

# Archives Administration in the Soviet Union

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I HAVE never had a chance to visit Russia and work in Soviet archives. In fact, I have never been farther east and nearer to Russia than the Alexanderplatz in Berlin. Therefore I do not pretend to give infallible judgments on the merits or faults of the administration of archives in the Soviet Union. In preparing this paper I had to rely on printed materials, which I found more abundant than I had expected in the Library of Congress. My approach is not that of an archivist or a record management specialist but that of a historian with special interest in the history of Eastern Europe, in its organization of historical research, and in its documentary sources.

A few months ago, the American Philosophical Society published a selection from the correspondence of John Franklin Jameson, who, in the Department of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution, as editor of the *American Historical Review*, and as one of the godfathers of the National Archives, served American scholarship with great devotion and distinction. In this correspondence there are two letters, of July 19, 1916, and July 16, 1917, addressed to one of the most distinguished historians of Tsarist Russia, Alexander Lappo-Danilevskii.<sup>2</sup> Jameson had met his Russian colleague in London in 1913 at the Fourth International Congress of Historians, which had accepted an invitation to convene the next congress in the summer of 1918 in St. Petersburg. Fate, as we know, willed differently; and at the time when the congress was to be held

<sup>1</sup> Paper read at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Washington, D. C., October 11, 1956. The author received his doctoral degree from the University of Berlin in 1924. Since 1946 he has been successively an American member of the Berlin team of the Inter-Allied German War Documents Project, curator of the German and Slavic collections of the Hoover Library at Stanford University, and Director of Research of the Inter-Departmental War Documentation Project. He is now Central European Specialist at the Library of Congress. In 1930 he published in *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, vol. 39, a bibliographical article on Soviet archives.

<sup>2</sup> John Franklin Jameson, *An Historian's World; Selections From the Correspondence . . .*, edited by Elizabeth Donnan and Leo F. Stock (American Philosophical Society, *Memoirs*, vol. 42; Philadelphia, 1956), p. 198, 211.

in the Russian capital, Russia was in the throes of defeat and revolution.

From Jameson's second letter it appears that Lappo-Danilevskii had asked for advice on the reform of the Russian archives. This, like many other issues in the cultural life of his country, had become a matter of public discussion under the Provisional Government of Russia. Here is Jameson's answer, dated July 16, 1917:

The National Government of the United States has done practically nothing in the way of concentrating its archives. We stand in the lowest stage of evolution in that respect, — government papers, in almost all cases, still remaining in the departments and even in the bureaus, in which they originated. Therefore, the American literature of the subject is a literature of agitation for an improvement rather than anything from which the archivists of another country could learn of achievements that would interest them. . . . The matter is in progress, and success is sure to arrive ultimately; and I suppose, the longer it is delayed, the more we shall be able to avail ourselves of European experience. Therefore, it will be a pleasure to learn, by and by, what steps toward concentration have been taken in Russia.

Such was the situation nearly 40 years ago, when from American darkness in the field of archival centralization no ray of light could penetrate the even greater Russian darkness. Today a stage has been reached where the United States and the Soviet organization of archives stand side by side as prototypes of the most modern achievements — as, so to speak, the last word in Western and Eastern archives organization. It will accord with the spirit of Dr. Jameson's letter to report to you on the steps taken in Russia toward a reorganization and concentration of archives. I shall deal very summarily with the history of the Russian archives in the pre-revolutionary period, and then I shall discuss in more detail the effect of Marxist ideology in placing an emphasis on the political role of archives that is completely alien to our conception.

The introduction to Frank Alfred Golder's *Guide to Materials for American History in Russian Archives*, published in two parts by the Carnegie Institution in 1913 and 1937, still remains an exemplary marshaling of the essential facts of archival history and legislation in imperial Russia. It is important to realize that the reform work of Peter the Great extended to the archives and that it was he who in 1724 set up the first Russian historical archives in a modern sense by concentrating in the Kremlin the documents of the Muscovite foreign ministry, the Office of Ambassadors (*Posol'skii prikaz*). Under Catherine the Great, in the 1780's, archives were set up in St. Petersburg and Moscow for the extant documentation

of the Muscovite central administration before Peter's reforms and for administrative files created since. During the 19th century, besides the St. Petersburg ministerial archives for different branches of the administration, several territorial archives, for instance those in Kiev and Kharkov for the Ukraine, were established. Two directors of the Archives of the Ministry of Justice in St. Petersburg, N. V. Kalachov and D. Ia. Samokvasov, gave much thought to their calling and favored radical reforms, suggesting a central administration for all Russian archives, one central archives for all branches of the central administration, and better training for archivists. None of these proposals materialized, however, except that certain courses in the auxiliary sciences of history were introduced at the archeological institutes of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and archival commissions were established in the provinces. The commissions remained to the end of the Tsarist era as rather powerless organs with limited advisory functions.

