

THE PERIODICAL PRESS OF NAVOI REGION AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF PROCESSES DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract. This thesis analyzes the significance of the periodical press of Navoi Region as a historical source for studying the political, socio-economic, and spiritual processes that took place in the region during the early years of Uzbekistan's independence. In particular, it examines how materials published in Do'stlik bayrog'i, Znamya druzhby, and other local publications reflected the historical realities of the period. The study substantiates the need for a critical approach to periodical press materials as historical sources, taking into account the period in which they were produced, the institutional affiliation of the publication, and the content of the materials. It also demonstrates that a comparative study of local press materials alongside other historical sources provides broader opportunities for examining the history of Navoi Region during the independence period.

Keywords: Navoi Region, independence period, periodical press, local press, historical source, source studies, Do'stlik bayrog'i, Znamya druzhby, regional history, historical processes.

Introduction

Following Uzbekistan's attainment of independence, fundamental changes took place in the country's political, socio-economic, and spiritual life. In the historical study of these processes, materials from the periodical press constitute important sources alongside official documents, archival materials, and statistical data. Regional newspapers are particularly significant because they recorded events and processes occurring within specific localities in their contemporary context and regularly covered the activities of local administrative authorities, economic and social life, the everyday lives of the population, as well as spiritual and cultural processes.

Researchers have also drawn attention to the potential of mass media materials as historical sources for studying the history of the independence period. Analyzing the role of mass media materials in the study of this period, A. Rasulov regards them as an important component of the system of historical sources reflecting political and social processes within society [1]. This approach also demonstrates the need to examine the

regional periodical press as a source of information reflecting a particular historical period.

In the case of Navoi Region, this issue is of particular scholarly significance. During the early years of independence, *Do'stlik bayrog'i*, *Znamya druzhby*, as well as city and district newspapers, published numerous materials concerning reforms implemented in the region, changes in industry and agriculture, the social life of the population, spiritual and educational activities, and the restoration of historical memory. Therefore, it is important to examine these publications not only as objects of media history, but also as primary periodical sources for studying the history of Navoi Region during the independence period.

The aim of this study is to identify the potential of materials from the periodical press of Navoi Region as historical sources for examining the historical processes that took place in the region during the early years of independence. The study employs the principles of historicism and objectivity, as well as comparative-historical and critical source analysis methods.

Main Part

The periodical press has distinctive characteristics as a historical source. One important feature of newspaper materials is that events and processes are often recorded close to the time in which they occurred. As a result, such materials reflect how historical processes were perceived by contemporaries, the key issues of the period, and various aspects of everyday life at the regional level. However, when using press materials, it is also necessary to take into account the founder of the publication, its editorial policy, the genre of the material, and the author's perspective. Therefore, from the standpoint of source studies, it would be inappropriate to treat every piece of information published in a newspaper as a historical fact without verifying it against other sources.

During the early years of independence, the system of periodical publications that developed in Navoi Region regularly documented the historical processes taking place in the region. On the one hand, these developments reflected the formation of the regional press system; on the other hand, they indicate that the range of sources available to historians for examining processes in different localities and spheres gradually expanded.

In particular, materials published in *Do'stlik bayrog'i* and *Znamya druzhby* are of considerable significance for studying processes at the regional level. Alongside changes in the life of the state and society, these publications covered issues related to regional administration, industry, agriculture, education, culture, and the everyday life of the population. As a result, their pages accumulated valuable information that makes it possible to trace how nationwide reforms were manifested and implemented within a specific region.

The significance of the local press as a historical source is particularly evident in reconstructing everyday life at the regional level. While official documents primarily record decisions, statistical indicators, and administrative processes, newspapers also reflect how these were implemented at the local level and manifested in the activities of particular enterprises, mahallas, schools, or communities. In this respect, the periodical press serves as a source that complements the information contained in official documents.

