
THE MONTH IN REVIEW – JUNE-JULY 2001

KYRGYZSTAN

MONOPOLIST TO RESTRAIN ATTACKS ON THE PRESIDENT

On June 8 the state publishing house "Uchkun" has refused printing a regular Kyrgyz issue of the opposition newspaper *Res Publica*. According to Mrs. Zamira Sydykova, Chief Editor of the newspaper, the reason was that the newspaper intended to publish a translation of Andrew Clark's article "A Five-Star Headache. Hyatt found itself in a trap" from a British newspaper *The Guardian* of May 16. The article deals with problems of the Hyatt Regency hotel construction recently opened in Bishkek and alleges that President Akaev's wife has been granted a bloc of the hotel Hyatt Regency's shares. Russian issue of the newspaper with the article was published on June 5. According to Mrs. Sydykova recently she had a meeting with State Secretary Mr. Osmonakun Ibraimov at which he suggested not to publish the article, but she refused and required to confute the information stated in the article. On June 8, Mr. Yrysbek Omurzakov, Chief Editor of *The Tribune* newspaper informed an *Azattyk* radio correspondent that the publishing house "Uchkun" management had demanded that he should remove any criticism of President Askar Akaev and his family from his newspaper. \\ From RFE\RL.

INTERNEWS OFFICE TO OPEN IN THE SOUTH OF KYRGYZSTAN

A southern office of the correspondent of the international organization *Internews - Kyrgyzstan* has been established in Osh. So far the only office of the organization was in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. According to the *Internews - Kyrgyzstan* Executive Director Mr. Omurbek Sataev this office will basically work for the regional TV-program "The Open Asia" and involve journalists of the Central Asian countries. In accordance with the design of its founders "The Open Asia" will work for current analysis of common factors and differences in economy, history and culture of four countries of the region. Thus, TV reporters and cameramen of the southern Kyrgyzstan can use the most advanced equipment in their work. Shortly soon an *Internews - Kyrgyzstan* legal advisor will start working in the office of the correspondent. \\ From Osh-Press.

STATE TV AND RADIO COMPANY REPORTER ARRESTED

On May 28, 2001 in Djalal-Abad, law-enforcement bodies arrested Mr. Samagan Orozaliev, TV-studio Zamana reporter of the Kyrgyz State TV Company accused of bribery. According to Mr. Orozaliev's application to the Djalal-Abad regional civil rights organization "Equity," he became a victim of intrigues and prosecutions of Mr. Ergesh Torobaev, Kyrgyz parliament deputy and Director of the Djalal-Abad enterprise of electric systems, and his closest cognate. The reporter affirms that Torobaev did not want that some facts of his unseemly activities in the rank of deputy and chief of enterprise be made public in Orozaliev's author's TV program.

In his statement Mr. Orozaliev affirms that he and his camera crew have been shadowed and their car searched. They stated this in their application to militia, but nothing followed. On May 28, Mr. Orozaliev met Bakyt, the son of Mr. Torobaev, who proposed him to change to positive the content of the material and offered some money for this. According to Mr. Orozaliev, he refused money. In a few minutes after the meeting Mr. Orozaliev was detained by militiamen, who searched him and found three hundred dollars in a breast pocket, and charged him of bribery. There were no Orozaliev's fingerprints on the banknotes; therefore militiamen proceeded to threatening and demanding him to confess the crime. But Mr. Orozaliev refused to confess the guilt and was brought to the city temporary custody ward together with the driver of the camera crew car. According to Mr. Orozaliev's wife, their apartment was also searched without any sanctions and witnesses of search. A video camera, video recorder, film processing equipment and more than hundred videocassettes had been withdrawn. Also, no certificate of seizure of Orozaliev's property had been drawn up. On June 27, Mr. Kubanychbek Bakiev, Djalal-Abad region Procurator informed that the inquest against the arrested reporter Samagan Orozaliev will be soon completed. According to the Procurator, four persons more made claims to the reporter. // From RFE/RL and the Djalal-Abad regional civil rights organization "Equity".

