

UDC 94(477.25)«1985/1991»:323.2.073.533  
DOI <https://doi.org/10.32999/ksu2786-5118/2026-54-1>

## TRANSPARENCY AS A COMPONENT OF THE POLICY OF “PERESTROIKA” IN THE KYIV REGION

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This article examines the process of shaping the policy of glasnost (transparency) in the Kyiv region during the period of “perestroika” (perebudova); analyzes the factors that influenced its development; and identifies the characteristic features, peculiarities, and consequences of glasnost’s development in the region.

**The aim of the study** is a comprehensive scientific analysis of the tasks and goals that the Soviet authorities set for themselves when implementing the policy of glasnost, as well as society’s reaction to these changes. **The methodological basis of the study** consists of the general scientific principles of historicism and objectivity, as well as retrospective, comparative-historical, and analytical approaches. The principle of historicism allows us to examine the process of glasnost in the Kyiv region within the context of the prevailing historical circumstances, namely the policy of “perestroika” under the leadership of M. Gorbachev. The principle of objectivity reveals to us the true picture of the highly contradictory and complex circumstances of the second half of the 1980s. in which the Ukrainian SSR, and specifically the Kyiv Oblast, found themselves. The retrospective method allows us to extrapolate the process of expanding freedom of speech and government communication, along with its challenges, onto contemporary sociopolitical trends. The comparative-historical method reveals the distinctive features and characteristics of the glasnost policy in the Kyiv Oblast and other regions of Ukraine. The analytical method allows us to identify the causes and factors that influenced glasnost in the Kyiv region. Scientific novelty. The policy of glasnost, as a component of the perestroika policy initiated by M. Gorbachev, is highly relevant and has been covered in the works of a considerable number of scholars in more general terms. However, the regional specifics of this process remain insufficiently studied. Therefore, the study of the policy of glasnost in the Kyiv region under perestroika is highly relevant and of significant scientific interest.

**Results and Conclusions.** The characteristic features and specific aspects of the implementation of the policy of glasnost in the Kyiv region during the period of perestroika included, on the one hand, traditional measures that were in line with all-Union and republican initiatives: establishing communication channels between the authorities and the public through the organization of “round tables,” “hotlines,” open-house days, informal meetings within work collectives; conducting various types of surveys to gauge public sentiment and opinion; implementing and/or simulating changes in the openness of party and state structures; strengthening the role of the press to increase public awareness and reduce the information vacuum; and expanding and deepening the process of rehabilitation, etc. On the other hand, the implementation of the policy of glasnost in the Kyiv region had its own peculiarities, which were due to the fact that the Kyiv region, as a region close to the capital of the Ukrainian SSR, had the opportunity to accelerate, in the context of social-political processes due to the high concentration of elites, including opposition figures, while simultaneously hindering them because of their proximity to the decision-making center at the republican level, where conservative figures constantly sought to slow the pace of social transformation. A specific factor influencing the development of glasnost in the region was the Chernobyl tragedy, which effectively became a kind of litmus test – for a long time, silence and disinformation served as the framework for information about the accident. As a result, the energy disaster quickly transformed from an environmental factor in public life into a powerful political one. Furthermore, during the implementation of glasnost policies, the Kyiv region was characterized by territorial heterogeneity and a variety of models for permissible actions in the information sphere – ranging from the liberal capital to the restrictive provincial – which significantly limited full freedom of speech.

**Keywords:** characteristics, distinctive features, political center, information gaps, rehabilitation, freedom of speech, communication.



## ГЛАСНІСТЬ ЯК СКЛАДОВА ПОЛІТИКИ ПЕРЕБУДОВИ НА КИЇВЩИНІ

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У статті проаналізовано особливості та характерні риси політики гласності на Київщині в період перебудови, проаналізовано чинники, які вплинули на процес формування гласності на Київщині, а також його наслідки.

