

Chapter 2

Journalists as Politicians: “Independent” Media and the Privatization of Politics in Russia in the 1990s

-Natalia Roudakova

This chapter traces the relationship between the Russian state and the “independent¹” news media in the first ten years of the post-Soviet rule, contributing not only to the anthropology of mass media, but to the study of post-socialist states. Many scholars have noted that the demise of socialism had meant, among other things, a significant *weakening* of the state in all countries of the former Soviet bloc (Humphrey 1991; 2002; Kaneff 2002; Stark 1998; Verdery 1996b; Volkov 1999; 2002 and many others). Occurring right at the peak of neoliberalist policies across the world, the weakening of states in Eastern Europe and former USSR meant more than a “regular” neoliberal withdrawal of the state from the economic sphere: it amounted to the *dissolution of the very center of unified political decision-making* in most countries (Verdery 1996b). But the collapse of a unified political center did not leave the region “without form and void,” as “end of history” proponents of post-socialist change would have it. Instead, as Verdery (1996b) suggests, the weakening of the state lead to a process whereby formerly central instruments of governance (be they coercive, economic, political, legal, or symbolic) have been arrogated by lower-level actors that previously had only a tangential relationship to “the state”; and it is those actors’ calculations, improvisations and practices that give rise to new institutions of governance in post-socialism. Following Humphrey (1991), Verdery (1996b) calls this process “parcellization of sovereignty” or “privatization of power” of former socialist states, urging researchers to study how the entity we know as “the state” is actually *produced* through

contact with other socio-political domains whose actors evoke and re-create the state in their everyday dealings with it.

Anthropologists and sociologists of Eastern Europe have taken up the research call and documented a number of fascinating instances where *horizontal* rather than vertical (Ferguson and Gupta 2002) relations and practices of governance take place *across* socio-political domains, defying the deep-seated dichotomies of public vs. private, state vs. market, legal vs. illegal, and state vs. civil society or “public sphere.” Humphrey (1991), for instance, has observed that the collapse of central planning and distribution networks gave a lot of agency to local bosses in Buryatia (a region in Siberia), who quickly introduced barter and special coupons instead of money, using them to deny access to goods and services to undesirable groups (economic migrants, vagrants, the homeless, the unemployed). Volkov (1999; 2002) has studied the ways in which violence management and conflict resolution in post-socialist Russia has been arrogated by local policemen and state security forces who act as private entrepreneurs and enforce physical security, provide dispute settlement, and offer “transaction insurance” to contending business groups, while resorting to the resources of former state security apparatus. Verdery herself (1996a; 1999) illustrated how privatization of land in rural Transylvania gave judges multiple chances to dispense justice according to criteria other than following the letter of the new property restitution law, which both judges and the population saw as deeply compromised. Finally, Yurchak (2002), Radaev (2002) and Nikiforova (2004) have reported that the introduction of private entrepreneurship in Russia created room for markets in bureaucratic services like certification, licensing, customs clearance, sanitary approvals of offices, and access to desirable municipal buildings, among others. Many private intermediary firms have come to “take care” (for a fee, of course) of the formalities involved in getting a bureaucratic service

done, as local administrations have made it almost impossible to obtain all the necessary approvals and signatures without going through “specially designated” intermediary firms.

The privatization of mass media after socialism has largely followed the same logic. The division into “the state” and “the public sphere” (arguably represented by “independent” mass media) has been neither clean nor complete, but has been a result of calculated give-and-takes, tactical compromises, and mutual obligations by individual actors, including journalists, politicians and businessmen, who have formed alliances and straddled multiple domains to “stay afloat” in conditions of high political and economic uncertainty. The goal of this chapter is to trace those practices and logics that blurred the divide between media, state, and business in Russia in the 1990s, which will serve as a backdrop for understanding many of the conflicts between media and the state that ensued in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This topic is a pressing one, given that much Western coverage of Russia in the last four years has been devoted to the alleged curbing of press freedoms by the Russian state and by President Putin in particular. But as I hope to convince the reader by the end of the chapter, viewing the conflict merely as a matter of curbing press freedom, especially in 1999-2001, misses two crucial points. First, private media owners and journalists in post-socialist Russia need to be seen not as “watchdogs” who kept the new Russian government in check, but as actors who have been *vying with fractions of the state for control over the symbolic control of the political field* following the decomposition of a unified political center after perestroika. As I will strive to demonstrate, throughout the 1990s and culminating in the early 2000s both state actors and “independent” media players battled on par with each other in memorable “information wars” over the definition of the country’s political-economic goals and objectives. Private media players (journalists *and* owners alike) utilized opinion-forming “communicative technologies” to support

the ascent to power of certain political groups, but not others; while state actors in power relied on the support of their own media holding companies and the use of the notorious “administrative resource” to maintain (or regain) the control of the political field. The second point not to be missed, directly to the first, is that neither journalists, nor businessmen, nor statesmen or politicians have been “pure” representatives of their respective domains of civil society, private business, and the state; instead, they have formed alliances and straddled multiple domains in order to compete with each other for control over the instruments and resources of governance (symbolic, political, economic) that previously belonged to the party-state alone.

Mass Media as the “Fourth Power”

Let me begin the exploration of the relationship between media and the state in the 1990s by examining the moral-philosophical principles that guided Russian journalists throughout perestroika and which underlay their post-perestroika claims to political influence. The notion of mass media as the “Fourth Estate²” or the “fourth branch of government,” translated into Russian as “the fourth power” (*chetvertaya vlast*), became very popular with Russian intellectuals in 1988-1992, when in the atmosphere of socio-political excitement and enthusiasm it came to stand for Russian journalists’ long-awaited chance of *real participation in political and economic decision-making on par with the other powers*. This understanding of the “fourth estate” was different from its more conservative interpretation in many Western countries, including the United States—the idea that professional mass media maintain a certain distance from the other branches of government and perform a critical “watchdog role,” but do not engage in politics directly.

Unlike its Western counterpart, which connotes disinterestedness, neutrality, “objectivity,” and distance, the Russian journalists’ understanding of the “fourth estate” during perestroika carried a real sense of political efficacy and empowerment. “There was a [euphoric] period of time when our press corps was full of pride that it was ‘the fourth power’,” says Yassen Zassoursky, the long-standing Dean of Moscow State University’s School of Journalism (Bogdanov and Zassoursky 1999:11). “It was a moment when the press whirled up all the way into the sky,” echoes Vsevolod Bogdanov, head of the Russian Union of Journalists and a prominent editor during Soviet years, “and that was a very sweet and entrancing moment. And the journalistic impulse was quite pure and honest. [...] We, the journalists, felt that we were the most important agents of democracy, that our work was of very high quality, and that we were moving society’s thought to a completely new level” (Bogdanov 1998:72). “The press in the early 1990s genuinely perceived itself as the fourth estate,” confirms Ivan Zassoursky, the grandson of Yassen Zassoursky and himself a media researcher and a journalist in the 1990s. The press realized itself as “one of the governing institutions wielding enormous influence in society. The directors of the “democratic” [i.e. pro-Yeltsin] publications felt a sense of participation in the formulating of the policy of democratic market reforms, and hence actively supported th[o]se reforms and propagandized in their favor” (Zassoursky 2004:57). The following quote from Raf Shakirov, the former editor of *Kommersant* (Russia’s first widely successful private daily on a national scale) is very characteristic of the time’s spirit, conveying the exuberance of real political participation that many editors and journalists felt during perestroika:

