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EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL

Freedom of Expression, Media Legislation, and Media Education for Ethnic Tolerance and a Culture for Peace

BY TODOR PETEV

The UNESCO supported and sponsored International Conference was held on October 27-28th 2000 in Sofia. About 80 participants from Balkan countries, Austria, Denmark, Italy and The USA took part at that meeting of journalists, university teachers, and NGO representatives.

Marcello Scarone of UNESCO made an opening keynote speech on Promoting Freedom of Expression and Democratic Media Legislation. Panel discussion on same topic got together profession-

als from diverse backgrounds, styles of expression, and professional perspectives - Negslava Stanoevic, Yugoslavia, Alexander Angelov, Bulgaria, Metin Arkun, Turkey, Heinz Brahm, Germany.

Prof. Thomas Bauer, University of Vienna, delivered report on Ethnic Tolerance and Culture of Peace, which opened predicable an intense discussion on internationalization of ethnic tensions, contradictions and conflicts with a special reference to media intrusion in public space in moments of crisis.

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UNESCO chairholder
Sofia University

Discussions followed in which Liljana Kostadinovic Rosen Milev, and Oliver Vilovic made imputes in cultivation of ethnic tolerance at international and local levels.

Prof. Mihai Coman, University of Bucharest, pushed discussions in a future direction: Journalism Education for Tolerance and Culture of Peace. Departure from intercultural stereotypes and misunderstandings opened room for gaining greater empathy and free exchange of information. Gordana Vilovic, Liljana Zurovac, Stepjan Malovic, Remzi Lany and Mirella Petrescu made their contributions (case studies) to an open and productive discussion.

Round Table Free Media for Ethnic Tolerance and Peace, chaired by Valery Rousanov, ACCESS Association, confirmed productive orientations in spirit of sharing. Prof. Brad Thomson, Fulbright Schollar, Dr. Zdravka Konstantinova, FJMC, Sofia University, Prof. Georgy Eldarov, The Vatican, and others made their contributions to better understanding and confidence building processes.

The Conference backed Manifesto 2000 focussing UNESCO International Year for a culture of peace and non-violence.

The Conference enjoyed a special event: chamber music group Tutti Soli performed repertoire of internationally popular songs.

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Ethnic Intolerance and Culture of Communication

BY THOMAS A. BAUER

The group of organizers and supporters of this conference follow the aim of making credible that an interethnic peace at the Balkan is not only an utopic, but - at least after somewhat ten years of transition - a practical and reachable horizon. And they trust by that in freedom of expression, in media legislation, and in media culture. Freedom in general is a qialitativ status of living and is based on tolerance. Freedom of expression is a way of constructing a peaceful environment, is a method of realizing political and cultural moral and by that a way of accepting difference and contradiction, even dissens of meaning. By the way, that is "just" a basic human right and has nothing to do with

sophisticated arrogance or social luxury.

I was asked to give an analysis of this topic out of the framework of an communication scientist, who I am in a sense of cultural theory. Also I was requested to do that in consciousness of being an Austrian, who might understand the multicultural challenge out of a framework of a multicultural history and out of the present transition of becoming a multicultural and multi-ethnic society, which Austria not always is able to manage sufficiently. But there is some multicultural competence and capacity of multiethnic holding together in Austria, not only by its history, but also by its present struggles to keep

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the mind open and to learn for the future by verifying the idea of social unity by cultural variety. There is a measure, which makes it possible or even more senseful, which is future. People who are afraid of "Alienation" are seeking for their welfare and for their identification in the past. This view makes nervous to lose, makes angry on news and depressiv. This past-oriented view hinders to learn. People who are looking for their hail, their identity and their place in the world in the future, have to open their eyes and their minds, are interested in learning, are not afraid of contradictions and develop by that an emancipativ stratgy of life.

So I suggest to follow me first in thinking about, where peace has its place in a multi-ethnic society, then we may look for possibilities of cultivating the climate of peace - and last not least we should contextualize those ideas with the phenomena of a media-culture and communication society.

1. The dialectic challenge

The starting point in search of ways, which lead to a solution of inter-ethnic conflicts is quite dialectic: the fact of ethnic intolerance demands the development of culture of peace. The development of

peace has to count with the fragility of tolerance. Tolerance of others always has to do with the conditions of own auto-stability, with the character of relations between neighbors, which have to be approached on different levels and in different thematic contacts between closeness and distance. Sometimes there is a psychological need of distance in order to give a close view onto the other, and sometimes it is necessary to be in a close disposition to the other, in order to be able to accept desires of distance.

The dialectic challenge within the question of what could be the way from ethnic intolerance to inter-ethnic peace goes even farther: we all know, there is a way to overcome conflicts, which is communication. The problem is, that what is the objective and the scenario of solution is also the scenario of how to do it and how to come there. The aim defines the way to go and the way to reach there includes and anticipates the truth and the quality of the aim. So there is no possibility of tricking, no place for lies and no sense of rethoric drama. Clearness, honesty, fairness, acceptance, tolerance of difference and variety are the principles of communicative ethics as well as they are the criterias of coming there.

There is also an other speciality within the relationship between the goal and the way of peace. As the goal defines the way, the way to do it is the goal, but also: the goal is the way, the goal has the character of coming, being and remaining on way. There is no end and there is no station to rest and to make it oneself comfortable.

Those more or less philosophical assumptions to the dialectic character of peace-work are at least moral conditions of the constitution of a culture of inter-ethnic understanding. The solutions are just there, where the problems are. More: The problems are the expression of what never has been solved, or of what never has been cleared in a sufficient way. There were always too many tricks, too many cultural lies, too many rethoric dramata mixed into the cultural expression of ethnics and into the definitions of ethnic identity.

When we assume the solutions to be found, where the problems are, we also may assume, that the problems generally are the troubles to deliberate and to develop the solutions. Problem and solution are the two sides of one coin. You find the solutions by clearing up the problems and then the solutions are just the troubles, one has to overtake in knowing

what problems one has to face and to make in realizing solutions.

If we may think, the problems to be the getting-lost objectivations of somehow anthropologically spiritualized solutions, the solution in general is the correction of how to deal the problems. Problems are not extinguishable, but they are challenges to change the view - in the case of ethnic conflicts: to change the view of oneself and of the other - and they are also the challenge to understand the conditions of life by a new paradigm.

2. New Paradigmata

The paradigm of ethnic intolerance is power as a means of a violent distinction between the we-group and the group of the others, it is also power as a strategy of surviving to the one and powerlessness as a condition of existence to the others. In that climate grows destructive interest of the social and cultural neighborhood, mutual hate, arrogance, abhorrence and detest for each other. The degrading behaviour among neighbors might be the compensation of a humiliated self-estimation under the condition of cultural similarity. Soemetimes - to the eyes of an outstanding person - it seems, the ethnic groups of

the Balkan are culturally too similar and too close - or they were forced to become that close, so that the desire of difference has not correspondence of distant rooms and not enough space for cultural autonomy.

The paradigm of an order of peace is autonomy. Which is not only and not first a political or an organizational status, but more and first of all a status of mind and a cultural status of self-generating. Autonomy is the psychological condition of partnership. It enables for empathy and social sensitivity. To be one's own and appropriate gives enough generosity to let others be their own and appropriate. Under the conditions of autonomy grows identity, personality and - constructively interest of the social and cultural environment and curiosity of the other. Autonomy in that socio-psychological context is not a question of political structures, it is a question of mind and mentality, it is a construct of authenticity.

Authenticity is the expression, but also the condition of constructing and developing identity. Identity consists of, what I think about me (I-Identity) and what others express to think about me (Me-Identity). So the treatment by others is a

paramount decisive factor in the constitution of subjectivity and self - especially when there are already relationships of similarity, neighborhood or competition.

Where that consciousness of identity and auto-existence is not given, or where it got lost over times of being treated by lies, stereotypes, copies, or masks, there the communicative competence is that demolished and smashed, so that this people hardly is able to help itself coming out of the circle of self-deception, self-forgetting and self-violation by deceiving, destructing and violating others. In this case one needs help from outside, one needs the mediation, in order to find a meta-communicative position and to realize, that the destruction I do against others is the destruction of my own. Once more we are - in search of peace - reminded of the redeeming factor of communication. Empathy and Authenticity are the two sides of the coin which is identity-consciousness. Identity is one of the conditions, in the same time, one of the effects, which describes the quality of communication.

3. Communication for what?

But what is communication and what is it for? What do

we mean, or what do we mythologize by that terms of communication or understanding?

Without any critical interest we normally use a model of communication, which assumes, that communication is done or has reached its aim, when people comes into the situation of understanding each other. And normally we think everything to be in order, when both partners in communication come to the decision to see the same or to see a thing from the same point of view.

So we learned - living in societies, which organize and arrange the problem of power by hierchies of competence - that communication has to succeed as a model of congruence. That model just works in arrangements, where the sharing of power is regulated and agreed. Insofar communication is a construction of reality and sense, we learned to agree with a way and a model of construction of reality which is in search of congruence and correspondence. And we learned that situation to take for an order of peace.

But what happens, when the relationships are demolished, when there is no interest in regulation or in construction of competence-arrangements, or

when the desire of understanding each other has died, and when not love is the paradigm of happiness, but hate?

Then a model of corresponding and consensual communication comes to its theoretical and practical border of explanation. Facing the everyday-experience. that communication always is happening to fail as it happens to succeed, makes it thinkable, that communication is in power to arrange correspondence and connection as it is in power to create difference and disconnection, that communication is in power to organize clearness, structure and disburden as it is in power to cause complexity, chaos, and burden.

Theorizing this experience, in order to find a functional model of analysis, and remembering, that the social reality is a result of communication - wherein failing might lead to a success and succeeding might lead to fail - such abstracting from experience, communication has to be seen as a resource of surprise - maybe the only one, which is left in an organized environment.

The dynamic force of communication is non-linear, because its structure is biotic. There is somehow teleology, but not

determination. Life is, what creates life and keeps life living by increase of difference. So communication, as the resource of social reality, develops social life by creating difference and not-expected views.

There is somehow a teleology of peace in communication, but no determination. Peace can be done by searching congruence and correspondence, but also by finding and arguing difference.

4. Unity by Diifference

So, what could we learn from that theoretical analysis for the question, how the Balkan-region can overcome from ethnic intolerance to intercultural peace? And what could be the role of means of communication in that process?

First: Peace makes Difference:

Difference in constructing social signification of reality is as important as correspondence it is in modelling a peaceful world.

Under the conditions of multi-ethnicity, multi-culturality and multi-religiosity dissens and difference are not a catastrophe, but an enrichment of realization of cultural contingency.

When this desire of difference is - or in case of the Balkan

was for a long time - under the pressure of equality or even indifference, or under pressure of the tension between a hopeless and wide poverty of the citizen and small but strong exploiting aristocracy, or under the pressure and dependency of hegemonial fights between leading oligarchies, it must be considered within democratic frames, that for the constitutional building of ethnic or cultural identity distinction and difference have more appeal than similarity or mistakability.

So there should be lot of sensitivity accepting the expression of ethnic difference - which is also "just" a social construction - by means of cultural, religious or even national-political peculiarity. This space is needed to get out of everyday-fight for selfunderstanding and to come to the point of missing the others for a social completion of the own identity.

Second: Peace needs Mediation:

There is a way from counter-culturality via multi-culturality to interculturality. The way is transcultural communications. To come to that competence of mutual transcultural attention, the ethnic groups at the Balkan need help. Not a help of ones who know it better, but a help of ones who came upon a

learning process by similar experiences. The help is on the one hand to give enough support, in order to give space for structural development. On the other hand there is need of mediation.

Mediation is a strategy of giving space for expressing the positions, which nourish the conflict, without the pressure to solve it, but with the interest to make visible the difference and to deliberate indoctrinations and cramped positions.

Mediation also tries to empower the motivation for social and cultural interrelations, in order to create platforms of interchange of different positions, where common solutions may be found.

Mediation is a concept of subsidiarity. It is a concept of giving conditions to the ethnic or cultural or social parties to find their own authentic way of intercultural attention. So interethnic peace is also to live with the difference and to learn, that difference in a multicultural world is better protected by communication and interrelationship than by isolation or separation.

There exists a debate on the role of media in a democratic and public society. And often it is said: the journalists obligation is just to inform, to deliver opinions, but never shall try to educate by their own opinions.

I follow this position insofar we are facing an audience which has competence of public communication. Insofar societies always have to learn to be competent of their own and of themselves, we may accept, that sometimes some societies are in need of a learning process and in need of instruments to become a learning society. In situations like that an impetus of self-education has to be mobilized by mediation, by confronting each other with confronting positions in a climate of rationality and within an environment of de-escalation. The media are in exact that position of doing so and serving the cultural transition from the status of counterdependence to a culture of interrelationship. As this transitional process needs decomplication and deschaotisation, it is a practicable way to oblige experts in media and communication. Needless to say, that this experts have to be in a moral advantage as they are in a professional advantage of information. That is just the view concerning the massmedia-culture. Facing the netmedia-culture, the situation is changing and challenging for a new round of democratic peace.

Third: Multi-discursive understanding:

In that context the role of the media has to be stressed. The

media overtake more or less consciously an important part in public mediation - maybe more than politics are able to. The media are not only a place of exchanging informations, ideas, positions or meanings. They are a platform of sharing meanings and of constructing social reality. As they overlook all the cultures and social rooms of the world and as they are interconnected all over the world, the media are a global marketplace which can be visited by anyone despite its ethnic, cultural or social convenience.

The media are the place, where the intercultural communication creates a multidiscursive understanding of world and of ones own relational position within this world. The power of media is their function of mediation. They make us learn, that conflict and crises are dispositives of communication. They bring us to the attention of others, even or especially when they could be a threat for our own interests.

Differences, failures, crises, surprises and conflicts are societal counterparts of congruent understanding, which have to be included in a consideration of organizing a communication society.

The chance of peace is the com-

munication society. And the chance of peace at the Balkan is to integrate all ethnic or cultural groups to their special need of selfpresentation. A democratic communication society must have space for the crisis, for the conflicts and for the failures of selfpresentation and interaction, otherwise - as it has to be organized technically - it would just be a technology-society.

The aim of technology is perfection by excluding sources of failure and empowering sources of success. The aim of communication is to create a livable world, in which the imperfectness makes sense.

To make this clearer: I believe in the power of media in this context, as far the media are not constructors of reality against a non-medial construction of reality, but as they are a resource of construction like any other system is just a resource of construction of reality, it could be science, arts or politics. The media-made-reality is - though, of course - constructed under the conditions of technology, organization, economy and culture - is a resource of an approach to the own identity as it is a resource of understanding others. The non-media-discourse, often called the everyday-discourse, is in a wide range an annexion of

media culture, and is not less interrelated to politics, economy or other organized systems.

So my hope is, that the media discourse arranges the ethnic discourses to become a forum of conflictual positions and by that way a bridge of intercultural awareness as it - the media discourse - is also a welcome irritation of tendencies of overestimation or isolation. The intercultural communication is the challenge of creating a transmission of a multiphenic order of doing the world.

What has to be done in searching peace in the relation to the media, is to develop the media-infrastructure, or more- regarding the new media: the net-infrastructure, in order to complete the everyday-discourses and the special milieu-discourses on ethnic assessment with counterparts.

Fourth: Initiatives for Emancipation:

Societies are in general self-referential systems. They are in possession of critical dynamics by themselves. They are in possession of competence, even when they are short of sources of rational development. In times of totalitarian regimes a know-what of emancipation is

growing. In times of liberation a know-how of emancipation has to be developed. There are several institutions and organizations within the sector of culture, communication, and media at the Balkan working according this strategy.

In that context it is a remarkable event, that there already exists an institution working for the culture of peace by expertness in media and communication, which is the Balkan Media Association, which is now going to run the Balkan Media Academy. This organization has developed by own competence, by own critical perspective and by international support to an institution, which analyzes the media-culture at the Balkan, and which now undertakes the professionalization of people working with media, and which empowers the qualification of media organizations all over the Balkan region, including all ethnic, cultural and social groups. This Balkan Media Academy is a model of cooperation between originating competence and international support in order to develop structures of peace-making. Journalists and PR-experts, who learn to use the media as means of mediation and encountership of people as long as there are conflicts, intolerance, resentments and dif-

fuse hate, are an incredibly important investment for democracy and peace.

So this could be an opportunity to thank all the persons, who worked with tremendous personal motivation and self-confidence to raise a personal idea to a huge internationally interneted project, also to thank the persons and representatives of the international, European or national institutions, who gave a lot of motivation and support to the BMA and in the same way understood the sometimes different way, how the Balkan works.