The Bolshevik revolution swept away all that hitherto had existed in the field of archives administration. The Soviet reform went further in centralization than had ever before been envisioned and added something new — a totalitarian unification. In the July 1940 issue of the *American Archivist* Dr. Posner, in his stimulating discussion of some aspects of archival development since the French Revolution, wrote the following:

The years since the end of the First World War have seen some entirely new developments. The Russian archives legislation has created the concept of the unity of governmental archives, according to which all records that are kept in government offices or have been transferred to archives depositories constitute one undivided and unique *fonds*. The decree of January 30, 1922, empowered the Russian archives administration to examine the files of all government offices of its own accord and, if necessary, to apply to the Central Executive Committee for remedy of conditions. The American National Archives Act has made similar, although less radical, provisions.<sup>3</sup>

These remarks clearly show that the Bolshevik revolution had become a dividing line not only in the history of Russian archives but in the theory and practice of archival organization of both Western and Eastern Europe. Incidentally, most of Dr. Posner's paper was translated into Russian and was published in 1941 in *Arkhivnoe Delo* (Archival Matters), the Soviet professional journal.

The reform of the Russian Archives after the October Revolution might be regarded as a late step in the series of great reforms which

<sup>3</sup> *American Archivist*, 3:171 (July 1940).

began in 1861 with the liberation of the peasants and which were strongly influenced by Western — Prussian, French, and English — ideas and experiences. It brought about in Russia a delayed victory for the ideas of the French Revolution in the archival field. The French laws of 1794 and 1796 had a direct influence on the drafting of early Soviet archives legislation in 1918 and 1919.

The undivided, unique, unified State Archives *fonds* — comprising both existing historical archives up to January 1, 1917, and current records from which the postrevolutionary historical archives are being built up — is the important Soviet innovation in the field of archival science and practice. As far as documentary materials are concerned, Soviet archives, libraries, and museums form a unit, since the Main Administration of Archives exercises authority also over the manuscript collections of libraries and museums.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the authority vested in the Main Administration in its dealings with government agencies and other public institutions regarding the filing systems of their current materials and the destruction of files or their disposition in archives is without precedent in the history of European archives.

There are two outstanding facts in the history of the organization of the Main Administration of the Soviet archives — a long period, between 1922 and 1938, of being directly under the highest political organs of the Soviet power, the central executive committees; and periods of subordination to ministries, before 1922 and again since 1938. Originally the Main Administration of Archives operated under the authority of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Great Russian Republic (RSFSR). Similarly the present Administration of Archives for the Soviet Union is part of the Ministry of the Interior. The years during which the Main Administration of Archives was directly under the highest political organs of the state were its formative years. It enjoyed an independence and authority in its dealings with other government agencies comparable with the authority originally vested in our National Archives. Its transformation into an organ of the Ministry of the Interior may be compared — *mutatis mutandis* — with the effects of the Federal Records Act of 1950, which brought our National Archives and Records Service into the framework of the General Services Administration. And it may be mentioned here that Dr. Posner in analyzing the final organization of the National Archives into branches charged with the administration of records from

<sup>4</sup> Decree of Mar. 29, 1941; see also editorial, "A Document of Enormous Political Importance [in Russian]," in *Arkhivnoe Delo*, 1941, no. 1; and *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1956, no. 3, p. 176.

functionally related *provenances* has pointed to the example of the former German Reichsarchiv and to the parallel provided by the organization of the Soviet archives.<sup>5</sup>

Today ten central State Archives have become the backbone of the Soviet archival setup. They are:

- The Archives of the October Revolution and the building-up of Socialism.
- The Historical Archives at Moscow and Leningrad, of materials before 1917.
- The Archives of very old documents in Moscow.
- The Archives of literature and art.
- The Archives of motion pictures, photographs, and sound recordings.
- The Red Army Archives.
- The Military History Archives at Moscow and Leningrad.
- The Naval History Archives at Leningrad.