The main difference of *Kommersant* from other publications was not just a matter of interactivity but a matter of *influence*. When Volodya Yakovlev [*Kommersant*’s first owner] and I re-read the first editorial vision of *Kommersant* as a daily paper, I thought,

“How impudent of us! ‘To become a newspaper of influence.’ To become like *Izvestia!* [most influential Soviet newspaper] Pure idealism!” [But] we predicted the trend correctly. The business began to actively move into politics, and [so did we]. Kommersant stopped viewing the state as a necessary evil that you cannot change, but can only take into account. ... [Instead] we began to view the state as our equal. When we wrote, we didn’t just inform people or provoked sentiments. If we took up something, we wanted to *go all the way to the end*. And a lot of laws that were under deliberation in the parliament were changed as a result of Kommersant’s publications. First the laws about cooperatives, then the tax code and the civil code. We had legal experts working for us who knew those bills, and they knew how to write about them in the paper to get the desired effect. That was not just facts, not just publicism—it was *impact* [*vozdeistvie*], *creative impact* [...] The main goal was to bring what you care about, for the sake of what you are writing and agitating public opinion, to the very end—to change the law. And then—to watch over how it is carried out. Everyone understood that life can be changed, and not only your own life—but the life of the entire country. This is how Kommersant became the newspaper of influence [...] I remember back then, during our staff meetings *we sat down and decided what is important for the country, and where it should be heading*. Perhaps that sounds presumptuous today, but we had a lot of experts at our staff meetings, and as a result Kommersant turned into a *society-forming* kind of newspaper [*sistemoobrazuyushuyu gazet*u] (Shakirov 2000:376) (emphasis added).

The idea of the writer/intellectual/journalist’s moral, “society-forming” leadership was not new to perestroika-era journalists. As I argued in the previous chapter, public intellectualism was Russian journalists’ guiding principle before the October revolution of 1917, and continued almost intact throughout the decades of the Soviet rule. Journalism, literature, intellectual activity, and public politics were always inextricably linked in Russia, particularly in times of massive political-economic upheaval, and journalists understood their role as enlightening and educating *both* the rulers and the population at large, generally standing for socially-liberal, economically-moderate ideas and policies (Mendeleyev 2001). The October revolution of 1917 was welcomed by many Russian intellectuals, and the young Soviet state heavily relied on them for building the legitimacy of its new rule. Again, Vsevolod Bogdanov recalls in a conversation with Yassen Zassoursky:

Remember when Lenin wrote, “the press is the scaffolding for the Party.” And the press coped with that task perfectly. No one can dissuade me that the lion’s share in the success of party-building belongs to the press. The same way the press later played its crucial role in the creation of the new socialist order, in the building of new social relationships and attitudes. It was only after the party occupied the principle place in society, that we became the party’s “assistants”...So said Adzhubei at the reception in Kremlin [in 196x] (Bogdanov 1998:72).

The Soviet “sixties”, indeed, were a breath of fresh air after the two decades of Stalin’s dictatorship that turned the socialist ideal into a totalitarian reality. The “thaw” initiated by Nikita Khrushchev gave journalists some distance from the state to embark on a public quest “of opposition to the existing rule for the sake of its own betterment,” as Egor Yakovlev, one of the best Soviet era editors who started his career in the sixties, put it. “This was not fighting against the system, against the regime,” Yakovlev explains, “but fighting for its improvement—in order to realize its own ideals and beliefs about decency, about morality, about social justice. By doing this, I felt that I was keeping step with the progressive part of society” (Yakovlev, quoted in Bogdanov 1998:27). It is during those “thaw” years, for Yakovlev, that his “long road toward fighting for human rights” began (Yakovlev 2003).

The years of Brezhnev rule (1965-1985), known as “the stagnation,” once again limited the scope of journalists’ self-expression as public intellectuals, leading many to resort to so-called Aesopian language, or writing between the lines. But starting in 1986-87 with Gorbachev’s new policy of *glasnost* (“openness”) and *perestroika* (“restructuring”), journalists and other public figures have excitedly embraced the new public opportunities at moral, intellectual, and political self-expression. Journalists joined philosophers, sociologists, economists, demographers, and state planners in public discussions over the definition of USSR’s socio-political telos, and over the scope and nature of political and economic reforms

that seemed inevitable by 1989. Many journalists began studying economics and law to participate in the drafting of new legal codes (as was the case of *Kommersant* I quoted), and the chief editors of most Soviet newspapers ran for office in the Supreme Soviet and in local parliaments while continuing on with their editorial work. And, of course, journalistic investigations on previously unheard-of topics themselves became benchmarks that signaled ever-increasing levels of political freedoms in the Soviet Union. As Egor Yakovlev once put it jokingly, “Mikhail Sergeyevich [Gorbachev] needed us more than we needed him.”

It is in these new and extraordinary circumstances that the idea of mass media as the “fourth power” entered Russian intellectuals’ parlance, opening the door to journalists’ assertiveness in appropriating the symbolic space that was previously reserved for the officialized discourse of the party-state alone. Suddenly journalists felt symbolically *on par* with the authorities, taking “the fourth power” to mean the ability to *compete* with the other branches of government for influence and for the definition of the country’s socio-political telos. See, for example, these characteristic quotes from *Zhurnalist*, Russian journalists’ leading trade magazine at the time:

The press is deferentially called the fourth power (after the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches). Everyone would like this power to be fair, intelligent, and effective (*Zhurnalist*, No. 6, 1990).

The most important goal of the Union of Journalists is to make its members realize that they are representatives of the fourth, most influential, power there is. Society will not be able to change without the fourth power. In fact, the country was stagnating precisely because there was no fourth power to govern it (Poltoranin 1990).

The more irreversible the changes, the stronger the young Russian state [*vlast*’], the more aggressively is the young Russian “fourth power” willing to fight it (Avraamov 1994).

This meaning of the “fourth power,” connoting competition with authorities for moral governance, was the continuation of a deeply-held conviction among Soviet journalists of their unique public intellectual role. As I argued in the previous chapter, Soviet journalists believed that because of their special proximity to “the people,” unlike with other branches of power, they had a moral right to organize and guide the population at large. Two important reasons accounted for this belief. First, like I demonstrated in the previous chapter, journalism was an effective institution of reader representation in the Soviet Union, and a space of limited but very real political efficacy: readers often turned to “their” paper hoping that an injustice done by those in power would be corrected on newspaper pages, which certainly created a connection between the reader and the journalist that no other branch of power enjoyed. As an experienced *Izvestia* journalist Yuri Feofanov (1993) recalls, for example,

The press glorified the Soviet regime, but it also protected select people from it. This could be seen as some sort of a deal that was struck between the press and those in power: readers reported cases of abuse, and journalists made sure to investigate and publicize them [while supporting the Soviet system in general] ... We ourselves instilled the belief in our readers that the press was omnipotent. [In fact], for the longest time we taught the reader *not* to rely on the law, effectively taking on its functions ourselves.