**Метою дослідження** є комплексний науковий аналіз завдань, цілей, які ставила перед собою радянська влада, а також реакція суспільства на ці зміни. **Методологічною основою дослідження** є загальнонаукові принципи історизму, об'єктивності, а також ретроспективний, порівняльно-історичний, аналітичний. Принцип історизму дає можливість розглядати процес гласності на Київщині в контексті тих історичних обставин, які відбувалися, а саме, політики перебудови під керівництвом М. Горбачова. Принцип об'єктивності розкриває нам реальну картину тих доволі суперечливих та складних обставинах другої половини 80-х рр., в яких опинилася УРСР та Київщина, зокрема. Ретроспективний метод дає нам можливість екстраполювати процес розширення свободи слова та комунікації влади, її проблематику на сучасні суспільно-політичні тенденції. Порівняльно-історичний метод розкриває нам особливості та характерні риси політики гласності на Київщині та в інших регіонах України. Аналітичний метод дає змогу нам з'ясувати причини, фактори, які вплинули на гласність на Київщині. **Наукова новизна.** Політика гласності як складова політики перебудови ініційованої М. Горбачовим є досить актуальною та висвітлювалася у працях досить великої кількості науковців більш комплексно. Натомість, регіональна специфіка даного процесу залишається малодослідженою. Тому дослідження політики гласності на Київщині в умовах перебудови є дуже актуальною та становить значний науковий інтерес.

**Результати та висновки.** Політика гласності мала свої особливості на Київщині. Разом з тим, процес політики гласності в УРСР був доволі складним та не зовсім однозначним. Головними складниками процесу були: реабілітація, розширення комунікації суспільства через його поступове та адаптивне наближення до управління державою, разом з тим, щоб не допустити вихід процесу з-під контролю. Крім того, важливу роль відігравали розсекречення архівних матеріалів та дослідження «білих плям». Політика гласності на Київщині відбувалася в умовах, коли політичний центр намагався балансувати та поступово часто на формальному рівні дозвано підпускати суспільство до формального управління державою без виходу процесу за рамки, які б, на думку, радянського керівництва призвели б до колапсу. Разом з тим, суспільство все чіткіше почало апелювати до змін та формувати власний порядок денний все частіше, незважаючи на владні директиви та накази.

**Ключові слова:** особливості, характерні риси, політичний центр, білі плями, реабілітація, свобода слова, комунікація.

### 1. Introduction

#### *Statement of the Problem*

The relevance of studying the issue of glasnost in the context of the perestroika policy initiated by M. Gorbachev is determined by a number of factors. One of the key factors is the process aimed at improving the mechanism of interaction between the government and society by changing the communication model, which was intended to become more open and streamlined in order to improve the system of public administration. An analysis of the content, essence, and structure of glasnost as a key component of the perestroika process occupies a central and pivotal place in this study. On the other hand, an important factor is the examination of glasnost as a procedure that shaped the culture of communication and interaction between society and the state, as well as the extrapolation of its practical outcomes to the present day. To a significant extent, a detailed analysis of glasnost and an examination of all

aspects of this issue will allow us to rethink and gain a clearer understanding of the interconnected contours of all the historical circumstances and changes of the 1980s and 1990s. At the same time, the lack of attention from scholars to the analysis of the process of implementing the policy of glasnost at both the national and regional levels prevents us from fully rethinking, examining in greater detail, and evaluating the picture of socio-political changes during the era of perestroika.

*Historiographical and Source Review.* The relevance of the issue of the proclamation and development of the policy of glasnost stems from significant scholarly interest in the socio-political transformations of the perestroika era. In the current context, understanding their causes, specifics, characteristics, features, and consequences takes on particular significance. One of the central and fateful reformist steps taken by Gorbachev's leadership was the introduction of the policy of glasnost,

which significantly expanded society's access to information and became one of the key factors leading to the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of an independent Ukraine on the world political map. Certain aspects of this issue have been explored in the works of Y. A. Alekseev, S. Kulchitsky, and A. Slyusarenko (Y. Alekseev, S. Kulchitsky, A. Slyusarenko, 2000), O. Boiko (O. Boiko, 2002, 2021), O. Garan (Garan, 1993), V. Danylenko (Danylenko, 2018), A. Kaminsky (Kaminsky, 1990), and others. However, at the regional level

