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"What Kind of Past Should the Future Have?" The Development of the Soviet Archival System, 1917-1931

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What Kind of Past Should the Future Have?

The Development of the Soviet Archival System, 1917-1931

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
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in History

by

Kelly Ann Kolar

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

What Kind of Past Should the Future Have?

The Development of the Soviet Archival System,

1917-1931

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Kelly Ann Kolar

Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Professor J. Arch Getty, Chair

This study investigates how the Bolsheviks built a usable past through the preservation, creation, and use of archival material. Soon after coming to power in the Russian Revolution of October 1917, the Bolsheviks created the most centralized and far reaching archival administration in the world. As the Bolsheviks turned increasingly to history as a source of legitimacy after the civil war, they used the evidence represented in archival documents to construct a narrative that would demonstrate this legitimacy. The Bolsheviks created this narrative using the documentary legacy they inherited from the Tsarist and Provisional Governments, and by founding new archival collections to be used to place the revolution into the preferred historical narrative. The party employed archivists in every aspect of this effort, and archival traditions of collecting, arranging,

and describing were supplemented by new practices, such as creating exhibits, popular publications, and lectures, which emphasized an active public role for archivists.

The limitations of resources during the early Soviet period had wide implications for the development of the archival system and the Bolshevik historical narrative. The lack of an educated workforce led Bolsheviks to rely heavily on pre-revolutionary professionals to create and enact reforms, staff their archival institutions, and participate in the public aspects of archival work (publishing and exhibiting documents). Archivists suffered from a lack of financial resources, which impeded their ability to properly carry out archival work. As a result, archival institutions repeatedly produced historical narratives that disappointed Bolshevik leaders and the party rescinded the early concessions to resource scarcity in developing the archival system (i.e., employing specialists, relative autonomy for institutions in the provinces) and enforced greater centralization, classification, and control over archival materials. By 1931 the Bolsheviks placed more fear than hope in the development of a multi-voiced historical record and narrative. The result was a significantly decreased focus on, or access to, archival materials for historical scholarship, and the consolidation of stricter, more centralized management which came to characterize Soviet archival administration.

This dissertation of Kelly Ann Kolar is approved.

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2012

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Introduction

> Man is a history-making creature who can
> neither repeat his past nor leave it behind.
> -- W. H. Auden

Veteran Bolshevik V. D. Bonch-Bruevich described a midnight walk home from party headquarters with Vladimir Lenin in the days following the October Revolution during which they discussed the role of archives in the new regime. Lenin, Bonch-Bruevich recalled, stressed the need to collect museum and archival materials, to show the world that the dictatorship of the proletariat was firmly established and that "truly cultural work [was] occurring where power [had] transferred to the working class."[1] Archives form the basis of a nation's historical record; what is kept and what is destroyed determines what, or even who, will be remembered, and what will be forgotten. This truth was not lost on the Bolsheviks who immediately established control over the documentary records of their predecessors. Within days of the 1917 October Revolution, the victorious Bolsheviks took direct action to secure Tsarist archival collections and begin publication of these materials.

On June 1, 1918 Lenin signed the "Decree on the Reorganization and Centralization of Archival Affairs of the RSFSR," which brought pre-revolutionary archives under centralized state control and established an infrastructure for the continued

[1] V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, *Izbrannye Sochineniia: Tom III Vospominaniia o V. I. Lenine 1917-1924 gg*. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1963): 337.

preservation of all existing Tsarist and Provisional Government documents.[2] This first step toward archival centralization, remarkable in scope even in 1918, was greatly expanded over the next decade to include nearly all kinds of archival documents, and managed by a newly created Main Archival Administration (Glavarkhiv, later the Central Administration, or Tsentrarkhiv).[3] Believing the future of their state would be greatly affected by the memory of the past, the Bolsheviks attempted to use the nation's documentary record to shape how their revolutionary state and their enemies would be perceived.

Party leaders stressed the ideological importance of the history embodied in the archives and this shaped their conception, plans, and long-term goals for archival institutions. As prominent Bolshevik historian and long time Tsentrarkhiv Director, M. N. Pokrovskii stated, "one cannot be a Marxist without being a historian."[4] As an instrument of public history, the Soviet archival system provided a sense of stability and tradition that helped to legitimize the new regime. However, the creation of the nation's historical record was not a straightforward, top-down endeavor, but a negotiation between party desires and the practical limitations encountered by working archivists. Both the high-level decisions and directives of the party and the everyday decisions of archivists implementing these directives had powerful and lasting implications for the development of the Soviet archival system.

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[2] Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree of 1918: The Bolshevik Legacy for Soviet Archival Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 45, no. 4 (Fall 1982): 429.

[3] The Main (Central as of 1922) Archival Administration was variously called GAU, GAUD, Glavarkhiv, and Tsentrarkhiv throughout the 1920s and 1930s. For the purposes of simplicity I will refer to it as "Tsentrarkhiv" throughout this study.

[4] M. N. Pokrovskii, *Politcheskoe Znachenie Arkhivov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Tsentrarkhiv RSFSR, 1924): 7.

This study employs both a top-down and bottom-up approach to evaluate the Bolsheviks' attempts to employ archives in the creation of a preferred historical narrative as it was shaped and reshaped by the changing politics and policies of their first fifteen years in power. In terms of archival and party leadership this study asks what role ideology played in the development of the Soviet archival system, what other factors influenced party leaders' decisions, and how successful the party's efforts were in achieving stated goals by analyzing the materials used to create collections, publications, exhibits, and community activities: meeting transcripts, instructions to archival workers, instructions to memoirists, as well as the output of the various local archive branches. This project also seeks to determine the influence of bottom-up factors on the Soviet archival administration by evaluating the role archivists played in the development of the archival system through an exploration of their backgrounds and motivations. This study asks what cultural and social factors influenced early Soviet archivists, what challenges influenced their everyday practices, and to what extent archivists' decisions affected enduring characteristics of Soviet archival science and historical narrative, through exploring personnel files, educational materials, curricula, lectures, internal memos, and correspondence which addressed the working conditions and day-to-day practices within archival repositories. By exploring the motivations of party and archival leaders, as well as the motivations and practical limitations of archivists working in widespread institutions, this project creates a comprehensive portrait of the development of the unique archival system and its role in the development of the Bolshevik historical narrative.

Historical Background

Archives in the Russian Empire were in most ways behind the development and organization of archives in Western European nations; there was little centralization of state documents or archival practices. Generally, Tsarist era government institutions cared little about centralizing and reforming archival administration. Prior attempts at archival reforms in accordance with the mid-19th century Great Reforms resulted in the designation of certain institutions for archival centralization, such as the Moscow Archive of the Ministry of Justice as the repository for all pre-19th century state records, but little was done to directly achieve this centralization. As a result, documentary records would often remain at their creator agencies with state archival resources scattered throughout the Empire. Archivists and historians during this period tried to consolidate practices and standards of archives, but were constantly thwarted by an oppressive Tsarist regime which had no interest in improving the administration of, or access to, heavily censored historical records.

By the February Revolution of 1917 archival science and administration was underdeveloped and scattered among several different archival repositories. Under the Provisional Government archivists began to work to reform archival practices. Petrograd archivists established the *Union of Russian Archival Workers* in April of 1917 with the goals of centralization and standardization of Russian archival practices. Because of the short and unstable tenure of the Provisional Government these reforming archivists were able to achieve little before the October Revolution, but their plans would have significant influence in the new Bolshevik archival administration.

Within days of the October Revolution the Bolsheviks took steps not only to

preserve existing Imperial documents, but also to use them to strengthen their public position. They saw great political and ideological potential in the use of pre-revolutionary archives, and later in the creation of their own archives, not only to affect foreign policy, but also to shape the public's view of the political situation in their favor.[5] In November 1917 sailor-Bolshevik N. G. Markin unearthed secret treaties undertaken by the Tsarist and Provisional governments during World War I held in the Ministry of Interior's collection. These documents were then published in seven pamphlets, as well as in the newspapers *Pravda*, *Izvestiia of the Petrograd Soviet, Worker and Soldier, Army and Navy of a Free Russia,* and others.[6] Several decrees in 1917 and 1918 addressed the paperwork associated with new laws, such as the preservation files related to the October 26 (November 8) abolishment of private property and the November 11 (24) abolishment of classes and civil ranks.[7] The decrees stipulated that all files related to property ownership or class status were to be transferred to new local authorities. The June 1, 1918 decree institutionalized many of the archival practices that had been evolving since the start of the revolution. Often referred to as the "Lenin Decree" by Soviet archivists, this concise document revolutionized the conceptual role of archives within the function of state and society. The decree ordered that the materials of all recently abolished pre-revolutionary government archival institutions and the current records of abolished state organization to be consolidated as part of the newly established Single State Archival

[5] V. V. Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR: 1917-1945* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1969): 37.

