

Literary Works on the Pages of the «Chronicle of Current Events»: Index «Literary Fiction»

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Abstract

The article explains the goals of the work on a new historical-philological resource – Index «Fiction». It combined all references of the literary texts in the «Chronicle of Current Events», the samizdat newsletter which was published by Moscow intellectuals in 1968-1983.

Keywords

«Chronicle of Current Events», Literary Samizdat

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The Russian segment of the Internet now hosts a new historical-philological resource – the Index «Fiction». It combines all references to literary texts in the «Chronicle of Current Events». This samizdat newsletter was published by Moscow intellectuals in 1968-1983 and is now a valuable source on the history of independent public life in the USSR and of the political control and repression in the post-Stalin era.

The index is the result of a scholarly partnership between the «Memorial» Society and the University of Oxford. It is an important component of the reference tools within the academic edition of the «Chronicle». The site laboratory where the work is being conducted uses a wiki platform. The prefix «wiki» signifies that is used for the world-renown Wikipedia. This platform supports the mission of the web-encyclopaedia, bringing together the intellectual ability and efforts of Internet users. The appeal of this approach is obvious. A dialogue and collaboration with the Internet audience is particularly effective for the publication of historical sources belonging in the recent past. The above fully applies to the «Chronicle», because some of the people referenced in it are now active in social networks.

The particular features of the web-archeography in the XXI century deserve a separate discussion, so for now we will return to the introduction of the Index. It contains records of over 1000 works of literature belonging to different eras and nations (with the obvious dominance of Russian literature). Each entry about the text is linked to its mention (mentions) in the «Chronicle of Current Events». In other words, the Index serves as a guide for those who are passionate about the interweaving of history and the literary process. We believe that scholars in the humanities are not the only ones interested in the adventures which befell novels, poems, short stories, poetic ballads, etc. - their fates were at times no less dramatic than these of the humans. Some texts have become the dangerous and alluring «forbidden fruit», while others, on the contrary, served the government or the state ideology. In the famous samizdat newsletter, domestic and foreign classics often appear to be direct participants of the «current events», connected in one way or

another with the informal social life. When viewed in this light, the glossy and static sheen of the classics sometimes cracks, revealing the non-conformist and rebellious, «criminal» and glorious past of these great books.

We present today the introductory article to the Index, or more precisely, its preprint. In the near future, the final version of the text will be published on the site-laboratory. It seemed to us an attractive opportunity to acquaint the readers, without delay, with the results of this historical-philological project closely associated with the study of samizdat. The desire to talk about the new data, methods and opportunities to explore this interesting phenomenon is largely responsible for turning an introductory note into a detailed article. Another important incentive for the publication of the preprint is the keen interest in the opinion of experts. This interest is due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project.

The article will explain the goals of this work, and will speak to its scientific novelty and significance. It also talks about the research plans related to the study of samizdat. We would be happy to help implement these plans: we will look forward to interacting with those who love history and literature.

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