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COUNTY PRESS OF THE NOVGOROD PROVINCE (1860-1927)

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Abstract

The article analyzes the changes in the county press, published in the Novgorod province from the second half of the 19th to the abolition of the province in 1927. The characteristic features of the county periodicals of the period under study are traced, the typology of publications, the conditions for their development and transformation are revealed. The county press in the Novgorod province developed unevenly, the first publications appeared in large county centers: Staraya Russa, where there was a popular in Russia mineral water resort, Borovichi, where there were successful industrial enterprises. In 1917, newspapers began to appear in most of the counties. This was due to socio-political changes in Russia: the transfer of power from the monarch to the Provisional Government and the emergence in Petrograd of the Soviet of Workers 'and Soldiers' Deputies, which led to dual power from spring to autumn 1917, when after the Bolshevik coup, power passed into the hands of the Soviets. The change of political power in Russia led to a radical change in the publishing paradigm in the provinces and counties. The first Soviet newspapers appear in the counties, which are characterized by a transitional character: along with the tradition of dialogue with readers, design inherent in general publications, officiality and propaganda attitudes are increasingly manifested. Since 1918 Zvezda, the organ of the Provincial Committee of the RCP (b) became the leading newspaper of the province. It had a serious impact on the county journalism.

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Keywords: Content, county, dialogue, newspaper, propaganda, rubric



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1. Introduction

The Novgorod province, located between the two capitals - Moscow and St. Petersburg, occupied a vast territory in the North-West of Russia. It consisted of 11 counties, different in population and level of economic development. In 1918, Belozersky, Kirillovsky, Tikhvinsky, Ustyuzhensky, Cherepovetsky counties left the province. Since that time, Novgorod journalism was in an active search for new forms in activities of newspapers, which manifested itself at both the provincial and county levels. The abolition of the province, and later the creation of districts instead of counties, led to a new administrative-territorial structure, to the creation of a newspaper in each district. After the Great Patriotic War, Kholm'sky district became part of the Novgorod region, although Kholm'sky county before the revolution belonged to the Pskov province, but in this study, the Kholm'sk print of the early 20th century is also considered. Thus, it is important to trace the history of the county newspapers of the provincial period, which will allow for a more in-depth analysis of the origins of the formation of the regional press on the territory of the Novgorod region.

2. Problem Statement

The local press developed extremely slowly in Russia. The transformation of the local press in 1917 and the first years of Soviet power is an insufficiently studied topic in modern science. The emergence of journalism under the conditions of a radical change in the political regime and under the conditions of a civil war did not take place simultaneously. And if in 1917 there were representatives of various left-wing parties in the Soviets and there was campaigning for elections to the Constituent Assembly in a multi-party system, then with the coming to power of the Bolsheviks, an ideological monopoly gradually began to be established. On the material of county newspapers, one can observe the gradual transformation of the general interest newspaper type familiar to the public into an official publication, with different goals and objectives than before. As part of this work, the main aspects of changes in both the design and the content of the county newspapers will be identified.

3. Research Questions

3.1. How did the Novgorod county press change over the course of almost half a century under the influence of socio-historical events? What aspects underwent transformation and what were the reasons for this process? How did these processes manifest themselves in domestic and regional journalism?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work was to identify the specifics of the county press of the Novgorod province, which was formed from the 1860s to 1927. At the same time, the typology of the publication, the role of the founder and publisher, changes in headings and topics, as well as changes in the tasks facing the editorial office are considered. Of particular interest is how the nature of communication between the editorial office and readers and readers with the local newspaper was changing.

5. Research Methods

The main method of this research is historical-typological and comparative. The article analyzes various aspects of the activities of county newspapers, clarifies the typology of publications and traces how the gradual transition from the general interest type, popular in the pre-revolutionary local press, to the typical Soviet local party publication is taking place.

6. Findings

History. The county press developed slowly, which was due to a number of reasons:

- preliminary censorship, which significantly limited the development of the private press in the provincial center, and even more so in the counties; the weak economic situation in the province; small population in a large area; low level of literacy.

In the 19th century, Staraya Russa became the county publishing center of the province. At the beginning of the 20th century, county publications appeared not only in Staraya Russa (Starorusskaya Zhizn, Iskorka), but also in Borovichi (Borovichesky Listok, Mstinskaya Volna), Kholm (Kholmityanin), Cherepovets (Novgorodsky Sever). This process was facilitated by the events of the first Russian revolution, which led to a change in censorship conditions and socio-economic life, including in the provinces: "in the cities there was work and money, Russian publishers and editors of newspapers and magazines are activating their new newspaper and magazine projects" (Pugachev, 2014, p. 170).