[6] Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela,* 39.

[7] The Russian Empire and the Provisional Government used the Julian calendar. As part of their efforts to modernize the Bolsheviks converted Russia from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar on February 1 (February 14), 1918 bringing it in line with most of Western Europe. Dates before the conversion are referenced in this study as "old style (new style), year."

Fond (Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhivnyi Fond, EGAF).[8] Early publication efforts were soon affirmed as one of the foremost tasks of archival institutions in the Soviet Union. Archival institutions regularly reprinted archival documents in the journals *Krasnyi Arkhiv (Red Archive,* from 1922) and *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia (Proletarian Revolution,* from 1924), as well as pamphlets, collected works, and newspaper articles. Further, throughout the 1920s archival institutions produced exhibits of archival documents and a public history of the revolutionary movement.

The June 1 decree subordinated Tsentrarkhiv, along with libraries and museums, to the People's Commissariat of the Enlightenment (Narodnyi Komissariat Prosvescheniia, Narkompros) and charged it with overseeing all areas of Soviet archival science and administration, including EGAF. The decree also established a unique aspect of the Soviet archival system: working documents created by state institutions could not be destroyed without permission from Tsentrarkhiv. At the time, the centralization and nationalization of archives was the most radical archival policy in history, extending even to the files still in the custody of their creator institutions. The goals of the centralization of archives after the French Revolution of 1789, while significantly transformative, were not nearly as extensive, concentrating generally on documents relating to land ownership by the First and Second Estates. Germany would not establish its national archive until 1919, and the United States not until sixteen years after the USSR in 1934. The scope of Tsentrarkhiv was widened further as the new republics' nascent archival administrations and republic level archival collections were ultimately subordinated to the center in 1929.

[8] Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree," 430.

The decision to preserve rather than destroy existing state documents was not inevitable. The Bolsheviks borrowed heavily from the experiences of the French, who centralized their archival materials after 1789. However, French revolutionaries also made a conscious decision to destroy many archival documents to ensure the eradication of the feudal privilege system through the destruction of evidence of rights of ownership.[9] The Bolshevik decision to preserve pre-revolutionary materials can be attributed partly to the Marxist emphasis on historical determinism and its scientific approach to history.

Although the Bolsheviks rejected historical works created by "bourgeois" historians, they rarely questioned the evidence presented in archival documents, imbuing them with an aura of truth that could finally be appropriately exploited by the working class with the application of proper Marxist methodological critique. The Bolsheviks also considered their revolution a model for future socialist revolutionaries, as the French Revolution had been for 19th century liberals. In addition, Bolshevik leaders, although revolutionary in their notion of economy and state, were still very much influenced by a number of prevailing Western concepts of culture. Years spent in exile in Western Europe by many Bolshevik leaders, particularly those who would come to lead Soviet cultural institutions, conducting research in the greatest archives and libraries of Western society shaped the Bolshevik concept of culture institutions. Early Soviet ideas of revolutionary culture did not advocate the destruction of all cultural manifestations of past societies. Instead the idea was to take ownership of and harness traditional concepts of cultural for a new proletarian society. Similarly, the Soviets would famously promote

[9]Lara Jennifer Moore, *Restoring Order: The Ecole des Chartes and the Organization of Archives and Libraries in France, 1820-1870* (Duluth, MI: Litwin Books, 2008): 9.

and substantially fund the expression of cultural traditions of great Western civilization, such as classical music, ballet, art, and literature.

Although the 1920s allowed for open, experimental cultural programs in the new Soviet society, by the end of the decade such programs would be shut down in favor of the expression of new socialist ideas in the form of traditional, more conservative 19th century cultural expressions. In this approach, archival collections, viewed as sources of great cultural and literary value, were to be nationalized, centralized, and made accessible to the masses. However, the value placed by Bolshevik leaders on archival materials was born of their educated, and in some cases self-educated, backgrounds. The instinct of many of the rank and file soldiers was to destroy libraries and archival collections. The inclination toward destruction would have great impact on the early years of archival development, resulting in the irreversible loss of numerous archival collections and consequently inspiring vast preservation and public education efforts.

The Soviets also leaned heavily on the French experience when developing their organizational practices. Tsentrarkhiv adopted as its guiding organizational standard the principle of provenance, or *respect des fonds*, which dictates that archival documents should be organized according to the structure created by the originating source and kept in their *original order* whenever possible. The decision to preserve pre-revolutionary documents in their original order meant that most archival collections continued to be housed in their pre-revolutionary institutions ensuring continuity in many pre- and post-revolutionary practices that belied the claims of radical change touted in Soviet literature. Indeed, little changed in early archival practice; pre-revolutionary technical methods of archival science were maintained, as well as the pre-revolutionary cadre of archival

workers.[10] In general, during this period there was no real attempt to change functional archival practices even as the role of archives in the state and society was being re-imagined. Archival educational centers in Saint Petersburg and Moscow were abolished, but archival education under the auspices of short term courses at Tsentrarkhiv were still conducted by "bourgeois" archivists and historians[11] who stressed traditional archival topics with lectures on "Western Archeography" and the "History of Western European Archives."[12]

Later criticism of "stagnation" was heaped on the leadership of the first Director of Tsentrarkhiv, D. B. Riazanov. However, the social and political upheaval caused by the civil war constituted the foremost reason for this stagnation. The war acutely limited resources and directed attention away from the science of organizing and preserving documents to more immediate mortal issues. The shortages, chaos, and violence of the war had a lasting negative impact on archival collections. Although the legal status of archival collections had been transformed, among the general populace, soldiers, and many officials, ignorance of new archival guidelines continued. Destruction of archival resources by Red Army soldiers and angry civilians was prevalent, especially in the early days of the revolution. Documents were threatened for a variety of reasons; people sold them, destroyed them because of their content and symbolism, and according to one

[10] E. V. Starostin and T. I. Khorkhordina, *Arkhivy i Revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2007): 31.

[11] The Bolsheviks used the term "bourgeois specialist" to refer to a non-communist professional of pre-revolutionary society employed in a new socialist enterprise. These specialists were used where the party lacked suitable educated and qualified cadres. These specialists were employed most extensively in scientific and technological positions.

[12] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 5325, op. 9, d. 56, l. 2 and 101.

report, burned them as fuel to power an electrical station.[13] Archival documents also fell victim to the paper shortage of the civil war years as countless records were pulped and reprocessed.[14]

At the end of the civil war the Bolsheviks found themselves ruling a country which in many ways was suffering from worse conditions than those that inspired the revolution. Bolshevik legitimacy no longer necessarily followed from their ardent and vocal opposition to the Tsarist and Provisional governments. As the new ruling power they were responsible for providing the improved conditions demanded by the population. Further, the experiences of the civil war engendered an increasing paranoia among Bolshevik party members. Where Trotsky had once claimed as the Bolsheviks published Tsarist secret treaties, "we have nothing to hide," by 1921 Bolshevik paranoia encouraged policies to eliminate and conceal dissent and other activities which reflected poorly on the Bolsheviks. Politically, this resulted in the 1921 Ban on Factions, increased censorship, and continued use of the Cheka (*Chrezvychainaia Komissiia*, Extraordinary Commission, the Bolshevik secret police apparatus), and a corresponding control over records that might prove unfavorable to the regime.

These policy developments greatly affected the growth of the Soviet archival system. First, the ever-increasing paranoia and intolerance of dissent led to progressively limited access to archival resources in the Soviet Union. In 1922 Tsentrarkhiv established the first official nationwide designation of materials to be separated for limited use with the introduction of sections on policy and law (*politsektsiia*) at all central

[13] Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela,* 36.

