and the Union of Soviet Journalists.⁴¹ With the motto of "Information for Peace and International Friendship", it used to disseminate Soviet propaganda abroad issuing bulletins, pamphlets and other printed materials. Those were used in the Soviet press and abroad. Its publications are translated into many languages and it covers all the subjects. The Daily Review (English) of the APN includes translations of the Soviet government's official documents, speeches by statesmen and Party leaders, comments on international events in the Soviet national newspapers, and articles on Marxist-Leninist theory, economics, science and art.⁴²

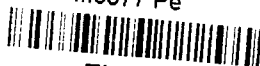
In both the agencies, the CPSU was to decide any matter regarding editorial posts. Journalists were trained in the institutions run by the Party or Party attached institutions.⁴³

Moreover, one important development took place in 1960, when "the news agencies were instructed to report news directly to the broadcast media, bypassing Pravda".⁴⁴ Earlier it was necessary to report every news to Pravda at first.

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41. Frederick C. Barghoorn, Soviet Foreign Propaganda (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 246.
42. Dalpat Singh Mehta, Mass Media in the USSR (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1987), p. 36.
43. Mickiewicz, n. 9, p. 52.
44. Hollander, n. 24, p. 30.

Therefore, it is clear that the two news agencies played a significant role during pre-Perestroika period, so far as their relationship with the print media outlets is concerned.

Expectations of Readers From the Press:

Factually, the success of print media outlet lies in its capacity to deal properly with grassroute level and government. To fulfil the objectives they have to cope with the nature of relationship between the people and the government. So, it works as a bridge between the two. There must not be any communication gap between the press and its readers. In the light of this fact, it is essential to know the expectations of readers from the Soviet press during pre-Perestroika period.

The Soviet press and other institutions conducted many readership surveys to find out choice of the readers. In the survey reports it was found that although the media is viewed officially as instrument of political education, the audience does not accept it, "they see the media as sources of diversion and enlightenment, and they are dissatisfied with the fare offered".⁴⁵

45. *ibid.*, p. 187.

The Soviet people wanted to read the newspapers and magazines for quick, upto-date and correct information, for articles analysing the current situation and incidents, and for entertainment. They did not like to read lengthy Party resolutions, reports of the CPSU General Secretary, economic articles and so many articles on Marxism-Leninism. Moral questions and international news were of much interest for them. Articles on international topics were very popular. Interest in them cut across "all age groups, all levels of educational attainment, and all occupations".⁴⁶

Soviet readers wanted to read about accidents, social evils, crimes and criticism of the leading personalities also. Professionals were fond of reading materials relating to their professions and the young generation wanted to read short stories, about art and literature. The young generation did not like to read thought provoking ideas and articles. Education, occupation and income of the readers are the main factors to determine their choice and interest in the press. But in any situation, the Soviet readers wanted to see in the press "more human interest, practical information, and entertainment".⁴⁷

46. Mickiewicz, n. 9, p. 58.

47. Hollander, n. 24, p. 187.

Content in the Press and Some Important Unpublished Materials:

The Soviet press mainly was dedicated to highlight achievements of socialism and criticise capitalism. But the content in the press was based on the principle that "anything said or written which does not conform to the official Party line, or which criticise any government or Party figure or institution" was a punishable crime.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Soviet press usually ignored analysis of the existing problems. It never examined them in depth and involved itself in the "search for ways of resolving them".⁴⁹

The Soviet people knew nothing about crimes, drugs, accidents, natural disasters, occupational injuries, official organs of censorship, security intelligence, schedules of travel for the political leadership, income and purchasing power structure at home and abroad, arms sales, crime or moral problems in the armed forces, hostile actions against Soviet citizens abroad, and special payment and education of athletes through the press.⁵⁰

The Soviet system could not allow to publish any secret matter. The list of the items of secrecy was given

48. *ibid.*, p. 186.

49. Martin and Hiebert, n. 23, p. 205.

50. Noguee, n. 25, p. 37.

in a law of 1956, but according to one clause of the law "the Council of Ministers of the USSR may add other items".⁵¹ It compelled the press to publish for the readers "only what the authorities want them to hear".⁵² Only the Party, government and the censor board could decide the quality and quantity of content for the print-media.

After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979) some changes were made in the field of press for presentation of the 'scientific' point of view.⁵³ But the press by and large continued old tendencies, so far as content was concerned. Absence of advertisements, beauty tips, secrets of success remained important features of the press.

In the field of international affairs, the press was carrying the views of the countries supporting the Soviet proposals and thoughts. In this field also only Soviet steps were justified. After Stalin the press started publishing some materials on physical culture, health, medicine, popular science and political-economic subjects, but never published opposing points of view or multiple explanations of a phenomenon.⁵⁴

51. Raymond Hutchings, Soviet Secrecy and Non-Secrecy (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), p. 55.

52. *ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

53. Noguee, n. 25, p. 37.

54. Mickiewicz, n. 9, p. 54.

Interestingly, it is necessary to note here that the Soviet press generally took only positive aspects of the system as well as the society. **I**t ignored and overlooked those elements which were the failures of the both system and society. As then Director of the Glavlit, V.A. Boldyrev said that "major specialists working for foreign intelligence services acknowledge that the press provides 80 per cent to 90 per cent of all such information".⁵⁵

The Height of Secrecy: Unpublished Events and Literatures:

The pre-Perestroika media outlets were not allowed to cover or to expose anti-Party facts. So significant documents and other news items remained unpublished. Even the famous speech of Nikita Khrushchev of the "Cult of Personality and its Consequences" at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 was not allowed to be published. The unchallenged report from any corner of the Party was published in detail in the western press. But, it was passed in silence by the Soviet media.⁵⁶ The ouster of Khrushchev in 1964 was also an important event. The incident brought so many changes in the Soviet leadership. But the press

55. The Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), vol. XL, No. 44, November 30, 1988, p. 1.

56. Bakaya, n. 16, p. 71.

did not take the matter seriously. Consequently, even the name of Khrushchev disappeared from the press. It is a classical example of how important political figures can be made into "unpersons".⁵⁷

Khrushchev was compelled to disown his memoir "Khrushchev Remembers", published in the Western press. The same thing happened in the case of Svetlana, daughter of Joseph Stalin. Her first book of memoirs could not be published in the Soviet press.

The views of the so-called dissidents or conflicting opinions were not allowed to come in the press. 'Though the Eyes of My Generation' (Meditations on Stalin) written in 1979 by Konstantin Simonov, a war novel 'Life and Destiny' of Vasili Grossman; a thought-provoking poem 'By the Right of Memory' written by Alexander Tvardovsky; account of Lenin's last days 'Meditations in Gorki' of Elizaveta Drabkina; Pasternak's 'Dr. Zhivago'; 'Children of the Arbat', a novel about Stalin by Anatoli Rybakov; 'White Robes', a novel about Lysenko's times, written by Dudintsev; 'Gulag Archipelago' and other works of Solzhenitsyn and memoirs about Mayakovsky, written by Veronica Polonskaya were among the other important matters, unpublished during the pre-Perestroika period.

57. Hollander, n. 24, p. 22.

The religious materials, reports on non-official voluntary and other charity organizations, Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 and its secret clauses, the Soviet-German Friendship Treaty and the involvement of many highly placed Soviet leaders in the corruption, like Brezhnev's son-in-law Churbanov and many other materials did not find place in the press. Many social problems and news dealing with natural disasters and accidents were not given coverage in the Soviet press. Even the proceedings of the Party and the government, and other institutions were also used to be kept secret. For example, the critical debate over the 1936 draft constitution of the USSR could not be printed for the masses.⁵⁸

It is also remarkable here that forced labour camps during the World War II could not get their place in the print media.⁵⁹ Earlier the same behaviour was shown towards the cultural affairs, due to the height of the censorship.⁶⁰

58. Ellen Wimberg, "Socialism, Democratization and Criticism: The Soviet Press and the National Discussion of the 1936, Draft Constitution", Soviet Studies (Glasgow: University of Glasgow), vol. 44, No. 2, 1992, p. 313.

59. Edwin Bacon, "Glasnost and the Gulag: New Information on Soviet Forced Labour around World War II", Soviet Studies (Glasgow: University of Glasgow), vol. 44, No. 6, 1992, p. 1069.

60. Michael S. Fox, "Glavlit, Censorship and the Problem of Party Policy in Cultural Affairs, 1922-28", Soviet Studies (Glasgow: University of Glasgow), vol. 44, No. 6, 1992, p. 1045.

Letters from Readers:

With a view to establish a reliable and sound communication, every print media had its "Letters from Workers" section. Thousands of letters were received everyday for this section. It was supposed to prove that mass media was "accessible to the masses as a public forum".⁶¹ Letters were published in many popular columns, e.g., 'A Reader Suggests a Theme', 'A Correspondent Goes to Meet Readers' and 'Replies to Readers' Letters" etc.

'Letters from Readers' were usually full of opinions on national, international and local levels, achievements of enterprises and economic development. Many problems were also found in the letters. Requests, complaints and suggestions were also available in them.

In 1967, the CPSU Central Committee resolution clearly emphasised that the letters show that many problems could not be solved at local level. The resolution 'On Improving the Work of Investigating Letters from Working People and Arranging Personal Interviews from them' also accepted that through the letters, readers wanted to compel the authorities concerned to solve the problems. The press also held the same attitude. It was of the opinion that the letters should be regarded as 'political activity of the working people and

61. Hollander, n. 24, p. 44.

their direct participation' in the improvement of economic management system.⁶²

There were some unethical journalistic practices too so far as 'letters to newspapers' are concerned. Publication of every received letter in the section concerned was neither possible nor expected. But unfortunately the print media used to publish only favourable letters. Even on the name of readers self-prepared letters were also published in the media outlets. For evidence, a deputy editor of Pravda's letter department, referring to letters complaining about the behaviour of local policemen, said, "It is not convenient to publish such letters....".⁶³ Likewise another editor also admitted that "some letters were created by the paper's own correspondents".⁶⁴

Now it is cristle clear that the official records provided by the media outlets regarding letters from readers were based on falsification of the facts. Consequently, the expected role of press and relationship with the masses could not come into practice.

62. Martin and Hiebert, n. 23, p. 215.

63. Mickiewicz, n. 9, p. 67.

64. *ibid.*

Role of Samizdat (Underground) Publications:

The Samizdat (illegal underground) publications, which were not permissible earlier, became very popular during Brezhnev era. Such publications came into existence and were strengthened by the "continued narrow, dull focus of the Soviet media".⁶⁵ All such publications were working very secretly and inspired the Soviet people specially the urban intellectuals and residents.

A journal The Chronicle of Current Events began in 1968. Tetrad, Phoenix 1961, Phoenix 1966, Sintaksis, Russkoye Slovo, a literary political magazine were among important Samizdat publications. Crime and Punishment, a periodical flushing out the criminals and culprits of the Stalinist era was also very important.

Soviet people could read an essay of Andrei Amalrik 'Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?'; 'Progress, Co-existence, and Intellectual Freedom' of Sakharov; 'My Testimony' written by Anatoly Marchenko; Vyacheslav Chornovil's work on the persecution, trials and imprisonment of many Ukrainian intellectuals in early 1966; 'The White Book' of Aleksandr Ginzburg highlighting the trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuliy Danil and many other materials through the Samizdat publications only. Such publications brought to light both

65. Hollander, n. 24, p. 193.

new writings, unpublishable in the Soviet press, and important but banned world literature.

The Alexander Herzen Foundation in Holland and People's Working Alliance in Germany were the main centres of Samizdat publications. Otherwise, many articles and items could not be published in the USSR. Many examples are available to prove that during Brezhnev's leadership, 'many intellectuals and writers were persecuted, some were exiled and some imprisoned' for expressing opposing opinions.⁶⁶

Reliance on Western Media:

The official nature and role of the Soviet press was unsuccessful in fulfilling demands of readers. The Party and government tried to intensify contacts between press and the people. The journalists, known as 'ideological warriors' and the 'common people' must be known to each other. It was the thinking behind this plan. But the journalists failed—the entire thinking remained untranslated into action, because people were not satisfied with their professional skills and ethics. As a result the tendency of reliance on Western media grew fast in the Soviet society.

For fulfilment of their requirements the Soviet people started relying on informal communication or word of

66. Bakaya, n. 16, p. 72.

mouth network. This informal source provided information about political happenings in detail during the 1940's.⁶⁷

The well-known Soviet media expert Hollander has pointed out the fact that the Soviet system tried to stop the growing attitude of faith towards Western media at any cost. The government jammed foreign radio broadcast and telecast. Several print media outlets were banned. Even the people were not allowed to talk with foreigners and establish personal relations with them. But the government failed in its mission. The Soviet people, any how intensified their contacts with the foreign print and electronic media.

According to facts in pre-Perestroika period, Western print media gained more and more success to hold the minds of people. While on the contrary, success of Western media proved the incapacity and failure of Soviet media.

Expected and Actual Image of the Soviet Press:

In opinion of the Soviet leaders the press was expected to fight against imperialism, racism, exploitation, suppression and state brutality. It was also active in promoting peace, progress and friendship in the country and

67. Hollander, n. 24, p. 181.

abroad. The press was working in the interest of socialism and Marxist-Leninist ideals. That was the thinking also of Lenin. He described the press as the centre and basis of political organization.⁶⁸ It was thought that the Soviet press will serve the interests of the people. Officially the press was expected to act as propagandist, agitator and organizer of socialism.

By contrast the image of the press was not as expected in the Soviet Union. Control of Glavlit, the CPSU and government over the press media it ineffective. The Soviet people as well as foreigners could not believe in the Soviet press because of the one-sided presentation of views and comments. As a result Soviet press had lost its credibility within and abroad. The Western media were of the opinion that there was no freedom of the press in the USSR.⁶⁹

Consequently the Soviet press gradually contributed to develop a tendency of reliance on Western media among the masses. For Soviet people the newspaper Pravda (Truth) became "Truthless" and Izvestia (News) became "Newsless". No truth in Pravda and no news in Izvestia, was the real image of the press of Soviet Union during the pre-Perestroika period.

68. Mehta, n. 42, p. 6.

69. *ibid.*

Summing Up:

Since October Revolution, 1917 to 1984, the Soviet press enjoyed no freedom and worked mainly in the interest of 'official' socialism. As a result popularity of the press went down and gradually it was replaced by the Western media. But after the injection of more freedom to the press through 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost', the clash between official and popular image of the press was inevitable. Consequently, effective steps towards freedom of the press became the demands of time.

CHAPTER 2PERESTROIKA AND GLASNOST: THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS FREEDOM
OF THE PRESS

The credibility and utility of the Press before 'Perestroika' came under strain. The leadership derived a conclusion that more development of socialism, needs more freedom of the Press. Then only objectives of very ideology of Marxism-Leninism could be achieved. This could be possible only through Glasnost (Openness) and Perestroika (Restructuring) of the Soviet **system**.

With the taking over by M.S. Gorbachev as the General Secretary of the CPSU on March 11, 1985, the atmosphere began to change. The concepts of restructuring and openness provided a new life to the Soviet press. The Soviet press during Perestroika and Glasnost (started from March 1985 onwards) got unexpected momentum in proving its utility and relevance. The press followed the idea of pluralism of opinion. As a result it could establish its credibility among western media also. But on the other hand, many official central media outlets lost their places as it had earlier, due to their continued stereo-type reportings.

This chapter proposes to deal with the movement towards freedom of the press during the period of restructuring and openness. Here it may not be out of place to discuss the meanings of Perestroika and Glasnost and shed

light on conditions that made possible their emergence. This discussion will be followed by an examination of the important appointments to key-positions in the Soviet press, publication of many unpublished materials and openness in letters to editors. The chapter will also deal with some of the newly-launched media outlets with their main purposes, role of independent publications and ups and downs in their circulation. It will also point out some incidents of repression against mediamen and media outlets.

Meaning of Perestroika, Glasnost and the Objectives of the Press:

The two Russian words - Perestroika and Glasnost - played a significant role so far as the freedom of the press is concerned. Perestroika literally means restructuring, renewal, rebuilding, reconstruction. And the word Glasnost means openness. But these two words were used in a wider sense with the advent of Gorbachev to power. To eradicate the gap between words and deeds of the Soviet leadership, the April 1985 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee put forward the course aimed at a renewal of socialism.¹

The course of renewal of socialism was put forward

1. M.S. Gorbachev, October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1987), p. 36.

to change the existing system in the society. The purpose was to eliminate visible and invisible hurdles between the government and the people. It was based on cooperation of the people "demanding fundamental changes in the very structure of the established system, in the foundation of society".² The main purpose of the course was to provide a new life to society to establish real socialism, uprooting elements and norms alien to the Leninist ideals. In the opinion of Gorbachev, restructuring was a revolution in "entire way of life".³

Restructuring was a revolution against the command administrative Soviet system. It was for democratization of the Soviet society.⁴ With the help of democratic norms and values, it was felt that ideals and interests of the working people, humanitarian values in the economy, social and political relations and in culture can be strengthened.⁵ It was a suitable way to adopt Lenin's concept of socialism with full theoretical and practical foundations, so that the common people could understand their responsibilities and work

2. Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), SU/0710, March 12, 1990, p. B/1.

3. Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), vol. XLI, No. 36, October 4, 1989, p. 2.

4. Gorbachev, "Report at the Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee on January 27, 1987", CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 4, February 25, 1987, p. 1.

5. Gorbachev, n. 1, p. 42.

accordingly. So Perestroika was in favour of people's dignity and their sense of freedom. There is no place of irresponsibility in restructuring. Therefore, they are exact opposite to each other.⁶

The Soviet society could not protect the achievements of the October Revolution of 1917 without restructuring the system. Only restructuring provides a free ground to the people in which rights can be exercised differently. This is the reason why Gorbachev stated that "there is no alternative to restructuring".⁷ It corrects the past mistakes to create a new social organisation with new work ethics.

It is necessary to mention here the circumstances under which the concept of restructuring emerged. Not only in the field of press but also in every sphere of life, the CPSU and the CPSU-led government had established a dictatorial control over all the organizations and institutions of the society. As a result, shortcomings of the existing system could not be exposed in the print media. In such a situation urgent practical steps were needed to get society out of the crisis. Pravda, rightly wrote in

6. CDSP, n. 3, p. 3.

7. M.S. Gorbachev, "Conviction is the Bulwork of Restructuring" (Speech at the CPSU Central Committee on February 13, 1987), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 7, March 18, 1987, p. 6.

1990 that to uproot the stagnation period "the leadership shouldered a burden whose weight was difficult to determine right way".⁸

During the stagnation period, no institution was empowered to control the CPSU-led government. On many occasions the government rendered several constitutional provisions meaningless; the common people were compelled to tolerate all the indignities heaped on them by the CPSU. Black deeds of the system could not be published in the Soviet press. But publication of such materials was in the interest of the people. In the process of restructuring this exposure could provide real "moral guidelines"⁹ for the future.

But there were some conservatives also who did not want to be unmasked. They opposed the process of restructuring with all possible methods. They tried to create confusion and fear in the minds of people against the results of restructuring. But the restructuring leadership appealed to the CPSU to fight against the conservatives. Gorbachev suggested openly that "the Party should take the lead in revolutionary renewal".¹⁰ The leadership also decided to

8. SWB, n. 2, p. 8/1.

9. Gorbachev, n. 1, p. 27.

10. *ibid.*, pp. 76-7.

neglect the conservatives and highlight the supporters of restructuring. In their opinion, restructuring minded persons must be talked about at full voice.¹¹

Finally restructuring got full support of common people and influenced the system. Evaluating its impact, Pravda, wrote in 1990 that Soviet society is "different from what it was in 1985, and the contrast is much greater than that between the society of 1985 and that of 30-40 years ago".¹²

Restructuring in any sphere of society needs openness. To restructure the Soviet society, the openness was inevitable and unavoidable. In reality both the terms restructuring and openness - are interdependent and inseparable. Openness could not be seen without restructuring the system and the system could not be renewed without exposure of its demerits and shortcomings. This was the reason that the process of restructuring and openness were in action at the same time in the field of the Soviet print media.

Gorbachev was of the view that everything must be done in open day light. In 1986, he stressed the necessity

11. M.S. Gorbachev, CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 14.

12. SWB, n. 2, p. B/2.

of openness in the press "to relax state control over cultural, intellectual, religious and other activities and to render the activities of state officials and organizations more open to public scrutiny through the media, and thereby more responsive to criticism".¹³ Earlier, at the March 1985 plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee, it was decided to expand openness. All the affairs related to the CPSU, state and society must be discussed openly and highlighted in the press. To make it possible, pluralism of opinion must be respected in the Soviet press. This pluralism of opinion does not include glorification of criminal and antisocial elements, irresponsible criticism and abuses of freedom of press. It includes only constructive opinions. Openness, in which pluralism of opinion is unavoidable, is also everything that is done in a constructive form. In the words of Gorbachev, "It is the affirmation of the new and of everything we have achieved".¹⁴

Openness, in the field of press, must be used with rationality to highlight the thinking of the people. It must be used to strengthen restructuring with devotion. Only then the Soviet press may present the real situation

13. The Europa World Year Book 1992, vol. II (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1992), p. 2750.

14. M.S. Gorbachev, CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 28, August 12, 1987, p. 8.

in the society inside as well as outside the USSR. Supporters of openness never favoured irresponsible attitude towards openness. It is totally unacceptable when debates, meetings, the pages of the press and television screens are used for squables, insults and the pinning of labels.¹⁵

Both the terms restructuring and openness are devoted to each other. In the light of their impact on the Soviet press, it is necessary to know the changed objectives of the Soviet Press. The press was expected to be more rational and responsible than before in the interest of people and socialism. It must be frank, truthful, courageous, bold and honest. It must not be one-sided or biased. As Pravda wrote: people need clear-cut political and moral guidelines and "a great deal here depends on the press".¹⁶

It became the duty of the press to respect dignity, knowledge, work and ability of every citizen. It was also expected from the press that "an idler, a moneygrabber, a bureaucrat and a boor will be rebuffed and unmasked".¹⁷ It was also expected from the press to avoid dogmatism, stereotypes and conventionalism, and to propagate Leninist and socialistic ideas rationally.

15. M.S. Gorbachev, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 26, July 27, 1988, p. 26.

16. Pravda, October 31, 1989, CDSP, n. 11, p. 17.

17. Gorbachev, n. 1, p. 46.

The press was also expected to highlight achievements of restructuring regularly, so that conservative forces may be checkmated and rebuffed. People's participation in restructuring and the necessity of restructuring in the press must be highlighted. It is thus clear that the tasks assigned to the Soviet print media during the period of restructuring were very different from those in the earlier period.

Important Appointments in the Press:

To achieve the new objectives of the Soviet press during the period of restructuring, many new editors were appointed in different print media outlets. These appointments were made with the hope that they will work and inspire to the press to work in the light of restructuring and openness, so that the real freedom of the press may be practised. Some of the new appointments must be mentioned here as these were also one of the positive steps towards freedom of the press.

