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UKRANIAN MEDIA AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL MARKETING IN 1991–2010

One of the most significant features that characterizes the degree of democracy in the country is the level of communication between the political system and society. The practice of states that adhere to the democratic path of development shows that the most optimal mediator in this interaction is independent mass media.

The political and civic function of the mass media is fundamental. It is associated with informing citizens about events, phenomena, situations and problems in society and the world, interpreting and assessing the political and cultural situation, criticizing or approving the actions of certain political actors, promoting mutual understanding between social groups and institutions that have different points of view, controlling the way in which power is exercised and used, encouraging society to learn, hold elections, engage in public affairs, rather than passively observe events, etc¹.

This function is implemented with the help of publishing products, radio, television, Internet technologies. Despite the pessimistic predictions of skeptics, printed products (newspapers, magazines, almanacs, brochures and books) are still a significant factor in the political struggle in Ukraine. Thus, according to the data of the all-Ukrainian survey conducted by the Institute of Social and Political

1 Kostenko, N. & Ruchka A., (Ed.) (2008). Media. Democracy. Culture. Kyiv: Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 356 p. P. 23–24.

Psychology of the Academy of Political Sciences of Ukraine on November 24–30, 2009, among voters who have already decided who they will vote for during the 2009 presidential campaign, 30.2 % noted that their decision was most influenced by television news releases; 19.3 % of respondents recognized the influence of publications in newspapers on their decision; the influence of advertising spots on television – 15.9 %; the influence of information posted on the Internet – 6.7 % of respondents².

Trust in the media in Ukraine remains quite high, which is, first of all, an echo of the Soviet times, when any critical speech in the press was met with an instant reaction from the authorities. Even today, most people believe that it is possible to change the situation thanks to critical speeches in the media. Speculating on this, political information, not always correct, and sometimes simply dirty, gradually replaced all other types of information and ended up in first place in the ratings. The psychological postulate was confirmed – everything forbidden is more attractive and desirable. So this «fried» information became what people wanted to hear and see more in the media. Based on this, the media increasingly provide political «curiosities» that fuel the public's interest in politics and encourage political leaders to use these opportunities. Of course, the value of such political communication is questionable.

Considering that elections are a kind of apotheosis of the entire political struggle, even this small example shows that the press, magazine and book production, influencing people's consciousness, play an important role in politics. This conservatism, which consists in considerable trust in the printed word, is natural, since for many generations of Ukrainians it was books and newspapers that were, and for a large group of fellow citizens remain, the main sources of information through which they learn about various aspects of public life. The press has taught ordinary citizens to consider themselves part of the wider world and to react to events taking place in it. It is the media that interpret the most important phenomena and events taking place in the country and abroad and convey information to the population. The formation of political culture, economic thinking as the basis for the functioning of the political system largely depends on them. The media are also a source of political information, and an intermediary, and a channel of direct information contact with representatives of the authorities. In addition, they, accumulating

2 Nykyforenko, N. (2010). The Role of the Media in Political Communication during the 2009 Presidential Campaign in Ukraine // Grani. No. 4. Pp. 106–111. P. 110.

the experience and will of the community, reflect and form public opinion, influence not only consciousness, but also actions, group actions of people, thereby becoming an important component of managing social processes in a democratic state.

The mass media carry out their role in society by presenting problematic issues on their pages, discussing them, supporting or condemning various judgments, views, ideas, proposals for political programs, both individuals and political parties, government structures, public associations, etc. Thanks to journalistic investigations, performing the functions of critical analysis and control, the mass media influence those in power and politicians, forcing them not only to listen to what the press writes about their actions and themselves, but also to respond to criticism.

By performing their functions well, the media contribute to the strengthening of a democratic state and its political institutions. In turn, politicians are interested in the development of the media, since they need them as a means of disseminating their ideas, concepts, and views.

The media in developed countries today have enormous opportunities to influence both public opinion and state institutions. I will give just one example. In 2003, while part of a delegation of Ukrainian mass media leaders in Canada, we visited the editorial office of one of the most popular daily newspapers, The Globe and Mail (Toronto), and witnessed the formation of the next issue of the publication, including the discussion at a meeting of the editorial board of the main topics of publications. And we cannot express our surprise when the next day the traditional 50-minute «warm-up» in the Canadian parliament began with a discussion of the newspaper's materials. Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Gray, in the presence of journalists from electronic and print media, was forced to give exhaustive answers to the opposition on the issues raised.