For many of these central depositories inventories and guides have been published since the 1930's.

Two types of archives were accorded a privileged status outside the Main Administration's authority — the foreign policy archives and the Communist Party archives.

When the new rulers of Russia proclaimed and postulated the end of secret diplomacy, this seemed also to imply the end of secret archives. But the Soviet Government traveled only a short distance on the road to open diplomacy. The new device was dropped when it seriously impeded the conduct of foreign affairs. Soviet diplomacy has become a tower of secrecy for reasons highlighted by the occasional revelation of documentary proof, from the archives of Soviet diplomatic missions, that its activities have not always been wholly diplomatic. A number of "revelations" in recent years, however, of spurious Soviet documents can be cited as proof for the contention that the greater the secrecy under which revolutionary conspirators and others operate, the greater the temptation for their enemies to forge documents; and, if the falsification is skillfully done, the greater the difficulty of disproving the document. It was almost 40 years before the last doubts as to the fraudulence of the so-called Sisson documents were removed and their real origin was established.<sup>6</sup>

The Soviet Government guards its diplomatic correspondence with a true mania for secrecy. It went so far as to remove the diplomatic archives of the last 150 years from the authority of the Main Administration of Archives and to attach them to the Foreign Min-

<sup>5</sup> Ernst Posner, "The National Archives and the Archival Theorist," in *American Archivist*, 18:212 (July 1955).

<sup>6</sup> George F. Kennan, "The Sisson Documents," in *Journal of Modern History*, 28:130-154 (June 1956).

istry as a special department. Only the archives of the Communist Party itself, of its youth branch, the Komsomol, and of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism (formerly the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute) have the same privileged status.

The prerevolutionary ministerial archives have been succeeded by large-scale new record centers of current files, especially since the original period of 5 years, fixed in 1919 for the disposition of administrative files either by destruction or by transfer to the post-revolutionary historical archives, was extended, in 1929, to 10 years.<sup>7</sup> It seems to be an established principle — the extent to which it is put into practice I am unable to assess — that organs of the Archives Administration should decide which agency files, on account of their intrinsic political, practical, or scholarly value, should be preserved.

It is noteworthy that soon after the enforced annexation and bolshevization of the Baltic states in the summer of 1940 special regulations were issued by the state governments remodeling the administration of the archives in their countries in accordance with Soviet legislation.<sup>8</sup> The papers of my colleagues will show that the Soviet type of archives organization is no longer limited to the Soviet Union proper, but has exercised and is exercising distinct and increasing influence on states in the Soviet orbit; this is true also of East Germany and Communist China.<sup>9</sup>

So much for the history and administration of the archives.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See V. Kučabský, "Das Gesetz über die Archiv-Verwaltung der RSFSR vom 28 Januar 1929," in *Zeitschrift für osteuropäische Geschichte*, n. f., 5:84-109, 248-262 (1931).

<sup>8</sup> Latvian ordinance, Aug. 22, 1940, in *Arkhivnoe Delo*, 1940, no. 4; decree of the Estonian Council of People's Commissars, Sept. 4, 1940, in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1956, no. 3, p. 248.

<sup>9</sup> In commenting on the ordinance on public archives issued by the East German Government in July 1950, Dr. Posner points out that the Archives Administration in the Soviet Zone is completely centralized in accordance with the example of the Soviet Union. *American Archivist*, 14:381-384 (Oct. 1951). For China, see M. S. Seleznev, "Der Aufbau des Archivwesens in der chinesischen Volksrepublik," in supplement to *Archivmitteilungen*, 1956, no. 2 (translated from *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1956, no. 6).

