

But it has to be a lot. Thus, we can safely assume that at least a third of the paper supplied to the printers and made into books, is wasted.

I examined hundreds of publications devoted to the catastrophic shortage of paper in the USSR. They all stated that the presses were starving for lack of paper. The following statistics have become popular. The USSR annually produces 36 kilogrammes of various types of paper and paperboard per capita while the USA produces 290 kilogrammes per capita. This is a striking difference. Whose fault is this? The general feeling is that the papermakers are to blame.

For the sake of argument let's say that they are responsible. They are having a tough time of it. Many executive personnel have been reprimanded or even removed from their positions because they have failed to deliver paper to the country's printers. Shortfalls in deliveries amount to hundreds of tonnes and thousands of tonnes are scrapped. Yet no-one is held responsible for this.

At the January 8 meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU, M.F. Nenashev, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Publishing Houses, Printing Plants and the Book Trade, complained about the shortage of paper for publishing historical works. How can there be enough if dull, useless books are being printed in the millions? Works of completely unknown contemporary authors gather dust for years on bookstore shelves. Who can improve this situation?

According to the system now in place, a Soviet author receives 60% of his royalties when his book is delivered to the printers and the full fee when the book is put on sale. This means that all the financial dealings with the author are completed before the reader has even evaluated the work. It would be difficult to