[14] Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR, Moscow and Leningrad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972): 23.

and local state archives to house separately the papers of existing local administrative, political, and judicial and organizations, and the papers of former services of the old regime. Soon these sections would be classified secret and their increasingly expanded scope throughout the 1920s led to restrictions on greater numbers of collections. Throughout the 1920s, party papers were housed in the Tsentrarkhiv administrated *Archive of the October Revolution* (AOR), alongside state documents. The founding of the *Single Party Archive* in 1929 marked an institutional separation between party and state resources with long-term implications for access to documentary sources.

Second, the maintenance of the policies of censorship, limited use of archives, and the continuation of some capitalist practices during the era of the New Economic Policy (*Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika,* NEP) meant that the Bolsheviks' criticisms against previous governments could be reasonably applied to themselves, making key aspects of their earlier legitimacy invalid. As they looked to history to generate a new legitimacy Bolsheviks enlisted a wide network of archives to unearth, even create, archival evidence of long traditions of Russian revolutionary movements and local connections to the central Bolshevik narrative. They then actively communicated this narrative to the public. Functionally, archives in the early 1920s were used to create stability in the new Soviet republics by collecting, processing, preserving, and marketing the Bolshevik revolutionary tale.

On November 21, 1921, at the urging of its new Director Mikhail Nikolaevich Pokrovskii, Tsentrarkhiv was removed from the authority of Narkompros and reassigned to report directly to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii

Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet, VtsIK), the highest state organ of power.[15] Pokrovskii emphasized the importance of archives to the state and had a goal of making the archival administration an integral component of the operation of the state apparatus, while concurrently downplaying the cultural and scientific role of archives.[16] He referred to EGAF as an "arsenal of political weapons" to be used to prevent the distortion of history and the meaning of the revolution by enemies of socialism.[17] Under Pokrovskii, party control of Tsentrarkhiv was strengthened.

Beginning in the early 1920s, the party deviated from strict *respect des fonds*, and commissioned the creation of thematic archival collections and institutions. These included collections on Lenin, Marx, and Engels, but perhaps the most noteworthy project was the Commission for the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party (Komissiia po Istorii Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii i RKP(b), Istpart), begun in September 1920. The underground existence of the revolutionary movement had discouraged the keeping of records. Istpart's attempts to create a documentary history of the revolution and the party ranged from soliciting the creation of materials, such as memoirs, to the reorganization of existing collections to form an archive of Bolshevik revolutionary history. Emphasis was placed on class and party activities in creating collections as the Bolsheviks wanted to create an appearance of class-consciousness and effective party leadership whether or not it actually existed.[18]

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[15] *Sbornik Rukovodiaschikh Materialov po Arkhivnomu Delu (1917-Iun' 1941 gg.)* (Moscow, Glavnoe Arkhivnoe Upravlenie pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR MGIAI, 1961): 19.

[16] V. A. Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit'* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2000): 15.

[17] Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR*, 133.

[18] Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI) f. 70, op. 1, d. 17, l. 18.

The result of the repeated formation and transformation of archival institutions in the 1920s resulted in disorder and loss of many of the documentary materials the Bolsheviks sought to preserve. For example, in 1923 Tsentrarkhiv requested files on the execution of members of the Romanov family from the Istpart section in Perm, where several of the Tsar's relatives where held by the Bolsheviks before their executions. Perm Istpart responded that they no longer housed these documents as they had already been transferred to the center, where Tsentrarkhiv was still unable to locate them.[19] Beyond the inefficiency of the system, this situation illustrates the numerous steps that archival documents went through during early institutional and collection level reorganization. As the Perm Istpart section was not the originating agency of these documents, it follows that these files passed through the custody of at least three different institutions within five years, each occasion increasing the possibility for loss or damage to the collection.

The 1931 establishment of the Institute of Archival Affairs (later the Moscow State Historical-Archival Institute, MGIAI), the main school of higher education to train archivists, was also a move toward a real centralization and standardization of archival practices. While archival leadership never attained ideal control or complete centralization, the institutions formed by 1931 exercised significant powers to limit access to sources and controlled the publication of historical documents and research works. Tsentrarkhiv, IMEL, and MGIAI would retain their roles as the custodians and administrators of archival resources and education until the end of the Soviet Union, which resulted in great influence on the continuing archival infrastructure still in use to

[19] GARF f. 5325, op. 1, d. 102.

the present day.

Historiography

Official party statements depicted the archival system as a well-oiled machine powered by Marxist-Leninist theory. Yet as archival scholars Schwartz and Cook point out, the history of attempts to create systems of power in archives are "littered with chaos, eccentricity, inconsistency, and downright subversion, as much as [they are] characterized by consensus, order, sequence, and conformity."[20] This observation of the chaos in the development of archives was especially true of early Soviet archives as they developed at a time of instability, plagued by lack of resources and conflicts during the civil war, NEP and the later upheaval of the Stalin revolution.

As a result of years of limited or no access to archival collections during the Soviet period, little has been written on the development of the Soviet archival system; yet its collections form the basis for scholarly studies of numerous disciplines. Each scholar who enters a Russian archive is influenced by the decisions made by the party and archivists decades ago. Current understanding of the Soviet archival system is often still clouded by a simplistic interpretation of the archival system as a tool wielded deftly by totalitarian powers. The simple assertion of the dominance of ideological orthodoxy as a guiding principle of archival development is prominent both in the Russian and the limited and dated Western literature on the topic.[21] Recent literature in both archival

[20] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (March 2002): 14.

[21] Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree of 1918," 429.

science and history has begun to explore and reassess the influence of archives on the development of historical record of a nation.[22] This reassessment has not been extended to Soviet archives where the dominant theory still posits the party as the author of the worldview of the Soviet people.

Early Soviet historiography was shaped by the international political context of the Cold War. Cold War era animosity between the Soviet Union and the West and lack of access to primary resources influenced the emerging historiography. Western political scientists and historians produced the "totalitarian" model to understand the October Revolution and subsequent emergence of the Soviet state. This model often focuses on the personalities of leaders, attributing to them not only evil and nefarious motivations, but also unchecked and effective power.[23] As a result, this model largely ignores society, depicting it as merely a tool in the hands of successive dictators. The rise of social history in the European field led to the development of the "revisionist" model of Soviet history beginning in the 1970s. This model allows for many contributing factors and a more complicated view of the success of the revolution and later events of Soviet history. The revisionist approach also allows for an investigation into society, exploring the experiences of Soviet citizens at all levels to reveal a nuanced portrait of the operation of

[22] See Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg, eds. *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006); Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); and Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds, eds., *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003).

[23] See Robert Daniels, *Red October: The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917* (New York: Scribner, 1967); S. P. Melgunov, *The Bolshevik Seizure of Power* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1972); and Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

the Soviet state with room for participation, agency, and influence at many levels: an interpretation challenging the typical top-down narrative of the totalitarian model.[24]

The lack of Western scholarship on Soviet archives means that its historiography has not undergone a similar "revisionist" transformation. The result is a Cold War influenced, totalitarian model understanding of archives—archives as a malleable product of an evil, corrupt, and all-powerful state. This interpretation tends to stress the dishonesty of Soviet archives, which are characterized by misleading information, falsification, or purposeful omission. Ironically, it is those less familiar with Soviet archives who are most likely to reach this conclusion and dismiss the usefulness of archives.[25] However, even within the field of history the lack of literature means that the only resources available on the history of the archives are those reproduced in the introductions to archival guidebooks. These tend to present a translated form of the official Soviet version of the history of archives, which stressed a top-down development and reinforce the effective management expressed in Soviet literature.[26] This study makes use of extensive archival materials, unavailable to both Russian and Western scholars during the Soviet period, to examine the development of the Soviet archival system beyond the officially produced narrative of archival development and introduces a bottom-approach which also considers the influences on the development of the archival

[24] See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Diane Koenker, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[25] See Michael Piggott, "Archives and Memory," in *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*, ed. Sue McKemmish (Australia: Charles Sturt University Centre for Information Studies, Australia, 2005): 299-327.

[26] See Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR, Moscow and Leningrad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

system beyond the goals of the party leaders. Further, the "totalitarian" interpretation assumes uniformity in ideological interpretation among Bolsheviks that did not exist. This study reveals the debates and transformations of the notion of history and the archive in a socialist society at the high level, as even officially stated ideology evolved with changing political climate. The simplistic, "totalitarian" interpretation also ignores the practical limitations of putting an ideological theory into practice. This project examines the influence of the widespread financial and personnel limitations in the early years of the revolution on not only the tangible development of the archival system and the historical narrative, but also on the Bolsheviks' evolving ideological notions of the role of history in society to offer a more complete understanding of archives in the Soviet Union.

