

International Scene

MARJORIE BARRITT and NANCY BARTLETT, editors

Perestroika in the Archives? Further Efforts at Soviet Archival Reform

PATRICIA KENNEDY GRIMSTED

Abstract: The new openness in Soviet society in recent years has led to dramatic changes in Soviet archives. There has been tremendous progress in normalization of access and working conditions, along with an increase in foreign projects and collaborative ventures, although some archives still retain the characteristics of a closed society. Captured Nazi records and other foreign archival materials brought back to Moscow at the end of World War II remain sealed in the "Special Archive," but their existence has finally been admitted. Significant problems continue to affect archival research, and other serious archival problems remain in the areas of appraisal and acquisition of records, and a lack of adequate archival security, storage, and reproduction facilities, many of them related to the country's economic and political crisis. Reduced budgets have forced archives to assume more financial responsibility by moving toward a fee-for-service basis, even as they have been given more autonomy from centralized control. The author discusses efforts through the end of 1990 to provide a legal structure for archival reform through attempts to draft a new law governing archives and resulting conflicts within the archival community. She concludes that archival *perestroika* must ultimately await resolution of political and economic structural issues and of the nature and extent of the federal union.

About the author: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted is currently a research associate at the Ukrainian Research Institute and a fellow of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University. She received her doctorate in Russian history from the University of California (Berkeley) and has taught Russian/Soviet history at several universities. She is the author of an ongoing multi-volume directory of archives and manuscript repositories in the USSR, funded through 1990 by a series of research grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. This article is drawn from materials gathered for a supplement to her *A Handbook for Archival Research in the USSR* (Washington: Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies and International Research & Exchanges Board, 1989) during her several long research visits to the Soviet Union in 1989 and 1990, under the auspices of IREX and the Commission on Archival Cooperation of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Main Archival Administration of the USSR Council of Ministers (Glavarkhiv), and in connection with collaborative publication projects between the Archeographic Commission of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. The author is grateful for the financial support from these many sources, and for the assistance of many Soviet friends and archival colleagues over the years.

RECENT YEARS IN THE USSR have seen an astounding new public awareness of problems of archives. When I presented a report on the subject of "Glasnost' in the Archives?" at a conference in November 1988, the Soviet commentator, N. N. Bolkhovitinov, reprimanded the program editors when they omitted the question mark in the printed program. The question mark duly appeared in the published version.¹ Events have developed so rapidly in the USSR that today a much greater degree of *glasnost'* has come to the Soviet archival scene than was the case two years ago—that is to say more open access to and improved research conditions in many archives, and more open discussion of archival reform. But *glasnost'*, as we all know, does not add up to *perestroika*. And *glasnost'* in a country that has never known a Bill of Rights or the democratic rule of law is still a long way from Western conditions, and could be reversed tomorrow if the crackdown of January 1991 becomes more general as many fear. As to significant *perestroika*, a bold question mark must remain.

Glasnost' and Access

New access possibilities. Foreign scholars who have worked in Soviet archives before 1988 would hardly recognize the sit-

uation today. During my lengthy visits in the USSR in 1990 almost every foreign scholar I met had some new archival breakthrough to report. An American professor was being shown top-secret documents from the postrevolutionary Central State Archive of the Soviet Army (TsGASA). Still another American scholar was shown prison-camp records in the State Archive of Sverdlovsk Oblast, and another was given access to a wide range of documents regarding environmental policies through the 1950s from numerous archives. In the tightly restricted Central Party Archive, a British scholar was being shown draft Party resolutions from the 1930s, while an American professor was being shown more materials than he could cope with relating to educational policy in the 1920s and 1930s.² In a published interview in the summer of 1990, the Party Archive director announced that "one million documents are open for researchers," and in another article, the scientific secretary announced "the opening of the personal papers (fonds) of Stalin, Bukharin, Kamenev, Zinov'ev, Raskolnikov, and Radek for a wide range of researchers."³

The archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given the right to declassify records after thirty years, according to a decree adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 1990.⁴ Records must still go through a formal declassification proce-

¹See Grimsted, "Glasnost' in the Archives? Recent Developments on the Soviet Archival Scene," *American Archivist* 52 (Spring 1989): 214-36, and the commentaries by Nikolai Nikolaevich Bolkhovitinov, Sara Vladimirova Zhitomirskaja, and Boris Semenovitch Ilizarov, "Glasnost' in Archives? Commentary by Soviet Historians and Archivists," *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990): 469-70. This present article serves as an update (to the end of 1990) to the author's 1989 *American Archivist* article, which covered developments in the USSR through the end of 1988. Her supplemental article devoted to the archival reference system, "Perestroika and Intellectual Access to Soviet Archives: What is to be Done?" will appear in a subsequent issue of the *American Archivist*. Hence that subject will only be treated tangentially here. A shorter version of Grimsted's current analysis appears in *Solanus*, vol. 5 as "Perestroika in Soviet Archives? Glasnost', Archival Reform and Researcher Access."

²According to IREX data for the academic year 1989-90, at least five American scholars have been admitted for research in the Central Party Archive under the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow, and two scholars were admitted to the Comsol archives.

³"TsPA: 'Million dokumentov dostupen issledovateliam!'" interview with TsPA Director I.N. Kitaev by V.V. Kornev, *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1990, no. 7, 46-50; and V.N. Shepelev, "Tsentral'nyi partiinyi arkhiv otkryvaet svoi fondy (informatsiia dlia issledovatel'ia)," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 4: 19-31. The article includes a brief characterization of each fond.

⁴V. V. Sokolov, "Ob otkrytii diplomaticheskikh arkhivov," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 6: 10-12.

ture; this will involve approximately three-fifths of the Archive of Soviet Foreign Policy (AVP SSSR) and the gigantic task has hardly begun. Foreigners are now being admitted to that postrevolutionary archives, but inventories and other vital finding aids are not available to researchers, and the lack of sufficient staff for the lengthy declassification procedures undoubtedly will still involve numerous delays and frustrations for researchers. Researcher access to the Foreign Ministry's prerevolutionary Archive of Foreign Policy of Russia (AVPR) appears today as a model of *glasnost*'. Two Canadian exchange professors were amazed to be working there and to have access to inventories the day after their arrival in Moscow.

Meanwhile, in the previously more tightly controlled state archives of Ukraine, an independent American Ukrainian researcher with no Soviet academic ties was being shown all available relevant files from the formerly top-secret personal archives of Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi, the last revered leader of the recently revived Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. And as part of an exchange, the archivist who headed the recently dissolved secret section of the Central State Historical Archive in Lviv spent a month in the United States to report on the newly opened records of the so-called "bourgeois nationalist" individuals and organizations in that archives. The director of that archives triumphantly announced to visitors as early as 1989 that "all fonds were now open" even though the holdings include records through 1944. The foreign researchers who have tried to test his words have all been impressed with their veracity. As another example of the new *glasnost*' in Ukraine, an American professor and editor of one of the leading anti-Soviet Ukrainian publications in the United States was welcomed in several state archives in Kiev and Lviv, was expeditiously shown requested materials, and was given over

1,500 photocopies relating to the partisan movement during the Second World War.

Foreign Projects and Collaborative Ventures. Participants involved in specialized foreign projects as well as Soviet-foreign collaborative projects are being given access to Soviet archives that would never have been dreamt of earlier. For example, in January of 1990 a delegation from the U.S. Holocaust Museum was welcomed in Kiev and Kharkiv and shown Nazi occupation records, which six months earlier were still tightly closed or reported as being nonexistent. These included a major cache of records from the infamous Rosenberg command operations (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*) in occupied areas of the USSR, captured by Soviet authorities in Silesia in 1945, but hitherto not known to be extant in Kiev. During 1990 in Moscow, in the Central State Archive of the October Revolution of the USSR (TsGAOR SSSR), the same delegation was permitted to prepare 52,000 frames of microfilm using an American paid assistant and working daily in cooperation with TsGAOR archivists and other consultants from Israel. By the end of the year, they had also prepared 48,000 frames in Minsk and were allowed to film 28,000 frames of World War II records in Kiev.

Collaborative projects in the archival realm are springing up everywhere. A graduate student from Ohio State University has set up a database system in the Moscow municipal historical archives to enter full archival inventories relating to peasantry in prerevolutionary Moscow *guberniia*, and another collaborative database is being established at the Moscow State Historico-Archival Institute (MGIAI) for data on individuals repressed in the Stalin purges. Several joint projects between the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University and the Archeographic Commission of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences are underway in Kiev and Moscow

involving extensive publications of hitherto-restricted historical documents relating to Ukrainian history and culture and the computerized preparation of basic archival finding aids. A Dutch microform publisher has camera units operating in Moscow and Leningrad, including some extensive projects involving manuscript collections and archives. The hitherto tightly restricted postrevolutionary Central State Archive of the Soviet Army (TsGASA) signed an agreement with an American publisher to reissue its previously classified five-volume list of fonds and to publish a new comprehensive guide in the United States.⁵ An agreement signed in November 1990 between the Academy, IREX, and BITNET computer system representatives will expand provisions for electronic mail that should greatly facilitate a number of joint projects, including those in the archival realm.

Even the formerly closed or "non-existent" subject of genealogy has opened up for serious archival endeavors, and state archives throughout the USSR are starting to entertain genealogical inquiries.⁶ A delegation of American genealogical specialists visited the USSR in March 1990 under the auspices of the U.S.-Soviet Commission on Archival Cooperation of the ACLS and Glavarkhiv to organize a new clearinghouse and to streamline procedures for genealogical inquiries from abroad in Soviet

archives. An agreement was signed in Moscow during their visit to establish a Soviet-American Genealogical Advisory Service (SAGAS) based at the U.S. National Archives in Washington, although Glavarkhiv has still been unwilling to send the promised return delegation of Soviet specialists to the United States.