In December 1985, Ivan Mitrofanovich Panov was appointed editor-in-chief of the newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda.¹⁸

18. CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 44, November 27, 1985, p. 32.

Aleksandr Serafimovich Potapov became editor-in-chief of Trud in the same month.¹⁹

In February 1986 many new editors were appointed. Albert Andreyevich Belyayev became editor-in-chief of the newspaper Sovetskaya Kultura. Boris Grigoryevich Vladimirov became editor-in-chief of Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta. Aleksandra Nikiforovich Aksyonov was appointed Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Radio and Television.²⁰

On March 10, 1986, the Novosti News Agency Founder's Council elected V.M. Falin as the new Chairman of the Board.²¹

Aleksandr Alekseyevich Paronov became editor-in-chief of the newspaper Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya in March 1986.²²

On April 18, 1986, a session of the Founders' Council of the All-Union Copyright Agency was held. It elected N.N. Chetverikov as Chairman of the Board of the All-Union Copyright Agency.²³

19. CDSF, vol. XXXVIII, No. 4, February 26, 1986, p. 24.

20. CDSF, vol. XXXVIII, No. 13, April 30, 1986, p. 24.

21. CDSF, vol. XXXVIII, No. 11, April 16, 1986, p. 23.

22. CDSF, vol. XXXVIII, No. 14, May 7, 1986, p. 31.

23. CDSF, vol. XXXVIII, No. 16, May 21, 1986, p. 24.

In April 1986, Ivan Timofeyevich Frolov was appointed as the new editor-in-chief of the magazine Kommunist.²⁴

One new appointment was made in TASS. In December 1988, the USSR Council of Ministers appointed Lionid Petrovich Kravchenako as General Director of the USSR Council of Ministers' Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS).²⁵

Reference may be made about some of the controversial appointments. On October 23, 1989, Viktor Grigoryevich Afanasiev was removed from the post of editor-in-chief of Pravda. Ivan Timofeyevich Frolov, who was editor-in-chief of Kommunist became the new editor-in-chief of Pravda. This appointment raised a controversy. The newly appointed editor-in-chief was reported to be a 'personal choice' of Gorbachev and it was alleged that Gorbachev had tried to interfere in the day-to-day working of Pravda. It was also alleged that the motive behind the new appointment was to strengthen control and widen the influence of Gorbachev in Pravda. At last Gorbachev clarified his stand on the matter. He made it clear that the outgoing editor-in-chief was not his opponent. He praised him for his Party spirit and his political qualities.²⁶

24. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 25, July 23, 1986, p. 23.

25. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 49, January 4, 1989, p. 31.

26. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 13.

Incidentally in the case of Argumenty i Fakty Gorbachev again came in the centre of a controversy. In October 1989, he tried to remove Starkov, editor of the magazine from his post. Interestingly, Starkov refused to resign. In a drastic development, the staff of the magazine publicly supported Starkov and threatened to go on strike in his support. Gorbachev, it is believed, wanted resignation of Starkov for in an opinion poll he had published on the popularity of Soviet People's Deputies, Andrei Sakharov came first, with Gorbachev in fifth place.²⁷

One other controversial event occurred in the literary journal Zvezda. Staff of the journal forced its editor-in-chief Georgy Konstantinovich Kholopov to send application for his retirement. Kholopov, who had been working for three decades, was charged for his anti-restructuring and anti-democratic attitudes. The staff were of the opinion that he must be removed from his post and G. Nikolayev should be appointed the new editor-in-chief. But the editorial office's Party group organizer, V. Kuznetsov informed the staff that the province Party Committee had directed that Mr. Kholopov would remain as editor-in-chief for a few more years, until his 75th birthday. There is

27. Ron Mackay (ed.), Letters to Gorbachev: Life in Russia Through the Postbag of Argumenty i Fakty (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1991), p. 160.

no one to replace him with. And finally Kholopov continued on his post.²⁸

One cannot deny that new appointments, made in the field of Soviet press during restructuring, were of much significance. However, a few appointments displayed the subjective prejudices of the restructuring leadership, victory of the Party over the staff of the press.

Publication of Hitherto Suppressed Works:

The movement towards freedom of the press also provided opportunity for publication of many banned and unpublished materials. In 1988, the Director of Glavlit told in an interview that dozens of previously closed subjects and types of information were now given wide coverage in the press.²⁹

During restructuring and openness many restricted books became available for the Soviet people. V. Solodin, member of the collegium of the Chief Administration for the protection of State Secrets in Print announced that

28. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 37, October 14, 1987, pp. 4-5.

29. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 44, November 30, 1988, p. 2.

by November of 1988 many restricted books could be read, because bans on them were lifted. N. Bukharin, Ye. Preobrazhensky, P. Kropotkin, L. Trotsky, B. Savinkov, P. Milyukov, the first catalogue of V.I. Lenin's works compiled by L. Kamenev, 'The ABCs of Communism' and other writers could be read now easily.³⁰

The newly-launched monthly magazine Izvestia Tsentralnovo Komiteta KPSS (News of the CPSU Central Committee) started publishing unpublished minutes of the meetings, instructions, letters, reports, speeches and memoirs of leaders of the CPSU and the Soviet state. It was also decided to publish works of Ya. M. Sverdlov, F.E. Dzerzhinsky, S.M. Kirov, N.I. Bukharin, M.V. Frunze, M.I. Kalinin, A.I. Rykov and J.V. Stalin. G. Ye. Zinovyev, L.B. Kamenev, A.M. Kollontai, Ye. D. Stasova, V.V. Kuibyshev, G.K. Ordzhonikidze, V.M. Molotov and A.I. Mikoyan were also in the list. The list also included the names of K. Ye. Voroshilov, N.S. Khrushchev, L.I. Brezhnev and many others. The magazine also took decision to publish famous but unknown and unread letters written to the CPSU Central Committee. Such type of letters, written by N.K. Krupskaya, A.V. Lunacharsky, A.M. Gorky, M.A. Sholokhov, M.A. Bulgakov, I.G. Ehrenburg, D. Bedny, N.I. Vavilov, Ye. V. Tarle, P.L. Kapitsa and R. Rolland were to be published. The decision

30. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 14, May 4, 1988, p. 19.

also included the names of L. Feucht Wangner and other figures in Soviet and world culture.³¹

Many materials relating to cultural affairs were published. These materials threw light on the real nature of Glavlit and the Party policy in cultural affairs.³²

'Through the Eyes of My Generation (Meditations on Stalin)', written in 1979 by Konstantin Simonov; Vasili Grossman's 'Life and Destiny', 'By the Right of Memory', a poem of Alexander Tvardovsky and 'Mediations in Gorky' by Elizaveta Drabkina were also published. Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*; 'Children of the Arbat', a novel by Anatoli Rybakov; Dudintsev's novel 'White Robes' and Veronica Polonskaya's memoirs about Mayakovsky were also published during Perestroika. Solzhenitsyn's works were also among the important published materials.³³

The entire discussion of the 1936 Draft constitution could be published in Perestroika period only. The published material disclosed the views of the opponents also.³⁴

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31. Pravda, November 15, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 46, December 14, 1988, p. 23.
32. Michael S. Fox, "Glavlit, Censorship and the Problem of Party Policy in Cultural Affairs, 1922-28", Soviet Studies (Glasgow: University of Glasgow), vol. 44, No.6, 1992, p. 1045.
33. Ravi M. Bakaya, "Democratization: The Role of the Soviet Media", in The Second Revolution: Democratization in the USSR (Indian Centre for Regional Affairs, New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1989), pp. 75-6.
34. Ellen Wimberg, "Socialism, Democratization and Criticism: The Soviet Press and the National Discussion of the 1936 Draft Constitution", in n. 32, p. 313.

Interestingly views of Yu. P. Zhdanov, sex pathologist; N.G. Soloyev, employed in investigative division of Moscow's Chief Administration of Internal Affairs and L.G. Gertisk, head of the Moscow Psychoendo Crinological Centre also got coverage in the press. They disclosed some facts about homosexuality, that is not openly discussed.³⁵

It was the impact of openness and restructuring that many newspapers and magazines began publication of religious materials. Novy Mir, Nauka i religia, Ogonyok, Sovetskaya Rossia and many other conservative media outlets also encouraged publication of such religious materials. In 1989, the official Baptists were able to publish "their membership and one could also compute the figures for the Reform Baptists".³⁶ It was also the impact of openness in the press that in 1936 Irina Ratushinskaya was unconditionally released. In 1983, she was sentenced to imprisonment for writing a poetry of Christian nature in which the suppression of religious liberty was criticized.³⁷

The debates on religious issues were published in Komsomolskaya Pravda also. It carried an article by

35. F. Podkolodny, "The Sodmite Sin", Meditsinskaya Gazeta, September 2, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 42, November 16, 1988, p. 10.

36. Michale Bourdeaux, Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 128.

37. Ibid., p. 28.

philosopher I. Kryvelev. In the article V. Bykov, V. Astafyev, Aitmatov and Ye. Pylilo were criticized for their religious articles.³⁸

During the period of openness the press was also allowed to publish information regarding forced labour camps during World War II. Such materials uncovered the oppressions made by the government in the camps.³⁹

Only during openness the press could cover the famous secret report on the 'Cult of Personality and its Consequences' presented at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, 1956. In his report Khrushchev had exposed many shortcomings of the Stalinist rule. Moscow News published another article criticising Stalin. In the article 'Stalin in 1939' Prof. V. Dashichev criticized Stalin's role in Soviet foreign policy during pre-war period. This article provoked a heated debate among mediemen on the issues raised in it.

The Soviet press also carried articles, features, reports and photographs related to the Chernobyl accident and other natural disasters, internal conflicts, ethnic and

38. I. Kryvelev, "Flirting With God", Komsomolskaya Pravda, July 30, 1986, CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 47, December 26, 1986, p. 4.

39. Edwin Bacon, "Glasnost and the Gulag: New Information on Soviet Forced Labour Around World War II", Soviet Studies, (Glasgow: University of Glasgow), vol. 44, No. 6, 1992, p. 1069.

nationality problems. It openly covered news and views relating to the CPSU, government and the Soviet system. Election campaigns, other political activities and conditions of the institutions set up to care for people, e.g., hospitals, psychiatric clinics etc., were given much coverage in the press. The charges of corruption at every level, if any, were aired freely in the press, e.g., charges of corruption against Churbanov, Brezhnev's son-in-law and Yegor Ligachev, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee etc. In this manner, the Soviet press published several unpublished materials and covered all the important events occurred before and during the period of restructuring and openness. Undoubtedly, all these changes in the field of freedom of the press were the result of Glasnost (openness).

Letters to Editors:

In such an open and debatable environment, 'Letters to Editors' also played a significant role in the direction of freedom of the press. Those columns of the newspapers and magazines acquired a new importance. Thousands of letters were received everyday in the editorial offices. These letters were related to housing, pensions, privilege, ceremony, the war, shortages, charity, sex, morality and bureaucracy. Issues of nationality, culture, travel, the past, environment, health, Chernobyl and nuclear weapons were also discussed in the letters. Letters also dealt

with issues of inadequacies, problems and solutions, aids and sexual diseases, the disabled, economy, agriculture, politics and military etc. Keeping in mind the content of the letters, Vladislav Starkov, editor-in-chief, Argumenty i Fakty wrote in November 1990 that readers in their letters show how Russians act in their everyday life, how they bring up their children. He further wrote that readers also show what their major worries are "housing problems, lack of money, malnutrition, inadequate education, conscription and the army, and sometimes the K.G.B. These problems are projected on to every person's life".⁴⁰

New critical letters in the newspapers, even in Izvestia, the government newspaper, could be seen. Yu. Orlik, deputy editor, letters department of Izvestia was of the opinion that openness must be practised in publishing various letters of the readers. Those letters were selected very honestly. Even anti-Soviet and anti-communist views projected in the letters were published.⁴¹ One reader of Izvestia criticising the newspaper wanted to know, what is done with dismissed officials, where are they transferred etc. He wrote that "usually nothing is said on that point, but it should be".⁴² In a letter 'I want to help my Party' the

40. Starkov, n. 27, p. XII.

41. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 3, February 15, 1989, p. 28.

42. CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 13, April 24, 1985, p. 1.

reader suggested a nationwide discussion of major issues prior to Party plenums. In an other letter 'Affirming the Spirit of Leninism' the reader asked that all Party proceedings should be made public. As a result of openness, both the letters were published in Izvestia.⁴³

Pravda, the Party newspaper, in November 1987, published an article 'The People will Tell the Truth'. More than 200 readers commented on the article. Some of them supported exposing Stalinism and others were of the view that condemnation of past is harmful.⁴⁴

On March 13, 1988, a letter 'I cannot Forgo Principles' written by Nina Andreyeva, was published in Sovetskaya Rossia. In the letter the writer had criticized the processes of democratization, restructuring and openness without any hesitation.⁴⁵ Pravda called the letter 'the anti-restructuring manifesto'.

Interestingly a letter 'More Openness, More Democracy, More Socialism', written by 38 writers was published in Pravda on April 19, 1988. It was a comment on the controversial letter of Nina Andreyeva. The writers expressed their full support to the restructuring, in the letter.

43. Valery Yelkin, "I Want to Help My Party", Izvestia, May 11, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 19, June 8, 1988, p. 9.

44. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 37, October 14, 1987, p. 2.

45. Nina Andreyeva, "I cannot Forgo Principles", Sovetskaya Rossia, March 13, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 13, April 27, 1988, p. 1.

Meanwhile Argumenty i Fakty was also publishing many letters from readers. It had become "the postbag of Perestroika".⁴⁶ Some workers at the Moscow Khrunichev plant wanted to know about secrets of K.G.B., and they were answered by the K.G.B. officials. One reader wanted to know some recent information on suicide rates. Information regarding it provided by USSR State Statistics Committee were published.

One reader of Izvestia wanted to know the reason behind shortage of cotton in dispensaries when the USSR was one of the biggest cotton producers. He was answered by L. Relin, Vice-Chairman of the main department for the cotton industry. Many other letters were also published in Argumenty i Fakty opposing beauty-contest, prostitution, women who display themselves naked on T.V., films full of sex, violence and murders, three and a half million agricultural supervisors whose hands never touch the earth, lack of condoms and also low quality of home-produced condoms etc.

In a letter Gorbachev was advised to invite Margret Thatcher to be appointed Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, so that the economic situation of the country may be improved.⁴⁷

46. Mackay, n. 27, p. 3.

47. *ibid.*, p. 118.

In many letters from readers, the Ogonyok editorial board was asked to clarify its right regarding publication of criticism. In March 1988, Vitaly Korotich of Ogonyok answered and stated that whatever and whoever is criticized in the magazine, that is "by right of democracy".⁴⁸

The print media established a good relationship with its readers through their letters to editors. Publication of various types of letters including anti-socialist letters, is the evidence of progress towards freedom of the press. As a result, in the words of Starkov, "the days of shadow-writing - the messages between the lines - have finally gone in the USSR".⁴⁹

Newly Launched Publications:

Since 1985 and onwards, the changed political environment paved the way to launch many new media outlets. This was also one of the positive signals towards freedom of the press. Some of them must be mentioned here.

On January 7, 1985, a new publication NTR: Problemy i Reshenia (The Scientific and Technological Revolution: Problems and Solutions) appeared. The main purpose of the publication was to publicize the latest achievements of

48. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 22, June 29, 1988, p. 24.

49. Mackay, n. 27, p. 161.

Soviet and foreign science and engineering. It was also to encourage exchange of views in these fields through organising seminars and symposiums etc.⁵⁰

A new magazine, Trezvost i Kultura (Sobriety and Culture) was planned to be published from January 1986. It was stated by Yu. Ovchinnikov, Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences and Chairman of the Temperance Society's Organising Committee. He said that the magazine will be a socio-political monthly and publish popular science materials.⁵¹

The Ogonyok (Flame) mapped out to publish readers' favourite authors. Vitaly Korotich Alekseyevich, editor-in-chief of the magazine argued that the magazine will improve its content keeping in mind the requirements of the readers. The readers' letters, sketches on family, daily life, legal themes and children's page will be provided sufficient place in the magazine. He further assured that a new column 'On Read and Unread Books' will be introduced in Ogonyok.⁵²

The Novy Mir also decided to change its content. Sergei Pavlovich Zalygin, editor of the magazine pointed out

50. CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 2, February 6, 1985, p. 19.

51. CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 35, September 25, 1985, p. 9.

52. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 31, September 3, 1986, p. 22.

that the magazine was ready to translate the concept of openness in itself. With this view it was decided to publish more public affairs, articles and material on criticism, science and other items. Zalygin observed about the result of the planned changes that "many magazines will publish new pieces during this time, and readers will decide which are the most interesting".⁵³

In December 1987, S. Losev, General Director of TASS referred to a new socio-political weekly. He said that the weekly Ekho Planety (Echo from the Planet) will start at the end of March 1988. It will be jointly published by TASS and the USSR Journalists' Union. The main feature of the weekly will be its publication entirely by electronic means, for the first time in the Soviet Union.⁵⁴

One unofficial publication Protestant appeared in November 1988. It was launched by people affiliated to the official union (AUCECB). It encourages Baptist communists to be aware of and to exploit all the new opportunities.⁵⁵ Taking advantages of openness it publishes many articles based on the concept of pluralism of opinion.

53. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 46, December 17, 1986, p. 14.

54. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 50, January 13, 1988, p. 31.

55. Bourdeaux, n. 36, p. 116.

A new newspaper Pravitelstvenny Vestnik was started in January 1989. Its main purpose was to keep the people informed regularly about the activities related to government, the Party and the society. N. Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers hoped that the newspaper would provide a platform to people, where they could put their suggestions and ideas about these activities. It was also to keep informed the officials about the feelings and ideas of the common people towards them. Many new writers and intellectuals were to be associated with that publication, so that a new atmosphere of openness and pluralism of opinion could be felt. The publication was to fight against conservatism, bureaucratic distortions and other evils of the society. Governmental documents and decisions were also to be published in the newspaper. It was decided to publish such governmental documents with extensive commentaries. N. Ryzhkov further stated that it would provide an opportunity for readers to become acquainted with interesting materials "from government archives and with instructive events in our country's history and economic development".⁵⁶

Another new monthly magazine Izvestia Tsentralnovo Komiteta KPSS (News of the CPSU Central Committee) also appeared in January 1989. It decided to publish important unpublished materials related to the Party, government and

56. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 1, February 1, 1989, p. 31.

the Soviet system. The main aim of the magazine was to publish CPSU documents—drafts of resolutions, reports, discussions and decisions of the Party bodies and Central Committee plenary sessions. These materials were published in official form and progress in restructuring was also highlighted.⁵⁷

Yet another publication Digest 24 Hours was launched by the Leningrad Organization of the USSR Journalists' Union from February 12, 1989. It is a collection of the selected materials, published in different magazines and newspapers.⁵⁸ It covers the events of the whole day. The first issue included the American magazine Fortune's view of the USSR economy, the secret communications between J.F. Kennedy and N. Khrushchev. It also carried a write up on the fate of Stalin's children among other interesting materials.

An independent publication Dostluk began in July 1989. It is a weekly supplement to newspaper Krymskaya Pravda in Crimean Tatar language fulfilling a longstanding demand of the people that a newspaper must be in their native language. The main purpose of the weekly supplement is to highlight literature and culture of the Crimean Tatars. It will also expose the Stalinist brutality in the region. About uniqueness

57. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 46, December 14, 1988, p. 23.

58. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 6, March 8, 1989, p. 28.

of the weekly the editor stated, "There is no experience in publishing such supplement in a national language: Dostluk is a kind of pioneer".⁵⁹

In August 1989, the CPSU Central Committee adopted a resolution titled 'On Certain Question of Restructuring the Central Party Press'.⁶⁰ According to it, a new newspaper Rabochaya Tribuna (Workers' Tribune) was to be launched in 1990. The main objective, of the newspaper, mentioned in the resolution, was to carry articles related to workers. To strengthen the struggle of the workers in favour of restructuring, their contributions and status in the Soviet society were also to be highlighted.

The resolution stated that the CPSU Central Committee weekly Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta will become a Central Committee mass circulation weekly called Ekonomika i zhizn (Economics and Life). The socio-economic policies of the Party and government will be covered with their impact in the field of economy. It was also decided to cover in the weekly entire economic activities and life of the people.

The resolution pointed out that the CPSU Central Committee newspapers Sovetskaya Kultura and Uchitelskaya Gazeta would become weekly publications. They will improve

59. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 27, August 2, 1989, p. 27.

60. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 32, September 6, 1989, p. 32.

the analytical quality and thematic content of the issues and avoid duplication of information.

To make the Party journals more useful than before, it was decided to turn them into mass periodicals. Through it the common people could read those journals easily. To serve the purpose, it was also decided to uplift theoretical and professional level of the journals.

The resolution also stated to launch a new CPSU Central Committee journal Dialog in 1990. The journal will cover multitude political life with pluralism of opinion. It also stated to cover deideologization of the Soviet system and nationwide discussion on all important issues. Among other important issues, the significant developments in the field of science, education and culture etc., were also to be highlighted in Dialog.

The resolution instructed the editorial staff of the journal Kommunist to work as the CPSU Central Committee's theoretical and political organ. It was also urged to cover new politico-socio-economic environment of the country.

The resolution further pointed out that the content of the journal Partiinaya Zhizn will be reshaped. It will incline to highlight affairs related to reshaping of the Party and democratization of intra-Party relations. The role of the CPSU as the political and intellectual vanguard of the society were also to be highlighted in it.

A thirty two pages fortnightly, Literary Gazette International began its publication in November 1989. For it a joint enterprise was set up with the American Company ANSAT.⁶¹ The main aim of the publication was to provide relevant materials at international level to the English-reading intelligentsia. This English-language Literaturnaya Gazeta was published with advertisements, so that the cost of production may be recovered easily.

The Yuridicheskaya Literatura Publishing House launched an unique collection of documents International Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms before March 1990. It published original texts of major international agreements regarding the protection of general human rights including rights of women and children. It also carried information on human rights during the war period including international rules related to war prisoners, war victims as mentioned in Geneva Conventions and the 1977 additional protocols to them.⁶²

A fortnightly Izbiratel (Voter) began in 1990. In the beginning, it was published in Kazakh and Russian, but soon it came in English too. The twelve pages coloured magazine was planned to be circulated throughout the USSR

61. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 46, December 13, 1989, p. 32.

62. SWB, SU/0669, January 23, 1990, p. A1/9.

and abroad. It was started by Nevada Semipalatinsk movement in Alma-Ata, to promote struggle for a ban on chemical weapons' tests and for environmental protection.⁶³

In the field of new publications it seems necessary to mention here the decisions of the bureau of the Oblast and city CPSU Committees of Leningrad. In the light of decisions, taken on April 17, 1990, Leningradskaya Pravda became a purely Party newspaper, the organ of the oblast and city Party committees. Earlier it was the organ of the Oblast and city CPSU Committees, and the oblast and city Soviets of People's Deputies.

But the weekly Leningradsky Rabochiy remained a publication of the oblast and Party committee.