The issue of archives and their role in the creation of a nation's historical record and cultural memory has been a topic of increased interest in the field of archives over the past two decades, but has only recently received the attention of those in the historical field. Verne Harris points out that positivist analyses had depicted the archive as a repository of truth: "the organic and innocent product of processes exterior to archivists."[27] Although archives were traditionally seen as impartial repositories of facts, recent scholarship exposes the power dynamic inherent in the creation and maintenance of archival collections. As archives were further scrutinized, the role of the archivist soon fell under the intellectual microscope as well. Working archivists were intrigued, as this reevaluation brought their role in the creation of a society's cultural and historical record to the fore. The result is a challenge to the traditional positivist view of the

[27] Verne Harris, "Claiming Less, Delivering More: A Critique of Positive Formulations on Archives in South Africa," *Archivaria* 44 (Fall 1997): 133.

archivist and the archive, which had long dominated the understanding of the institution. The emerging counter interpretation of archives places archivists firmly in the center of the creation of the documentary heritage of a nation, and archival scholars were quick to take up the various debates on archives and their relationship with memory, society, and culture.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and subsequent increased archival access, archival research has become indispensable to historical research projects. Unfortunately, the growing number of Western archival patrons are, for the most part, unaware of the history of Soviet archives, as a serious history has yet to be produced. Historians know the value of context to the subject of their research, and yet they are unaware of the context of the development of their most important resources—the archives. Recently, however, the debate on the role of archives influencing the development of the cultural record has extended into the field of history.[28] In the last decade, archivists and historian have written a number of article compilations on archives and memory, society, and the cultural and historical record reflecting this new interest in the construction of archives.[29] These works evaluate archivists' decisions on what to collect, process, and preserve from the historical record of a nation and how these decisions shape the production of historical narratives.

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[28] Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, "Part II: Archives in the Production of Knowledge," in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar,* eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006): 85.

[29] See Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg, eds. *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006); Antoinette Burton ed. *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds, *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003); and Randall C. Jimerson, *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009).

The common Western perception of Soviet era archives is often what might be called "anti-positivist." Here the archivist, as an agent of the state, is fully and actively engaged in, and successful at, the creation of a preferred historical record, implying that nothing in Soviet archives is legitimate.[30] If a simplistic view of Western archivists as "keepers of the historical truth" is no longer sufficient, then the portrait of mindless, robotic Soviet archivists creating a uniform, but historically unreliable, documentary heritage at the behest of an all-powerful and infallible regime is likely equally insufficient. The records of the former Soviet archives represent the *working* documents of the Soviet state and party. Consistently falsifying documents would have been logistically impracticable, not to mention it would have made the functioning of the state near impossible. Further, the Western interpretation of how the Bolsheviks may have manipulated their documents assumes a moral and ethical belief system undergirding the creation, preservation, and organization of these archival collections that may not have existed among communist archival leaders, whose values were based in different ideological principles.

Current studies of post-colonial archival collections offer commentary on such assumptions and a potentially helpful model for the Soviet system. Here too, the issue of documentary validity is called into play. In writing about archives in the former French West African colonies, Ted Cooper answers those who question the completeness and value of colonial archives and claim "dirty truths" were likely to have been expunged by ruling powers.

> Fortunately, colonial officials in, say, 1930 did not know what was to befall their successors in 1960. They had no reason to hide their racism or

[30] Piggott, "Archives and Memory, 314.

> their cultural chauvinism and had every reason—as bureaucracies inevitably carried out debates and jockeyed for position within themselves—to make themselves understood within terms that were persuasive with the colonial power structure at any given time.[31]

Similar conclusions can be made about Soviet archival documents and their creators. The archives of the former Soviet Union represent the working papers of the state and party and thus include many "dirty truths" which were simply a part of the functioning of the government. For example, documents relating to the Soviet massacre of Polish officers in 1940 were meticulously saved, as were many documents about the Stalinist terror.

Soviet historians had their moment of "revision," and archival scholars are now exploring the link between archives and memory, yet the intersection of these topics is rare to nonexistent. Most information on Soviet archives can be found in the introductory chapters of guidebooks, which fail as histories since they do not attempt to provide historical analysis or engage any kind of historiographical debate. Nor do they attempt to engage the debate on the creation of archives and their effect on the cultural record of a nation. Nonetheless, one can glean information from the overall history presented here, parse together a narrative, and make some interpretations about Soviet archival history. Patricia Kennedy Grimsted endeavors to produce a more analytical examination of Soviet archival history with her 1982 article, "Lenin's Archival Decree: The Bolshevik Legacy for Soviet Archival Theory and Practice."[32] She makes some interesting assertions, for example that the Lenin Decree may seem to Westerners to be a practical document, but

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[31] Ted Cooper, "Memories of Colonization," in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006): 258.

[32] Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree of 1918," 429.

that it in fact had strong theoretical implications. However, in this short study, she is not able to adequately expand on these theoretical implications. Still, Grimsted raises very important theoretical issues of Soviet archival development, including the decision to preserve, rather than destroy, pre-revolutionary archives. She attributes this decision to the theoretical principles of Marxism-Leninism, which stressed the combination of historical determinism and ideological orthodoxy.

The official ideological explanation for preservation has been evident for years in Soviet archival literature, however practical influences are yet to be explored, as well as the story of the implementation of these ideological instructions. This study fills this gap in our understanding of Soviet archival development by addressing the static and changing motivations behind the Bolsheviks' decision to establish control over, preserve, and centralize archival documents of both their current and predecessor regimes. Further, this project tackles the impact of practical issues on the implementation of Bolshevik archival policies by analyzing the activities at the lower institutional levels. Archivists working in local repositories had to navigate many, at times conflicting, elements in their work, including instructions from archival administration, orders from local political authorities, and shortages in personnel, equipment, and space. Grimsted is successful in arguing the significance of the wide scope and centralization of archives under the Bolsheviks, but does not address the consistent inability of central authorities to effectively control the implementation of their instructions, which resulted in the failure of many policies of centralization and administration. This study explores these failures which are significant in and of themselves, as the failures of local archives to carry out Tsentrarkhiv or Moscow Istpart's plans resulted in the physical loss of many collections,

or at times, the inclusion of materials undesired by Moscow in the Soviet historical record. The failures of local institutions to properly implement central plans also impacted enduring policies of central archival administrators, who would adjust their expectations and plans for archival administration to respond to local shortcomings. Most notably, archival policies throughout the 1920s opted for greater physical centralization and classification of archival materials to circumvent continued shortcomings of provincial archival bureaus.

Although historians have not explored the history of Soviet archives, Western archival literature has dedicated some attention to the topic. Archival literature has several examples of Westerners reviewing Soviet archival practices, usually with the unfortunate ancillary attempt to situate practices in the context of Soviet history. Most authors have no qualms about reproducing Cold War influenced arguments on the historical implications of archival science in the USSR. With the recent focus in Western archival literature on the role of archives in the creation of memory and the cultural record, the legitimacy of Soviet archives has been attacked. For example, Michael Piggott' exploration, "Archives and Memory," notes the Soviet case with the claim that the responsibility for witnessing and recording collective memory in the USSR was left to dissidents like Solzhenitsyn, as everything else was officially dictated.[33] The implication is that official archives were disconnected from the collective memory of the Russian people and that Soviet state archives were somehow artificial and did not reflect the real lives of Soviet citizens. Not only is this statement steeped in a Cold War understanding of what culture and society was in the Soviet Union, but its logic is also

[33] Piggott, "Archives and Memory," 314.

critically flawed. To claim on the one hand that the Soviet state controlled almost everything, and then on the other hand that this "everything" does not somehow reflect the memory of the people results in a contradictory conclusion. However, in the first few years of their rule, the Bolsheviks, in fact, encouraged the development of archival collections that would reflect the collective memory of the local population. Further, the assertion that official records were "officially dictated" invests too much credence in Soviet claims to effective administrative control that have been debunked in studies of other areas of society. The evaluation by this study of both the motivations of the leadership and the, at times autonomous, work of archivists to collect materials at small institutions across the Soviet Union demonstrates that Bolsheviks were rarely completely successful at dictating a collection. Even when the party directed efforts to collect materials, local archival institutions consistently collected and preserved materials of the local population that sometimes fell outside of, or even directly contradicted, the "officially dictated" norms.

