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“There Are No Obstacles to Issuing Permits to the Said Merchants...” Letters of the Military Governor of the Ural Oblast N. A. Verevkin to the Orenburg Governor General N. A. Kryzhanovskii (1872–73)

Abstract

The article presents previously unpublished correspondence between the Orenburg Governor General N. A. Kryzhanovskii and the Military Governor of the Ural Oblast N. A. Verevkin

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concerning alcoholic beverages distribution by individuals in the steppe fortifications. The messages are written in an official style, as befits the position of correspondents. When describing the documents, the principle of contextual-historical analysis has been applied to establish connections between historical situation and conditions of documents' creation. The article is to make archival information available to researchers of regional history, administration in the Russian periphery in the 19th century, and pre-revolutionary entrepreneurship, as well as to anyone interested in history. The current assessment of spheres of interaction between state and private sector of economy makes the analysis of such cooperation in historical retrospect more relevant. The problem of regulating the alcohol market, quite relevant in modern Russia, was also reflected in official papers. The analytical part of the study attempts to give an impression of administrative structure of the Orenburg Governorate in the 1870s and its territorial division and raises the question of motives of commanding officers of forts and higher regional authorities in their favorable response to entrepreneurs' petitions. Despite their relative brevity, the messages contain much information on history and regional lore. They provide names of some Orenburg merchants, outline geography of the alcohol trade outside cities of the Orenburg region, permit to assess the scale of organizational problems. The archival data shows the ambivalent position of commanders who required continuous shipments of wine, food, and basic necessities, but needed to prevent binge drinking of the personnel. The algorithm for processing documents to license sale of weak and strong alcohol inside fortress walls reflects enormity of bureaucratic apparatus in the gubernia and nationwide. The article concludes that motives of favorable decisions of the Orenburg Governor Generalship administration on the entrepreneurs' petitions remain unclear, and therefore, the nature of relations between merchants and regional administration in sphere of alcohol shipments to steppe fortresses requires further research.



Keywords

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Historical sources, alcohol trade, steppe fortifications, Military Governor, Orenburg Governor General, Ural Oblast, merchants, sale permit, N. A. Kryzhanovskii, N. A. Verevkin.

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