The decision made it clear that Vecherniy Leningrad will not be published jointly. The CPSU city committee handed the newspaper over to the Leningrad city Soviet.

The Smena became the organ of the Leningrad Oblast Komsomol Organization. It could not remain the organ of the Leningrad oblast and city Komsomol committees.

It was also decided to start publication of two new newspapers. One will be published by the Oblast Soviet of People's Deputies and other by the trade union.

63. SWB, SU/0702, March 2, 1990, p. B/4.

The decisions were taken after hearing a report on the change in the structure of the Leningrad press and other mass media, at a joint plenum of the oblast and city CPSU committees.⁶⁴ This was the reason that the decisions could bring about several changes.

The USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs decided to make available the socio-political and methodological journal Sovetskaya Militia (Soviet Police) to the general people. According to decision taken in June 1989, now every citizen is allowed to subscribe it without prior permission of the police. It deals with law and order situation promoting fight against crimes. Many features on police administration and investigative crime reports are also published in it.⁶⁵

Finally, under the changed political and social environment, the Soviet print media successfully reshaped itself and launched so many new media outlets, The quality of content in the existing media outlets was also improved keeping in mind the movement towards freedom of the press.

64. SWB, SU/0743, April 20, 1990, p. B/4.

65. CDSP, n. 59, p. 27.

Role of Independent Press:

Notwithstanding the adoption of the concept of pluralism of opinion, to implement the ideas of restructuring and openness in the field of press, readers were not fully satisfied with the government media outlets. Official newspapers and magazines were not providing space to anti-Soviet and anti-communist writers. So, the independent publications fulfilled this requirement.

Glasnost one of the well-known unofficial publications was publishing opinions of many dissidents. As a result, it was alleged that Glasnost was a dissident publication. But editor of the publication, S.I. Grigoryants rejected this allegation and assured that "this was not a dissident publication. We want our articles to be objective".⁶⁶ Such unofficial publications as Demokraticeskaya Oppozitsia (Democratic Opposition) and Novodvorskaya were publishing derogatory remarks too. Not only these two publications but also many other publications including Press-byulleten nezavisimovo Sibirskovo informatsionnovo agentstva (Press Bulletin of the Independent Siberian News Agency) and Svobodnoye Slovo (Free Speech) etc. continued to publish anti-Soviet lines. They used to provoke the common people to

66. N. Petrov and R. Topolev, Vechernaya Moskva, August 7, 1987, CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 37, October 14, 1987, pp. 6-7.

reject Lenin and other Soviet leaders, Soviet system, the CPSU and all other governmental institutions. Their pages were full of anti-national and anti-socialist materials on a large scale. The Western media persons were very prompt in highlighting those materials. Yury Zhukov of Pravda pointed out this fact in bold words that "unfriendly foreign news media gladly make use of such publications".⁶⁷

It may not be inaccurate to say that independent publications got popularity due to one sidedness of official publications. With the publication of unofficial individual media outlets, the era of illegal underground publications ended for ever. Michael Bourdeaux rightly exclaimed, "what do the words 'official' and 'unofficial' mean in the world of Soviet publishing at present". He further said, "The days of sharp division between official (heavily censored) and samizdat (uncensored) are gone, possibly for ever".⁶⁸

Circulation of Media Outlets:

With the changed mood of the people, the tastes were also changed. This fact came to light in November 1989 that "subscriptions to most central newspapers and many

67. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 34, September 21, 1988, p. 14.

68. Bourdeaux, n. 36, p. 116.

magazines have fallen".⁶⁹

Readers wanted to know the real facts and information in the media outlets. They wanted to see both - achievements as well as failures of restructuring. They disliked one sided reporting. Most of the central newspapers could not fulfil demands of readers and their subscriptions fell down. Pravda faced a loss of more than 3 million subscribers in 1990. It tried "to restore readers' confidence, increase the paper's prestige and raise the quality of its work to the level that restructuring requires".⁷⁰ It also invited suggestions from its readers.

On the contrary, Semya (Family) got a booming success. It consisted materials on family life, love, children etc. As a result its subscription increased more than two hundred per cent.

The main reason behind these ups and downs regarding subscriptions, was concerned with gap between tendencies of official and independent publications. Open discussion and debates over the Party platforms and at governmental levels were provided sufficient place in the individual publications in comparison to official publications. This fact naturally affected the subscriptions of the media outlets.

69. Moskovskiy e Novosti, No. 47, November 19, 1989, CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 46, December 13, 1989, p. 38.

70. ibid.

To understand the subscription statistics of media outlets, the first chart shows (See Table - 1) increase in their circulation in 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 gradually. This was the proof that the press could establish its credibility in the society.

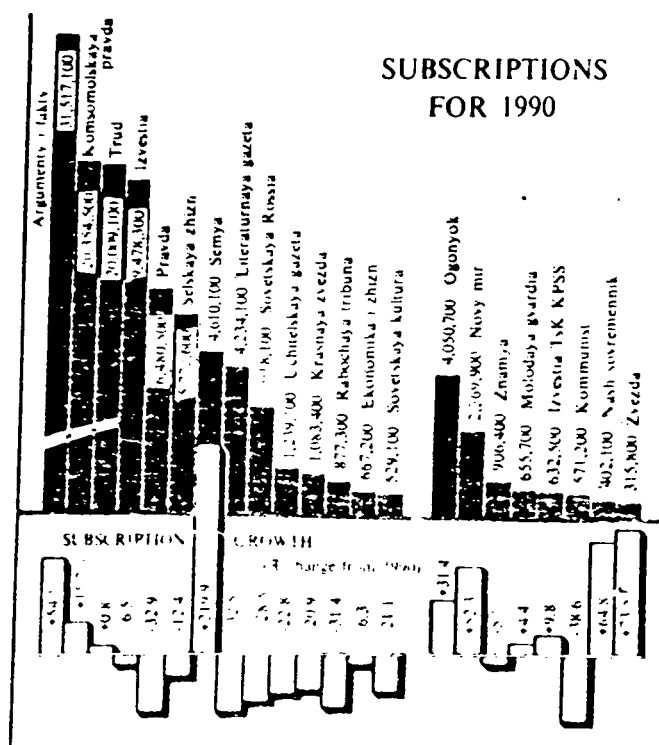
Table - 1⁷¹

	1986	1987	1988	1989
Number of Daily and Non-Daily Newspapers	8,515	8,532	8,622	723 (Only Daily Newspapers)
Daily Circulation (Million copies)	198.1	207.9	217.4	134.0
Periodicals	5,275	5,295	5,413	

71. The Europa World Year Book 1992, Vol. II (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1992), p. 2750.

The second chart (See Table - II)⁷² deals with important comparative subscriptions to important central newspapers and magazines. These media outlets lost their popularity in 1990 as the chart shows. Subsequently, other magazines and newspapers got more success than before. An entirely new weekly Argumenty i Fakty now tops the list because of its investigative journalism.⁷³

TABLE - II



72. Moskovskiy Novosti, n. 69, p. 38.

73. Bakaya, n. 33, p. 79.

Undoubtedly, every media outlet which fulfilled requirements of restructuring, openness and demands of readers, found increase in its subscribers. Other media outlets, most of the central newspapers and magazines discovered that their subscriptions fell down, due to their biased tendencies.

Atrocities on Print Media:

Certainly the period of democratic change, paved by the restructuring and openness of Soviet system, was full of paradox. Where on the one hand society as well as the press were breathing the fresh air of freedom, on the other hand many evidences came to surface proving atrocities on media men from different corners of the system.

One news about suppressing a journalist appeared on January 4, 1987. V. Berkhin, head of the correspondents' office of the magazine Sovetsky Shakhtyor (Soviet Minor) was accused of hooliganism by Voroshilovgrad Province law-enforcement agencies. As a result, from July 18 to 31 in 1986, he was under arrest.⁷⁴

74. M. Odinets and M. Poltoranin, Pravda, January 4, 1987, CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 1, February 4, 1987, p. 1.

But after investigation, the arrest was found illegal. A brigade of jurists from Moscow found the allegations baseless. The journalist was permitted to return to his duties. The Ukraine Republic Prosecutor's office made an official apology to the journalist. A. Dichenko, Director for the Ukraine Republic State Security Committee's Administration (for Voroshilovgrad Province) was removed from his post. The Security Committee took disciplinary action against other staff members who were found involved in the illegal arrest of the journalist.

This incident proved that the suppression of the journalist was not too easy. But in August 1987, another incident took place. This time two writers Ogorodnikov and Lev Timofeyev were attacked in an article.⁷⁵ They were accused of exposing past shortcomings of the communist reign. Editor of the magazine Glasnost S.I. Grigoryants was accused of publishing articles, written by dissidents. In the articles, the editor was proved a corrupt man.

A different kind of event occurred in July 1988. Ye. Dodolev, in his article 'The Young Heirs' levelled some allegations against Anatoly Andreyevich Kirilenko. The allegations, published in Nedelya, after the investigation, were found baseless and slanderous in nature. As a result,

75. Petrov and Topolev, n. 66, pp. 6-7.

the author of the article was imposed financial and administrative penalties. The editorial board extended its sincere apologies to Kirilenko.

Later on, the Bureau of the All-Union Council on Professional Ethics and Law - a council of the USSR Journalists' Union also criticized Ye. Dodolev. It praised editorial board of Nedelya for recognizing the mistake and publishing a prompt apology.⁷⁶

The suppression was also initiated Marxist journalists by the followers of restructuring. On October 23, 1989, M. Ya. Korolyov pointed out this situation and said, "Today it is not always safe for a principled Party journalist to appear on our political prairies".⁷⁷ He further said that such journalists may be attacked from any unexpected side. Many unofficials were organising the picketing of editorial offices. They were organising marches against any article they did not like. Some People's Deputies were also found involved in threatening the journalists for their expulsion.

During discussion on draft law on the press and other news media, on November 24, 1989, Deputy Ye. A. Yevtushenko also put some examples of suppressing the journalists.

76. Ye. Dodolev, "The Young Heirs", Nedelya, July 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 37, October 12, 1988, p. 21.

77. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 14.

He discussed about the accredited Soviet photo correspondents Shurikhina of Pravda and Inyakin of Izvestia.⁷⁸ Both the journalists were escorted out of the hall, where the discussion, mentioned above, was going on. Administrative removal of Literaturanaya Rossia editor Kolosov and constant pressure on the television programmes 'View' (Vzglyad) and '600 Seconds' (600 Sekund), he mentioned.

A. Yevtushenko further mentioned the attempts to remove Argumenty i Fakty editor Starkov, Averin, the editor of Knizhonye Obozreniye (Book Review); Puchkov, the editor of the Noginsk City Newspapers and many other provincial and district journalists.

Later on, many Deputies, at the Moldavian Supreme Soviet sitting on April 19, 1990, demanded replacement of a journalist.⁷⁹ They were of the opinion that Central T.V.'s own correspondent Ivan Petkov should be replaced by a local T.V. journalist. Petkov was accused of biased and misleading reporting. When Petkov reached there, he was physically attacked by a group of furious youths.

During openness many newspapers and magazines were suppressed. In 1988, the Ministry of Communications restricted subscription to several popular newspapers and journals.

78. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 48, December 27, 1989, p. 10.

79. SWB, SU/0751, April 30, 1990, p. B/5.

Most of them were considered pro-restructuring publications, e.g. Ogonyok, Znamya, Novi Mir, Literaturnaya Gazeta, and Druzhba Narodov, etc. As a result, the general public began writing letters to different offices, newspapers and magazines. A scene of public-protests could be seen everywhere. But instepe of this, "it took more than two months' hard struggle to get the restrictions lifted".⁸⁰

The popular monthly Novy Mir was compelled to publish only two issues in the first half of 1990.⁸¹ It was to publish complete works of Solzhenitsyn. A million extra subscribers were eager to read these materials. But the magazine found shortage of news print. It is to be noted that paper was allocated by the state. It was interpreted as government-effort to stop Novy Mir from publishing the complete works of Solzhenitsyn.

On the basis of above-mentioned facts, it is clear that during Perestroika period, the journalists as well as Soviet press could not function freely. They had to face opposition and difficulties from various sides.

80. Tatyana Zaslavskaya, The Second Socialist Revolution: An Alternative Soviet Strategy, Translated from Russian by Susan M. Davies and Jenny Warren (London: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd., 1990), p. 8.

81. Mackay, n. 27, p. 2.

Summing Up:

Despite the atrocities on mediamen, the Soviet press enjoyed much freedom during restructuring and openness. The CPSU and the government relaxed their control over the press. Gradually the media outlets became bold enough and tried to fulfil all the requirements of readers under the changed mood of system. Undoubtedly, these developments contributed towards freedom of the press.

This movement towards freedom of the press got relative success in the Soviet society due to Perestroika leadership. This positive role of Perestroika leadership is to be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER - 3

PERESTROIKA LEADERSHIP AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

With the arrival of Gorbachev to power, a heated debate began over freedom of the press. On the one side, the Soviet press was actively widening and strengthening the task of restructuring and openness. Changes brought in the print media have already been discussed in the preceding chapter. On the other side, a continuous clash between the Perestroika leadership and the conservatives could be seen everywhere in the Soviet Union. The conservatives put their arguments against the course of restructuring at every level opposing the concept of pluralism of opinion in the press. But the Perestroika leadership stood its ground. The main emphasis of this chapter will be on some basic issues of differences between the pro and anti-restructuring leadership.

The debates between the two forces and the course of struggle between them proceeded in a zigzag way. The year 1989 may be regarded as the most crucial year in this struggle. In 1990 the debate was mainly centralized on the provisions of the draft Press law.

1985

In 1985, the Perestroika leadership did not face any effective opposition of the conservatives. On January 18,

A. Druzhenko, staff editor for Law and Ethics stressed the necessity of openness in the Soviet press. He underlined that an informed person is a strong person. Emphasizing his view, he further explained that information is order; misinformation is chaos.¹

After his election as General Secretary of the CPSU on March 11, 1985, Gorbachev stressed the need of restructuring the press and bringing openness in it through every possible step. In an interview to French Television, he spoke in clear words that the press must cover human rights issues and debates related to it. He himself tackled openly about scientist Sakharov, in an interview to French newspaper L' Humanite.² The well-known Russian scientist was one of the famous dissidents.

On November 24, 1985, an article entitled, 'Being Well Informed' appeared in the press. Valery Kondakov of Sovetskaya Rossia, author of the article, underlined the necessity of restructuring in the field of 'administration' so that demands of the readers may be fulfilled.³

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1. The Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), vol. XXXVII, No. 3, February 13, 1985, p. 18.
 2. Michael Bourdeaux, Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 23.
 3. Valery Kondakov, "Being Well Informed", Sovetskaya Rossia, November 24, 1985, CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 49, January 1, 1986, p. 6.

1986

The Perestroika leadership faced some effective opposition from the conservative forces in 1986. The 8th USSR Writers' Congress, held in June 1986, provided a good opportunity for open discussion. G.M. Markov, First Secretary of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union laid stress on bringing qualitative changes in the Soviet press. He suggested that the print media outlets reconstitute their editorial boards to include only real writers and excluding ornamental writers. Voznesensky suggested publication of works of poet Boris Pasternak and writer Anna Akhmatova. Feliks Kuznetsov suggested restructuring the psychology of literary officials at first. Sergei Zalygin advised learning classic Russian literature. Sergei Mikhalkov defended recently published Soviet literature. Yegor Isayev emphasised the need for hard-hitting criticism. Many other literary leaders also favoured openness in the press.

But on the other hand, there were some conservatives also. Boris Mazhayev alleged that editor-in-chief of Novy Mir did not publish his novel 'Peasant Men and Women', due to ideological differences. But the editor-in-chief Vladimir Vasilyevich Karpov clarified the fact and said that the Novy Mir editors had followed the democratic way, so far as the said novel was concerned. He also warned against mixing

up democracy and demagoguery.⁴ Y.M. Mishin, First Secretary of the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League (YCL) Central Committee opposed the concept of restructuring and stressed that the "time needs old style fighters for Party ideals".⁵

Aleksandr Prokhanov stated that patriots of the Soviet society favoured the idea of a strong state, the idea of the socialist homeland. He demanded to fulfil their will. Anatoly Ivanov was of the opinion that writers should write about communists. Writing about communists, should be the purpose of the publications.⁶

But, finally the Perestroika leadership dominated the debate. Dannil Grain, Vladimir Beekman, Olzhas Suleimenov, Yekaterina Shevelyova, Boris Oleinik, Janis Peters, Yury Mushketik, Kerim Kurbannepesov and many others strongly supported restructuring of the press and openness in the media outlets. Pointing out the anti-restructuring tendencies of conservatives, Olzhas Suleimenov suspected that ideological bureaucrats will not allow the writers to write the truth. He questioned the silence on events of the thirties. He

4. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 29, August 20, 1986, p. 7.

5. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 36, October 8, 1986, p. 15.

6. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 37, October 15, 1986, p. 11.

asked, "Why we do not write candidly about the 1930s - about collectivization, for example?".⁷

On October 1, 1986, Literaturnaya Gazeta published a dialogue between Streshnev and Shirokov. Shirokov, a newly elected Secretary of the Province Party Committee favoured openness in the press. He stated, "If you uncover a problem then you have begun to solve it. If you have covered up a problem, you have refused to solve it, you are afraid to even think about it".⁸ Favouring the concept of restructuring he gave an example of Lenin and said, "Lenin himself did not stand still, but added new ideas based on his experiences".⁹ He assured that "the time of fear has passed. The time for action has arrived".¹⁰ The interesting aspect of the published dialogue was, views expressed by Streshnev. Being an old Party official he favoured renewal of the press and hoped that "the new style will triumph immediately".¹¹

But reputed philosopher I. Kryvelev never favoured reshaping and openness in the field of Soviet Press. To him, it was anti-Soviet concept. He expressed his views

7. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 33, September 17, 1986, p. 10.

8. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 40, November 5, 1986, p. 3.

9. *ibid.*, p. 4.

10. *ibid.*, p. 5.

11. *ibid.*, p. 4.

in his article 'Flirting with God', published on July 30, 1986. He criticized V. Bykov, V. Astafyev, Aitmatov and Ye. Pylio for their articles on religious issues. He called them anti-Soviet articles.¹²

But in December 1986, the restructuring leadership again won the battle. On 3rd and 4th December, the well-known literary critic V. Lakshin praised the publication of some good novels in Izvestia. In his view, those novels could not be published during pre-restructuring period. His ideas were published in his article 'Novels That Are Being Debated' in Izvestia.¹³

Again on December 11, S.V. Mikhalkov favoured writing the truth. In his report at the Sixth Congress of the Russian Republic Writers, he appealed to the writers to be bold.¹⁴

1987

In 1987, the conservatives became more confident and bold in expressing their views against freedom of the press than earlier. Consequently, the Perestroika leadership also continued its struggle against them with devotion and commitment.

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12. I. Kryvelov, "Flirting With God", Komsomolskaya Pravda, July 30, 1986, CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No.47, December 24, 1986, p.4.
13. V. Lakshin, "Novels That Are Being Debated", Izvestia, December 3-4, 1986, CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No.51, January 21, 1987, p. 7.
14. S.V. Mikhalkov, "Report at the 6th Congress of Russian Republic Writers", CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No.52, January 28, 1987.

On February 13, 1987, Gorbachev, speaking under the title, "Conviction is the bulwark of restructuring", at the CPSU Central Committee, called upon the mediamen to spread the new wind of openness everywhere. He urged that there should be no forgotten names and blank space in history or literature. He pointed out some difficulties also in the way of restructuring. There are opponents of restructuring, who do not know to adjust in the changed atmosphere, he pointed out. He assured the mediamen that the Central Committee was convinced that journalists would work for restructuring steadfastly and tirelessly.¹⁵

Aleksandr Vasinsky of Izvestia wrote on February 14, "Is it easy to be democratic?". He pleaded that the journalists must tolerate and respect varying opinions, views and ideas.¹⁶

But Ye. K. Ligachev, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the Central Committee was of a different opinion. He met with the creative personnel of the television centre in Ostankino on February 23, 1987. He warned against the bourgeois

15. M.S. Gorbachev, "Conviction is the Bulwark of Restructuring" (Speech at the CPSU Central Committee, February 13, 1987), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 7, March 18, 1987, p. 8.

16. Aleksandr Vasinsky, "Is it easy to be Democratic?", Izvestia, February 14, 1987, CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 7, March 18, 1987, p. 9.

propaganda behind the mask of openness and restructuring. He revealed that it has brought up substantial forces to undermine Soviet People's faith in the rightness of the Communist Party's course and the reality of the restructuring that came under way on a broad scale. He appealed to the mediamen to expose it.¹⁷

In February 1987, speaking at a meeting with the Latvian Republic's Party, Soviet and Economic Aktivists at a meeting with the Estonian Republic's Party, Soviet and Economic Aktivists and also at the 18th Congress of USSR Trade Unions on February 25, 1987, Gorbachev stressed the need of openness and democratization. On February 25, speaking on the topic, "Restructuring is a vital affair of the people", he emphasized that democracy is order and discipline of high level.¹⁸

Further in February 1987, Yu. Makhrin questioned the utility of existing press centres of ministries and departments. In his opinion, "these eat up large amounts of public money. It is a totally unwanted waste".¹⁹ In fact, he was supporting restructuring of the press.

17. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 7, March 18, 1987, p. 8.

18. M.S. Gorbachev, "Restructuring is a Vital Affair of the People" (Speech at the 18th Congress of the USSR Trade Unions, February 25, 1987), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 8, March 25, 1987, p. 8.

19. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 9, April 1, 1987, p. 11.

Sergei Zalygin, editor-in-chief of Novy Mir published several unpublished materials. He believed in action, not in thought only in the field of freedom of the press.

However, some leaders on March 17, 1987, expressed different views. Addressing a meeting of the Secretariat of the Board of the Russian Republic Writers' Union, they did not support misuse of openness in the press. S. Mikhalkov, Chairman of the Board and V. Dementyev, Secretary of the Board praised the opinion of Ligachev. Ligachev was of the view that press and writers should turn to classic Soviet literature and highlight their richness. He also objected to unlimited criticism. Stressing the point of criticism, S. Mikhalkov said, "Criticism sometimes reaches a point at which we read in the press words of a very insulting nature directed at people who have done a good deal for the Soviet regime".²⁰ He asked to avoid it.

Meanwhile, at the same meeting N. Shundik, A. Keshokov, P. Proskurin, Yu. Bondarev, M. Alekseyev, F. Chuyev and S. Borzunov spoke in favour of more openness in the writings.

The famous international commentator M. Vulfan, on June 18, 1987, wrote in Sovetskaya Latvia about freedom

20. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 21, June 24, 1987, p. 8.

of the press. He opposed more openness. He wrote that taking advantage of the process of democratization and the expansion of openness, "certain people are behaving in an unseemly manner, violating public order and openly expatiating on bourgeois-nationalist notions that are alien to us".²¹ In fact, he was opposing anti-Soviet articles, published in the press.