Let us hope, this and other initiatives will make school at the Balkan

Last but not least: Balkan - a synonym for future:

The culture of interior and interactiv peace at the Balkan region has to do with and is somehow dependent from the view or even the stereotypes Europeans keep about the Balkan. The identification of the Balkan by Europe is on the one hand the affirmation and construction of the identitiy-feeling of Europeans, on the other hand a way to keep the Balkan in distance. In order to break those distances, there are sometimes intentions within organizations of the Balkan itself to substitute the denomi-

nation "Balkan" by a new mask, named "South-East-Europe" or at laest by a denomination which is not as burdened with stigmatization and which not mediates a problematic image. The history of the Balkan gave a lot of opportunity to equate it with incalulability, inweighability, interior split and inpenetrability. This image makes it difficult to make friends or form an alliance. But this is - of course - very important exactly in the present transition, where the Balkan needs alliances to overcome. Regarding what I tried to point out with my analysis just before, I can not find the psychological and not the practical sense of a renunciation of the label Balkan. The history is a part of the present and of the future. The authenticity of the future is given by mastering the past. Bisesdes that the term "South-East-Europa" is just a technical and economical term, while Balkan is a cultural symbol. I f it is important to develop new trust of the other European societies into the Balkan, you must give to Europe the chance of changing the meaning and not of replacing one opinion by an other. But first it is important, that the Balkan countries themselves estimate the denomination Balkan as a futurable criterion. Maybe that is, what the Balkan mentality has to devel-

op with more creativ consciousness, with more control of mind and with more postulation of itself. So the decision to use this name as a lable of future, as a challenge for openness, clearness brotherhood, and culture of neighborhood is the chance to present the Balkan as a surprise of not affirming the stereotypes, which develops the European interest of re- asking the Balkan much more than anything, coming from a a no-name - region. Such mobilizing the interest of Europe brings new feedback to the Balkan, which might again be re-invested in the search of an intercultural interaction of a multiethnic region. There is no reason to be ashamed of an identification, even if it is burdened by history, when there is the intention to rebuild it from inside to outside. If one refuses the identification from outside by putting on a new mask, there is no guarantee that the purification of the identity will be done from inside. Exactly because of the fact, that Europeans have strong stereotypes of uncalculability of the Balkan, convince them by confusing them, according the sentence of John Tucker: "If you can't convince them, confuse them."

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Education for the Media and for the Culture of Peace and Tolerance

BY MIHAI COMAN

The obligation to discuss this kind of theme places me in a difficult position. As a professor I think, from the bottom of my heart, that the education in the spirit of a culture of peace and tolerance represents a noble and reachable goal. As a researcher (as an anthropologist) I have to notice the fact that this activity is (at least from the perspective of present-day co-ordinates of journalistic education) a hard to reach reality.

If we take a look at the things from a general philosophical perspective, there is no need for a certain "education" in the spirit of peace and toler-

ance. These are fundamental moral concepts and any and every educational act must allow understanding and assuming them as fundamental elements of the cultural profile of every individual. If these values (together with other elements, considered minimal moral consciousness elements) have not been transmitted and interiorised, it means that there has not been any educational project, or, if it has, then it has been designed in a wrong manner, denying its very educational nature. As a consequence, we can not, purely theoretically, talk about a certain

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“education” for tolerance because this one is a constituent part of education, an “educated” journalist has to be, almost axiomatically, a person sensitive to differences, tolerant, capable of promoting comprehension and peace values.

However, the daily experience shows us that these general truths are not always covered by facts - the presentations of the events in audio-visual and written press are frequently accompanied by an embarrassing incapacity of understanding the nature of a certain situation, by intolerance, by simplifying (and not once contemptuous) stereotypes, by aggressive judgements and symbols. Certainly, the most simple way of explaining these “side-sleepings” of the media is to call for the vocabulary of the conspiracy theory; from this perspective, the journalists are guilty either of weakness (lack of professional competence), either of immorality. In the first case, they are “victims” of a manipulation scenario set by different actors - political men, political marketing specialists, terrorists, business men, secret services agents, etc. They gave out wrong information or they blocked the access to information and thus the presentation made by journalists was distorted (what those who hide themselves in the warm corner

of running away from responsibility forget is the fact that intolerance is especially obvious in the tone of journalistic texts, in information’s cutting out and putting in the “text” - written or audio-visual -, in the journalistic attitude and language). In the second case, the journalists either gave up to cupidity and wrote “at some order”, either they abandoned the moral values of profession and enrolled in the propagandists’ legion, still maintaining the facade of the mass-media status and activity. There are not so many cases when a guild representative admits that they were bought or that they submitted to a propaganda campaign; usually they invoke major values, i.e. the fight against a certain threat (the Nazi Germany in the case of the American media propaganda, or Milosevich dictatorship in the case of NATO bombing positive presentation).

However, if we do not take into consideration these particular cases, and we exclusively talk about the morally correct journalism, we can not help asking ourselves why the presentation of complex situations is strongly affected by stereotypes - sources of intolerance and attitudes that are not in the favour of mutual understanding and peaceful conflicts solutions? Is journalists’ education wrong or

incomplete? Are the journalists “ingrate” students who forget when they are on the “field” what they learnt in the classrooms?

I think there are two answers at these questions: 1) journalists education is far from being a real education - it is only a process of skills transmitting (a trainment process); 2) when journalists cover difficult situations on the field, they are not free to make the decisions they want to - they are submitted to the daily production pressures, to the newsrooms editors, to the managers and advertisers interests. Because the first aspect constitutes the subject of this paper work, I shall only analyse the structural weaknesses of journalists preparation programs (there is a vast bibliography for the other aspect, what specialists call sociology of the newsroom).

The educational model in journalism is influenced by the profession's requirements and built to satisfy these requirements; this model can not have a pedagogical and social autonomy (similar to the other modern society professions), because the active group of journalists has an almost complete control over the professional field. Because of various reasons (which I do not have the time to discuss here) the journalism did not accept one of

the basic standards of any profession: the academic studies as a necessary condition for the access to profession. In journalism the access is (almost) free, the integration criteria being established by the guild - meaning the newsrooms or professional organisations managers; the socialization model remains dominated by the trainment process inside the newsrooms, see the skills transfer in the working process under the care of a “master”. Even in those situations when the academical formation - in long or reduced periods - is accepted, the profession discourse emphasizes the importance of the permanent contact with journalists - who must be invited to teach the courses dedicated to skills forming process - and of the internships inside newsrooms, if these are not accomplished, the profession is totally compromised. In this way, journalism training, either taking place in academical facilities, either in professional schools (that belong to press groups or to professional syndicates or associations), or simply inside the newsrooms, became synonym to professional skills transfer.

This particular situation must be seen in the context of journalism development, namely in the context of the efforts made by this profession to gain (to

secure) its own identity and legitimacy, meaning public acknowledgment and social prestige. At the end of the nineteenth century, on the basis of the massive urbanization, of the rising, precisely from this reason, of the social interest for information, of increasing the speed of transportation (both, information transportation, by telegraph, and goods transportation by railways and roads) of developing the technologies for the written press (linotype and the printing wheel) and of setting the model for press financing by the means of advertising (followed by a drastic decrease of newspapers prices), the conditions of mass press were accomplished - cheap, accessible, with a circulation of hundreds of thousand copies per day and national distribution. Fact that generated an enormous need for labor in order to provide the raw material for this industry - news, feature reports, interviews, investigations, chronicles, etc. The increase of those who were involved in this profession led not only to creating a professional group and to its diversifying (through the appearance of different specializations and professional categories that established precise tasks - the division of labor), but also to a fight for earning the professional autonomy. As different histories of this profession show (see

M. Schudson, D. Schiller, M. Palmer, D. Ruellan studies, for example), the fight for social recognition was held by imposing a demarcation line capable of identifying the professional specificity of journalism in relation to other activities, in other words, to set up exclusion criteria. On this groundwork the journalists delimited themselves from those who practiced opinion journalism (philosophers, politicians, moralists, etc.) and from those who practiced literary journalism (writers and essayists) - meaning from those who, through their activity, had been occupying so far the most of the journalistic field and who were the most natural claimants to "occupy" journalism territories.

By promoting the idea that journalism is neither opinion, nor literature, the guild obtained a few things: a) establishing a specific field of activity: gathering, verifying and writing the news; b) determining a personal field - information journalism - and specific genres and techniques deriving from it; c) imposing a monopoly on this territory ("we are the specialists!"), therefore the right to control the criteria and the processes of (1) journalism practicing, (2) entering the profession, (3) exclusion, (4) rewarding, (5) construction of public representations about

the profession; d) establishing practitioners priority over other categories (researchers, teachers, philosophers, moralists) who would like to judge and influence the development of the profession - in other words, the only ones who have the legitimacy to comment the journalists facts are those who practice themselves journalism and, therefore, who know better than anybody else which are its evaluation standards.

Having this fight for professional autonomy as a background, a corpus of ideas and representations about journalism (a professional ideology) was created, as well as a vast mythology (spread by the legends of the profession, by the journalism manuals, by novels and books) that feature both, journalism and journalists, in a heroic light (reparatory, missionary, savior, contestatory, victim etc. journalism).

On the other hand, journalism is still a "young" profession and therefore "fragile" - it is heterogeneous (because it did not succeed in completely shutting off its borders it must include persons with different cultural horizons and conceptions), insufficiently autonomous (it is influenced by the political circles and by the business men), dependent to the public (it must modify its content accord-

ingly to the public's requirements in order not to lose the audience), with norms and procedures often not enough defined (although it made great progress in establishing professional techniques, journalism depends in many cases on ad hoc procedures and improvisation). Moreover, the journalism activities are extended and diversified everyday: how can you define a profession with so many discrepancies, for example those between a local journalist's work and that of an anchor-man from an important TV channel, or between that of a journalist who works for a gardening magazine and the journalist's who works for the news department, etc. Thus the journalism reveals itself as a professional field that has fought and is still fighting for maintaining its autonomy, but seldom managing to keep it.

In this context, its dialogue with the academic corpus is a difficult one, or, to be more precise, it is a difficult dialogue from both sides: a) firstly, because the journalists guild fears the academic corpus' desire to control the education for the profession and, through this, the access to profession (here we deal with a problem of power exercise solved by the mature professions by removing the accent - they surrendered to the academics the

basic knowledge part, considered to be defined and not negotiable, and they are more preoccupied with maintaining the control and the influence over the part of the new professional knowledge, in other words, over the research); b) secondly, because the academic corpus is suspicious towards this field which can not provide yet a conceptual field clearly defined; the academical educational spheres already constituted claim themselves from one or more sciences; theoretical fields or research traditions - all of them having an unanimous recognized prestige. The journalism succeeded in imposing itself in the academic spheres by referring to such a field: the communication studies, often invoked, are themselves still a heteroclitous assembly of elements coming from sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, arts and literature theories, cybernetics, etc, that is in the middle of a process of gaining a status and a legitimacy on a scientific and academic level.

This rather particular situation leads to a hybrid academic model. This one is based on a great amount of practical activities with the purpose of creating some skills, and on some theoretical knowledge with the purpose of forming the thinking patterns specific to the pro-

fession.

The first segment is characterised by "vocationalism" - based on repeating some pattern activities (text writing according to some standard writing procedures, producing materials for the written press, radio and television, and, more recently, for the online journalism), that simulate real situations in the professional activity. The purpose of this preparation process is providing young persons capable of directly, rapidly and successfully penetrating the production, in other words, capable of producing efficiently and cheap, with full responsibility, from the very first day the products needed for the media industry (unique situation, because in other professions graduation from studies is followed by a training period when the young person does not have complex professional duties and is guided by more experienced persons).

In order to reach this purpose, profession made pressures over the academic circles so that: a) there should be more professional skills training activities; b) these kind of exercises should resemble as much as possible to those inside newsrooms; c) the accent should be on (even mechanical) professional skills accumulation and not on their conceptualization

or critical evaluation; d) the manuals and all the other educational materials should be made on the pattern of "recipes", that would provide standard procedures, easily to understand and reproduce; e) the most appropriate personnel for performing this activities should be nominated by the profession's representatives, either active journalists, either journalists who work as teachers.

In deciding the academic curricula the theoretical part (the one that should provide the thinking patterns specific to the profession, as an example the juridical, medical, engineering or economical framework) is hard to establish. On the other hand, they often say that the journalist should have a "general background of knowledge" (see culture), but the question is how general should it be in order to be useful in professional performing? Ideally, it should be a Renaissance-like education (including everything one can possibly know, from geography to history, from arts to religion etc.) because the profession of the journalist, through its variety of fields requires all these knowledge. And if we refuse the general humanist education, then what should be the sciences or the disciplines capable of forming the journalistic

framework? There is no theoretical unattackable answer, the experience of different academic curricula shows that this part is usually covered by knowledge concerning interpersonal and social communication, mass media, legislation, ethics, political sciences, economy and sociology. And this is extremely little in comparison to other academic curricula and to other professional studies.

In this way, first because they need to be accepted by the profession and second because of the incipient nature of communication studies, the journalists' educational programs have a rather more manufacturing nature than an academic one.

The education for a tolerant way of thinking must be based on creating abilities for analysis, for critical and self-critical evaluation, for interpretation - meaning for the freethinking exercise. Tolerant thinking requires opening towards the categories of the other and, at the same time, the ability of overcoming your own categories, to be more precise, one's own stereotypes (prejudices) and common places. Obviously, an important part of the tools we judge the world with are "common sense truths", meaning common places inherited from one generation to the other inside each culture and

subculture. As Walter Lippmann noticed many years ago: "in the great blooming buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we have to perceive that which we picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture". Therefore we are prisoners of our own prejudices that our maternal culture or professional subculture we are integrated in fed us with - because these help us find simple, comfortable, ready-made answers to the confusing problems of life. Journalists are also prisoners of these stereotypes (not once source of intolerance and aggressiveness) because they are products of their culture and because they write (they must write) in terms and explanatory frameworks accessible and acceptable for their audience.

However, journalists are (they must be) more than simple resonance boxes of their own culture; they must contribute to understanding some phenomena and events in what they have special and unique, so that people could correctly evaluate the situations and make decisions (at a personal level, as well as at a public one), equally useful and moral. In order to be able to make others understand, journalists must prove a great thinking

mobility so that they could evaluate different points of view involved in an issue and present them in a well-balanced manner (both in selecting information and using the right tone for the presentation). In order to have a tolerant perspective, journalists should possess the critical thinking practice - and this is a state of mind that can be obtained in time, through debates, reading, meditation, doubts, confrontations, feverish search for the truth etc. There are no universal procedures for tolerant way of thinking and for gaining the ability to understand the profound meaning of the events, there are no simple skills to be learnt, nor standard training and practical school-books. The way towards this state of mind does not go through "vocationism", but through complex academic education.

That is way the journalists' dominant educational model (based mainly on manufacturing skill transfer) does not provide the thinking frameworks inherent to a culture of peace and tolerance. This one appears (if and when it appears) as a secondary product, from outside or from the edges of the journalism training: from personal reading, professional experience, failures, debates (most often in forums ex-centric from the journalistic

daily life), contacts with the scientific milieu etc. This is the reason I am afraid that in the present-day frameworks of journalism curricula such an educational project would extremely difficult find its place; the education for a critical way of thinking (and therefore for tolerance) continues to be, in the current stage, at the level of professors' conscience duty and students' capacity of overcoming the utilitarian vision of their own education and of asking for more - from the academical stuff, from the profession and from themselves.

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South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

BY OLIVER VUJOVIC

Over the past years media and journalists in South East Europe have often been forced to work under difficult conditions. Furthermore, the deepening political and economic crisis of the past months is having particularly devastating consequences for the media. It is getting ever more difficult for journalists to do their work properly, as independent newspapers, as well as private TV and radio stations, are subject to repressive laws and policies and are being destroyed economically. From defamation to national security,

from privacy to contempt of court, laws are widely used to suppress information and opinions that have a right to see the light of day. Public representatives also have a tendency to limit public access to information: official files and documents are often unnecessarily withheld from the public's eye, impeding the public's right to be fully informed and preventing them from evaluating the performance of their representatives. Physical harassment, threats and intimidation are also deployed to discourage

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inconvenient reports. Radio stations have been closed and equipment destroyed, newspapers have been prosecuted and fined, and economic sanctions have been used to bring the independent media to the brink of bankruptcy.

In response to the worsening situation and in the belief that media pluralism forms the basis of any democracy, the International Press Institute launched the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). The purpose of the organisation is to promote media pluralism by providing timely and non-bureaucratic assistance to the media of the region; while, at the same time, collecting and distributing information on the international activities in support of their aims.

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, is a network of editors and journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, internet, new media and news agencies in the South Eastern European Region - Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, FRY (Serbia, Montenegro & Kosovo), Greece, Macedonia and Romania.

SEEMO is run by a President,

a Vice-president, a Board and a General Secretary. The Board will ideally include up to three representatives (one from each sector of the media: print, electronic media and news agencies) from each of the member countries, as listed above, and external observers from Slovenia and Hungary. The Board will elect a President and a Vice-president. The General Secretary will take care of the administration; the organisation of events and the correspondence; spreading information and maintaining contact with the Board and the members.