An appropriate Moscow base for the new clearinghouse has yet to be found, however, due to uncertainties resulting from Glavarkhiv funding cutbacks, decentralization in the state archival system, and the lack of support of the current Glavarkhiv leadership for genealogical endeavors. A number of cooperatives and "self-financing" groups in the now more independent state archives and archival administrations of non-Russian republics, as well as numerous more independent research "cooperatives" outside of archives, are trying to set up what they hope will be lucrative genealogical consulting services.⁷ Despite the new enthusiasm for such enterprises, the extent of their delivery potential still needs testing, because many of the basic problems of genealogical work in the USSR have not been resolved and the reference facilities needed for such work have not improved.

Continuing Restrictions. Some archives still retain the characteristics of a closed society. Despite the increased opening of materials in the Central Party Archive noted above, many files remain restricted there. Information is also coming to light about the extent to which the Central Committee of the Communist Party has kept even tighter restrictions on its own totally secret archives, to the extent that many

⁵*Annotirovannyi perechen' fondov Tsentral'noi gosudarstvennoi arkhiva Sovetskoi Armii*, 5 vols. (Moscow: Glavarkhiv, 1987; reprint edition: Minneapolis: Eastview Press, 1991). The list of fonds—originally issued in a press run of fifty copies—was declassified in 1989. See further discussion of this publication and the forthcoming two-volume guide to TsGASA being published by the same American firm.

⁶Regarding the changed situation for genealogical research in the USSR, see Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Glasnost' and Babushkas—New Horizons for Genealogical Research in the USSR," *Heritage Quest* 28 (April/May 1990): 38-43, and 29 (June/July 1990): 35-39.

⁷Advertisements have appeared or flyers circulated from several "cooperatives" in Moscow and other cities. Information about genealogical work in the USSR and inquiry procedures is being collected by SAGAS—c/o Patricia Eames, Office of Public Programs, U. S. National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

of the most revealing high-level files from the postrevolutionary period have not even been turned over to the Central Party Archives.

As might be expected, there is little real *glasnost*⁷ in terms of research possibilities in the archives of the KGB, although foreign journalists were received for a press conference in the Liublianka headquarters and some shots of KGB archives were aired on public television in November 1990. Revelations from KGB archives regarding individuals repressed during the Stalin years have been appearing in the all-union press, and in Kiev the KGB released a few important files of suppressed Ukrainian literary figures that were long thought to have been lost forever.⁸ On the other hand, the KGB is continuing its attempts to weed out and destroy potentially revealing files, and to alienate others from their place of creation. Such activities in Vilnius, involving both the destruction of archives and their transport to Moscow, were finally admitted—and at least temporarily halted—by the KGB in Lithuania, following extensive protests in the Lithuanian parliament and a lengthy vigil in Vilnius at the end of January 1990.⁹

The Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (TsAMO) in Podolsk outside of Moscow, was long a holdout of the old order, but recently there are some signs of *glasnost*. In a 1987 *Izvestiia* interview, the

director of the Historico-Archival Division of the General Staff declared that most World War II records below the Army level were open for research, except for files deemed of strategic value.¹⁰ By the fall of 1990, one Finnish historical project was being shown documents from the archive, and an American specialist was given a tour of the Podolsk facility. But there were continuing tight restrictions on high policy-level files with complaints that the Army General Staff was not ready to open its doors to a revised history of the "Great Patriotic War of the Fatherland."

More surprising, there are still few signs of *perestroika* in the Manuscript Division of the Lenin Library, where before 1978 Soviet and foreign researchers enjoyed unusually open policies and scholarly working conditions.¹¹ After considerable outcry from Soviet cultural and academic leaders, the Council of Ministers appointed a high-level commission of experts to study the situation; their scathing report on the unprofessional conditions they found there in the fall of 1989 still awaits full publication.¹² Starting with the academic year

¹⁰The 1987 *Izvestiia* interview with Lieutenant Colonel I. N. Venkov is cited in Grimsted, "Glasnost' in the Archives?" 223-24.

¹¹The reactionary situation in the Lenin Library Manuscript Division was the subject of a series of articles in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, which are cited in Grimsted, "Glasnost' in the Archives?" 228-30. See also the more detailed discussion of these problems in Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *A Handbook for Archival Research in the USSR* (Washington, DC, 1989), 136-39.

¹²"Zakliuchenie gruppy ekspertov, obrazovannoi v sootvetstviu s rasporyazheniem Soveta Ministrov SSSR ot 28 dekabria 1989 g. No 2257 dlia izucheniia sovremennogo sostoiianiia i perspektiv razvitiia otdela rukopisei GBL." A copy was available to me for consultation in the office of the Division of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The report was printed in a small press run restricted edition for discussion by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and has been the subject of discussion in Moscow academic and cultural circles. The Manuscript Division staff, which refused to cooperate with the investigation, has subsequently attempted to discredit the commission.

⁸See the newspaper reports of the receipt by the Institute of Literature of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences from the KGB of an important group of papers of the Ukrainian political and literary figure Volodymyr Vynnychenko—"V KDB URSR: Dokumenty peredano instytutovi," *Vechirni Kyiv*, 29 June 1990; E. Lohvyn, "Rukopysy ne horiat". Znakhidky v arkhivakh KDB," *Robitnycha hazeta*, 1 July 1990, 4; and "Pryiemna nespodivanka," *Radias'ka Ukraina*, 8 July 1990.

⁹See the reports of the protests and the vigil—with over 2,000 demonstrators—in the daily U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service reports, FBIS-SOV-90-017 (25 January 1990), 75; 90-018 (26 January 1990), 62; and 90-019 (29 January 1990), 83.

1990/91, scholars were reporting improved success.

Captured Records. The lid is also still held tightly on Glavarkhiv's so-called "Special Archive" (*Osobyi arkhiv*), the top-secret Central State Archive of the USSR that houses the extensive captured Nazi records and other looted foreign archival materials brought back to Moscow from the salt mines and castles of Germany and Silesia at the end of World War II. The first public account of this repository appeared in a sensational series, "Five Days in the Special Archive," in *Izvestiia* in February 1990.¹³ Shocking as it is that Soviet authorities would suppress information about the existence of the high-level Nazi records held there in secret for forty-five years, when counterpart records held in the West have long been open for research (and even extensively published on microfilm before their restitution to Germany), at least the existence of these crucial records is now being admitted.¹⁴ Microfilms of some of the death books and identity cards from Auschwitz (in Polish, *Oświęcim*) were finally released to the International Red Cross in the fall of 1989 after having been held in secret in that

archives since their seizure by Soviet forces in 1945 after the liberation of the concentration camp.¹⁵ Research access to the archives itself was still being denied in the summer and fall of 1990, with the explanation that, while the "top secret" restriction had been lifted, the sensational holdings of the Special Archive are now restricted as "commercial secrets," pending negotiation for their return to Germany (presumably at a price).¹⁶

The inadequacy of finding aids makes it difficult to open the archives to research, but information is beginning to trickle out about the various captured records deposited in that facility which, according to the *Izvestiia* article, were primarily used by the KGB and other security organs for "tracking down enemies of the Motherland" after

¹³E. Maksimova, "Piat dni v Osobom arkhive," *Izvestiia*, 18-22 February 1990 (nos. 49-53) mentioned only the high-level Nazi archives that had been brought to Moscow from the Silesian castle of Althorn [sic], where they were discovered by Soviet 59th Army units. Actually the archives—evacuated from Berlin and elsewhere—were found in the castle of Count von Althann in the village of Wilkanów (German, *Wölfsdorf*), 6 km. SE of Bystrzyca-Kłodzko (German, *Habelschwerdt*), which is south of Kłodzko (German, *Glatz*).

¹⁴See the comprehensive published list of captured records filmed by the Western allies in Berlin, England, and the United States, "Captured German and Related Records in the National Archives (as of 1974)," in *Captured German and Related Records. A National Archives Conference*, ed. Robert Wolfe (Athens, OH, 1974, "National Archives Conferences," vol. 3), 267-76. Other papers in the same volume described the various intelligence and historical uses of the captured records and the filming operations as discussed at the National Archives conference devoted to the subject in 1968.

¹⁵A Tass release dated 22 September 1989, quoting the head of the Soviet Red Cross research department, noted the release of identity cards of 130,000 prisoners and films of forty-six books recording the deaths of more than 74,000 people, but did not identify the archival source. The first Soviet revelation of these materials appeared in an article by E. Maksimova, "Arkhnivnyi detektiv," *Izvestiia*, 25 June 1989 (no. 177): 4. The Special Archive was mentioned together with its director, but there was no further explanation about it until the same reporter's series in February 1990. According to a 1945 report, Soviet authorities captured from Oświęcim "a total of 700 file units and 82,000 card files"—"Svedeniia o dokumental'nykh materialakh inostrannogo proiskhozhdeniia vyvezennykh v Sovetskoi Soiuz v 1945 godu," signed Golubtsov (15 December 1945), TsGAOR SSSR, fond 5325/10, d. 2148, fol. 5. According to an American Red Cross news release dated 24 September 1990, in addition to the death books, "the Soviets have provided access to the names of 130,000 prisoners used for forced labor in various German firms and 200,000 names of victims in other camps, including Sachsenhausen, Gross Rosen, and Buchenwald."

¹⁶Access to the Central State Special Archive (*Tsentral'nyi gosudarsvennyi [osobyi] arkhiv SSSR*) is subject to special permission from Glavarkhiv chief F. M. Vaganov. Vaganov personally assured the present author that files from the archive would be made available for a joint Soviet-American project on the fate of Soviet cultural treasures during World War II. As of early December 1990, however, examination was permitted of only three small unrelated files (in two cases unidentified as to the fond of origin), and requests for consultations with specialists were denied.

the war. Under Stalin, the entire state archival system was part of the Commissariat and subsequently the Ministry of Internal Affairs (NKVD; MVD). Such priorities had a devastating impact on the archival system and its orientation and may help to explain why these materials were never adequately prepared for normal research purposes. Despite the horrifying Soviet losses in the "Great Patriotic War of the Fatherland," the totalitarian Nazi regime and the occupation period in the USSR remain among the "blank spots" in Soviet historiography and important Nazi records captured by Soviet authorities were hidden from world scholarship.

