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CONTINUITY OF PARTY JOURNALISM THEORIES
DEVELOPED BY LENIN AND STALIN

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Abstract

Party journalism was an important segment of the Soviet totalitarian regime. It played a leading role in manipulating the mass consciousness both during the preparation of the socialist revolution and socialist modernization of Russia. The theoretical basis of communist ideology was developed by Vladimir Lenin before the October 1917 coup. Under his direct leadership, the totalitarian journalism model was created. Stalin continued the Lenin's policy, building it into a rigid vertical of power and using repression against the opposition. If in historical science, the Stalinist contribution to the development of totalitarianism has been sufficiently studied, the role of Lenin as the founder of the concept of total control over the mass media has been insufficiently investigated. It is necessary to revise some of the assessments and theses of research conducted in the era of communist authoritarianism. In order to eliminate this gap, the article attempts to identify prerequisites for the development of the periodical press system under the authoritarian-totalitarian regime of the Bolshevik partocracy on the example of the North Caucasian media. In the national regions, totalitarianism manifested itself in an uglier form. For the first time, the works by the famous researcher and critic of the Stalinist totalitarian regime Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, who was an eyewitness and participant in the events that took place in the region in the 1920–1930s, are introduced into scientific circulation.

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1. Introduction

In Soviet historical science, some researchers argue that the Bolshevik authoritarian system with its practice of mass repression and restrictions on freedom of speech, developed in the 1930s as a result of strengthening the Stalinist regime under the slogan "exacerbation of the class struggle as we move towards socialism." The "Red Terror" was not associated with Lenin. In exposing the cult of Stalin, this approach took root in the studies by social scientists. There are many supporters of this concept in Russia. Some politicians and scholars are still making attempts to rehabilitate the communist theory (Leninism), tearing it away from the "bloody terror" of Stalinist totalitarianism. Most studies of the past 20 years do not draw a line between Leninism and Stalinism in the field of party and state building. However, there are still no serious works on the issues of relationships between Lenin-Stalin's policies in the field of mass media. In particular, this concerns the authoritarian model of journalism in the most multinational region of Russia – the North Caucasus, on whose support the fate of the entire Soviet regime largely depended.

2. Problem Statement

The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that in modern Russia, against the background of the growing opposition movement, there is a trend to restrict freedom of journalism by the government. This problem is especially acute in the republics of the North Caucasus. This is evidenced by the reduction in the independent media, persecution of journalists. Lessons from the practice of Bolshevik totalitarianism have not yet been fully learned.

3. Research Questions

It is necessary to reveal the unity of Leninism and Stalinism in the field of journalism.

Characteristics of the peculiarities of formation of the system of journalism in the conditions of the national regions of the North Caucasus.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to reveal the connection between the policy of the Bolshevik Party to restrict freedom of speech at the stage of seizure of power and socialism construction in peaceful conditions. The article aims to show its activities in transforming the press into a tool for manipulating the mass consciousness in the North Caucasus.

5. Research Methods

The research methodology is based on the principle of historicism, which makes it possible to reveal the relationship and interdependence of social processes and the press in specific historical conditions.

6. Findings

In Lenin's program of the proletarian revolution, the press was described as the most important means of mobilizing the illiterate masses. The mass consciousness was manipulated through the press. The Bolsheviks, who constituted a small part of the Russian political forces, used the press during the revolutionary transformations after the fall of tsarism in 1917. With the seizure of power in October, they began to have a monopoly on all media and propaganda in the country. That is, the foundation for a system of one-party journalism was laid in the early days of the revolution. According to Antonov-Ovseenko (2013), "during the October coup, the Bolsheviks took a set of measures aimed at restricting and eliminating freedom of the press" (p. 53). "The Bolsheviks needed some sort of legitimate reason to carry out repressions against the opposition press" (Antonov-Ovseenko, 2013, p. 84). Therefore, the Provisional Workers 'and Peasants' Government – the Council of People's Commissars (CPC) issued a decree on the press on October 27.