In the first period SEEMO will work in close co-operation with IPI. During this time, SEEMO will have the opportunity to make good use of IPI experience and professionalism as well as contacts and databases. Furthermore, in order to reduce the costs, SEEMO headquarters will be located within IPI's office in Vienna, giving SEEMO access to IPI's computers, telephones, copy machines and other types of office equipment.

After this period of time, upon decision of the SEEMO Board and of IPI, SEEMO might become self-sustainable and independent. Membership of SEEMO is open to editors, editors-in-chief, directors and

journalists from newspapers, journals, news agencies, Internet media, new media, TV or radio broadcasting outlets from the SEE region, who support the principle of freedom of the media and desire to co-operate in achieving the Organisation's objectives. Participants, in seeking membership, will formally declare in a written statement their willingness to work for press freedom and the achievement of the Organisation's stated objectives as defined below. SEEMO corporative members are media, media institutes and media organisations, like in Serbia the newspaper DANAS, news agency BETA, radio INDEX, internet news service BEOGRAD.COM..

SEEMO is open for co-operation with other international and local media organisations as well as IGOs and NGOs.

Main objectives in the SEE region:

- To promote and safeguard freedom of the press, by which is meant: free access to the news, free transmission of news, free publication of newspapers, free expression of views.
- To achieve understanding among journalists and so among peoples.
- To improve the standards

and practices of journalism.

- To promote the free exchange of accurate and balanced news and the free flow of information regardless of national boundaries.

- To ensure the safety of journalists and to allow them to work without interference.

- To promote co-operation, understanding and an exchange of professional experience among its members.

SEEMO's activities include:

Media Aid Programme

- To collect and distribute information about existing aid programmes and funds in support of media and journalists in the SEE region.

- To identify the most appropriate sponsor for SEE journalists and media outlets in need.

Media Law Programme

- Creation of a committee of media law experts with representatives from every SEE country.

- Analysis of the present legislation regulating the media in the SEE

countries.

- Preparation of texts for a new media legal framework in line with international standards.
- Interventions with local authorities to improve the legislation regulating the media.
- Training programme for media law experts.
- Legal advice for media outlets and journalists.

Media in Transition Programme

- Support in the development of editorially independent public service broadcasting (to replace the state controlled broadcasting structures).
- Support in the drafting of journalists' code of conducts and internal statutes.
- Training of editors in conflict-management.
- Training of managers (publishers).

Other activities

- Organising missions for on-the-spot investigations by regional and international experts.
- Publication of studies of vio-

lation of press freedom.

- Support in the exchange of news between media organisations.

SEEMO Committees

PRINT MEDIA Chaired by: Radomir Licina, Danas (FRY)

ELECTRONIC MEDIA Chaired by: Dragos Stefan Seuleanu, Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation (Romania)

NEWS AGENCIES Chaired by: Ljubica Markovic, BETA News Agency (FRY) and Frrok Cupi, Albanian Telegraphic Agency (Albania)

MEDIA LEGISLATION Chaired by: Sasa Mirkovic, B-92 (FRY), in cooperation with the ANEM legal office

NGOs NETWORKING Chaired by: Victor Roncea, Ziua & Civic Media Association eu.ro.21 (Romania) and Svetlana Nedimovic, Media Plan Institute (Bosnia Herzegovina)

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM Chaired by: Zoya Dimitrova, 168 Hours (Bulgaria)

NEW MEDIA AND THE

**INTERNET Chaired by: Bane
Andjelic, Beograd.com (FRY)**

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Promoting Freedom of Expression and Democratic Media Legislation

BY MARCELLO SCARONE

It is my pleasure to be able to address you today on the important subject of freedom of expression and its relation to media legislation. Allow me to make some comments concerning the importance of this freedom as a fundamental human right and the different legal issues related to its promotion and its restriction.

Information is the oxygen of democracy. If people do not know what is happening in their society, if the actions of those who rule them are hidden, then they cannot take a meaningful part in the affairs of that society. Information is not just a

necessity for people - it is an essential part of good government. Bad government needs secrecy to survive. It allows inefficiency, wastefulness and corruption to thrive. As Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize-winning economist has observed, there has never been a substantial famine in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press. Information allows people to scrutinise the actions of a government and is the basis for proper, informed debate of those actions.

And governments can always find reasons for main-

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taining secrecy - the interests of national security, public order and the wider public interest area few examples. Too often governments treat official information as their property, rather than something which they hold and maintain on behalf of the people.

Several press freedom organizations have produced principles which set a standard against which anyone can measure whether domestic laws genuinely permit access to official information. They set out clearly and precisely the ways in which governments can achieve maximum openness, in line with the best international standards and practice.

Principles are important as standards but on their own they are not enough. They need to be used by journalists, campaigners, by lawyers, by elected representatives and by public officials. They need applying in the particular circumstances that face each society, by people who understand their importance and are committed to transparency in government.

I shall restrict my comments to outlining the general nature of UNESCO's principles regarding freedom of expres-

sion and access to information under international democratic guidelines and to noting a few of the consequences for the media which flow from these obligations.

The extent of such freedom is not always clear and for a definition we turned to noted Argentine thinker Juan Bautista Alberdi, who with magnificent precision summarized press freedom this way, "...the press is a non-delegated power that the country retains in order to exercise it itself..." and to abdicate that power is the same as to renounce sovereignty and give up being a free people. We believe there is no truer definition - freedom of the press is one that the people do not turn over to their representatives, they keep it for themselves, it is what enables them to know what their governments are up to and to work together with their leaders. They do so through the press which, as we have said before, it is the best substitute for the Athenian agora and is essential for government of the people by the people.

On that basis, it is ridiculous to think that governments are in any position to regulate free speech and press freedom and

- much less - to censor the people, to tell them what they may see, read or hear, or what they may say, comment on or report. It is the people who may censure the government, not the other way around, as James Madison proclaimed.

Freedom of expression as a non-delegated power is the essence of democracy, equaled only by the right of the people to freely elect those who govern them. Freedom of expression and the vote are a citizen's unrenounceable rights. Also, in the case of election of government it is inconceivable to speak of democracy with a self-appointed government. But just as freedom of expression and elections of government are unrenounceable, freedom of expression and press freedom are the custodian and the guarantee of enjoyment of that other right. Observe, for example, just how liberty is threatened by laws that ban the publication of election campaign opinion polls. Such a ban at the same time attacks the right of people to know and conspires against their right to freely elect their government.

Prof. Justino JimÈnez de Arechaga, a prominent Uruguayan who was president and member of the Inter-American Commission on

Human Rights for many years, said in his law classes that there are three kinds of electoral fraud: during the election, after the election and before the election. In the first case, he cited the example of non-existent citizens casting a ballot two or three times; in the second case, the announced returns not reflecting the actual vote, and in the last case, he mentioned the lack of press freedom as a form of electoral fraud prior to polling. If there are limitations put on a citizen learning in any way he wants about who and what to vote for, if restrictions are placed on his right to choose based on an awareness of all the elements in play, then one cannot talk about free elections or talk about democracy.

In light of all of this, it is no exaggeration nor is it mistaken to maintain that there must be liberty in order to have freedom of expression, and for that reason we insist on it. Too many laws are harmful, since as the scholar Thomas Payne put it, "There is no valid reason to restrict or to seek to curtail freedom of the press."

With this said, then, allow me to outline and briefly describe then major principles concerning freedom of expression

which we at UNESCO believe are of an universal nature and affect every human being, thus should be applicable everywhere and not be subject to "exceptions" of a cultural, religious or other nature, which is often used as an excuse not to apply them and therefore restrict these freedoms.

Principle One

It is an essential value in human life for individuals to be able to express themselves, seek, disseminate and receive information with complete freedom.

Freedom of speech, freedom of press and the right to information are individual rights, which belong to all: individuals, community and society, the latter viewed as the totality of the individuals. The absence of these freedoms therefore has a dual consequence: it violates an individual right and at the same time it leads to a society and a community without liberty. From this perspective, the violation of freedom of expression and of the press is a violation of democracy, the framework for provision of human rights.

It is inconceivable for a society to be democratic and free if it does not have a press that can act with absolute freedom. The

news media are the institutional underpinning of the right to free speech and the right of the public to information, and without them these rights would inevitably be limited.

As for its origin, freedom of expression and of the press must not be subject to the whim of authorities or of the written law. If freedom of expression and of the press were to be established only in current laws, their content and protection would have a precarious basis. In noting the inalienable character of this right, the action of authorities that deny it or the existence of contradictory legislation amount to violations of a superior juridical order - whether based on concepts in natural law, on international norms and principles enshrined in treaties or declarations or international customary law.

Principle Two

This principle recognizes the right to seek, disseminate and receive information of any kind, air views on any matter and disseminate any and all of them in any medium. The holders of this right are not only those who work as journalists, but everyone.

There can be no free press or free society if journalists in

particular and citizens in general find themselves restricted in their seeking timely and complete information. Nor if those in government or the authorities surround their actions with secrecy or seek protection in laws that uphold secrecy as a means of preventing their actions being transparent.

The recognition of this right - to be informed and to form and express opinions - presupposes the recognition of the right to information that every member of society has. It is not a matter of a right of those who actively seek information, but also a right of those who hope to receive it through those divulging the information. There is no justification for imposing upon news media and journalists regulations on how they should do their work or on news content.

Regulation of the press often has been used to restrict or deny these rights. Such restrictive regulation conspires against plurality and sows the seeds of totalitarianism at the same time that it strangles individual creativity that enables progress in civil liberties. Similarly, invoking the color of law to justify restriction, international denunciation and repudiation of dictatorships is made more

difficult.

To the traditional restrictions that have been imposed on news media are now being added new ones. All these restrictions must be rejected as being an obstacle to the free dissemination of information and opinion.

Social communication no longer knows national borders, it is not subordinated to the state or pressure groups. It is part of the trend toward consolidation of an international society, in a process of increasing deregulation of news media, which excludes any interference that may restrict freedom of expression.

Principle Three

Every person has the right to receive information that will permit him to make judgments about public affairs affecting his welfare or that of the community. This unavoidably forces the authorities to permit free access to information in its possession generated within the public sector. This information ought to be provided in a timely and fair manner, containing complete facts, including necessary supporting documentation, accurate data regarding its sources and any necessary explanations in order to understand

the information being provided.

If the information is denied - or inadequately administered - it should be able to be obtained through the presentation of a petition, Habeas Data, writ of relief or another appropriate legal resource. The government official responsible for withholding information should be punished.

However, journalists are in special need of this right.

It is indispensable for journalists that the officials in charge of ordering, conserving, and administering public information, understand that they do not own the information. The information belongs to citizens who, as its owners, have the right to know it. It is necessary to watch out for cases in which the bureaucrat unjustly invokes such exceptions as national security, public order, etc., with the objective of limiting information about public affairs.

This third principle also includes guarantees for journalistic access to cover court trials and other legal proceedings, coverage that constitutes a guarantee of full and transparent administration of justice.

This principle, moreover, calls upon authorities not only to adopt the necessary measures, including legislative means, to ensure free access to public information, but moreover to make information available.

Finally, the third principle concludes with a call to public officials, especially judges, not to require journalists to reveal their information sources. This is an essential guarantee for the free exercise of the journalistic profession, because it allows the source to open himself to the journalist, confident that he will not be persecuted either by the subject of his information or by the justice system.

Principle Four

Attacks on the practice of journalism and freedom of expression restrict the rights of all other citizens for they limit the right to information of those citizens. They are thus open violations of human rights that on occasion manifest themselves in a gross and criminal manner and in subtle and deceitful ways.

The way in which those who take such actions repeatedly escape justice is one more assault to be added to the list of crimes against press freedom and news-gathering. The

authorities cannot avoid their responsibility for this impunity. As a result:

- It is reaffirmed that governments have an obligation to guarantee and respect the practice of journalism and freedom of the press, to put an end to the assaults and in every case to encourage the relevant agencies to investigate and punish the guilty.

- Legal action must be taken promptly to punish the guilty harshly, swiftly and surely. The judiciary must act through the lower courts, excluding any participation of military or special tribunals that might end up protecting the criminals.

- The fight against impunity forces the national legislatures to stipulate that there shall be no statute of limitations for crimes against press freedom and news-gathering activities, and to be more cautious in considering granting amnesty or pardon to those guilty of those crimes. Similarly, legislation must be geared toward establishing rules for more effective legal process and the conviction of those who mastermind and execute these crimes.

- International financial and cooperation organizations

must make a commitment in this fight against impunity, making it a condition that there be full respect for freedom of expression and effective investigation and punishment of those responsible for crimes against news-gathering activities.

Principle Five

The actions that make up violations may have either a public or a private origin. Whatever their origin, however, the state has a responsibility for the actions it initiates or carries out, but also for not adopting the rules and regulations empowering it to prevent and punish violations of freedom of expression and of the press. The United States Supreme Court held that a prior restriction of that nature was "the essence of censorship." According to the justices, the true essence of freedom of the press was the protection against prior restrictions, a philosophy that remains in effect currently. The power that a state has to halt publication - prevent facts from being disseminated or published - is of a highly repressive nature. That power can amount to prior censorship, or a court order not to disseminate or publish a report. Together with the orders that restrict the free

movement of journalists and those that gag news sources, these direct restrictions make the existence of a free and active press impossible. Similarly, it is inadmissible for the private sector to exert pressure or prior censorship on the news media and influence their reporting or editorial opinions.

Prior censorship is the best known of the restrictions of free speech and press freedom. It supposes a control of information before it is disseminated and, consequently, the possibility of total or partial veto on the part of the censor. This has been used, and continues being used, by totalitarian political regimes. As a weapon of restriction of a fundamental right of man, it merits the repudiation anywhere it may appear and whatever the grounds used to justify it.

The express or hidden attacks, often unintentional, on free speech and press freedom, may be committed not only by officials with executive functions, but also by legislators in their eagerness to regulate these rights, or by judges, with the aim of protecting other rights equally worthy of protection. And they might even come from persons or organizations that are not connected with the state.

No limitation on the exercise of free speech and press freedom, on the grounds of defending democratic stability, can be allowed, as this stability is not endangered by those who denounce unlawful or immoral activity or incompetence but rather by the corruption, impunity or cover-up engaged by those in positions of power.

The control of information on the part of the state may manifest itself in various ways, including sophisticated ones, such as the hiding of information and the control of the content of opinions or expressions citizens may utter.

The hiding of information can be achieved by classifying the information as confidential or secret, giving censorship a certain air of legitimacy.

But as serious as prior censorship is the "forced publication of information". Prior censorship can prevent journalists or news media from disseminating a report or opinion. Forced publication implies making journalists or news media publish a report or opinion with which they do not agree or they believe should not be published. It is perhaps even more serious to run something they do not believe in or is contrary to their views than to come out

with a censored, blank space. The so-called rights of reply, response or rectification are clearly an arbitrary and obligatory form of imposing information. In free and democratic countries where there is competition and a plurality of media, no citizen remains defenseless over information that may be given about him. There will always be a news outlet that will be prepared - because of its own ethics, to gain credibility or for political or ideological reasons or even through friendship or acquaintance - to publish his version. And if the justice system works as it should in any democratic country, this will be the best recourse to check and punish any unlawful behavior by the press, without restricting the rights and freedoms of journalists and the media to express themselves freely and unreservedly, make their own professional judgments, observe standards of ethics and even be protected, should the case arise, in their right of ownership.

Self-censorship, for which the media and journalists themselves share a responsibility, is another form of attacking free speech, press freedom and especially the people's right to know. It can be the product of violence, an arbitrary act, the lack of legal guarantees, all of

which are common in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. It is also something achieved through their violent actions against the media and journalists those who murder journalists with impunity and assault the news media.

There is another kind of behavior with the aim of causing journalists and media to censor themselves, and sadly it can be found in democratic countries as well. It is financial pressure, the arbitrary use of public funds to reward or punish the media according to their editorial views or reporting.

A third aspect, in which certainly the media and journalists play a larger role, is the acceptance of self-censorship because of financial interests or for partisan, political, ideological or religious reasons.

Principle Six

On the basis of this principle, discrimination is any manner of making access to information difficult or denying such access, when it is the duty of the state and its agents to provide it; and,

favor is that which harms freedom of expression. It is the granting of any privilege to news media or journalists in

order to stimulate praise, create bias in reporting, express ideological commitment or other conduct which damages the reliability and credibility of information.

Principle Seven

This principle responds to legal and administrative measures that at times are used by governments to favor or harm media or journalists. This directly or indirectly restricts the right to free speech and press freedom.

These actions take different forms, such as the application of discriminatory and abusive taxes and duties, placement of official advertising not based on the criteria of efficiency and fairness, lack of transparency in the award of radio and television frequencies, and the absence of controls to prevent the operation of illegal broadcast stations.