## 2. The Policy of Openness in the All-Ukrainian Context

One of the most important components of the perestroika policy was glasnost. It was precisely the factor of glasnost that became one of the defining factors in the final stage of the Soviet Union's existence, which may have accelerated the fall of the "Evil Empire." The policy of glasnost was proclaimed at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Its main objectives were to intensify criticism and self-criticism of the leadership, discuss problems existing in society, encourage proposals "from below," rehabilitate those unlawfully convicted, and generally address the mistakes the Soviet government had made over decades of rule (Gordina, 2010:204). Glasnost is a transitional state of the information space on the path from total state control and the silent unanimity of society to freedom of speech. The essence of the domestic version of glasnost encompasses two aspects: ensuring a certain degree of openness and accessibility of party and state institutions, as well as the existence of limited freedom of information (Boiko, 2021: 70). The policy of glasnost was implemented at a time when, in essence, the Soviet state apparatus was in a rather serious state of crisis. Therefore, to avoid a large-scale catastrophe, the Soviet party leadership decided to gradually change the model of communication between the authorities and the people in order to continue using the masses in large-scale socio-political transformations.

During this period, government institutions became more accessible to citizens. People increasingly sought dialogue with the authorities and addressed them in both written and oral form. In 1986, the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine received 27,400 written appeals, and 23,200 citizens attended in-person meetings. Such democratic forms of communication as "open letter" days, "open reception" days, and meetings between party and state bodies and the public at their workplaces and places of residence (Tsdagoy, F-1, Op. 32, SPR 2367:5,6,7; F-1, Op. 11, SPR 1427:69), through which "Service-05" became part of the Soviet system by responding to citizens' inquiries by telephone. It first appeared in the Donetsk Oblast, and by early 1987 was operating in

635 executive committees of city and district councils. Thanks to it, in 1986 alone, everyday issues raised in 261,400 citizen inquiries were resolved (Tsdagoy, F-1, op. 32, SPR 2362:29–30). The establishment of this service made it possible to resolve issues related to the population's livelihood more quickly, strengthen executive discipline within state structures, and to some extent enhance the authority of state bodies.

However, it should be emphasized that these positive changes in the sphere of relations between the authorities and the people had serious shortcomings. First, as a rule, they were the result of one campaign or another announced from above and took place within a clearly defined framework.

The party leadership feared that the situation might spiral out of control, so it tried by every means possible to limit publicity and establish certain boundaries that could not be crossed. For instance, in the all-Ukrainian In this context, the Communist Party constantly sought to demonstrate that glasnost should occur exclusively within certain limits that did not exceed the boundaries of the prevailing ideology, while simultaneously, to some extent, easing the pressure on society – that is, it was a form of political stretching. In particular, it manipulatively portrayed certain nationalist forces as allegedly seeking to expand these boundaries of glasnost in the context of rehabilitating individuals who had suffered political persecution in the 1960s and 1970s, and, in the event these demands were not met, promised to create informal associations that would produce illegal literature and publish materials abroad with the aim of influencing foreign states (12, 2011: 30).

In the context of the development of the policy of glasnost, issues related to the national aspects of policy were of considerable importance. For example, in July 1987, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine considered the issue "On measures to implement the guidelines of the 27th Party Congress in the republic regarding national relations and the strengthening of international and patriotic education of the population." The report prepared for this meeting by the leadership of the Communist Party states: a) Between 1976 and 1986, the republic's film studios produced 200 feature films, 126 of which were dubbed into Ukrainian, but the number of copies of these films accounted for only 13% of the total. The film archive of that period contained only 16,917 copies of feature films in Russian, of which only 1,783 were in Ukrainian. During the 11th Five-Year Plan, 42,336 titles of books and brochures were published with a total print run of 758,436.1 thousand copies, including 10,264 titles in Ukrainian (24.2%) and 72.5% in Russian. b) The share of socio-political literature in Ukrainian was 34.7%, in Russian – 60.0%; for scientific and technical literature – 12.8% in Ukrainian and 86.0% in Russian. (Lytvyn, 1994, 82–83). These statistics clearly

demonstrate that the problems that had accumulated in Ukraine regarding the use of the Ukrainian language in public life were quite serious and therefore could not be ignored, especially against the backdrop of an economic crisis that was becoming increasingly evident.