It is not without reason that in modern political science the media are characterized by such sonorous titles as “the eyes and ears of society”, “the great arbiter”, “the fourth branch of government” (along with the legislative, executive and judicial branches), “the watchdog of public interests”. The belief in the omnipotence of the mass media is so great that it is not uncommon among politicians to think that the one who controls the media controls the entire country.

These capabilities of the media, against the background of their ever-increasing penetration into the political sphere, their transformation into one of

the most important instruments for implementing the political process, cannot but arouse interest from all players in the political market. Depending on whose hands they are in, they can be used both for objective and prompt information of people about real events in the world, their education and upbringing, and for manipulation in the interests of certain groups of people.

Ideal conditions in the political sphere can be considered a situation when politicians understand that they are part of civil society and reflect the opinion of their voters, and the media – the same as part of the same civil society, but reflecting the opinion of their readers. In other words, the media cover what politicians do, and politicians in publications read what the people think. Thus, the media act as an indicator of the interaction between politicians and society. To perform precisely this function in society, absolutely independent, both from an economic and political point of view, mass media are needed.

The euphoria of building such relationships in Ukraine passed in the mid-90s of the last century, when the media was actually structured, and today we have a media-holding clan-party-oligarchic monopoly on the formation of the information space in the state. For the most part, these associations are politically biased and often do not set a goal to make a profit, which is typical of a market economy, but on the contrary, they invest money even in unprofitable media with the sole purpose of getting political dividends from it. The rest of the publications are economically powerless and are forced to become easy prey for big business or politicians or beggars in state institutions.

All the problems of the media as a political communicator appear most clearly and vividly during elections. It is then that you can see the level of dependence of a particular media outlet on a certain political force, business structure, and really determine their influence on political processes. The election campaign is considered a litmus test of the level of freedom of speech and the democratic nature of society.

A necessary condition for the formation of a democratic state based on the rule of law is multi-party system. It allows for a more complete consideration of the interests of all citizens in state policy and contributes to the stable and dynamic development of society. According to the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, as of November 2010, 185 political parties were officially registered in Ukraine. 107 political parties participated in the last elections to the Verkhovna Rada, 16 of which became parliamentary³.

3 Register of public organizations // Unified register of public formations: [site] / Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. URL: : <http://www.minjust.gov.ua/0/18501> (10.01.21).

The formation of multi-party system took place in 1990–1995, when the demarcation took place mainly according to ideological criteria, at the second stage (1996–1999) – based on the attitude to the political regime, since 2000 socio-cultural factors have become decisive⁴.

The times of the development of multi-party system coincide with the beginning of the development of freedom of speech in Ukraine. Some researchers call it the period of Kravchuk's «pink» democracy. Ukrainian publishing houses, media are deprived of communist ideology and are given the opportunity to write about what they want and publish what they want, censorship in any form is prohibited. The processes of adopting laws protecting the interests of the industry are being activated. The information market is beginning to form.

Having received the long-awaited freedom of speech, Ukrainian publishing is somewhat confused. Society, weakened by mass political repressions, divided along territorial lines and spiritually unprepared for independence, was unable to replace political elites. High-ranking communist figures continued to rule not only on the Pechersk hills, but also in most regions of the country. In 1991, five candidates from new political parties received only 32.24 % of the votes of voters who took part in the vote. Ukrainian society was not ready to accept freedom as such. This can be partly explained by its general conservatism and the fact that Ukrainians, on the one hand, are characterized by detachment from politics and individualism, and on the other – conformism and «obedience»⁵.