Despite a more developed historiography on historical research on the Soviet 1920s, there is not yet an exploration of how the development of this historical narrative affected the development of Soviet archival collections and their management, or how, in turn, these collections affected Soviet historical production. Several historians who have explored the development of historical science in the 1920s have traced the development of the Bolshevik historical narrative within the context of an underprepared state which relied on non-communist specialists to build this "most political of sciences." [34] They

[34] See Robert F. Byrnes**, "**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession, 1917-1934," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 297-308; Jonathan Frankel, "Party Genealogy and the Soviet Historians (1920-1938), " *Slavic Review* 25, No. 4 (Dec 1966): 563-603; George M. Enteen, "Marxists versus Non-Marxists: Soviet Historiography in the 1920s," *Slavic Review* 35, no.1 (March 1976): 91-110; and Larry E. Holmes and

focus on the influences of these specialists at the center, as both the participants in the creation of the Soviet historical profession and the catalysts for Bolshevik reactionary policies in historical development. These assessments of the historical narrative do not take into account the extensive and geographically dispersed mobilization of archivists and institutions aiding in the creation of the 1920s official Bolshevik historical narrative that are evaluated in this project. In the provinces, non-communist specialists and uneducated party members were also employed in the creation of the historical narrative, resulting in a significant influence on the development of historical methodology and public history. The influence of the role of those outside the center is significant to the trend throughout the 1920s toward greater paranoia, censorship, and consolidation of the historical profession in the Soviet Union.

Although historians have largely ignored the development of the Soviet archival system, there is one aspect that has been given attention: Istpart. Here historians of Soviet history see what Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz describes as "creating a past for tomorrow," and ask some of the same questions the creation of a nation's historical record and memory asked by archivists beginning in the mid-1990s.[35] Frederick Corney sees the creation of the Istpart archive as a reflection of the importance to the party of establishing a coherent history of themselves in the unstable post-revolutionary period, especially after 1921 events such as the Kronstadt rebellion. He stresses the importance of "archival coherence" as part of an attempt to create an impression of a consistent pre-revolutionary party history for present and future Soviet populations. This coherence was

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William Burgess, "Voice or Political Echo?: Soviet Party History in the 1920s," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 9, nos. 2-3 (1982): 378-98.

[35] Schwartz and Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power," 11.

achieved through "gathering together under one thematic (and physical) roof the scant documents about the scattered and often short-lived organizations of the pre-October RSDRP" to produce a sense of continuity never actually realized by the local organizations.[36] He also points out the concerns of the revolutionary leaders that their many years spent in exile might have alienated them from common Russian people. To address this issue, archives from abroad were collected and integrated with domestic collections in an effort to symbolically integrate the exiled leaders with the Russian people.

Corney's exploration of the creation of the myth of October does include the role of local Istpart sections in the ultimately failed development of a comprehensive, inclusive narrative, but does not address other state archival institutions which also played a significant role in collecting and publishing documents, along with propagandizing to the public. This study includes local state archival institutions to offer a complete picture of the development of archival collections as part of the Soviet historical narrative. The previous omission of these institutions is important to address as the local state archival bureaus became permanent historical repositories in the Soviet Union, whereas many local Istpart branches were ultimately closed by the end of the 1920s.

More detailed histories on Soviet archives are found in Russian language resources produced by senior archivists and professors of archival science for educational purposes. Unfortunately, these tend to mimic each other. One is hesitant to dismiss all archival literature as uniform, but in the Soviet case, where and publications were highly

[36] Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the October Revolution.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004): 114.

centralized there was little room for creativity or variation.[37] Particularly, as this study argues, by the end of the 1920s, the Bolsheviks had gained greater control over the histories produced for public consumption. Soviet archival literature lauds early Bolshevik archival practices as almost universally effective and truly revolutionary. There are, however, some interesting contradictions within the oeuvre of Soviet archival literature reflecting different political climates. Riazanov, the first leader of Tsentrarkhiv who had a hand in much of the early, lasting reforms of archives, but was later arrested and executed in 1938, is denied credit for many of the accomplishments of the early archival reforms in literature produced after his fall from grace. Yet after his political rehabilitation by Soviet authorities in 1990, he consequently appears positively in historical accounts of the founding and development of the Soviet archival system.

Post-Soviet Russian literature exhibits its own bias in denigrating the Soviet archival accomplishments. These authors tend to emphasize the damage caused by Soviet archival practices and often use colorful adjectives such as "ruthless" and "brutal" to describe the actions and accomplishments of Soviet archival administration.[38] In a way the Soviet and post-Soviet views have much in common. Both overstate the achievements of the early Soviet archival administration, giving authority to Soviet claims of the efficacy of archival management. They vary in arriving at different moral

[37] See G. A. Belov, *Teoriia i Praktika Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR.* 1st ed, (Moscow: Vysshaia Shkola, 1966); F. I. Dolgikh, *Ediniia Gosudarstvenniia Sistema Deloproizvodstva: Osnovnye Polozheniia* (Moscow: Gl. Arkhivnoe Upr. pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, 1974); F. I. Dolgikh and K. I. Rudel'son, eds. *Teoriia i Praktika Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR*. 2nd ed. (Moscow: Vysshaia Shkola, 1980); G. M. Gorfein and L. E. Shepelev, *Arkhivovedenie: Uchebnoe Posobie* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1971); V. E. Korneev *Arkhivy RKP(b) v 1917-1925 gg.: Uchebnoe Posobie* (Moscow: MGIAI, 1979); and V. V. Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR: 1917-1945* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1969).

[38] See A. G. Golikov, *Arkhivovedenie Otechestvennoi Istorii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 2005); and V. A. Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit'* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2000).

conclusions about these accomplishments. Post-Soviet archival literature also seeks out the role of non-communists in the development of the Soviet archival system. Bourgeois specialists played active and significant roles in the development of archival reforms and administration in the 1920s, but their contributions were downplayed in, or even eliminated from, the later Soviet literature. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, archival scholars were freed to investigate the influences of these specialists on the Soviet system. However, the anti-Soviet sentimentality of the post-collapse era at times encourages an overemphasis on the importance of these individuals as a means to discredit positive Bolshevik contributions to archival reforms.

Absent in nearly all literature is an exploration of the archivists themselves. Soviet and Russian scholars have favored a top-down interpretation of the history of the Soviet archival system. Western literature followed this route due to historiographical assumptions, as well as a lack of available resources to conduct a social history of archivists before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although post-Soviet Russian authors have made use of newly available archival resources and used this access to conduct research into the influence of specialists on the archival system, the individuals investigated were usually high-level administrative reformers and educators.[39] As is apparent from recent archival science theory, the lack of understanding of the archivists who worked most closely with the documents and the public is a significant gap in our understanding of Soviet archives. Each archivist brought his or her value system to the collections, his or her social, cultural, political, economic, and even religious influences.

[39] See T. I. Khorkhordina, *Neizvestnyi Maiakovskii* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2001).; and V. V. Krylov, "Idei Dekreta ot 1 Iiunia 1918 g. Rodilas' v Diskussiiakh Chlenov Soiuza RAD," *Otechestvennye Arkhivy* 3 (1998): 12-14.

All aspects of work with archives had an aspect of creating value, or at least an order of value in the archives.[40] This project offers an exploration of the practical and everyday problems faced by archivists as they attempted to implement archival reforms and the differing motivations of archivists in local institutions as they carried out the implementation of policies. The wide umbrella of EGAF resulted in an increasing administrative scope of Tsentrarkhiv over repositories with cadres from many different backgrounds. Additionally, the Bolsheviks responded to the lack of available qualified personnel among their own ranks by casting a wide net in terms of backgrounds, in both social status and professional experience, to staff their new archival institutions from the lowest to the highest ranks. This study explores the significant influence of this mixed group on the development and implementation of archival reforms, from direct influences, such as contributions to the creation of reforms or overt sabotage efforts, to indirect influences, such as reactive policies resulting from archival and party leaders' dissatisfaction in archival work carried out by less than ideal personnel.

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This study includes four chapters that explore the unique aspects of Soviet archival administration during the first fifteen years of Bolshevik rule. The first chapter examines the development of the conception of archives and archival institutions in Soviet Russia, and to an extent the other republics, and the motivations of the party that affected this process. Bolshevik leaders' prioritized the preservation of the documentary past of their

[40] Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 135.

enemies and employed these documents in creating a new historical narrative for the public. This chapter also investigates what pressures led Bolsheviks to transform their conception of archives and historical narratives from a relatively open resource to a highly centralized and controlled system of institutions.

