The 80th Anniversary of the Beginning of the Second World War in Historical and Educational Activities of the Russian Archivists

Abstract

This article is devoted to the coverage of a number of major historical and educational projects implemented in recent years by the Russian archivists in the context of the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War of 1939-1945. Having analyzed the activities of the leading national archives in this area, including their use of modern information technologies and Internet resources, the authors link these projects with discourse of world politics and historiography on the most important factors and causes that resulted in the outbreak of World War II. In connection with heated discussions and disputes on the prerequisites and causes of
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the Second World War that are escalating among politicians and historians of various countries on the eve of its 80th anniversary, the Russian historians and archivists have done a tremendous job in preparing thematic historical and documentary exhibitions devoted to the most significant (from historical point of view) events that directly affected international relations in the pre-war months. Complex of audiovisual sources, which has been reviewed in this article as a part of historical and documentary exhibitions complex, confirms that it was a complex of factors and events associated with the collapse of the Versailles-Washington system of international relations that led to the outbreak of World War II; but, most of all, the policy of pandering to the aggressive revanchist aspirations of Nazi Germany by the major European powers and concern of the European allies of the USSR for strengthening of its position in international affairs. Introduction of new sources and expansion of documentary base available to general public by means of exhibitions and permanent Internet projects plays a huge role in historical and educational work in general, and in counteraction of falsification of history and of dividing the historical memory of the peoples of the former USSR and the allies of World War II in particular. Finally, it contributes to the consolidation of efforts of the national professional community of historians and archivists and to propagation of dialogue of Russian historians and archivists with their colleagues from near and far abroad.

Keywords

World War II, historical memory, historical policy, Munich Betrayal, Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Poland, post-Soviet space, Baltic states, Rosarchiv, Russian State Military Archive, Ukraine.

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