The second explanation for the belief in journalists’ unique representational abilities lies in what George Faraday (2000) identified as the philosophy of liberal humanism that was practiced widely by the Soviet intelligentsia. Liberal humanism, argues Faraday, established a connection between a socially-concerned intellectual (including the journalist) and “the people,” based on the latter’s intellectual deference toward the former. Faraday demonstrates that many Soviet intellectuals believed they had the right to guide “the people” because, just like the French cultural bourgeoisie in the 1970s immortalized by Bourdieu, they were convinced that high educational credentials translated unproblematically into a sense of intellectual *and* moral

distinction. Unconstrained by the market forces (which would be the case under capitalism), and only partially constrained by the party-state, Soviet “creative intelligentsia” as it was called, developed a belief that what the readers needed *and* wanted, was their creative, intellectual, and moral output in the interests of “the public.” This, in part, explains the exhilaration experienced by many journalists during perestroika once the external limits on intellectual production were removed: with no more control from the party (and before market pressures had a chance to settle in), intellectual work came to mean “pure,” unconstrained, “independent” self-expression that so many journalists had been hoping for during the “stagnation” of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Inspired by their new-found power and confident in their moral right to it, journalists in the 1990s began a series of scathing critiques of the ailing Soviet state, playing a crucial role in its eventual delegitimation. Media space in 1990 and 1991 was filled with unveiling the dark pages of the Soviet history that dealt with political persecutions and purges, revelations about the Soviet failures in Afghanistan, indignation at the abuse of power and the double-standard among the upper-echelons of the party, exasperation with socialism’s endemic shortages, apprehensions about the deepening economic crisis, and many other similar themes. 1991 reports from Dushanbe (Tajikistan) and Vilnius (Lithuania) where peaceful demonstrations were broken up by tanks and resulted in civilian casualties, in addition to live broadcasts of bickering, squabbles, and mutual insults in the Soviet parliament during the Supreme Soviet Congresses further compromised and delegitimized the basis of the state rule, while public esteem toward journalists soared, nearing that of national heroes (recall the stunning popularity of *Vzgliad* and *Do i Posle Polunochi* programs, for example, or the love and admiration toward anchors such as Vladislav Listyev or Svetlana Sorokina). For a short while, it seemed like journalists, indeed, ruled the

country and were the only guarantors of democracy and freedom. These sentiments accounted for a massive influx of romantically-driven 20 and 30-year-olds into the profession at the turn of the 1990s, aided by a quick growth in the number of private media outlets following the passing of the new Law on Mass Media in 1990.

Unfortunately, this idyllic equilibrium when the “fourth power” seemed to rule over the other three branches and enjoy an unprecedented credit of trust and faith with the population did not last past 1992, as a cluster of factors began to undermine it. First, the country continued to be plagued by a deep socio-economic crisis that followed price liberalization and a sharp drop in industrial production in 1991. Unemployment shot through the roof and spiraling inflation wiped out life-long savings of most Russians, introducing one of the most dramatic increases in poverty the modern world has known. The political situation in the country also remained highly volatile throughout the early 1990s, as Yeltsin’s stand-off with the Supreme Soviet worsened, accompanied by country-wide strikes, civil unrest, and a forced and bloody disbanding of the Supreme Soviet in 1993. Nervous and deeply divided about the possible scenarios of Russia’s recovery, and fervidly looking for answers to “what is to be done” and “who is to blame,” journalists and commentators of all sorts turned the media space in the early 1990s into an incongruous cacophony of emotionally-charged voices, wrought with accusations of the state players and politicians in helplessness and moral, political, and economic ineptitude. The accused fought back, using both media and administrative resources at hand and often turning public politics into a public spectacle of mutual assaults. Importantly, this fed not only further delegitimation of the state, but *the beginning of the delegitimation of mass media as well*, as the line in the public perception of journalists and politicians began to blur by 1993-1994 and the public’s discomfort with attack methods practiced by both groups became noticeable. For the

first time, citizens began reporting a significant withdrawal from active reading and viewing, compared to just one or two years before. See, for example, these remarks, characteristic of the time and conveying the sense of utter “electrification” of the public space and the profound sense of unease about it:

There was a time when live television programs enjoyed true love and support of the entire population, to which the extremely high ratings of *Vzgliad*, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie* and many other programs testify... [But] today, more often than not, the television screen that used to unite the journalist and the reader, separates them. “It is very unpleasant to watch television today,”—I heard this phrase many times from very different people. It is not only the reader who is being estranged from the programs he used to “own”; journalists are starting to estrange themselves from readers, losing trust, and, sometimes respect, for them (Gasparian 1994).

I think the press has overstepped all boundaries already. Drunk from emancipation, it eliminated all of the barriers for itself. Defaming everyone, regardless of their real sins, of their public position, regardless of their human dignity. The principle is, “the more scathing the assault, the better.” ...During the times of the party-state the press was allowed into the corridors of power for reprimands and instructions only. *Now the press bursts into those corridors, making pogroms; but it seems that it often gets itself into a maze that it doesn't know how to escape* (Feofanov 1993) (emphasis added).

The role of provocateurs of public fights is played by journalists today. The saturation of the public atmosphere with mutual assaults has reached its peak... The tone, the word choice in today's journalism are continuously balancing somewhere on the very verge of what can be printed, so that in culminating moments this line could be shamelessly crossed. [...] The rudeness in the press is thought-out and closely targeted. So that the opponent would choke with humiliation, his blood rushing to his temples... Try an experiment. Put two stacks of newspapers in front of you, “right” papers to the right, “left” papers to the left. Sit in between them. Begin to read them—and you will feel right away as if you were between two powerful electromagnets. The tension is growing, a lightening is about to strike... How much does the society lose from this collective irritation that the press provokes every day, every hour? I think it loses a lot. It loses a cold, clear head and the ability to orient oneself—the only thing that would save it from a catastrophe (Vainonen 1991).

We have very few calm newspapers. But the public need for them is very high. ... I think that the newspapers that begin to talk to their readers in a normal, human voice have a chance to beat those who work up their headlines to pig squeals. [...] Everyone wants to win for certain—to win over those who are in power, or who are partly in power, over the readers, over the colleagues. Everyone is in a constant state of war with everyone else, apparently convinced that this is the only way to build public recognition and prestige. Whereas in reality all signs of a falling prestige of the press are present. [...]

Personally to me it is absolutely clear that we need to protect [...] the press from itself [and] journalists from their colleagues. [...] Newspapers today pounce on each other in such a rage that it is time to create some sort of a neutral zone and introduce peacekeeping forces into it. *The struggle [for influence] has been getting out of hands* (Simonov 1994) (emphasis added).

What shows in these reports from 1993-1994 is that journalists, driven by their public intellectual calling and their newly-found understanding of the “fourth power,” fervently engage in public battles over the definition of the country’s social, political, and economic telos; but in that process, they often *become indistinguishable* from politicians and other players in the field of power who are pursuing their own goals that are not necessarily congruous with the public interest. Instead of becoming a guild that maintains a certain distance from the state (which would be the case in most capitalist countries, and which has its own problems), a combination of social, historical, and economic circumstances led Russian journalists to jump headlong into politics—a process that, over the last decade, brought about the excessive negative politicization of the post-Soviet media space which not only challenged the legitimacy of the institutions of state power, but led a steep decline in prestige and authority of mass media itself.

