

The Project of Creating a New Scientific and Educational Website on History of the Orenburg region as a Task of Modern Russian Historical Studies

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Abstract. The article shows the content of the project devoted to the establishment of a new research and education website "History of the Orenburg region in the pre-revolutionary published sources". The value of the project for the development of historical sciences is demonstrated.

Keywords: Orenburg Region, Historical Sources, Internet Sources, Russian History.

1. Introduction

Any complex scientific problem can be considered at several levels. In the context of studying the Russian Empire's administrative-territorial structure the Orenburg region inevitably becomes the centre of researchers' attention, because it was the region, development of which provided not only integration of a number of Central Asian regions into Russia, but also created its own East for the Empire.

For a long time the only possible characteristic of the Russian Empire given by the Russian historians was «the prison of nationalities». The modern science, in general, has overcome this approach. Today the Empire is understood as "a way of governing the heterogeneous space being a modernized society, a way of overcoming the world's locality" [1]. It is important to know how it was possible to provide phenomenal stability of such a conglomerate of people and cultures (as the Russian Empire was) throughout several centuries. The accents of this research have been displaced to clarify the potential of the administrative technologies that could react effectively and adequately to the quickly changing political, economic and sociocultural environment in the conditions of multicultural community. The studies of the Orenburg region can be more than helpful in clarifying these important questions.

2. The Main Way of Development of a Modern Russian Historical Science

The purpose of the paper is to familiarize the scientists with the new Internet project, which must help them to provide the research procedure of the Orenburg region with "a wide range of sources" [2].

The main objective of the project is to introduce and make it possible for the scientists to have an access to the sources published in the pre-revolutionary period, which reflects the development of the Orenburg region from the most ancient times to February, 1917 in all its variety. It is planned to find and place on the website the historical sources, which will give a chance to carry out any researches on economic, social, political problems and the cultural history of this region.

Placing sources in a full-text format is the main way to develop historical studies. Creation of specialized websites provides essential expansion of a circle of the researchers, increases possibilities to recheck author's interpretations of the contents of documents and a correctness of their use, and also provides a public availability to a documentary part of a cultural heritage. The websites devoted to a regional history are an objective documentary basis for a bigger unity of locals because of love for the country, so they play not only an important academic, but also an important political function.

The existing nowadays in Russia problems with an access of historians to scientific literature and archival materials, the need of integration of the Russian historians into the world of scientific community,

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the sharply defined split of the historical community in Russia – all these aspects can be restored and developed in a virtual form.

In a Russian-speaking Internet, unlike an English-speaking one, the amount of documentary resources for historical researches is insufficient. Among the available projects we will note the following: the first one is “The Library of electronic resources created by the laboratory of historical informatics of the Moscow State University” [3]; the second one is the website “East literature” (section "Documents") [4]. Among the foreign projects based on the idea of creation electronic (digitized) base on history of one of the regions of the Russian Empire (Central Asia) there is a website Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies (RIFIAS) «Works on archeology, history and geography of Central Asia. Russian Empire. XVII - the beginning of the XX century» [5] on which 378 scanned books are placed. However structurization of this material leaves much to be desired as it is not based on any uniform logical principle.

3. Modern Russian Historical Science Tasks Being Solved by the Project

The analysis has showed that this project is in a great demand for the Russian historical science.

First of all, created as a result of implementation of the project the website becomes an objective basis and a necessary step for creation extremely demanded, but non-existent academic history of the Orenburg region of the pre-revolutionary period. The Orenburg region before the revolution of 1917 was a large and original region that included (at different stages) the territories from Simbirsk, Samara and Stavropol to Uralsk, Aral, and the Ural mountains. So the creation of the complex website containing main historical sources on the Orenburg region’s history would be important for studying history of Russia as a whole.

Secondly, the creation of such a website allows researchers to advance considerably the development of a regional historical science and historical education as a result of including into its database generally accessible complex of the primary sources reflecting the characteristic features of the Orenburg region development during the pre-revolutionary period. There will be a big clarity in the question of what aspects of the regional history represent «blank spots» and need additional research.