The same period also saw a technical and technological revolution in the industry. Editorial offices faced problems with the need to take care of the printing and material and technical base, distribution, etc. In addition, Ukraine entered a period of economic crisis, which led to rampant inflation. As a result, the media, having lost their nomenclature, fell into a new dependence: state-owned media – on the state, and commercial media – respectively, on the owners who provided investments in exchange for supporting their financial and political interests. In this situation, a number of leading newspapers («Holos Ukrainy», «Molod Ukrainy», «Robitnycha

4 Yakymenko, Yu. Evolution of the party system of Ukraine: initial positions, public demands, possible alternatives: selected materials of the All-Ukrainian conference ["Political parties in Ukraine: representation and participation"], (Kyiv, December 10, 2010) // Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Research. URL: <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=603277591> (10.12.20).

5 Vladimirov, V. (1998). History of Ukrainian journalism (1917–1997): teaching aids. Luhansk: Publishing House of the Eastern Ukrainian State University, 210 p. P. 154.

Gazeta», «Radyanska Ukraina», «Silski Visti», «Sportivna Gazeta», etc.) appealed to the state for help. The government resolution of March 3, 1994, published for the first time a list of subsidized publications. Thus, the state used the existing difficulties in its interests, firmly linking the support of newspaper publishers with the ability to control and direct their activities. Newspapers and magazines were mostly loyal to the state, and the state, in turn, reacted quite calmly even to critical speeches. The book publishing business was busy saturating the scarce market and practically did not participate in political processes. However, publishing products in the form of information posters and leaflets were actively used.

Gradual negative changes began to occur with the election of L. Kuchma as President of Ukraine in 1994. It was during his presidency that not only publishers but also society felt the presence of censorship, and later – total control over the media. At the end of 1994, under the cover of regulatory institutions, state control bodies were created, designed to monitor the activities of the media. Thus, the Ministry of Press and Information was created, whose responsibilities included state registration of print media, keeping records of publishing houses and publishing organizations, printing enterprises and book distribution, ensuring information security in the press, protection against disclosure of information, the dissemination of which could harm the state, consideration of controversial issues related to the provision and use of information, control over the content of advertising, consideration of materials intended for movement abroad that may contain state secrets, etc. But in practice, it was one of the bodies of influence on publishers.

Having created a vertical press service of all executive bodies, the state began to dose and sift information, reducing the possibilities of access to it.

In 1997, the law “On State Support of the Mass Media and Social Protection of Journalists”⁶ was adopted. The authorities divided the journalistic environment, actually bribing media workers who worked in state and municipal media. Opposition opinion practically disappeared from the columns of newspapers and magazines. They fell under direct dependence on the owners of the media, or rather, on their political views, interests and opportunities. The most powerful media holdings pursued a pro-presidential policy. Therefore, in fact, in each media outlet there were topics for criticism and those that could not be

6 Law of Ukraine “On State Support of Mass Media and Social Protection of Journalists” dated 23.09.97 No. 540/97-VR: 5 Jan. 2011 / Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Official source: website of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. URL: <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=540%2F97-%E2%F0>.

touched. This unwritten rule was violated only during periods of aggravation of the political struggle between the president and parliament, between the president and the opposition, during parliamentary and presidential elections. Problems or misunderstandings between the owner of the media outlet and the relevant government institutions were almost automatically reflected in one or another publication. The media outlets were punished for their disobedience by closure, numerous inspections by various regulatory bodies, blocking of bank accounts, refusal of printing houses to print copies, and even confiscation of finished copies⁷

The editor-in-chief of the Den newspaper, Larisa Ivshyna, frankly spoke about the specifics of the authorities' pressure on opposition media outlets in an article published in the Vechirnyi Kyiv newspaper on December 14, 1999: "In the three years that I have been at the helm of the newspaper, I have never once received a call from the authorities demanding to print or not to print this or that material, to change my position, or to indicate who the newspaper should support and who to criticize. Now the authorities have other means of pressure or influence on the opposition press – a tax or fire inspector can legally come to the editorial office and really mess things up."

The judicial branch of government was drawn into the political struggle. Lawsuits by officials against publications for the protection of honor and dignity with absurdly huge amounts of compensation for moral damages became a common practice. For example, in 1995, the newspaper "Evening Kyiv" was simultaneously a defendant in 9 lawsuits for such claims and did not win any of them⁸. [153, p. 242] Another example is the newspaper "Vseukrainskie Vedomosti" ceased publication, having satisfied an absurd lawsuit for the protection of honor and dignity with an enormous amount of compensation for moral damages – 3.5 million hryvnias. In the last issue of the newspaper, the editorial staff wrote: "We are being squeezed from all sides: the account is blocked, we are unable to pay for paper, printing, delivery. The threat to the safety and even the lives of the editorial staff has become real (the day before, on March 22, 1998, unknown persons threw bottles with incendiary mixture at the editorial office premises – author's italics). The only thing left for us in this situation is to suspend the publication of the newspaper".

