

Reflections on the Development of the Press in Khorezm During the Years of Independence

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Abstract: Today, information is considered the main driving force of human society. The press serves as the primary carrier and guiding instrument of this force. Indeed, information enters society, takes shape, and becomes embedded in public consciousness precisely through the press. This article presents reflections on the process of development of the press in the Khorezm region during the years of independence.

Keywords: Press, fourth estate, lithography, Otajon Abdalov, “Inqilob quyoshi”, “Xorazm haqiqati”, “Bog‘ot sadosi”, “Gurlan hayoti”, “Yangi Urganch”, “Urganch haqiqati”, “Hayot ko‘zgusi”, “Hazoraspnoma”, “Xiva tongi”, “Xonqa hayoti”, “Shovot istiqboli”, “Yangiariq ovozi”, “Yangibozor ko‘zgusi”, “Xorazm ma‘rifati”.

Introduction

Historically, the press has been recognized in society as the “fourth power.” Today, however, its role goes even further—it has become a central force in shaping public consciousness. Which issues are considered urgent, which problems enter the center of public discussion, and which events remain on the margins largely depend on the choices made by the press. In this sense, the press not only disseminates information but also determines the direction of societal development. Although the press broadly encompasses all printed products, in a narrower sense it refers to periodical publications, primarily newspapers and journals.

In world history, the first press publications began to appear in Europe in the mid-fifteenth century. Over the following centuries, the press gradually became the primary means of mass communication and the dissemination of knowledge and ideas. Early printed publications consisted of books, pamphlets, and leaflets; in the early seventeenth century, newspapers emerged, followed later by magazines. By the mid-nineteenth century, press agencies had been established. Despite the emergence and development of other forms of mass media—such as radio broadcasting and television in the twentieth century and the Internet in the twenty-first century—the press has continued to expand its role and significance in human society, adapting to modern technologies and evolving in new forms.

In Khorezm specifically, the foundations of the press were laid on March 8, 1920. From that date, the newspaper *Inqilob Quyoshi* (“Sun of the Revolution”) began publication, with Bekchon Rahmon serving as its first editor-in-chief. The equipment necessary for publishing this newspaper—a lithographic printing press manufactured in Geneva, Switzerland—had been brought to Khiva in 1874 at the initiative of Muhammad Rahim Khan II, the Khan of Khiva. Initially used for the publication of literary works, this lithographic press began to be employed for printing the newspaper *Inqilob Quyoshi* after the establishment of the Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic in 1920.

The province’s main newspaper, *Inqilob Quyoshi*, was published in Khiva until July 1, 1928, after which it began to be printed at the printing house in Urgench. From January 1, 1939, *Inqilob Quyoshi*

was published under the name *Khorezm Haqiqati*. During the 1930s, the activities of local periodicals were launched in a number of districts and cities of Khorezm Province. In particular, newspapers such as *Gurlan Hayoti*, *Xonqa Hayoti*, and *Xiva Tongi* (1931); *Shovot Hayoti* (1932); *Hazoraspnoma* (1935); *Yangiariq Ovozi* (1936); *Hayot Ko'zgusi* (1941, as the official publication of Qo'shko'pir District); *Yangibozor Ko'zgusi* (1955, initially published as *Paxtakorlar Ovozi*); *Urganch Haqiqati* (1958, first published as *Paxtakorlar Ovozi* and later as *Oktyabr Bayrog'i*); and *Bog'ot Sadosi* began their activities, laying the foundation for today's press in Khorezm Province.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, these publications continued their activities and covered the initial stages of socio-political and economic development during the years of independence. In 1996, 20 newspapers were operating in Khorezm Province, of which 18 were state-owned, one was public, and one was established under various organizational forms. Among them, seven were provincial newspapers, ten were district newspapers, and one was a city newspaper. In subsequent years, the range of regional publications expanded with the addition of newspapers such as *Yangi Urganch* (2001, initially published as *Urganch Oqshomi*), *Khorezm Iste'dodi* (1998), *Huquqiy Himoya* (2010), *Khorezm Ma'rifati* (2010), *Khorezm Tibbiyoti – Medicina Khorezma* (2010), *Ezgu So'z* (2016), and *Urganch Universiteti* (2023).

However, in the province, journals began to operate effectively only after 2000. Notably, journals such as *Ilm Sarchashmalari* (established in 2001 under the auspices of Urgench State University named after Al-Khwarizmi), *The Bulletin of the Khorezm Ma'mun Academy* (since 2006), and *To'maris Avlodi* (published as a journal since 2018, having been issued as a newspaper from 2009 to 2018) began their activities.

It is no secret that, as a result of the rapid development of the global Internet today, electronic publications and bloggers operating on social media platforms have become major competitors to print media as forms of mass communication. This situation has had a serious impact on the activities of many print publications. In particular, subscription rates have declined, and publications have struggled to maintain regular periodicity.

For example, while the weekly circulation of the newspaper *Khorezm Haqiqati* amounted to 3,443 copies in 2005 and 3,500 copies in 2019, by May 2025 this figure had decreased to 1,602 copies. The significant decline of *Khorezm Haqiqati*, regarded as the province's main official newspaper, can largely be attributed to the influence of social media. The circulations of provincial and local newspapers such as *Bog'ot Sadosi*, *Gurlan Hayoti*, *Yangi Urganch*, *Urganch Haqiqati*, *Hayot Ko'zgusi*, *Hazoraspnoma*, *Xiva Tongi*, *Xonqa Hayoti*, *Shovot Istiqboli*, *Yangiariq Ovozi*, *Yangibozor Ko'zgusi*, and *Khorezm Ma'rifati* amount to only several hundred copies, and the majority of these publications were unable to publish several of their issues throughout 2024.

At present, 21 print and 21 electronic publications, three television channels, and two radio channels are operating in the province. In addition, one of the most notable aspects is that 74 blogs are being run by 29 entities on the YouTube platform as well as on the social networks Instagram, Telegram, and Facebook. By comparison, while the total circulation of all provincial-level print publications does not reach 10,000 copies, the combined number of followers of these blogs exceeds 7 million.

Conclusion

Although the periodical press entered our country in the 20th century and developed gradually, during the years of independence its progress encountered obstacles due to both objective and subjective factors. Today, as in the rest of the Republic, the development of the press in Khorezm Province is closely linked to social networks and various Internet platforms. This situation indicates that the future of print media requires a complete transformation into a modern, digitally integrated system.

In this context, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. All print publications should be fully removed from the direct support of local government bodies and privatized.

2. Print publications should align their activities with the content and nature of modern social networks, securing their presence on platforms with large audiences such as Instagram, Telegram, and YouTube.
3. A system should be established for financing mass media through non-governmental organizations, with attention given to international grants and sponsorship funds.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that print media must provide information tailored to all segments and layers of society and rapidly adapt to modern information technologies in line with contemporary demands. Publications that fail to implement these measures may naturally face restrictions on their activities. Conversely, those that adapt to these new requirements will have all the opportunities to begin a new phase of development in the digital era.

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