<sup>10</sup> For further studies, Adolf Brenneke, *Archivkunde* (Leipzig, 1953), chapter 14, "Russland," p. 257-277, is recommended. Brenneke's well-balanced judgment is an antidote for Ilia L. Maiakovskii's one-sidedness in his article on the Soviet archives in *Boľshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* [Great Soviet Encyclopedia] (2d ed., 1950), vol. 3. A German translation of this article, *Das Archivwesen in der Sowjetunion* (40 p.), published in 1952 as no. 1 of the Institut für Archivwissenschaft's *Schriftenreihe*, is out of print; but Harvard College Library has a copy — call no. Bp 9.12 (1). See also I. Rösler, "Ueber die Terminologie russischer Archivdokumente," in *Schriftenreihe*, 1956, no. 7.

Other recent publications on Soviet archives are: I. K. Dodorov, "Einige Bemerkungen zur Archivforschung in der Sowjetunion," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 2:457-467 (1954); Josef Hemmerle, "Entwicklung und Aufbau des Archiv-



Regarding the ideology of the Soviet archivists I want to convey to you some of the fundamental ideas of their professional ethics. They justify their work not only in the name of the Party, government, and scholarly interests but also in the name of their idols: Marx, Engels, Lenin, and (until recently) Stalin.<sup>11</sup> Of Karl Marx, who took the archives of the First International into his personal custody, it is known that he meticulously kept personal papers. He angrily blamed the leaders of the Paris Commune in 1871 for having neglected to confiscate and use the archives of their bourgeois enemies. This lesson was not lost on the Bolsheviks, so that Lenin could write after the usurpation of power: "We have learned much from the Paris Commune and we have not repeated its grievous mistakes." During his stay in Switzerland as a political refugee, Lenin had been instrumental in setting up archives of the Bolshevik Bureau at Geneva. It is, therefore, not surprising that Lenin, whose interest in administrative details extended to filing systems,<sup>12</sup> after seizing power became concerned about the fate of the archives.

The primary interest of Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders in the archives was definitely political and propagandistic and not historical. They were anxious to safeguard materials of the Tsarist police and any other materials that could throw light on the fight of Tsarism against the revolutionary movement, on the surveillance of revolutionaries at home and abroad, or on the use of *agents provocateurs*. The basic decree for the reorganization and centralization of the Russian archives was promulgated over Lenin's signature on June 1, 1918. It is remarkable that at a time when mortal foreign and internal dangers were piling up against the Soviet State in the summer of 1918, its organizers or — to be more exact — its real leader, Lenin, found time to take an interest in archival matters and to issue a decree that revolutionized the existing system of the Russian archives. Lenin's active interest in the archives and their centralization was comparable to the well-known interest of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The professional and ideological training of the majority of Soviet archivists is entrusted to the Istoriko-Arkhivnyi Institut in Moscow. It was established in 1930 as the Institute for Archival Science; in 1932 its name was changed. The definition of the institute's task by its present rector, A. S. Roslova, reads as follows:

wesens in der UdSSR," in *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 50/51: 117-122 (1955); and Helmut Lötze, "Das sowjetische Archivwesen; Bericht über eine Reise nach Moskau," in *Archivmitteilungen*, 1955, no. 4, p. 19-21.

<sup>11</sup> I. Maiakovskii, "The Attitude of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin Toward Archives and Archival Materials [in Russian]," in *Arkhiivnoe Delo*, 1940, no. 4, p. 1-14.

<sup>12</sup> *Arkhiivnoe Delo*, 1940, no. 4, p. 29.

"Its purpose is to educate archivists capable of mastering the new tasks and — equipped with the only scientific theory in existence, namely Marxism-Leninism — able to overcome the bourgeois conception in archival science and to initiate and to develop a Soviet science of archives."<sup>13</sup> From this declaration of purpose it becomes clear why this institute has not been recognized by impartial observers as similar to or equal to its counterparts in Western Europe: the *École des Chartes* in Paris, the *Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* in Vienna, and the *West German Archivschule* in Marburg.

Thus Marxist theory, as background of Soviet archival theory and practice, is the prerequisite for the training of a specialist. Or, to quote from last year's *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*: "The great task is to develop a knowledge of sources based on Marxist-Leninist methodology, revising and integrating all the best that has been attained in the past."<sup>14</sup>

The basic disciplines represented in the institute by full chairs are: the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, the history of the nations of the Soviet Union, the history and organization of archives, the history of State institutions and their administrative organization, the theory and practice of archives, and auxiliary sciences of history. Old Russian, German, English, and French are required languages; Latin is optional. Compared with American training courses this is a very European curriculum for 5 years of study. The number of students is staggering; they have increased from between 230 and 250 in the early 1930's to about 1,800 in 1955. One thousand of them live in dormitories; the others are not full-time students but are enrolled in evening or correspondence courses.