The Loss of Economic Autonomy and the Writing “On Order”

Having focused on the socio-historical reasons that led Russian journalists to embrace politics as a vocation (public intellectualism and the belief in mass media as the “fourth power” above and beyond the other three) let me now turn to an equally important *economic* factor that contributed to the excessive politicization and polarization of Russian media space in the 1990s. In broad strokes, it is a story of the *loss of economic autonomy* that many news outlets experienced throughout the 1990s. The shift in the structure of Russian media ownership during that decade was from a great number of small, editor-run and subscription-supported outlets toward large

media conglomerates, or media holding companies, solidified by 1998-2000 and financed almost entirely by what I call interlocking administrative-financial-industrial groups with the single goal of using mass media as a powerful tool in political conflicts over privatization and during election campaigns. Let us examine how this shift occurred.

Although editorial collectives were “free” to operate on their own after the (1990) 1991 Law on the Press broke the party monopoly on their ownership, a number of reasons worked together to make the economic survival of newly-private outlets extremely difficult. The Law on the Press allowed editorial collectives to become de-facto owners of mass media outlets; yet effectively the Law guaranteed only the right to a media *trademark*, i.e. the right to publish a paper or broadcast a program under a particular name. The Law did not guarantee the transfer of ownership of editorial offices, equipment, publishing facilities, or distribution networks to editors or journalists themselves. Moreover, the transfer of trademark rights to journalists was not automatic: if an existing editorial collective wanted to take the sea on their own, they needed to re-register their outlet with the newly-founded Ministry of the Press, specifying themselves as the outlet’s new founders³, before the old owners (usually a local branch of government or a state organization of some sort) decided to do the same. Some of the editorial collectives were lucky, as their former owners “let them go” without problems and even granted them office buildings, equipment and other assets (although publishing plants and nation-wide distribution networks were not privatized for years after the law took effect). Other editorial collectives were less fortunate, either because the former owners demanded the assets and journalists did not have the start-up capital to pay them off, or because the old owners beat the editors to the Ministry of the Press, re-registering the outlet in their name first. In such cases journalists fought when they could, taking the conflicts onto newspaper pages, and eventually either acquiesced, or set hopes

on the editorial independence clause of the new law, or left the outlet altogether to launch their own mass media with whatever start-up capital they could find.

Even if editorial collectives managed to become the outlet's new founders, they faced a very challenging task of putting their news production onto commercial rails, as the country's deepening economic crisis was making it extremely difficult to stay solvent even in the short run. Price liberalization in 1991 led to a steep ascent in prices of paper and printing services, which led to the cutting-down of the production of paper and newsprint. Spiraling inflation—another product of price liberalization—led to a significant restriction in cash flow, which made it difficult to pay employees on time, or to pay them at all. Barter deals for advertising space became common, yet very time and energy consuming—particularly the conversion of bartered products into cash or materials which would be of use to the newspaper (Donaldson 2002). As one editor once put it, “barter is when advertising space is exchanged for gasoline, electricity, pantyhose, chocolate, and funeral services” (MediaLaw.RU 1999).

Advertising, indeed, was another contentious issue, as most businesses in the consumer sector were struggling with price liberalization and inflation themselves to find money for advertising campaigns. Moreover, until 2002 Russian tax codes provided no tax breaks for advertisement expenses: businesses had to pay for ads from pure profits, which discouraged advertising further. Additionally, neither newspapers, nor businessmen knew how much to charge for advertising, so agreements were often intuitive, not secured on paper and thus not always reliable. Lastly, print distribution presented its own problems, exacerbating the financial standing of most news outlets. National distribution channels (kiosks and postal subscription services) remained in state monopoly until late 1990s, making payment for sold copies to

newspaper companies post-factum and slow, and information on unsold issues also slow or non-existent (Donaldson 2002).

Yet, despite the newsprint being expensive, circulation numbers small, distribution monopolized, and advertising almost non-existent, few founding editors and publishers were willing to give up. During 1991-1994, independent editors and publishers acted like most people would in highly volatile social and economic environments: they learned to quickly recombine their existing resources and devise strategies to stay afloat. Some of the strategies included arguing for and received subsidies from governments of different levels⁴; launching parallel businesses like real estate or marriage agencies to pay journalists and rent⁵; applying for Western aid, if editors were knowledgeable in English and the discourses of press freedom and democracy; exchanging favorable coverage for barter and cash; and increasingly relying on support of various private sponsors, which soon became the most common way for economically-failing outlets to avoid bankruptcy.

The donations of private sponsors have usually (but not always) represented the politicized capital of entrepreneurs who entered into alliances with politicians or who themselves decided to run for office to ensure privileged access to privatization auctions. Given the insider character and the frantic pace of Russian privatization in the 1990s, few entrepreneurs in post-socialist Russia have done without aligning themselves with statesmen in various branches of local and regional government in order to secure desirable privatization results; and, in turn, few politicians held office without coming to own a stake in one or another former-state enterprise as a result of a privatization auction. In the early 1990s, the investments of politicized capital into mass media were still fairly haphazard, but starting in the mid-1990s and culminating in 1998-2002 politicians and businessmen began to crucially rely on mass media as weapons in political

battles for power and influence, leading to what many observers have called the “mediatization of politics” in Russia in the 1990s. Accompanying this transformation was a shift in the structures of formal media ownership: if in the early 1990s most private outlets were still formally independent, that is, owned by editorial collectives, and relied on advertisements from businessmen and politicians paid through the advertising department or under the table, by the end of the 1990s almost all serious political players or groups of players *owned* one or more media outlets, effectively concentrating their media resources into media conglomerates or media holding companies (*kholdingi*) as they are known in Russia, to use them as political weaponry during Russia’s multiple election campaigns.

This “takeover” of Russian media space by interlinking political-economic groups, complete in a period of quick several years, was the sorest, most sensitive spot for Russian journalists in the 1990s, generating a great deal of intra-professional anguish and distress associated with their loss of professional-intellectual autonomy. I will turn to the specific manifestations of this loss in chapter 6, where I discuss a powerful discourse of “journalism as prostitution” in detail, and its effect on individual journalists. In this chapter, however, my goal is to trace how two interconnected processes—the erosion of media’s economic independence that gave select political groups privileged access to media resources, and the journalists’ own fight against the loss of their professional-intellectual autonomy—have transformed the Russian media space of the 1990s into a battlefield for control over the symbolic instruments of political rule that only several years before belonged to the party-state alone. Let me now turn to some examples from fieldwork to begin examining these processes in more detail.

