

Interview with Grigory Shevelev  
Head, Information Programming

Accent has changed in economic news: 3,5,10 years ago, center of economic news was, for example: amount of steel produced (figures); amount of grain harvest, etc. Now in center of news is the relation of people to their work, understanding of the person is the essence of the amount of production of steel. This is happening because relationships between the individual and the state and between the individual and work is changing, and information must reflect it. News is definitely a participant in this transformation. Our task is not only to state, but to push the process further in the human consciousness. News is essential part of the democratization of society. With help of tv we inform people about decisions from the top and vice versa.

Did one story about the auto factory in Moscow that makes Moskvich cars. For 2 days the factory produced no cars. It didn't have little rubber rings, without which they could not make cars. The leaders asked: how can we go on to self-financing [khozraschet] to develop our own profit, when there are no rubber rings? The next day, after the broadcast, other factories called Gosteleradio and said they were in a similar situation. The Moskvich plant called and said the conveyer was working again. Rubber rings had been supplied by planes, at a cost that made them like gold. Vremya can't talk daily about the lack of little rubber rings. A correspondent in Saratov was told to go to the factory that produced the rings. The story from that factory (in the rubber industry) found that it was producing on a low technical level. The question is of technical reconstruction of the industry, and we talked about it on the program and the problem of technical reconstruction accelerated. But also found that growth of the production of cars was planned with a planned growth of rubber rings that was impossible for the rubber industry to supply at that cost, and that the problem, therefore, is of Gosplan and of the Council of Ministers. Under self-financing, each enterprise will do more planning. This is an exceptionally critical problem now. This is not pure news, as the West sees it.

International information

Process of change is happening in many countries' selection of news. In London at a Eurovision Conf. Shevelev and colleagues agreed about need for more substance and broadening range of information from abroad.

Summit was news only on day of signing of treaty, strictly speaking, but the development of talks, importance went beyond.

The visual is more authoritative; the emotional element is the clearest advantage of tv.

They have about 50 foreign bureaus. Want to open new ones in Australia and China. Moscow apparatus of department = 250 people. By plan, Vremya has 40 minutes. But it depends on what happens and can run longer. Chairman of Gostel allows flexibility.

Priority is on "hot spots" of globe, countries important to war and peace. Will have more about different aspects of life in

capitalist countries, achievements. Want to use useful experience for our perestroika. Interested in how common people live.

There is increasing interest in daily life of people everywhere. Information should awaken an interest in public. Sometimes stereotypes from the flow of stories (accidents, catastrophes) make viewers lose sharpness; that 5 people died makes no difference. Told story of crocodile and antelope and how public reacted in large numbers. People more exercised about this than about the famine in Ethiopia, etc.

Ceremonial receptions: on same level of protocol are treated exactly the same way. Could not recall exceptions, and if there had been, they were purely technical. State tv is part of the protocol. Presence of tv camera is element of the protocol.

If newshole were larger, would do more about economics; have not devoted enough attention to the spiritual [not religious] life of society. Because economics is of primary importance, there is often not enough time for stories about culture and spiritual life. With more time, would do more about science, culture, music, literature, life of people, daily life, art.

40 minutes is a long time, but we also have bulletins. Might increase time of Vremya--not enough time now. But news should be information, preferably short. 35-40 minutes is optimal time,

90 Minutes is done live TWICE (for Eastern zone)

Today in the World went off and then came back. Reveals mentality of people working in tv. It had been on for many years--10 years or so. People responsible for program noted that it had lost its freshness, liveliness; it had become dull; people didn't watch it. In order to modernize, was decided on basis of "it seems to us" to take one edition off the air. Overwhelmed by telephone calls. Everywhere Shevelev went--in company, with his family--asked what happened. Because of this experience, when they decided to introduce 90 Minutes, they quickly did a telephone survey in Moscow after the premiere and received interesting data to use later in program. They put sociologists in the studio about reactions to 90 Minutes. This permitted Shevelev more actively to argue for improvement of 90 Minutes. At present, 90 Minutes runs from 7-9:30 a.m. After January, will do another sociological study and start at 6:00 a.m. Chairman and 1st deputy [Kravchenko] took decision to increase program. Increasing the program day, which this involved, is very costly.