

UDK 930.2

"SHARING EXPERIENCE IN RUNNING A MASTER'S PROGRAMME "PUBLIC HISTORY: HISTORICAL INFORMATICS AND MEDIA-TECHNOLOGIES IN HISTORY"

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***Abstract:** The goals and practical aspects of running the Master's Programme in Public History at the BFU named after I.I. Kant are reported. The relevance and practical demand for professional historians with a new set of competencies is substantiated. The arising complications and prospects for the future development of the above mentioned master's programme are noted.*

***Keywords:** Public History, historical informatics, media technologies in history, GIS, project activity, historical consulting.*

Master's programmes in history in higher education in Russia are mostly focused on the education of history researches and history teachers providing students with a deep methodological and historiographical knowledge. Meanwhile, nowadays the search for new forms of training professional historians, who can apply their knowledge in addition to traditional spheres of application in higher and secondary schools, archives, museums, etc., is becoming ever more urgent.

Therefore, we turned to the practice of teaching abroad, i.e. in the Anglo-Saxon countries of the programmes "Public History".

It is also important to note, that "Public History", a becoming an academic discipline in the US in the second half of the 1970s, was a response to the growth of social activism and the widespread use of historical material in public discussions. Another motive for its development was the technological revolution in media space and the development of digital technologies that started circulating around that time, which opened up new opportunities for studying and presenting historical knowledge.

Currently, "Public History" as a historical discipline is taught in more than one hundred and fifty universities in the United States. In this country the National Council for Public History operates (National Council on Public History), several regular publications are published, including the highly authoritative "Public history news". The subject of public history is widely represented in the blogosphere of America.

In addition to the United States, "Public History", as a historical programme, is taught in the Anglo-Saxon countries - Canada, Australia and Great Britain. There are national councils for public history, scientific magazines are published, and the problems of public history are subject to spirited debates in the media space. For example, in England, courses for public history are taught at many universities, starting with the Master's programme of Oxford University that goes back to the initiative of Hilda Keane, author of many articles and books on public history. At Lancaster University, there are several master's programmes: "History for Life", "Historical approaches to the territory and the region", "Project of historical consulting".

Meanwhile in the rest of Europe with exception of Great Britain, "Public History" as a discipline and a scientific school makes only the first steps. In the academic community, even the term is disputed, and, for example, in Germany, the concept of "Applied History" (Angewandte Geschichte) is used as a competing one. The very introduction of the methodology and practices of the "Public History" in the academic space of Europe produced justified concerns of two kinds: 1) fear of excessive influence of state institutions and political conjuncture; 2) prejudice against the commercialization and medialisation of history. In addition, in our opinion, the conservative tradition of countering American innovations played a role in Europe.

However, at the beginning of the new millennium, the programmes of Applied History (Angewandte Geschichte) were launched at Central-European universities. They opened their doors in Zurich, Berlin, Aichstet-Ingolstadt, Mannheim and Heidelberg, and other university towns. Since 2009, the International Federation for Public History established by historians of many countries, conducts numerous conferences, and publishes its scientific journal. Thus, "Public History" undergoes the process of institutionalization, which is manifested in professional associations, specialized publications, awarded academic degrees in public history, and the growing presence of this new field of historical knowledge in the media environment.

In the post-Soviet space and Russia, public history takes only first steps and its interpretation is very pluralistic, including "applied history", "popular history," "public history," and even "historical politics" [1, p. 10]. While "public history", according to Alexei Miller, is a form of dialogue, "historical politics" contributes to the destruction of the "space for dialog" [2, p. 10].

In Russia there are numerous articles published, "Public History" is addressed at scientific conferences, since 2015 a very informative web portal "Public History" has been running. "Public history" begins to gradually take root in the academic consciousness and teaching practice. In 2012, first applications for the Master's programme "Public history: Historical knowledge in modern society" were accepted at the Moscow higher school of social and economic sciences headed by the well-known Russian historian and literary critic A.L. Zorin, and managed by R.B. Konchakov.

Another center of "Public History" is the Higher school of economics, its master's programmes have been opened at its Moscow branch: "Information

Resources of Historical Science" and "Management of Historical and Humanities Projects", and the Master's Programme "Applied and Interdisciplinary History" was launched at the HSE in St. Petersburg. At the European University of St. Petersburg there is a master's programme "Modern approaches to the study of the politics of memory and cultural memory". Among regional universities the master's program "Theory and Practice of Applied Historical Research" of Perm University and the master's programme in public history at the Baltic Federal University in Kaliningrad shall be mentioned, both being realized since 2015.

Speaking about the content of the course "Public History" it should be noted, that there are two competing approaches in its contents and teaching methods - the first one singles out the idea of new forms of presentation and application of historical knowledge, counting on a new toolkit - the use of digital and media technologies. In this field, Public History aims to make history understandable for society and educate historians not only for teaching in schools and universities, but also for mastering new fields of application of history in a practical field, along with academic science and education.