An excellent example of an editor-publisher navigating through economic difficulties in the first half of the 1990s is one of Alexander Kruglov*, a prominent head of a publishing house

in Nizhny Novgorod today. Alexander started his career as a young but ambitious head of the “Department of the Working Youth” (*otdel rabochei molodezhi*) in a popular Soviet newspaper published in Nizhny Novgorod in the 1970s and 1980s. After the subsidies to the newspaper were withdrawn in 1991 and it was clear that the paper was “dying,” Alexander decided to launch his own publication for people in their 30s and 40s who were trying out private entrepreneurship⁶. To fund his new enterprise, Alexander first contemplated a parallel launch of “some sort of commercial firm that would support the newspaper” but eventually settled on an agreement with one of the city’s prominent businessmen who provided the initial capital to start. But the businessman was shot and wounded before too long and decided to quit business and politics, so Alexander’s paper began its several-years-long quest for economic survival. “I felt responsible for the people who were working for me,” Alexander recalled to me in an interview in 2000,

And I didn’t want to give up. It was 1993, the year of hyperinflation. Every month I was getting telegrams that would just categorically inform me, with no appeal, that the cost of paper is going up by 200 percent this month, or that the cost of ink or whatever is going up 100 percent next month, or that our rent will increase five times, and so on. I had to shift unbelievably. Once we had no money left to pay for the print-run—so I went to the director of the printing plant and told him, “Take some of our shares!” And he did, so we did not pay for print for the next eight months, and I was instead able to pay journalists their salaries. Then the next time I ran out of cash I went to a bank to ask for a loan, telling them that we’d pay back the interest in advertisements. They agreed, and we eventually made enough to pay back the loan. Then another time we needed to pay for paper, I went to the director of the printing house to barter a high-speed copier for free print. High-speed copiers were still rare, and I had promised free advertisement to the company that sold those copiers in exchange for one of them. And then there was a moment when I had exhausted my resources and still could not come up with cash to pay the journalists that month. So I simply went to this one entrepreneur, and told him directly: if you place your advertisement with us right now, I’ll be able to pay people their salaries this month. If not, they won’t have anything to bring home to their families. And that worked, too. [...] If not for those crazy years, I would have never known what it means to be in the publishing business. Only through all of this I realized that the newspaper is a *commodity*—a very specific one, but still a commodity.

What Alexander does not tell here, and what becomes obvious from conversations with journalists who had worked for his paper in the first half of the 1990s, is that the lion's share of financial support for the paper during that time already came from the politicized capital of Nizhny Novgorod entrepreneurs who needed favorable PR campaigns to secure victories in local elections. See, for example, the account of Anton Shumilov*, who worked in Alexander's paper as one of its economic correspondents:

[The man who first invested in Alexander's paper] was investing money into political PR against Nemtsov [at the time, an extremely popular governor of Nizhny Novgorod region]. Through [Alexander's paper] he was attacking the firms and companies associated with Nemtsov. When he left Russia [after he was shot], Alex feverishly began to look for someone to sell his paper to, to find money. ...A couple of years later, over a half of the papers' shares was sold to [an oil company]. I was editing the economic pages of the paper then, and I had to service the [head of the oil company]'s election campaign in 1996. Some articles were just openly taken down or added to my page [to service the campaign]—it was very unpleasant. It was the first time I came across that kind of practice when articles were written “on order.” ...[Since the head of the oil company bought the newspapers' shares, but did not pay much by way of salaries], people used to say that the newspaper sold itself for cheap, without getting much in return (smiles). ...Most of the advertisement that went through the paper was “black” (off-the-books), about 90% of it. Alex even got upset when people brought him “white” advertisement money (smiles again).

Another Nizhny Novgorod journalist, Svetlana Bulgakova*, worked for Alexander's paper as a political correspondent until 1995. She recalled how Alexander insisted that his journalists “bring in as much advertisement as possible” if they want their salaries paid on time, or at all. Like Anton Shumilov, Svetlana was not happy with this practice, but she kept finding ways to maintain some level of professional-intellectual autonomy as a journalist despite the pressure:

N.R. – When did you first join a political advertising campaign?

In Alex's paper, already during capitalism. My first elections were in March 1993, the mayoral elections in Nizhny Novgorod. Bedniakov and Krestianinov collided heads on during those elections. Boris Nemtsov was supporting Krestianinov who was Nemtsov's neighbor and the head of the oblast Supreme Soviet, while Bedniakov was the city's

acting mayor. So Nemtsov decided to make Krestianinov a mayor, evidently because Krestianinov was more loyal to him than Bedniakov. At the time we [at Alexander's paper] were siding with Nemtsov, so we had to support Krestianinov. And we all got very little money for it, by the way, maybe half of the money that was promised to us, all of it "off the books."

N.R. – How did your articles look like during that campaign?

Well, I remember there were some interviews with Nemtsov, where he was supporting Krestianinov, and I also remember a press-conference where I was asking Krestianinov the "needed" questions that were given to me—but it wasn't difficult, actually, because they were really interesting questions, not senile questions like they prepare sometimes.

N.R. – What about Bedniakov's campaign—did you cover it at all?

No, I didn't—a colleague of mine was doing that, digging up some compromising materials on him and so on. I wasn't digging up anything for that campaign, just the interviews and the press conferences.

N.R. – Did you feel you were producing news or advertisement?

Well, it was a political conflict. But it was all pretty sincere on my part. I did not like Bedniakov, I even apologized to him later. I didn't particularly like Krestianinov, but I did like Nemtsov.

N.R. – What about the readers—did you think much about them when you were covering that campaign?

No, the coverage was pretty one-sided, actually.

N.R. – What followed after that?

The Federal Duma elections in December 1993, after the shooting down of the Supreme Soviet. Alex would tell us over and over, "look for advertisement, look for advertisement, bring it to the paper"...

N.R. – Yourselves? So, in other words, journalists were working as advertising agents?

That was the paper's policy. It was a very young newspaper, it was left without powerful founders-sponsors, and we needed to survive economically. So I found ...not quite friends, but good acquaintances who were running for that Duma elections in 1993 and needed coverage. That time, by the way, I remember it was all "white" advertisement [not off-the-books], everything was going through the accounting office, I remember I was lugging around a stack of paper invoices, and I was getting some additional five percent for it or something like that.

N.R. – And how did your articles look then?

Well, it was just interviews on some timely political issues, I wasn't writing any leaflets or anything, just my regular work in the political department of the newspaper.

N.R. – Did you feel you were doing advertising, or news?

No, it was, of course, an advertising campaign, but I was trying to make those interviews and articles interesting.

N.R. – Did you feel any discomfort doing that?

Not really. That time I wasn't working *against* someone; I was working to help someone get elected. And when you have seven contenders, and you think yours is the best one, I was genuinely very happy when "my" candidate won. I kept in touch with him for two more years after that, he gave me a lot of insider information about the working of the Russian Duma when I went there for business trips.

N.R. – What other campaigns were there in [Alexander's paper] before you left it?

In the spring of 1994 there were elections to the regional Duma, and then I think elections to the municipal government. And then nothing until the end of 1995 when we had the double elections, of mayor and governor at once, where Nemtsov and Skliarov won with overwhelming support in the first round. I don't remember those elections very well, I must have been covering Russian federal politics at the time, since I had that insider track. I don't remember any pressure from anyone as to what to write.

N.R. What about commercial ads—were there many of them at the time in [Alexander's paper]?

No, not really. The newspaper really lived on the money that journalists brought into it [as political advertisements]. The revenues from sales and commercial ads were small.