In July 1987, at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee, with executives of the mass news media and the creative unions, most of the speakers favoured openness, but I.D. Laptev, editor-in-chief, Izvestia, reminded conclusions of the June 1987 plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee. He was of the opinion that the press is misusing openness. He also called for review of the process of democratization.²²

In September 1987, at a conference of the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news and propaganda media, Ye. K. Ligachev, member of the Polit bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee expressed critical views regarding freedom of the press. He asked the mediemen to present history without distorting facts. He also warned against the growing menace of the anti-socialist and anti-communist forces. He revealed

21. CDSF, vol. XXXIX, No. 27, August 5, 1987, p. 3.

22. CDSF, vol. XXXIX, No. 28, August 12, 1987, p. 8.

that anti-Soviet forces wants to destroy the USSR and urged to the press not to be guided by these forces.

But A. Vasinsky, on September 16, 1987, wrote in Izvestia that openness cleans away dross and is a safeguard against stagnation. He also favoured restructuring of the press.

An interesting debate began on August 7, 1987 in Vechernaya Moskva. N. Petrov and R. Topolev in their article criticized a Samizdat magazine Glasnost for blackmailing the people.²³ They alleged that two dissidents Ogorodnikov and Lev Timofeyev considered themselves 'discoverers of the truth' and wrote articles about old events of human rights violations, about political prisoners in the USSR etc. all in the name of openness. But editor of the publication, S.I. Grigoryants made it clear that the publication was not of dissidents.

In that article the writers tried to prove that Grigoryants was a corrupt man. To prove they quoted Prof. S. Leonov of the Irkutsk Polytechnic Institute. Grigoryants had telephoned him, one day, and threatened that if the institute did not allow one student to retake two examinations that he had not passed, "he would carry an article on how

23. V.M. Chebrikov, "A Great Example of Service to Revolutionaries Ideals" (Report at a Ceremonial Meeting), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 37, October 14, 1987, pp. 6-7.

students are persecuted for their past at the Irtutsk Polytechnic Institute".²⁴ In fact, during the renewal of the press, such type of derogatory articles were quite common. These articles were cited by the so-called hardliners to prove that openness in the press was not needed.

V.M. Chebrikov, member of the Polit bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR State Security Committee delivered his report 'A great Example of Service to Revolutionary Ideals' at a Ceremonial Meeting devoted to the 110th Anniversary of the birth of Bolshevik revolutionary Felik Edumundovich Dzerzhinsky. Criticizing the freedom of the press Chebrikov said that the Soviet press was "depriving bourgeois propaganda of the opportunity to capitalize on our shortcomings and unresolved questions".²⁵ He further assured that restructuring will move on under the leadership of the CPSU, within the framework of socialism and in the interest of socialism and warned against the capitalistic tendencies getting place in the press.

In October 1987, Yu. Kudryavtsev, candidate of Jurisprudence wrote an article in Nedelya favouring publication of news about violation of human rights and also praised the creation of atmosphere for free speech.

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*, p. 8.

But in November 1987, Boris Yeltsin, the First Secretary of the Moscow City Communist Party Committee and a non-voting member of the Politbureau, was dismissed from both the posts. The allegation against him was that he had criticized conservatives of the CPSU in the strongest words.²⁶ It was also true that Yeltsin wanted restructuring and openness to be pursued speedily. He was of the opinion that conservatives of the CPSU must be exposed in the press, so that their anti-openness attitudes may be understood in the society. This incident was taken as victory of conservatives in the matter of restructuring and openness.

1988

During 1988, the Perestroika leadership was compelled to utilise its energy for struggle against hardliners. Heated discussions and debates over the issue of freedom of the press continued throughout the year.

On January 8, 1988, Gorbachev talked about difficulties faced in restructuring of the press. He hoped that solid results could be achieved within three years. He was speaking on 'Democratization is the essence of restructuring and the essence of socialism' at a meeting in the

26. The Europa World Year Book 1992, Vol. II (London: Europe Publications Ltd., 1992), p. 2751.

CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological institutions and creative unions. He also stated that freedom of press must be utilized in a proper way, in the interests of the people, state and Party.

V.A. Korotich, editor-in-chief of the magazine Ogonyok pleaded for involving the employees of the mass news media "in the struggle for the success of restructuring".²⁷ S.P. Zalygin, editor-in-chief of the magazine, Novy Mir, also emphasised that holding discussions and openness in the press, are very useful for development of democratic life in the USSR. Other participants expressed similar views.

But on February 10, 1988, a different opinion appeared. N.N. Chetverikov, Chairman of All-Union Council on Professional Ethics and Law pointed out that the main function of the journalists is to strengthen Marxist-Leninist ideology. He opposed anti-Marxist ideas. He was of the opinion that the Soviet press must be committed to socialistic values.²⁸

V.V. Karpov, in his report, 'Improving Nationality Relations, Restructuring, and the Task of Soviet Literature', at the plenary session of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union, held in March 1988 supported restructuring and openness

27. CDSF, vol. XL, No. 2, February 10, 1988, p. 5.

28. CDSF, vol. XL, No. 6, March 9, 1988, p. 24.

and asserted that there is no need to unearth pre-Perestroika nationalities' problems. It should be stopped immediately because it would disturb restructuring.²⁹ Sergei Baruzdin, editor, Druzhba Narodov and others also expressed the same views. They favoured avoiding this dangerous tendency, growing among writers and in the press.

A heated debate started with the publication of a letter "I cannot Forgo Principles" in Sovetskaya Rossia on March 13, 1988.³⁰ In a long letter to editor, a teacher Nina Andreyeva expressed the opinion that the Soviet system needs no change. The letter alleged that restructuring leaders were trying to destroy the Marxist-Leninist foundation of the Soviet system. It opposed any type of openness in the press. The author of the letter criticized the concept that the mediemen should respect pluralism of opinion. The letter emphasized the fact that democratization, openness and restructuring must be stopped in the interest of preserving Marxism-Leninism and socialism.

29. V.V. Karpov, "Improving Nationality Relations, Restructuring and the Task of Soviet Literature" (Report at the Plenary session of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union, March 1988), CDSP, vol. XL, No. 11, April 13, 1988, p. 5.

30. Nina Andreyeva, "I cannot forgo Principles", Sovetskaya Rossia, March 13, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 13, April 27, 1988, p. 1.

Commenting on the letter, Pravda on April 5, 1988, in its editorial "The Principles of Restructuring: The Revolutionary Nature of Thinking and Acting" attacked the so-called 'anti-restructuring manifesto'.³¹ The editorial stressed that the letter writer Nina Andreyeva had highlighted only negative aspects of restructuring. It stated that Stalinist suppression and all other demerits of the existing Soviet system, must be exposed.

On April 10, 1988, a public affairs writer Nikolai Bodnaruk, commenting on the letter, wrote in Izvestia that it showed the confusion in the minds of anti-restructuring people and their ideological spinelessness.³² Same day Lyudmila Saraskina wrote in Moskovskaya Novosti 'Portrait of the Enemy'. The article accused Nina Andreyeva of immoral views on repression and suppression under communist regime. The author alleged that Nina Andreyeva wanted to hide these episodes.

The editorial board of Sovetskaya Rossia also agreed with the editorial of Pravda and apologized for illconsidered publication of the critical letter. It assured that all readers back restructuring, though some are still confused.³³

31. "The Principles of Restructuring: The Revolutionary Nature of Thinking and Acting", CDSP, vol. XL, No. 14, May 4, 1988, p.1.

32. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 15, May 11, 1988, p. 7.

33. *ibid.*, p. 8.

Commenting on the letter, on April 19, 1988, 38 leading writers wrote a letter to Pravda, 'More Openness, More Democracy, More Socialism'. The letter assured that the writers were completely "with the Revolution, with its sacred ideals". The letter criticized the anti-restructuring forces. It said that those forces are upholding the interests of the exhausted and discredited administrative-command system. It also assured that such forces "would not be able to make society follow their lead, they would not be able to revise and block the ideology of restructuring."³⁴

The 38 writers, who signed the letter, were: G. Markov, V. Karpov, M. Alekseyev, A. Ananyev, G. Balklanov, S. Baruzdin, Yu. Verchenko, Yu. Bondarev, G. Borovik, V. Bykov, A. Voznesensky, N. Gorbachev, D. Granin, N. Gribachev, Yu. Gribov, I. Dedkov, A. Dementyev, Yu. Drunina, Ye. Yevtushenko, S. Zalygin, A. Ivanov, Ye. Isayev, V. Korotich, V. Krupin, F. Kuznetsov, S. Mikhalkov, A. Mikhailov, P. Nikalayev, P. Proskurin, R. Rozhdestvensky, V. Rozov, A. Salynsky, Ye. Sidorov, K. Skvortsov, Yu. Surovtsev, A. Chakovsky, Yu. Chernichenko and M. Shatrov.

Gorbachev, at the meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological

34. G. Markov and others, "More Openness, More Democracy, More Socialism", Pravda, April 19, 1989, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 16, May 18, 1988, p. 8.

institutions and creative unions, held on May 7, 1988, spoke in favour of openness in the press. On that occasion, N.M. Gribachev, editor-in-chief, Sovetsky Soyuz suggested that journalism should be grounded in accurate, verified facts. S.P. Zalygin, editor-in-chief, Novy Mir, pleaded for a responsive attitude towards public opinion and acceptance of it as a guiding force in public affairs.

But V.V. Karpov, First Secretary of the Board of the USSR Writers Union and I.D. Laptev, editor-in-chief, Izvestia, were of different views. Karpov pointed out that the people, criticized by any media outlet, were not given sufficient opportunity for their justification. He suggested that this inequality should be removed. I.D. Laptev was of the opinion that the press is not covering new problems and new facts that the very "process of democratization and life itself are throwing up to us".³⁵ He criticized the press for abuse of its freedom.

On June 4, 1988, T. Zaslavskaya, President of the Soviet Sociological Association, in an interview to Izvestia, warned against enemies of restructuring. She clearly emphasized that Brezhnev era bureaucrats are not supporting

35. "Report on meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological institutions and creative unions, May 7, 1988", CDSP, vol. XL, No. 19, June 8, 1988, p. 5.

restructuring. She appealed to the media to expose their anti-restructuring attitudes.

On September 23, 1988, Gorbachev criticized the 'leftists' and 'rightists' forces, who were bringing confusion in the society. He stated that the press should continue its struggle against them. He told, "Restructuring is a living process and it is being carried out by living people".³⁶

In September, Yury Zhukov of Pravda criticized many of the newly born independent papers. He gave several examples in support of his arguments.³⁷ The Novdvorskaya had published an appeal, addressed to the 17-18 meeting of the Sezm of the Lithuanian Sajudis Organisation demanding the initiation of a 'civil disobedience' campaign against the authorities. In the issue no. 15 of the magazine, Demokraticeskaya Oppozitsia (Democratic Opposition), a poet named V. Yaremenko used pornographic verses about Lenin.

Zhukov pointed out that Issue no. 14 of the newspaper Svobodnoye Slovo (Free Speech) carries a cartoon.

36. M.S. Gorbachev, "At the New State of Restructuring" (Speech at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological institutions and creative unions, September 23, 1988), CDSP, vol. XL, No. 39, October 26, 1988, p. 8.

37. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 34, September 21, 1988, p. 14.

In that cartoon Gorbachev is aiming a revolver at the reader, and behind his back is some kind of circle labelled 'Restructuring'. Then comes an appeal addressed "to all anti-fascists in our country". It says: "A fascist terror is beginning, or rather, being renewed in our country".

In its issue no. 16, Svobodnoye Slovo contains an 'appeal' addressed to the USSR People's Deputies. It says: You can and must reject the current constitution, demand elections to a constituent assembly on a multi-party basis, and proclaim the need for disintegration of the empire.

Zhukov, giving other examples also revealed that independent press, so called Samizdat publications and West-funded publications are trying to disintegrate the USSR. He opposed freedom and openness in the press, on such grounds. He hoped that the coming draft law on the press will eradicate such publications.

On the other hand, Vladimir Alekyeyevich Boldyrev, Director, the USSR Chief Administration for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press (Glavlit) supported freedom of the press. In an interview, published on November 3, 1988 in Izvestia, he argued that the system of classifying information as secret needs democratic control. Excess secrecy will help conservatives only. People, he warned, would begin to rely on Western news media, because that

secret has "negative effect on world opinion".³⁸

Earlier in September 1988, an article appeared "From a Cult of Secrecy to an Information Culture" in Kommunist. In this article V. Rubanov, head of a department of the USSR State Security Committee's (KGB) Research Institute, urged that free information flow is essential in any system. It is a "vital resource and a highly valuable commodity".³⁹ He was of the opinion that the Soviet press must be given more freedom.

1989

During 1989, in a surprise move, the Perestroika leadership favoured a dialogue with all kinds of people and at every level on the issue of freedom of the press. Earlier the pro-Perestroika leaders were neglecting and rejecting the views of hardliners. But factual arguments put by hardliners, compelled them to initiate a fruitful and meaningful debate on the issue. As a result, the discussions over draft of Press Law considered all the differing views and followed pluralism of opinion.

38. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 44, November 30, 1988, p. 6.

39. ibid.

On March 10, 1989, a split took place in the Moscow Writers' Organization of the Russian Republic Writers' Union, on the issue of restructuring. Dissidents set up a new public association named 'the Committee Writers'. The dissidents alleged that the Writers' Union was working as a apparatus of the administrative command system. They pointed out that the Writers' Union was not promoting implementation of restructuring.⁴⁰

In the same month, Gorbachev accepted that restructuring was proceeding with some difficulties.⁴¹ But he stressed the need of dialogue among various sections of the people. Even Zhores Aleksandrovich Medvelev, a well known dissident, also supported the stand of Gorbachev. He said, "I do not know anyone in the country today who could do his job better than he (Gorbachev)".⁴²

But V.A. Avdevich, Director, Periodical Publications Administration of the USSR State Committee on the Press, was in favour of command system. During the discussion on the draft law on Press in the Joint Committee on Questions of Glasnost and Citizen's Rights and Appeals, he favoured

40. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 10, April 5, 1989, p. 20.

41. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 21, June 21, 1989, p. 16.

42. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 30, August 30, 1989, p. 35.

overseeing of everyone and everything and to retain in his own hands the right to issue prohibitions and to ply the "not permitted" stamp.⁴³

On October 13, 1989, Gorbachev addressed executives of the mass news media on "Tendencies in the Press Are Cause for Alarm and Reflection". Stating that the Soviet society was leaving the old style, he described the demand of a blue print of the new society, as nothing less than "a poverty of philosophy".⁴⁴

On October 23, 1989, Gorbachev met with Pravda, editorial board, department editors and members of the newspaper's Party Committee. On that occasion he introduced the new editor-in-chief Ivan Timofeyevich Frolov. It was felt that Gorbachev removed Afanasyev due to publication of some articles supporting Party control over the Press. But Gorbachev replied that it was the decision of the CPSU Central Committee. He also warned that some unpopular measures might be taken to avoid misuse of freedom of the press. He criticized a section of journalists involved in misguiding the common people about restructuring the system.

43. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 38, October 18, 1989, p. 21.

44. M.S. Gorbachev, "Tendencies in the Press are Cause for Alarm and Reflection" (Speech in a meeting with executives of the mass news media, October 13, 1989), CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 15.

M. Ya. Korolyov, Deputy editor-in-chief, Pravda, talked about the problems faced by a principled Party journalist. Such a journalist may be humiliated anywhere, he stated. He also criticized mutual attacks, made with reason or without within the Party. He called upon the Party officials "to introduce readers to the laboratory of Party work, and show its dynamics and intellectual content".⁴⁵

The Draft Law on Press and Other Mass News Media was introduced in the Second Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on November 24, 1989. A controversy marked its initiation as a day earlier another draft started circulating which had not been considered by the appropriate committees. As B.N. Nikolsky, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Questions of Glasnost and Citizens' Rights and Appeals observed during the debate on the Draft Law on Press, changes were made in the Draft Law without the Committee knowing anything about it and they were not discussed in the Committee. In this context he referred to the new version of Article 43 of the second Draft which he called "a veiled attempt to preserve censorship".⁴⁶ The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, A.I. Lukyanov gave his ruling that only the first Draft

45. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 14.

46. Izvestia, November 25, 1989, CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 48, December 27, 1989, pp. 9-10.

signed by the Committees' Chairmen would be discussed.

The Draft Press Law was commented on in the Supreme Soviet by representatives of the Committees that had prepared it. The first Speaker was G. Kh. Shakhnazarov, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Questions of Legislation, Legality and Law and Order. Recalling that "with the exception of rare periods, censorship has raged throughout the country's history, and free speech could make its way only by means of incredible stratagems", Shakhnazarov characterised the Law on the Press and Other News Media as equal in significance to the Law on Property. He placed it among the category of "constitutional or organic laws". Shakhnazarov stated that only with freedom of the press it was possible to develop labour initiative and enterprise and conversely freedom of the press was possible only if it was backed up by the development of economic initiative.⁴⁷

B.N. Nikolsky, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Questions of Glasnost and Citizens' Rights and Appeals together with Deputy N.V. Fyodorov strongly defended the Draft Law on the Press. However, Deputy L.P. Kravchenko disagreed with the previous speakers defending the Draft Law. He was particularly critical of the provision which gave

47. *ibid.*

individual USSR citizens the right to found mass news media. Deputy Ye. D. Pokhitailo expressed the apprehension that mass media might wind up in the hands of persons with unearned income if the right to found media was given to individual citizens. Instead of it, Deputy Kravchenko preferred that the Draft Law carried the precise wording of the Vienna agreement that "every citizen has the right to receive, possess, reproduce and disseminate informational material".⁴⁸

The right given in the Second Draft to the Chief Administration for safeguarding state secrets in the press through a kind of censorship was taken exception to by Deputy L.I. Batynskaya. Such an institution was abolished in Britain, she said, as far back as the 17th century. But Deputy Y.A. Kuptsov was critical of the Draft Law on Press for its "orientation towards a priority position and special status for the mass news media in society" and for omitting many of the basic political institutions, concepts and principles that are reflected in the USSR constitution. He desired that the Law should mention the "interests of the people and of socialism or the priority of the socialist choice and idea".⁴⁹ Kuptsov suggested that the following wording be included in the Draft: "The press, the television,

48. *ibid.*

49. *ibid.*

radio and other mass media in the USSR are an institution of socialist democracy, an effective instrument in restructuring and the renewal of society, and a means of expressing and shaping public opinion and of ensuring glasnost and nationwide monitoring of the state of affairs in the country".⁵⁰ Another Deputy G.F. Kharchenko expressed the apprehension that "some grouping might take advantage of the law in its own interests, and clan interests are possible".⁵¹ He also pointed out that the Americans, the British and the Japanese were getting along all right without any press law.

But Deputy Ye. A. Yevtushenko justified the necessity for the press law against the backdrop of the administrative removal of Literaturnaya Rossiya editor Kolosov, from his post during the restructuring period, against the backdrop of constant pressure on television programs "View" (Vzglyad) and "600 Seconds", and against the backdrop of the attempts to remove Starkov, the editor of Argumenty i Fakty; Averin, the editor of Knizhnoye Obozreniye (Book Review); and many province and district journalists.⁵² Yevtushenko supported the first version of the Draft Press Law prepared by Fyodorov's group. He described the second version with its, "innocent little adjustments" a very "dubious and dangerous step backward". He proposed that the first version be put to a vote.

50. *ibid.*

51. *ibid.*

52. *ibid.*

Deputy V.A. Medvedev noted that a certain distance between dismantling of the old and the birth of the new is making itself known. The previous methods of regulating the informational sphere have fallen away, but new methods characteristic of a state based on the rule of law are still lacking or rest on old traditions that have outlived their time.⁵³ He also pointed out that an intoxication with freedom of the press has surfaced up and in some places the loosening of restrictions is turning into an unduly free and easy atmosphere and there are other extremes. "They are making themselves known through group biases", he added, "and through attempts to impose one viewpoint and replace one half-truth with another and to use glasnost to satisfy personal ambitions, including some of an anti-socialist nature".⁵⁴ Medvedev argued that the Law on the Press must not be elevated to the level of the absolute and due emphasis must be given to "legal standards and stable democratic traditions".

At its plenary session of November 27, 1989, the USSR Supreme Soviet approved the draft Law on the Press and other Mass News Media on first reading and resolved to publish the draft in the press for discussion and then to instruct the Joint Committee on Questions of Legislation, Legality and Law and Order and the Joint Committee on Questions of Glasnost and Citizens' Rights and Appeals; in conjunction with the Joint Committee on International

53. *ibid.*

Affairs, to finish work on the draft. The result of the voting was 376 for, 8 against and 13 abstaining.

An article-by-article consideration of the Press bill began in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in June 1990. Introducing the draft, Boris Nikolskiy, Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Glasnost and Citizens' Rights and Appeals, stressed that under the conditions of an emerging multi-party system the need for such a law "becomes even more urgent than before, as it enables new parties and mass movements to launch their own mass information organization and, on the other hand, bars all kinds of pirate publications".⁵⁵ The draft enabled not only state and public organisations, political parties and various associations but also any Soviet citizen above 18 years of age to launch a mass information organisation.

During the first reading of the bill in the summer of 1989, this provision evoked the most heated debate. Many Deputies expressed fear that control over the press might be seized by shadow economy magnates. Objecting to these fears, Nikolskiy noted that the draft provided for founding mass information organisations, not their ownership.

55. Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), SU/0788, June 12, 1990, p. C2/2.

Anyone may found an organisation who has ideas of interest to the publisher, he said. Nikolskiy stressed that people, leaking secret information and not an information organisation, would be held responsible if secret information was published. He suggested the adoption of a special law to protect state secrets.

Deputy A. Sabentsov, who spoke on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee stated that the working group which prepared the bill for discussion had rejected a proposal to include in the text a provision stating that mass information organisations should build the activity on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology. He described the condition of monopoly preference for Marxist-Leninist ideology under conditions of a multi-party system as something outdated.

The Supreme Soviet completed the debate concerning the second reading of the bill on the Press and Other Mass Media. The bill was approved on the whole and only two articles were declared as needing additional editing. The new law was finalised on 12th June. Debate again became particularly heated when the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted the law on 12th June 1990. The issue that evoked controversy was the provision granting every Soviet citizen at the age of 18 to found a mass information organisation. Many deputies expressed concerns that shadow economy dealers

might seize control over the press. But the viewpoint that prevailed was that the right to launch an information organisation was one of the most important democratic freedoms recorded in international human rights agreements signed by the Soviet Union. A resolution was passed to implement the law from 1st August 1990. The Press Law adopted by the USSR Supreme Soviet on 12th June became the first legal act in the history of the Soviet Union containing detailed guarantees of the freedom of the press and the rights of the journalists. Prior to this freedom of the press had merely been declared in the USSR constitution.