The second approach was prompted by a similar idea: making history understandable and necessary for people, and fueled by the so-called "New historical movement", which was formed out from a popular hobby for independent study of history. Its adepts believe that everyone is competent in his own life experience. This gave impetus to the study of history "from below". Modern practice has caused the emergence of numerous historical and local lore clubs, the movement of so-called "reenactors", the emergence of numerous sites and resources on the Internet, constant historical discussions in social networks. To serve these needs, the practices of the so-called "local history," "microhistory," "personal history," "oral history," as variations of "Public History" began to develop.

When choosing the teaching strategy for the Master's programme "Public History: historical informatics and media technologies in history", BFU named after I. Kant stressed out the applied tasks in historical education and emphasized modern teaching methods using achievements of historical informatics and media technologies. The master's programme was opened in September 2015, and in June 2017 first graduates were registered. Now it is possible to draw a number of preliminary conclusions about the practical implementation of our initial plans.

The Master's programme consisted of a compulsory, basic and variable parts; included lectures and practical classes, practices, research work, state examination, writing and defense of the master's thesis. The master's programme included the development or substantial modernization of 18 separate teaching materials for the following courses and types of academic work: (I will mention only the most significant for this programme). The courses on "Reconstruction of the past in the computer environment and media space", "Databases" and "Geoinformation systems" in socio-historical activities, "3D reconstruction of objects of historical and cultural heritage", "Media and digital technologies "in museum work and the protection of monuments were taught. In the form of a seminar and a research workshop, the

courses "Management of the Digitalization of Historical and Cultural Projects" and "Historical Expertise and Consultation" were taught. Teaching staff was attracted from the Department of Historical Informatics of the Moscow State University named after L.I. Borodkin and D.I. Zheryatyev, and from the Moscow Higher School of Social and Economic Sciences programme manager of "Public History" R.B. Konchakov was attracted. In addition, to ensure the educational, project and practical work at the Humanitarian Institute of the BFU, the Center for Social and Humanistic Informatics (supervisor R.B. Kochakov, director E.V. Baranova) was founded; corresponding cooperation agreements with institutions of public administration, culture and education of the Region were concluded.

Two years have passed and we see how the very method of teaching the humanities has changed, alongside with lecture and practical exercises in the form of active public and project activities. All undergraduates participated in several projects, acted as participants, executors and project managers. Such as the creation of a database of regional media "Soviet time", the project "People's Photo Album", the development of the educational resource "Russian-speaking media environment of the Baltic region." The candidates submitted applications and are holders and participants of scientific grants of the RFFI, RGNF, regional government, foreign scientific institutes. The students participated in various scientific seminars and conferences at the university, in scientific centers of our country and abroad. Studying themselves, they taught others: they acted on television, conducted cycling tours within the educational project "The Wheel of History", acted as lecturers and directed projects in the regional young historian school. They are actively involved in the media space, run blogs on local history of the region. They created the Consulting Bureau for Regional History, which alongside with the Center for Social and Humanistic Informatics of the BFU concluded an agreement with the Kaliningrad office of RZD on writing history and design for RZD museum and administration of the web site on the history of the regional railway.

The result of a rich, diverse and fruitful work was the successful defense of master's theses. All graduates were employed already during their studies, being employed in the Regional Agency for the Protection of Historical Monuments, the University, the museums of Kaliningrad, the editorial office of the regional television, etc.

However, the gained experience revealed a number of problems that require constructive discussion and reflection. In particular, the Master's programme, which in our view requires a careful restriction and content reduction seems to be an overburdened. There was a problem of providing separate subjects with non-resident teachers, which sets the task of training local specialists in "Public History". The integration of the master's programme into latest developments around "Public History" in the neighboring countries of Eastern Europe, especially in the context of overcoming conflicts in the spirit of "political history", is another task to be performed in the future. Finally, a good example of historians inspired colleagues

from the Institute of the Humanities at the BFU to adopt some didactical techniques tested by "Public History".

Therefore, in the forthcoming academic year, it is planned to expand the block of disciplines in the field of digital humanities and project activities, extending it to the major of master's programmes of the Institute of the Humanities of BFU. To ensure the objective and academic mobility, it is planned to open a network programme in digital humanities together with the Perm University. Similar negotiations are being held with the Belorussian State University.

In conclusion, it should be noted, that our Master's programme is designed to fill the missing links between the scientific production of historical knowledge and the growing public interest in the past, and the delivery of historical material itself is done via modern media and digital language. We proceed from the premise, that historians and historical science should pay more attention to the historical debates in the society, perceiving these needs and demands not as an inappropriate interference of amateurs, but as a chance to be asked-for and the task of being heard and evaluated as an expert. Historians should have discovered the space of public history long ago, with deep understanding of the complexities and peculiarities of this sphere. For this purpose, educational programmes are created, new practices are introduced, and specialists, capable of dialogue with society shall appear.

References

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