This interview is interesting in many regards. First, probably more than anything, it demonstrates how the endless train of elections in the 1990s became the central arena where struggle for influence and access to resources has taken place in post-socialist Russia. In 1993-1998 the train of elections in Nizhny Novgorod was exceptionally long, as fractions vying for power have obstructed and sabotaged each other to the point that some elections had been

cancelled, results of others were pronounced invalid, several incumbents were dismissed by federal authorities or judges, several statesmen quit their positions moving up in ranks, and entirely new political bodies were created (like municipal and regional Duma) that needed representation. These and other reasons have called for multiple rounds of electoral campaigning a year, making political rather than commercial advertisement the major source of economic support of newly-private media outlets.

Secondly, the interview with Svetlana Bulgakova shows that although she sees the line between political advertisement and “regular” electoral coverage as blurred, she still tries to find a territory where she can assert her professional-intellectual autonomy as a journalist. Svetlana is no average reporter: she is well known in the city for her poignant and polemical writing, and her criticism of public figures is usually tight, carefully crafted, and well targeted. Her colleagues admire her talent and call her “a professional,” although most think that she has gone “too far” in blending journalism and politics. Trying to understand where that line lies for her, I pressed Svetlana during our second interview to tell me what she understood her *civic* role to be, given her involvement in a number of political campaigns in the city. “I still want to be an active [public] figure (*deistvuyushchim litsom*),” she said, “to form people’s opinions and to effect change. If not for the pressures and obligations [of favorable coverage], I would have probably “drowned” most of them [the city’s politicians] long time ago,” she laughs. In particular, Svetlana is known for her scathing criticism of a man named Yuri Lebedev, who had held several top offices in Nizhny Novgorod region throughout the 1990s, including his last position as the city’s mayor in 1998-2002. I asked Svetlana to recall how Lebedev became the target of her scathing critiques. She began:

I had a very good human relationship with Lebedev for while, to the point that he could call me up at home and ask how things are going in our paper.

As she tells this, I recall the picture published in one of the compromising reports on Lebedev where he is captured hugging Svetlana and another prominent businessman, all smiling.

Svetlana continues:

But Lebedev's relationship with [my paper's chief editor Vladimir] Nikolayev* soon developed into a real personal and non-personal conflict. Nikolayev considered himself a friend of Lebedev—he had helped Lebedev out with publications when Lebedev was running for the mayor of [a town in Nizhny Novgorod oblast], they drank together, all sorts of things. To begin with, Lebedev did not place any advertisement with our paper when he was running for the mayor of Nizhny in 1998. It's a city paper, and the guy is running for the mayor, it was very strange. Nikolayev pricked up his ears [but didn't say anything to Lebedev], only kept saying to journalists during editorial meetings that if Lebedev wins, it'd be great, because he is "our man."

As we recall, political ads were crucial for most newspapers' economic survival in the 1990s, given the scarcity of commercial advertising outside Moscow and St. Petersburg due to the low standards of living of most readers in the provinces. The paper where Svetlana worked and Nikolayev was the chief editor, needed the money to stay afloat, and so Nikolayev signed an advertising contract with another mayoral candidate running in that campaign. Lebedev ostensibly became very angry with Nikolayev for aligning the paper with another candidate like that, rather than staying loyal to Lebedev and providing free media support Lebedev had apparently expected. Svetlana continues:

And after Lebedev won the election in 1998, a serious stand off began between him and Nikolayev... Our salaries began to be delayed for several months.

Another backgrounder is needed here. The paper both Svetlana Bulgakova and Vladimir Nikolayev worked for, was registered with the Press Ministry as jointly co-founded by the

paper's editorial collective and the city council of Nizhny Novgorod. As the paper's co-founder, the city council was *expected* to support the paper financially in times of trouble, but was not, in fact, *obligated* to do so, due to an unprecedented legal ambiguity that was created by the 1991 Law on the Press. Guided by the desire to protect press freedom not only from the state, but from media owners as well, the authors of the 1991 Law included a clause where editorial collectives were proclaimed *independent legal entities* vis-à-vis their external "founders," which, at the time, was used as the euphemism for "owners" of mass media (Fedotov 2002). The clause opened the possibility for editors and journalists themselves to engage in the financing of their outlets (which explains the fiendish search for advertisement on which Kruglov, Nikolayev and other editors in Nizhny Novgorod embarked to keep their papers afloat, and which, of course, was ripe with conflicts of interest). But at times when the outlet was unable to collect enough advertisement to keep going (in-between election seasons, for example), editors turned to their co-founders (the city council, in our case) for subsidies. Yet, as I mentioned, external founders were not obligated by law to support "their" outlets, which effectively created a "valve" whereby the founders could manipulate the disbursement of subsidies to financially-insolvent outlets depending on whether the editorial policy of the outlet was to the founders' satisfaction. When the editors' and the founders' politics clashed, they latter could withdraw the subsidies from the outlet without being held particularly responsible for it. This is precisely what happened when Yuri Lebedev was elected the mayor of Nizhny Novgorod and discovered the "valve" that "fed" the paper where Bulgakova and Nikolayev were working. To quote Svetlana again:

I remember about half a year after [Lebedev's victory in the mayoral] elections, I ran to him in the smoking room of the Duma building, and yelled at him, "Do you at least understand what you are doing?! It is not just one editor with whom you have bad blood and whose salary you are not paying, it is a hundred people who all have families to feed, by the way!" He sort of dashed aside, and didn't say anything...

...I remember my first real impulse to criticize Lebedev was when I saw his negligence toward children. When the municipal baby-food kitchens began to close down because the city owed those kitchens a lot of money, I was outraged. In my district the kitchen was still operating but during limited hours, so I had to get up early in the morning to make sure I brought back something for my daughter. And at the same time, I knew that Lebedev was using municipal money to pay for cell phone service that his secretary was using, and I knew how much each minute of her babbling cost the city budget. Those kinds of things just enraged me. ...And it so happened that my feelings coincided with the editorial politics of my paper. So I started to smother (*mochit*) Lebedev in my articles.

N.R. – Was the editorial policy against Lebedev ever made explicit to journalists in some way or another?

It was very simple. I would just come to the editor and say, “Imagine what a scum this Lebedev is.” And he would say, “Then go write about it!” And I did. I remember one of the first negative articles I wrote was a story about how, after Lebedev came back from his trip to Italy in his new capacity as a mayor, the only thing he could do for the city is to open an ice-cream shop. [...]

N.R. –What about the upcoming mayoral election [in 2002]? Will you be working in the campaign [against Lebedev]?

I haven’t gotten any offers so far. I was only contacted by the people with whom I worked two years ago, and they asked that, if they need anti-Lebedev articles, whether they can contact me. I said, OK, give me a call, we’ll discuss each case separately, but I won’t write about how good of a man your candidate [Makarov*] is. They said, all right.

