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*Collection of documents and social consciousness*

*Summary*

In the past three centuries the human race obtained a huge number of publications in the form of collected documents. In the replies to numerous questions on the essence of that phenomenon, its effects and influences on our present reality, the motives that determine at a given historical moment on which topic a collection of documents will be published, why the human race has the need for such a document rather than only the work of a historian, etc., important explanations can sometimes be obtained for many historic problems. Nowadays it is particularly important to reply to the question of whether archeography is “the servant girl of time” or rather a volume of all-encompassing knowledge objectively establishing links between the documents and personalities, the society and the state.

One of the laws behind the existence of a collection of documents is the *law of mutuality*, i.e. the existence of mutual links and the mutual action between the collected documents and social consciousness. Every volume of collected documents undergoes three stages of existence – *the stage of topicality, the stage of inertia and the stage of maturing*.

The reason underlying every idea to prepare a collection of documents is the intention to make the document optimally accessible. The motives from which such intentions develop and are implemented (*the driving forces*) can vary interminably. Nevertheless, these differences can be reduced to several general driving forces – the scientific-agnostic, educational, political, publicist, pragmatic and didactic.

A document in collected documents seems to “penetrate” the past. This “penetration” in order to confirm or build up on the previously acquired knowledge about the past can take place *therapeutically* (gradually, depending on the possibilities of discovering a new document, forming new research interests) and *surgically* (when the need in society becomes mature for a revolutionary “penetration”, this usually being the case with respect to documents that had been carefully hidden away).

The “awareness” about the past on the basis of collected documents is a complex phenomenon that presupposes the need to abide by certain basic principles: *the principle of programming, systematization, fundamentality, novelty and of apolitical character*.