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CENSORSHIP OF THE SIBERIAN PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS: LINGUISTIC AND SEMANTIC CORRECTION

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Abstract

The article deals with typographic prints of the forbidden issue of *Sibirskaya Gazeta* (1881. No. 11), which are stored in the archives of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs (in the Russian State Historical Archive). The local censor M.A. Gilyarov, who replaced the permanent censor of *Sibirskaya Gazeta*, made remarks on prints. The proposed corrections caused a conflict between the censor and the editors of the newspaper, it reached the level of the General Directorate for Press Affairs. Petersburg requested typographic prints to clarify the circumstances of the conflict, which became, consequently, available to modern researchers. An analysis of typographic prints with censor's corrections showed that Gilyarov paid attention not only to the “ideological” component of presented texts. He struck out unnecessary words, apparently considering that the authors made a lexical mistake, corrected the forms of words, added the necessary, in his opinion, phrases. This suggests that the style of newspaper texts was also a matter of concern to provincial censors, despite the fact that they were not directly engaged in editing the texts. The conducted research leads to the conclusion that censorship of the provincial press was a much more complex phenomenon than a simple prohibition of “harmful” newspaper texts. The censors tried to moderate opposition statements of journalists and improve the style of the text in accordance with their ideas.

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1. Introduction

The censorship of periodicals in pre-revolutionary Russia is one of the most sought-after objects of study among modern researchers. It attracts the attention of historians who study the history of the formation of the institute of censorship, its structure, the specifics of the implementation of censorship supervision in capitals and in the province (Blokhin, 2019; Patrusheva, 2014; Patrusheva, 2017). Different aspects fall into the field of vision of researchers: the history of research in the field of censorship (Bessonova, 2019), censorship history of individual press organs (Vikhrova, 2017) and censorship activities of Russian writers (Zubkov, 2017), censorship of academic dissertations (Galiullina & Ilyina, 2016), censorship from the point of view of jurisprudence (Yakovleva, 2016). Pistorians of journalism study the impact of censorship on the development of Russian periodicals (Gromova, 2012; Romashchenko, 2016; Zhirkov, 2015), including the press of Russian regions (Bordakov, 2018; Mogilatova, 2019; Shevtsov, 2016).

In many respects, the interest of scientists in censorship of periodicals is due to the fact that it is because of its interference the history of Russian journalism looks “truncated” to some extent, and some of its subjects are not completely clarified. This especially concerns the history of the closing many Russian newspapers and magazines of the 19th – early 20th centuries, which were successful from the point of view both publishers and readers, as well as the prohibitions of certain issues and articles that were not published “due to circumstances beyond the editorial office”. The study of censorship archives allows to restore these “gaps” in the history of Russian pre-revolutionary journalism, to find out the features of censorship of metropolitan and provincial publications. This statement of the question allows to talk about the relevance and novelty of the study, aimed at the clarification the censors’ methods of working with the newspaper text of a particular provincial publication, *Sibirskaya Gazeta*, which was published from 1881 to 1888 in the Siberian city of Tomsk.

2. Problem Statement

The study of the work of censors with specific texts of the provincial press is complicated by the fact that very few typographical prints with censors' corrections has been preserved to our time. In the considered case, material that allows to see censorship interference in the newspaper’s text was discovered in the archives of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs, stored in the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA. F. 776. Op. 12. 1880. C. 71. 271 l.). This case consists of documents related to the publication in the city of Tomsk of the first large private newspaper in Western Siberia – *Sibirskaya Gazeta*, published in 1881–1888.

Sibirskaya Gazeta, founded by a local entrepreneur and philanthropist P.I. Makushin, united around itself both representatives of the young Siberian intelligentsia and political exiles, mostly the Narodniks. It was the first newspaper in Tomsk, and therefore, that is why the mechanism of interaction between local publications and the censorship department was debugged on its example. One of the episodes of such a “debugging” was the conflict of the newspaper with the local censor M.A. Gilyarov, temporary substitute for the permanent censor of the *Sibirskaya Gazeta* – Tomsk Governor V.I. Mertsalov. As a result of the editors' disagreement with Gilyarov’s corrections, there was an attempt to

publish newspaper No. 11 for 1881 with gaps in the places of words, expressions and articles struck out by the censor. Gilyarov did not give permission for this issue. The editors appealed for support to the Main Directorate for Press Affairs, which requested the originals of typographic prints with censorship corrections. According to the results of the analysis of this situation, Petersburg sided with Gilyarov, so No. 11 for 1881 was not published, we know about its contents from archival materials only (for more details see: Zhilyakova, 2019).