7 Kostyleva, S. (2001). Printed Mass Media of Ukraine (1986–2000): History of Formation, Development Trends. — Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine, NAS of Ukraine, 304 p. P. 120.

8 Karpenko, V. (2003). The Press and Independence of Ukraine: Practice of Media Policy 1988–1998: Textbook. Kyiv: Kyiv National University named after Taras Shevchenko, Institute of Journalism, Nora-Druk, 350 p. P. 242.

In general, according to the Union of Journalists of Ukraine and the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Freedom of Speech and Information, in 1999 alone, 2,258 lawsuits were filed against the media, which contained demands to pay the plaintiffs over 90 billion UAH, which is almost three times the State Budget of Ukraine.

Well-known and high-profile examples of violations of the law regarding the media are: the cessation of the publication of «Silskie Vesti», the closure of the newspaper «Politika», the arrest and seizure of the circulations of the newspapers «Svoboda», «Tovarysh», «Ukrainian Bourgeois Nationalist», the arbitrariness of tax officials regarding the newspaper «Vechernye Vesti», the temporary cessation of the publication of «Pravda Ukrainy». The newspaper «Politika» has become a permanent participant in legal proceedings

«... In Ukraine, with the participation of executive authorities, as well as the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine and some courts, the practice of persecuting opposition and other mass media outlets critical of executive authorities, and their leaders, is spreading... Political censorship is actually carried out in various ways,» the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine «On the Activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and Other State Authorities in Ensuring Freedom of Speech, Meeting the Information Needs of Society and Developing the Information Sphere in Ukraine» of February 16, 1999 stated. during the «Government Day» on information issues in the Verkhovna Rada⁹.

It was during the mid-1990s that there was an increase in cases of intimidation, beatings and even murders of unwanted journalists. (According to the Union of Journalists of Ukraine, since August 1991, 38 journalists have died in Ukraine, whose deaths are attributed to their professional activities.)

Socio-political groups, united by financial and industrial interests, headed mainly by representatives of regional elites, began to organize themselves into political organizations for the convenience of lobbying their interests. Almost every such group founded or bought mass media that would defend its positions. The number of its own mass media became a kind of argument in the struggle for the favor of the heads of state. The media, which were under the influence of these structures, were forced to praise or at least not to praise the owner or sponsor and

⁹ Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and other state authorities in ensuring freedom of speech, satisfying the information needs of society and developing the information sphere in Ukraine dated 16.02.99 No. 430-XIV / Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Official source: website of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. URL: <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=432-14>

strongly criticized opponents, thus turning into hostages and a means of struggle between clans. Ordered articles, a «war of compromising materials», mutual accusations became everyday life. Divided on different sides of the barricades, journalists were forced to either accept these rules of the game or leave political journalism for other fields in order to save face.

Any regrouping in the Ukrainian political arena, as if in a mirror, is necessarily reflected in the media. The media are actually turning into an instrument of political struggle, manipulation technologies of the authorities, political parties, financial and industrial groups. Even formally independent newspapers were clearly influenced by individual politicians and parties (“Den” – the entourage of Ye. Marchuk, “Silski Visti” – the team of O. Moroz, “Chas-Time” – the national democrats led by V. Chornovol and others). Serving narrow-group and even personal interests, focusing on supporting individual politicians, instead of being the “fourth power”, expressing the interests of civil society in its interaction with the state, the national press is losing its authority. People prefer the local press and the proven programs of “Radio Liberty”, BBC and “Voice of America” in Soviet times.

Often, during conflicts between branches of government, the media not only failed to play the role of a stabilizing factor in Ukrainian society, but, on the contrary, contributed to the aggravation of the confrontation. “Black PR” was distributed in millions of copies, pseudo-publications often appeared, as happened with the newspaper of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “Holos Ukrainy”, when on November 29, 1999, under its name, a so-called special free issue with a fake provocative appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the citizens of Ukraine was printed in a huge circulation.