In short, the aim of Principle Seven is to prevent authorities from acting arbitrarily in their relations with the media. The existence of trustworthy and independent legal systems and swift justice are a fundamental guarantee that any legislative or administrative action which assails free speech and press freedom will be corrected.

Principle Eight

This principle is a result of a struggle begun by the English poet John Milton, in his book "Aeropagitica," in which he clamored for the freedom to write and publish without any official license.

Article 20 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 declares that "No one may be compelled to belong to an association." There is, therefore, a right of persons to associate or not - rather than an obligation. This has a particular connotation regarding obligatory membership of journalists' associations, as this requirement, administered as it is by governments or professional association leadership, is the source of discrimination or political control in the field of communication.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled on November 13, 1985, in a unanimous decision of the six justices, that "the compulsory licensing of journalists is incompatible with Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights if it denies any person access to the full use of the news media as a means of expressing themselves or imparting information."

“1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one’s choice.”

This principle provides the basis to one of the highest standards of jurisprudence and doctrinal trends of thought, as it establishes with unquestionable foundation, the incompatibility of compulsory licensing or mandatory membership to associations or guilds with the right of each person to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any medium.

This is accompanied by the right of society to receive information without obstacles.

In the same manner, the right to freedom of association-incorporated for centuries into western civilization-is a principle that ought to remain intact.

Academic efforts and the attainment of university degrees to improve the practice of journalism ought to be supported, insofar as these efforts do not impose restrictions on freedom of expression.

Principle Nine

Freedom of expression and of the press is taken to be, in this day and age, as the exercise of freedom of expression affecting the public and through any technical medium of social communication such as the graphics media, radio, cinema, television, telephone call-in shows, communication by satellite transmission, computer networks and all other technical means of communication. But no one is responsible for its performance except the press itself. To impose any kind of official demands for measuring what the press does is incompatible with freedom.

Even when the idea is implicit in “commitment to truth,” it is worth noting that in the same way a clear distinction is made between news items and advertisements, there should be a similar distinction made between news and the opinion of the person writing it.

In an ideal word, which unfortunately does not exist, the best press law is the one that is never passed, because there is no better regulator than an informed public.

Principle Ten

Principle Ten specifies that no news medium nor jour-

nalist may be punished for publishing the truth, truth should be understood to be an ideal to be achieved, a goal to be pursued. The human condition also allows for a limited truth, which is not necessarily the truth of everyone else and in no way the sole and whole truth.

The free dissemination of this and other truths must be preserved, with all their peculiarities and limitations, and fundamentally the imposition of an official truth must never be accepted.

Truth emerges from the marketplace of ideas: even false ideas and information contribute to the search for truth.

In the exercise of freedom of the press, an abuse only exists if the information is disseminated with malice and full awareness of its falsehood.

On this matter, it is necessary to clarify that press crimes do not exist as such, rather there are crimes committed through the press. The press is one of the means through which an illegal act exercising the right to expression can be committed; and the consequent liability should fall on the author of the expression and not on the journalist or communications outlet reporting it, when jour-

nalists or the media are republishing the information without making it their own.

Restrictions on Freedom of Expression

It may seem a bit odd for a human rights activist, especially after what I have just said, to talk about restrictions on rights. I take it as a given that this audience needs no reminding of the importance of freedom of expression, both in its own right and as an essential underpinning of democracy. The constant reiteration of this by courts, international bodies and distinguished individuals has become almost a mantra.

Since we do not live in the perfect world that would allow for the ten principles I mentioned to freely exist, freedom of expression is one of those rights which, unlike for example freedom from torture, is subject to a number of exceptions. This is in some ways problematical as it means that a form of balancing must be undertaken when assessing whether a given restriction falls within the scope of permissible exceptions. International bodies, however, have outlined a clear 3-part test which any restrictions on or interference with freedom of

expression must meet. It may be noted that as a matter of law, it is for the State to justify these restrictions, not for citizens to prove that they are excessive.

The test, which flows clearly from the wording of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and from views published by the UN Human Rights Committee, requires that any restriction must: a) be provided for by law; b) be required for the purpose of safeguarding one of the legitimate interests noted in Article 19(3); and c) be necessary to achieve this goal. It is clear that the proper approach to evaluating a particular restriction is not to balance the various interests involved but to ascertain whether the restriction meets this strict test.

The first part of the test means State interference with freedom of expression cannot be legitimate unless it is specifically provided for by law. Restrictions must be accessible and foreseeable and "formulated with sufficient precision to enable the citizen to regulate his conduct". Acts by the authorities which interfere with media freedom but are not specifically sanctioned by law, such as discretionary acts committed by the police or

security forces, are not acceptable. Second, freedom of expression may be restricted only to safeguard one of the limited list of legitimate interests in Article 19(3), namely respect of the rights or reputations of others, and for the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals. Measures restricting freedom of expression which have been motivated by other interests, even if these measures are specifically provided for by law, do not meet the test.

Perhaps, the most important part of the test, and the one upon which most restrictions founder, is the requirement of necessity. Although absolute necessity is not required, this requirement sets a high standard which restrictions must meet. Courts around the world have elaborated on this test when assessing restrictions on freedom of expression. In balancing freedom of expression and other legitimate interests, the Supreme Courts of Both Zimbabwe and Canada, for example, look at three factors. First, the objective must be of sufficient importance to warrant limiting a fundamental right. Second, the measures must be rationally connected to the objective, in the sense that they are carefully designed to achieve that objec-

tive. Third, the measures must impair the right as little as possible, in the sense that there is not less intrusive means of protecting the legitimate interest. In other words, restrictions which are not clear and narrow, or which do not serve a legitimate aim, cannot be justified.

Conclusion

The importance of freedom of expression as a fundamental human right is now beyond question and the key role it plays in a democracy has been recognised by courts, international bodies and human rights activists around the world. Judicial and quasi-judicial bodies, both national and international, have dealt with most of the challenges facing the national and international media today and have provided us with solutions to many of them which respect international human rights norms.

I have tried to outline some of these solutions to you today. I hope that this presentation has provided some useful material for the rest of the conference. It is only by recognising these international standards, and by implementing them in practice, that freedom of expression in the Balkans and, indeed, around

the world, will become a full reality.

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ARTICLES

ARTICLES

Media System in Postcommunist Romania

BY DANIELA ROVENTA-FRUMUSANI

Postmodernism, post- communism, revolution of communication

In the shift from the totalitarian society of order (but order and silence of cemeteries), command, monologue to the democratic society of dialogue, conviviality, intersubjectivity, the socio-semiotic reperes and mediatic functionings become the main operators of reality, the complex reality of transition.

After the collapse of communist regimes, Eastern Europe has entered in a new socio-political config-

uration with fuzzy borders (like in fictions: "C'était et ce n'était pas"). Nothing is sure, with one exception: the ruins of the past. The new identity is defined as destructuring of the old world: postcommunism, posttotalitarian society and synchronisation with Western Europe, postmodernity, individualism with Gilles Lipovetsky, loss of certitudes with Claude Lefort, seduction and simulacres with Baudrillard and so on.

One of the first important results of the fall of the Berliner Mauer was the recon-

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quest of communication: face to face communication, mediatic communication, essential for group cohesion and the *Gemeinschaft* affiliation, Internet communication. All these forms arrived at once and one could say the Romanian revolution was not only the telerevolution par excellence as social break, but also the beginning of a revolution of communication.

D. Wolton recently observed (1997) that three crises tend to destabilize the identity of the profession of journalist, identity which is fragile and vulnerable in Romania, whose models are quite ancient: between the two world wars. That is why Romania is an interesting and rich laboratory both of transition and study of post-communist journalism. In fact Romania was the second in the region to enact a postcommunist broadcasting law (after the Czech one) and its print and broadcast media (on a per capita basis) are the largest in East-Central Europe. "Its pre-communist media history is brief, rich, yet preprofessional in nature; what its postcommunist journalism lacks in professionalism, it makes up in vigor, diversity and controversy" (P. Gross, 1996:IX). The functioning of the market economy (alliances of certain

groups, suppression of the others, individualistic logic of success or only of survival) these are some emblems of the economic logic as dangerous as the political pressures.

The postcommunist media

The general concept of media transformation in the social sense by developing critical or loyal audiences, in the economic sense, by eliminating financial dependence, in the professional sphere, crystallizing the information / opinion division is correlated with the process of social change and means its transformation into a key element of democracy by instituting a legal framework able to offer freedom guarantees and press autonomy, by demonopolizing the electronic media, by training in various ways the new journalists.

As Alexis de Tocqueville put it 170 years ago, the democratic model provides "More prosperity and more security" for every citizen. Mass-media is in fact the main instrument in the democratization of societies; as public service (serving civic efficient participation and integration) mass-media needs two fundamental rights: the

right to information and the freedom of expression: "This seems a quite simple thing, easy to find in each constitution. But from the constitutional guarantees to the real achievement, the road is long and thorny today just like yesterday" (M.Runcan,1998:89).

While occidental and developed countries cross an integrative process (the Maastricht treatise in Europe, Alena, Mercosur in America) the postcommunist societies are characterized by centrifugal, disintegrative tendencies (previsible effect after the forced assimilation or bolchevisation of the communist camp); in fact the sentiment of national dignity contributed to the collapse of communist regimes in an explosion of passions put in the refrigerator for half a century. This refrigerator of non solved conflicts determined Ray Dahrendorf to assert that Western societies will enter the XXI century, while ex communist ones will go back to the XIX with all the cortege of conflicts and turmoil.

It is obvious that these oppositions are not so clear cut. Romania lives simultaneously different ages of advertising and press, phases that

Western countries have crossed in successivity: at the same time a rural society or a forced rural one (because after the urban exode we witness a rural one) coexists, with islands of postindustrial informational society.

And it is also obvious that a strong wind has swept away all certitudes, ideologies, systems, doctrines. In Alexis de Tocqueville's formula the past does no more enlighten the future, we live a transition period of uncertainty and aporias.

The distinctive elements of the Romanian democracy are the civil society on one hand (civil society effectively assassinated under Ceausescu, very different situation in comparison with Poland-the Solidarnosc trade unions and underground press), and the information society statu nascendi on the other hand.

The diachronical reading of media functioning can distinguish three periods

i)first of all the short grace period, the december euphoria dominated by a new sentiment of Gemeinschaft;

ii) the dysphorical 1991-1992 period;

iii) the critical, selective media reception accompanied by the search for audience loyalty 1992-1999.

In the first period media in general and television in particular conserved a magic connotation. It is a period of sacralization of mass media (it is true because it was at the TV), but also of past focusing (interest for Ceausescu's secrets and political compromises of public persons). The dominant symbols are the flag with the hole which means both disappearance of the marxist ideology, ostension of the void, of the emptiness.

In this period of essentially quantitative changes the actantial and technological dominants are:

- the old systems of printing and radio transmitting;

- the actor journalists compromised by collaboration with the previous regime are not credible ethically or professionally.

ii) after 1991 appears a kind of saturation, of indifference due to price liberalization and the crisis of the old distribution system. The press becomes now present oriented: it tends to explain the tendencies of the transition, to reflect on its new mission (it's a period of debates on the necessity of a law of the press, of a code of journalists);

iii) after 1993 the journalists try to optimize their activity. After a paranoia of failure (metaphorical enunciation of ruins, illness, catastrophes) they begin to rethink the future (social policies): "After the disappearance of the communist utopia was created the impression of an indefinite tunnel period, tunnel whose end we do not see; people have to learn again the taste of future to use Tocqueville's terms" (Fr. Thom, 1996).

At the beginning of 96 the Romanian landscape comprises 1200 newspapers and journals that means local and national, weeklies and monthlies, literary and pornographical, the owners being professional unions, partis, institutions like the Police, the Government. We have to mention the disappearance of some

political magazines, replaced by economic, entertainment, women's and teenager's press.

The readers who read in 1990 between 2 and 5 newspapers, fix their preferences to only one. The audiovisual media have had a real boom after the audio-visual law (may 1992): 107 radio stations, 600 local TV cable stations, 44 local and regional TV.

The journalist education witnessed the same "parcours": at the beginning, at the preprofessional stage (to use Peter Gross' terms) journalists came enthusiastically, euphorically from all fields: lawyers, teachers, economists etc, but without training in journalism. They were quickly trained in the newsrooms "learning by doing" or in brief training courses abroad. Training in the newsrooms was continuing a long tradition and led to the recycling of a significant labour force, especially lawyers, engineers, students and even people with only secondary education; the nucleus of this professional training were some local stars in the print or audio visual press. Intensive courses carried out in the newsrooms were organized by the Romanian Radio Society which in collabo-

ration with various institutions (BBC, Voice of America Franz Ebert Foundation) started intensive one month courses in order to train young employees or focused short courses (political press, economic press, women's press). This solution has been adopted by the Romanian television, some private radio and TV stations as well as by newspapers.

In the new framework of freedom, participation, transparency mass-media play a crucial, often redeeming role, contributing to the consolidation of the new society, even taking the tasks of other institutions if they are not well functioning (in Romania as well as in other new democratic countries, the last instance, the supreme court where people appeal for justice is a newspaper hosting in its columns letters from the readers and appeals to justice and truth, the main newspaper is itself called "The Truth"). As fourth power and watch dog of the society the press explains and creates the new public opinion and civil society: transparency of information is not a luxury but simply a survival condition; that's why press services as well as access to archives receive a major signification in the democratic

mechanism: “Closed doors, absence of informations or willingness to provide them is now a behaviour destined to *d i s a p p e a r a n c e*” (M.Runcan, 1998:138).

If pluralism is a key word of democracy: equal opportunities for different voices, classes, gender, religions, ideologies, in the regulation of the press one should adopt a regulated pluralism too, and not only the “invisible hand” of the market (cf. also Virgil Stefan Nitulescu 1998)

The legal frame was constructed in Romania adopting the French one, as well as the basic state institutions built in the second half of the XIXth century were copies of the French ones; that's why the sore point in the French criminal Code as well as in the Romanian (article 205-206) the offense to authorities could limit the freedom of action and investigation of journalists. For instance “The insult, defamation or threat achieved implicitly or by using mass-media against an official who plays a function implying the exercise of the State authority is punished with prison from 3 months to 2 years (Penal Code art.238 modified in 1996). A lot of well known Romanian

journalists have penal condemnation for defamation because the border between social critique and defamation is hard to establish.

There are seven articles in the criminal Code which affect directly the journalists' work: the articles 168, 205, 206, 236, 238 and 239. “These articles offer an exaggerated protection for politicians, officials and other public functionaries” (P.Gross, 1999:118).

“One of the most serious problems Romanian journalists face today is the Criminal Code which makes libel and slander a criminal offense, punishable by jail sentence with truth not sufficient defense.... So far, financial fines rather than jail sentences are the usual penalty for guilty verdicts. But libel and slander should be civil offenses, punishable by fines, not jail sentences, if guilt is found in court” (J Ottaway, 2000:11).

Even the press of minorities living in Romania (Hungarian, German, Roma, Bulgarian, Russian, etc.) is obliged to minimal censorship (article 236) if this article stipulates jail sen-

tences for public defamation of the Romanian nation; "subjectively interpreted, these dispositions mean that every critique addressed to the officials who represent the Romanian nation constitute a defamation of the country or of the nation"(P.Gross,199:119).

We have to mention that the last years we assist all over the world to the erosion of criminal limitations of the press (censorship, opinion offence, interdictions of publishing, ideological interdictions), put in other words we witness the slow transition of mass-media from the criminal to the civil sphere, as space of interpersonal conflicts (-cf.also M.Runcan,1998:138).

In such a universe of permanent change: explosion of media means (cable television, personal computers, mobile phones, digital transmissions etc.), paradigmatic changes in information and communication (media convergence and globalization) the values journalists have to preserve are not only the right to information and the freedom of expression, but also the most important human values such as respect for the others' lives and privacy, respect for the analytic cultural trend of the

press,not only for the voyeuristic, sensationalist, market-driven one. The seek of sensationalism and the logic of audimat generates unbelievable "derapages mediatiques" like the 1996 Baia Mare aviatic accident when the television reporter from ProTV (a commercial TV station) announced to the widow of the pilot the tragic event and filmed the "hot" images of this scene. Despite the flagrant violation of the right to intimacy, the Romanian justice didn't react even if from the point of view of the Audio-visual Law the National Council of the Audio-Visual was entitled to interfere.

The most important actual debate is the necessity to pass the Law of free access to information of Public Interest before the law of the secret.The free circulation of public information implies transparency, correctness and responsibility of public authorities in regulating the relationships with citizens no more under the influence of the arbitraty or the bureaucratic excess. "Most Romanian journalists want a Freedom of Access to Information Law to be passed soon, and a proposed Press Law to be rejected as too restrictive. They oppose a new Information Technologies Act

that would be unusually complex and restrictive and set up a large government bureaucracy to enforce rules, seriously limiting the rights of a free press to report on many legitimate issues of public interest".(J.Ottaway,2000:11).