Probably every Soviet archivist did well to take to heart in 1931 Stalin's article "On Some Questions on the History of Bolshevism," in which he attacked followers of Trotsky and other "falsifiers" of the history of the Communist Party and stressed the importance of archival materials as historical sources. Stalin's slogan, "falsifiers of history," became standard invective, freely used against editors of documents and historians who provoked Soviet displeasure. The Soviet rejoinder to our State Department's documentary publication *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (1948) was a pamphlet entitled *Falsifiers of History*, anonymously published by the Information

<sup>13</sup> A. S. Roslova, "Das Moskauer Staatliche Historische und Archiv-Institut," in *Archivmitteilungen*, 1956, no. 1, p. 11-16, translated from *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1955, no. 5.

<sup>14</sup> A. A. Novosel'skii, in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1955, no. 4, p. 234.



Bureau of the Soviet Union<sup>15</sup> but undoubtedly with the approval of Stalin and Molotov. It attempted to refute the German documents in Anglo-American custody about German-Soviet relations by using German documents in Soviet custody on Germany's relations with Great Britain, France, and the United States. The Soviet Government did not accept the American challenge to open its own secret archives and thus authentically reveal from its own records its stand during the crucial period of Soviet neutrality during the last war. The Anglo-American-French edition of German Foreign Ministry documents, the *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, is continuously vilified and belittled by Soviet critics. A well-known Soviet historian, Nikolai P. Poletika, has given a lecture at Leningrad University on the topic "The Falsification of Diplomatic Documents as the Method of Bourgeois Historical Science."<sup>16</sup>

One of the most important functions of the Soviet Archives is its publication activity. The art of editing sources has been developed in today's Russia almost into an auxiliary historical discipline, with elaborate rules laying special emphasis on editorial principles for modern and contemporary documents. The Russian art of editing can be traced back to a political pamphlet that Vice-Chancellor P. P. Shafirov wrote in 1716 by command of Peter the Great, to justify Peter's having made war in 1700 against Charles XII of Sweden. Shafirov published a series of documents bearing on Russo-Swedish relations between 1564 and 1700, stressing in footnotes that they had been compared with the originals.<sup>17</sup> Against present-day Soviet editorial perfectionism it should be remembered that the beginning of Bolshevik foreign policy in November of 1917 was marked by the crude and amateurish publication of documents from the archives of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs purporting to reveal the secret treaties of the Entente. This publication was a political move of accusation against the "imperialist Powers." The same motivation in the late 1920's impelled the publication of Russian prewar and wartime documents on international relations in the period of imperialism.<sup>18</sup>

In internal as well as in foreign policy the political significance of the archives is axiomatic and is an important consideration in publication "policies." Ten years after the October Revolution a

<sup>15</sup> *Falsifiers of History* (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1948. 58 p.).

<sup>16</sup> *Vestnik Leningradskogo Universiteta*, 1948, no. 6, p. 143.

<sup>17</sup> *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1955, no. 4, p. 201.

<sup>18</sup> *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus; Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zaristischen und der Provisorischen Regierung, 1878-1917*, translated and edited by Otto Hoetzsch; and O. Hoetzsch in *Zeitschrift für osteuropäische Geschichte*, n. f., 5:348-355 (1931).

leading archivist, Vladimir V. Maksakov, wrote: "The archives are the armory of political weapons which we shall use for many years to come in the political struggle against the White Guards [the counter-revolutionaries] by revealing their past and trying to prevent them from distorting the history and the meaning of our revolution."<sup>19</sup>

While denouncing the German publication of prewar documents in *Die Grosse Politik* and the Gooch and Temperley collection of British documents as "patriotic" publications, Maksakov asserted that the Russian documentary publication on the period of imperialism was unquestionably in full accord with the Marxist-Leninist conception of the First World War.<sup>20</sup>

The use of archives in Soviet foreign policy may be illustrated by the following example: In 1936 there was published a collection of documents (from the Central Archives of the October Revolution in Moscow and Kharkov) on the collapse of German policy in the Ukraine in 1918. This collection was clearly conceived as a warning against German designs to repeat the Ukrainian scheme of 1918, and it was in line with Stalin's warning to Hitler to keep his "pig's snout out of the Soviet garden." This was said at a time when — to use another expression from Stalin's picturesque language — German and Soviet statesmen used to throw garbage cans at each other.

