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## From “Glasnost” to Suffocation

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Gorbachev defined “Perestroika” as a new way of thinking about his country and about the world. Changes evidently affected the media as well. This is the main issue of this article, which explains how things in Russia have changed - radically - since the 1980s. The Russian media now fights on three fronts: the Russian mafia, the country’s economic mire and the obstacles set up by the current government.

In the past five years over 90 journalists have died in the former Soviet Union; in addition to those fallen in various military confrontations, a large number have been killed for having dared to write about organised crime and its connections with the country’s political leadership.

Public radio and television have financing problems. Newspapers are bled dry by taxes, the high cost of paper and utilities bills. The “Nezavisimaya Gazeta”, the first Russian independent newspaper and one of the key symbols of “Glasnost”, was forced to shut down. Other media like “Segodnia”, which stood out for its professional journalism during the war in Chechnya, had to tone down their criticism of the government because, according to “Segodnia”’s editor, they couldn’t “throw out the window everything gained in two years of life.”