Conclusive remarks

Mungiu Alina (director at the Romanian public TV) observed that the media system had a very strong semiotic role, acting as substitute for all the absent structures of the Romanian society: substitute for power and opposition, for the political elites, as well as for the sometimes inefficient Parliament. This emphasizes the fundamental role of the press as cause and consequence of the democratic changes. At the same time when the Romanian society consolidates its liberal and democratic structures, mass-media incorporates also new values: professionalism, honesty, objectivity. The unique (technical skills) initial training of the actors journalists will be replaced by a combinatorial solution: "general knowledge, specialisation, ethics and professional training" (D.Vidal,1996:15). The schools of journalism as a whole and their actors chosen on the

basis of the excellence principle (numerus clausus at the entrance exams, long test periods in media organizations after graduation) are becoming in my opinion a fundamental factor for granting a wide access to the Information and Communication Society, defined as the revolution of our times.

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The Romanian Written Press - from Penury to Excess

BY MARIAN PETCU

In Romania, the Communist political regime had created a monocentric, Soviet-inspired system of media communication, designed to exclusively back the official public spheres and to counter the emergence of the alternative ones.

From this perspective, although the Romanian media system 'had no contribution whatsoever to the triggering of the revolution on December 15, 1989 and neither did it contribute to its continuation until December 22, when Ceau-escu fled Bucharest' (GROSS, P., 1999, 61), serving to the last minute to strengthen the status quo, the media had the indisputable merit of adopt-

ing an anti-totalitarian attitude, of radically and irreversibly choosing democracy starting from that historical moment.

The transition of the Romanian society from totalitarianism to democracy was accompanied and stimulated by a new emancipated pluralist media (autonomized, according to O. Manaev), which offered the basis for the interaction of different social groups. There is no doubt that the progressive demassification of society, the decommunization of culture and social communication, in all its forms, owe a great deal to the last decade press which has been interested in 'redefining the contract of media

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communication, regaining credibility and re-attracting the public'. (FRUMUSANI, D., 1997, 138).

Given the fact that 'reliable information on these changes are scarce, incomplete and confused (...), the discourse on local media developed by the literary and cultural thought magazines is tributary to an elitist and frustrating- critical perspective about press and journalists' (COMAN, M., 1999, 10), we shall submit the results of a survey outlining 'the informational explosion' released in December 1989. The survey was made between 1994-1999, using relevant methods and techniques of sociological investigation. The main data sources were the National Legal Records(DLN), the ISSN National Center, the catalogues issued by the press release companies, data from the National Committee for Statistics(CNS) as well as the surveys made by the author in 11 counties, in three stages. The source complementarity made it possible to perform highly accurate measuring, especially thanks to the individual processing (title by title) of the whole statistic population, based on basic data sheets.

There is a rich tradition of written press in Romania - in

1935, for example, there were edited 118 dailies and 2232 periodical magazines, with a general circulation of roughly 5 million copies, that is an average rate of 1 copy/ 3 inhabitants (GEORGESCU, I., 1936, 167).

After the Communist regime came to power, in the wake of WW II, the number of publications dropped to 110 titles, with a slight rise during the following decades, leading to a peak circulation in 1970 - 698 titles.

In 1989, there were 495 publications, 76 of which exclusively intended for export.

Between 1990-1999, the index "newspapers, magazines and other periodical publications" issued by The National Committee for Statistics showed values ranging from 1444 to 1995 titles, as in Table 1.

According to our survey 4958 titles have been added in the last decade, 419 of which founded before 1990, with an average rate of 454 new titles a year (Table 2).

For a more accurate picture of the Romanian press evolution, we calculated two significant indicators for the editorial

activity: "number of newspaper and magazine titles per 100,000 inhabitants" and "the yearly rate of new publications" based on the data provided by the N.C.S. and the National Legal Records (Table 3).

The latter indicator provides relevant information on the overall supply rate of new publications, the highest rates being registered, naturally, at the beginning of the interval. In the editorial year 1989-1990, for example, 70% of the total volume of publications edited in Romania represented new titles, and in 1991, compared to 1990, the share of new titles was 51%; in 1999, only 23% of titles were newly founded (in the same year). The above mentioned data may be considered as the rate of the market maturation as well because of the supply adaptation to demand.

The distribution of publication supply, at national and local level is: 2131 titles edited in Bucharest (also distributed at national level) and 2827 titles edited at local or regional level. There is a rise tendency for the local and regional share. The average rate for the analyzed period was 47,6% "national" publications and 52,4% local publications (the peak registered in 1993 was

the same in 1999 - Table 4).

The territorial distribution of Romanian publications generally copies the pattern of social and economic development of the respective counties and regions. Between a peak of 223 titles (7,8% of the total number of local publications) registered in Cluj county (the capital of historical province of Transylvania) and the minimum of 9 titles registered in counties like Botosani (N-E) and Giurgiu (South) (0,3% of the total local publication number) we can note privileged areas from the media point of view. The group of counties registering the highest number of titles - more than 100- is made up of Cluj, Timis, Bihor, Hunedoara, Mures, Brasov (the central and central-western area of Romania), Iasi, Constanta, Arges, and the one with a minimum offer of publications- less than 30 titles- is made up of the counties Buzau, Salaj, Vaslui, Tulcea, Vrancea, Mehedinti, Dambovita, Olt, Ialomita and others.

We note that the average number of titles per county was 71 in the mentioned period. The first three counties according to the press output- Cluj, Timis, Bihor- had 562 titles, representing 20% of the local publications and 1,2% of

the press published in Romania; the group including the first ten counties concentrated 49% of the local publications (27,6% of the Romanian press), while the other 30 counties had a contribution of 61%.

At the level of the cultural and historical areas we can see that the counties with the highest number of publications were concentrated in Transylvania (950 titles) followed by Moldavia (476 titles) and Oltenia (362 titles), Crisana-Maramures (344 titles), Muntenia (315 titles), Banat (238 titles) and Doubrogea (149) (Table 6).

Comparing the regional development of Romania from the human development indicator perspective (IDV) and that of the share of a region in the total local press volume, we find that the most significant similitude (position 2) can be seen in the North-West region. The center region, although on the 5th position according to IDV scale, has a contribution of 17.5% to the local press, which places it on the third position, while the South-East region, though more disadvantaged from the human development perspective, ranks the 5th as contribution to the local press, ahead of the West region, the most developed

economically. The concentration rate of press editors is another significant indicator for the territorial media structure in Romania, in the last decade. It is dependent on the density of urban places and on the economic and social development level of each county. Therefore, between the first position in the specific scale for this indicator, held by the county of Prahova (with 11 towns in which publications were edited) and the 11th position, held by 5 counties with a single town in which press was edited (the administrative center - see Boto~ani, Giurgiu, Tulcea, Salaj, Vrancea) there is a large variety of situations.

In the typological approach on the Romanian written press, I used three criteria - the contents, the editing place and periodicity. I pointed out as representative from the contents point of view 22 types, based on the share of journalistically approached subject areas: general information, politics, culture, religion, entertainment, science, economic (and financial magazines), military magazines, administrative and legal affairs, sports magazines, TV programs, women's magazines, children magazines, youth, home magazines, education, erotic, health, professional, advertising and others.

From this perspective, we can find significant differences in the number of titles - while for the nationally distributed publications the first three positions are held by the scientific press (280 titles) and the professional press (197), on the local and regional level, the same positions are held by the general information press (401 titles), cultural (320) and entertainment (242).

The greatest similitude can be found for the health publications (position 18/national, 18/local), politics ones (position 7/national, position 7/local), as well as for the entertainment publications (position 2/national, position 3/local - Table 8).

The periodicity of publications reflects, in its turn, the economic and adaptation difficulties (the reception crisis) that most publications experienced.

The most frequent phenomenon was the increased length of the editorial cycle, i.e. publications were published at longer intervals of time compared to the launching period. The largest share in the total volume of publications in Romania is represented by monthly titles (990 publications), followed by weekly titles (918) and those with an undetermined publication date

(867).

This unusual distribution is related to the contradictory evolution of the media market - starting from the second half of 1991, it went into a deep crisis which made many editors opt for contents 'without relation to time', non-event contents, which could remain in the distribution networks for longer periods of time (usually entertainment publications). The same explanation holds for the large number of titles with variable publication(413), the editing of an issue often depending on the degree in which the previous issue had been sold (Table 9).

There have been spectacular rises for all types of publications - if in 1989 there were published 11 daily papers in Bucharest (10 distributed at national level) and 21 magazines, in 1990 the number of daily papers mounted to 18 (72 between 1989-1999) and that of weekly magazines to 98 (343 between 1989-1999).

A new phenomenon consists in the emergence and development of regional publications (in Romania, the county is the administrative and territorial unit, that is why by the term 'regional publications' we mean those titles distributed in at least three close coun-

ties). There were published 18 titles between 1990-1999 covering (distribution area) between three and thirteen counties (the regional editions of the three important nationally distributed daily papers edited in Bucharest - *Evenimentul Zilei*, *România Liberă* and *Ziua* - are not included here).

Most of the regional publications were edited in the central and central-western part of Romania - 8 titles- followed by the South of the country, with 6 titles, and by the Eastern area with 3 titles.

Also, as a novelty element, we mention here the seven networks of publications, three of which are general (of general information) and four specialized.

The most representative networks are *Jurnalul* (19 county editions), founded in 1991, and *Monitorul* (17 county editions).

The re-focusing of the readers' interest on the community space in their proximity is obvious at the local press level which, despite pessimistic forecast, holds an important place among information sources.

The surveys made by the Laboratory for Media Studies,

Political Communication and Culture (July 1998) confirmed the fact that the publications accumulating the highest level of public rejection were the political ones (almost nonexistent on the press market now), followed by socio-economic and sports publications. To the question 'would you like to read more articles of...' the answers were those in Table 10.

Unfortunately, the number of the market surveys on written press is quite low, which reduces the chances of editors to take advantage of the relevant markets (the readers) on the long term. As an example, we could mention the fact that about 600 of the publications founded in 1990 ceased their publication in late 1991.

Nevertheless, the Romanian supply of publications remains unexpectedly high- about 2000 titles in 1999- if we take into account the economic situation (purchasing power) and the level reached by the audiovisual, especially by teledistribution.

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**TABLE 1. INDEX "NEWSPAPERS , MAGAZINES
AND OTHER PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS "**

Year/Titles	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
C.N.S. (a)	495	1444	1336	1205	1087	967
D.L.N. (b)	-	-	-	-	-	1524

Year/Titles	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
C.N.S. (a)	1180	1313	1855	1995	1550
D.L.N. (b)	1792	1997	1942	1993	1982

**TABLE 2. THE RATE OF NEW ROMANIAN PUBLICATIONS
(BASED ON THE FOUNDATION YEAR)**

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Total of titles	(419)	998	681	639	462	321

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total of titles	369	432	403	234	-

**TABLE 3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDICATOR "TITLES OF
NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES PER 100 000 INHABITANTS "**

Year/Source	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
C.N.S. (a)	2,1	6,2	5,8	5,3	4,8	5,2
D.L.N. (b)	1,8*	5,1*	5,1*	5,1*	5,1	6,7

Year/Titles	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
C.N.S. (a)	5,2	5,8	8,2	9	7,8
D.L.N. (b)	7,9	8,8	8,6	9	9

(a) National Committee for Statistics

(b) National Legal Records

* Yearly average between 1990 - 1993

**TABLE 4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDICATOR
"THE YEARLY RATE OF NEW PUBLICATION "**

Year/Source	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
%	-	69	51	53	42,5	21

Year/Titles	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
%	20,5	22	21	25,3	23

**TABLE 5. THE SHARE OF PUBLICATIONS BASED ON THE PUBLISHING
PLACE/CIRCULATION AREA (100%)**

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Bucharest	49	68	48	45	40	48
Counties	51	32	52	55	60	52

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Bucharest	46	47	44	42	40
Counties	54	53	56	59	60

**TABLE 6. THE DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL
PUBLICATIONS ACCORDING TO CULTURAL
AND HISTORICAL AREAS (1989 - 1999)**

Position	Area	Share (%)
1	Transilvania	32
2	Moldova	16,8
3	Oltenia	12,8
4	Crisana-Maramures	12
5	Muntenia*	11
6	Banat	8,4
7	Dobrogea	5,2

* Bucharest not included

**TABLE 7. THE TYPOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION
OF ROMANIAN PUBLICATIONS (1989 - 1999)**

Position	Type	Total no. of titles	From which distributed	
			Nationally (%)	Locally & regionally (%)
1	science	550	313(14,7)	237(8,3)
2	general			
	information	532	131(6,1)	401(14,1)
3	entertainment	522	280(13,1)	242(11,3)
4	culture	514	194(9,1)	320(11,3)
5	professional	390	197(9,2)	193(6,8)
6	magazines	317	90(4,2)	227(8,0)
7	politics	312	107(5)	205(7,2)
8	economic-			
	financial mag.	250	151(7)	99(3,5)
9	education	242	59(2,8)	183(6,4)
10	advertising	198	63(3)	135(4,7)
11	religion	164	45(2,1)	118(4,1)
12	sports	160	81(3,8)	79(2,7)
13	administrative and legal affairs	133	58(2,7)	75(2,6)
14	Others	122	59(2,8)	63(2,2)
15	erotic	119	67(3,2)	52(1,8)
16	military	116	47(2,2)	69(2,4)
17	youth	95	44(2)	51(1,8)
18	health	68	36(1,7)	32(1,1)
19	children's mag.	67	41(1,9)	26(0,9)
20	women's mag.	34	29(1,4)	6(0,2)
21	home magazines	28	19(1)	9(0,3)
22	TV programs	25	19(1)	6(0,2)
	Total	4 958	2 131	2 827

**TABLE 8. THE DISTRIBUTION OF ROMANIAN PUBLICATIONS
BASED ON THEIR PERIODICITY (1989 - 1999)**

Position	Periodicity	Number of titles
1	monthly	990
2	weekly	918
3	undetermined	867
4	annually	435
5	quarterly	432
6	variable	413
7	bimonthly	269
8	daily	220
9	others	143
10	halfyearly	136
11	bi-quarterly	77

**TABLE 9. THE DISTRIBUTION OF ROMANIAN PUBLICATIONS
BASED ON THEIR PERIODICITY (1989 - 1999)**

Position	Periodicity	Number of titles
1	monthly	990
2	weekly	918
3	undetermined	867
4	annually	435
5	quarterly	432
6	variable	413
7	bimonthly	269
8	daily	220
9	others	143
10	half-yearly	136
11	bi-quarterly	77

TABLE 10

Field of activity	Yes	No	I don't know/No answer
Entertainment	46,7	19	34,3
Socio-economic	30,4	30,3	39,4
Political	30	42,1	27,9
Cultural-educational	45,9	17,2	37
Sports	32,2	30,1	37,7

A MESSAGE FROM THE PROLETARIAT: WAS IT WELL-READ?

(A study of the U.S. press coverage
of Soviet industrial strikes in spring, 1991)

BY ANDREI RICHTER

When in early March, 1991, a strike started to spread in the Soviet coal fields it went virtually unnoticed by the majority of the foreign media. At that time the "Referendum on the Future of the Union" which was taking place then was at the focus of Moscow correspondents' attention. Only when the miners were backed by major walkouts of workers from various industries in Minsk, Kiev, other towns, as well as by rallies and pickets in Moscow, did the editors and reporters decide that they were missing a big story. In April industrial unrest became the major Soviet news topic, and so remained

through the end of the strikes in early May.

The miners' strike in the spring of 1991, was unprecedented both in the total number of strikers (250,000) and the duration of the walkout (two months). Caused by a widespread discontent of the population over the political fluctuation of the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, attempts of his government to solve economic problems merely by putting more load on the lower class, the conflict was not a classical dispute between the unions and the administration, but an anti-government strike, supported by the com-

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munities. Political demands, along with the economic ones, were set forward at the very beginning of the action. Some of the strike committees which led the workers believed that making economic demands was pointless as their implementation was conditioned by political changes in the country.

The strikes ended with a partial victory for the workers: the pits were transferred from Soviet government's jurisdiction to a much more flexible system of control by the Russian Federation's or Kazakh governments (in the Ukraine the transfer occurred in the fall of 1990); the support from the miners also helped Russia's leader Boris Yeltsin and other independent-minded republican leaders secure President Gorbachev's signature under the "9+1" agreement, which as then was expected made way for early elections of the parliament and the president. For clear reasons the strikers were criticized by the Communist party bodies and conservative "Soyuz" (Union) faction in the Soviet Parliament. The "Democratic Russia" opposition movement, on the

other hand, was supporting the miners both in words and deeds. Probably out of fear to come under fire from his parliament (as happened after his support of the Baltic governments earlier that year) Russian leader Boris Yeltsin kept silent over the conflict.