Since the early 1920's the Committee for the Study of the History of the Communist Party and of the October Revolution (known under the abbreviation Istpart), the Lenin Institute, and the Marx-Engels Institute (which in the 1930's became the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute) have been centers for editing archival materials on the history of Communism, including the collected works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. The Marx-Engels Institute tried to obtain the original or a photostat of every scrap of paper in the handwriting of Marx and Engels. Its publication activity has bordered on a Marx-Engels philology and has laid itself open to reasonable question by publishing, for instance, against the advice of Albert Einstein, the notes of Engels on the philosophy of nature — notes which are of no scientific value and contribute almost nothing to a better understanding of Engels' intellectual development.

A recent paper in French by two Soviet historians, A. A. Novosel'skii and V. I. Shunkov, on the editing of historical sources in the Soviet Union, which was distributed at the 10th International Congress of Historians in Rome in 1955, surveys the materials that

<sup>19</sup> *Arkhivnoe Delo*, 1928, no. 3, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Istoriik-Marksist*, 1929, no. 11, p. 228.

have been published from Soviet archives.<sup>21</sup> It may, therefore, suffice here to point out the main topics of historical interest in the Soviet Union, which are often represented by published collections of relevant sources. With the accent on modern and contemporary history, the principal fields of research are the history of the October Revolution and of the period of civil war and intervention, the economic policy of the Soviet Government, its agrarian policy, the nationalization of industries, and the history of Soviet society. In progress toward publication are collections of documents and materials dealing with prerevolutionary personalities and events, for instance two series on Russian Army and Navy commanders, a series on the labor movement in 19th-century Russia, and another on the peasant movement from the end of the 18th to the end of the 19th century; also a series on geographical discoveries by Russian explorers, stressing Russian "priorities" in the Pacific, Northeast Asia, and Northern America (Alaska). Work on several pre-revolutionary representative collections of sources has been resumed — for instance, on the complete collection of Russian chronicles (1949, after an interval of 20 years) and on the letters and documents of Peter the Great (1946, after an interval of 29 years). In these instances the Historical Institute of the Union Academy of Sciences works in close cooperation with the Administration of Archives. Recently a continuation of the long-dormant series, "The International Relations in the Period of Imperialism," has been suggested.<sup>22</sup>

Several anniversaries have signaled the beginning of impressive collections of relevant sources: the centenary in 1925 of the insurrection of the Decembrists, the tercentenary in 1954 of the Treaty of Pereyaslav between the Ukrainian Cossacks and Muscovy, and, in 1955, the 50th anniversary of the first Russian revolution.

Nothing in the Soviet Union compares even remotely with our series *United States Army in World War II*, which is based on the scrupulous collection and exploitation of all pertinent printed and unprinted sources. To the contrary. Concerning the most recent collection of essays on the war on the Eastern front, published under the imprint of the Historical Institute of the Union Academy of Sciences, the reviewer, E. A. Boltin, in *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History) of May 1956, writes: "The authors . . . did not con-

<sup>21</sup> *Izдание istoricheskikh istochnikov v SSSR; la publication des sources historiques en URSS* [text in Russian and French] (Moscow, 1955. 63 p.). See also S. I. Iakubovskaia, "Contribution to the Question of Exploring and Publishing Sources of the Soviet Period [in Russian]," in *Problemy Istochnikovedeniia*, 14:46-59 (1955).

<sup>22</sup> *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1955, no. 4, p. 242.

sult new sources. The book has not a single reference to archive documents or materials previously unpublished."<sup>23</sup>

Five-year planning, however, the dominating factor of Soviet economy, includes archives. For the period 1956-60 the Main Administration of Archives has announced a publication program of not less than 400 volumes of document collections and reference materials.