In general, after the parliamentary elections of 1998 and the presidential elections of 1999, the control of the executive branch over the media became even tighter. The Presidential Administration took full control of all information flows in Ukraine, and “temniki” appeared – unofficial, closed directives to the media leadership, which contained detailed instructions on how to cover political events in Ukraine in the news, in what tone to present this or that information.

Already during this period, the publishing industry joined the political struggle. Mass editions of publications with a programmed political basis of both a positive and critical nature were printed (works by D. Chobot, O. Shekhovtsov, K. Bondarenko, V. Chemerys, V. Skachko, and others). Individual party leaders

resorted to book production to promote their ideas. Brochures with party or bloc programs were published.

The practice of the media included a system of “incentives” either to publications or directly to journalists for creating a positive image of politics, business, sports teams and their leaders on the pages of newspapers. Which is generally contrary to the basic principles of the profession. The example of journalists from Germany is illustrative. In May 2007, in Kyiv, to honor the memory of the football players of Kyiv “Dynamo” who died during the war (the tragic “match of death”), a friendly game was held between Ukrainian and German media workers, represented by the newspaper “Der Spiegel”. Given the significance of the event, the German Bundeswehr allocated a plane to transport German journalists. But the journalists flew in on a regular plane at their own expense. As the head of the delegation, Mr. Sontheimer, explained: “Our journalistic ethics do not allow us to take any steps that could later be interpreted as dependence on anyone.” That’s how it should be for us.

The 2002 parliamentary elections in Ukraine for the first time demonstrated the possibility of victory not of a communist or leftist idea, but of a democratic force. The new political class needed its own information channels, which led to the transformation and even development of the media market in Ukraine. State media increasingly lost the trust of readers, and therefore their traditional importance for the authorities. They were replaced by the most rated business media projects, which were also completely controlled by the authorities, but had a much larger readership, and therefore had much more attractive opportunities in the political struggle. The positive tone of their publications regarding the institutions of power and the negative tone regarding the rapidly advancing opponents remained unchanged. At the same time, in 2002, journalists dared to openly declare the pressure on the media and the actual destruction of freedom of speech in Ukraine. A movement began for the right to a profession, independence of the media.

On the eve of the 2004 elections manipulative technologies were already being implemented centrally, through the system of the same «temniki», but not only, as was the case in 2002, in the media controlled by one party, but also in all electronic and print publications, of all forms of ownership, controlled by the regime.

Open political advertising was absent in the national and especially regional media during August-September. Instead, the pro-government

candidate was advertised under various informational pretexts. Special methods, according to the monitoring conducted by the NGO «Europe XXI Foundation», were used in regional media. In circulation publications and on TV channels, there were frequent cases when the editorial staff received «wholesale» cash from certain individuals in the amount of payment for political advertising from other candidates with the condition that such advertising would not appear. 2004 became the peak of the «era of control» and «unity of disinformation policy»¹⁰.

However, the situation was significantly different from previous election races. A number of independent publications, in particular, such a popular newspaper as «Dzerkalo Tyzhnia», won the respect of readers for their impartiality, serious analysis of materials, frankness of judgments and impartiality, and became centers of trust. Cities and villages were covered with political posters, leaflets, the content of which, often, was not only far from elementary principles of morality, but also simply violated constitutional norms.

The turbulent events of the fall of 2004 divided the media, as well as the entire society. The Association of Periodical Publishers stated that during the election campaign there were facts of deviation from professional standards of balance and impartiality in covering political events in Ukraine: «Some publications embarked on the path of inciting radical sentiments of the electorate, bordering on sharp political intolerance. Such publications cast a shadow over the entire domestic press and undermine the trust of the majority of readers.»¹¹

Analyzing the role of Ukrainian media in the 2004–2006 election campaigns, we can conclude that they were much more involved in their course than in their provision, which did not allow them to fulfill their main function of high-quality, pluralistic and unbiased information to consumers of information, to provide voters with the information necessary to make a conscious choice possible. Often, the role of the media was reduced to the role of a powerful technological component of the agitation and advertising campaigns of certain political forces, and not as an independent player in the political field.