Another rather important issue facing the ruling elite was the problem of rehabilitating individuals who had suffered unlawful repression and been unlawfully convicted in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s; a commission was established, headed first by M. Solomentsev and later by O. Yakovlev; in effect, the commission continued the work that M. Khrushchev had begun in his time; the result of these efforts was the rehabilitation of over a million people during the period from 1988 to 1990 alone. A striking example of how the glasnost process to some extent changed the consciousness of party members is the case of L. Kravchuk, who said: “It was a farce, a falsification, a crime; if I had known all this in 1958, I would never have joined this party. That is what I can briefly say about the turning point in my consciousness” (9:591).

In the all-Ukrainian context, the glasnost process had its own distinctive features and characteristics; on the other hand, at the regional level, some of these were repeated, while others had their own specific features.

As a region located near the capital of the Ukrainian SSR, the Kyiv Oblast had the potential both to accelerate socio-political transformations and, at the same time, to hinder them. This dynamic was largely due to the high concentration of elites, particularly the Ukrainian intelligentsia, a segment of which opposed the authorities. The slowdown was often due to the region’s proximity to the republican-level decision-making center, whose conservative figures constantly sought to slow the pace of social change to prevent the situation from spiraling out of control.

### **3. Features of the Implementation of the Policy of Glasnost in the Kyiv Region**

In carrying out directives from above regarding the implementation of glasnost and in attempting to establish communication channels with society, the party bodies of the Kyiv region utilized various forms and tools – roundtables, telephone hotlines, open letter days, informal meetings within work collectives, and so on. During these events, pressing social issues were discussed, as well as problems related to improving the state of criticism and self-criticism within government structures (DAKO, F-5, vol. 117, Spr, 3:12). At this time, certain changes were also taking place within the structures of the Communist Party itself, initiated by the leadership at the 27th Congress of the CPSU; in particular, initiatives were encouraged to hold internal party discussions on various issues, and the active expression of opinions

by rank-and-file communists was stimulated (DAKO, F-5, Op. 117, Spr., 666:6). It is characteristic that in the course of these communicative contacts, the communist leadership at the local level sought, on the one hand, to “let off steam” – formally giving ordinary citizens and ordinary communists the opportunity to express their own opinions – and on the other hand, to gauge public sentiment with the aim of preventing the emergence of negative trends in society and ensuring their own self-preservation. In this context, it is significant that various surveys aimed at gauging public opinion at different levels were becoming widespread at this time. In an effort to demonstrate to society that changes were taking place within the party ranks under the influence of glasnost and that public opinion was being taken into account, the first secretaries of the city party committees of Fastiv and Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi, L.B. Khodakovskiy and G.G. Domnych, were dismissed for “sabotaging” the perestroika processes (DAKO, F-5, op. 117, Spr, 3:19-20). The elections, held for the first time as an official alternative to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, became a key catalyst for the development and spread of glasnost. It was these elections, conducted on the principles of glasnost and democratization, that ushered in a new phase in the development of society. In this pre-election atmosphere, a significant number of discussion clubs began to form in the Kyiv region, which eventually became centers of dissent. For instance, in the Brovary District alone and in the district center itself, five election clubs were established and 6,000 meetings were held with candidates for the USSR People’s Deputies, where issues important to the local population were frequently discussed and potential candidates provided answers, creating an atmosphere of competition and debate (DAKO, F-5, Op. 117, Case 743:13). A distinctive form of glasnost during the electoral process was the widespread practice of citizens writing comments and criticism directed at the authorities, as well as their free opinions and assessments of candidates, on the ballots (DAKO, F-5, Op. 117, Case, 3:42).

The press played a significant role within the policy of openness. The publication and distribution of newspapers and magazines became a tool for expanding citizens’ awareness and reducing the information vacuum during the years of perestroika.