In fact, Nazi records represent only a small part of the still mostly secret archival loot brought back to Moscow after the war. The shipment from the Althann castle alone involved some twenty-eight railroad freight cars of archival materials, including a vast cache of records that the Nazis gathered from masonic lodges and other secret societies throughout Europe (dating from the 18th century to 1940), along with the records of the Second International, personal papers of many European socialist leaders, and some materials relating to Jewish organizations, all of which have also been totally suppressed since the war.¹⁷

Another prime component of the Special Archive—and one of the initial justifications for its establishment in 1945—was twenty-eight freight cars containing more than one million security case files gathered by French intelligence throughout the world (including those on Soviet leaders) that had been plundered by the Nazis from Paris in 1940. Uncovered in a Bohemian castle by Soviet authorities in July 1945,

they were brought to Moscow, like the Althann holdings, on the personal orders of Lavrentii Beriia, Stalin's deputy premier for security affairs, who was also in charge of the Archival Administration.¹⁸

Stories are beginning to appear in the Soviet press about other vast captured records and war trophies from Germany and Eastern European countries still held in the USSR, most of which hold no political or intelligence interest. Moscow library circles and many intellectuals reacted angrily to the dramatic revelation in September 1990 about the scandalous plight of more than a million and a half library books looted from the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany that are still lying open to daily pigeon droppings in the unheated, rat-infested Moscow church of Uzkoie, under the jurisdiction of the Academy of Sciences' blue-ribbon library for social sciences (INION). Details were also provided for a staggering total of 1,535,234 plundered books that were distributed to various other Soviet libraries between 1946 and 1949.¹⁹ Although this article

¹⁸The French security records found in Czechoslovakia in a castle near Česká-Lípa are described in several reports filed in dela 2029 (see especially, fols. 20-23). According to a report of Archival Administration director Nikitinskii to Beriia, these materials were of "such great state interest for the . . . NKVD, NKGB, NKO, and NKID," that he recommended "the formation of a special central state archive of foreign fonds, in which would be concentrated the above mentioned materials from the French archives, as well as earlier received Romanian *Siguranțe*, former Polish military and political organs, and various German occupation agencies." (fols. 22v-23) The deposit of these materials—along with those from Althann—in the *Osobyi arkhiv* is confirmed in the Glavarkhiv list mentioned above—"Svedeniia o dokumental'nykh materialakh," TsGAOR SSSR, fond 5325/10, d. 2148, fol. 5, and the covering report (fols. 1-4). See more details about these materials in Grimsted, "The Fate of Ukrainian Cultural Treasures during World War II: Archives, Libraries, and Museums under the Third Reich," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 39:1 (Winter 1991): 72-79.

¹⁹Evgenii Kuz'min, "Taina tserkvi v Uzkom," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1990, no. 38 (18 September): 10; English edition—"The Mystery of the Church in Uzkoie," *Literary Gazette International*, no. 39 (Oc-

¹⁷Considerable data about these and other Soviet-captured records can be found in the now declassified internal records of Glavarkhiv in TsGAOR SSSR, fond 5325, opis' 10. The materials transferred from the Althann castle in Silesia are described in a series of reports in file no. 2027.

had no corresponding figures for looted archives and manuscript books, it noted the salutary example of the Manuscript Division of the Lenin Library, which in 1957 returned all of its plundered archival materials of German and Polish origin that had been acquired at the end of the war.

Recently there have been a few more archival restitutions. In December 1988, for example, some forty tons of German naval records (1877-1945) and some scattered Prussian military records dating from the eighteenth century through 1933, which were among the extensive captured records brought to Moscow in 1945, were returned to East Germany.²⁰ Another encouraging development, linked to the transformed German scene, took place in October 1990 when the medieval Hanseatic archives of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck were restored to their proper homes after forty-five years in hiding in the Central State Archive of Early Acts (TsGADA) in Moscow. In exchange, the counterpart medieval sections of the Tallinn City Archive were returned to Estonia after forty-six years in Germany. But "even on such a day of celebration for culture and common sense," a Moscow journalist pondered the less festive, but provocative, questions regarding the fate of other "archives taken as war trophies—and under what terms their restitution would be effected."²¹ Before such questions can be answered, however, more precise information is needed in the spirit of *glasnost* about the remaining vast quantities of captured records that remain in the

USSR, where they were found, and the extent to which they may have been split up and rearranged in the course of their migration.

Problems Affecting Archival Research

Despite the continuing restrictions in some important archives of the postrevolutionary period, especially for World War II, there has been tremendous progress in normalization of access and working conditions in Soviet state archives. Yet there is still much to be done before general research conditions and access procedures resemble those in the West. For example, researchers in the Party Archive and in archives under the Ministry of Defense must still submit their notes for inspection before removal from the reading room. Besides, many of the progressive examples of *glasnost* mentioned above are not guaranteed by law or even formal administrative regulation. Still dependent on the whim or fiat of a particular archival director, access possibilities may vary markedly from day to day, from place to place, and according to the individual case under review. A cautious director may say "No"; next week, when the director is away, a more progressive assistant director may say "Okay, but no copies"; and then the security representative in the secret division may refuse to deliver the documents or withhold part of the file without any explanation at all. Quite often there is still discrimination against foreigners and, even more grating, reverse discrimination against Soviet researchers, whereby a director wanting to make a good impression on a foreign visitor may permit communication of a file that the following week will be withheld from a Soviet citizen.

Soviet Travel and Research Arrangements. Foreigners traveling to the USSR still face many of the same bureaucratic complexities as in the past. Although many more areas have been opened for visitors,

tober, no. 1): 20. According to the newspaper report, the books are under the jurisdiction of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences (INION) of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

²⁰See the report by Wolfram Schmidt, "Übernahme von Archivgut aus der USSR," *Archivmitteilungen* 39 (1989, no. 5): 179-80.

²¹E[vgenii] Kuz'min, "Netrofeinaia istoriia," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 11 October 1990 (no. 41): 10. That notice also appeared in *Literary Gazette International*, November 1990, no. 1 (17): 6.

foreigners still need visas for each separate city. Today there are often overwhelming new problems of bedding down, eating, and moving about in a country on the verge of economic collapse. Archives and the provisions for foreign research visitors are no more exempt than any other segment of society from the break down of the centralized command economy and distribution system. After sixteen years of trying, an American professor finally reached the archives in Saratov in the summer of 1990.²² Yet a group of American official exchange participants under the long-established inter-governmental exchange agreement were without permanent beds for their first two weeks in Moscow in the fall of 1990.²³

An individual foreign researcher still cannot simply arrive in the Soviet Union on a tourist visa and expect to work in archives as one can in most Western countries. According to the latest printed Glavarkhiv regulations, visiting researchers still need a Soviet academic institutional sponsor for archival access, although there has been an increase in exceptions to this rule.²⁴

The persistence of the nonconvertible ruble and the shortage of convertible currency (*valiuta*) in Moscow have contributed to a multiplicity of new exchange arrange-

ments between Soviet and foreign academic institutions, which have resulted in the dramatic growth of new possibilities for research sponsorship. What several years ago was a centrally controlled official and exclusive academic exchange system has evolved into an often hastily devised and chaotic array of local academic institutional exchanges and Soviet-foreign joint-venture initiatives providing a multitude of new possibilities for foreign research visits to the USSR. Time has not yet tested what new Soviet institutional sponsors can deliver, particularly in a period of increasing deficits in everything from gasoline to butter, or from medical syringes to cigarettes.

Glavarkhiv itself had to curtail the reception of most foreign exchange visitors in 1990, after the Moscow City Council decreed that Soviet institutions had to pay for hotel rooms for foreign visitors in convertible currency, even for officially-sanctioned exchanges. Foreign visitors may be able to live well enough in Moscow on the newly introduced Western credit-card economy, but heaven help the visiting student dependent on a ruble stipend. Foreign scholars may be relieved not to have to deal with foreign office bureaucrats for their everyday needs as in the past; but they should not be surprised to encounter some resentment when scholars in their host institute have to take their limited work time to stand in endless lines for nonexistent railway tickets or other requirements of their guests that were previously attended to by foreign office bureaucrats.

The general abolition of many central bureaucratic controls in Soviet government have had their repercussions in the archival sphere. As the archival institutionalization of a centrally-directed authoritarian bureaucratic command system, Glavarkhiv has seen its ranks and budget cut severely. It has responded in terms of a general decentralization of archival authority and the lessening of its own bureaucratic role. This has brought important changes in archival ac-

²²See Donald J. Raleigh, "The Triumph of Glasnost in Scholarship: Raleigh Reaches Saratov," *AAASS Newsletter*, 30:4 (September 1990): 1-2. See also the earlier mention of his battle for permission to get there in *Izvestiia*, 5 April 1990.

²³Moscow State University, with whom the American group was officially affiliated, refused to relinquish dormitory space. With the lessening reins of central bureaucratic authority, in effect, the American graduate students were the innocent victims in a dispute between Moscow University and their parent agency, the USSR State Committee for Public Education (*Gosobrazovanie*) regarding the number of places their own students were to be given on the exchange.

²⁴*Pravila raboty issledovatelei v chital'nykh zalakh gosudarstvennykh arkhivov SSSR*, Odobreny kollegiei Glavarkhiva SSSR 18.09.89, prikaz Glavarkhiva SSSR No 64 ot 29.09.89 (Moscow, 1990). Previously, separate editions of such rules were issued for Soviet and foreign readers.

cess procedures by lessening central bureaucratic controls and bottlenecks. Applications by foreigners for access to central-state archives on both all-union and union-republic levels now go directly to the archives themselves rather than through the foreign office of Glavarkhiv. Thus foreigners working in the union republics no longer have to go through Glavarkhiv in Moscow, and republic-level state archives are free to correspond directly with researchers from abroad, to set up their own foreign exchange accounts for foreign microfilm orders and genealogical inquiries, and to operate with an autonomy that was inconceivable before 1989.