The strikes were marked by a propagandistic war over the issues and effects of the dispute. The official USSR news agency TASS, Soviet Central television, Radio Moscow, Pravda and other communist party publications supported the Kremlin's idea of miners' "pulling the blanket onto their side", blaming "Western special services and reactionary trade unions" for fueling of the conflict. Liberal "old press", like *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Moscow News*, as well as the majority of the "new press", like *Kuranty*, *Stolitsa*, *Kommersant*, sympathized with the strikers, thus reinforcing links between the strikers and democratic forces within the country.

A few publications, *Izvestia* being the most important of them, presented a balance of pro- and contra-strike views. The insurgent voices

caused an open irritation of Party and state functionaries: rumors of an imminent ban of some of them were leaked, there were attempts to "strangle" a most influential miners' publication - *Nasha Gazeta* (Our Newspaper), published by the workers' committees of Kuzbass basin.

It would be proper to quote here a result of the poll conducted among the miners' leaders. In answer to the question "What will be the effects of a possible future strike?" some 30 percent said "Danger of an economic catastrophe", while 61 percent pointed to "Acceleration of political and economic reforms" (*Rossiiskaya gazeta*: Mar. 7, 1991. P.3). In part this explains the thoughts that were governing the workers when they struck this spring. It is also useful to compare the result with the way the effects of the strike were portrayed in the U.S. press.

Briefly, this is the context for our study of the text coverage of the industrial conflict by American press. Three daily newspapers - the *Christian Science Monitor* (CS Monitor), the *New York Times* (NY

Times), and the *Wall Street Journal* (WS Journal) - were chosen for the particular research. The three were selected because they are national, elite (or, quality) publications with large international sections, have traditions of wide coverage of Russian affairs and (in the case of the last two) labor issues.

The purpose of the study was to examine what kind of story would the U.S. press run about a Soviet industrial conflict, and, more specifically, what will be its structure and message.

The method used for the study was content analysis. All the items that were dealing in part or in full with the miners' conflict of March-May, 1991, as well as other strikes in the Soviet Union at the same span of time, were examined from different angles. We also took interviews from the foreign desk editors of the three publications.

All entries were categorized according to their types - news items (understood as news highlights, news summaries, photo captions - of five and less

sentences long), full-length stories (further subdivided into news / news analysis, editorials, features, columns), and cartoons.

We also examined the sources of the material on the subject. The primary sources were divided into editorial writers, staff correspondents, contributors and wire services. All the sources quoted in the story or presented as the origins of information on every particular subject were dubbed as secondary sources.

That means (that every time a source was quoted by or served as a basis for a particular piece of information or opinion it was registered in the course of the research. Regarding the position toward the strikes of different state and political bodies and organizations, personalities and media described above, we thought it worthwhile to group all the secondary sources into three big groups on the basis of their attitude to the dispute.

A negative approach to the strikes of President Gorbachev, the Government, the communist party and industrial

functionaries and bodies, as well as state- and Party-controlled media (TASS, Central TV, Pravda daily) was never questioned by anybody in the Soviet Union. In addition we put here references to the joint "9+1" declaration of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and other republican presidents calling for an end to the strikes. Workers' opinions were subdivided during the analysis. Newspapers supportive of the walkout were put into the pro-strike category. Remaining sources, either neutral (Izvestia, Reuters, Interfax, Postfactum news agencies), or those that were of mixed or undecided opinion of the events (such as Russian, Ukrainian, other governments of the USSR republics; Radio Russia, controlled by the former) comprised the third group - "other".

In full detail we went into the subject matters of the stories on the conflict examining the number of stories that dealt with particular issues of the strikes. That was done in order to investigate the focus of each publication on the event, as well as to trace the general features of a "Soviet strike story."

Analysis and Findings

Overview

The types of stories on the Soviet strikes in the three newspapers under study betray some general characteristics of the way the events were covered by them (See Table 1). With just one third of all pieces coming from second page short news columns "News Currents" and "News Summary" the CS Monitor and the NY Times mainly ran full-length detailed stories. With the WS Journal the picture was reverse, its preference being frequent front-page short items (from the "What's News..." column) to the long reports inside the paper. (The remarkable number of news items on the strikes in the Journal — 29 in 48 consecutive issues - can hardly be beaten by most Soviet dailies.)

Another point here that attracts attention is a total absence of features and columns on the subject. As to the editorials, only several paragraphs were found in just one Monitor and one Journal editorial over the whole two-month period. Such a lack of serious comment over the total 97 entries from all three pub-

lications on the strikes was an unexpected finding for us.

With respect to the sources of the stories, we can observe two different pictures (See Table 2). The overall majority of news items originated in the Western wire services, which is not unusual. But nearly all the stories on the strikes came from Moscow reporters of the publications, which suggested an idea that the subject was simply passed from the editorial offices to the hands of the correspondents.

The idea was put on test during interviews conducted by the author on July 8-10, 1991. While a career editor Tom Winship, president of the Center for Foreign Journalists, stated that usually foreign correspondents in selecting their subjects were 90 percent on their own, Lee Lescaze, foreign editor of the Wall Street Journal, said that with their Moscow correspondents the figure would be 75 percent, Jane Lampmann, International News Editor of the Christian Science Monitor, pointed to a routine weekly list of subjects, proposed by their Moscow bureau, and

Bernard Gwertzman, foreign editor of the New York Times, noted that "it was more in their [the correspondents'] hands". Editors of the three publications under study said that they did not remember a case of a correspondent's dispatch on the strikes being "killed" by them. Therefore it seemed to be of interest to check the secondary sources, i.e. the sources of these particular correspondents.

For that matter, and since just a few secondary sources were mentioned in the short news items (presented in Appendix 1), we catalogued those of the full-size stories separately in Table 3. A general remark here is that the three publications did not care to present the views of the dissident anti-strike miners who comprised in the middle of the conflict the workforce of as much as 63 per cent of all Soviet pits (Kommersant: 1991, No.13, quoting Independent Union of Miners). Another general point would be that, in spite of the then diversity of Soviet media sources, U.S. correspondents relied on a surprisingly limited number of old-style traditional propagandistic

sources such as TASS and Pravda, both quoted as much as all other.

Regarding the subject matters of the Soviet strikes stories (See Table 4; as with the secondary sources table and for similar reasons subject matters of short items and wire reports can be seen in Appendix 2) we observe that the effects of the conflicts on the society - and that being usually negative economic ones - overshadowed the causes of the conflict. In our opinion, that could happen due to the following reasons:

- 1) Moscow-based reporters were late for the initial stage of the conflict and did not bother to return back and examine the essential causes of the dispute;
- 2) Soviet government and its agencies conducted an enormous propaganda campaign stating that the national economy headed to a collapse because of the stoppages in work, and the U.S. reporters just fell victim to the campaign.

Demands of the strikers and Kremlin's response are pretty well balanced in the stories, especially if we take into consideration the evergreen (constant) news-

worthiness of calls for resignation of the Soviet president. The ratio of political and economic demands, made by the workers, was accurately reflected by the publications during the conflict. The same can be said about the proportion of "sticks and carrots" in the response category, with an exception of the stories in the Journal that (probably due to its specific business nature) were giving strong focus on the economic concessions of the Soviet government.

Soviet Strikes Story '91

"The Christian Science Monitor"

The first piece of the Monitor on the miners' strike (March, 21) goes into details of the causes of the conflict and demands of the workers, tracing them back to those during the industrial conflicts in 1989. Then the government pledged to fulfill a number of demands, but failed to do it in full. Like nearly all of the stories to follow it, the article by Daniel Snyder, the Moscow correspondent, mentions the miners' call for President Gorbachev's resignation. It also quotes the reason of the demand:

"The president does not represent the interests of the people". Right or wrong that can be (public opinion polls tend to confirm the idea), this is a rare explanation of the demand at a time when the majority of the Western audience will probably think the Soviets admire Mr. Gorbachev as much as the West does.

In the period from this first report until the last piece on May 7 - the newspaper ran 12 full-length news stories, plus an editorial and a cartoon on the subject. Six pieces dealt solely with the conflict, while others included it as part of their stories on more general political and economic issues of Soviet life.

The CS Monitor stories have a ratio of 41 percent of sources for the strikes to 33 percent against it with 26 percent other. The slight pro-strike tendency is mainly due to the absence of voices of dissident anti-strike workers and an extremely low use of the electronic media sources, which were mainly state-controlled (see Table 3). The Monitor correspondents much more widely than the reporters from the other two publications

relied on sources from various print media, some of which were openly sympathetic to the strikers.

A latecomer to the scene of coverage of the spring conflicts, the Moscow bureau of the newspaper did its best to present the dispute as a political, rather than an economic conflict. In several stories Moscow correspondents gave prominence to the point that the workers were rejecting offers of wage increases, sticking to their political demands, e.g.: "The miners in the coal pits have disdained offers of money until Gorbachev is gone." (Apr. 8) Editor Lampmann also said that she viewed the event as the one "with heavy emphasis on the political" side (Interview: July 8, 1991).

The economic effects of the strike were not elaborated and presented with some skepticism. The Monitor would rather write "the (Soviet) government claims [!] that huge losses... are rippling through the economy as a result of the strike" (Apr. 19), than "the government says...". Stressing the support the strikers were providing for pro-Yeltsin liberal anti-

Communist forces, the Monitor carried an exceptionally good report on May 3 noting that the miners got their political demands satisfied. According to the "9+1" agreement, Gorbachev signed then with republican leaders like Yeltsin, Fokin (Ukrainian PM) - who could point to great workers' pressure and support in this case, the former was to resign and hold new elections as soon as early 1992. At that time the point was missed by most Western observers. The editorial comment on the spring strikes was mixed. A May 7 cartoon suggested the strike was drowning the country, while an editorial gave cautious approval of the strikers' actions: "The sentiment for democracy in Moscow [during rallies in March] and the far-flung coal miners is reassuring." (Apr. 2)

"The New York Times"

The Times was the first among the three newspapers to run a story on the conflict. Actually, that had happened several days before the strike started. Then came a month-long silence to be followed by the first big piece to cover the actual events in the

minefields. In the article (Mar. 28) Serge Schmemmann, Moscow correspondent of the newspaper, somewhat belatedly reported that the walkout had started a couple dozen days before, and for the first time gave an account of the background of the dispute. He pointed to the "conflicting claims and fragmentary information" on the effects of the strike, but somehow the story had only the governmental figures and opinion for that matter.

That was particularly unusual, since in general the New York Times stories had a ratio of heavy 43 percent of pro-strike sources to as little as 25 percent against it and 32 percent other (see Table 3). Nearly half of the secondary sources were strikers, none of the anti-strike workers served as a source of information or opinion. Judging by the content analysis' results the Times correspondents, unlike the Monitor ones, heavily relied on electronic media and paid little attention to whatever was written in the Soviet press.

Altogether, from February 27 to May 7 the publication had 17 Moscow dispatches on the spring workers'

unrest, 9 of them dealt solely with the conflict.

While stating in most of their stories the price hikes as the cause of the strikes (see Table 4), the reporters mainly covered the political demands of the workers. Thus they clearly were saying that the price rises were the last straw in testing the patience of the people. According to the Times that was not an attempt to "pull the blanket onto the miners' side", but a deep conflict:

"From the coal mines of the Kuzbas to the streets of Minsk, workers have downed their hammers and sickles ["sickles"?! - AR] to demand an end to the wretched proletarian paradise promised them by Marx but forced on them by Communism." (Apr. 14)

Giving the broadest coverage of the wide political demands among the three (not just Gorbachev's resignation), the NY Times pointed to the seeming paradox of the workers opposing workers' state. It said the shift from the economic demands to the political ones was in complete accordance with Marxist textbooks (Apr. 14). It also quoted a comparison of the

strikers' tactics with that of the Bolsheviks (Apr. 24). As to the social effects of the strikes the Times emphasized the miners' role in the Gorbachev-Yeltsin rivalry, presented as "a bitter power struggle between the central Government, backed by the Communist apparatus, the military and the K.G.B., and a coalition of nationalists, liberals and democrats" (Apr. 10). "The workers", - writes Serge Schmemmann, - "offer Mr. Yeltsin both a powerful reserve force and a counter to any notion Mr. Gorbachev may have of using military force to impose his will" (Apr. 14). At the same time the newspaper stated that "Mr. Yeltsin was recognizing that all his popularity did not really outweigh Mr. Gorbachev's powers. Mr. Yeltsin could, for example, claim the support of striking coal miners, but he has no way of satisfying their demands" (Apr. 25).

The Times said that the economic concessions of the central government to the strikers - described as "the ploy" - were rejected every time they were proposed, while all kinds of Kremlin's calls and bans were defied.

The New York Times had probably the widest coverage of the conflict. Surprisingly, among the 30 odd items and stories dealing with the strikes in the Soviet Union there was not a single editorial comment or a column on the issue. "Probably, they had nothing to say", - commented on it the Times Foreign Editor Gwertzman (Interview: July 9, 1991).

"The Wall Street Journal"

The first story carried by the Wall Street Journal on the spring strikes - and that came two weeks after the start of the conflicts - had a strong anti-strike flavor. Andrea Rutherford, a Moscow's staff reporter of the Journal, noted, that "most miners... have ignored the strike call, and many of those who walked out are back at work" (Mar. 15). Backed with numerous quotations of a "labour activist" Sergei Vasiliev, whose purpose was "to persuade coal miners in Donetsk not to join a national strike", the article went on to mock the "pro-strike faction" and gave the final say to Mr. Vasiliev. For three more weeks the publication did not run Moscow dispatches on the

background of pouring news of the workers' unrest only to come with a piece saying that "the current strike did not receive as much support as a nationwide walkout in 1989" (Apr. 4).

Altogether, the Wall Street Journal had 12 full-length stories on the Soviet strikes, one of them being an editorial. Out of the 12, six stories dealt primarily with the disputes, while six more covered the subject in part. The strikes were covered between March 15 and May 10, 1991.

In general, the Journal had the most balanced among the three publications ratio of pro/contra/other sources, which was 47 to 42 to 11 percent. It was the only newspaper that quoted views of anti-strike workers (see Table 3). We cannot but pay attention also to the fact that the Journal reporters relied mainly on traditional "central" sources, such as Kremlin, TASS, Pravda, disregarding independent republican governments (Yeltsin's including), popular press, etc.

The causes of the strikes were not really described by the publication (see

Table 4). True, none of the three newspapers elaborated over this point, but the extent of disregard is most visible in the WS Journal.

The Journal was the only publication under the study to keep silent about the support, liberal forces were receiving from the strikers, putting economic crises as the ultimate effect of the conflict on the society. The "damaging strike" (Apr. 4; Apr. 25) has "brought the Soviet economy to the verge of collapse" (Apr. 22), wrote the Journal. This issue of great economic losses as a result of the strikes was widely disputed in the Soviet press (See for example: *Izvestia*: Apr.23, p.4), but never questioned by the Journal. As an example let us see into a structural repetition in April 16 issue: "The Soviet government says losses in coal and related industries already amount to billions of rubles..."

"But striking miners say they won't go back to work until..."

Moreover, pointing to the political crisis as an effect of the strikes, the newspaper meant a threat to Mr. Gorbachev not from the anti-Communist forces, but from the orthodox commu-

nists, e.g.:

"He [Gorbachev] seems unable, or unwilling, to stop the protests thus eliciting criticism from hard-line communists who plead for a restoration of 'law and order'" (Apr. 19).

The world of workers' demands and government's response according to the Journal is a story of a kind Mommy sharing the last piece of bread with her unruly and not-sensible child. More than the other publications, the newspaper focused the readers attention to the economic demands of the strikers saying that "the government can't afford to boost their wages" (Mar. 15), to be repeated with "the government can't really afford to cave in and award big pay increases to end the strikes (Apr. 5) - just in case you've missed the point. If you look at the WS Journal pieces on the strikes as at one long text, you will see a story of Kremlin proposing new deals and workers rejecting them outright.¹

On looking back at the Journal's coverage of the dispute, Editor Lescaze said he was not satisfied with it. "I would like to see, maybe, two more stories,

giving more detail... of both the miners' position, but also of the government's response." (Interview: July 10, 1991)

Soviet Strike Story Profile

Conclusions

In order to find common characteristics of the stories printed by the American newspapers, we looked into percentage of total number of full-size stories (42) with certain subject matters (see Table 4). The results are as follows:

- * 93 percent of all stories pointed to the demands of the workers (60 percent of stories mentioned the call for the resignation of President Gorbachev);

- * 76 percent of all stories gave the response of the authorities;

- * 69 percent of all stories did not give any cause of the strikes;

- * 55 percent of all stories described the effects of the strike on Soviet society.

Backed with the above figures we can reconstruct a typical "Soviet Strike Story", which will give workers' demands, Kremlin's response, socio-economic effects of the con-

flict, but will fail to mention the causes of the dispute. It turned out that as much as 79 percent of all stories correspond to the model completely or in all, but one points.