At the legislative level, the new trends in the development of the media during the Perestroika era were enshrined in the USSR Law “On the Press and Other Mass Media” in June 1990. It is worth emphasizing that in the information sphere during the perestroika era, there were not only radical quantitative changes (during the first three years of perestroika, the total circulation of newspapers and magazines in the USSR grew by over 61 million copies and reached nearly 490 million), but also

profound qualitative changes – the press became increasingly free and, step by step, emerged from under party control (Central State Archives of the USSR, F-1, Op. 32, SPR 2446:108)

It is worth emphasizing that the expansion of the press's influence on society was already taking place on an informal level even before the law was passed. It is characteristic that over time, the influence and authority of state (especially party) media declined, while that of informal media grew. Thus, in 1988, the total circulation of newspapers and magazines in the Kyiv region was 2,734,400 copies, which was 118,800 copies more than in 1987. Circulation in rural areas increased by 59,700 copies. Per 1,000 people, the circulation of newspapers and magazines increased by 93 copies and, as of 1988, stood at 1,448 publications;

The population of the region increased the number of subscriptions to magazines such as "Robitnytsia", "Selyanka", and others; at the same time, the number of subscriptions to central-level newspapers decreased by 16,000. Public attention to newspapers, magazines, and publications controlled by party bodies, such as "Communist", "Agitator", and "Party Life", significantly decreased (DAKO, F-5, Op.117, Spr, 542:28–29). As a result, the press, especially the opposition press, became not only a means of information but also a powerful lever of influence both in the center and in the localities. Thus, in particular, during the rallies in Kyiv in the second half of the 1980s, which increasingly began to influence the socio-political situation, newspapers and magazines were actively used to directly or indirectly influence public consciousness (Free Word, 1990:6). It is worth emphasizing that the expansion of the influence of the press on society occurred at an informal level even before the law was passed. In particular, a number of opposition publications appeared in the Kyiv region – Visnyk Brovarshchyn, Vilne Slovo, Vybor, and Kyivskiy Chas – which became an alternative in the information space for society in the Kyiv region (7, 12, 15:1-3). In addition, newspapers, magazines, and other periodical and non-periodical publications began to play the role of means that actively helped disseminate necessary opposition information, which accelerated the communication and consolidation of opposition cells after long years of societal information isolation (TSDAGOY, F-1, Op.32, SPR.2555:175).

Following the proclamation of transparency and openness by the authorities, communist leadership at various levels could no longer ignore the emergence of journalists as specialists who now had the opportunity to communicate openly on various topics and, most importantly, to receive information about the authorities' further steps in reform policy and objectively cover the activities of party structures without ideological embellishments. (TSDAGOY, F-1, Op.32, SPR.2658:57). Over time,

the authorities realized that communication with society was important for informing the population about their actions to ensure that processes initiated by party structures at the local level did not get out of control. An active role in this process was played by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, L. Kravchuk, who at the republican level initiated the television programs "Deputy Hour" and "Political Tribune". Through these programs, the authorities attempted to present their activities from a more open perspective; these steps were later copied and repeated at the Kyiv regional level (TSDAGOY, F-1, Op.32, SPR.2555:258).