These new developments also mean that the individual scholar must be more knowledgeable than previously about the precise location of the materials being requested. Letters of application from foreign scholars now go directly from the host institute to the individual archives, rather than through the foreign office of the Academy presidium or other receiving umbrella agency and then through the foreign office of Glavarkhiv. Thus the scholar cannot assume that the all-knowing Glavarkhiv bureaucracy will redirect a request when an archives has changed its name or structure. If the needed materials have been transferred to a different archives, a new letter—duly signed and sealed by the appropriate authorized official of the host Soviet institute—will be required. If the institute director who is authorized to sign and seal happens to be on a business trip, sick, or involved in a conference, the foreign visitor may have to wait for access as in the past. The bureaucratic response to decentralization is not uniform, however, and foreign researchers may well find that some archives—especially on the oblast level, and those outside of Moscow—will still require the reassuring written permission from an increasingly understaffed Glavarkhiv.

Research Conditions. Working conditions within many archives have improved

tremendously for foreigners in the last two years. Most dramatic was the abandonment in January 1990 of the infamous Glavarkhiv foreigners' reading room, to which researchers from abroad were traditionally confined while using research materials from most state archives under Glavarkhiv in Moscow. Foreigners now work directly alongside their Soviet colleagues in the regular reading rooms in Soviet state archives, and they experience more directly the many serious problems and lack of *perestroika* that beset Soviet archives. In May 1990, for example, the Central State Archive of the October Revolution of the USSR (TsGAOR SSSR) was forced to close to researchers for a week when the head of the reading room retired and the rest of the reading room staff all resigned in protest of their low pay and difficult working conditions. During the summer, the reading room was open only four hours a day, with a ten-item-per-day limit strictly in force; at times researchers had to wait half an hour or more to receive or return their files. By late fall, the TsGAOR reading room was open for eight hours per day, but it was still understaffed and could only provide minimal reader services. All this occurred in a period when more researchers are demanding immediate access to more of the high-interest files the archives has recently declassified.

Most important with regard to research access, foreigners are at last allowed to use unpublished finding aids, the all important basic inventories (*opisi*) that provide item-level description within individual fonds, as well as other card catalogs and reference materials.²⁵ The practice started slowly in 1988 on a trial basis in some archives but has now become standard. Equally important, within the state archival system under Glavarkhiv, a number of internally pub-

²⁵A note regarding this new policy appears in *Sovetskíe arkhívy*, 1990, no. 1.

lished basic archival finding aids have been declassified and researchers, including foreigners, are now permitted to consult the basic guides—or lists of fonds—to major central state archives in Moscow in the archival reading rooms.²⁶ The earlier restrictive practice, whereby only the carefully designated, all-knowing archivist could choose what materials were relevant to a given research project, and hence what a researcher would be shown, has been abandoned. Foreign researchers are now free to explore the full range of reference facilities in many archives, including normal professional consultations with individual archivists, and to order items of their choice as their research develops. And at the same time, archivists are encouraged to be more honest and responsive in their dealings with foreigners.

Previously, state archives, with few exceptions, restricted the use of laptop computers by researchers, but in the last few years the situation has been changing. The new rules for use of state archives published by Glavarkhiv in 1990 specifically note that researchers are now permitted to bring computers for their personal use to reading rooms in state archives, although there is the stipulation that it must not disturb other researchers. Because of potential disturbance, dictaphones are still generally not permitted.²⁷

Now that Soviet and foreign researchers are being permitted and even encouraged to seek out more materials in many hitherto unexplored Soviet archives, many questions remain. Are Soviet archives ready for researchers? Has there been any significant reform in the archival system itself, in the attitudes of archival administrators, in fostering independent historical research, or in

what materials are being chosen for permanent preservation? Has there been significant reform in the archival reference system? Is there sufficient access to information about the documentary holdings in Soviet archives, or about what materials have been destroyed for one excuse or another? For the most part, the answers to these questions must still be negative, as was explained in an insightful article by the former head of the Manuscript Division of the Lenin Library, Sara Vladimirovna Zhitomirskaiia, in *Literaturnaia gazeta* in July 1989. Her discussion covered the lack of basic archival reform in appraisal and accession of materials for permanent storage, in the failure to enact a law regulating archival practices, and, most importantly, in the blatant inadequacy of the archival reference system.²⁸

Appraisal and Disposal of Records. Lack of significant *perestroika* is apparent in the continuing problems in the area of appraisal and acquisitions, which obviously will have a crucial and irreversible effect on what future researchers will find in the archives. Zhitomirskaiia criticized the Soviet practice of creating documents that would give future historians a false impression about events and the lack of representativeness in the selection of documents for permanent preservation. Neither of these problems has been sufficiently addressed by Glavarkhiv, either in present practice or in the formulation of the new archival law. Some Soviet archival leaders, such as V. V. Tsaplin, former director of the Central

²⁶See discussion about these publications in Grimsted's forthcoming article, "Perestroika and Intellectual Access to Soviet Archives: What is to be Done?" to be published in the *American Archivist*.

²⁷*Pravila raboty issledovatelei*, (1990).

²⁸S. V. Zhitomirskaiia, "Delo ne tol'ko v sekret-nosti," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 19 July 1989 (no. 29): 3. Responses to the Zhitomirskaiia article by N. N. Bolkhovitinov, P. K. Grimsted, and V. P. Kozlov appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 16 August 1989 (no. 33): 5. See also Zhitomirskaiia's contribution in "Glasnost' in Archives? Commentary by Soviet Historians and Archivists," *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990): 474-75. The complicated issue of intellectual access to archival materials will be discussed in a subsequent *American Archivist* article.

State Archives of the National Economy (TsGANKh), recognize that in order "to insure the availability of archival information needed by society" it will be necessary "to undertake qualitative changes in the principles and methods of selecting records for permanent preservation."²⁹ In subsequent discussion in the pages of *Sovetskie arkhivy*, other archival leaders concurred and suggested possible improvements.³⁰

The need to broaden the range of documentation chosen for permanent preservation has been at the core of the formation of the new so-called People's Archive, established under the auspices of the Moscow State Historico-Archival Institute (MGIAI) as a demonstrative attempt to compensate for Glavarkhiv's failure to provide for the archival acquisition of documents that reflect non-official social organizations. The People's Archive, opened officially in December 1988 and now housed in the building next door to MGIAI, is obviously a direct challenge, both in concept and operation, to Glavarkhiv's appraisal and retention policies. Its avowed purpose is the collection and preservation of archival materials now overlooked by other state archives, such as the records of unofficial social organizations, letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines, and documents of a more private character.³¹

The People's Archive, while still a small and comparatively minor operation, has

accessioned many interesting materials including some documents of the conservative nationalist group *Pamiat'*, prison relics from political dissidents, and files from a wide range of unofficial, independent publications. The archives has received high acclaim for its efforts to preserve the records of numerous vital social and political elements that have not found a home in existing archives, and has accordingly found a particularly favorable public reception during the period of *glasnost'*. The need fulfilled by the repository, which would otherwise be excluded from state archival support, was recognized in a funding grant from the Soros Foundation.³²

Reacting to earlier charges that many records regarding individuals who died in the purges were still being destroyed rather than accessioned by state archives, in the fall of 1989, Glavarkhiv deputy chief A. V. Elpat'evskii assured an American delegation that all destruction of Stalin-era documents had stopped, and that reappraisal was beginning, taking into account the demonstrated demand for information from the public.³³ Later reports suggest that destruction continues elsewhere, especially with the archives of the KGB, over which Glavarkhiv undoubtedly does not have control. The above-mentioned vigil in Vilnius to protest the continued destruction of vital KGB files regarding persecuted or deported Lithuanians may have temporarily halted the process in Lithuania, but undoubtedly the public is unaware of the extent of such activities in other areas of the USSR. Further information has also come to light about

²⁹V. V. Tsaplin as quoted in "Arkhiy i perestroika: 'Krugly stol' zhurnal," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 1: 19-20.

³⁰"K 70-letiiu TsGAOR SSSR. 'Kraine neobkholdimo liubit' svoiu professiiu . . .'" (*'Krugly stol' zhurnal*)," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 4: 40-41.

³¹See, for example, the published accounts of the new archives by B. S. Ilizarov—"Narodnyi arkhiv," *Rodina*, 1989, no. 89: 96, and in an interview (with N. Belov), "Za chem Narodu arkhiv?" *Moskovskii avtotransportnik*, 1989, no. 29 (20-26 July): 13. Professor Ilizarov and his staff kindly arranged a tour of the facility and discussion meeting with the official delegation of American archivists taking part in the Glavarkhiv finding aids symposium in May 1990, after Glavarkhiv was "unable" to arrange such a visit.

³²The Soros Foundation, founded by a Hungarian-born venture capitalist in New York, supports foreign professional travel by citizens of Eastern bloc nations, as well as a variety of cultural initiatives in the USSR.

³³See the report of the American archival delegation studying Soviet policies and practices with regard to appraisal, by Marie Allen and Roland Baumann, "Evolving Appraisal and Accessioning Policies of Soviet Archives," *American Archivist* 54 (Winter 1991): 96-111.

the extent of intentional destruction of archival records by Soviet authorities during World War II, which created huge gaps in available documentation for historians now trying to reconstruct the tragic history of the 1920s and especially the 1930s.³⁴

Archival Security. Other glaring problems showing the lack of *perestroika* on the Soviet archival scene were aired in a revealing article in *Ogonek* in March 1990.³⁵ The authors cited devastating examples of archival theft, indicating the lack of adequate archival security measures. These included the 1974 "Apostolov affair," involving an employee of the Central State Archive of Early Acts (TsGADA SSSR) in Moscow, who managed to steal more than two hundred early documents, many of which were subsequently sold in the USSR and abroad. In this case, prosecution of the theft was seriously hindered by the fact that many of the stolen documents came from the captured materials from German Hanseatic city archives then still held in strict secrecy in TsGADA, which could not be publicly identified with the archives. Another 1988 case of inadequate archival security involved the trial of two men who robbed a series of archives and museums over a period of years. The authors noted that the unrealistically low valuations in many archives, whereby priceless documents are assigned minimal figures of only a few rubles, means that even when a thief is brought to justice, he has to pay little for the crime. Soviet state archives still require archivists to count all files provided to researchers, but that cumbersome, labor-in-

tensive system has failed to stem the tide of more professional plunder from within.