FORMER VECHERNY BISHKEK CHIEF EDITOR TO ESTABLISH A NEW NEWSPAPER

On June 11, the Ministry of Justice registered a new newspaper "Moya Stolitsa." Its founder became Mr. Alexander Kim, former Chief Editor of the most popular Russian evening newspaper of Kyrgyzstan *Vecherny Bishkek*. Another former *Vecherny Bishkek* Chief Editor Mr. Gennady Kuzmin and Deputy Chief Editor Mrs. Rina Prizhivoit joined Mr. Kim. The newspaper's staff includes a number of former *Vecherny Bishkek* reporters, who left the office after newspaper shares were acquired by businessmen loyal to powers.

ARBITRATION COURT REFUSES TO CONDUCT A CASE AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

On July 30, the Bishkek city arbitration court refused trying two cases against the Minister of Justice stating that these cases should be tried in a civil court. Aleksander Kim, Chief Editor of the new newspaper *Moya Stolitsa*, is a claimant in the first case, and Bakyt Djamalidinov, the founder of newspapers *Agym*, *Techenie* and *Djoltigen*, is a claimant in the second one. Both of them charged the Minister of Justice of infringement of laws and demanded annulment of the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic "On issues of mass media registration" of 20 June 2001 concerning the cancellation of state registration of 16 mass media, among which there were those newspapers. The Bishkek arbitration court refused to go ahead with the proceedings soon after Omurbek Zakiryaev, a judge of the Bishkek arbitration court, had started to conduct the first case on July 13, and sessions of the court were held on July 13, 26 and 27. A new judge, Alibek Arziev, started conducting the second case on July 23 and then postponed it until July 30. The *Moya Stolitsa* representative, Mr. Viktor Shloev, informed the Radio *Azattyk* correspondent that the newspaper would appeal to the Supreme Arbitration Court. According to him, civil courts should not try cases between legal persons. As we informed earlier, on 10 April 2001, the Ministry of Justice made an announcement about the re-registration of political parties and mass media until 1 July 2001, justifying the decision by the fact that many parties and mass

media existed, but only on paper. Soon after, 16 new mass media were registered with the Ministry of Justice. On June 20, the Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyzstan made a decision to revoke the registration of the 16 new mass media. In the opinion of Mr. Criss Shlupp, the *Internews* Director, the Arbitration Court systematically and intentionally interfered with the trial against the Ministry of Justice. The *Internews* press release stated that the Ministry of Justice had established the final date of re-registration as 1 October 2001; therefore, development of mass media in the Kyrgyz Republic had been paralyzed for a period of six months and no new mass media could be registered until autumn. The Chairman of the Kyrgyz Publicity Protection Fund, Melis Eshimkanov, told the Radio *Azattyk* correspondent that the country authorities, themselves systematically breaking laws, do their best to exclude the appearance of any new independent mass media in Kyrgyzstan. On July 13, Mrs. Elena Bonner, a known civil rights fighter and the widow of academician Andrei Sakharov, sent a letter to President Askar Akaev in which she expressed her concern about the future of the 16 mass media whose registration had been revoked in Kyrgyzstan without sufficient reasons. Mrs. Elena Bonner wrote that, due to what has been done, the possibility of holding the Second International Sakharov Congress in Bishkek, scheduled for September 20-22, had become rather problematic. //By RFE/RL information.

SEARCH IN DJANY MUUN

On June 27, a search was made of the editorial office of the non-governmental newspaper *Djany Muun* (New Generation), published in the Kyrgyz language, in south Kyrgyzstan. That day, a group of persons presenting certificates as National Security Agency employees, entered the *Djany Muun* office. They disconnected the telephone, carried out a search of the office and confiscated a manuscript copy of the recently-published anti-corruption article. According to *Djany Muun's* employees, the group acted very professionally and operatively, nevertheless, their actions were illegal. They had no documents to explain the reason of their visit and search of the office. They also demanded that the Editor should make a recognizance not to leave the city without permission and to come immediately to the regional National Security Department to give testimonies when called. The newspaper employees protested against such actions and considered the visit of the national security agents as "a kick to publicity and democracy, and a shot in the eye of the President and his policy". // By information from the Extreme Journalism Center.