Perhaps the most important pain point of glasnost was its territorial heterogeneity – the multivariateness of models of permitted actions in the information sphere – ranging from the permissive metropolitan model to the restraining provincial one, which significantly limited full freedom of speech. As one of the readers of "Ogonyok" quite reasonably noted in this regard: "... all this glasnost is concentrated somewhere in Moscow. For Kyiv, it is already the second glasnost. For Cherkasy, it is the third, very modest one. And for Myrhorod, Smila and Konotop, only a tiny bit remains. But "there is no sturgeon of second freshness"! If there is Glasnost-1, Glasnost-2, etc., this means that unfortunately there is no glasnost at all, but only the appearance" (Lubensky:5). A rather significant niche in the implementation of the glasnost policy was occupied by the process of rehabilitation of those who were illegally repressed and accused of various crimes. Starting in 1987, a commission on this issue of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, headed by the Second Secretary of the Central Committee V. Ivashko, began its work. The rehabilitation process became especially active after the issuance of the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU of July 11, 1988, "On additional measures to complete the work related to the rehabilitation of persons unjustly repressed in the 30s-40s and early 50s", on the basis of which rehabilitation commissions were formed at the Kyiv City Committee and 24 regional committees of the party of the republic, including in the Kyiv region; the prosecutor's office was involved in the rehabilitation process; from July 1988 to April 1989, criminal cases were reviewed for 15 thousand people, of whom 9 thousand were rehabilitated (Boiko, 2004:52). The rehabilitation process in the Kyiv region can be divided into two stages: The first stage (1955-July 1988). At that time, a total of 678 out of 714 former party officials were rehabilitated through judicial proceedings; the number of those who were reinstated in the ranks of the CPSU was 196, and the number of those who were denied was 95 (DAKO, F-5, Op.117, Spr, 441:2). Based on these facts, it can be concluded that the rehabilitation process was largely selective in nature, as it focused mainly on restoring

the reputation of the Communist Party rather than on a general change in approaches to restoring the good name of people who had suffered from Soviet justice in the past.

The second stage (July 1988 – July 1991): The issuance of the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on July 11, 1988, “On additional measures to complete the work related to the rehabilitation of persons unjustly repressed in the 30s, 40s, and early 50s”, became a catalyst for the rehabilitation process. However, in the initial phase of this stage, rehabilitation in the Kyiv region proceeded slowly. For instance, during a three-month period in which 12 cases were considered, decisions were made on all 12; of these, only one case concerned a former member of the CPSU, none were restored to party membership, and one person was rehabilitated posthumously. Over time, the rehabilitation process became more active. From July 1988 to January 1990, 7,235 people were rehabilitated, while 1,000 were denied rehabilitation, including 18 former party officials. Among those rehabilitated posthumously were 196 former party members; as was typical, the largest number were high-ranking party officials and economic workers, and the smallest were Komsomol workers and military personnel. By July 1991, a total of 7,235 people had been rehabilitated. The fact that the number remained unchanged suggests that the rehabilitation process was provocative and caused public resonance. Consequently, further deepening the process and clarifying new facts about the Soviet past was, to some extent, threatening to the regime’s existence. Additionally, the intensification of socio-political processes could have led to catastrophic consequences for the regime; therefore, the process was gradually curtailed (ДАКО, F-5, Оп.117, Spr, 441:5,6,8,9,10,11,12,13).

#### 4. Conclusions

Thus, the characteristic features of the implementation of the policy of glasnost in the Kyiv region during the perestroika era consisted, on the one hand, of traditional actions aligned with all-Union and republican policies: the establishment of communicative relations between the authorities and society through “round tables”, “hot” telephone lines, open letter days, and informal meetings within labor collectives; the use of various polls to study public mood and opinion; the implementation (or imitation) of changes regarding the openness of party and state structures; the strengthening of the press to increase citizen awareness and reduce the information vacuum; and the expansion of the rehabilitation process. On the other hand, the implementation of glasnost in the Kyiv region had its own peculiarities. Because the region was close to the capital of the Ukrainian SSR, it had the potential to both accelerate socio-political processes due to the high concentration of elites (including the opposition) and slow them down due to its proximity to the republican decision-making center, where conservative figures constantly sought to hinder social transformations. A specific factor influencing the development of glasnost in the region was the Chernobyl tragedy, which served as a litmus test; for a long time, information about the accident was suppressed or distorted. As a result, the energy disaster quickly evolved from an environmental issue into a powerful political factor. In addition, the implementation of glasnost in the Kyiv region was characterized by territorial heterogeneity and a multivariate range of permitted actions in the information sphere, varying from a permissive metropolitan model to a restrictive provincial one, which significantly limited full freedom of speech.

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*Date of initial submission: 17.04.2026*  
*Date of acceptance after peer review: 15.05.2026*  
*Publication date: 25.05.2026*