Chapter two examines the role of archivists in the development of the Soviet archival system. The rapid expansion of Tsentrarkhiv in size and scope and the lack of qualified ideologically reliable cadres to staff these institutions resulted in a relatively inclusive policy toward employment in archival institutions. Consequently, archivists employed in both the center and provinces in the early to mid-1920s represented a wide range of backgrounds and qualifications, from semiliterate party activists to highly educated and experienced bourgeois specialists. This chapter explores the development of Soviet archival training and education and the consolidation of professional standards in the face of continued failure by most archivists to achieve the desired goals of the Tsentrarkhiv and party leadership.

Chapter three investigates the Bolsheviks' endeavor to write a new past that benefited the regime and how this influenced, and was in turn influenced by, the collecting of archival materials in the center and provinces. The development of the Soviet historical profession and Bolshevik historical methodology was reflected in archival collecting, which in the first years of Bolshevik rule was also characterized by an inclusiveness encouraging the local and unique development of collections of provincial archival bureaus and Istpart sections. When these efforts did not yield the kind of materials the Bolsheviks desired (at times yielding materials contradictory to the

Bolshevik understanding of revolutionary history), the party curtailed collection efforts and adjusted the way historical research and publications were carried out.

Chapter four explores the use of this created historical narrative in public educational and propaganda efforts. The narrative was intended for a wide audience and archival institutions made great efforts to bring these narratives to the public, most notably through publications of documents and histories, exhibits, and other public presentations of documents. However, the lack of education and the high level of illiteracy in the greater population severely limited the public impact of archival publications. Accordingly, archival bureaus and Istpart sections carried out extensive archival exhibit work through the creation of permanent museums and travelling exhibits to convey the information of the new historical narrative to the illiterate population with visual representations and guided tours. However, as with other endeavors of the archival system, attempts to implement Soviet wide historical propaganda that celebrated local significance, but paralleled the central historical narrative, were hindered by an endemic lack of resources and shaped by the personalities of the local archivists implementing public plans.

Chapter One

> *…the question of the archive is not, I repeat, a question of the past…but rather a question of the future, the very question of the future, question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what this will have meant, we will only know tomorrow.*
>
> --Jacques Derrida

In 1919, A. Kutuzov reported to Tsentrarkhiv, "More than half a year ago the decree that established the Main archival administration was issued… Provincial archives are in poor conditions, stored in bad conditions, and if things continue as they are there is no guaranteed they will survive. In Penza the commissars burnt all the court documents of the provincial archives in order to 'clear the field for new activities.'"[1] Once the Bolsheviks established power they inherited the documentary legacy of their predecessor regimes, the Tsarist and Provisional Governments, but they almost immediately encountered problems protecting these collections in a society where many did not appreciate their value. Where others, even among party ranks, viewed archives of the previous regime as unneeded, even dangerous, remnants of the past, the Bolsheviks placed great emphasis on preserving these same collections. On June 1, 1918 Vladimir Lenin signed the "Decree on the Reorganization and Centralization of Archival Affairs of the RSFSR," bringing archives under centralized state control, and creating an

[1] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. R5325, op. 9, d. 121, l. 197.

infrastructure for the preservation of all existing Imperial state documents.[2] The Bolsheviks thus created the most centralized archival system in the world under the auspices of the Main Archival Administration (Glavnoe Arkhivnoe Upravlenie, later the Central Archival Administration, Tsentrarkhiv).[3] The founding and evolution of the Soviet archival system had a profound impact on the construction of the historical record of the Soviet Union. Party leaders stressed the ideological importance of the history embodied in the archives. As an instrument of public history, the Soviet archival system provided a sense of stability and tradition that helped to legitimize the new regime. However, the creation of the nation's historical record was not a straightforward endeavor. The pithy June 1 decree established a state archival administration truly revolutionary in scope in just a few broad statements, leaving most details to later interpretation. Tsentrarkhiv's leaders struggled to determine and implement these details in a time of scarcity among evolving ideas of what a socialist archive should be and the role it would fill in the new state.

Reforming archives in the new regime was a two-fold issue—determining what an archive should do and getting this vision implemented once it was determined. The parameters of this archival system were continually changing throughout the 1920s. However, once leaders did reach consensus, the financial and social upheaval of the early Soviet period presented further obstacles to implementing archival reforms. Tsentrarkhiv

[2] Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree of 1918: The Bolshevik Legacy for Soviet Archival Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 45, no. 4 (Fall 1982): 429.

[3] The Main Archival Administration is variously called GAU, Glavarkhiv, and Tsentrarkhiv (Tsentral'noe Arkhivnoe Upravlenie) throughout the 1920s and 1930s. For the purposes of simplicity I will refer to it simply as "Tsentrarkhiv" throughout the dissertation.

faced monetary and personnel shortages, and a lack of understanding and respect from much of the population and even many party members.

On November 22, 1917, the Bolsheviks published secret treaties of the Tsarist regime and its allies. The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Leon Trotsky stated, "the workers' and peasants' government abolishes secret diplomacy and its intrigues, codes, and lies. We have nothing to hide."[4] The early revealing of the dirty secrets of the Tsarist regime went hand in hand with creating a society where information was more publicly available. The new archival administration allowed for greater access to state documents, even for the non-Marxist historical specialists who remained in the archival and historical fields after the October Revolution. After securing victory in the civil war, the Bolsheviks were faced with issues of ruling a population, economy, and countryside devastated by the war. They struggled to prove their rightful claim to power and to win over domestic and foreign audiences. The Bolsheviks based their legitimacy in history and this was reflected in the archival system developed in the Soviet Union. Archives were used extensively for propaganda resulting in widespread development of archival institutions across the USSR. In addition, several collecting, writing, and propagandizing historical institutions were established in the early 1920s with the goal of producing and disseminating party and revolutionary history, such as the Commission on the History of the Party (Istpart) and the Institute of Marx and Engels. Early historical collecting endeavors were extensive and relatively inclusive, encouraging participation by citizens across the Soviet Union and allowing the continued scholarship of many non-communist specialists. But as the Bolsheviks encountered more and more problems with inclusive

[4] Jane Degras, ed. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume I, 1917-1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951): 7-8.

policies for historical writing, they responded by further consolidating, concentrating, and limiting access to historical documents.

These limitations were soon systematized as a permanent part of the Soviet archival system. Indeed, by the start of the first five-year plan, the party's had shifted the mission of the archives from the traditional conception, albeit with a Marxist bias, as a repository of sources for historical research to an institution to be exploited in aid of the industrial economy. In addition to economic efforts, Bolshevik leaders used archival documents in endeavors to establish diplomatic relations and encourage economic investment. Party leaders asked archivists to abandon many of their previous tasks (even processing collections!) to investigate their resources for any type of material which could aid in building the state and economy—papers on industry, scientific studies of natural resources, records of former private enterprises, and the like. This shift in use signaled the end of the archival institution as primarily a scientific research organization with opportunities of originality and creativity and a peak in the trend toward censorship and limitation begun in the mid-1920s. A state archive functioning in service of the state is a fairly uncontroversial concept. But the Bolsheviks expanded the scope of the state archive so greatly that it came to include nearly all kinds of archival papers, including those of religious, artistic, and literary provenance traditionally outside the scope of an official state archival institution. The new focus of the archive severely limited research endeavors into the numerous collections that were not in direct relation to building the industrial economy.