Of Soviet periodicals devoted to the discussion of archival matters or documentary publication I shall name and characterize three: *Arkhivnoe Delo*, *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, and *Krasnyi Arkhiv* (Red Archives). Long ago Olga P. Palmer listed or abstracted in the *American Archivist* over a number of years the content of *Arkhivnoe Delo*, which ceased publication in 1941 after 61 issues had appeared in 18 years. Regular features of each issue were sections devoted to archival science in the broadest sense, to the exchange of experiences in archives administration and organization, to the discussion of methods of preserving documents, and finally to book reviews and bibliography. With the increased xenophobia of the Stalin regime in the 1930's, a section which had dealt with the foreign relations of archives and had listed foreign visitors was discontinued. Since 1940, under the heading "The Best People in the Archives," short biographies of outstanding archival workers of the rank and file have been given. These biographies are of considerable sociological interest because they give information on the family background, training, Party membership, and careers of the subjects.

Up to June of 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, there had been published 106 volumes of *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, to which an excellent index has been compiled in the United States.<sup>24</sup> The documentary publications and documented articles in the *Krasnyi Arkhiv* have long been recognized by the historical profession as in many respects indispensable sources. In the interwar years German propaganda against the war-guilt clause of the Versailles Treaty exploited them to the limit. William L. Langer, in his *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, was one of the first American scholars to integrate carefully the new Russian documentation in his narrative.

<sup>23</sup> *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, no. 5, p. 151, translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 8, no. 31, p. 8-11 (Sept. 12, 1956).

<sup>24</sup> *Digest of the Krasnyi Arkhiv—Red Archives*, vols. 1-30, compiled by Leonid S. Rubinchek (Cleveland Public Library, 1947), vols. 31-106 compiled by Leona W. Eisele under the direction of Andrei A. Lobanov-Rostovsky (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1955). See also Leonid S. Rubinchek, "The Red Archives; a Review Article," in *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol. 6, nos. 18-19, p. 159-171 (1947).

On the other hand, the historian Mikhail Pokrovskii, who played a very influential role in the centralization of the Soviet archives, has said that the founding of the *Krasnyi Arkhiv* in 1922 was a rather daring undertaking, because the State Publishing House was reluctant to give financial support. In 1927 he wrote: "To make this type of publication self-supporting is approximately the same as to attempt to put military aviation or the exploration of the Arctic Ocean on a paying basis."<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the Soviet Union is the only country in the world which, since the beginning of 1955, has issued bimonthly a periodical exclusively devoted to the publication of documents (mainly of the Soviet period) and to the discussion of archival problems. Each issue of the *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* has an average of 250 pages. This journal offers the most up-to-date and the most comprehensive information on the present situation of archives in the Soviet Union and on Soviet archival science.<sup>26</sup>

The sensational 20th Communist Party Congress of February 1956, which destroyed the image of Stalin, has exercised a profound influence on what may be called work on the historical front.<sup>27</sup> Editorials in leading political and historical periodicals, such as *Partiinaiia Zhizn'* (Party Life), *Voprosy Istorii*,<sup>28</sup> and *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, have urged broader exploitation of archives for rewriting a de-Stalinized history of the recent past. There seems, however, to be an unbridgeable gap between historical objectivity — the intention to reveal the entire truth — and Party considerations, which, for ideological reasons, allow the revelation only of partial truth bordering on untruth. A spokesman for the Institute for Marxism-Leninism, M. D. Stuchebnikova, has made this point perfectly clear. She said: "The publication of Menshevik documents cannot be tolerated even when a Bolshevik influence can be seen in them. Our documents are published for a wide circle of readers and an incorrect selection of documents can only confuse them."<sup>29</sup>

Wrapped in their Marxist ideology, Soviet historians and archivists can think of their American colleagues only as representatives of a bourgeois and capitalist system. Let me conclude this paper by

<sup>25</sup> *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, 23:1 (1927).

<sup>26</sup> On *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1933, nos. 1-6, see I. Rösler in *Archivmitteilungen*, 1956, no. 1, p. 27-29.

<sup>27</sup> See "Soviet Congress Revising History," in *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 1956; and "[A. M.] Pankratova Outlines Changed Tasks of the Historians," in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 8, no. 12, p. 9-11, translated from *Pravda*, Feb. 22, 1956.

<sup>28</sup> "The 20th Party Congress and Problems of Research on Party History," in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 8, no. 19, p. 6-9, 18, translated from *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, no. 3, p. 3-12.