MOYA STOLITSA'S FIRST ISSUE TO APPEAR IN PRINT

On July 24, in Bishkek, the first joint issue of newspapers *Advokat* (Lawyer) and *Moya Stolitsa* appeared with a circulation of ten thousand copies. According to information from *Moya Stolitsa*, it is a joint project launched by the *Advokat* Chief Editor Mr. Toktorbek Djanaliev. The newspaper *Moya Stolitsa* is one of the 16 mass media that received registration certificates from the Ministry of Justice which were later declared ineffective. It has become a tradition in Kyrgyzstan for some newspapers to use other mass media printed pages. This spring, the opposition newspaper *Asaba* was published using a logotype of the newspaper *Res Publica*, as the Ministry of Justice had prohibited the publication of the newspaper because of its financial problems. The *Advokat* Chief Editor, Toktorbek Djanaliev, said to the Radio *Azattyk* correspondent that he had received a written notice from the Deputy Minister of Justice, Erkinbek Mamyrov, stating that he had violated the law in having issued the last

edition of the newspaper together with *Moya Stolitsa*. Mr. Mamyrov declared that if such a practice continued, then Mr. Djanaliev would be punished as joint issue of newspapers was forbidden. Mrs. Rina Prizhivoit, *Moya Stolitsa* editor, advised that the Ministry's decision to cancel the registration of *Moya Stolitsa* was not final as there had been no judicial agreement on this so far; therefore, the newspaper still had the right to cooperate with any other newspaper.

INQUIRY AGAINST THE OSH JOURNALIST TO CONTINUE

On July 20, Mr. Rasul Umarov, Head of Department of the General Prosecutor's office, informed the Radio *Azattyk* correspondent that the inquiry against the former correspondent of the National TV and Radio Corporation, Samagan Orozaliev, was still in process. Security service agents had arrested Mr. Orozaliev on May 28, having charged him with receiving a bribe in the amount of \$300 from a local official - Ergesh Torebaev. Mr. Umarov also said that six further persons had stated that Orozaliev had wronged them, and the TV and Radio Corporation had sent a letter stating that Orozaliev had quit the corporation before his arrest. Mr. Orozaliev denied all charges, declaring that the case against him was a frame-up. According to him, he had been preparing material on corruption among local officials, and Torebaev's people, having learned about this, tried to bully him. Mr. Orozaliev had informed the militia bodies about the matter, but no action had yet been taken. //By RFE/RL information.

TAJIKISTAN

DEATH OF THE EDITOR OF *BIZNES I POLITIKA*

Mrs. Nina Maksimovna Pak, Chief Editor of the private weekly *Biznes i Politika*, passed away on 21 June 2001 after a long and painful illness. "Nina Pak was one of the first representatives of the independent press in the country", said Mr. Khayet Davlyatov, Chairman of Union of Journalists of Tajikistan. "The newspaper she headed wrote fearlessly and openly, and was some kind of a barometer of political life in the country." Mrs. Nina Pak was born on 9 December 1954, and for many years worked in the field of journalism. During the last eight years, she headed *Biznes i Politika*. "The independent political newspaper of Nina Pak always gave the readers reliable, first-hand information", said Deputy Chief of the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Davlyat Nazriev. "Therefore, she was popular even amongst the governmental officials." *Biznes i Politika* used to publish analytical articles concerning economic, political and social developments of the Tajik society. In the opinion of experts of the Fund of Memory and Protection of Rights of Journalists, Nina Pak always fearlessly published materials that other Tajik newspapers never dared to.

ROUND TABLE ON THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

A round-table of journalists on the subject of "Access to governmental information" was held on July 25 in Chkalovsk (Sogdian region) under the aegis of the OSCE Office in Khudjant. Speaking at the meeting, Mr. Djunaïd Ibodov, an expert of the international organization "Internews," stated that in Tajikistan's regions, there is less freedom than in the capital. In Mr.

Ibodov's opinion, if in Dushanbe a publication of certain material is quite possible, in distant areas it gives rise to anger of the local authorities. Mr. Abdurahmon Abdumannonov, Head of the Mass Media Department of the Office of the President of the Tajik Republic, stated in his speech that Laws concerning the mass media activities in Tajikistan, in many respects, met world standards; however, their observance by various structures of the state power leaves much to be desired. Mr. Abdulmadjid Bobodjonion, Chief Editor of the private newspaper *Sugd*, informed that representatives of the regional khukumat should have participated at the meeting. However, there was no dialogue between the journalists and government officials. (From *Asia-Plus* information).