

Freedom of the press and garret with memories

One of the first memories of mine are closed connected to what was found by me in a day of summer, in the garret of my grandparents' house. It was in the middle of 80-s. I found a bundle of newspapers there and I was astonished. Maybe that fact determined me to choose the faculty of Journalism later. After I found that bundle of newspaper in the garret I was always going there by skimming through it. What was so interesting in those newspapers? I was reading about the way how a kolkhoznik by name Ivan Pavlovici Crudu became a hero of social labor or how the milkmaid Maria Dimitrievna Botan managed to exceed the plan of work. There were different pictures of a tractor-driver for example propping up his tractor or of any plant worker who demonstrated a heroic deed in his work. The pictures from the newspapers which I was keeping in my hands were pictures representing people who were laughing of happiness, people proud of what they are doing, proud of their country in which they are living and always ready to protect it. Once while I was climbing up as usually in the garret, I found out with stupor the absence of that newspapers. Later I learned that my grandparents threw away in the garbage - can. That fact made me to avoid for a long time the reading of newspapers because it made me think that the newspapers have a single destination – garbage can. Maybe for my grandparents that newspapers signified namely a simple garbage, taking into consideration the fact that they were obliged to subscribe to certain newspapers, but unfortunately sometimes even not reading it. Possible they were so indifferent concerning the newspapers because the facts rendered in it were far from reality or by other words – just a simple imagination. I am retelling all these my occurrences I had once, because it had been made me think over the years why it was like that and not otherwise, why soviet newspapers and Mass Media were deceiving, manipulating and how it was possible that people

who were living in USSR could accept such things like that. I haven't yet found answers to these questions, but the most strange thing for me is the fact, that I see everyday people around me saying that in past they had a better life.

So, if to led oneself to these ideas, then we can say that it was good that people were deceived by soviet Mass Media – the fact that is obviously incorrect.

After the fall of Former Soviet Union, the member states became independent and started the period of transition from communism to democracy. The press also changed radically. I started to find in newspapers things different from that once found in the garret. The press from the beginning of 90-s announced the end of dictatorship and the beginning of liberalization in all fields. I try to remember myself how much people were enthused. This fact was due to the press. Thanks to it, the behavior of people changed very much. In those days you could hear such words like: democracy, privatization, market economy, etc. Most of these concepts were compromised by the governing bodies come by turns in the Republic of Moldova. Another expression appeared in those days was the freedom of press and speech. Regardless of the fact, that a small number of people were understanding what freedom of press was signifying, the citizens and namely journalists started to perceive otherwise mass media and its role in a democratic society. Unfortunately, the concept of freedom of press wasn't explained adequately at those times, but anyway it influenced positively the society and journalists as well. In the XX-th century a Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville undertook a journey in the USA. The fruit of this journey was the apparition of a book "Democracy in America" which changed the social and political thinking of European people. Making reference to the freedom of press, Tocqueville stated that "freedom of press covers not only the political opinions, but of all people as well. It changes not only the laws, but manners as well". Thinking on these words and analyzing what happened in this context when speaking about the Republic of Moldova, we can realize that in our country press changed the people's manners as well.

In 1994 the Constitution adopted by the Parliament of R.M. was stipulating “any citizen is guaranteed the freedom of thoughts, opinions, as well as freedom of the speech”. So, the press had a juridical framework, that made it to be different from the soviet one.

Writing this essay by bringing obvious confessional facts, by making a parallel between the past and present, I realize that the concept of freedom of press was compromised, because the journalists forgot which is their role, the governors made everything possible to control it, but citizens came to the conclusion that freedom of press is just a simple bluff. In other words – one more. The understanding of this fundamental concept in an open society based on the model of a present democracy didn't exist up to the present in the Republic of Moldova. I know several professors who even declare that the freedom of press doesn't exist. So, it means that these professors teach me that the freedom of press is a chimera. So, is not hard to realize that the Moldavian society, when we speak about the freedom of press, is among a vicious circle. I would like to be wrong while declaring these facts, but unfortunately, the reality demonstrates that I am right. Moreover, the Moldavian society is not sure if indeed needs a free press or not. I could bring some arguments, examples in this context, but I will not do it, although analyzing the press in other countries, it is not hard to come to the conclusion that “something is rotten in the state of Danmark”.

A large number of experts who had visited the Republic of Moldova made great efforts in order to change the people's view regarding the freedom of press. A lot of trainings, workshops were organized, many books were published about how mass media should be. But unfortunately, this was somehow in vain. Of course it should be mentioned that present press is completely different from the soviet one. At present, there are a great number of media which express various points of view, however this is not sufficient for all means of information and entertainment to be considered as the “fourth power”. Press in the Republic of Moldova is controlled and conducted by various groups of interest, thus, having negative impact on adequate informing of citizens.

The advantage of the freedom of the press for the Republic of Moldova is its positive influence on the society's view. This influence about which I am speaking, can be observed beginning even with politicians' behavior and finishing with the way how people are dressed. So, we can state that press, regardless of some reservations, managed to contribute by making the citizen more responsible of his actions, fact that can't be overlooked. The only thing that freedom of the press from the Republic of Moldova offered to Moldavian society was and is – *finding the truth once lost* in what regards the reality. Moreover, the freedom of the press is still in the process of evolution, many mass media institutions still conceive it like something abstract, foreign and unnatural. I would like to glorify the contribution of the press in what regards the society's democratization, the creation of civil society, economy's liberalization, etc., but unfortunately, I can't do it, because I can be misinterpreted, because press has still many efforts to make in this regard.

For certain, the real affirmation of the freedom of the press will happen some day in the Republic of Moldova also.

Changing the tone and becoming a little bit more optimistic, I would like to state that to my opinion, the main advantage of the freedom of press in what regards our country is the fact, that in many today news stands I can find a lot of other things than that once found in the garret of my grandparents' house and this fact inspire me with hope to progress.