The revolutionary events of 1917 influenced the growth of county periodicals, and these were already politically engaged publications (Semenova, 2018). Since 1918, the county press in the Novgorod province arises on local initiative and its main task is to form and support the new government.

In the mid-1920s, the movement of worker correspondents and village correspondents actively developed in the Novgorod province, as well as throughout the country. And initially, in the communication of editorial offices with village correspondents and worker correspondents, there is dialogicity and mutual interest in creating provincial and county newspapers. Newspapers of the 1920s are created with the direct participation of workers and peasants (Kozlov, 2019).

Let us turn to the analysis of those aspects in which the change in the nature of the activities of the county newspapers of the period under study was manifested.

County Press Publishers. Until 1917, most of the Novgorod newspapers were published on the initiative of the Novgorodians. These were private publications. In 1917, party newspapers appeared in the counties. They were published by representatives of one or another party, such as the cadet "Valdayskaya Zhizn", the Socialist-Revolutionary "Narodny Trud" (Borovichi), "Golos Trudovogo Naroda" (Kresttsy), which supported the Labor People's Party. District Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies published Izvestia (Borovichi, Kresttsy, Valdai), or the founders were the district Soviets together with the district cooperative union (Edinenie, Staraya Russa; Krestyanin-Kooperator, Cherepovets) (Vasilenko, 2017, 2018). After the Bolsheviks came to power, county newspapers of local Soviets and local committees of the RCP (b) appeared: Kholm'skaya Kommuna, Voskhodyashee Solntse (Kholm), Krestyanskaya Pravda, Serp (Demyansk): "With the arrival of the Bolsheviks, the media lost their freedom, most of the

newspapers ceased to exist, and the newly created ones were withdrawn from the market process and functioned on state subsidies”(Petrushin & Shilova, 2019, p. 79).

Most of the 1917 and early 1920s publications are short-lived due to the difficult political and economic situation in the country. The exception was Borovichi's Krasnaya Iskra, which has been published since 1919.

Type of publications. The county press in the Novgorod province begins with the publication of a reference: in Staraya Russa there was a “Reference Sheet of Staraya Russa Mineral Waters” (1881-1885). The editor-publisher F. Weber tried to make a specialized balneological publication of the all-Russian level out of the leaflet, but this plan was unsuccessful. More successful was the "Seasonal Leaflet of the Staraya Russa Mineral Waters" (1997-1904), which was published by the resort director S. Tilicheev. Another specialized publication was the “Leaflet of the Ustyuzhsky Society of Agriculture and Forestry” (1889-1890).

The most popular type of county newspapers has become general interest publications - public and literary, which are characterized by a certain set of headings and genres (Sonina, 2004). As Sonina (2004) convincingly shows, this type of newspaper was extremely popular in Russia. This example was followed by the publishers of private newspapers in Novgorod, it is natural that this type was well known and familiar to the reading public of the counties.

“Izvestia” of the county Soviets is of a transitional type: along with the features of a general interest publication, they perform the functions of an official body - local Soviets - publishing various documents and decisions (Kozlov & Semenova, 2017). Private publications of a party orientation were of a general type, but the content was dominated by the party's position in assessing current events in the country and campaigning for elections to the Constituent Assembly from the party was actively conducted.

Bolshevik publications of the early 1920s transformed from the usual general interest type to the type of a purely official publication. In this, the party publications of the Bolsheviks followed the traditions of the official provincial publications (Vorobyova & Kozlov, 2019).

Content and headings. It was customary for readers of county newspapers to see both Russian and foreign news in their newspaper. However, the greatest interest was aroused by publications about local events, problems, incidents, because “a special advantage of regional newspapers on the market is their ability to provide their readers with the “identification structure” of the local / regional community” (Yanglyaeva & Yakova, 2019, p. 489).

The local intelligentsia willingly participated in the local newspaper, as it is known that “in relation to society, journalism performs a function related to the publicity of social activity” (Demina & Shkondin, 2017, p. 19). Notes, reports, articles, letters, poems, feuilletons, stories were sent to the editorial office. The headings were typical for a general publication: editorial, chronicle, telegrams, across Russia, around the county, city life, correspondence, letters to the editor, mailbox, announcements. Advertising occupied a considerable place in the district newspapers. It determined the profitability of the publication, since it was difficult to recoup the publication of a county-scale newspaper through subscription or sale. In the newspapers of 1917, the usual content is supplemented with campaign materials, various documents related to party events or the activities of the Soviets. Newspapers of this period are most sharply distinguished by

their socio-political journalism, since “already at the initial stage of the revolution, differences in the social expectations of the masses appeared” (Drobchenko, 2014, p. 85).

