

PULP AND PAPER

The Paper Shortage - Why It Exists, What to Do About It

Why isn't there enough printing paper? Publishers are alarmed over the shortage of paper for producing fiction. The editorial offices of both major and minor magazines and newspapers are panicking: this year alone the runs of central newspapers increased by almost 20 million copies. Criticism of the press voiced by several speakers at the 19th CPSU Party Conference has, in our view, only served to stimulate interest in periodicals.

Restrictions on subscriptions and individual sales of periodicals and literature in the era of glasnost have produced a justified protest from readers, but there is a real threat that many would-be subscribers to various popular periodicals may find their requests rejected. There is a shortage of 15,000 - maybe even 20,000 - tonnes of paper for books and magazines. As a result, several million readers will be unable to subscribe to Soviet press publications.

By 1989, the situation will be even worse. Basing its calculations on the growth rate of subscriptions, the USSR State Planning Commission has calculated that publishers are short 143,000 tonnes of newsprint and 83,000 tonnes of paper for the printing of books and magazines. Would-be subscribers are in danger of having not only their magazine subscriptions, but also their newspaper subscriptions rejected.