The developer of the Bolshevik concept of turning journalism into an instrument of ideological support for the dictatorship of the proletariat was Vladimir Lenin. Even before the October coup, he laid the foundations of future totalitarianism, in particular, a scheme for the complete subordination of the propaganda system to the party. The "Red Terror" did not begin during the Civil War. The well-known Sovietologist Avtorkhanov (1990) asserts that "the period of spiritual and physical repression <...> began on the second day after the victory of the revolution – it was necessary to clear the ground for the victory of socialism during six months!" (p. 29). This conclusion was also confirmed by Trotsky (2005): "I remember how in the first period, in Smolny, Lenin repeated that in six months we will have socialism and become the most powerful state" (p. 62). "As a prerequisite for the destruction of enemies, Lenin created two most important mechanisms of dictatorship: censorship to destroy freedom of speech and the political police with extraordinary rights to destroy enemies of the people without trial and investigation. It was created when there was no "white terror" or civil wars, on December 7 (20), 1917" (Avtorkhanov, 1990, p. 52). Lenin admitted that "without this institution, Soviet power cannot exist" (Avtorkhanov, 1990, p. 69). The Bolshevik leader created an absolute guarantee of his longevity in the person of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (VChK) and the system of ideological support of the regime. Repressions began under the Lenin's government rather than during the Stalin's era.

Special decrees were dedicated to the destruction of freedom of the press. The first one of November 10, 1917 banned liberal-democratic publications with the proviso that they were a "temporary event." The socialist press did not fall into this category. Meanwhile, it was the socialist press that criticized the new Bolshevik government. This mistake was noticed by Lenin, and six days later on November 16 he issued a decree banning all socialist newspapers. Gorky (1917) in his newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* (despite the fact that it was not touched by the repression) condemned measures of the Bolsheviks: "Lenin, Trotsky and those accompanying them have already been poisoned by power, as evidenced by their shameful attitude towards freedom of speech, personality and those rights for whom the democrats fought. This is the path to anarchy, death of the proletariat and revolution. Lenin and his associates consider it possible to commit all crimes ..." (p. 20).

This was the beginning of creation of the one-party national periodical press in the North Caucasus. Departments of regional party committees began to exercise full control over journalism. “All links of this structure were supposed to provide an ideological support of the system of dictatorship, violence and terror, manifestations of the policy of war communism, which became a clear contradiction to the declared statements of the Bolsheviks, who promised to establish a free society with equal opportunities for everyone. The idea of justice turned into despotism” (Toboltseva, 2004, p. 72).

The Bolsheviks were aware that their final triumph would depend on the support of national movements. To attract them, it was necessary to build a system of skillful propaganda in the national regions. That is why local periodicals occupied an important place in the system of the party-Soviet press of the republic. For example, in 1918–1920, over 80 newspapers were published in the languages of the PCFCP peoples (Zasurskiy, 1975). There were a lot of publications in Russian. In 1917–1920, in Tataria, more than 130 newspaper and magazines were published in eight languages (Zasurskiy, 1975). The rapid development of the press required the development of a system of publishing. “The Bolsheviks were aware that without superiority in the information field, there is a risk of losing all other organizational and political gains” (Antonov-Ovseenko, 2013, p. 89) ... This explains repressions against the non-Marxist press.

This picture was also typical of the North Caucasus. The official publications of the tsarist government and all democratic newspapers and magazines were banned. In March 1918, the Dagestan Military Revolutionary Committee made a decision: To take the printing house owned by merchant Mikhailov for the needs of the Military revolutionary committee, to prohibit the publication and printing of the Volny Dagestan newspaper which belongs to the Menshevik party (Akhmedov, 1989). The newspapers of the Union of United Highlanders of the North Caucasus "Gorskaya Zhizn", the Ossetian "Iron Gazette" newspaper, the first edition in the Kabardian language "Adyge Mak" ("Voice of the Circassian") ceased to be published. Similar measures were taken in all the national regions.