According to a survey by the Center for Political Studies of participants in the protest action in Kyiv, the motivation for participation in them was characterized as follows: falsification of election results – 41.18 %; rejection of

10 Ligachova, N. & Ganzha, L. (2005). *Journalistic Revolution – 2004. Events, People, Discussions*. Kyiv: Vistka, 284 p. P. 11.

11 Ibid. P. 32–33

the existing realities of life in Ukraine – 32.09 %; desire to build a democratic society in Ukraine of the European model – 20.86 %. The most active supporters of reforms were entrepreneurs (66.67 %) and employees of private firms (47.83 %). 60 % of whom had the highest income among those surveyed – over 1000 UAH. per month¹². This indicates that the middle class, interested in political stability, highly appreciating freedom and human rights, inclined to compromise and reconciliation of political poles, having moderate political demands, fairly high competence and activity in making electoral and political decisions, has intervened in politics. The middle class plays a significant political, stabilizing role in the state. Small and medium-sized businesses, of which the publishing business is a part, belong to this group.

Interestingly, the largest group of protesters was made up of those who have from 100 to 500 books in their library – 31.18 %, a significant group was made up of participants who have more than 500 books in their libraries – 22.04 %. That is, the share of those who have more than 100 books in their home library was – 53.22 %¹³. These data indicate not only the formally high educational level of the participants in the action, but also that these people are characterized by conscious, independent behavior, which is a product of training and independent work on increasing their own educational level.

During the elections, the press literally changed before our eyes. Participants in a round table held in mid-December in Kyiv, dedicated to the role of the media in the conduct of elections, stated that Ukrainian journalists should always be critical of the authorities. The editor-in-chief of the weekly «Dzerkalo Tyzhnia» V. Mostovy said in his speech that the media «should be a spy for the people in power.» In his opinion, journalists should be critical of the actions of the authorities: «No matter who comes to power, I know that we will still be in opposition.» The president of the Academy of the Ukrainian Press V. Ivanov made a similar statement: «If we do not clap our hands and do not beat the authorities on the head, then everything will remain as before, only the name of the president will change.»¹⁴

The slogans of the Maidan to revive freedom of speech, protect journalists, reveal all high-profile cases, and clear away all the «trash» that had accumulated during the previous government were gladly supported by the publishing

12 Ligachova, N. & Ganzha, L. (2005). *Journalistic Revolution – 2004. Events, People, Discussions*. Kyiv: Vistka, 284 p. P. 68.

13 Ibid. P. 67

14 Ibid. P. 32.

community – a new stage of its development had begun. The newly elected President promised that he and his government would ensure transparency, honesty, and competitiveness of the information space of Ukraine.

Many journalists and researchers note that it was in the period from the end of 2004 that real freedom of the press began, and with it the development of democracy in Ukraine. The Orange Revolution, which swept through the squares of Ukrainian cities and souls, was the beginning of the end of the technology of the «temniki». Owners, editors, journalists felt free for the first time in recent years. They stopped following the illegal and immoral instructions of state and party bodies. And no one sent these «comments» anymore. And most importantly, why would one want to believe that no one would follow these instructions anymore¹⁵.

After decades of distrust, citizens began to gradually change their attitude towards Ukrainian publishers, and primarily towards the media, and believed that the pages of publications could contain truthful information. The society itself, which had breathed a breath of freedom, also changed.

But, once again, the feeling of euphoria did not last long. Having destroyed centralized censorship, the state did not go further. Empty promises remained: the denationalization of the press, the legislative consolidation of the independence of journalists and editorial teams from the owners, the transparency of media ownership, the creation of conditions for the economic independence of publishing houses, etc. In this situation, some returned to old traditions, already singing along with the new authorities and new political forces, while others disappeared altogether, unable to withstand the competition.

So, what remained was the censorship of the owner, which in one way or another controls editorial policy, realizing certain clan oligarchic interests. But the state did not really like this either, since not all media magnates were supporters of the new authorities. A proven method was used – encouragement and support for state and municipal media.