Moreover, while the overall majority of the stories quote workers' opinion or information, 98 percent of all stories will not have voices of dissident anti-strike workers, thus presenting the workforce a homogeneous mass which is never true. As to the media sources of a "Soviet Strike Story", they were rather old-style and propagandistic Pravda and TASS, than the glasnost sprouts.

Finally, a typical "Strike Story" will most probably be a hasty news report than a deep analysis or a human interest story per se.

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TABLE 1. TYPES OF THE SOVIET STRIKES RELATED MATERIAL

Type	CS Monitor	NY Times	WS Journal	Combined
News items	35	34	69	138 %
Full-length stories	61	66	31	158 %
news/news analysis editorials	(57)	(66)	(29)	(152)
features	(4)	(0)	(2)	(6)
columns	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Cartoons	4	0	0	4 %
TOTAL	100 %	100 %	100 %	300 %

TABLE 2. PRIMARY SOURCES OF THE SOVIET STRIKES ITEMS AND STORIES

Type/Source	CS Monitor	NY Times	WS Journal	Combined (percent of all items and stories)
NEWS ITEMS				
Wire Services	100 ²	9 ³	0	109
Services and Staff Reporters	0	91	100	191
TOTAL	100 %	100 %	100 %	300 %
FULL LENGTH STORIES				
Staff Moscow Reporters	65	81	84	230 %
Contributors	21 ⁴	0	0	21 %
Wire Services	7 ⁵	19 ⁶	8 ⁷	34 %
Editorial Writers	7	0	8	15 %
TOTAL	100 %	100 %	100 %	300 %

² Compiled Reuters, UPI and AP from Moscow

^{3, 7} AP from Moscow

⁴ Stories by Justin Burke, Moscow correspondent for Gannett Co. newspapers and a stringer of the Monitor

^{5, 6} Reuters from Moscow

TABLE 3. SOURCES OF SOVIET STRIKES STORIES

	CS MONITOR	NY TIMES	WS JOURNAL
	(percent, of times quoted)		
WORKERS, unions, among them, anti-strike	35 0	43 0	49 8
GORBACHEV, his ministers and aids	9	9	10
PARTY and industrial functionaries	7	2	4
LOCAL administrations	4	8	0
YELTSIN, his ministers and aids	17	14	4
Both YELTSIN and GORBACHEV	9	3	0
TASS, state news agency	4	6	10
REUTERS	0	0	4
Soviet NON-STATE news AGENCIES	2	2	2
State TELEVISION	0	3	0
RADIO RUSSIA (pro-Yeltsin)	0	3	0
PRAVDA (Communist daily)	4	2	6
IZVESTIA (Soviets' daily)	2	2	0
KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA (youth daily)	2	0	0
KURANTY (Moscow Soviet's daily)	2	0	0
NASHA GAZETA (Miners' paper)	2	0	0
OTHER SOURCES	1	3	3
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 4. SUBJECT MATTERS OF SOVIET STRIKES STORIES

	CS MONITOR	NY TIMES	WS JOURNAL
	(percent, of times quoted)		
Causes of the strikes	31	59	8
-includes price hikes, etc.	23	53	8
Effects on the society	62	65	42
-includes economic crisis,	38	47	33
-political crisis,	15	29	17
-support of democratic forces	31	24	0
Demands of the strikers	100	88	83
-includes Gorbachev's resignation,	100	76	83
-other or general political,	54	65	42
-higher pay,	8	6	42
-other, or general economic	31	6	33
Response of the Kremlin:	77	65	92
-includes tough stand ("sticks"),	54	47	25
-economic proposals, invitation to talks ("carrots")	31	29	75
TOTAL number of stories (100 %)	13	17	12

APPENDIX 1. SECONDARY SOURCES OF NEWS ITEMS ON SOVIET STRIKES

Secondary source	CS MONITOR	NY TIMES	WS JOURNAL
	(number of times quoted)		
WORKERS, unions	0	1	4
GORBACHEV,			
his ministers	0	0	4
YELTSIN, his aids	1	0	1
BOTH YELTSIN			
and GORBACHEV	1	0	1
State TELEVISION	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0

APPENDIX 2. SUBJECT MATTERS OF SOVIET STRIKE ITEMS AND WIRES REPORTS

	CS Monitor	NY Times	WS Journal
	number of items		
Causes of the strikes	0	1	2
-price-increase	0	1	2
Effects on the society	6	5	8
-economic crisis	4	2	8
-political crisis	0	0	0
-support of			
democratic forces	2	4	0
Demands of			
the strikers	3	6	8
-Gorbachev's			
resignation	3	6	8
-other political	0	2	1
-economic benefits	0	3	4
Response of the			
Kremlin	3	4	9
-tough stand			
(bans, etc.)	0	0	6
-proposals of			
benefits and talks	3	4	5

THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MEDIATIC COMMUNICATION

(In the case of
the Republic of Moldova)

BY CONSTANTIN MARIN

The modernity asserts the removal of the human being out of the social anonymity of its valuation in the position of author of the social creation. The civil society through its vocation of promoting the citizen's supremacy in the deliberation of the public affairs is registered perfectly among the top values of the modernity.

At the same time, it may try on countries' attachment to the ideals of the European integration, and, in a larger perspective, to the general process of world's universality and even of formation of a new geopolitical

power, called by Justin Rosenberg, "the empire of the civil society"¹.

By the end of this millennium we state that the attractiveness zone of the civil society as a social doctrine and practice is extending. Next to the first world it starts to include the post-communist East-European countries, Moldova, in particular. Hence there develops the complicated process of recovering the civil society absorbed by the state-party in the period of the totalitarianism. The unequal statute of the real or potential social actors establishes the peculiarity of this process.

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In the period of the totalitarianism and authoritarianism the state-party encroached the sovereignty of the nation, estranging the citizen from the republic or reserving the role of a tacit and docile contemplator. The time that followed after the communist system has fallen seemed to have been marked, in Moldova in particular, by essential changes in the statute of the individual, of the society in general. But very soon these expectations swept away. Despite the constitutional and economical reforms (declared or partially done), the civic potential of the man continued to remain unclaimed. The power preferred to hold the sovereignty bearer at distance from the social administration lever. It is usually requested only during the election campaigns. By getting the desired mandate, the power interrupts the dialogue (or even the monologue) with citizens or maintains it so sporadic that they still remain contemplators. A such behavior is traditional for power in general. It was remarked even in the 18th century by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who in "Social contract" noted that the government is tempted into reserving

"the right of expressing opinions, of proposing, dividing, discussing" only "to its members"². That is why, Dahrendorf remarked, citizens have nothing else but to "borrow" the power from those desired under control³.

Of course, each power is given up with difficulty. If in the USA the civil society preceded the setting up of the state, the first one delegating the public authority competence thought them to fit to, then Moldova, and other post-communist countries, as well, is in a complete different situation. The edification of the civil society starts when the power is enough institutionalized and autonomized in what is called, in a traditional way, political society. It makes use (or even abuse) of its prerogatives to the detriment of the political existence of the man, of his statute of citizen. Otherwise, the articulation of the civil society becomes dependent on power. In such conditions citizens have to demonstrate initiative, courage, consistency, and the power, when it actually wants to edify a modern society - good will, but concrete actions of legislative order too, that

would facilitate the implementation of democratic values. In this case only, we may speak about power as an actor of the statuation of the civil society.

The institutionalization of the inter-societal life proliferated during the industrial epoch is a natural fact today. This phenomenon even in its incipient stage revealed a polyvalent effect. On the one hand, the institution meant "solidarity and cooperation"⁴, "an ensemble of complete roles"⁵ - circumstances that facilitated the human individualization and perpetuation. On the other hand, by establishing certain boundaries that in a way or another affect the man`s aspiration for freedom had and still has a coercive impact on his deeds and mind. In consequence, this institution undermined the pre - eminence of the human being - the cornerstone of the civil society. The harmonization of man`s nature and institution becomes quite convenient. The general tendency of inter-societal institutionalization is also characteristic for the realities from the Republic of Moldova. A decade ago, according to statistical estimations,

here there were registered about 5000 economical agents. At present, their number went over 150 000 that grew up of 30 times. But the institutional landscape passes beyond the economical frame, extending into all social domains. Gradually the institution places the man on the outskirts of the social life. The human being becomes the projection or (and) its hostage. The triumph of the institution on man brings into their relationships the effects of the domination of the majority proportional to the minority. The violence through which the institution is imposed generates the human violence as a shield of protection of the personal being. In consequence, the aspiration towards the civil society, the supreme virtue of which, after Popper, is not violent⁶, is undermined.

Taking into account the social objective role of the institution, it will be treated as an important actor of the edification of the civil society.

The contributions of the power and of the inter-societal state or private institutions in the social modernization of Moldova, in

particular, become insufficient and inefficient, without the citizens' participation of course. Moreover. Its contribution, alongside with the exceeding of the consequences of the totalitarianism, has become gradually decisive. Its civic initiative is palpable and efficient only when citizens institutionalize and form "social power sources" (Dahrendorf). As a rule, the civil society is conceived as such kind of source.

The civil society mostly materializes claiming of autonomy and freedom towards the interventions of the state in the social life⁷. The noted approach is one of the most circulated in the actual theoretical and political debates from the West. But it emphasizes one quality of the civil society only. The given phenomenon is multiform. That is why, more motivated and closer to the classical essence there seems to be the examination of the civil society as a social polydimensional phenomenon with political, economical, etc. implications. It would penetrate and determine the human existence, in the hypostasis of a private being and of a citizen as well. Out of these reasons we opt for defining the

civil society as a macro-, societal, open system in which there function and interact mutually the inter-societal systems, each transmitting to the civil society a certain dimension: politics, economy, institutional ethics, etc.

In the institutional era the civil society also gets the communicational dimension that settles down into the public communicational space. It covers the mediation, institutional and societal communicational waves that assure the greater information of citizens on the public affairs, creates the premises for the public opinion's crystallization.

The coming into value of the civil - which is an indispensable part in the democratization of social life - implies the edification of a such system of mass communication in which most of the territory would belong to public media, that is to those media which by their mere nature will focus on the human being as citizen, and as social and political actor. In other words, the democratization claims a non-nationalized press, with no political or party obliga-

tions, a pluralistic press that would cover the whole spectrum of the civil society, a press that would watch and frustrate the power whenever it will forget deliberately or not that it does not autorepresent, but represents the civil society. The mediatic communication as an institutionalized element of the civil society will be conceived as an open system that will act into the social and political fields. In the first case, by assuring a good information of the public, it develops its civic culture, demands the validation of political decisions, creates a social visibility. In the second one, the mediatic communication induces the moment of the social into the political society, realizing what we could call the social lobbyist. The mediatic communication as an open system feels the influence of the civil and political society as well, including that of the power that establishes its legal frame of functioning. In conclusion, we could mention that the mediatic communication with the statute of element of the civil society gives expression of the social in the sphere of the political and of the political in the

sphere of the social, thus, becoming the binder of the modern society.

The communicational practice from Moldova being in transition from totalitarianism to democracy tries the ambivalent tendency in the development of the autochthonous mass media. On the one hand, on a quantitative plan, they try to detach out of the petrification State from the communist times. On the other hand, on a qualitative plan, they keep on paying tribute to the anterior superseded practices. Further on, we shall try to detail the development of this process.

The quantitative transformation of mass media in Moldova

We have come out, or rather we are trying to come out of an omnipotent state-party which has abusively regulated the entire social existence. In those circumstances society, as Francois Chatelet and Evelyne Pisier said, was "an atomised mass reduced to acquiescence". The mass media, incorporated into the bureaucratic system, and basically alienated from its natural desti-

nation of correct and unhampered information of citizens on public interest issues, had served as a conservation agent for a stagnating society. Communication through the media had turned into a unidirectional, profoundly ideological information flow, isolated from the global information highway and from performing technologies, which were opening new vistas for the modern society, open to the domestic public and to the world.

The last decade of this century has been marked by the most spectacular metamorphoses of the media in Moldova.

One refers to their quantitative aspects. The erstwhile static body of the media came to life. Significant in this light is the evolution of electronic press. By the early 1990's there was only one broadcast institution operating - the present state-owned Company Teleradio-Moldova. In 1993 the local radio market saw the launching of the first private station - Unda Libera. According to the latest figures, in 1999 the number of such radio stations has

gone over 20. At the moment circa 50 private over-the-air TV studios, 27 cable, and 4 mixed ones are operating in the electronic communication sector.

Important changes have also occurred in the area of news agencies. The exclusive monopoly of the official institution Moldpres was replaced by a relevant diversity of information sources available to the press. It was the 10 independent agencies, among which Basa-press, Infotag, Flux, Nica-press, Deca-press, and Interlic that managed to get a foothold in the local market. These, maybe excessively numerous for a small Moldova, are remarkable for their tendency to profoundly reflect the course of local events, and to present them from different perspectives. The printed press has also seen considerable quantitative changes. This sector is possibly the most dynamic, so much so that today we find it difficult to operate with exact statistical data. However, it should be mentioned that the number of newspaper titles in 1997 was 460. Their regular publication over the past the years (just as before) has been hampered by difficul-

ties caused the suspension of some, disappearance or sporadic publication of others, which broke the periodicity announced initially. We assume that the quantitative indicators of printed press will continue to undergo certain changes as the territorial and administrative reform gains pace. The overall vector of the quantitative evolution of the domestic mass media suggests that Moldova gravitate towards the category of countries with an average level of media development. According to the minimum standards formulated by UNESCO for each country in the world, for every thousand of inhabitants there should be at least 100 copiers of daily newspapers, 50 radio and 20 TV sets. According to some experts Moldova meets this minimum requirement and in some cases exceeds it. Thus, regarding TYV sets our country approaches the European average (250 sets per 1000 inhabitants). The availability indicator for radio receivers (550 per 1000 inhabitants) is more than ten times the minimum level established by UNESCO and ranks after the USA (over 2000), Canada (over 2000), UK,

Japan, France (circa 1000 radio sets per 1000 inhabitants)⁸. Obviously the cited statistical data can only be interpreted as a potentiality for the saturation of informational needs of local users. These have to be evaluated taking into account the impediments faced by the media in this country (low purchasing power of information users, frequent power cut-offs, etc.), as well as its social impact. In any event, there are real reasons to believe that the media landscape here has a considerable potential.

Mass media's social

pre-bankruptcy

Qualitative dimensions of the mass media, as in the case of the quantitative ones, are contradictory, reflecting to the same extent both the tendency to capitalise on press freedom and universal journalism standards, and the tribute paid to blueprints compromised now but eulogised in times past. Thus, on the one hand we can see the entrepreneurial initiative in the mass media, implementation of private property in the communication sector, the rise and strengthening of indepen-

dent, politically neutral, pluralistic press, the will to offer the public balanced information, and on the other - government control of the mass media, excessive involvement of political parties in the press, obvious political partisanship, distortion of information, informational violence, disregard for people's right to information, mutual intolerance by ideologically competing newspapers or papers committed to group interests. These features generate different media products.

They, the products, can generally be divided into two categories. The first one indicates the predilection (voluntary or otherwise) to become an element in the political society. The second points out to the intention of the press to become part of the civil society. For the time being the press here prefer the first product. Their vulnerability resides in the fact that this way the media enrolled in power structures (or those of political groups seeking access to power) and consequently act a coercive factor in their relations with information consumers. This practice basically contra-

venes the nature of information media launched in the 18th century under the motto of press freedom as an exponent of civil society. It is rather characteristic of totalitarian regimes, where the press is incorporated into the coercion system. The quantum of domestic mass media focused on the second product is yet to become significant, and so is their social impact. Nonetheless, we believe the development track of this type of press is precisely appropriate when a modern society is being built. It is the latter, without pretending to be a power or even a superpower, which carries out the ultimate vocation of the information media - to be the advocate and the catalyst of democratic society, of supremacy of the people's sovereignty.

In conclusion, in spite of the noted quantitative transformations, we shall affirm that ten years after the beginning of Moldova's transition from totalitarianism to democracy at the chapter of means of communication we are more in the past than in the future. After 1990, at the same time with the "destruction" of the communist party's

monopoly as leading force of the society, the press remained almost intact from the structural and functional point of view. It became multi-polar, continuing to oscillate around the institutions of power or those aspiring at power. The political nationalization and partisanship constituted the characteristic signs of the autochthonous mass - media. They mainly generated their state of social pre-bankruptcy.

Mass media's nationalization

The nationalization in the communicational field meant the passing into the state property or administration of the informational patrimony of the former party of government, the dozed access at the information sources, the preferential finance of the means of communication depending on loyalty degree towards the power, etc. We shall remark that mass - media's nationalization initiated in Moldova at the beginning of the 90s (in this period, according to our calculations, the state was owning over 50% of the written press, the whole electronic press) was pro-

moted by all governments, regardless of their political preferences. Lately the state presence on the informational market reduced a lot (the majority of the provincial newspapers that belonged to the traditional organs of the local power failed). It is true that at present we assist at their reversal as the administrative - territorial reform is implemented. This fact convinces us once again that the power, even if formed as a result of democratic elections, is tempted into being an active actor in the communicational field.

