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THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST PRESS SYSTEM IN AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

This article describes the reforms implemented by Amir Amanullah Khan in the field of press and the impact of newspapers and magazines created at that time on social life. The article is also enriched with the scientific works of scholars studying the history of Afghanistan. The article cites famous historical newspapers in Afghanistan as examples and substantiates them with scientific literature.

Keywords: "Siraj ul-Akhbor", "Faryod", "Ittifaq Islam", "Aman-e Afghan", Amir Amanullah Khan, "Afghan Yulduzi", "Afghan Tongi"

Amanullah Khan drew attention to reforms related to the periodical press in Afghanistan. It is known that the press is needed to form social views, show achievements and shortcomings. The restoration of Afghanistan's national independence on August 19, 1919 opened the first stage in the development of publishing and the press in the country.

Every society has a vital need for the press and mass media, and they have the right to accurate information. After all, a free press has an important and fundamental role in the efforts to educate the people, informing society about political, social, cultural, and economic trends. The periodical press has boldly entered the country to inform about various situations, such as strengthening



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relations with society, covering international and ethnic relations, socio-economic situations, civil liberties, and the structure of the state. Therefore, the emergence of mass media, including, first of all, the conditions for the socio-economic and political development of Afghan society, the need to cover the processes of interaction between people, and the need to update, store, and reproduce various information, gave rise to the periodical press in Afghanistan. With the restoration of Afghanistan's independence in 1919, the press became the main tool for influencing the social consciousness of the masses and played a key role in processing the ideological and political views and theoretical concepts of the ruling classes of Afghan society, various political groups and social strata on the issues of the country's socio-economic and political development. The periodical press emerged as a means of establishing social consciousness, establishing mutual relations between the people and the government and served as the main tool. The diverse social structure of Afghan society, difficult internal political and socio-economic processes, and important socio-economic and cultural reforms adopted by the government of Amanullah Khan had a significant impact on the ideological, political and propaganda activities of the periodical press.

During the reign of Amanullah Khan, the press flourished rapidly. In 1919, published by M. Tarzi, it gained great prestige in the Afghan world. The editor of the newspaper "Siraj ul-Akhbor" was Abdul Hadi Davi, later Said Qasim Khan. He launched the publication of the newspaper "Afghan" in the capital. In February 1920, "Sharqiy Ittifaq"¹ in Jalalabad, "Faryod" and "Ittifaqe Islam" in Herat, four newspapers were published in Persian and sometimes in Pashto. In the same year, the newspapers "Uganish" and "Islamic Union" were published in Mazar-i-Sharif.

¹ Vartan Gregorian. The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan. – Stanford: California, 1969. – 245 p.



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In 1921, the newspapers "Baghlan Union", in 1922 "Ittihad-e Khanabad", in Kandahar "Afghan Uyg'onishi", in Kohistan "Afghan Yulduzi", and in 1923 "Haqiqat" were published in Kabul². In 1925, the "Press Law" was passed, which gave the right to publish private newspapers. The first private newspapers were the Pashtun-language newspaper "Do'st" in 1927, "Ch'ul Shamomi", and "Navruz" were traditional newspapers. Some ministries also began to publish their own newspapers. For example, the "Bilimlar Oyasan" newspaper by the Ministry of Finance and the "Harbiy Ish" newspaper by the Ministry of Defense. Many periodicals were published weekly or biweekly. All publications were subject to state censorship and were called upon to support state reforms. During the reign of Amonullah Khan, 13 state printing houses operated. Most of the articles were devoted to the same issues: independence, nationality, modernization, ethnic and religious views. As the Afghan correspondent of "Siraj ul-Akhbar" emphasized: "through the acquisition of knowledge and the study of science, it is possible to expand the worldview of the people." Like other countries, in order to reach the level of civilization, the people must first find their own aspirations and strength. In several publications, Amonullah Khan is portrayed as the person who introduced education, a great leader and saved the people from poverty.