Archival Storage Facilities. Inadequate physical storage facilities are another plague for Soviet archives and manuscript repositories, for which solutions will not come quickly, given the current economic crisis. Glaring deficiencies in preservation standards are found throughout the country. According to the same *Ogonek* article, even such major central state archives as the Central State Archive of the October Revolution (TsGAOR SSSR) and the Central State Archive of the National Economy (TsGANKh SSSR), were annually reporting leaking roofs, often involving the damage of thousands of files. In January and February of 1990 bursting pipes in the Institute of Russian Literature (*Pushkinskii dom*) in Leningrad caused considerable water damage to irreplaceable library collections and threatened priceless manuscript treasures in that famed repository, less than two years after the fire that destroyed countless books and periodicals in the neighboring Library of the Academy of Sciences (BAN).³⁶ During the intervening year, another catastrophe in the Music Department of the Leningrad Public Library resulted in the water loss of irreplaceable eighteenth-century manuscript music scores. In a report to representatives of the Council of People's Deputies at the end of 1990, Glavarkhiv admitted that at least a quarter of its storage facilities for state archives do not meet elementary standards.³⁷

Archival Reproduction Facilities. Inadequate duplication facilities in Soviet archives are yet another example of the lack of *perestroika* and the continuing Soviet

³⁴Regarding wartime destruction and the inadequacies of Soviet evacuation efforts, see Grimsted, "The Fate of Ukrainian Cultural Treasures During World War II," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, forthcoming, and the recent article by O. N. Kopylova, "K probleme sokhrannosti GAF SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 5: 37-44.

³⁵Rem Petrov and Andrei Chernyi, "Potieravshi—plachem," *Ogonek*, 1990, no. 9: 9-11.

³⁶See I. Foniakov, "Rukopisi Pushkina pod ugrozoi," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 24 January 1990: 1; and Carolyn Hoover Sung, Valerii Pavlovich Leonov, and Peter Waters, "Fire Recovery at the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR," *American Archivist* 53 (Spring 1990): 298-312.

³⁷"Narodnye deputaty SSSR znakomiatsia s rabotoi arkhivistov," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 6: 10.

isolation from Western technology and principles of archival service. Inadequate copying facilities contribute directly to poor preservation provisions. The lack of sufficient preservation filming insures the loss of many documents on fading or crumbling paper, such as that used in the 1920s and 1930s. It also means that there are no security copies of all of the inventories (*opisi*) and other reference materials in many archives. Many Soviet archives have followed their Western counterparts in filming many high-use and highly valued groups of records and insisting that readers use the films rather than originals. Inadequate filming techniques and equipment, however, have seen the production of low-quality, barely legible films, which, coupled with poor quality microfilm readers, grossly impair research and cause troublesome eye-strain to researchers. The lack of copying machines has meant that inventories also have been microfilmed rather than photocopied, despite the difficulties for researchers and archivists alike of consulting inventories in microfilm format. The failure to produce quality master negatives and the lack of machines for copying microfilm have also meant that many records have to be refilmed for every new order, thus threatening the preservation of the documents themselves.

Copying services for researchers also remain totally inadequate. Although quality copies in limited quantities can be ordered in state archives with some delay, quick copy services are unknown in state archives, and most archives do not have their own copying facility. Laboratory facilities serving all of the central state archives in Moscow were so backlogged in 1990 that individual microfilm orders in a major repository such as TsGAOR SSSR are now limited to one hundred frames per year. Simultaneously, diminished archival budgets and the demands of self-financing (*khos-trashchet*) on a national scale have led state archives to impose staggering fees for pho-

tocopy orders they cannot fulfill, even for official Soviet academic institutes and in connection with publication projects for which they are formally sponsors. Fees for actual copying work are normal in archives the world over, and service fees are always expected for mail orders. But Soviet archives in their new commercial spirit have gone a step further with newly-imposed "information values" or "copyright" fees that can now add anywhere from three to ten rubles (depending on the archives' evaluation of the documents being copied) to the cost of filming a single document, even if the actual copying may be done by an outside firm or photographer. The same fees now apply to Soviet as well as foreign orders.³⁸ There are now additional service charges on top of the basic cost of forty kopecks or more for an individual photocopy or microfilm exposure charged by the laboratory, even if the researcher has placed all the appropriate markers in the volume in question and delivered the files to the appropriate attendant.

Many state archives have gone a step further to seek much-needed income in convertible foreign currency (*valiuta*) and have signed contracts with new "cooperative" (i.e., private enterprise) ventures to perform copying services; some arrangements cover genealogical and other reference service requests as well.³⁹ Availability

³⁸In December 1990, for example, the present author was charged 2,400 rubles as copyright fees by the Central State Archive of the October Revolution of the Ukrainian SSR (TsDAZhR URSR) in Kiev for a Xerox order from eighteen file units, placed officially by her collaborating Soviet institution, the Archeographic Commission of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The copying itself came to a more modest 300 rubles.

³⁹A recent advertisement in the *AAASS Newsletter* (January, 1991, p. 29) offered to supply microfilm and photocopies from Soviet state archives at an average cost of "\$1 per page plus \$50 per order for handling and shipping." As mentioned above (see fn. 7), other cooperatives in Moscow and other cities have advertised their willingness to perform genealogical searches.

of reproduction services has improved in many such cases, but, much to the distress of students and academic researchers, prices have skyrocketed. Soviet entrepreneurs may be better able to acquire the foreign copying machines and supplies needed to compensate for the inadequate facilities in the archives themselves. It may be understandable that Soviet archives are trying to raise funds to improve their copying facilities and keep their archives solvent when the state treasury is curtailing adequate support. But the result is that copying facilities are less accessible to the public and to Soviet scholarly and public institutions, who are likewise operating on decreased budgets. This is hardly a positive development in a period of *glasnost*.

Self-Financing versus Public Service. Reasonable charges for copying services and the delivery of certified copies of documents are standard in all archives, but the recent economic crisis in the Soviet Union has propelled some state repositories toward putting the financing of archives on a more extensive fee-for-service basis, moves that have brought vehement discussion from inside and outside Glavarkhiv about the possible degradation of the public service function and the image of archives. Previously Soviet archives were required to perform all reference and copy work of a socio-legal nature without charge and were not even set up to receive money for copying services in most instances, but all that has changed in the last few years. Beginning in 1990, individual archives were forced to assume more financial responsibility for the services they perform, even as they were given more autonomy from centralized Glavarkhiv control.

The Glavarkhiv journal *Sovetskie arkhivy* published a "round-table" discussion from the end of 1989 before some of the changes were put into effect. Participating directors or deputies representing five of the twelve all-union central state archives responded to questions about the

proposed new economic basis.⁴⁰ The Central State Military History Archive (TsGVIA) director argued that such a move was the only way for individual archives "to insure the strengthening of their independence in resolving organizational, financial, staff, and management questions." He was convinced that such a move "does not contradict the task of raising the social status of archives, but rather would encourage greater realization of the basic principles, forms, and methods of the work of archival institutions in ensuring the preservation and use of documents of GAF SSSR." He added that it would help "overcome the miserable pay of archivists (who still average only 117 rubles per month)" and hence "stimulate more productive work." TsGANKh director Tsaplin warned that "certain types of service . . . should not be put on a commercial basis," at the same time suggesting that "the introduction of service fees, even including some types of use of documents," would not run counter to "strengthening the social role of archives" and "raising the quality of archival work." A TsGAOR SSSR archivist also argued that under no circumstances should such a move interfere with the rights of citizens to use documents in reading rooms and to receive needed information in response to necessary socio-legal inquiries, but saw no reason for "not serving artistic unions, film studios, and other institutions on a 'self-financing' basis, whereby they would pay for the work of archives in connection with their productions." Several others repeated the belief that this would be "the only way of over-

⁴⁰The archives represented were: the Central State Archive of the October Revolution of the USSR (TsGAOR SSSR), the Central State Archives of the National Economy (TsGANKh SSSR), the Central State Archives of the Soviet Army (TsGASA), the Central State Military History Archives (TsGVIA SSSR), and the Central State Archive of Literature and Art (TsGALI SSSR).

coming the unfavorable material-technological basis of archives," along with many hopes for "more computers and copying machines for researchers in the reading rooms." The TsGASA deputy director believed that the new economic basis might well "enhance the status of archives." She took a more commercial line in reminding others that they were always told "that we preserve the priceless legacy of the nation, but that meaning could be just as well turned around. Priceless means it costs nothing, and once it costs nothing, does that mean we don't need to care for it?"⁴¹

As the new economic order goes into effect, discussion continues with examples of different fiscal solutions and problems in different state archives.⁴² The first uncertain steps toward autonomy and a market economy in the face of a collapsing centralized economy are obviously difficult ones for archives, and it will be a few years before the details have been worked out in the context of new state budgetary reform and a new law on archives. Thus it is still too early to see how such changes will affect archival work and the extent to which the changes already introduced will stand up. Yet it is tragic to contemplate the possible further erosion of the public image of archives if state archives are forced to move further toward becoming self-financing, fee-for-service agencies, as some have proposed, or even worse, if they are forced to turn over their services to profit-making, commercial ventures.

⁴¹Quoted in "Arkhiy i perestroika: 'Kruglyi stol' zhurnala," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 1: 22-24.

⁴²See the further discussion on the issue of self-financing and new archival economy in a subsequent published "round table" discussion with additional representatives from the same archives in *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 3: 3-12, with additional reports from Novosibirsk oblast, no. 3: 13-14, and in an interview with the director of the State Archive of Khar'kov Oblast, no. 5: 3-7, and commentary from Kostroma archivists, pp. 7-11.