Summing Up:

The heated debates over freedom of the Press are the evidence of effective competition of ideas. The Perestroika leadership which had earlier tried to ignore the views of the opponents now felt in 1989 the need for conducting a factual debate over the issue of freedom of the press, allowing the conservative forces to express their views without any fear. Anti-restructuring leadership was provided equal opportunity to express its views on the draft press law. In 1990, during the discussion on provisions of the draft, all the views were taken into consideration. Finally the draft was passed by the USSR Supreme Soviet. The legislative foundation of the press law will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: PRIOR TO
THE PASSAGE OF THE LAW ON THE PRESS

The demand of the time to change the role and status of the Soviet press, as it existed during pre-perestroika period resulted into passage of the law on the press and other news media. In the new situation, the stereo-type Party-controlled press became meaningless. This was the reason for adoption of a press law by the USSR Supreme Soviet. But the ground was gradually prepared for the adoption of the press law and which carried forward to its logical culmination the process already started in 1985. Since then many literary organizations, some of the important newspapers, specially Pravda and Izvestia, the CPSU, many republican governments and the USSR government continued their efforts for strengthening legislative foundations of freedom of the press through discussions, directions, decisions and rules. This chapter deals with these efforts that culminated in the adoption of the Press Law. It is necessary to understand the background of the law in depth. It also deals with the main provisions of the law, and attempts a critical appraisal of it.

Role of Literary Organizations

Several literary and cultural organizations, led by the CPSU, contributed in the passage of the press law through discussions and debates. The Sixth Congress of Russian Republic Writers, December 11, 1985 discussed the concept of truthfulness, openness and real information in detail. It demanded openness in the field of the Soviet press, so that 'pluralism of opinion' may be established.¹

In June 1986, the Soviet writers again demanded upliftment of bans imposed on print media and electronic media. On June 19, Gorbachev met with writers who were Deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet. A group of Moscow based writers was also participating in the meeting. They stressed implementation of the principles established by the 27th Congress of the CPSU. On that occasion he said, "The Party Congress (27th) provided a lesson in specific, constructive and corrective criticism. Such a spirit of creation and critical analysis must be not only preserved, but actually developed".²

1. S.V. Mikhalkov, "Report at the Sixth Congress of Russian Republic Writers, December 11, 1985", The Journal of Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), vol. XXXVII, No. 52, January 22, 1986, p. 1.

2. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 25, July 23, 1986, p. 22.

In the same month, the Eighth Congress of the USSR Writers' Union underlined importance of criticism and self-criticism in the writings and improving quality of the literature. On that occasion G.M. Markov, First Secretary of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union presented his report. He pointed out that more attention should be given to fostering quality work that expresses the USSR's present 'diversity' and greatness.³ He stressed public affairs writing and requested for bold and impartial criticism. He suggested that never cut oneself off from the concerns of the modern world or the life of our people.⁴ He further revealed the suggestions of the USSR Writers' Union's Central Inspection Commission's report. V.P. Telpugov, Chairman of the Commission had suggested that writers' meetings should be held in open atmosphere. Openness in writers' meetings is inevitable.⁵ The resolution of the Congress also appealed the writers to fulfil 'the goals set by the 27th CPSU Congress'.⁶ With desire to free the press from the clutches of the Party, the plenary session of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union, March 1988 favoured restructuring. In his

3. G.M. Markov, "Report at the Eight USSR Writers' Congress, June 1986", CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 26, July 30, 1986, p. 1.

4. *ibid.*, p. 9.

5. *ibid.*, p. 13.

6. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 38, October 22, 1986, p. 17.

report V.V. Karpov pointed out some difficulties in restructuring the press. He appealed to the writers to eradicate them.⁷

In this manner many literary organizations of the USSR again and again supported the concept of openness in the Soviet press. Their suggestions worked as legislative foundation for freedom of the press.

Role of Pravda and Izvestia

The Party newspaper Pravda and the government newspaper Izvestia published several views and comments during Perestroika. Their views were given due importance in the Soviet mass media. Their role in guiding and directing the Soviet media before adoption of the press law was thus quite significant.

Pravda, on March 27, 1985, published an article 'Openness in Work'. The article stressed that public openness was essential because extensive and timely information shows trust in people. It also underlined that Personnel of the Party must be discussed openly in their

7. V.V. Karpov, "Improving Nationality Relation, Restructuring and the Task of Soviet Literature" (Report at the Plenary Session of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union, March 1988), CDSP, vol. XL, No. 11, April 13, 1988, p. 5.

evaluation, selection and promotion so that all the officials may be accountable towards the people. It was also pointed out that in the field of restructuring nothing can be done "without consistent adherence to the principle of public openness."⁸

In another article Pravda, on June 13, 1986, criticized the tendencies of removing critical sections of the newspaper articles. It disclosed that local Party officials deleted critical articles on public catering in the area near Pskov. It stated that this was against the concept of criticism and self-criticism.⁹

Like Pravda, the other important newspaper Izvestia also supported the concept of open criticism. On June 25, 1987, the editorial board of the paper revealed that the number of letters from readers was rapidly growing. It also accepted that some letters support restructuring and some oppose it. But the newspaper favoured openness and criticism. In the opinion of the editorial board, "both (letters) have the right to be heard".¹⁰

8. "Openness in Work", Pravda, March 27, 1985, CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 13, April 24, 1985, p. 3.

9. CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 24, July 16, 1986, p. 11.

10. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 25, July 22, 1987, p. 24.

Both the newspapers Pravda and Izvestia determined guidelines for journalists also. On January 28, 1988, Pravda, in its editorial 'History and Morality' suggested the writers to present an honest, balanced and non-sensational view of history. The editorial further stressed that human norms should be protected and strengthened as they drew support from the masses.¹¹

In October 1988 Gorbachev met the Pravda staff. In this meeting, he expressed his views about the objectives and tasks of the press. Speaking on 'All the New Stage of Restructuring' he favoured serious, responsible, direct and honest discussion and advised the press to provide organizational and ideological backing for restructuring and eradicate attempts to discredit it. Writing in favour of realism, knowledge of life, writing against bureaucratic and controlled life style in the society, creating a new work culture, monitoring ministerial functioning and writing in favour of human interests and national interests were some of the important tasks pressed by Gorbachev. He further stated that openness should not be restricted. He said, "Openness in the interests of the people, in the interests of socialism, must be unlimited".¹²

11. "History and Morality", Pravda, January 28, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 5, March 2, 1988, p. 9.

12. M.S. Gorbachev, "All the New Stage of Restructuring" (Speech at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee), CDSP, vol. XL, No. 39, October 26, 1988.

Again on October 13, 1989, Gorbachev spoke in favour of restructuring of the Soviet press and democratizing it.¹³ He was addressing the executives of the mass news media. On October 23, 1989, he met with Pravda's editorial board, department editors and members of the newspaper's Party Committee. He called for easing social-economic tension within 12 to 18 months. Simultaneously, he warned that "unpopular measures may be needed against the press".¹⁴ The reason behind this threat was abuse of freedom by the Press favouring conservatism and dogmatism of the system. The purpose of journalistic creativity, according to him, was "to uphold our socialist values, advance the ideas of restructuring and affirm positive, progressive trends. And resolutely overcome everything negative".¹⁵ He firmly stated that no newspaper should be turned into someone's private domain. In his own words, "The press is a public matter. It should serve society".¹⁶

Following the meetings of Gorbachev with executives of the mass news media and Pravda, on October 31, 1989, Pravda published its editorial 'The Responsibility of the press'. The editorial indicated that the CPSU did not want

13. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 16.

14. ibid., p. 13.

15. ibid., p. 14.

16. ibid.

to lose its control over the Soviet press. Pravda wrote, "the mass news media must be guided by the Party line...."¹⁷ It suggested the press to provide political and moral guidelines for a politicized public. It advised to do everything to accomplish the task of restructuring and openness. In its opinion, people want the full truth, good and bad but undistorted.¹⁸

Pravda continued guiding the Soviet press in 1990 as well. On March 11, 1990, an article was published in Pravda - 'From Spring 1985 to Spring 1990'. It evaluated the achievements of restructuring, openness and democratization and wrote that "We have breathed the fresh spring air of glasnost and democracy...".¹⁹ It urged the press to follow the path of restructuring boldly and consistently. Explaining the fact that the Soviet society had covered a vast ground in the sphere of democratization and glasnost between the spring of 1985 and the spring of 1990, Pravda asserted that the path of restructuring was the only correct road for guaranteeing people a decent life and for realizing the potential of the great country.²⁰

17. "The Responsibility of the Press", Pravda, October 31, 1989, n. 13, p. 17.

18. *ibid.*

19. "From Spring 1985 to Spring 1990", Pravda, March 11, 1990, Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), SU/0710, March 12, 1990, p. B/1.

20. *ibid.*, p. B/2.

The 'Pravda-Festival, 1990' reminded the media men again of their tasks. On May 4, 1990, Gorbachev in his greetings praised efforts for the sake of triumph of the ideas of restructuring and the principles of humane democratic socialism. The duty of the press, he said, is "to reject stereotypes more resolutely and conduct an open and honest dialogue with people...".²¹

The Pravda festival for the first time contributed to establish direct relations between the subscribers and the press. On May 5, 1990, Gorbachev also participated in this festival. He underlined that Pravda "now provides good guidelines for society, communists and the whole press".²² He appealed to the press to welcome different writers, so that the real picture of the society may come out. He praised the efforts of Pravda in giving place to all kinds of writers. He claimed that Pravda had opened itself up to a "broad circle of most different writers who represent different viewpoints".²³

Evidently the line taken by Pravda and Izvestia during restructuring reflected the essential features of the forth coming press law.

21. SWB, SU/0758, May 8, 1990, p. B/1.

22. ibid.

23. ibid.

Role of the CPSU

So far as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) is concerned, it also helped in strengthening and widening openness in the Soviet press and created a climate conducive to expression of different opinions and views in the discussion on the forthcoming law on the press and other news media. So a study of Party's role is also helpful to understand the legislative foundation of the freedom of the press.

The CPSU Central Committee in September 1986 adopted a resolution 'On the Magazine Kommunist'. The resolution called for an 'open competition of ideas' in applying Marxism.²⁴ It asked the magazine to pay more attention to sociological research. Openness was the only path through which "the creative enrichment of present-day Marxist-Leninist thought be achieved", the resolution stressed. It was stated that the magazine should be a "militant organ" in the struggle against "bourgeois ideology, opportunistic concepts and attempts to emasculate and render lifeless the revolutionary, creative concept of Marxist-Leninist theory".²⁵

24. "On the Magazine Kommunist" (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee), CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 34, September 24, 1986, p. 7.

25. *ibid.*

The CPSU Central Committee adopted a resolution 'On the results of Comrade M.S. Gorbachev's Trip to Krasnodar and Stavropool Territories' on September 25, 1986. The resolution stressed that the directives of the 27th Party Congress and the June (1985) plenary session of the Central Committee and the policy of renewal must be implemented boldly. It criticised the efforts of the so-called anti-restructuring people and warned them that "who take this risky path will be held personally accountable to the Party".²⁶

The Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee, January 27, 1987, also emphasised the necessity of democratization and openness in the USSR. Gorbachev, in his report 'On Restructuring and the Party's Personnel Policy', criticised stagnation, corruption of recent past and the Stalinist brutality and stressed that it should be exposed by the Soviet press.²⁷

Again on February 13, 1987, Gorbachev addressed a

26. "On the Results of Comrade M.S. Gorbachev's Trip to Krasnodar and Stavropool Territories" (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee, September 25, 1986), CDSP, vol. XXXVIII, No. 40, November 5, 1986, p. 1.

27. M.S. Gorbachev, "On Restructuring and the Party's Personnel Policy" (Report at the plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee on January 27, 1987), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 4, February 25, 1987, p. 1.

meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news and propaganda media. In his speech on 'Conviction is the Bulwark of Restructuring', Gorbachev favoured responsible criticism and dialogue with people. He emphasised that "the people, the working people, should be the main actor in the press and on television screens".²⁸ In his opinion the Soviet press had done a good job to establish openness as a norm of the Soviet society.

Gorbachev further suggested the editors to present the real picture of the Party and society and to publish criticism and self-criticism based on truth. Lack of objectivity or one-sidedness and inaccuracy in criticism, Gorbachev said, "only plays into the hands of the opponents of restructuring".²⁹ Mr. Yegor Ligachev, Member of the Politbureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Alexandr Yakovlev, Alternate Member of the Politbureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and other speakers also expressed the same views in the meeting regarding the role of the Soviet press.

On April 16, 1987, the 20th Youth Communist League (YCL) Congress was addressed by Gorbachev. In his speech

28. M.S. Gorbachev, "Conviction is the Bulwark of Restructuring" (Speech at the CPSU Central Committee on February 13, 1987), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 7, March 18, 1987, p. 6.

29. *ibid.*, p. 7.

'Young People Are a Creative Force of Revolutionary Renewal', he hoped that the YCL would also fulfil the tasks of restructuring and openness. He pointed out that some people and factors were obstructing restructuring and warned that "on this principal question, there should be no concessions on our part".³⁰

Again in July 1987, a meeting was held in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media and the creative unions. The meeting discussed the role of the press, television and radio in the process of restructuring and in the fulfilment of the tasks mapped out by the June 1987 Plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee. Gorbachev favoured the changing role of the Soviet media and suggested that the Soviet press must follow the norm of openness. All the speakers stressed a nationwide discussion on the system of socialist democracy and observed that reliance on the masses and openness were the command of the times.³¹

A conference in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news and propaganda media, was organised in September 1987 to discuss the questions

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30. M.S. Gorbachev, "Young People Are A Creative Force of Revolutionary Renewal" (Speech at the 20th YCL Congress on April 16, 1987), CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 16, May 20, 1987, p. 11.

31. CDSP, vol. XXXIX, No. 28, August 12, 1987, p. 6.

related to the mass news media. Addressing the meeting Ye. K. Ligachev, Member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, urged that changes taking place in the Soviet society, state, Party and peoples should be discussed in the mass media.³² His speech was like a code of conduct for the journalists. He suggested them to write about October Revolution, socialism, achievements of the Revolution and socialism, struggle for a better material and spiritual life for Soviet people and about restructuring in the Soviet society. He requested that "everyone must take a respectful attitude towards their opponents' opinions, not unthinkingly reject them".³³ He suggested the media men to study some documents for better understanding of Soviet history. He exhorted them to read the materials of the 27th Congress and the plenary sessions of the CPSU Central Committee, the speeches of M.S. Gorbachev and other leaders of the Party and government, and the CPSU Central Committee's address to the Soviet People in connection with the 70th Anniversary of Great October Revolution. He praised the press for publishing materials that reflect various opinions. But he also warned against the reactionary forces of the country and remarked that "some editors readily publish what agrees with their viewpoints, but what does not agree with it, either is not published or is accompanied by editorial commentary

32. CDSF, vol. XXXIX, No. 37, October 14, 1987, p. 2.

33. *ibid.*

that rejects the publication out of hand".³⁴

Ligachev cautioned the publication of some derogatory articles. He reminded them of the decision taken at the meeting with executives of mass news and propaganda media and creative unions held after the June 1987 plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee. The decision, Ligachev said, was clear that "we cannot permit a disrespectful attitude toward our people, toward the generations that built socialism and defended it in a battle to the death with fascism".³⁵

On November 2, 1987, Gorbachev again argued in favour of restructuring and openness. Presenting his report at the jubilee meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, he stressed that the Soviet Press should actively participate in the process of restructuring so that real socialism and more democracy may be established in the Soviet society.³⁶

Gorbachev met with the media men again the January 1988. In his speech ' Democratization is the essence of

34. *ibid.*, p. 1.

35. *ibid.*

36. M.S. Gorbachev, October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1987), p. 26.

restructuring and essence of socialism', at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological institutions and creative unions on January 8, 1988, he assured that if openness, criticism and democracy are in the interests of socialism, in the interests of the people, they are "limitless".³⁷ He urged the editors to be aware of their responsibility. He was of the opinion that openness and criticism must be continued in the Soviet press. He said, "Openness and criticism are means by which the masses, by which society, monitors all processes".³⁸

On May 7, 1988, a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological institutions and creative unions, took place. All the participants supported the efforts towards freedom of the press. Gorbachev appealed for a positive role of mass news media.³⁹

The 19th All-Union CPSU Conference, June 28, 1988 also mapped out some programmes and principles for Soviet journalists. In his report 'On Progress in the Implementation of the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the

37. M.S. Gorbachev, "Democratization is the essence of restructuring and the essence of socialism" (Speech at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee on January 8, 1988), CDSP, vol. XL, No. 2, February 10, 1988, p. 4.

38. Ibid.

39. "A report on meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with executives of the mass news media, ideological institutions and creative unions, May 7, 1988", CDSP, vol. XL, No. 19, June 8, 1988, p. 1.

Tasks of Deepening Restructuring'. Gorbachev reviewed the concept of openness and restructuring. He observed that during the course of restructuring, greater knowledge, competence, constructiveness and responsibility were needed. This task could be accomplished by the press only, in his view, "by involving a broader range of society".⁴⁰ He praised the press for restoring historical truth and justice, criticizing shortcomings and deficiencies, disseminating the ability to think and act in a new way, creativity with a new purpose. He emphasized that a new quality in the Party Press is needed - a new quality in its political-education and organizational role. He further stated, "Our press now must delve more deeply into processes and analyse the complex dialectics and contradictions involved in the making of a new society in all spheres of its life".⁴¹

On April 20, 1989, the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee at a session discussed the Draft Law on Press. It emphasized that the law would codify the principles of openness, which promoted the progress of restructuring and the implementation, as well as the future development and extension of economic and political reforms.⁴² It was

40. M.S. Gorbachev, "On Progress in the Implementation of the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Tasks of Deepening Restructuring" (Report at the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference on June 28, 1988), CDSP, vol. XL, No. 26, July 27, 1988, p. 26.

41. *ibid.*

42. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 16, May 17, 1989, p. 21.

recognised that the role of the Soviet print media and electronic media are of great significance. The rights and duties of the mass news media, it was stated, must be defined clearly. It also observed that "in addition to the expansion of the mass media's rights, there is also to be an increase in their responsibility for the information published and for its authenticity".⁴³

In August 1989, the CPSU Central Committee adopted a resolution 'On Certain Questions of Restructuring the Central Party Press'. The resolution was very significant because it laid down many principles regarding the Soviet mass news media. It was written that questions relating to starting and closure of central newspapers and magazines, changes in their size and publication schedule and their wage and royalty funds were to be considered by the USSR State Publishing Committee. It instructed Union-republic Communist Party Central Committees and territory and province Party Committees to review the structure of their publications and bring it into conformity with the requirements of the resolution by 1990. It also directed them to improve their contents and reduce their unprofitability. All these publications were to be confirmed by the CPSU Central Committee.

43. *ibid.*

The resolution also made it clear that "with the passage of the Law on the Press and other Mass Media, the formation and cessation of all newspapers and magazines, is to be regulated by law in the manner established by the USSR Supreme Soviet".⁴⁴

Gorbachev again addressed the media men on October 13, 1989. In a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee with the executives of the media, creative unions and ideological institutions which discussed the question of the work of the press, television and radio in consolidating all forces in society to successfully carry out the tasks of restructuring, Gorbachev, speaking under the title, 'Tendencies in the Press Are Cause for Alarm and Reflection', stressed freedom of the press.⁴⁵ He spoke that press should not create confusion in people's minds. It should help in finding "correct solutions, approaches and answers regarding how to ensure the success of restructuring".⁴⁶ However, soon some shortcomings of the Soviet press became visible. The plenum of Journalists' Union found that the

44. "On Certain Questions of Restructuring the Central Party Press" (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee), CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 32, September 6, 1989, p. 32.

45. M.S. Gorbachev, "Tendencies in the Press are Cause for Alarm and Reflection" (Speech at a meeting in the CPSU Central Committee on October 13, 1989), CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 43, November 22, 1989, p. 15.

46. *ibid.*, p. 14.

USSR Journalists' Union itself had been little affected by the changes taking place in the country. An USSR Journalists' Union statement was adopted on that occasion.

The statement expressed its complete support "for journalists and leaders of mass media who are being subjected to unjustified attacks and persecution by officials or so-called meetings' democracy".⁴⁷ The USSR Journalists' Union also decided to resolutely defend media men, using "all necessary legal means for the purpose".⁴⁸ V.A. Medvedev, Member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, addressing the plenum, appealed to protect the rights of the media men.

The CPSU Central Committee adopted a resolution on the newspaper Pravda. This resolution indicated the nature, content and provisions of the coming law on the Press and other mass media. In the resolution of April 7, 1990, the role and status of the Soviet press in general and Pravda in particular was discussed in details. It was stated that Pravda represented the real face of society that the CPSU wanted to establish. It was suggested that the press must

47. SWB, SU/0708, March 9, 1990, p. B/7.

48. ibid.

restructure itself avoiding conservatism. It must follow the Leninist principle of a new type press - the press of and for the people. It must be free, truthful, honest and frank. The language of the press must be easy. It was a reality that most of the Soviet media outlets were full of official reports and Party reports. The common people could not understand them quickly. Therefore, the resolution pointed out that only that press is useful which "uses language comprehensible to everyone when conversing with the readers".⁴⁹ The resolution further stated that "our press must play an active, creative, constructive role in uniting and rallying all healthy forces in society on the platform of Perestroika".⁵⁰

The CPSU Central Committee resolution urged Pravda to cover all important political events and develop pluralism of opinion. Pravda was also called upon to express the diverse interests and viewpoints of all strata of the population.

In April 1990, an ideological conference under the auspices of the CPSU was organised. The conference clarified that the relationship between the Party and the Press was not to remain unchanged. All the indications were favouring a qualitative change due to emergence of the multi-party system.

49. "On the Newspaper Pravda" (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee, April 7, 1990), SWB, SU/0735, April 10, 1990, p. B/1.

50. *ibid.*

Undoubtedly, the coming law on the Press was hoped to bring many changes in the existing relationship of the CPSU with the Soviet press.⁵¹

Role of Various Republics

Following the changed environment, various Soviet republics were actively reshaping their media-mechanism. Their legislative initiatives also helped in formulation of the Press law.

The Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party took an important decision on July 20, 1985. The Party, in its meeting felt that the Soviet press men were not getting information easily. With a view to providing members of the press with better information on urgent present-day tasks, the Party confirmed a system of holding press conferences.⁵² The press conferences were to be attended by the journalists and the Party was to provide them all the information available.

At times it appeared as if the Soviet government would never free the press. Such feelings were not baseless. An example of the Belorussian International Affairs Ministry

51. SWB, SU/0748, April 26, 1990, p. B/2.

52. CDSP, vol. XXXVII, No. 32, September 4, 1985, p. 19.

is relevant to be mentioned here. In February 1989, the Belorussian Internal Affairs Minister V. Piskarev announced some restrictions on the journalists. He stated that restrictions were imposed in January 1989 with the approval of the "Statute on Procedures for the Admittance and Presence of Representatives of the Mass Media in Places where Measures are Being Taken to Maintain Public Order". They were approved by the USSR Ministry of Defence, the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and the USSR Journalists' Union and were drawn up at the initiative of the USSR Journalists' All-Union Council of Professional Ethics and Rights. The statute was applied to the so-called "protected zones". The minister assured that in all other cases, the rules would remain as before. Disclosing the provisions of the statute he said that "from now on journalists will be issued special passes to cover all events, rallies, meetings and various emergencies".⁵³ He further warned that "if they do not have these passes, issued by the ministry, they will be viewed as people who are violating law and order".⁵⁴

It was a surprising matter. On the one hand, the Soviet government was talking about openness in the Press,

53. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 6, March 8, 1989, p. 23.