Bolshevik publications in the early 1920s initially retained the usual headings of pre-revolutionary general publications, but over time, the usual headings became extremely few. There are many official documents in the newspapers for strict execution. The theme reflects the struggle to establish the power of the Bolsheviks as the only popular and just. This is also manifested in poetry published in district newspapers, since "during the crisis periods of history, poetry also becomes a means of ideological struggle" (Kostyakova & Titova, 2018, p. 44).

Goals and objectives of county newspapers. Reference publications were published in order to inform, first of all, the visitors of the resort. They also contained articles of a popular scientific nature related to medicine. And if in Weber's edition there was practically no advertising, then in Tilicheev's edition the last page was filled with advertising. At the same time, the quality of advertising was quite high: frames, vignettes, various fonts, drawings.

The general county newspapers served to inform and entertain the public, and they also encouraged discussion of important local issues. Undoubtedly, the publications reflected the ideological preferences of the editor-publisher, but they allowed for discussions, polemics, which was most clearly seen in the “letters to the editor” section, where readers expressed and defended their opinion, sometimes opposing the opinion of the editorial board. The activities of newspapers in 1917 were supplemented with another important goal - to win the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Agitation and political polemics were characteristic features of the newspapers of this period. After all, “the influence of regional socio-political publications on the electoral behavior of voters” is very significant (Sokolova, 2016, p. 137).

The Bolshevik newspapers of the early 1920s fulfill the task prescribed by Lenin in 1905: the organizer of the masses and the propagandist of Marxist theory. These tasks are replacing the already familiar entertainment function, and significantly affect the nature of the information placed on the pages of newspapers. The administrative function is implemented in the publication of a large number of official documents, both on a national and provincial scale, and on a county one: "the government ... sets not only the levels of institutionalization, but also the levels of relationships, which in turn affect the tradition as such, its ethical and legal system" (Schmidt & Rizojev, 2019, p. 126).

Principles of interaction with the audience. Reference newspapers were not focused on dialogue with the reader, although the entertainment section could include reviews of plays or concerts at the resort.

The communication in general publications was most varied: correspondences, letters to the editorial office were published, and the editor-publisher published answers to his readers in the "Mailbox" section. There were sometimes caustic assessments of the materials sent to the editor. Dialogue is the main feature of general interest newspapers. But newspapers until 1917 were oriented towards an educated public. And in 1917, county newspapers were striving to reach a mass reader, so the texts in them are written in an accessible language, they can be read aloud, and the editorial office asks competent readers to read the newspaper to their illiterate comrades. The audience of district newspapers is fundamentally changing: publications strive to be interesting to workers, soldiers, peasants.

In the county newspapers of the 1920s, it can be noticed that from the invitation to dialogue, from issue to issue, the monologue tone becomes more and more clear: prescribing to share the ideology of the

new government. In the conditions of the civil war, the style becomes very aggressive: lists of those who were shot for anti-Soviet activities are published. And more and more actively the image of the enemy-exploiter is being formed: a bourgeois, a landowner, a priest. If in the early 1920s the editorial board appeals to the public, to comrades, without making a principled class emphasis, then later the publications emphasize the class character of the audience to which the publication is addressed: these are workers and peasants. At the same time, the nature of correspondence and letters to the editor is changing, which in style are close to public denunciation. And it is characteristic that the answers of the editorial staff in the "Mailbox" depart from the estimated characteristics, but may contain a message that the letter has been forwarded to the appropriate authority for taking measures.

7. Conclusion

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the study are as follows:

- a certain mosaic is observed in the formation of the pre-revolutionary county press: publications appear on the personal initiative of editors;
- pre-revolutionary county publications are of a general interest type, since this type of newspaper is popular both in capitals and in the provincial center, it is familiar to the reading public and is interesting due to the variety of content;
- the politicization of the county press, which took place in 1917, was due to the general state of affairs in the country, but general newspapers remain the main type of publication;
- the county press becomes official and is integrated into the unified administration system, which is manifested in the content of the publications;
- the main task of the county newspapers in the 1920s was propaganda of the ideas of the new government.

In the 1920s, the county press was gradually incorporated into the administrative vertical, becoming the official body of local government. This process culminated in the early 1930s with the creation of the district press system as an important horizontal level of political work in the USSR.

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