For example, the 27 June 1997 issue of *Do'stlik bayrog'i* published an article by O. Qambarov entitled "Ma'naviyat hayot ko'zgusi" [Spirituality as a Reflection of Life] [2]. Materials of this kind make it possible to examine how the concept of spirituality was interpreted in the regional press during the early years of independence and what place it occupied in the life of society. The significance of such materials for historians is not limited to the factual information they contain. They also provide an opportunity to trace changes in the concepts, values, and social discourse characteristic of a particular historical period.

Articles addressing socio-economic issues were widely published in the print media of Navoi Region. For example, *Navoiy ovozi* published an article entitled "Shijoatda hikmat ko'p" [There Is Great Wisdom in Initiative]. The article states that, as a result of the efforts of collectives working on the principle of "the economy first, politics later," the economic situation in the republic was improving significantly. It notes, for instance, that in one collective farm, 227 family-based units and 26 small labor collectives were established within agricultural production, generating substantial economic income for the farm. The article further reports that the farm earned 4 million 472 thousand soums more in income than in 1990 [3].

The transition of the country's economy to market relations was accompanied by certain difficulties. As a result of the reforms implemented, the decline in production volumes in Navoi Region gradually came to a halt, followed by a gradual increase. During the implementation of economic reforms and the transition to market relations, enterprises and organizations were granted greater rights and autonomy in setting prices. According to *Do'stlik bayrog'i*, under these conditions, 34 enterprises and organizations in the region ended 1993 with losses amounting to 2.4 billion soums, which was regarded as a matter of concern [4].

Another important characteristic of the periodical press as a historical source is its regional dimension. While nationwide publications covered the broader political and social processes taking place across the country, regional and district newspapers documented the specific ways in which these processes unfolded at the local level. For example, materials concerning the activities of industrial enterprises, social issues in rural areas, regional infrastructure, and the activities of educational and cultural institutions are important for studying the distinctive historical development of Navoi

Region. Therefore, the regional press can also be regarded as a historical source that makes it possible to identify the local manifestations of nationwide historical processes.

At the same time, newspaper materials should be approached through source-critical analysis. First, each publication operated within a particular historical and institutional context. Second, not all aspects of historical reality were covered to the same extent on newspaper pages. Third, news reports, analytical articles, editorial materials, and individually authored articles differ in their characteristics as historical sources. Therefore, comparing information contained in newspaper materials with archival documents, statistical data, and other periodical publications enhances the reliability of historical conclusions. A comparative analysis of archival documents relating to Navoi Region and materials from the periodical press is particularly valuable. For example, while decisions and financial documents issued by local administrative authorities concerning the activities of editorial offices reveal the institutional dimension of a particular process, newspaper materials make it possible to determine how that process was reflected in the information space. This provides an opportunity to examine the same historical phenomenon comparatively through different types of sources, such as official documents and the periodical press.

The regular publication of local newspapers over an extended period constitutes another important characteristic of their value as historical sources. By examining successive issues of the same publication from different years, it is possible to trace changes in attitudes toward particular issues, the emergence of new topics, or the disappearance of certain issues from the public agenda. This makes it possible to use the periodical press not only to identify individual historical facts, but also to study the dynamics of historical processes.

Thus, studying the periodical press of Navoi Region as a historical source requires a twofold approach. On the one hand, it involves identifying the factual information, events, dates, locations, and processes recorded in newspapers. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider the historical circumstances in which this information was published, by whom it was produced, and for what purpose. Only such an approach makes it possible to fully utilize the potential of periodical press materials as historical sources.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that the periodical press of Navoi Region constitutes an important body of historical sources for studying the historical processes that took place in the region during the early years of independence. Materials published in regional, city, and district newspapers are significant not only for their coverage of political and socio-economic changes, but also for their reflection of the everyday life of the population, spiritual and cultural processes, and regional characteristics.

However, when using periodical press materials as historical sources, it is necessary to analyze them critically and to take into account the institutional characteristics of the publication and the historical context in which the materials were produced. A comparative study of newspaper materials alongside archival documents, statistical data, and other sources enhances their scholarly value. In this respect, *Do'stlik bayrog'i*, *Znamya druzhby*, and other local publications serve as an important source base not only for studying the history of the press in Navoi Region, but also for examining the broader historical processes that took place in the region during the independence period.

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