The party press and the coming into value of the civil society

The transformation of the press in Moldova into an element of the public communication space has been slow to occur; there is not even a foreshadow of such a transformation, and that is why could be the excessive density of the party-paper strand in the general fabric of the printed press, and the disadvantaging impact they have on the citizens' right to political life, and hence on the citizens' role

of debaters in social life. In the early '90s the local informational landscape was marked by two important events. The first one was the foundation of the newspaper *Glasul* (The Voice), and the second one was the foundation of another newspaper, *Tara* (The Greater Country), which is still the organ of the Christian Democratic Popular Front of Moldova. These two papers on the one hand marked the extinction of a single-party, communist domination over the mass media, and on the other hand contained the signs of an ambivalent evolution of the local printed press. *Glasul* could be characterized in this respect as a potential landmark in the plurality of the press in Moldova. *Tara*, as we saw later on, marked the beginning of a multi-party press. In the former case one could sense the intention to build a kind of press that would reflect the entire range of opinions in society, that would give free rein to the freedom of expression and approach impartially social and other kinds of issues. In the latter case one could see the heterogeneous political entities - from the point of view of doctrine - to operate in the media. Both

trends were appropriate at that point in time. The previous totalitarian state-party had completely destroyed the civil and taken over communications to give them one single ideological hue. The freedom of the press became thus a litmus test for the transition from totalitarianism to democracy; it expressed the opposition between the government and the recovering civil society.

The subsequent of the printed press in Moldova has shown that from among the two trends showing potential at the beginning of the implementation of democratic values the more significant one turned out to be the development of media based on multi-partiness.

The phenomenon of an unprecedented increase in the number of political formations in the first half of the 90's (their total number was greater than 50) was accompanied by a proliferating party press. Almost every political organization deemed it a duty to put out a newspaper. Thus, in the same year when *Tara* appeared (1990), two more political papers appeared - the publication of the social democrats *Republica* and

the communist Cuvintul. In 1993 the field of the press witnessed several other political debuts - the socialists launched Dreptatea, the present Party of Democratic Forces (then Intellectuals' Congress) started Mesagerul, the agrarians - Pamant si Oameni. The Party of Reform put together the Observatorul de Chisinau. Some time later one could witness the appearance of Moldovanul (Republican Party), Albina (Democratic Labor Party), Libertatea (Liberal Party), Luceafarul (Party for Rebirth and Reconciliation), Dialog (Movement for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova), Furnica (Social Political Movement 'Civil Alliance for Reforms'), etc. A number of parties started creating their local press element in the same period of time.

The parties' publishing activity has been persevering and unable at the same time. The activity curve swings upward during elections. The local elections in the spring of 1999 have shown this one more time. But the interest for the press slumps immediately after the elections end. The only exception are the par-

ties which pass over the threshold defined in the elections law. The ephemeral character of many party papers, as well as the lack of discipline on the part of publishers regarding the law on the legal print deposit make it practically impossible to give a full statistical estimate to this layer of the printed press. The data we have allow only for an approximate assessment of the number of party newspapers on our information market. These data show that party papers represent about 40 percent of the total number of relatively stable publications. We think that this share in the print market - although have to emphasize that figure does not show exactly the amount of party publications we have - is extremely large, especially if we take into account the significant role that the government still plays in the media market. At present the party press and the governmental one have together considerable chances to shadow out public or private newspapers. The status of the latter as an auxiliary element represents nothing but the fact that the civil society is deprived of a public venue.

Hence our special interest for the relationship between the party press and the public venue, as well as for the impact the party press have on the value of civil society.

In the light of the traditional approach to civil society, political parties represent the society's organization and have as their objective the development of a citizen's right to political life. In the recent decades, however, an increasing number of scholars have become inclined to include them into the political society. The social experience that we have had in Moldova provides enough arguments in favor of the latter option. The political formations in our country tend to migrate towards power rather than represent the will of citizens of the civil society in order to oppose the authorities. In this light, our party press is rather part and parcel of the powers-that-be or promotes party interests aimed at gaining power. That is, the party papers represent mouthpieces of some bodies, which are drifting farther away from the civil society, thus becoming increasingly alienated from it.

In 1972 Theodore White wrote, 'The power of the press is preeminent. It sets the agenda for public discussion.' Indeed, it is public discussion on public matters, which is one of the fundamental elements in a public venue. The party press in general and our papers, published by various political bodies, in particular, are situated outside that venue. By filtering information, they do nothing but include in the agenda points with an obvious party interest. As a conclusion we would like to note that the party press, by virtue of their present situation and activities, should be included with suspicion into the public venue. They can become an integral part of the venue only when they start observing certain requirements.

The publishing experience of political parties in Moldova can provide some relevant examples. Observatorul de Chisinau could be one of them. The Party for Reform launched this newspaper before the 1994 elections to parliament. The newspaper was on for a short time - from 16 November 1993 till 15 March 1994. The Party for

Reform failed to gain enough social support and was left out of the elections race; very soon it disappeared for some time from the Moldavian political spectrum. The newspaper disappeared along with the party. The party thus behaved ordinarily, with nothing to prove that it wanted reform. However, the information consistency and policy of Observatorul showed that the party was worthy of its name. The revelation that this newspaper became and which, I believe, will be marked in the contemporary history of the mass media in Moldova, was due to the fact that Observatorul (thanks to the will of the party, as well as to the desire of the paper's staff to do good-quality journalism) showed a clear respect for the citizen's right to information. This right, if compared to the one related to the freedom of the press, is a more complex right. Scholars' Ion Dogaru and Dan Claudiu Danisor showed in their recent study on human rights and public liberties that this right emphasizes 'the human being rather than the social fabric.' The articles from the newspaper under examination, which appear under section

headings such as Society, Politics, Economy and Business, Securities, Banking and Finance, Advertising, Culture, some of which are new to the press in Moldova, should be assessed only on the basis of the right to information. They are set apart from their counterparts in the rest of the press due to their exhaustive information, comprehensive civil outlook and, generally, even due to their impartiality.

The party newspaper Observatorul de Chisinau is rather an exception among the party press. It is true that another party paper, Mesagerul, started lately showing signs of serving the public. Once again, attempts like these are not typical of the party press here. The party press prefer to show people what to think rather than, as political scientist Bernard C. Cohen wrote in his book *The Press and Foreign Policy*, to tell people what they should think about.

The coming into value of the civil society - which is an indispensable part in the democratization of social life - implies the edification of such a system of

mass communication in which most of the territory would belong to public media, that is to those media which by their mere nature will focus on the human being as citizen, and as social and political actor. That is, democratization requires a pluralist press, and not a pluriparty press. A natural question arises: what will be the future of the party press? Should we impose on it some restrictions, just as the parliament does to its publishers, the parties? I don't think this would be appropriate or that this might work. If we are to respect the principle of freedom of the press, no one can be banned from expressing oneself freely, including political parties. A solution in such a case would be provided by the information market, which operates within the civil society. It will be the market (to be sure, when the recovery of the civil society from the influence of the powers-that-be starts occurring by all avenues, including by using communication levers) which will set the place and role of the party press appropriate to it. One can already see some symptoms of this.

The statistical survey published in the Mass Media (March 1998, pp. 29-31) shows that readers prefer publications with no political engagement. Thus, 5 party papers made the top-10 list of publications distributed by subscription in 1998 (Dialog, Tara, Luceafarul, Mesagerul and Libertatea), while there were only three in the list of the publications most searched for in Moldpresa's kiosks (Mesagerul, Tara and Zemlia i Liudi). We have enough reasons to believe that the situation is similar this year too.

The multi-party press in Moldova should be at least looked at as a sprout of the democratization of social life. This press is rather a hangover of the times past, from which we are trying to get away. The future belongs to public mass communication, and this should be emphasized more clearly in the project on media development, which was recently passed by the Moldovan parliament. Thomas Jefferson, a former US president, made an appropriate declaration regarding the civil society: '...were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without

newspapers, or newspapers without a government. I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.' We could paraphrase what Jefferson said, taking into account the context of the issue under examination, as follows: were we to choose between party papers and non-party papers, we would not hesitate to prefer the latter.

The independent press

The state press and that of the parties circumscribed to the power or that functions as part of Moldovan political society have enough chances to eclipse the public or private newspapers. Their number in the general informational autochthonous landscape is irrelevant, and the behavior of those of national or municipal size, in particular, has the mark of political partisanship. Exception in this context seems to constitute the local private written press joined into the Independent Press Association. There also should be mentioned the private electronic press (a series of broadcasting and TV stations lately created the Electronic Press Association - EPA), and those ten press agencies as

well. The autochthonous public and private mediatic communication, undrawn into the fields of power, represent, for now, more an option than a meaningful reality.

The mass media and non-governmental organizations

The associative sector, as nongovernmental organizations are sometimes called, is a significant element of the civil society. American sociologist Peter L. Berger also called them "infrapolitical" structures. Berger wrote: "There is a great variety of institutions... by means of which people participate in social life and which help them define their existence"⁹. The NGOs authorize especially, the institutionalization of public space as a link between the citizen and the power. By cumulating the civil initiative they activate the citizens' potential to deliberate on public affairs and promote democracy' participatory character.

In Moldova NGOs appearing in 1992; 75 such institutions were registered year. Their numbers increased subsequently. The following statistics in this respect were presented

at the 2nd Forum of Nongovernmental Organizations from Moldova (November 4-6, 1999). While in 1997 there were 765 registered NGOs, in 1999 their number increased to 1.400. The same period of time witnessed changes in the location of NGOs. In 1997 the overwhelming majority (95,3 %) were located in Chisinau. Two years later the share of NGOs in other communities increased to 21 percent. In spite of the noticeable increase, which may seem impressive at a first glance, the density of NGOs is still insignificant. Some other statistics were cited at the Forum in this respect. Currently in Moldova there are 0.31 NGOs per 1000 population, while in France this number is 11.95, in Belgium - 7.84, Slovakia - 3.14, Poland and Romania - 0.62.

The density of ONGs in Moldova becomes even less important if we take into account their status and social impact. In order to support this assertion, we will cite the results of an opinion poll conducted in 1996 by the foundations Viitorul and IFES-Moldova with support from the Center for Investigating

Public Opinion of the Modern Moldova Foundation. The poll focused on how people perceived the local public administration. The poll placed the spotlight on the low degree of information among citizens regarding the jurisdiction, areas of concern and resolutions of nongovernmental organizations; and, consequently, people's insignificant involvement into managing public affairs. The respondents (the sample of 1000 common people and 73 experts was representative for the whole of Moldova, except for its eastern regions, showed an insufficient level of knowledge on participatory democracy, which was familiar to 38.4 % of the experts and 19.8% of other respondents. The absolute majority of people (95 percent of common respondents and 80 percent of experts), according to the poll, was not informed at all about the participation of people from their community in dealing with public issues through local referenda, people's meeting or petitioning¹⁰.

Two years afterwards, the National Center for Assistance and Information to Nongovernmental

Organizations in Moldova "Contact" discovered that many NGOs existed just in words, and 10-15% were actually active¹¹. As well, researcher Iurie Josanu reported that a part of NGOs in Moldova have been set up around concrete people, or were subservient to them in order to garner "political dividends, financial support, authority" ¹².

The estimates above suggest that NGOs in Moldova don't have enough transparency in their activity. Moreover, we could say that many of them are closed social systems, and therefore the influence of citizens on their current and future work is insignificant or even none. An underestimation or total neglect of the media can explain this. However, the experience of Western civil societies has shown that the printed as well as the electronic press have a strong associate potential - by reporting on and expanding the public space. Therefore, Moldovan NGOs could work in at least two areas in order to capitalize on this potential:

1. Publishing their own outlets;
2. Generating a flow of

information and directing it at the mass media in order to create awareness among the social sector that need solidarity and civil association.

Moldovan NGOs have had so far an insignificant experience in publishing. One of the first attempts in this respect was made by the 21st Century Youth Foundation, which published an information bulletin, Agenda, in the spring of 1998. Later on other organizations followed. It is worth mentioning the following: Alternativa XXI (Independent Society for Education and Human Rights), Democratia (Women's Organization "Civic Initiative" from Moldova), Fermierul Moldovei (National Federation of Farmers in Moldova), Ideea Civica (Pluralism Center from Moldova), Refugium (Society for Refugees in the Republic of Moldova), Drepturile pacientului [The Rights of the Patient] (Medical Management and Insurance Society), the information bulletin published by the National Center for Research and Information on Women's Issues, etc. Besides these Chisinau-based publica-

tions, local NGOs started publishing their own. One should mention here the bulletins published by the Ungheni Center for Private Initiative, the "Terra" NGO in Chircaiesti, the Balti-based Regional Center for Youth Information and Counseling, the "New Generation" Club in Soroca, etc.

The majority of such publications, although they are welcomed, are fragile and sporadic. Their publication is predicated on the funding obtained occasionally from various international foundations. Hence, we can't speak of any permanent publication, of stable periodicity, although this genre printed media - the information bulletin - requires it. To these drawbacks we can add the small print runs, content and design inconsistencies, access to these publications, which is either limited or selective. From this point of view it seems that the bulletins put out by local NGOs are more efficient (especially due to the restricted area of target audience); the bulletins of those striving for national status seem less so. In the latter case, the impact the bulletins have. I ought to

say, is almost null. In order to achieve profitability of publishing activities, we believe that NGOs working in similar areas should start cooperating; another possibility is for NGOs to consider small-format publications-booklets, fliers, prospects, etc.

In their publishing activities NGOs ought also to include the mass media. Alexis de Tocqueville, who back in the first decade of the 19th century was referring to the role of one such medium - the newspaper - wrote that this was the medium by means of which association members had the possibility "to discuss daily without having to see each other and to agree without having to meet"¹³. This assertion is also valid in the case of television, radio, and, in the not so remote future, we believe, the Internet.

At present the Moldova mass media can offer too little proof of taking advantage of the associative potential and increasing the awareness of the public on issues that are supposed to create solidarity among citizens. This situation can be explained in a number of ways. The first one is that

NGOs have not yet become a continuous source of information for the mass media. By following this path rather than relying on other avenues, the associative sector will achieve greater promotion of its own identity and cultivation of an appropriate image with a wide population segment. The second explanation can be found in the activity of the media. The printed and electronic press have not shown acceptance of a new way covering society - through the "eyes" of the citizen. This is why the activity of NGOs is only rarely covered by newspapers, TV and radio. By observing the mass media in the last several years we were able to notice such activity only at the municipal radio station Antena C, in its Associative Sector program. In addition, we would like to mention that the mass media don't have to serve only as pulpits for NGOs. The mass media themselves have a strong associative potential and the power to make citizen show social solidarity. Tocqueville wrote: "A newspaper is...always an association whose members are its regular readers"¹⁴. The capitalization on this potential, we believe, is an

important condition for the modernization of the mass media in Moldova.

Ancient Greeks realized their potential as citizen in the free space of the polis, known as agora. Modern states, by virtue of their dimensions, have no such spaces that could accommodate all the free and equal citizens for deliberations on public affairs. They can offer, however, other opportunities. Mass media as a constituent element of the civil society from the period of the communication is offering the possibility of the citizen to edify a modern agora (a mediatic agora) an agora of the mass media.

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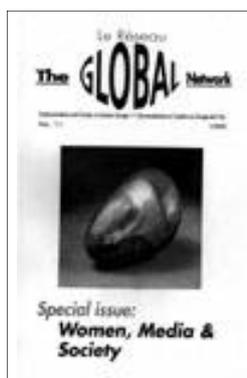
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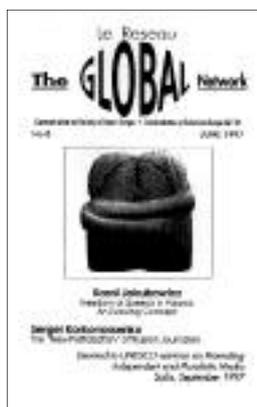
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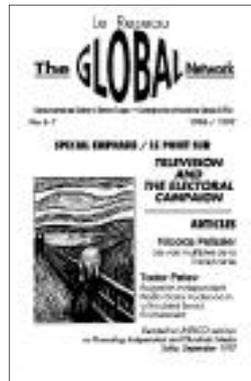
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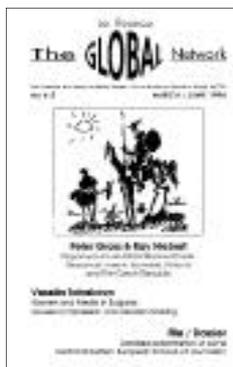
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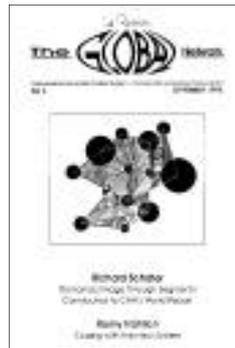
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