Censor's remarks preserved on typographical prints make it possible to find out what kind of corrections made in the newspaper text, to evaluate them from the point of view of both semantic and linguistic corrections.

3. Research Questions

One of the main questions of the study is evaluation of the depth of censorship intervention in newspaper texts. Analyzing preserved typographic prints, we can notice that different newspaper blocks were corrected: subtitles were signed, sources of reprints under the text were indicated, whole articles were struck out, as well as paragraphs, word replacement was suggested. The motivation for striking out particular articles and paragraphs was ideological: the articles were recognized by the censor as "harmful" to readers, or being, in the opinion of the censor, "idle talk" (RGIA. F. 776. Op. 12. 1880. C. 71. L. 27). It can be suggested that stylistic corrections were due to Gilyarov's desire to make newspaper texts more understandable to readers – and at the same time reduce the political acuteness of individual statements.

One more important question that can be resolved through the study of censorship corrections in typographic prints is the content of prohibited articles, including the feuilleton "Essays and Pictures of Provincial Life" – this was the first attempt by one of the authors of *Sibirskaya Gazeta* to speak in this genre. Because these materials were not published later, the archival case containing typographical prints is the only source of data on these texts.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the specifics of censorship in a provincial press on the example of the *Sibirskaya Gazeta* using preserved typographic prints with censorship corrections. To achieve the purpose, it is necessary to solve such tasks as deciphering handwritten censorship remarks, familiarity with the content of sentences paragraphs, and articles struck out by the censor, determining the degree of their undesirability using Gilyarov's explanation preserved in the archive (RGIA. F. 776. Op. 12. 1880). C. 71. L. 21–23), an analysis of censorship corrections from the semantic and linguistic points of view.

5. Research Methods

A complex of textual methods was used to study the considered archival material, including semantic analysis of newspaper text, syntactic and contextual analysis, and also a historical reconstruction method. Similar work is already being carried out by modern linguists (Bazylev, 2017; Besedina, Burkova, & Michurin, 2019; Chernyavskaya, 2017, etc.).

The synthesis of linguistic methods and historical analysis methods is due to the complexity of the material, which requires an interdisciplinary integrated approach. Like most documents related to the implementation of censorship in pre-revolutionary Russian journalism, it is at the intersection of textual criticism, archival research, history and journalism. It should also take into consideration that the history of censorship is only part of the general history of journalism, which is on the whole a fairly well-studied field of science. Censorship subjects, as a rule, “fit” into this area as additional, although very important for creating a holistic picture of the formation of the Russian periodical press system of the late 19th – early 20th centuries.

6. Findings

The conducted analysis of the text material confirmed that the corrections made by Gilyarov were both semantic and linguistic. The editors of *Sibirskaya Gazeta* were particularly indignant at the corrections concerning reprinted official materials, as well as articles and feuilletons entitled “Essays and Pictures of Provincial Life”. In addition to censor’s strikeouts, comments on texts of an ironic or derogatory nature were signed on the margins of this print by the hand of Gilyarov. During the analysis of the conflict, the Main Directorate for Press Affairs Office confirmed that the censor does not have to comment on newspaper texts, this is not his responsibility.

The temporary censor of the Siberian Newspaper, as we can see from the materials studied, paid attention not only to the “ideological” component of presented texts. He struck out unnecessary words, apparently considering that the authors made a lexical mistake, corrected the forms of words, added the necessary, in his opinion, phrases. This suggests that the style of newspaper texts was also a matter of concern to provincial censors, despite the fact that they were not directly engaged in editing the texts.

7. Conclusion

The conducted research leads to the conclusion that censorship of the provincial press was a much more complex phenomenon than a simple prohibition of “harmful” newspaper texts. The censors tried to moderate opposition statements of journalists and improve the style of the text in accordance with their ideas. Further research in this area may clarify a number of questions such as: individual differences in censorship of periodicals; metropolitan and provincial censorship supervision: was there a difference between them; dynamics of censorship impact on the periodical press of Siberia, and some others.

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