Moreover, the imposition of proprietary charges and some types of usage fees raises problems that still need clarification and resolution within the most basic levels of judicial theory and within the legal basis for the proposed archival reform. Most specifically, the issue of "information values" or copyright charges for government documents—as opposed to generally accepted charges for the actual copying—involves fundamental legal and jurisdictional principles. In the United States, as in other Western democracies, records created by a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" are considered to be in the public domain and thus not subject to fees for use or copyright (again, as opposed to fees for copying). Hence the idea that a state archives could charge fees for the *right* to copy public documents in its care is anathema to those familiar with democratic archival theory and international practice. The prospect of such increased political as well as economic restraints on the public availability of government documents is hardly a remedy for the low credibility of Soviet archives.

Attempts at Archival Reform

Glasnost in archives? Yes, and even increasingly so, as the glaring problems of the nation's archives are being aired widely and publicly. But *perestroika*? Not yet, or at least not in demonstratively progressive directions. Of course it is still to be hoped that archives are not approaching "the end of *perestroika*," as some are already prophesying in other areas of the Soviet scene.

There has been much *talk* about *perestroika* in the realm of archives, as in so many other aspects of the Soviet state and society. The public is beginning to recognize that archives, while preserving the documentary heritage of the nation, serve a vital cultural function in society and need to be freed from the effects of their long-

time prime association with the security organs and their earlier functions of controlling information, promoting Communist Party goals, and searching for internal enemies of the regime. It is generally recognized that the results of archival declassification, the possibilities of research in hitherto banned topics, and the increased public access to documents and finding aids, which have been achieved during several years of *glasnost*, could be reversed quickly because they still have no juridical basis. Such achievements of *glasnost* are reinforced neither by a legal structure guaranteeing individual freedom, freedom of the press, and freedom of information, nor by legal restraints on state intrusion on individual rights.

Many who have been turning their attention to archival reform have not been waiting for society to be reformed around them. In the course of the more open public discussion of archives of the past few years, all sides agree that a basic law on Soviet archives is needed to give a juridical basis to a system hitherto governed only by decrees and administrative regulations.⁴³ A basic law governing archives has in fact been on the drawing boards since 1987 and came to public attention through open discussion in the Soviet press early in 1988.⁴⁴ Since then, discussion of archival reform has become increasingly heated. Debate regarding archives has been no less bitter than much of the other political discussion heard in public meetings and demonstrations, in the corridors and session rooms of the Communist Party Congress, and before public television and radio in the Council of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet.

From the start of discussion of archival reform, Glavarkhiv, a centralized, supra-ministerial archival agency attached to the Council of Ministers under the directorship of Fedor Mikhailovich Vaganov, has tried to dictate the path of archival reform on its own terms. At the same time, Glavarkhiv has seen its own bureaucratic ranks and centralized authority cut back severely. Having withstood an earlier retrogressive and ill-fated reform attempt from the outside to shift its independent jurisdiction to the Ministry of Justice, Glavarkhiv has been forced to implement considerable internal reform and turn serious attention to *perestroika*. Archival authorities within Glavarkhiv and its various departments have drafted and discussed a series of versions of a new archival law, culminating in what was presented as a relatively definitive draft, dated 4 November 1989. Issued as an in-house pamphlet with a press run of 1,000 copies, the introductory note signed by Glavarkhiv chief Vaganov promised a more widely available publication for public discussion.⁴⁵ Despite his promises, however, neither the November 1989 draft nor a revised version has appeared in openly published form.

Dissatisfaction with the present Glavarkhiv leadership and with earlier versions of the Glavarkhiv-proposed archival law led to the formation in 1989 of an alternative "initiative group," consisting of a number of concerned and reform-oriented archivists, historians, and jurists, headed by Professor Boris Semenovitch Ilizarov.⁴⁶ The group found institutional support in the Moscow State Historico-Archival Institute (MGIAI), the principal university-level

⁴³Earlier decrees and regulations are mentioned in Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree of 1918: The Bolshevik Legacy for Soviet Archival Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 45 (Fall 1982): 429-43, and in the introductory chapter in Grimsted, *Handbook*, 3-55.

⁴⁴See Grimsted, "Glasnost' in the Archives?" 218-21.

⁴⁵*Zakon Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik ob arkhivnom fonde SSSR*, ed. F. M. Vaganov (Moscow: Glavarkhiv, 1989).

⁴⁶See, for example, B. Ilizarov, "Ob arkhivakh i taunoi bor'be za sokhranenie ikh 'tain'," *Ogonek*, 1989, no. 2: 10-11. Earlier discussion of archival reform and articles by Ilizarov and others are cited in Grimsted, "Glasnost' in the Archives?" 118-21.

training institution for archivists, which has been the center of the movement for archival reform since the appointment of Iurii Afanas'ev as rector at the end of 1986. Afanas'ev, now a deputy and leader of one of the major reform-oriented groups in the Council of People's Deputies, made archives and *perestroika* in historical study a political cause célèbre in the public press and the legislature. An initial draft of the proposed alternative archival law was circulated widely during the summer of 1989, and several public discussions were held at MGIAI in the fall with participants from many institutions including Glavarkhiv. In an effort to raise the issues involved for serious public discussion, the Academy of Sciences published the alternative draft in the October 1989 issue of its monthly general-interest journal.⁴⁷

As one of the basic components of a new law, the Glavarkhiv draft was already moving away from the narrow bureaucratic conception of the "State Archival Fond" with a new title of the "Archival Fond of the USSR," which at least implied a much-needed expanded jurisdiction over vital agency records not presently controlled by Glavarkhiv. Yet there was a lack of specificity as to which agency records would be included and no mention of the thorny issue of Communist Party Archives, which at present do not come under the State Archival Fond. The alternative draft went much further in replacing the current "State Archival Fond" with a more democratic and all-inclusive "Archival Fond of Soviet Society," thus retaining an important element of archival centralization on the all-union level, but expanding its jurisdiction to other vital agency records not presently controlled by Glavarkhiv.

Another thorny issue of archival reform, with which the present leadership of Glavarkhiv can hardly be anxious to deal, is the very existence of Glavarkhiv itself. The initiative group's draft of a new archival law proposed the replacement of Glavarkhiv by a more limited archival council under the Council of People's Deputies that would deal only with professional functions. A new blue-ribbon archival advisory council has been functioning since its creation in the fall of 1988, but some participants suggest that, without any bureaucratic or political authority, the present council is serving no significant purpose. Furthermore, there appears to be little consensus that any kind of archival council in and of itself could or should be reorganized as a replacement for the more traditionally bureaucratic agency of Glavarkhiv, but then much would depend on its power and the definition of its functions. In other words, the alternative draft law raised many unresolved questions but, by threatening the existing power base of Glavarkhiv, put forth a fundamental challenge to the status quo. It is little wonder that debate became so heated.

Glavarkhiv's published round-table discussion in the first 1990 issue of *Sovetskie arkhivy* specifically addressed the proposed draft laws on archives in a few instances. TsGANKh director Tsaplin confronted the matter most directly and most critically:

The official project for the Law on Archives in both form and content in principle intricately strengthens the status quo in archival affairs. In it, aside from defining the terms for restricting access to documents, there is nothing essentially new to reflect contemporary tendencies, which in fact . . . would strengthen the participation of society in the administration of archival affairs. The alternative variant of the Law, formulated especially by MGIAI, is divorced from life. It overflows with the obligations of ar-

⁴⁷Iu. M. Baturin, M. A. Fedotov, and V. L. Entin, "Glasnost' i arkhivy: Variant zakonodatel'nogo resheniia," *Vestnik Akademii nauk SSSR*, 1989, no. 10: 75, followed by "Zakon SSSR ob arkhivnom dele i arkhivakh: Initsiativnyi avtorskii proekt," 76-87.

chives before society and citizens, but does not establish the right to safeguard archival affairs and the State Archival Fond of the USSR. It requires a great deal of state archives, but in answer to that it gives almost nothing.⁴⁸

Tsaplin went on to make some more concrete suggestions regarding principles and structure for archival affairs and emphasized the need "to reinforce the right of every citizen (on his own recognizance) and institution to acquaint themselves with documents of interest to them unless they constitute state or military secrets" and that such "use should remain free of charge."⁴⁹ The deputy director of the Central State Archive of the Soviet Army (TsGASA) emphasized "the Law on Archives should make clear the obligation of all state institutions and agencies to turn over their records to state archives within a specified time, including such all-union agencies as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the KGB."⁵⁰ The Glavarkhiv draft law itself, however, was not published by the journal, but the published discussion, short as it was, reveals the critical attitudes towards the Glavarkhiv draft, even within the state archival service itself.

The Division of History of the Academy of Sciences opened its bureau meeting to a public discussion of the two proposed draft archival laws in January 1990. Both draft laws had been circulated in advance to the Academy institutes that form part of the Division of History for preliminary study and written evaluation, and the principal sponsors of both drafts participated in person at the meeting along with a wide segment of concerned scholarly researchers.⁵¹

Vaganov presented a strong defense of the official Glavarkhiv version, emphasizing the overbearing need to keep the Glavarkhiv structure and functions intact and the appropriateness of keeping planning and implementation of archival reform under Glavarkhiv auspices. He found few supporters among the assembled specialists. Professor S. O. Shmidt, chairman of the Archeographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences (whom Vaganov had dismissed from the editorial board of *Sovetskie arkhivy* several months earlier) served as rapporteur for the appraisals of the two draft laws submitted by various Academy institutes. The Institute of History of the USSR, for example, expressed "the general opinion that the Glavarkhiv draft sought to preserve the existing situation, structure, and organization of archival affairs in the country . . . and shows inadequate attention to questions of *glasnost*' and *perestroika* in archival affairs." Because "archival institutions appear in the law as a system of archival service organs, undervaluing their role as scholarly institutions, . . . members of the institute unquestionably give preference to the alternative project." The opinion of the Institute of General History agreed that the alternative project, "despite some existing inadequacies, was "more democratic and presented a more realistic perspective for basic *perestroika* of the entire archival system." It was, nevertheless, the sense of the meeting that "neither one nor the other draft should be presented to law-making bodies in its present formulation." Yet, "the severe problems and deficiencies of both drafts" raised by the various institutes' appraisals and by participants in the discussion made "reconciliation impossible." Vaganov, himself not accustomed to such open public discussion,

⁴⁸V. V. Tsaplin as quoted in "Arkhiy i perestroika: 'Kruglyi stol' zhurnala," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 1: 19.