Thirdly, the process of creation this website and also the result of this process will promote discussions of the most debatable problems of the Orenburg history, among which are such important issues, as, for example, an assessment of Pugachev’s rebellion, ethnoconfessional policy of the Russian Empire in regions, imperial technologies of the power on the Empire’s peripheries, a sociocultural phenomenon of the Cossacks, the Russian politicians in Central Asia, the formation of civil society in the Russian province and many other things.

Fourthly, the scientific processing of sources for the website (references; preparation of the scientific comments for events and names, which were mentioned in documents, etc.) allows us to solve a problem that is very important for historical studies, that is the critical analysis of a number of myths based on quotes being used in one publication and then taken from this source into another one, etc., with the reference to the documents, which nobody saw in the original.

4. Implementation of the Project

The implementation of the project includes the following steps:

- First, the development of the general methodological basis for structuring the website and development of the system of cross problem and chronological references between separate pages of the website;
- Secondly, the search and the identification of sources in the Russian federal and regional libraries (the State archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian state archive of ancient acts, the Russian state historical archive, the Russian state military and historical archive; the Russian state library and the Russian national library). This includes both: the editions, which were published before the revolution and now are a sort of sources (for example, it is planned to reveal and process all so-called “address calendars and memorable books” of the Orenburg province, a complex of the provincial periodical press, statistical collections, collections of circulars of the Orenburg governors etc.), and numerous

documentary inserts in scientific publications of pre-revolutionary authors, many of which are unique as their primary sources have already been lost by our time;

- Thirdly, the creation of the general list of sources selected for publication on the website with: a) bibliographic characteristics; б) short characteristics of the contents; в) referring to structural parts of the created website;
- Fourthly, the technical processing of the sources selected for the publication;
- Fifthly, the scientific processing of the primary sources selected for the publication (the creation of explanatory notes to each revealed source and explanatory notes to each section of the website);
- Sixthly, the methodical processing of the sources selected for the publication (the creation of a complex of training tasks according to contents of documents, differentiation of these tasks for school students and students);
- Seventhly, the text writing for the main page of the website, the development of indexes of names, place names.

In view of the foregoing we may conclude that the central part of the research project is the search in libraries and the creation of the digitized database of sources.

The official presentation of the website is planned to be done in 2013 within the events devoted to the 270 anniversary of Orenburg.

5. Conclusion

The sphere of the project's application is as follows: Internet centers of educational institutions, which are created for pupils studying "History" in the Orenburg region, Bashkortostan, the Chelyabinsk region, the northern regions of Kazakhstan, and also the Internet center of the Volga region branch of Institute of the Russian history of the Russian Academy of Sciences; the regional center of collective use of the Internet in the Orenburg regional universal scientific library. The users are scientists-historians, regional specialists, students of higher educational institutions, school students. The sphere of use of the project has no restrictions as to its development and the exposure of resources will cause interest and need for them among the representatives of the scientific community in Russia and neighboring countries and foreign countries. However the circle of users will be constituted first of all by historians and representatives of the humanities (teachers, research associates, students).

Additional possibilities of the project are connected with the following directions of work (that can be carried out on its basis):

- the regular expansion of resources of the website at the expense of reception of the digitized sources from users;
- the thematic expansion of the website at the expense of placement the sources on pre-revolutionary history of the Orenburg region, published during the Soviet and Post-Soviet period (at the unconditional observance of copyright);
- the creation of a multimedia disk «History of the Orenburg region sources of XVIII – the beginning of the XX centuries» for studying history of the region by school students and students on the basis of the project;
- the organization of lists of mailing the updating of the website to addresses of the organizations and individuals interested in it;
- the development of the international humanitarian cooperation providing a so-called triyazychiye (the Russian, the English, the Kazakh languages) of all the scientific information, which is represented on the website.

In the conclusion of this article I would like to call all colleagues interested in the development of this project to join us and to start active cooperation.

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7. References

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