<sup>29</sup> *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, no. 2, p. 209, translated in Institute for the Study of the USSR (Munich), *Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 8, p. 20 (1956).

pointing out what Soviet authors think of American archives and the exploitation of their riches.

My first source in that respect is the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.

In the article on "Archives"<sup>30</sup> I. L. Maiakovskii asserts that in a class society the archives are used by the ruling classes as a means of holding their own, to maintain and to strengthen their ruling position and to enslave the working class. The main trends of archival development in capitalist states are sketched, singling out Germany and the United States as the most illuminating examples.

We are told that in the period of decay and of the general crisis of capitalism the bourgeoisie tries to use the centralization of archives for strengthening its governing position and for its struggle, the world over, with the "progressive" forces, and that this became especially clear in the centralization of archives carried through after the First World War in Germany and the United States. In the United States, according to the Soviet Encyclopedia, monopolistic capital created the National Archives for concentrating the documents of the Federal Government as one of the means of strengthening the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie. The Encyclopedia states that the Government of the United States has used for its own ends the difficulties in the way of rehabilitating European archives after the last war. It charges that in accordance with the usual rapacious policy of its monopolistic circles, the United States tried to extend its rule over the archives of all the capitalist countries of Europe under the cloak of giving help toward their reestablishment. American archivists, it goes on, organized at Paris in 1948 a committee of experts, which in the presence of an observer from the U. S. Department of the Army worked out the rules of an International Council on Archives and elected its officers. The International Council on Archives is pictured as a United States instrument of control over the archives of the capitalist countries and is declared to be a sign of their submission to the aims of the imperialist policy of the United States.<sup>31</sup>

I think it is unnecessary to correct before this group this strange picture; but in my opinion the utterance deserves recording as a piece of psychological warfare in the cold war on the "archival front." Not a word is said in the Soviet Encyclopedia to show that the International Council on Archives was set up under the auspices of UNESCO.

<sup>30</sup> *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* (2d ed., 1950), vol. 3, col. 176-184.

<sup>31</sup> Interestingly enough, representatives of the Soviet Union's Archives and those of other Eastern European countries attended the International Congress on Archives in Florence, Italy, in September 1956. — *Editor*.



My second source is the latest issue of the *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* received by the Library of Congress (1956, no. 3). Here a reviewer, B. P. Kanevskii, writes six pages on the *National Program for the Publication of Historical Documents*, which was submitted to the President of the United States in 1954 by the National Historical Publications Commission.<sup>32</sup>

The review actually deals with two topics: our national publications program and United States Government publications in general. It harshly criticizes the selection of outstanding Americans whose papers, according to the national program, deserve publication. In the reviewer's opinion the program mirrors the alliance of the American monopolies, which falsify history in their interests, with the bourgeois historians and archivists. The list contains, for his taste, too many representatives of big business, too many generals, and too many members of the clergy. Of literary figures he misses the names of Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, O. Henry (William Sydney Porter), Sherwood Anderson, and Sinclair Lewis. Whatever one may think of this suggested list, it is, of course, straight propaganda. The reviewer does not pretend to know whether or not there are actually any papers left by these authors that are worth publishing. He is incensed that the selection of labor leaders includes the names of Samuel Gompers and Terence Powderly, who, in the opinion of Communists, betrayed the interests of the American working class. To sum it up, he thinks that the "fighters for democratic rights and social progress of the American people" are insufficiently represented.

The review ends with a vigorous attack against the State Department's publication of the Yalta documents. Of United States Government documentary publications in the field of foreign policy the reviewer says that generally their aim is to illuminate, in an apologetic manner, the history of the foreign policy of the ruling circles of the United States, and that the selection of documents made for the series *Foreign Relations of the United States* scoffs at the peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union.

This is where we stand now. This is the latest word from Moscow. Much water must flow down the Potomac and the Moscow and Volga rivers, I am afraid, before we can imagine and establish a true and fruitful cooperation between American and Soviet modern historians, or between American and Soviet archivists, in the spirit of mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance.

<sup>32</sup> "Natsional'naia programma publikatsii istoricheskikh dokumentov v SShA," in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1956, no. 3, p. 238-243.