54. *ibid.*

but on the other hand, the same government was applying such statute to continue its control over it. B. Mikhailov, candidate of Jurisprudence and head of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs Press Bureau also favoured the statute. He hoped that the "procedure will help our press, radio and television to efficiently cover events associated with emergency situations and to avoid conflicts".⁵⁵ He further stated that "We should be informed of all violations that infringe on the rights of writers and photographers".⁵⁶

But after some time the government took some positive steps also. The Ministry of Culture was allowed to free access to foreign periodicals in libraries, reading rooms and foreign information centres. The government uplifted all restrictions and bans on the use of duplicators and copiers. All these changes, brought by the government were disclosed in a talk by B. Pyadyshev, delegate to London Information Forum, 1989. He pointed out that "every citizen and organization can now subscribe to any foreign publication".⁵⁷ The USSR government brought these changes in January 1990. Installation of special dishes for receiving foreign satellite television programmes, was also allowed. During pre-Perestroika period no one could imagine such changes in the realm of public information.

55. *ibid.*, p. 24.

56. *ibid.*

57. SWB, SU/0669, January 23, 1990, p. A1/9.

Though the government was ready to translate into action the ideas of openness and democratization in the Soviet media, the press was not yet free to feel an atmosphere of openness. Some new restrictions were imposed again in March 1990. This time in Lithuania. The USSR government was of the view that the local mass media has been "intensively whipping up feelings against the army and deliberately creating an atmosphere of psychosis and fear of possible terror by the Soviet Army".⁵⁸ It was felt that the socio-political situation in Lithuania was complicated and contradictory, and the local press was playing an irresponsible role. To solve the problem an inter-departmental press centre was set up in the Lithuanian capital on March 30, 1990. The press centre included representatives of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, the K.G.B., the Ministry of Defence and the Communist Party of Lithuania. The press centre was to supply the mass media with objective information about the situation in Lithuania.⁵⁹

The Soviet press again faced an unfortunate situation in May 1990. This time the question related to the publication of state secrets. In the centre of the entire episode was - Ogonek. Following the path of openness and restructuring the magazine was publishing many articles concerning questions

58. SWB, SU/0728, April 2, 1990, p. B/4.

59. ibid.

of defence and the armed forces. In one such article, the Committee for Defence and State Security was also criticised. The question came up before the Committee for Glasnost and Citizen's Rights and Appeals. Examining the socio-political activity of Ogonek journalists on May 18, it opposed the tendencies of the journalists in criticizing sensitive organs of the government. They were also found guilty of disclosing state secrets. Simultaneously, the Committee supported openness and objectivity in the press. It was stressed that "objectivity and truth should become the norm in the press and in all materials that cover the life of the armed forces".⁶⁰

Another development connected with a resolution, adopted by the Communist Party of the RSFSR Constituent Congress widened the path of restructuring and openness of the Soviet press. On June 23, 1990, the resolution appealed to the CPSU Central Committee to approve the Communist Party of the RSFSR Central Committee as co-publisher of newspaper Sovetskaya Rossia. The resolution pointed out the need to form new press organs of the Communist Party of the RSFSR Central Committee - a newspaper and a socio-political journal. It was felt necessary to create a publishing house of the Communist Party of the RSFSR Central Committee to produce newspapers, journals

60. SWB, SU/0771, May 23, 1990, p. C1/2.

and political literatures.⁶¹ One of the important points of the resolution was the argument produced in favour of separate mass media. It was stated that under condition of an emergent multi-Party system, the polarisation of interests and opinions, and the intensification of the political struggle, it was becoming difficult to work. The Communist Party of the RSFSR, it was stated, cannot operate efficiently "without its own media".⁶²

The resolution, mentioned above, was very significant, because it favoured own mass media for the Communist Party of the RSFSR Central Committee. This necessity was felt at government level too. In June 1990, the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR also adopted a resolution on the separate mass media. Boris Yeltsin, presenting the resolution said, "it is necessary to create a republican network of mass media".⁶³ It was decided to set up the network of mass media, including a newspaper of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and some magazines. It was to be set up by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and the republic's government, jointly.

Moreover, on basis of the above mentioned facts, it is rightly to say that almost all republics took several official steps towards freedom of the press, which ultimately provided the ground for formulation of the law on the press.

62. *ibid.*

63. SWB, SU/0802, June 28, 1990, C1/2.

The USSR Government's Initiatives Towards Passage of the Press Law

Eventually it was the USSR government constitutionally empowered and authorised to make a law on the mass news media. No law could take shape in the absence of a strong will and commitment of the government. But during restructuring and openness, the government took every possible step against the controlled press. As a result, the law on the press and other news media came into existence in 1990. It was the consequence of several legislative efforts of the USSR government towards freedom of the press. Some of these important legislative efforts, during the Perestroika period, may be mentioned here.

The first significant attempt at the government level, was the "law of the USSR on the nationwide discussion of important questions of state life",⁶⁴ adopted on June 30, 1987. It consisted of 16 articles. Articles - 9, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 - dealt with several aspects of openness in the mass news media. Article 9 guaranteed publication of draft laws and other important questions of state life submitted for discussion, in the press. It was the duty of the press to cover all the proposals, suggestions, opinions of the people, organisations, institutions and government officials.

64. See Appendix-II.

The press was bound to inform the public about the results of discussions. According to Article 12, draft laws and materials on other questions were to be published in the press not later than ten days after the decision for nation-wide discussion.

Article 13 allowed the print media to initiate discussions on the questions and draft laws. Proposals and critical comments were to be summarized by the print media. According to Article 14, the mass news media provided regular information to the population about nation-wide discussion developments. Article 15 guaranteed the publication of draft decisions of local Soviets and their executive committees, in the local press. Article 16 allowed the local press to discuss questions submitted for discussion by the population. The law opened the path for people's participation in decision making and implementation processes on the basis of broad openness and comparison and consideration of various opinions and proposals of the working people.⁶⁵

In August 1987, the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers adopted a resolution "On Measures

65. "Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic on the Nationwide Discussion of Important Questions of State Life, June 30, 1987", CDSF, vol. XXXIX, No. 28, August 12, 1987, p. 13.

to strengthen the physical facilities of the USSR Journalists' Union and to improve the conditions in which it operates'. A USSR Journalists' Fund, under the USSR Journalists' Union, was set up. A Pension provision for Journalists was also made.

According to this resolution, the USSR Council of Ministers instructed the USSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing and the Book Trade to set up the Mysl (thought) Publishing House. An editorial staff was also needed for preparation and publication of literature on the mass news media, text books, training manuals, reference works and collections of the best public affairs writings by Journalists.⁶⁶ The USSR State Planning Committee was instructed to provide financial help to the USSR Journalists' Union to strengthen its physical facilities. The financial assistance was also to help the Union in purchasing its equipment and constructing a creative work facilities.⁶⁷

On February 10, 1988, an All-Union Council on Professional Ethics and Law was created under the USSR Journalists' union. A statute on the Council's operation was confirmed. The Council Chairman, N.N. Chetverikov, also

66. "On Measures to Strengthen the Physical Facilities of the USSR Journalists' Union and to Improve the Conditions in which it Operates" (Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers), CDSF, vol. XXXIX, No. 33, September 16, 1987, p. 19.

67. *ibid.*

Secretary of the Board of the USSR Journalists' Union and Chairman of the Board of the All-Union Copyright Agency, pointed out that the Council in conjunction with the republic, territory, province and primary journalistic organizations, would take an active part in all activities of the USSR Journalists' Union. It was to ensure observance of the requirements of the Union's charter and ensure the purity of the Union's rank. He stated that the council would prepare a code of ethics for journalists that would be made available for wide spread discussion.⁶⁸ It would act as a judge, whenever the ethics was violated. The Council would also study and summarize instances in which suits are filed against mass media outlets and journalists and the reasons thereof, he said.⁶⁹

N.N. Chetverikov further stated that the council was called upon to actively assist in instilling in Union members a Marxist-Leninist legal and ethical awareness and communist moral principles in keeping with the tasks of the press in a socialist society. It was to participate in monitoring the observance of those standards by all journalists; and to adopt measures to foster in the profession

68. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 6, March 9, 1988, p. 24.

69. *ibid.*

an atmosphere of intolerance for violations of the requirements of journalistic ethics. It was also to assist in providing legal aid to journalists in their professional activities and to concern itself with the protection of their professional honour and dignity. It was thus clear that the newly set up Council was given a significant role to play.

In September 1988, the Council decided to develop and implement a procedure, so that journalists may collect information at the scene of extraordinary events. It also indicated that the draft of code of ethics for Soviet journalists would be soon published for nationwide discussion in the bulletin Zhurnalistskiye novosti (Journalism News).⁷⁰

In October 1988, the USSR Council of Ministers started a new press service (information section). Director of the press service, L.A. Voznesensky pointed out on October 27 that the press service would expand glasnost in the administrative working. It was also to keep the people informed about the work of the Soviet government.⁷¹

An interview, published in Izvestia on November 3, 1988, of Dr. Vladimir Aleksyeyevich Boldyrev, Director of the USSR Chief Administration for the Protection of State Secrets

70. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 37, October 12, 1988, p. 21.

71. CDSP, vol. XL, No. 43, November 23, 1988, p. 17.

in the Press (Glavlit), must be mentioned here. It was the first interview given by a Director of Glavlit in the entire history of its existence. He suggested a mechanism for monitoring Glavlit's activity. The future law on the press must mention basic tasks of the Glavlit, he hoped. He clearly pointed out that "We propose that a Statute on Glavlit be published openly, a document that we would draft with an eye to the Law on the Press".⁷² He also mentioned the measures adopted for transfer of many foreign publications to the libraries' open collections. Earlier this was banned. The Glavlit was to allow several documents and materials for publication, if they did not harm the national interests.

Now the Draft Law on the Press appeared on the scene. Izvestia published a report on September 21, 1989, and said that the draft law was discussed and then approved by the Joint Committee on Questions of Glasnost and citizen's Rights and Appeals. Earlier Deputy A.S. Yezhelev opened the discussion. A working group comprising representatives not only of the Joint Committee on Questions of Glasnost and citizen's Rights and Appeals, but also of a number of other joint committees, took part in the discussion. The Deputies invited the young legal scholars Yu. M. Baturin, M.A. Fedotov

72. Vladimir Aleksyeyevich Boldyrev, "Press Interview", Izvestia, November 3, 1988, CDSP, vol. XL, No. 44, November 30, 1988, p. 4.

and V.L. Entin, who for the first time in Soviet legal practice prepared the draft on their own initiative. They also published it at their own expense in Yuridicheskaya Literatura (Legal Literature).⁷³

Disclosing the opinion of the members of the Joint Committee on Questions of Legislation, Legality and Law and Order, Deputy N.V. Fyodorov urged that the draft discussed in the joint and standing committees "Can and should be considered during the first days of the Supreme Soviet's second session".⁷⁴ Deputy V.A. Logunov, speaking on behalf of the Joint Committee on Questions of the work of the Soviets of People's Deputies and the Development of Management and Self-management, as well as Deputies A.A. Zgerskaya, M.N. Poltoranin and others were of the opinion that the draft law was good enough. Many opinions, sometimes even contradictory ones, were taken into consideration and fitted in, they stressed.⁷⁵ It was decided to publish the draft law for nationwide discussion, in near future.

The second session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, began on September 25, 1989 included the draft law in its agenda.⁷⁶ On November 24, the debate over the draft law

73. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 38, October 18, 1989, p. 21.

74. *ibid.*

75. *ibid.*

76. CDSP, vol. XLI, No. 39, October 25, 1989, p. 16.

became very heated due to circulation of a second draft law which was not approved by the appropriate committees.⁷⁷ Finally, the plenary meeting of the second session of the USSR Supreme Soviet decided that the first draft, signed by the committee Chairman, would be put to vote.

On November 27, the draft law was approved on first reading. Then on June 6, 1990, the third session of the USSR Supreme Soviet discussed over it and finally on June 12, 1990 the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted it with a decision to implement the law from August 1, 1990.⁷⁸

Simultaneously in June 1990, the USSR Supreme Soviet was discussing the 'Draft USSR Law on Public Associations' too. Article 18 of the draft law dealt with mass media. It stated:

"Public Associations have the right to establish mass media and carry out publishing activity in keeping with legislation of the USSR and the Union and autonomous republics concerning the Press and other mass media and other legislative acts".⁷⁹

77. CDSP, vol.XLI, No. 48, December 27, 1989, p. 9.

78. The Europa World Year Book, Vol. II (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1992), p. 2752.

79. "Draft USSR Law On Public Associations", SWB, SU/0786, June 9, 1990, p. C1/3.

This effort was also one constructive legislative step towards freedom of the press bearing the essence of Perestroika and Glasnost.

The passage of the law opened a new chapter in the history of the Soviet press. Each of the provisions, the law consists of, guarantees openness, democratization and restructuring in the Soviet Press and other news media.⁸⁰ As a result, the media has now discovered a new role for itself and recognised the need for a new idiom of expression.⁸¹

Main Provisions of the Law

'The Law on the Press and Other News Media' consists of seven chapters and thirty nine articles.⁸² Main provisions and features of the law must be explained here to understand it in depth.

Chapter one of the law (Article 1-6) included some general provisions. It abolishes censorship and explains the freedom of speech and freedom of the press guaranteed to citizens by the USSR Constitution. It states that these

80. SWB, SU/0791, June 15, 1990, p. C1/2.

81. Prabhu Chawla, "Moscow media sells new ware: Problems of Professionalism", Indian Express (New Delhi), June 7, 1993, p. 1.

82. See Appendix-III.

rights signify the right to express opinions and convictions and to search for and select, obtain and disseminate information and ideas in all forms, including the press and other news media. News media, i.e., newspapers, magazines, etc., are represented by the editorial management of the press, television, radio, news agencies and other institutions putting out news. The news media have to use the languages of the common people of the USSR in obtaining and disseminating news. The editorial management of a media outlet is a juristic person and it has the right to carry on production and economic activities. According to law, USSR and Union-~~and autonomous-~~republic legislation is to determine the process of state subsidies to news media. Abuse of the freedom of speech is prohibited. This provision also prohibits from interference in the private lives of citizens and writing against their honour and dignity. Chapter one of the law also clarifies that the legislation on the press and other news media consists of this law and other USSR legislative acts issued in accordance with it.

Chapter two of the law (Article 7-20) deals with the organizational activities of the news media. It prohibits the monopolization of news media. It allows the USSR citizens who have reached the age of 18, to found media outlets. The registration of a media outlet is essential. If media outlet does not begin its work within a year from the date of

registration, the registration certificate is considered invalid. The dissemination of news without registration, other than enterprises, organizations, educational and scientific institutions, is punishable. So far as the refusal of registration is concerned, the reasons are sent to the applicant in written form. If the founder of a media outlet stops its activities, then its labour collective or its editor (editor-in-chief) has the right to found a media outlet with the same name. The law states in detail about the founder, editor, editorial management and publisher of a media outlet. It also emphasizes that the editorial charter regulates relations among them. The charter includes the procedure for the distribution and use of income of the media outlet. But this charter must not be at variance with legislation.

Production, property and financial relations among the founder, editorial management and publisher of a media outlet are determined on the basis of the law and a contract. The law provides the complete form of a contract. Every issue of the print media must contain complete informations regarding its publication, i.e., names of the publication, of the founder etc.

According to law, it is necessary to send free copyright copies of a print media outlet after its publication, very soon to the All-Union Book Chamber, the

V.I. Lenin USSR State Library and to other institutions and organizations. For this purpose, the media outlet has to follow the procedures determined by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Union- and autonomous-republic Councils of Ministers.

The law also guarantees the preservation of materials from television and radio broadcasts. The editorial offices of these electronic media must prepare a journal with a register full of complete information regarding broadcasting and telecasting. That journal is to be preserved for a period of one year from the date of the final entry in it.

Chapter three of the law (Article 21-23) includes provisions regarding the dissemination of news. It states that the spreading of news should be factual and based on data. The dissemination of news media output without publication of data, is prohibited. This dissemination of news is carried out by the publisher directly. It may be carried out on a contractual or legal basis by communications enterprises or other organisations. This dissemination of news may be carried out by citizens also.

The dissemination of news is allowed only after receiving the permission of editor or editor-in-chief for its release, broadcast or telecast. He determines the press run of a periodical publication after consultation and

coordination with the publisher. The law also makes a provision that the prevention of the legal dissemination of the output of a media outlet, is not allowed. If any court decision has entered into legal force, only then the prevention of the legal dissemination of the output of a media outlet is allowed.

This is responsibility of all media outlets founded by state and administration to publish their official reports. These reports must be published so that the people may know about the activities of these bodies and organizations. The editorial management has to publish these reports, without taking money. Within a given period, the reports must come into such publications. Likewise any decision of a court or state arbitration agency that has entered into legal force and that contains instructions regarding the publication of this decision through the given media outlet, must be disseminated in time and free of cost.

The press law deals with relations of the news media with citizens and organizations in Chapter four (Article 24-28). Citizens have the right to receive reliable information about the activities of the Party, state and other organizations.

For the protection of this right, the mass media is empowered to receive such information from the state,

Party and other non-governmental organizations. Those institutions, officials and agencies are bound to provide required information. The media men should be provided such materials and documents without facing problem. If any information is not provided to a mass media, then the representative of the mass media may lodge a complaint before a higher level agency or official. He is permitted to take the help of the court too.

This is the right of a media outlet to use works of journalism, literature, art and science. But copyrights of such works should be compiled with. No one can force a media outlet to publish his materials. The decision of the editor or editor-in-chief is final. In any court order to publish such materials, only then that will be published. The law states about reader's letters also. Any letter may be edited. Cutting in the text of the letter is allowed. But the sense of the letter should remain unchanged.

For protection of honour and dignity of a citizen, some important provisions are included in the law. Citizens and organizations can demand the retraction of published information, if that information is false and defames their honour and dignity. They may request the editors of the concerned media outlet to publish their replies and withdraw the published statement or information. If the concerned

media outlet refuses to publish a retraction or reply, the citizen or organization in question is allowed to appeal to a court. The court, after examining the petition, may order the publication to do so.

The law protects the right of an informant also. Any media outlet is not allowed to disclose the identity of a person, who has provided some materials for publication, on condition that his name not be divulged. But his name and identity may be disclosed if any court requires.

In chapter fifth of the law (Article 29-32) many arrangements are made regarding journalists. According to law, he, who is engaged in gathering, creation, editing or preparation of materials for a media outlet, is a journalist. He has the right to collect and disseminate information. He can be received by any official or person in connection with performing his duties. He is allowed to use tape-recorders, cameras and other equipments, if his professional duties require. He is allowed in natural disaster areas, at rallies and demonstrations to collect information. For verification of the facts, he has the right to take help of specialists. Journalist also enjoys other rights granted to him in accordance with the law.

Some provisions regarding the accreditation of journalists, are also available in the law. Media outlets may accredit

their journalists. This is the duty of the agencies to which journalists are accredited, to notify them about functions and conferences scheduled. The agencies should also provide them official records of proceedings and other documents.

The law further narrates about duties of a journalist. A journalist's duty is to follow the editorial charter of the media outlet with which he is linked. He should verify his reports himself before its publication. He can refuse any assignment given to him, if he feels that the assignment is illegal. He has to respect the rights, duties, honour and dignity of other citizens and organisations. He also has other duties stemming from this law.

The provisions of the law regarding international cooperation in the field of news, are also significant. These provisions are mentioned in chapter six (Article 33 and 34) of the law. It mentions that the USSR citizens have the right of access to information through foreign sources. The law allows them to use foreign television telecasts and foreign radio broadcasts. They are also entitled to use the foreign print media.

The international cooperation in the field of news is based on the treaties concluded by the USSR and the Union republics. If any conflict takes place between this

law and such treaties, then those treaties should be applied. The news media and organizations of the media men are also given the right to conclude agreements with foreign citizens and organizations.

So far as the activities of representatives of foreign news media and diplomatic and other representatives of foreign states in the USSR are concerned, the law makes a clear provision. In that situation, activities of those foreign media men are regulated by USSR and Union-republic legislation and by the relevant international treaties of the USSR and the Union republics.

The last chapter, i.e., chapter seventh (Article 35-39) of the law mentions the provisions relating to liability for the violation of the law. This chapter protects the basic nature of the press and other news media protecting the honour and dignity of the citizens of the USSR. Dissemination of false fact and information that does not correspond to reality and defames the dignity and honour of the citizen, is unlawful. The victim deserves to be compensated by the guilty media persons. But media persons may not be punished for such dissemination of news, if that is based on official records, news agency reports and speeches by deputies in the Supreme Soviet sessions, congresses, conferences. Interestingly, state machinery or Party officials are not allowed interference in the legitimate activities of the media men. If one tries to force the media

outlet to disseminate or not to disseminate any information, he may be punished by the court.

The law mentions several grounds of liability for the violation on the press and other news media. The grounds are: abuse of freedom of speech, the dissemination of information that does not correspond to reality and defame the honour and dignity of a citizen or organization, and attempts by journalists to influence courts.

Every media outlet is to be registered at first. After fulfilling other important legal requirements, mentioned in the law, the media outlet should work. Otherwise the court may punish the guilty persons, involved in illegal publication.

Critical Appraisal

The law on the Press and other news media came into effect from August 1, 1990. It was given a cautious welcome. In fact, the Soviet society was ready to breathe the fresh air of freedom in the Press due to continuous effect of restructuring and openness that started with the advent of Gorbachev to power in March 1985. Gorbachev encouraged all initiatives towards freedom of the press. But conservatives were not fully satisfied with many provisions of the law

as it became clear during heated debates over the draft law in the second and third sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet. They never favoured complete abolition of censorship.

But the censorship completely ended, with the law coming into effect on August 1. Now the Glavlit would continue to exist as a functional, structural organisation under the government's jurisdiction. This was pointed out in an interview on July 26 by Vladimir Alekseyevich Boldyrev, Director of the USSR Council of Ministers, Glavlit. The publication of information constituting a secret would be prevented through three ways.⁸³

Firstly the editor or editor-in-chief and secondly any authorised senior employee of the media outlet can perform this task. Thirdly, it could be done through a contract concluded between the media outlet and the Glavlit to review materials prepared for publication. The Glavlit would check the publication of state secrets.