Archive in Revolution and War

Russian pre-revolutionary archives were highly decentralized and generally not in line with Western standards of state archival development and organization. What few attempts there were at centralization of state records were limited. For example, during the Great Reforms of the mid-19th century it was decreed that the Moscow Archive of the Ministry of Justice, founded in 1852, was designated the repository for all pre-19th century state records; however, this was never fully implemented. Tsarist officials took little interest in archives, thus ensuring the continued stagnation of archival science in Russia, even as archivists grew more frustrated and began increasingly agitating for reforms. By 1917 centers of Russian archival development remained dispersed and centered on different archival repositories. But as Russian archival scholars E. V. Starostin and T. I. Khorkhordina point out, as the revolution approached, "almost all scientific historians and archivists spoke in favor of the reformation of the archive system against the unlimited power of bureaucratic departments."[5]

When the Bolsheviks came to power they addressed archival custodianship as an element of a series of decrees. Immediately after the revolution, the Bolsheviks secured the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and published selections of its documents in connection with the November 9 (October 26), 1918 decree "On Peace." On the same day, the decree "On Land" abolished private property and stipulated for the transfer of all related files to local government institutions. Pre-revolutionary archives had also fulfilled practical roles in governing the population and many of the most significant

[5] E. V. Starostin and T. I. Khorkhordina, *Arkhivy i Revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2007): 57.

records collectors were the institutions most reviled by the Bolsheviks, such as the church and the secret police. Churches collected and stored the vital records of the populations, information on births, marriages, and deaths. On December 31 (18) 1917 Sovnarkom issued the decree "On Civil Marriage, Children, and the Authority of Books of Acts," which established marriage outside of religious institutions and required all "spiritual and administrative agencies which previously had jurisdiction over marriage, births and deaths" to immediately transfer their records to their city, county, or rural councils.[6] In support of this decree, the Bolsheviks created the Department of Records of Marriages and Births to assume all civil record keeping functions.

The June 1, 1918 decree institutionalized the efforts of the Bolsheviks to gain control over the nation's documentary information. Referred to as the "Lenin Decree" by Soviet archivists, this concise document revolutionized the conceptual role of archives and archivists within Russian state and society. The first point of the decree established the Single State Archival Fond (Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhivnyi Fond, EGAF):

> All archives of government institutions are abolished as department institutions, and the files and documents preserved in them henceforth form the Single State Archival Fond.[7]

This point guaranteed the continued preservation of the documents of Tsarist and bourgeois organizations under the auspices of new Bolshevik archival institutions. The decree also created the Main Archival Administration (renamed the Central Archival Administration, Tsentrarkhiv, in 1922) to administer the Single State Archival Fond.

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[6] "Dekret VTsIK i SNK o Grazhdanskom Brake, o Detiakh i o Vedenii Knig Aktov Sostoianiia, 18 (31) Dekabria, 1917 g.," *Biblioteka Elektronnykh Resursov Istoricheskogo Fakul'teta MGU im. M. V. Lomonosova*, accessed on September 18, 2012, http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/17-12-18.htm.

[7] Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree," 430.

With this concise decree, the Bolsheviks endeavored to transform, both intellectually and administratively, the decentralized archival system of pre-revolutionary Russia into a centralized system of state document repositories with scopes far more extensive than similar institutions in other contemporary societies. The decree also made provisions for the files of liquidated Tsarist and Provisional institutions that had yet to be transferred to archives, by ordering that, "all files and correspondence of government institutions closed on 25 October 1917, are to become part of the State Archival Fond."[8]

Point five of the decree was remarkable in that it provided that "Government institutions do not have the right to destroy any files, correspondence, or individual documents without written permission of the Main Administration of Archival Affairs."[9] This point transformed and expanded the concept of the role of an archival administration in state and society. A traditional Western concept of archive was as a repository for institutional materials that were no longer considered necessary for that institution's day-to-day work. The creator institutions were responsible for managing records while in their care and transferred their documents to archives only after they had lost their significance to day-to-day affairs, were already organized, and had been weeded of materials deemed unnecessary for permanent storage. With the extension of a records management responsibility, the Bolsheviks ascribed an unheard of, or even unimagined, role to archival institutions at this time. The June 1 decree assigned Tsentrarkhiv a responsibility for documents even when they were still in the custodianship of their originating agency. This responsibility would have great implications for Soviet

[8] Ibid., 442.

[9] Ibid.

archivists who would became directly responsible for vast and various documentary sources. Tsentrarkhiv educated the archivists for, and inspected the archives of, various party and state institutions. However, this stated authority was not always backed with genuine authority. Like many aspects of the June 1 decree, point five transformed archival administration in theory, but initially lacked the enabling legislation and logistical details needed to carry out and enforce new state archival policy. The extraordinary instruction that no files could be destroyed without written permission from Tsentrarkhiv was supported with only the vague threat that transgressors would be "subject to judicial proceedings."[10]

This increased scope of Tsentrarkhiv's administration resulted in many problems, practically and logistically, as well as authoritatively, as archivists endeavored to carry out their work. The decree immediately transformed the concept of archival administration in Russia, but without enabling legislation, developed standards and rules, or prepared cadres to carry out the lofty proclamations, and officials at many state offices chose simply to ignore the new requirement to contact Tsentrarkhiv before destroying records. Others attempted to contact Tsentrarkhiv, but were frequently left without response. On November 11, 1918, a representative from the Kursk Railroad wrote Tsentrarkhiv Moscow stating that he was aware that institutions could not destroy documents without permission from Tsentrarkhiv and wanted to know what to do with their archives. "On the one hand," he wrote, "how these files are supposed to be transferred to Tsentrarkhiv is not explained in the decree, on the other hand, the decree

[10] Ibid. 442.

says we cannot destroy anything."[11] Having received no response, he wrote again on December 23, explaining that they had a mountain of old telegrams, telegram ribbons, and old ticket which were "robbing the railroad of valuable space," and asked permission again to destroy them.[12]

The early Bolshevik notion of archives regarded them as open institutions. Point six of the June 1 decree stated, "The Main Administration of Archival Affairs should immediately establish procedures for obtaining information from the State Archival Fond." The centralization of archival affairs was done with a "view toward a better scientific utilization."[13] Initial archival legislation embraced the extensive use of documents not only to discredit their enemies, but also to help build the new society. The vision of centralized archives in post-revolutionary Russia also resulted in increased contact between the public and archival institutions. Whereas, a contemporary Western citizen might never have had reason to interact with his state archival institutions, the Soviet citizen almost assuredly did, as the interpretation of the order for "better scientific utilization" came to include sizeable public education campaigns by archives in the early 1920s.

The intellectual leaders of the Bolsheviks valued archival documents of their predecessors and enemies as important evidence of the Marxist scientific progress of history, an extremely sophisticated, and even unique view, among revolutionaries. The Bolsheviks borrowed heavily from the experiences of French revolutionaries and often

[11] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 36, ll. 1-2.

[12] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 36, l. 8.

[13] Ibid. 442.

referred to the lessons of the French Revolution. Although revolutionaries in France similarly created a state archive to centralize seized documents after the 1789 revolution, their efforts of archival centralization stopped far short of the wide scope of Soviet state archives. French revolutionaries also made conscious decisions to destroy many archival documents to ensure the eradication of feudal privilege through the destruction of evidence of rights of ownership.[14] The Bolsheviks on the other hand, not only preserved noble land deed information, but also protected and expanded the Land Survey Archive (Mezhevoi Archive). When threatened with the danger of a return of the old order, the Bolsheviks were more likely to destroy people, most famously with the murder of the Romanov family in 1918, while protecting their documentary legacy.

The Bolsheviks were eager to exploit archival documents in the uncensored research and writing of history. They saw the Russian Revolution not as an isolated event, but as the first in a succession of events, obligating them to preserve the documentation of the history of this world-altering experience. The Bolsheviks used their new access to documents to begin carrying out the historical work that Tsarist officials had previously forbidden. Like most Western scholars, the Bolsheviks held a positivist view of archival documents. They questioned the motives of the documents' creators, but rarely the facts they recorded. History was falsified in tomes, not in the archival evidence. The preservation of Tsarist era files, especially police files, was important to Bolsheviks, as these were some of the only existing documents on their pre-1917 revolutionary movement. A 1920 Istpart circular noted, "even from the documents

[14] Lara Jennifer Moore, *Restoring Order: The Ecole des Chartes and the Organization of Archives and Libraries in France, 1820-1870* (Duluth, MI: Litwin Books, 2008): 9.

of our enemies can information be gathered, so they must be equally carefully protected."[15]

The 1920 Istpart pamphlet, *To All Party Members*, cited the French Revolution as an example of how archival documents were used to support a transformation of political power. The Bolsheviks argued that the bourgeoisie used and distorted documents of the French Revolution in the following century to support their class interests and maintain power. Thus Bolsheviks thus saw a need not only for the careful preservation of historical resources, but also to use them teach the world of their revolution:

> We don't want to mimic the bourgeois and *distort* the past—the proletariat does not need to hide the truth. But we can't allow our revolution to become a victim to a similar bourgeois falsification… The bourgeoisie are already writing a history of the Russian Revolution. Kadet Miliukov published several volumes on the history, the Menshevik Sukhanov wrote a thick book, *Notes on the Revolution*. Can it be that it is possible to allow future communists to study the Russian Revolution in the writings of its enemies? And what do we know of our history? Everyone knows his own little corner of it. There are newspapers, decrees, drafts of central and local commissions, etc., but they are not centralized. The history of the revolution must be looked for in twenty places and asked about of a hundred people, and is still dependent on the lucky chance that all of these people will be alive when the historian carries out this work. And so many already are not.[16]

The Istpart pamphlet argued preservation of documents would aid future revolutions, the Russian Revolution acting as "an example for future communist revolutions, a beacon for future revolutionaries, as the French revolution was for bourgeois democrats," and the Bolsheviks were therefore obligated to save the documentation for the future.[17] Nationalizing and centralizing documentary sources of the country also merged well with

[15] Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI) f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 52.