Svetlana eventually left the municipal paper and joined one of several media holding companies that had formed in Nizhny Novgorod and that was supported by an industrial-financial-administrative group that maintained an oppositional stance to Lebedev until his defeat in the mayoral elections of 2002. “I do not consider myself a servant [*ja ne derzhu sebia za obslugu*],” Svetlana told me at the end of the interview. “But I *can* write-up something on order if it coincides with my beliefs. I can always turn down a request if I am not interested in it. What makes it harder for me is that a lot of people depend on [the PR money] I bring into the newspaper [as its leading journalist]. I guess I am a team player, even though it took me a while

to find it,” Svetlana concluded. When I followed up with a question about whether the dividing up of journalists into camps had had negative consequences for the profession in general, Svetlana agreed. “There is, indeed, a caste-like sense today among us,” she nodded, “we used to all hang out together, us and people from [the contending media holding company], joke about how things are on the other side of the front lines. That is long gone now, things are a lot more serious today.”

I chose Svetlana Bulgakova’s story because it underscores many of the points I have made earlier. We can see how the particular economic circumstances in which she works compel her to write “on order”; yet we also see her continuous striving for political influence (inspired by the understanding of the press as “the fourth power”) via symbolic means under her control—a publicly staged verbal argument—despite her dependent economic position. In fact, we can observe how her economic dependence actually *strengthens* the force of her accusatory thrust: the more wronged she feels as an employee and a mother, the harsher her language, and the stronger her desire to “form opinions and to effect change.” This is a very important link, as it helps to explain why, despite Svetlana’s and other journalists’ best efforts, readers and viewers in post-socialist Russia continue to turn away from journalists’ exercise in political “tug-of-words.” As the state was increasingly parcellized in the 1990s, journalists’ intense accusations of select politicians did not result in any punishment or accountability as far as the readers were concerned. The accused politicians were alive and well, and instead responding to the public charge, as would have been the case in the Soviet Union, they fought back against the “accusers” through mass media under *their* control (recall, for example, that before Svetlana’s conflict with Lebedev, she had already aligned herself with governor Nemtsov and several other politicians and businessmen whose interests she represented during the 1993 elections to the Russian

Duma). The intensity of verbal arguments in public space grew, but the results of those conflicts amounted to little more than the “spinning wheels” effect as far as the readers were concerned. See, for example, the following quotes from the street interviews conducted by Olga Yegorova (a television journalist in Nizhny Novgorod) on the eve of an earlier mayoral election. Although the quotes are from 1994, it could well have been 1998 or 2002, for the reactions of viewers to political campaigning and journalists’ involvement in it have not changed since then:

O.Y. –Who are you going to vote for, Bedniakov or Krestianinov?

- No one! There is too much prattling, babbling, lying on television—we stopped believing what journalists have to say!
- Life is life, and journalists are regular people, they must want to eat, too (laughs).

O.Y. – Do you think there is press freedom in Nizhny Novgorod today?

- No way! Journalists are unfree like everyone else, they depend, like all of us, on their “owners,” holding on to their jobs.
- Journalists used to be dependent on the Party before; today they depend on the rouble.
- Here, I am a university professor. My salary is 800 roubles. How much is yours? — A little more. (O. Y.) –“A little more,” see? And who pays you? –The government. [Olga Yegorova works for a state broadcast station]. – The government... So it buys you! The government buys you! (Yegorova 1994).

To summarize, I have used the examples from Nizhny Novgorod to illustrate how economically-vulnerable media outlets in the 1990s have resorted to politicized capital, inviting contending administrative-industrial-financial groups to use media space to compete (via journalists) for resources and opinions. Journalists have tried to respond to this assault on their professional-intellectual autonomy by claiming some of the critical/negative coverage they provide as “their own,” yet they have not escaped being aligned with some political-economic players more so than others. This has been rather unfortunate for the readers, who have become

ever-more agitated and confused, awash in political arguments fought with ever-increasing intensity in media space with the help of journalists.

It is increasingly clear today that the “information wars” between contending political-economic groups have been contributing to the delegitimation of the very institutions that are implicated in them: according to recent (2004) public opinion polls, most Russians (92%) do not trust the news media, and only 5 percent trust that the government and professional politicians represent their interests (CJES 2004). In comparison, in 1991-1992, it was precisely the opposite: the mass media, the parliament (the Supreme Soviet), and the church were the most respected institutions in Russia (CJES 2004). Today, sociologists note, most readers and viewers are rather “tired of politics”: 63% of them have a negative attitude to politics as a concept (with capitalism being an unpleasant term for 66% of them), and only 18% of Russians have a clear idea of what policies would be desirable for Russia at the moment. 71% of Russians recognize the power of money, 8% recognize the power of authorities, 5% admit the power of the law and 2% admit the power of conscience (Sineva 2004). Finally, when asked what they most expect from those in power, 47% responded they hope for a “calm life” (Levada 2004).

Conclusion: The ‘Etatization’ of Mass Media and the Mediatization of Politics

In Russia after Socialism

The situation I described here urges us to break with a number of assumptions that are built into liberal models of mass communication and governance. First, what needs to be accepted is that the post-socialist state and the newly-“independent” media in Russia do not inhabit separate, discrete domains but exist in symbiosis, mutually reinforcing each other. Like I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the division into “the state” and “the public sphere,” arguably represented by “independent” mass media, has been neither clean nor complete after the

dissolution of the USSR. Mass media after perestroika have come to economically depend on the politicized capital of groups of businessmen and statesmen competing for power in elections of various levels, while politicians became convinced that they have a future in politics only to the extent that it is reflected in the mass media. Journalists and editors, in their turn, continue to believe in their own unique power as public intellectuals, utilizing the symbolic instruments at their disposal—tactical, targeted, caustic verbal arguments—for different reasons and to different ends. In a sense, we can speak of one large media-political space in today's Russia that includes journalists, politicians, and businessmen, where each group controls their own means and instruments of power (symbolic, administrative, economic), using them as bargaining tools when creating cross-institutional alliances amongst themselves.

The second assumption of liberal theories that begs to be suspended is that journalists, once “free” from the control of the authoritarian state, would unproblematically unite into a professional guild that would strive for textbook democratic ideals of promoting liberty, encouraging transparency and accountability, ferreting out corruption, and promoting good government, answering to the public at large (as the International Center for Journalists mission statement would have it, for example). Instead, as my analysis and data from various sociological polls illustrate, the media-political space that both journalists and politicians in today's Russia inhabit increasingly *excludes* the public who has come to distrust it, indicating that a profound delegitimation of *both* the institutions of governance and of mass-media in post-socialist Russia are underway.

If we suspend these two assumptions of liberal theory that many scholars routinely rely on, a different picture of the relationship between mass media and the post-socialist state arises, one where the major question is not necessarily, “is the state still pressuring the media and

constraining the freedom of speech?” but “to what extent does the mediatization of politics *disenfranchise* the public, in whose name the post-socialist reforms were launched in the first place?” Although my analysis in this dissertation does not engage with this question directly, it is crucial to address it in further studies of media, state, and society in authoritarian and post-authoritarian settings.

Chapter Bibliography

Avraamov, Dmitrii

- 1994 "Oboidetes' bez podruchnykh: zametki iz Sudebnoi palaty". *In Zhurnalist*. Vol. 12, December 1994. pp. 7-9.