Clashes in the columns of publications between the government and the opposition, within the government and the opposition, between financial and industrial groups are often perceived by Ukrainians as freedom of speech. According to the human rights organization Freedom House, Ukraine ranked

15 Kipiani, V. (Ed.) (2005). *The Power of Darkness and Temniks. A Reader on Political Censorship in Ukraine, 2001–2004*. Kyiv: Prosvita, 308 p.

115th out of 195 in the world freedom of speech ranking, with negative trends: from 92nd in 2007 to 115th in 2009¹⁶.

The influence of the media on the political struggle in 2009–2010 was not much different from the previous ones. The same filth, the same division into friends and strangers, the same dependence on the owner and the absence of one's own position, the practical absence of influence and control over the mass media by the public. Money rules the day again. Among the differences: the political confrontation took place not only along the line of “government – opposition”, it also took place between the centers of power – the president and the prime minister; even greater disillusionment among citizens about the future; widespread use of the Internet. The press remained in demand in small towns and especially villages, because here the share of Internet users, according to a study conducted in February 2009 by Gemius Ukraine, was only 6 % of the entire Ukrainian Internet audience¹⁷.

The new and old authorities were in no hurry to solve the existing problems in the publishing industry. However, the desire to dominate the information space did not disappear. The facts of pressure on writers and withdrawal of book editions became regrettable. As happened with the book by the famous Ukrainian writer M. Matios “Torn Pages from an Autobiography”, which, by the way, was recognized as the “Book of the Year – 2010”. It seemed that the authorities were not averse to returning to the usual methods of the late 90s. Lawsuits against newspapers (“Kyiv Post”, online publication “Oglyad”, etc.) from the “powerful of this world” to protect honor and dignity in court again appeared.

According to a sociological survey conducted by the Research & Branding Group company in 24 regions of Ukraine and Crimea in December 2010, more than half of Ukrainians (51 %) were convinced that there is a threat to freedom of speech in Ukraine. The objectivity of information provision in the media, in their opinion, is influenced by the political views of the owner – 53.6 %, censorship by the authorities – 38 % and self-censorship of the journalist – 10.6 %. 56 % of Ukrainians generally trusted the media and 38.5 % did not. 37 % of respondents received information from local media. 48.6 % of respondents agreed with the statement that the information field of Ukraine is a real reflection of the situation

16 Kovalenko, N. & Lashchenko, O. “The Price of Speech”. The situation with freedom of speech in Ukraine has worsened // Sounds of Life: [site] / Radio Svoboda. URL: <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/1745846.html> (03.09.22).

17 Dutsyk, D. News from the fronts of media wars // Ukrainian Pravda. URL: http://www.media.parlament.org.ua/Analitika/action/article_detail/article_id/2591 (03.01.23).

in the country, while 20.3 % disagreed¹⁸. So, the authorities changed, but the problems remained. It turned out that the elimination of the state monopoly, the introduction of private ownership of the mass media, the abolition of political censorship – processes are certainly necessary for a democratic state, but they are not sufficient to speak of the independence of the media.

According to the Windhoek Declaration (adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1991 and the International Federation of Journalists in Montreal in 1992), “by an independent press we mean a press that is independent of governmental, political or economic control, as well as of control of the materials and infrastructure necessary for the production and distribution of newspapers, magazines and periodicals... By a pluralistic press we mean the end of any monopoly and the existence of as many newspapers, magazines and periodicals as possible, reflecting as wide a range of views as possible in society.” In addition, the declaration states that, according to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “the establishment, support and strengthening of an independent, pluralistic and free press are essential for the development and promotion of democracy and economic development in a country”¹⁹.

Based on the previous analysis, it can be stated that the media can be independent, and therefore capable of being independent players in the political struggle and fulfilling their main purpose, only under two circumstances: the first is the presence of legal and social mechanisms that will exclude the possibility of manipulating the media; the second is the creation of public media, the owner of which will be the entire society, which will provide all the material needs of the publishing house at the expense of public funding, and will allow journalists to work in the interests of society as a whole.

Only under such circumstances can the media become a full-fledged link in the political system. And the very emergence of public media will force the rest of the media to restructure, will lead to a weakening of journalists' dependence on their owners, and will serve to democratize the press.

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