Boldyrev further revealed that a new draft statute on the Glavlit, had been worked out and submitted to the USSR Council of Ministers for circulation. He also emphasized

83. Vladimir Alekseyevich Boldyrev, CDSP, vol. XLII, No. 31, September 5, 1990, p. 9.

that the Press law empowered all information organisations to send materials abroad on their own, bypassing their ministry or department. They "themselves will decide what materials to present to the chief administration for review for the purpose of protecting state secrets", he underlined.⁸⁴

The Press law reduced powers of the Glavlit, at every level. Major General S. Filimonov, the last Chief Military censor of the USSR Armed Forces stated on August 6, 1990 that "prior censorship is indeed being abolished". He clarified that "this affects all open publications, including military ones".⁸⁵ About new job of the military censor mechanism, he said that they would monitor materials that had already been published, 'informing editors and publishing houses of instances in which secret information has been divulged and, if necessary, letting law-enforcement agencies know about it'.⁸⁶

The final abolition of Press censorship was a good news for the Soviet media and also for the Soviet people. Expressing his happiness on the news, Mikoja Ripko, editor of Pravda of Transcaucasia revealed that the newspaper censorship committee had a list of two hundred firms working

84. *ibid.*

85. S. Filimonov, CDSP, vol. XLII, No. 31, September 5, 1990, p. 9.

86. *ibid.*

for the army. These names were never to appear in the newspapers. Whenever any news item relating to results of football matches from these factories appeared in the newspaper, the name of only one of the teams appeared. He added that 'nobody knew who that team had beaten or by whom it had been beaten'.⁸⁷ According to provisions of the Press law, the sports fans among his readership would be provided complete information regarding sports, he hoped.

Likewise on August 1, the Izvestia in an article 'Goodbye, Censorship', openly criticized Glavlit. It disclosed that the Glavlit 'came to the defence of purely departmental interests and ideological dogmas'.⁸⁸

Welcoming the Press law, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting, i.e., Gosteleradio, Mikhail Fedorovich Menashev assured that Gosteleradio would work keeping the spirit of the law, in its mind. In an interview, he underlined the relationship of Gosteleradio with Union of Cable and Television Organisation. As one of the founders, one of the participants and one of the partners of this organization, he assured that Gosteleradio

87. Makay Ron (ed.), Letters to Gorbachev: Life in Russia Through the Postbag of Argumenty i Fakty (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1991), p. 160.

88. "Goodbye, Censorship", Izvestia (Moscow), August 1, 1990, CDSP, vol. XLII, No. 31, September 5, 1990, p. 9.

would not command or control it. He clarified that Gosteleradio is "planning to interact and cooperate with cable television".⁸⁹

On the issue of relationship between Gosteleradio and cable television, Eduard Mikhaylovich Sagalayev, President of the Union of Cable and Television Organisations also expressed the same views. In the light of the Press law, he hoped that Gosteleradio would never abolish the Union. The provisions of the law nowhere establish supremacy of the state organisation. Therefore, he urged, "it is premature to be fearful of the future simply because this Gosteleradio is a state organisation".⁹⁰ He further added, "May be we will find out that it (Gosteleradio) is a friend, comrade, companion, colleague, partner and so on".⁹¹

The comments of Albert Vlassov on Press law were quite balanced and cautious. Vlassov, Chairman of State Information Agency Novosti, i.e. IAN welcomed the law and placed the responsibility of its evaluation on common people. He pointed out that the IAN would never impose its opinion on anybody. He further added that the "world judges the Soviet policy by its real deeds, rather than declarations".⁹²

89. Mikhail Fedorovich Menashev, SWB, SU/0833, August 3, 1990, p. B/3.

90. Eduard Mikhaylovich Sagalayev, SWB, SU/0837, August 8, 1990, p. B/6.

91. *ibid.*

92. Albert Vlassov, SWB, SU/0833, August 3, 1990, p. B/3.

It seems necessary to note here that it was the public organisation Novosti Press Agency (NPA) which was reconstituted as the state Information Agency Novosti (IAN) during Perestroika.

Likewise Nikolay Ivanovich Yefimov, editor-in-chief Izvestia, urged to wait for effects of the law on the print media. He requested, "Let us try to live by this law, to make as much use as possible of what the law gives us, to the greatest degree".⁹³

Yefimov highlighted the revolution, brought about by the law in the Soviet press. He said: "Firstly the abolition of advance censorship and secondly, the demonopolisation of the mass media - are a revolution in our press, and the law was worth adopting for that reason alone".⁹⁴ He agreed with the idea expressed by several deputies including Lukyanov that "after one, one-and-a half or two years" the USSR Supreme Soviet discuss "which part of the law are working and which parts are not and, if necessary, make additions to it and improve".⁹⁵ Through effective implementation, the objectives of the law could be achieved. Putting stress on this fact he urged, "I think we shall see after some

93. Nikolay Ivanovich Yefimov, SWB, SU/0833, August 3, 1990, p. B/3.

94. *ibid.*, p. B/2.

95. *ibid.*

18 months what is complete about it and what is not".⁹⁶

In this manner, the Soviet media men welcomed the Press law carefully. Most of them considered the demonopolisation of the mass news media and abolition of censorship as the revolutionary initiatives towards freedom of the press. But at the same time, they were in favour of effective implementation of the law to achieve its objectives.

Summing Up

Undoubtedly, the law on the press and other news media provided a significant opportunity for changing the existing nature of the Soviet press. The law, which was a culmination of many official legal steps taken in various republics and by the USSR government, paved the way to usher in freedom of the press. The initiatives of various literary organisations and contribution of newspapers, particularly, Pravda and Izvestia and of the CPSU, laid the legislative foundations of freedom of the Press.

Several initiatives, prior to the passage of the law, contributed to the restructuring of the press and bringing openness in its activities which facilitated the

96. *ibid.*

passage of the law on June 12, 1990. But, at the same time, the Soviet people, specially media persons, welcomed the law cautiously. They were sceptical of its implementation. The critical appraisal of the law by the Soviet media men left many questions, mostly related to translation of the provisions of the law into action, to be answered by the future alone.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The study follows a historical and analytical approach to the subject 'Perestroika and Freedom of Press: Early Efforts in the Field of Legislation'. It highlights the state of the Soviet Press before and during Perestroika period.

The controlled Soviet media came after the October Revolution of 1917 and continued upto 1985 when a new environment was created through applying 'Perestroika' (restructuring) and 'Glasnost' (openness) in the field of press.

In this dissertation both - the pre-Perestroika period (1917-March 1985) and Perestroika period (March 1985-June 1990) are analysed. A study of the pre-Perestroika period brings out the functioning of the controlled press, while the study relating to Perestroika period highlights the changes, brought in the print media through a consistent practice of Glasnost. It also covers the main issues of debate over freedom of the press leading to the passage of the press law and discusses its important provisions.

Soon after the successful October Revolution of 1917, the newly established government under the leadership of

Lenin, by issuing two decrees on press in November 1917 and January 1918 banned the bourgeois press which was one of the most powerful weapons of the bourgeoisie and more dangerous than bombs and machine-guns for socialism and communism. The decrees established a new stereo-type press controlled by the Party and Party-led-government. All the constitutions - the RSFSR constitution of 1918 and the USSR constitutions of 1924, 1936 and 1977 - continued the same arrangements with respect to the press.

All the successors of Lenin tried to increase Party-control over the press and they misused it for their personal power gains. Stalin misused it to increase his popularity. Khrushchev freed the press to expose only Stalinist misrule and atrocities of that period. Brezhnev, who made the censor board, i.e., Glavlit very powerful, forced the press to look at every development from the government's point of view and to follow Party-guidelines. It was necessary to take approval of the Glavlit before publishing any news-item. Both Andropov and Chernenko died within a short span of time and they could bring no change in the status of the press.

The controlled Soviet press contributed to greater reliance on Western media and popularity of several Samizdat (underground) publications. Thus the Soviet press was becoming ineffectual within the USSR and abroad.

With the advent of Mikhail S. Gorbachev to power in March 1985, a heated debate began on freedom of the press. The reason behind the debate was the stress by the new leadership, on 'Perestroika' (restructuring) and 'Glasnost' (openness) in the Soviet press to achieve real socialism. Gorbachev insisted that every affair related to the CPSU, government and the Soviet system must be discussed freely in the Soviet press, so that democratic norms, primacy of human rights, social justice, and priority of human values in international relations could be protected. An open discussion on every aspect of the Soviet state and society was needed in the Soviet press which in its existing form had lost its relevance.

Following 'pluralism of opinion', applying 'openness' and restructuring itself, the press started looking at the developments from the people's point of view. Launching of several new media outlets, change in contents and form of the newspapers and magazines and increasing number of their subscribers, were signals of successful initiatives. With the publication of many unpublished and censored materials, the Samizdat publications became irrelevant. The new Soviet press became popular.

All the developments in the press, were the result of numerous efforts made by the Party, government, media men and common people. But these developments also aired internal bickerings among publicists and journalists. Hence,

the USSR Supreme Soviet finally adopted a comprehensive law on the press and other news media to curb and eliminate these negative features. The law, passed on June 12, 1990 and implemented from August 1, 1990, was the first law in the history of the Soviet press, which demonopolised the press and abolished the censorship. The law, consisting of thirty nine articles, guarantees freedom of the press and rights of the journalists.

It would be only right to say that the passage of the press law was the culmination of a spirit of glasnost unleashed by perestroika. The Perestroika leadership openly supported restructuring of the press and argued that openness in the press must be encouraged. It insisted that all matters relating to the Party, state and government be covered in the print media outlets. Nothing should be concealed from the people. Everything was to be done in a democratic manner and the press and other news media was no longer to be under Party control. But the existing structure of the Soviet press was not suitable for applying democratic norms and 'pluralism of opinion'. Therefore, the perestroika leadership continuously emphasized the necessity of restructuring the press itself through various decisions taken at Party forums and governmental initiatives from time to time.

Undoubtedly, the conservative leaders like Yegor Ligachev and Yury Zhukov opposed the initiatives towards freedom of the press, calling them anti-socialist and anti-communist. Their critical opinions were also considered seriously by the Perestroika leaders and at last after a heated debate between the pro and anti-Perestroika forces, the law on the press and other news media was adopted. The law could be passed by the USSR Supreme Soviet only due to positive implementation of openness in the Soviet press and through restructuring the entire media-mechanism.

Two trends emerged as the Soviet government began relaxation of control over the press. On the one hand, this relaxation encouraged the trend towards free and objective reporting, critical analysis of events, policies and investigative journalism. Many illustrations are given in chapters two and three of the dissertation as indication of this trend. On the other hand, the press published numerous negative materials too. Some of them contradicted the basic human values and social norms.

Sexual and vulgar information with naked photographs of women along with measurement of various parts of their bodies were published in Intercontact, a publication of the Cultural Department of the Moscow Soviet. Many other examples of such published materials are contained in chapters two and three.

But on the whole, it is true that the relaxation of government control over the press encouraged the trend towards freedom of the press. Important appointments to key positions in the press, publication of several censored materials, launching of many new print media outlets, qualitative changes in the contents of media outlets and in their forms were positive results of this relaxation. Yet the same relaxation increased some negative aspects too. Increasing number of articles full of baseless allegations and internal bickerings among publicists and journalists, presented the negative consequences of relaxation of government control over the press.

As study has shown, the press law re-established credibility of the Soviet press. In the first chapter, it is mentioned that Lenin always welcomed intellectual debates in the press within the framework of socialism. The Party-controlled press carried many articles of Maxim Gorky during Lenin's rule. In several of his articles Gorky had criticized Lenin and his government, but Lenin never stopped Gorky from doing this. This attitude of Lenin towards the press, helped the press in establishing its credibility within the country and abroad.

The successors of Lenin strengthened the control of the Party over the press. Nothing could be published

against the Party. Glavlit, the censor board was empowered to prevent publication of any material in the name of state secrets. The press was unable to meet the requirements of the people for full information on public affairs. Many important events remained uncovered and critical literature remained unpublished. This kind of censorship developed a tendency of relying on Western media and Samizdat (underground) publications. The Soviet press became an object of ridicule. It was said that "the KGB spends millions of roubles to stop people talking and then millions more to find out what they really think".¹ One of the famous jokes of the Soviet period was, "Pravda (truth) is sold out, there is no Izvestia (News), only Trud (work) remains".²

It was in such a critical situation that the press law was passed. It abolished the censorship and demonopolised the print media. The law guaranteed freedom of the press. It permitted the print media outlets to establish their professional contacts with foreign media also. Provisions of the law, mentioned in chapter fourth, were widely welcomed by the media persons. On the basis of this

1. Andrei Amalrik, Times (London), September 13, 1982.

2. Kalpana Sahni, "Glimpses of Glasnost in Soviet Media", Times of India (New Delhi), June 12, 1987.

fact, it is true to say that the press law re-established utility, relevance and importance of the press in the USSR and foreign countries.

Soviet people, who never liked the stereo-type monotonous contents of the controlled press, widely hailed the new move towards freedom of the press. They wanted to read articles full of entertainment, educational themes and critical comments with up-to-date information on every issue of the society. But the press was working as an 'ideological warrior'. It never tried to meet the demand of the people for complete information to form their opinion independently.

But the decades old suppressed attitude of the people came to surface with the beginning of 1985. Now any kind of suppression on media men was opposed by the people. They wrote letters to the editors, to the government and to Party officials to show their anguish. Likewise, they never supported the conservatives, who were in favour of controlled media. They were in favour of overthrowing the existing press 'of the communists, for the communists and by the communists'. Their new expectations from the press encouraged them to contribute to the new movement towards freedom of the press. Without the constructive participation of the common people no change could have been brought in the Soviet press.

The dissertation also points out that Gorbachev freed the press to expose the controlled society that existed under his predecessors. On various occasions he strongly pleaded for uncovering of failures, shortcomings, atrocities and corruptions, etc. He welcomed the appearance of such materials in the press. He argued that his stand of openness was in the interest of people, socialism and the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

Here it seems necessary to mention that Gorbachev wanted that only his 'predecessors' should be exposed and uncovered in the Soviet press. Any print media outlet, if it tried to unmask Gorbachev, was not encouraged by him. He did not want that the principle of openness should be implemented in matters relating to him. He tried to remove Starkov, editor of the magazine Argumenty i Fakty for an opinion poll, published in that magazine on the popularity of Soviet People's Deputies, Gorbachev was given fifth place. Earlier he got success in appointing I.T. Frolov as editor-in-chief of Pravda removing V.G. Afanasiev from his post. This was seen as an effort by Gorbachev to establish his effective control on Pravda.

When the media men started exposing the failures of Gorbachev, his supporters threatened those media men and humiliated them. They alleged that those media men were conservatives. The media men should highlight only

achievements of restructuring. Gorbachev himself threatened those media persons, who were involved in highlighting shortcomings of restructuring. He termed it as abuse of freedom of press. During the debate over the draft press law, by the second and third sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, these negative actions of Gorbachev were discussed. Gorbachev did not answer these allegations levelled against him and his government.

The study thus shows that though it was Gorbachev, who initiated the drive towards freedom of the press, he wanted that only his predecessors should be criticized and his actions and popularity should not be questioned. He tried to retain his personal control over media outlets and demanded that failures and demerits of restructuring should remain unpublished and the concept of openness should not be applied in revealing his double standards concerning freedom of the press. On the basis of information available and mentioned in previous chapters, it is right to conclude that Gorbachev freed the press to make an x-ray of the society that existed from 1917 to 1985. But he did not want his shortcomings and failures to be exposed in the Soviet press.

The study has tried to raise and answer many questions. The USSR Supreme Soviet passed the law on the

press and other news media but achieving the aims and objectives of the law depends upon the manner in which the law is implemented. It is in the future only that evaluation of the law can be made.

APPENDIX - I

DECREE ON THE PRESS, ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF
PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS¹

November 9 (October), 1917

In the trying critical period of the revolution and the days that immediately followed it the Provisional Revolutionary Committee was compelled to take a number of measures against the counter-revolutionary press of different shades.

Immediately outcries were heard from all sides that the new, socialist power had violated a fundamental principle of its programme by encroaching upon the freedom of the press.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government calls the attention of the population to the fact that what this liberal facade actually conceals is freedom for the propertied classes, having taken hold of the lion's share of the entire press, to poison, unhindered, the minds and obscure the consciousness of the masses.

Every one knows that the bourgeois press is one of the most powerful weapons of the bourgeoisie. Especially at the crucial moment when the new power, the power of workers and

1. Decrees, vol. 1, pp. 24-5, in Akhapiin, Yuri, First Decrees of Soviet Power (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), pp. 29-30.

peasants, is only affirming itself, it was impossible to leave this weapon wholly in the hands of the enemy, for in such moments it is no less dangerous than bombs and machine-guns. That is why temporary extraordinary measures were taken to stem the torrent of filth and slander in which the yellow and green press would be only too glad to ~~drown~~ the recent victory of the people.

As soon as the new order becomes consolidated, all administrative pressure on the press will be terminated and it will be granted complete freedom within the bounds of legal responsibility, in keeping with a law that will be broadest and most progressive in this respect.

However, being aware that a restriction of the press, even at critical moments, is permissible only within the limits of what is absolutely necessary, the Council of People's Commissars resolves:

GENERAL PROVISIONS ON THE PRESS

1. Only those publications can be suppressed which (1) call for open resistance or insubordination to the Workers' and Peasants' Government; (2) sow sedition through demonstrably slanderous distortion of facts; (3) instigate actions of an obviously criminal, i.e. criminally punishable, nature.
2. Publications can be proscribed, temporarily or permanently, only by decision of the Council of People's Commissars.

3. The present ordinance is of a temporary nature and will be repealed by a special decree as soon as normal conditions of social life set in.

Chairman of the Council of
People's Commissars,
VLADIMIR ULYANOV (LENIN).

Petrograd, October 27, 1917.

APPENDIX - II

LAW OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON
THE NATIONWIDE DISCUSSION OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS
OF STATE LIFE¹

The further deepening of socialist democracy and the development of the people's self-government presuppose the expansion, for every citizen of the USSR, of real possibilities of exercising his or her constitutional right to participation in the management of state and public affairs and in the discussion of draft laws and decisions of national and local significance, as well as of major questions of public life submitted for discussion by public organizations in accordance with their statutory tasks.

This law is designed to facilitate the development of citizens' participation in working out decisions on important questions of state and public life on the basis of broad openness and the comparison and consideration of various opinions and proposals of the working people.

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Art. 1. Nationwide Discussion of the Most Important Questions of State Life. - In accordance with the USSR Constitution, the most important questions of state life are to be submitted

1. Pravda, July 1, 1987, p. 4; Izvestia, July 1, 1987, pp. 5-6, in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), vol. XXXIX, No. 28, August 12, 1987, pp. 13-4.

for nationwide discussion.

Draft laws and other highly important questions of state life are submitted for nationwide discussion by the USSR Supreme Soviet or the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Art. 2. Discussion of Important Questions of the State Life of the Union Republics. - In a Union republic, draft laws and other important questions of the state life of the Union republic may be submitted for public discussion.

Draft laws and other important questions are submitted for public discussion by the Union-republic Supreme Soviet or the Presidium of the Union-republic Supreme Soviet.

Art. 3. Discussion of Important Questions of the State Life of Autonomous Republics. - In an autonomous republic, draft laws and other important questions of the state life of the autonomous republic may be submitted for public discussion.

Draft laws and other important questions are submitted for public discussion by the autonomous-republic Supreme Soviet or the Presidium of the autonomous-republic Supreme Soviet.

Art. 4. Discussion of Questions of Local Significance by the Population. - Decisions on important questions of local significance that affect the interests of the population residing in the area in question are adopted by the Soviets of People's

Deputies and their executive committees after preliminary discussion of these questions by the population.

Questions of local significance are submitted for discussion by the population by the Soviets of People's Deputies or their executive committees.

Art. 5. USSR, Union-Republic and Autonomous-Republic Legislation on the Discussion of Important Questions of State Life. - The procedures for nationwide discussion of the most important questions of state life are defined by this law.

The procedures for public discussion of important questions of the state life of the Union and autonomous republics, as well as for the discussion by the population of questions of local significance, are defined by Union-and autonomous-republic laws based on this law.

Art. 6. The Participation of USSR Citizens in Discussions. - USSR citizens are guaranteed free participation in the discussion of important questions of state and public life.

In the discussion of questions of all-Union, republic and local significance, USSR citizens have the right to participate directly, as well as through public organizations, labor collectives, meetings at places of residence, voluntary initiative agencies, meetings of servicemen in military units, and the mass news media.

Any direct or indirect restrictions on the rights of USSR citizens to participate in discussions on the basis of parent-age, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude toward religion, time of residence in a given locality or kind and nature of occupation are prohibited.

Art. 7. Participation by Public Organizations and Labor Collectives in the Preparation and Holding of Discussions. - Organizations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, trade unions, the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League, cooperatives, women's and war and labor veterans' organizations and other public organizations and labor collectives participate in the preparation and holding of discussions of important questions of state and public life.

Art. 8. Ensuring the Holding of Discussions. - The holding of discussions of important questions of all-Union, republic and local significance is ensured by the Soviets of People's Deputies.

Art. 9. Openness in the Holding of Discussions. - Discussions are held on the basis of broad openness. Draft laws and other important questions of state life submitted for discussion are published in the press, publicized on television and radio, and brought to the attention of the population by other means.

The mass news media give comprehensive coverage to

the progress of discussions, publish proposals and critical comments made by citizens, state agencies, public organizations and labor collectives, as well as surveys of proposals and critical comments that have been received, and inform the public of the results of discussions.

Art. 10. Expenditures Related to Discussions. - Expenditures related to the discussion of draft laws and other important questions of state life, as well as to the discussion by the population of draft decisions of local Soviets of People's Deputies and their executive committees, are paid by the state.

Art. 11. Liability for Violating the Legislation on Discussions. - Officials of state and public agencies who commit violations of this law, as well as individuals who hinder USSR citizens in the free exercise of their right to participate in discussion, incur liability as established by law.

II. PROCEDURES FOR NATIONWIDE DISCUSSION

Art. 12. Submitting Questions for Nationwide Discussion. - Draft laws and decisions affecting the basic areas of the country's political, economic and social development and the exercise of the Soviet citizen's constitutional rights, liberties and duties, as well as other highly important questions of state life coming within the jurisdiction of the USSR, are submitted for nationwide discussion.

Draft laws and other questions are submitted for

nationwide discussion by a decision of the USSR Supreme Soviet or the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, adopted at their initiative or on a proposal by a Union republic. Recommendations on the advisability of submitting a draft law or other question for nationwide discussion may be made by standing committees of the Council of the Union or the Council of Nationalities, the USSR Council of Ministers, all-Union agencies of public organizations or other agencies and individuals who, in accordance with the law, submit a draft law or other question to the USSR Supreme Soviet or its Presidium.

Draft laws and materials on other questions are published in the newspaper Izvestia, other central newspapers, in the republic press and, when necessary, in the local press no later than 10 days after the decision is adopted to submit them for nationwide discussion. They may also be published in specialized periodicals.

At the same time that a question is submitted for nationwide discussion, the USSR Supreme Soviet or its presidium establishes the time schedule and the procedures for organizing work to examine proposals and critical comments received during the nationwide discussion, and it entrusts the implementation of this work to the appropriate standing committees of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Council of the Union and Council of Nationalities or sets up a special commission for this purpose.