⁴⁹Ibid, 20.

⁵⁰L. V. Dvoynikh, as quoted in *ibid*.

⁵¹The comments regarding that meeting are based

on an unofficial stenographic transcript available in the office of the Division of History. I am grateful to colleagues there for making this text available to me.

nonetheless called for all to sit down and work together in redrafting an appropriate law to submit to the legislature. Others present understood him to mean that such discussion could take place only under his direction and openly expressed doubts as to his sincerity and readiness for further substantive discussion. Thus the meeting ended in an impasse.

Subsequent debate took a bitter, personal turn as substantive discussion of the reform proposals was in fact pushed to the background, and more personal battle lines were drawn. Soon after the January meeting, Glavarkhiv published an attack on the MGIAI archival reform activities; initially issued anonymously as a restricted Glavarkhiv in-house bulletin, the document then appeared in a slightly amended version in the wide-circulation professional archival journal *Sovetskie arkhivy*, under the sarcastic title, “‘Foreman for *Perestroika*’ of Archival Affairs.”⁵² The article, generally attributed to Vaganov, singled out Afanas’ev, Ilizarov, and other participants in the MGIAI reform efforts as virtual enemies of archival *perestroika*.

The anonymous article complained about three major MGIAI-led operations, very much in the same terms Vaganov had used in the last segment of public discussion during the meeting at the Division of History in January. Each of the three points deserve more thorough separate consideration, but can only be mentioned briefly here.

The first MGIAI offense was the support of the alternative initiative project for an archival law. Noting various stages in the project, the article strongly criticized the published interview with Professor Ilizarov in which he supported the alternative draft.

There was the strong implication that only Glavarkhiv knew best and was qualified to draft a suitable law for the Soviet archival system.⁵³

The second MGIAI offense was the formation in 1990 of the All-Union Independent Association of Historians and Archivists, with the aim of seeking reform in the archival realm and improvement in working conditions for archivists. The association held its first conference at MGIAI in June 1990, five months before a Glavarkhiv-sponsored organizational meeting to establish a more official association.

The third offense, according to Glavarkhiv, was the formation of the People’s Archive under MGIAI auspices. Obviously, a direct challenge to the Glavarkhiv system, and most particularly to its appraisal and retention policies, the People’s Archive, and the fact that it received a grant from the Soros Foundation, drew biting criticism from Glavarkhiv.

The total effect of the reformist challenges to Glavarkhiv authority was too much for the current leadership:

“What does all this mean?” the Glavarkhiv critique demanded. “What role is MGIAI beginning to play in the archival affairs of the country? . . . Will they continue to educate archivists as in the past? . . . Or perhaps MGIAI is considering setting up a ‘New Center’ for the organization of ‘new’ archival affairs in the country? Generally, and above all, workers of state archives want to know: What is happening to the level of archives with the help and direction of MGIAI?”⁵⁴

As so often occurs in official Soviet writings, the rhetorical questions were phrased in the name of the vast collective, in this case as if the “workers of state archives”

⁵²“Perestroika arkhivnogo dela—ego sozidanie, a ne razrushenie,” published as *Bulletin Glavarkhiv*, 1990, no. 1. Republished as “‘Proraby perestroiki’ arkhivnogo dela: kto oni i shto delaiut?” *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 2: 46-57.

⁵³See the interview with Ilizarov in *Sobesednik*, 1989, no. 34 (August), 10.

⁵⁴“Perestroika arkhivnogo dela,” 5, and “‘Proraby perestroika,’” 46.

spoke with a single voice. What the article—and most particularly the version published in *Sovetskie arkhivy*—did not reveal is the dissatisfaction and labor unrest in the ranks of state archives, which, for example, led to serious strikes in Tula and Lviv in January 1990, boycotts in Orel and Kursk, and lesser slow-down strikes in many other archival institutions. The Glavarkhiv in-house brochure specifically criticized MGIAI for its support of the Tula strike, hence blaming MGIAI for “the destabilization of the situation and disorganization of work of institutions of the state archival service of the USSR.”⁵⁵ There was also no hint in either version of the Glavarkhiv article of the labor unrest in Glavarkhiv’s own backyard, such as was expressed in the resolution of archivists in the Central State Archive of the National Economy (TsGANKh SSSR) in Moscow at the end of January, which complained bitterly about the miserable pay and working conditions of archivists, inadequate archival facilities, and other serious problems. Its forthright expression of “distrust in the management of Glavarkhiv, which is standing aloof from the process of *perestroika* in archival affairs” culminated in the demand for “the resignation of Glavarkhiv chief, Comrade F. M. Vaganov.”⁵⁶

Read in the context of such demands and developments on the archival scene, the Glavarkhiv tract does indeed appear aloof when it affirmed, “To be sure, [the MGIAI activities] do not receive the absolute support of most Soviet archivists, and most

particularly those among their ranks who reject the elements of destabilization and disorganization that contribute to the completely abnormal moral and political situation.”⁵⁷ Such a diatribe against MGIAI appears further out of context when one realizes that many of the best qualified archivists have been trained by MGIAI, that many of the state archival staff are still in training there, and that a number of Glavarkhiv archivists still teach courses or have close associations at MGIAI.

The publication of such a rhetorical article on the part of the Glavarkhiv leadership, especially when the Glavarkhiv-proposed law still had not appeared in print, only added fuel to the fire. After the *Sovetskie arkhivy* version appeared, the MGIAI Academic Council formally adopted a resolution of protest against this Glavarkhiv publication on 15 May, suggesting that the Glavarkhiv attack “does not assist the analysis of the problem of *perestroika* in archival affairs and even impedes it,” and affirmed the need to respond publicly to the attacks.⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, such response was not invited in *Sovetskie arkhivy*.⁵⁹ Even less surprisingly, the entire unfortunate incident only increased the sense of frustration and discouragement of those opposed to Glavarkhiv policies and tactics. The

⁵⁷“*Perestroika arkhivnogo dela*,” 3-4. The latter quotes appeared only in the in-house pamphlet.

⁵⁸“*Reshenie Uchenogo Soveta Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo istoriko-arkhivnogo instituta ot 15 maia 1990g. o resul'tatakh obshchdeniia dokumenta 'Perestroika arkhivnogo dela—ego sozidanie, a ne razrushenie.'*” The author is grateful to colleagues at MGIAI for making the text of the resolution available to me, which is cited here with their permission.

⁵⁹A subsequent issue contained an obscure one-line disclaimer from the editor, explaining that the article was published on the order of Glavarkhiv: *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 4: 110. As explained to me by Soviet colleagues, the note implied that some of the members of the editorial board were strongly opposed to the published attack; for example, the name of V. I. Buganov, at his request, was not listed among members of the editorial board in the same issue as the article.

⁵⁵A short article by A. Lanina, “*Bastuiut 'tishaishe'*,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 17 January 1990, 2, noted the Tula strike, the pay boycott in Orel, and further boycotts in Glavarkhiv RSFSR and the Archival Administration in Kursk, and mentioned that sixty telegrams supporting the Tula strike had come from other cities. The article also mentioned the political “meeting” held at MGIAI with supporting speeches by Professor Ilizarov and Rector Afanas'ev and announced an organizational conference for the Independent Association of Historians and Archivists.

⁵⁶Quoted in *Ogonek*, 1990, no. 9: 11.

frustration of some of the alternative group was further increased in the course of the summer, when news began circulating that MGIAI rector Afanas'ev, in what appeared to many as a political ploy, was planning to transform the renowned archival training institute into a broader based Russian university emphasizing studies in the humanities. Ironically, Vaganov's earlier query about the dedication of MGIAI to training archivists was beginning to ring true.

Seen from afar, although the two draft laws may be a manifestation in the archival realm of the more general struggle throughout the country between the polarized forces of change and of those who seek to preserve the privileged status quo, the reduction to the level of personal mud-slinging has only served to deflect attention from the principles involved. Thus energy has been diverted from desperately needed archival reform, at a point when there is little time or energy to lose especially for Glavarkhiv on the all-union level. At the same time frustration and labor unrest within Glavarkhiv ranks continued to multiply. At the end of May, as mentioned above, the reading room staff of TsGAOR SSSR resigned en masse, and the principal archives for postrevolutionary documentation was without adequate readers' services.

Six months after the January discussion, the draft law proposed by the alternative group appeared unrevised in pamphlet form in a widely circulated edition of 5,000 copies, with an introductory note of support by MGIAI rector Afanas'ev. An introductory article by MGIAI Professor Ilizarov discussed the crucial role of archival reform in the process of democratization of society, and MGIAI associate Aleksandr Kamenskii discussed related steps in the formulation of the initiative draft law.⁶⁰

Regrettably, however, the pamphlet had gone to press before the January forum discussion in the Division of History. Accordingly, neither the introductory remarks nor the text itself benefited from that discussion, which raised serious problems with both draft projects for the new law. Even by the end of the year, no further revisions were made in the alternative proposal despite its serious drawbacks as pointed out in the January 1990 meeting.

The concept of an "Archival Fond of Soviet Society" admittedly sounds more democratic than the present Glavarkhiv-dominated "State Archival Fond" or even the Glavarkhiv proposed "Archival Fond of the USSR." But the legal definition of an appropriate power base and authority structure will still need to be worked out in more realistic terms if a new legal entity is to embrace such powerful components as the archives of the Ministry of Defense, the Communist Party, and the KGB, none of whom have thus far shown themselves to be open to discussion of serious democratically oriented professional functions in the archival realm. The Ministry of Defense, for example, was reportedly holding strong in its battle to keep the control of its archival wealth and its archival organization away from Glavarkhiv. In fact, the problem of agency archives and other major archival deposits outside the present control of Glavarkhiv remains particularly acute. Furthermore, the crucial role of and authority over the archives of the Communist Party and the KGB can hardly be resolved fully until the role of those organizations themselves within a new political regime is decided. But even if their

⁶⁰Iu. M. Baturin, B. S. Ilizarov, A. B. Kamenskii, M. A. Fedotov, E. I. Khan-lira, O. V. Shchemeleva, and V. L. Entin, *Zakon ob arkhivnom dele i arkhiv-*

vakh. Kakim emy byt'? Mnenie uchenykh. Initsiativnyi avtorskii proekt (Moscow: "Iuridicheskaiia literatura," 1990). The pamphlet appeared in early July 1990. See the remarks about its publication by V. Georgievskii, "Svobodnyi vkhod v arkhivy—predlagaiut sdelat' spetsialisty v svoem avtorskom proekte novogo zakona ob arkhivnom dele v SSSR," *Izvestiia*, 18 July 1990, 3.

role is minimized in a reformed, democratized polity, questions still remain about the fate and archival jurisdiction of the crucially important all-union records they have created since 1917.