The coming to power of Amanullah Khan and the independence of Afghanistan were important milestones in the history of the Afghan periodical press. The popularization and development of new reformist views, the development of journalism, and the emergence of the first private publications in the country are associated with the name of Amanullah Khan. Amir Amanullah quickly formed the Afghan press during his rule. In April 1919, the newspaper "Aman-e Afghan"

² Губар Мир Гулам Мухаммад. Афганистан дар масир-е тарих. (Афганистан на пути истории). – Кабул. 1967. (на языке дари), 136 с.



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("Peace of the Afghans") was published³, its editor was Abdul Hadi Davi, later Said Qasim Khan. The periodical press played a major role in the development of the social views of the people.

Therefore, Queen Surayya, who tried to raise the social consciousness of women, founded the first women's magazine in 1924, called "Ershad-ul Neswan" ("Guidelines for Women"). The magazine discussed social problems and the role of women in society. Several Afghan women published articles on the historical role of women in Islam and their contribution to the victory in the struggle for independence. In addition, in the mid-1920s, a women's protection society ("Anjuman-e Hemoyat-e Neswan") was established in Kabul under the leadership of one of Amonullah's sisters, Kobroy Jan. Queen Surayya published her article about marching without a tent in the newspaper "Amon-e Afghan" on October 10, 1928. Thus, the periodical press in the country has served as a key tool in revealing and communicating social, political, and economic events and information to the public.

The period of development of the Afghan press falls on the reign of Amir Amanullah Khan (1919-1929), one of the main directions of his reformist activity was the development of culture, in particular, the mass media. During this period, more than 20 periodicals were published in Afghanistan: official (organizational, city-owned), state-funded, unofficial, private. Amanullah Khan's government began organizing city printing houses and newspaper networks in the country in 1920. In February 1920, the first city newspaper in Persian, "Ithadid Mashriqi/Sharqiy Binyunt", was published in Jalalabad under the editorship of Burhanuddin Qoshqaqi. Periodicals soon appeared in other urban centers: in Herat – "Friyad/Nido" and "Attaq-e-Islam/Islam Union" in 1920; in Jabalus-Siroj

³ Reshtiya Seyid Qasim. Journalism in Afghanistan. – Kabul. 1948. – 73 p.



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– “Staat-e-Afghan/Afghan Yulduzi” in 1920; in Khost – “Al-Ghazai/Gholib” in 1921; in Kandahar – the first Pashto-language newspaper “Tloos-e-Afghan/Afghan Tongi” in 1921; in Khanabad – “Attaq-e-Khanabad Union” and “Islah/Islohot” in 1922; in Mazar-i-Sharif – “Bidaar/Awakening” in 1922; in Baghlan – “Attaq-e-Baghlan/Baghlan Union” in 1922. The city newspapers reprinted the information of the capital’s newspapers and also published local news.

It should be noted that radio in Afghanistan, namely Kabul Radio, began broadcasting in 1928 during the government of Emir Amanullah Khan, and it was the only information medium that informed the people about social, cultural, economic, political, and international processes, and the people always listened to the radio⁴.

One of Amonullah Khan's achievements was to ensure freedom of speech and the press. The first Afghan Constitution was adopted in 1923, and the Law on the Press was adopted in 1924, which allowed the printing of private periodicals, which, although financially independent, remained under government control and were initially subject to censorship. Article 2 of the 1923 Afghan Constitution states: "The periodical press and internal state newspapers enjoyed freedom based on the charter. The publication of newspapers represented the exclusive right of the government or individuals with Afghan citizenship. With regard to the foreign press, the Afghan government at a higher level reserves the right to determine or prohibit the conditions of publication." The freedom of speech enshrined in the Constitution created the opportunity for the emergence of the first private newspaper in Afghanistan.

⁴ В.Г. Коргун. Интеллигенция в политической жизни Афганистана. – Москва. 1983 – 38 с.



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