Art. 13. Organizing the Discussion of Draft Laws and Other Questions. Summarizing Proposals and Critical Comments. - Union, republic and local Soviet and other state agencies and executives of enterprises, institutions and organizations, in conjunction with public organizations, ensure the broad discussion of draft laws and other questions and create the necessary conditions for this.

Citizens may send proposals and critical comments on draft laws and other questions submitted for nationwide discussion directly to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet or to the Presidiums of Union-or autonomous-republic Supreme Soviets, local Soviet executive committees or other state and public agencies.

Draft laws and other questions submitted for nationwide discussion may be discussed at sessions of Soviets of People's Deputies or at meetings of their agencies and Deputies groups, at meetings of public organizations, labor collectives and citizens at their places of residence, by voluntary initiative agencies, at meetings of servicemen in military units, in the press and on television and radio.

Proposals and critical comments received during a nationwide discussion are summarized, as appropriate, by the Presidiums of Union-and autonomous-republic Supreme Soviets, executive committees of local Soviets of People's Deputies, other state and public agencies, and the mass news media.

In order to summarize proposals and critical comments that have been received, the indicated agencies may form commissions and working groups. Proposals and critical comments, in generalized form, are sent to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Art. 14. Summing Up the Results of Nationwide Discussions. - Proposals and critical comments received by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet from citizens, labor collectives and state and public agencies concerning a draft law or other question are examined and taken into consideration during the final work on the draft by the appropriate standing committees of the chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet or by the special commission or agency that has submitted a question to the USSR Supreme Soviet or its Presidium. For the preliminary examination of proposals and critical comments, they may form preparatory commissions and working groups made up of People's Deputies, appropriate specialists, scientific and cultural figures and representatives of state and public agencies and scientific institutions.

The mass news media provide regular information to the population about proposals and critical comments that have been received and about progress in examining them, and organize the explanation of the provisions of a draft law or other question.

The results of the nationwide discussion of a draft-law or other question are examined, as appropriate, by the USSR Supreme Soviet or the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the population is informed of the examination.

Proposals and critical comments not relating to the subject of a draft law or other question that is under discussion are directed through the proper channels to the appropriate state and public agencies, which examine them according to established procedure.

III. DISCUSSION BY THE POPULATION OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

Art. 15. Submitting Draft Decisions and Other Questions for Discussion by the Population. - Draft decisions of local Soviets of People's Deputies and their executive committees concerning plans for comprehensive economic and social development and the budget, the ensuring of socialist legality, the safeguarding of law and order and the rights of citizens, the work of enterprises, institutions and organizations involving service to the population and other important questions of state, economic, social and cultural construction at the local level are submitted for discussion by the population.

Draft decisions of local Soviets and their executive committees and other important questions are submitted for

discussion by the population by the local Soviet or its executive committee at their initiative and also on the basis of proposals by the standing committees of Soviets, Deputies' groups and Deputies, agencies of public organizations, labor collectives, meetings of citizens at their places of residence, and other agencies and organizations stipulated by Union-and autonomous-republic legislation.

Draft decisions of local Soviets and their executive committees are published in the local press or brought to the attention of the population by other means.

Art. 16. The Examination of Questions Submitted for Discussion by the Population. - Questions submitted for discussion by the population may be given preliminary examination at sessions of lower-level Soviets of People's Deputies, at meetings of their executive and administrative agencies, standing committees and Deputies' groups, at meetings of public organizations and labor collectives, at citizens' meetings at places of residence and at meetings of voluntary initiative agencies, and they are discussed in the local press and on television and on radio.

Proposals and critical comments from agencies, organizations and citizens are sent to the executive committee of the appropriate Soviet and are taken into consideration during final work on draft decisions, as well as in practical activity. Proposals and critical comments that because of

their content fall into the jurisdiction of higher-level state agencies are sent to them for examination.

The results of a discussion are reported by the executive committee at a session of the Soviet of People's Deputies and are brought to the attention of the population.

A. GROMYKO,
Chairman of the Presidium,
USSR Supreme Soviet,
T. MENTESHASHVILI,
Secretary of the Presidium.

The Kremlin, Moscow, June 30, 1987.

APPENDIX - III

LAW OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:
ON THE PRESS AND OTHER NEWS MEDIA¹

CHAPTER I. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

Art. 1. Freedom of the Press. - The press and other news media are free.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press, guaranteed to citizens by the USSR Constitution, signify the right to express opinions and convictions and to search for and select, obtain and disseminate information and ideas in all forms, including the press and other news media.

Censorship of news is not permitted.

Art. 2. The News Media. - In this law, news is understood as publicly disseminated printed, audio and audiovisual reports and materials.

News media are understood as newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, newsreels, documentary films and other periodical forms for the public dissemination of news.

The news media are represented by the editorial management of the periodical press and of television and radio

1. Izvestia, June 20, 1990, p. 3; CDSP, vol. XLII, No. 25, 1990, pp. 16-20.

broadcasting organizations (news agencies and other institutions putting out news).

Art. 3. The Language of the News Media. - The news media carry on their activity using the languages of the peoples they serve or whose interests they represent. The news media have the right to disseminate news in other languages.

The state ensures the right of USSR citizens to the use of their native language and other languages of the peoples of the USSR in obtaining and disseminating news in accordance with legislation on the languages of the peoples of the USSR.

Art. 4. Production and Economic Activity. - The editorial management of a media outlet is a juristic person operating on the basis of its charter.

The editorial management has the right to carry on production and economic activity under conditions of economic independence and economic accountability.

Procedures for granting state subsidies to news media are determined by USSR and Union-and autonomous-republic legislation.

Art. 5. The Impermissibility of Abuse of the Freedom of Speech. - The use of news media for divulging information that constitutes a state secret or another secret specially protected by the law, for appeals for the forcible overthrow

of or a forcible change in the existing state and social system, for the propaganda of war, violence and brutality or of racial, national or religious exclusivity or intolerance, for the dissemination of pornography or with a view to the commission of other criminally punishable acts is not allowed.

The use of news media for interference in the private lives of citizens or for encroachments on their honor and dignity is forbidden and will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

Art. 6. USSR and Union-and Autonomous-Republic Legislation on the Press and Other News Media. - Legislation on the press and other news media consists of this law and other USSR legislative acts issued in accordance with it, as well as Union-and autonomous-republic laws and other legislative acts on the press and other news media.

CHAPTER II. ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY OF THE NEWS MEDIA.

Art. 7. The Right to Found Media Outlets. - The right to found media outlets belongs to Soviets of People's Deputies and other state agencies, political parties, public organizations, mass movements, creative unions, cooperative, religious and other associations of citizens created in accordance with the law, and labor collectives, as well as USSR citizens who have reached the age of 18.

The monopolization of any form of news media (the press, radio, television or others) is not allowed.

Art. 8. The Registration of Media Outlets. - The editorial management of a media outlet carries on its activity after the media outlet in question has been registered.

Applications for the registration of media outlets intended for an all-Union audience are submitted by the founders to bodies of state administration determined by the USSR Council of Ministers, and applications for the registration of media outlets intended for a republic or local audience are submitted to the appropriate executive and administrative agencies. An application for registration is to be examined within one month from the day it is received.

The registration of media outlets intended for a republic or local audience may be assigned to other state agencies by Union- and autonomous-republic legislative acts.

Media outlets intended for a foreign audience are registered with the USSR Council of Ministers or a Union-republic Council of Ministers.

The right to begin putting out news is retained for one year from the date a certificate is received. If this period elapses, the registration certificate is considered invalid.

Art. 9. Applications for the Registration of Media Outlets. - Applications for the registration of media outlets are to indicate:

- (1) the founder;
- (2) the name, language (languages) and location of the media outlet;
- (3) the proposed audience;
- (4) program goals and tasks;
- (5) the proposed frequency of publication, the maximum size and output of the publication or broadcasting operation, and sources of financing.

The presentation of other demands during the registration of media outlets is forbidden.

Art. 10. Cases of the Dissemination of News Without Registration. - Bodies of state power and administration and other state agencies have the right to public dissemination of news without registration for the publication of official normative and other acts and of bulletins of judicial and arbitration proceedings.

Enterprises, organizations and educational and scientific institutions have the right to create and disseminate informational materials and documents necessary for their activity without registration. No registration is required for activity involving the preparation, with the aid of technical means, of printed, audio and audiovisual products

that are not intended for public dissemination or that are reproduced in manuscript form.

Registration is not required for media outlets issuing printed output with a pressrun of fewer than 1,000 copies.

Art. 11. Refusal to Register Media Outlets. - The registration of media outlets is refused only on the following grounds:

(1) if the name of the media outlet or its program goals and tasks are at variance with the provisions of the first part of Art. 5 of this law;

(2) if the registering agency has already issued a certificate to a media outlet with the same name;

(3) if the application is submitted less than one year from the date that a decision terminating the activity of the media outlet entered into legal force.

A refusal of registration is sent to the applicant in written form, with an indication of the reasons for the refusal as stipulated in this law.

Art. 12. Registration Fee. - A registration fee is charged for issuing a registration certificate for a media outlet, in accordance with the procedures and amounts established by USSR and Union-and autonomous-republic legislation.

Art. 13. Terminating the Production or Publication Activity of a Media Outlet. - Termination of the production or publication activity of a media outlet is possible on the basis

of a decision by the founder or the agency that registered the media outlet, or by a court.

The agency that registered a media outlet, or a court, terminates the media outlet's production or publication activity if there are repeated violations over a year's time of the requirements set in the first part of Art. 5 of this law.

If a media outlet does not produce or publish for more than one year, a new registration certificate is required for it to resume its activity.

In the event of a decision by the founder to terminate the production or publication activity of a media outlet, its labor collective or its editor (editor in chief) has a preferential right to found a media outlet with the same name.

Art. 14. The Procedure for Appealing a Refusal to Register a Media Outlet, as Well as a Decision to Terminate Its Activity. - A refusal to register a media outlet or the violation by a state agency of the one-month time period established for registration, as well as a decision to terminate the activity of a media outlet, may be appealed to a court by the founder or editorial management and is considered by the court, including property disputes, in accordance with the procedures stipulated by legislation on civil procedure.

A determination that a refusal to register a media outlet or a decision to terminate its activity is at variance with the law entails the revocation of the appealed decision. The revocation of a decision to terminate the activity of a media outlet entails reimbursement for losses incurred by the founder, editorial management and publisher, including income not received.

Art. 15. The Founder, Editor, Editorial Management and Publisher of a Media Outlet. - The founder establishes the program (basic principles) of the activity of a media outlet. The editorial management or other institution putting out news carries out the program on the basis of professional independence.

The editor (editor in chief) is appointed and removed by the founder of the media outlet or is elected and removed in accordance with the procedure stipulated in the editorial charter. The editor (editor in chief) directs the work of the editorial board and staff of the media outlet and represents it in relations with the founder, the publisher, authors, state agencies, public organizations, other citizens' associations and citizens, as well as in court.

The editor (editor in chief) is responsible for the fulfillment of demands placed on the activity of the media outlet on the basis of this law and other legislative acts.

The editorial board is formed in accordance with the procedure stipulated in the editorial charter. The editor (editor in chief) is chairman of the editorial board.

The publisher of a media outlet may be its founder, or it may be a publishing house or other juristic person providing material and technical facilities for the production (duplication, output) of news.

Art. 16. The Editorial Charter of a Media Outlet. - The editorial charter of a media outlet is adopted at a general meeting of the outlet's collective of journalists by majority vote, with at least two-thirds of its members present, and is confirmed by the founder.

The editorial charter regulates relations between the founder, the editor (editor in chief) and the editorial management, and the powers of the journalists' collective. The charter includes provisions concerning the procedure for the distribution and use of income received from the activity of the media outlet, and other provisions.

The editorial charter must not be at variance with legislation.

Art. 17. Production, Property and Financial Relations Among the Founder, Editorial Management and Publisher of a Media Outlet. - Production, property and financial relations among the founder, editorial management and publisher of a media outlet are structured on the basis of existing legislation and a contract.

The contract specifies:

means for the maintenance of the publishing or broadcasting operation;

the portions of income (profit) from the activity of the media outlet that are placed at the disposal of the editorial management, the founder and the publisher;

the obligations of the founder and the publisher with respect to providing proper production, social and everyday conditions for the life and work of staff members;

other provisions.

Art. 18. Publication Data. - Every issue of a printed periodical must contain the following information:

- (1) the name of the publication;
- (2) the founder;
- (3) the last name and initials of the editor (editor in chief);
- (4) for periodical publications, the sequential number of the publication and the date of its appearance, and for newspapers, the time that it was signed for the press as well;
- (5) an index number for periodicals distributed through communications enterprises;
- (6) the pressrun;
- (7) the price (when a publication is commercially distributed);
- (8) the addresses of the editorial office, the publisher and the printshop.

Each time they go on the air, or, in the case of continuous broadcasting, at least four times every 24 hours,

television - and radio-broadcasting organizations must announce the name of the television - or radio-broadcasting organization.

Art. 19. Copyright and Mandatory Copies. - Immediately upon printing, free copyright copies are sent to the All-Union Book Chamber, the V.I. Lenin USSR State Library, the M. Ye. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, the founder and the agency that issued the registration certificate for the given publication.

Copyright and mandatory copies of printed matter are also sent to other institutions and organizations in accordance with procedures determined by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Union- and autonomous-republic Councils of Ministers.

Art. 20. The Preservation of Materials From Television and Radio Broadcasts. - The editorial offices of television - and radio-broadcasting organizations must preserve broadcast materials for a period of one month from the time they are carried on the air and keep a journal with a register of broadcasts that are put on the air without prerecording, indicating the subject of the broadcast, the date, the time the broadcast began and ended, and the first and last names of the moderator or anchorman. The journal containing the register of such broadcasts is to be preserved for a period of one year from the date of the final entry in it.

CHAPTER III. THE DISSEMINATION OF NEWS

Art. 21. Procedures for the Dissemination of News Media Output. - The dissemination of the output of news media is carried out by the publisher directly or on a contractual or other legal basis by communications enterprises or other organizations, as well as by citizens.

The dissemination of news media output without publication data is prohibited.

Art. 22. Permission for the Dissemination of News. - The dissemination of each individual issue (with publication data) of the output of a media outlet is allowed only after the editor (editor in chief) has given permission for its release (or broadcast).

The pressrun of a periodical publication is determined by the editor (editor in chief) in coordination with the publisher.

The prevention of the legal dissemination of the output of a media outlet, including the confiscation of a pressrun or part of it, is not allowed, except on the basis of a court decision that has entered into legal force.

Art. 23. Official Reports. - Media outlets founded by bodies of state power and administration must publish the official reports of these bodies.

The editorial management must publish, free of charge and within a designated time period, a decision by a court or state arbitration agency that has entered into legal force and that contains instructions regarding the publication of this decision through the given media outlet.

CHAPTER IV. THE NEWS MEDIA'S RELATIONS WITH
CITIZENS AND ORGANISATIONS.

Art. 24. The Right to Obtain Information Through the News Media. - Citizens have the right to promptly receive, through the news media, reliable information concerning the activity of state agencies, public associations and officials.

The news media have the right to receive such information from state agencies, public associations and officials. State agencies, public associations and officials make information in their possession available to the news media and provide them with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with documents.

A refusal to provide requested information may be appealed by a representative of a media outlet to a higher-level agency or official, and then to a court, in accordance with the procedure stipulated by law for appealing unlawful actions by bodies of state administration and officials that infringe the rights of citizens.

Art. 25. The Use of Authors' Materials and Letters. - The use of works of journalism, literature, art and science by the

news media is allowed if copyrights are complied with.

No one has the right to order a media outlet to publish materials that have been rejected by the editors, unless the law stipulates otherwise.

When reader's letters are published, the cutting and editing of their text is allowed, if the sense of the letters is not distorted.

Art. 26. The Right to Retraction and Reply. - Citizens or organizations have the right to demand from the editors of a media outlet the retraction of published information that does not correspond to reality and that defames their honor and dignity.

A citizen or an organization with respect to which a media outlet has published information infringing its rights and legitimate interests has the right to have a reply published in the same media outlet.

The retraction or reply is published under a special rubric or on the same page and in the same typeface used for the retracted story: In newspapers, this is to be done no later than one month from the date the request is received, and in other periodicals it is to be done in the next issue under preparation.

A retraction or reply is read by a radio or television announcer on the same program or series of broadcasts and at the same time of day, no later than one month from the

date the request is received. The right to make a reply may also be granted to a citizen himself who demands that a reply be published or to a representative of an organization making such a demand.

The editors must publish a reply that is up to one page of standard typewritten text in length. No editing of the text of the reply is allowed.

Art. 27. The Consideration by a Court of a Request for the Publication of a Retraction or Reply. - If a media outlet refuses to publish a retraction or reply or violates the one-month time period for publishing one, the citizen or organization in question has the right to appeal to a court within one year from the date of the original publication.

The court examines an application to have the editors of a media outlet publish a retraction or a reply in accordance with the procedure stipulated by legislation on civil procedure.

Art. 28. Special Cases in Which Information Is Not Divulged. - The editors of news media and journalists have no right:

(1) to give the name of a person who has provided information on condition that his name not be divulged, with the exception of cases in which a court requires this;

(2) to divulge information from a preliminary investigation without the written permission of the prosecutor, the investigator or the person who conducted the inquiry;

to make public any information that could lead to revealing the identity of a juvenile lawbreaker without his consent and the consent of his legal representative;

(3) to prejudge in their reports the results of a judicial hearing of a specific case or in any other way to influence the court before a decision or verdict enters into legal force.

CHAPTER V. THE JOURNALISTS' RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

Art. 29. The Journalist. - In accordance with this law, a journalist is a person who is engaged in the gathering, creation, editing or preparation of materials for a media outlet to which he is linked by labor or other contractual relations, or who is engaged in such activity on authorization from such a media outlet.

Art. 30. The Journalist's Rights. - A journalist has the right:

- (1) to seek out, obtain and disseminate information;
- (2) to be received by officials in connection with the performance of his professional duties as a journalist;
- (3) to make any recordings, including recordings using audiovisual equipment, filming and photography, with the exception of cases stipulated by law;
- (4) upon presentation of his journalist's credentials, to be present in natural disaster areas and at rallies and demonstrations;
- (5) to draw on specialists to verify facts and

circumstances in connection with materials he has received;

(6) to refuse to create materials under his byline if they are at variance with his convictions;

(7) to remove his byline from materials the content of which, in his opinion, has been distorted in the process of editorial preparation;

(8) to stipulate that his anonymity be maintained.

A journalist also enjoys other rights granted to him in accordance with this law.

Art. 31. The Accreditation of Journalists. - By agreement with state agencies and agencies of public organizations, media outlets may accredit their journalists to these agencies.

The agencies to which journalists are accredited must notify them ahead of time of meetings, conferences and other events and provide them with verbatim reports, official records or proceedings and other documents.

Art. 32. The Journalist's Duties. - A journalist must:

(1) carry out the program of activity of the media outlet with which he has a working relationship and be guided by its editorial charter;

(2) verify the authenticity of the information he reports;

(3) satisfy requests made by persons who provide information concerning their identification as sources, if this information is being made public for the first time;

(4) refuse an assignment given to him by an editor (editor in chief) or editorial staff if it involves breaking the law;

(5) respect the rights, legitimate interests and national dignity of citizens and the rights and legitimate interests of organizations.

A journalist also has other duties stemming from this law.

CHAPTER VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF NEWS.

Art. 33. International Treaties and Agreements. - International cooperation in the field of news is carried out on the basis of international treaties concluded by the USSR and the Union republics.

If an international treaty of the USSR establishes rules different from those contained in this law, the rules of the international treaty apply.

The news media, professional organizations of journalists and other creative unions participate in international cooperation in the field of news and may conclude agreements with foreign citizens and organizations for this purpose.

USSR citizens have the right of access to information through foreign sources, including direct television broadcasts, radio broadcasts and the press.

Art. 34. The Activity of Representatives of Foreign News Media and Diplomatic and Other Representatives of Foreign States in the USSR. - The legal status and professional activity of foreign correspondents and other representatives of foreign news media accredited in the USSR, as well as the information-related activity of diplomatic, consular and other official representatives of foreign states in the USSR, are regulated by USSR and Union-republic legislation and by the relevant international treaties of the USSR and the Union republics.

CHAPTER VII. LIABILITY FOR THE VIOLATION OF
LEGISLATION ON THE PRESS AND
OTHER NEWS MEDIA.

Art. 35. Grounds of Liability for the Violation of Legislation on the Press and Other News Media. - Abuse of freedom of speech, the dissemination of information that does not correspond to reality and defames the honor and dignity of a citizen or organization, and attempts by journalists to influence courts entail criminal, administrative or other liability in accordance with USSR and Union-republic legislation.

Liability for other violations of legislation on the press and other news media may be established by USSR and Union-republic legislation.

Liability for the violation of legislation on the press and other news media is borne by the officials of state

and public bodies guilty of such violations, as well as by the editorial board and editor (editor in chief) of the media outlet and the authors of reports and materials that have been disseminated.

Art. 36. The Impermissibility of Interference in the Activity of the News Media. - Interference on the part of officials of state or public agencies in the legitimate professional activity of journalists or the coercion of journalists to disseminate or to refuse to disseminate information entails criminal liability and is punishable by a fine of up to 500 rubles.

Art. 37. Liability for the Illegal Preparation and Dissemination of News. - The preparation and dissemination of the output of a media outlet without the outlet's registration in accordance with this law, or after a decision on the termination of its production or publication activity, entails administrative liability in the form of a fine of up to 500 rubles imposed by a people's judge, with confiscation of the pressrun or other output.

A second commission within any one year of a violation covered in the first part of this article entails criminal liability and is punishable by a fine of up to 1,000 rubles, with or without confiscation of technical equipment belonging to the guilty party that was used in preparing and disseminating the information.

Art. 38. Cases of Exemption From Liability for the Dissemination of Information That Does Not Correspond to Reality. - An editor (editor in chief), as well as a journalist, does not incur liability for the dissemination of information that does not correspond to reality:

(1) if this information was contained in official reports;

(2) if it was obtained from news agencies or press services of state or public agencies;

(3) if it is a verbatim reproduction of speeches by People's Deputies at Congresses or sessions of Soviets or by delegates to Congresses, conferences or plenary sessions of public associations, or of official statements by officials of state and public agencies;

(4) if it was contained in sources' speeches that were broadcast live or in texts that were not subject to editing in accordance with this law.

Art. 39. Compensation for Moral Damages. - Moral (intangible) damage suffered by a citizen as a result of the dissemination by a media outlet of information that does not correspond to reality and defames the honor and dignity of the citizen or that causes other intangible damage to the citizen is compensated for, in accordance with a court decision, by the media outlet, as well as by any guilty officials and citizens. The amount of compensation for moral (intangible) damages in monetary terms is determined by the court.

M. GORBACHEV,
President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
The Kremlin, Moscow, June 12, 1990.

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