The Bolshevik leaders associated restrictions on freedom of speech with the emergency during the civil war. But even after the defeat of the White movement and establishment of the Soviet regime, the restrictions were massive, and the new government used all means to suppress the freedom of speech (Antonov-Ovseenko, 2013). The suppression of the opposition press in the provinces was carried out systematically and on a large scale as part of the measures taken by the Bolsheviks against the opposition as a whole (Antonov-Ovseenko, 2013). As a result, in the North Caucasus, where the liberal press was underdeveloped even in the pre-October period, this segment of journalism disappeared. The Program of the Bolshevik Party adopted by the 8th Congress in 1919 proclaimed that deprivation of political rights and any restrictions on freedom are necessary as temporary measures to combat the attempts of the exploiters to defend or restore their privileges (Egorov & Bogolyubov, 1983). But the victorious end of the war did not end the restrictions. On the other hand, the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus repaired the ugliness and enriched itself through bribery. This increased the number of the discontent members of the party. A.F. Myasnikov publicly condemned the policies of the party leadership. He argued that corruption, bribery, abuse of power occur because the party has a monopoly in the press (as cited in Avtorkhanov, 2003). The lack of freedom of speech contributes to the rampant crime and impunity of the communist officials. Sending the brochure to Lenin, he wrote: "We have a lot of ugliness and abuses: we

need freedom to expose them." Myasnikov proposed to declare "freedom of the press from monarchists to anarchists." The Bolshevik leader cynically replied to Myasnikov: "We do not want to end by suicide and therefore will not do this" (Lenin, 1970, p. 79).

This Lenin's line was continued by Stalin, but in an uglier form. The development of the local press system was constantly monitored by the party. The Bolshevik leadership established a vertical of power. "The temporary provisions on emergency measures laid down in the Decree on the Press became permanent" (Khuako, 1991, p. 162). During the "red terror" unleashed by Stalinism in the North Caucasus, almost all writers, publicists, scientists and the most authoritative political figures were repressed. At the republican congress of writers, the Chechen poet Abadi Dudayev read his poems written on the death of one of the Bolshevik leaders Sergo Ordzhonikidze. He finished the recitation to thunderous applause from the audience. Excited by such a reception, he inadvertently said that he would write even better when Stalin died. For these words he was arrested for allegedly preparing a "terrorist act against Stalin" and shot (Antonov-Ovseenko, 2013).

The ruling party formulated its policy in program documents, declarations and slogans and implemented it through the press. Hence, the principles of interaction between the press and the party committees were interpreted in a simplified manner, and the press was viewed as "driving belts" from the party to the masses. The national press was subordinated to the party committees, which were subordinated to the single central government. The media were removed from the influence of formal founders (federal or local councils, trade unions, public organizations) and subordinated to the agitation and propaganda department of the central committee of the Bolshevik party.

The national press, as a segment of this system, turned into a powerful instrument for the propaganda of the socialist ideas among the peoples of Russia, played a significant role in strengthening the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, in establishing an authoritarian regime, in reeducating the masses with the aim of total submission to the communist doctrine, in destroying those who did not follow the instructions and directives of the partyocracy. Under Lenin, the CSS machine was an instrument of the party, and under Stalin, the party itself turned into an instrument of the CSS machine (Avtorkhanov, 1990).

7. Conclusion

For Bolshevik totalitarianism, the press played an important role as a component of the administrative command system. It became political press being a tool of reprisal against dissenting, a conductor of the ideology of the class struggle and its aggravation. Under the totalitarian regime, the press became an instrument for developing the Stalin's personality cult, a tough tool for exercising administrative-command pressure.

In general, the merits of the press and journalists in the development of totalitarian regimes are crucial (Goryaeva, 2009). The substitution of moral foundations in understanding the nature of professional ethics of journalists by the principles of "party membership of the press and literature" determined the functions and nature of the Soviet media, which were laid down by Lenin and brought to perfection by Stalin.

Journalists were forced to engage in information activities, propaganda, distorting reality at the behest of party committees. To fulfill the tasks assigned to them, they had to lie, to use “black” propaganda tools (Vidyaeva, 2014). Information becomes disinformation in all cases, “when it is necessary to hide the existing reality and build a new one (Bakhnyan, 1983). In relation to the Soviet reality, this situation was ubiquitous.

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