The challenge to Glavarkhiv as a centralized agency of control may be in keeping with democratic trends and progressive reform, but questions remain as to whether individual archives operating on their own will be able to raise sufficient financial support and perform all of the professional functions that have hitherto been carried on by Glavarkhiv. Without a centralized administrative base and firm political executive authority, could professional functions in such realms as improving appraisal and retention schedules really be controlled on an all-union level? Would a democratic council of archival representatives have the political clout to force archival appropriation and open access to the records from such independent-minded all-union agencies as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or the KGB, all of which ideally should be considered an integral part of the "Archival Fond of the USSR"? Even in terms of more purely professional research and development functions, would the unique Glavarkhiv research institute VNIIDAD be abandoned in the process? And will there be stable, long-range funding and technical support for the vitally needed new buildings and improved preservation standards? Without a designated, centralized institutional base, where will be the similar funding, computer support, and expertise needed to rebuild the present Glavarkhiv registration and reporting operations into a vital public service and user-oriented, multi-lingual nationwide registration and reference system? Concrete archival reform still has far to go, and many vital issues have yet to be adequately addressed.

One of the most fundamental questions involves the nature of the union structure and the extent to which separate archival

fonds and archival systems will be organized for each national union republic and autonomous region that has declared its sovereignty from Moscow in 1990. Indeed, during the year significant impetus for archival reform shifted away from the center to the republics. The alternative draft law leaves room for such republic-level developments of the non-Russian republics, but nonetheless seeks to retain a centripetal umbrella of professional functions on the all-union level.⁶¹ In the Baltic, more radically centrifugal reform plans for republic-level archival systems were being finalized. Lithuania was the first Soviet republic to adopt a new archival law with a totally independent national archival system. This law was adopted in February 1990. Estonia had enacted an archival law in 1935 before Soviet annexation. The new law being drafted there is likewise based on the premise of complete Estonian independence. As explained in the report of Peep Pillak, Estonian archival leaders totally rejected "the hollow and stagnant proposals" of the all-union Glavarkhiv, and also rejected the "more democratic" MGIAI alternative because "it still envisages an all-union centralized archival system." Estonian state archives have already discarded their Soviet-style nomenclature, such as the "Central State Archive of the October Revolution," thus restoring in its stead the institutional names used during the independent Estonian republic.⁶² Neither of these Baltic republics wants any part of a Moscow-based Glavarkhiv to dictate its archival policies and functions; the alternative Estonian plan likewise rules out a republic-level Glavarkhiv.

The meeting of the newly formed archival association for the Russian Federation in October of 1990 raised serious

⁶¹*Zakon ob arkhivnom dele*, 33-34.

⁶²See Peep Pillak, "Reforms in Estonian Archives," *American Archivist* 53 (Fall 1990): 5.

challenges to a centralized all-union Glavarkhiv authority by strengthening authority of Glavarkhiv in the Russian Federation through its strong platform for archival reform in the RSFSR, not unlike other challenges to central all-union authority on the part of an increasingly assertive Russian Federation. That same month reform-minded Rudolf Germanovich Pikhoia took office as chief of Glavarkhiv RSFSR, which in the following month was reorganized as the Committee on Archival Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation (*Komitet po delam arkhivov pri Sovete Ministrov RSFSR*), with Pikhoia as chairman. Claims were being formulated that all Russian historical records held by all-union historical archives should be transferred to the jurisdiction of the RSFSR, and plans were underway for a separate archival law for the RSFSR as part of a comprehensive reform of the archival system.

Some other republics, such as Ukraine, while anxious to assert their sovereignty, had yet to break with the Glavarkhiv plan or formulate a thorough-going archival reform plan of their own by the end of 1990. Obviously the matter of national archival systems cannot be resolved before the resolution of the basic federative structure of the USSR and the extent of independence and degree of self-determination of the present constituent union republics. But none of the republics will tolerate a centralized archival service in Moscow if it fails to respect national languages and archival traditions.

Many of the problems of archival reform dominated the organizational meeting for a new official all-union Society of Archivists of the USSR held in Moscow under Glavarkhiv sponsorship in November 1990. The meeting brought together representatives, predominantly from state archives, from throughout the USSR, further serving as a counterpoise to the independent association

meetings held at MGIAI earlier in June. Although the November meeting made considerable progress toward establishing an all-union association, it spent much time trying inconclusively to resolve issues of the relationship of republic-level associations to the all-union one. Such an all-union association could theoretically provide vital coordination on the archival front in the face of the increasing disintegration of central controls, but the future of the association and its effective role vis-à-vis republic-level associations was hardly clear in the face of the nation's overwhelming political and economic crisis.

In the context of the crisis situation unfolding in the fall of 1990, basic archival reform on the all-union level appeared to have reached an impasse, and the challenge of supporters of the alternative project appeared to have made little progress toward winning enough political support to upstage Glavarkhiv. The final issue of *Sovetskie arkhivy* for 1990 reported on a formal September meeting of representatives of the Council of People's Deputies with Glavarkhiv officials to discuss issues affecting the "Archival Fond of the USSR" and the progress towards a new archival law.⁶³ As a sad commentary on the realities of the Soviet political process, the short report read as if there had never been a challenge by supporters of an alternative draft archival law, nor any further controversy earlier in the year. "Vaganov emphasized that the [official Glavarkhiv] draft law was based on the development of archival affairs in the USSR, appeared to reflect the realities of life and activities of the State Archival Service of the USSR, and was elaborated in taking into account foreign legal experience." It noted that "he gave a short characterization of the main sections of the draft law," which, he explained, had

⁶³"Narodnye deputaty SSSR znakomiatsia s rabotoi arkhivistov," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1990, no. 6: 10.

been prepared in consultation with other interested agencies, including the Ministry of Justice and the Academy of Sciences. The revised Glavarkhiv draft was formally submitted to the Supreme Soviet, but it has still not appeared in openly published form.⁶⁴

Only time will tell if Glavarkhiv itself as an agency can withstand the challenges of *perestroika*, or if it can reform itself to serve a reformed, multi-lingual, multi-national society, within a market economy and a restructured, democratic political regime. Only time will tell if it can transcend the narrow boundaries of the present State Archival Fond as its designated patrimony. Unfortunately, the extent to which the Glavarkhiv public image has been perceived as a bastion against fundamental reform, and the extent to which its economic resources have been curtailed at a time of general economic crisis may serve further to undermine its positive achievements in the archival realm. Fundamental decisions still need to be made about the extent to which the favorable aspects of a centralized archival agency such as Glavarkhiv on an all-union level could best serve the needs of a multinational archival administration. Undoubtedly, it will take considerable public dedication and determination on the part of a socially and culturally responsive leadership to resolve the pending issues and tear down the battle lines that have been draining resources from the more basic issues of archival reform and the much-needed *perestroika* of the archival system.⁶⁵

The problems of archival reform and its apparent impasse at the end of 1990 are indicative of much broader problems in Soviet society at large. A collapsing economy still isolated from the world and from Western technological advances by its non-convertible currency, and an imperial union that can be preserved in 1991 only by Soviet tanks and renewed national repression hardly provide the prerequisites for democratic reform and archival *perestroika*. Given the maxim that archives by their nature must both reflect and serve the society whose records they preserve, definitive reform of the Soviet archival system cannot proceed in a vacuum. Some who are most concerned about archival access suggest that an effective archival law cannot precede a law on freedom of information and more fundamental guarantees of the rights of citizens vis-à-vis the state. Issues of public availability of documents also require resolution of principles of proprietary jurisdiction and the extent to which the national archival legacy remains legally in the public domain.

Others who emphasize the custodial and public service role of archives as guardian of the records of society recognize that definitive reform of the archival system cannot precede reform and stabilization of the entire government and economic structure. Whether archives are to be turned into self-financing, fee-for-service commercial ventures or publicly financed as scholarly-oriented public service agencies, as in Western democracies, requires resolution of issues of government finance and economic viability. Whether archives are to be freed de-

⁶⁴The author requested a copy of the revised Glavarkhiv draft before leaving Moscow in December 1990, but was told it is an internal document not for general circulation.

⁶⁵Editor's note: As this article was being prepared for publication, the editors received the following updated information from the author who was in Moscow: "In conjunction with the 13 April 1991 reorganization of higher organs of the Soviet governmental structure, the continuing existence of Glavar-

khiv was assured. Glavarkhiv's official position is now under the Cabinet (formerly Council) of Ministers of the USSR. Henceforth its official designation is to be *Glavnoe arkhivnoe upravlenie pri Kabinete Ministrov SSSR*." The editors were also informed that MGIAI did in fact become a department of the new Russian State Humanitarian University (*rossiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet*).

finitively from their legacy of subservience to the operational goals of state security organs and to the ideological aims of the Communist Party awaits resolution of the theoretical goals and orientation of the new state order. Is there still to be a State Archival Fond in its present form, or is it to be expanded to include other prime, but sensitive, bodies of records of state and Party rule not now under its jurisdiction? Is it to be replaced by a more comprehensive and

democratic "Archival Fond of Soviet Society," supplemented and/or complemented by archival fonds of sovereign federated nations? To what extent, and in what areas, is an all-union archival fond of any sort to be superseded by national archival fonds of independent sovereign nations? The choice between such alternatives obviously must await resolution of the overriding issue of governmental reform and of the nature and extent of the federal union.