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SUBJ FYI -- Pressfax Carries 31 Aug PRAVDA

Full Text Superzone of Message

- 1 The 30 August Soviet pressfax first cast saw the return of PRAVDA, carrying the newspaper's six-page single edition for 31 August -- the first to be published since 23 August.
- 2 The revamped PRAVDA's masthead no longer features a portrait of Lenin nor the slogan "Proletarians of all countries, unite!", but above the title, still in the old familiar typeface, it states in small italic print: "The newspaper was founded 5 May 1912 on the initiative of V.I. Lenin." The masthead carries no tag-line description of the paper. The cover price is 15 kopeks (the 23 August issue was 10 kopeks). Across the top of the front page, above the masthead, the paper proclaims: "PRAVDA has been published -- and that is right and proper!" Across the bottom of the page it says: "Thanks to everybody who, together with us, defended the paper."
- 3 At the bottom of the back page is a note: "The founder is the PRAVDA journalists' collective."
- 4 PRAVDA carries the following front-page address from its new chief editor, Gennadiy Seleznev:
- 5 "Dear Readers!
- 6 "It is a whole week since you have seen PRAVDA, and it is not our fault that you have been deprived of contact with us. We were fulfilling the Russian president's decree on suspending publication of PRAVDA and we were hoping for an order from the country's president abolishing the undemocratic decree. Alas, this did not happen.
- 7 "In the statement by the editorial collective (PRAVDA for 23 August) we said everything we think about our former founder. During the days when the newspaper failed to appear PRAVDA's journalists went further. The labor collective decided not to allow the country's oldest newspaper to disappear and entrusted the editorial office journalists' organization with the status of founder of PRAVDA.
- 8 "We will seek to be a newspaper of civil harmony and to uphold centrist positions while supporting democratic transformations in society.
- 9 "Having endured our fill of humiliations, insults, and threats, we will begin to elaborate with trebled energy the topic of the defense of human rights. We will defend above all rank-and-file communists from persecution for their beliefs. They, who are not implicated in any plots or juntas, are now being defamed at every street corner, heedless of all decency.
- 10 "Things are very difficult for the newspaper at the moment. But this does not mean that it is going to quietly fade away and die. No, we are being reborn as an independent newspaper known throughout the world. And that is not highfalutin talk but the pure truth. God grant us all the strength and wisdom to continue the path of reforms chosen by our people, without losing our human dignity in the process."
- 11 A front-page announcement of the establishment of a PRAVDA support fund states that journalists have taken on "the difficult but honorable duty of restoring the original and proud meaning of the word that forms its [the newspaper's] title" but that today PRAVDA "is left virtually without any financial support."

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- 12 Much of the content of the 31 August PRAVDA relates to the paper's enforced nonappearance over the past week. It publishes international appeals to Yeltsin to authorize publication and vox pop interviews commenting on its nonappearance.
- 13 Most of page 3 is devoted to photographs of events in Moscow during the coup. An accompanying commentary by S. Oganyan notes that the paper's former editors refused to publish these photographs, and pledges: "We will seek to work in such a way as to ensure that PRAVDA is the first paper closed by the next junta, if there is one."
- 14 A page-6 announcement by the newsdesk soliciting "news and original ideas" from readers declares that the paper will cover "all kinds of events, from pure sensation to 'insoluble' problems of everyday life; from encounters with 'flying saucers' to impromptu interviews with politicians."
- 15 The paper contains no interviews with Soviet officials -- a staple of the "old" PRAVDA. It features more photographs and cartoons, including one reprinted from the Paris INTERNATIONAL HERALD-TRIBUNE showing a huge Yeltsin shaking the hand of a midget Gorbachev and saying: "Welcome back to power, Mikhail." Photographs of an old woman praying before an altar, her hand on her brow, and of Gorbachev in a similar posture are carried on page 2. There are also notably more religious locutions in correspondents' copy than were to be found in PRAVDA before its suspension.
- 16 Besides reports from its own correspondents and TASS, it also carries reports attributed to INTERFAX and REUTER. Few reports and commentaries approach 1,000 words in length. There is a clear impression that an effort has been made to make the paper livelier in both presentation and content.
- 17 PMU will file liberally from this issue to convey the flavor of the revamped PRAVDA. (endall) 31 aug [REDACTED] 30/2027z aug BT #9119 NNNN