Bogdanov, Vsevolod and Yassen Zassoursky

- 1998 *Vlast', zerkalo ili sluzhanka? Entsiklopedia zhizni sovremennoi rossiskoi zhurnalistiki*. Moscow: Russian Union of Journalists.

CJES

- 2004 *Opasnaya professiya: ezheemesyachnyi bulleten' sobytii v SMI Rossii*. Moscow: Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, May 2004.

Donaldson, Lloyd

- 2002 *Print Media Management in the CIS: Problems and Points for Improvement: Internews Russia*, <http://www.internews.ru/books/mediamanagement/index.html>.

Faraday, George

- 2000 *Revolt of the Filmmakers: The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy And The Fall of The Soviet Film Industry*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Fedotov, Mikhail

- 2002 *Pravoye osnovy zhurnalistiki*. Moscow: VLADOS.

Feofanov, Yuri

- 1993 *Svobodnaya pressa v labirinte rossiskikh vlastei*. *In Zhurnalist*. Vol. 8, August 1993. pp. 2-5.

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta

- 2002 *Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality*. *American Ethnologist* 29(4):981-1002.

Gasparian, Vigen

- 1994 "Televidenie--krizis doveria". *In Zhurnalist*. Vol. 5, May 1994. pp. 24-25.

Humphrey, Caroline

- 1991 "'Icebergs', Barter, and the Mafia in Provincial Russia". *Anthropology Today* 7:8-13.

- 2002 *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After Socialism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Kaneff, Deema

- 2002 *Why People Don't Die "Naturally" Any More: Changing Relations Between "The Individual" and "The State" in Post-Socialist Bulgaria*. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8(1):89-105.

MediaLaw.RU

1999 Russian Mass Media, Power and Capital: Toward the Questions of Concentration and Transparency in Russian Mass Media (in Russian). Vol. 18. Moscow, Russia: Media Law and Policy Institute, <http://www.medialaw.ru/publications/books/conc1/>.

Mendeleyev, A.G.

2001 Zhuzn' gazety "Russkoe slovo": izdatel', sotrudniki. Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopedia.

Olimpieva, Irina, Oleg Pachenkov and Elena Nikiforova

2004 "Srednii sloi: v Peterburge razvivaetsia rynok korruptsionnogo posrednichestva mezhdru biznesom i vlastju". In Expert-Weekly. Vol. 4 (161), February 2, 2004.

Poltoranin, Mikhail

1990 "Ministerstvo chetvertoi vlasti". In Zhurnalist. Vol. 11, November 1990. pp. 18-21.

Radaev, Vadim

2002 Rossiskiy biznes na puti k legalizatsii. Economicheskaya sotsiologiya (electronic journal, www.ecsoc.msses.ru) 3(1):43-64.

Shakirov, Raf

2000 Tak "Kommersant" stal gazetoi vliyaniya. In Pressa v obshchestve (1959-2000): Otsenki zhurnalistov i sotsiologov. Dokumenty. pp. 370-383. Moscow: Moscow School of Political Research.

Simonov, Alexei

1994 "My opiat' vstupayem v polosy, gde pravda ne nuzhna nikomu". In Zhurnalist. Vol. 1, January 1994. pp. 2-5.

Sineva, Yevgenia

2004 The diagnosis of Russia and accompanying diseases: Pollsters say three-quarters of Russians are ashamed of their country. Russkii Fokus, via Johnson's Russia List. No. 16, May 10, 2004.

Stark, David and Laszlo Bruszt

1998 Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Vainonen, Nikita

1991 "Shkola zlosloviya". In Zhurnalist. Vol. 6, June 1991. pp. 36-39.

Verdery, Katherine

1996a The Elasticity of Land: Problems of Property Restitution in Transylvania. In What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next? pp. 133-167. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- 1996b A Transition from Socialism to Feudalism? Thoughts on a Post-Socialist State. *In* What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next? pp. 204-228. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 1999 Fuzzy Property: Rights, Power, and Identity in Transylvania's Decollectivization. *In* Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World. Michael and Katherine Verdery Burawoy, ed. pp. 53-82. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Volkov, Vadim
- 1999 Violent Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 51(5):741-754.
- 2002 Security and Enforcement as Private Business: The Conversion of Russia's Power Ministries and Its institutional Consequences. *In* The New Entrepreneurs of Europe and Asia. Victoria and Thomas Gold Bonnell, ed. pp. 83-103: M.E. Sharpe.
- Yakovlev, Yegor
- 2003 Ot voskhoda do zakata: vospominaniya tekhn, kto byl s Adzhubeyem. *Moskovskie Novosti*, October 21, 2003, available at <http://www.mn.ru/issue.php?2003-41-45> (June 18, 2004).
- Yegorova, Olga
- 1994 "Chetvertaya Vlast" (*The Fourth Power*). Broadcast. Nizhny Novgorod: NNTV.
- Yurchak, Alexei
- 2002 Entrepreneurial Governmentality in Postsocialist Russia: A Cultural Investigation of Business Practices. *In* The New Entrepreneurs of Europe and Asia. Victoria Bonnell, ed. pp. 278-324. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, accessible at <http://anthropology.berkeley.edu/egovernmental.pdf>.
- Zassoursky, Ivan
- 2004 Media and Power in Post-Soviet Russia. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

NOTES

¹ As I mentioned in the previous chapter, media independence has usually been viewed as independence from the *state* in Western liberal discourse; media outlets I discuss in this chapter are outside the formal control of the state, but they do enter into alliances with select politicians and businessmen, which is why "independent" is introduced in quotes.

² Some Russian media commentators argue that it was the French revolution of 1789 which gave rise to the phrase "the fourth estate", crediting mass media with the power to propel the revolution forward (see, for example, Vladimir Pozner's note in one of his recent programs, <http://www.smi-nn.ru/?id=29823>). Others, like Yassen Zassoursky from Moscow State University, maintain that the phrase goes back to the 18th century standoff between journalists and the British parliament, after which journalists were eventually let in on the parliament's hearings (Bogdanov and Zassoursky 1998:76).

³ The word “owner” was still too ideologically-laden at the time, so it was replaced with a euphemistic “founder” instead. The argument over the ambiguity of the rights of the “founder,” compared to those of the “owner,” is at the heart of the new controversial mass media bill that has been in preparation for the last several years; I return to this important topic in more detail in chapter 5.

⁴ One famous case is when *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* failed to come out several days in a row due to severe financial difficulties, the newspapers’ management pressed the case before President Yeltsin, who immediately signed a decree temporarily reinstating fixed prices on paper and providing both *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Trud* with the much-needed subsidies (Zassoursky 2004).

⁵ See, for example, the experience of the “advertising and real estate department” of *Michurinskaya Pravda* (Tambov, Russia), *Zhurnalst*, “Ideas of Newspaper Business” section, Vol. 9 and 12, 2001.

⁶ Launching media outlets geared toward new post-Soviet entrepreneurs has been very popular in the 1990s. Sometimes it was following the “winds of change,” sometimes following Western media management trends where former Soviet editors learned that forward-looking, risk-taking, upscale audiences make the best “target” readers and therefore improve the financial success of a media enterprise (see William Dunkerley’s articles in SREDA at <http://www.sreda-mag.ru/management.phtml> to get a sense of this discourse)