[16] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 52-53, (emphasis in original).

[17] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 51r.

the ideology of rule by the masses. An article in the newspaper *Bor'ba* (*Struggle*) described historical materials as a public good.[18] It explained that the centralization of materials was necessary for a socialist state that ruled in the name of the people, as opposed to the selfish activities of capitalist societies where "billionaires established art galleries in their mansions paying mad money [beshenyi den'gi] for the originals of Rembrandt or Titian just to be able to boast of their rareness."[19]

The first to take the helm of Tsentrarkhiv was David Borisovich Riazanov, a long-time member of the Russian Social-Democratic party and a highly educated historian with a considerable knowledge of Western European archival practices accumulated from his years in exile. Soviet historians described Riazanov as a man with "rabid energy," and independent political views.[20] In 1900 Riazanov went into exile in Europe for the first time where he helped establish the Marxist group *Bor'ba* (*Struggle*) to unite émigré Russian Marxists. They were ultimately excluded from the landmark 1903 Second Party Congress, which ended with the Bolshevik and Menshevik split. Riazanov refused to join either faction and only after his return to Petrograd after the February Revolution become a member of the Bolsheviks with the Mezhraiontsy merger in August of 1917.[21] This dubious path to the Bolshevik Party, although at the time unremarkable, was later used as ammunition in arguments against the state of the archival administration under Riazanov's leadership. Riazanov played an important, if not the major, role in the

[18] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 15.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Starostin and Khorkhordina, *Arkhivy i Revoliutsiia,* 89.

[21] Hermann Schreyer, *Die Zentralen Archive Russlands und der Sowjetunion von 1917 bis zur Gegenwart* (Duesseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2003): 37.

creation of the Lenin Decree, including proposing the idea of EGAF and the original placement of Tsentrarkhiv under the custodianship of the People's Commissariat of the Enlightenment (Narodnyi Komissariat Prosvescheniia, Narkompros), and many archival historians speculate that it was he who in fact authored the Lenin Decree.

The placing of Tsentrarkhiv under a cultural administration seems at odds with the initial Bolshevik use of archives for political and practical means, but owes much to the planning of Riazanov, who proved to be an intellectual above all else and greatly concerned with the cultural opportunities of the newly opened archives. The cultural designation was most amenable to retaining pre-revolutionary archival specialists in service of the new regime. Under Riazanov non-communist researchers, who had been limited by the strict control of archival sources during the Tsarist era, were also given greater access to materials for research. This cultural categorization also allowed for the appointment of a number of bourgeois archivists to significant positions in Tsentrarkhiv. Indeed, the Board of Tsentrarkhiv under Riazanov included only one Communist Party member, himself, the remaining members were the pre-revolutionary specialists, V. N. Storozhev, M. K. Liubavskii, and S. B. Veselovskii.[22] Interestingly, much of what became the trademarks of the Soviet archival system were ideas put forth by these bourgeois archivists and had roots in the pre-revolutionary period. Pre-revolutionary archivists had agitated for rationalizing archival reforms before the revolution and under the Bolsheviks they were finally given the authorization and means to implement these

[22] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1644, l. 3. This project adopts the terms "bourgeois specialist" used by the Bolsheviks to refer to a non-communist professional of pre-revolutionary society employed in a new socialist enterprise. These specialists were used where the party lacked suitable educated and qualified cadres. These specialists were employed most extensively in scientific and technological positions, but were also used extensively in the archival and historical professions in the 1920s.

reforms. For the party, reforms articulated by specialists would bring the Tsarist and Provisional government institutions firmly under centralized Bolshevik control, streamline the governing process, and facilitate the exploitation of the resources housed in these previously disjointed institutions.

When Tsentrarkhiv was first founded it had two centers, Petrograd and Moscow. Petrograd, as the capital of the pre-revolutionary regimes housed the majority of important pre-October state archival papers and thus the greatest numbers of archivists were working in the region. The March 12, 1918 declaration of Moscow as the new capital was echoed in the centralization of archival development and administration in Moscow. However the considerable number of archival repositories located in Petrograd required a continued administrative presence. As a result, the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv retained a special status and a degree of autonomy, even publishing their own journal, *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (*Historical Archive*) beginning in 1919. The Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv was dominated by pre-revolutionary bourgeois archival specialists, including its Director S. F. Platonov, the leading Imperial historian in Saint Petersburg in the pre-revolutionary period, and quickly became a thorn in the side of Moscow Tsentrarkhiv.

One of the most significant factors in the development of the archival system was the continued physical threat to archival documents in the first years of the Bolshevik regime as a result of the civil war. The upheaval of the war led to the destruction of documents in both direct and indirect ways. Misguided, poorly planned attempts to protect documents through evacuations, acts of hostility targeted at archival records, as well as the usual collateral damage resulting from intense military engagements, were all

major catalysts for the destruction of archives. Frequent evacuation of archives, which began before the revolution in some parts of the Russian Empire in response to World War I, and intensified during the civil war, resulted in the loss of countless documents. In 1921, Petrograd archivist V. I. Picheta described the consequences of the two major evacuations of archival documents from the old Tsarist capital. The first, a 1917 evacuation, was a hasty and unplanned overzealous response to protect the valuable documents from the "imaginary danger of the seizure of Petrograd by the Germans."[23] The hurried character of this evacuation resulted in the loss of countless archival documents, which perished during the journey and upon their arrival, as many destinations for evacuation did not have suitable notification, and hence storage areas ready for these "best and most valuable" documents. Picheta depicted the evacuation of materials in March of 1918, associated with the transfer of the capital to Moscow, as even more chaotic with greater losses of documents. Even when evacuated documents were not physically lost in the transfer, many were "intellectually" lost as the lack of preparation for, and subsequent chaotic nature of, the move ruined the organization of the documents making them unusable for years.[24]

The need to protect documents and the new role of the archive in Soviet society encouraged a vast expansion of historical institutions. Tsentrarkhiv institutions played an extensive role in collection and preservation efforts in the provinces in response to the continued threat of destruction. Further, as archival institutions replaced officially assumed the role of local liquidated recordkeeping institutions, such as churches, it was

[23] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 271, l. 20.

[24] Ibid.

important that Tsentrarkhiv exist in local areas to facilitate the retrieval of vital information from archival documents. As the state established a bureaucratic base, archival administration and records management became more important in the governing of the new society. Provincial archivists spent much of their time working with citizens not only in agitational-educational roles, but also providing veterans documentation of their military service, and helping citizens access vital statistics, needed to make claims for benefits, to prove eligibility for employment, entrance into an educational institution, or party membership. Personal information authenticated by archival documents became even more significant as the Bolsheviks came to accept the "upward mobility" of peasants and workers into positions in bureaucratic and intellectual work by emphasizing "class origins, not class as measured by occupation."[25] Archival records provided the evidence of proper class origins. Under the direction of Tsentrarkhiv, the number of provincial archival bureaus grew rapidly. Even during the difficult years of the civil war, the number of archival bureaus in the provinces quadrupled from eight in 1918 to thirty two in 1919. By 1925 Tsentrarkhiv oversaw eighty-five provincial archival institutions.[26]

Politicizing the Archives

With the end of the civil war, the party began to transform the mission of the archive in society. Two years of difficult fighting and a series of social protests left the

[25] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Bolsheviks' Dilemma: Class, Culture, and Politics in the Early Soviet Years," *Slavic Review*, no. 47:4 (Winter, 1988), 612.

[26] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 116r.

Bolsheviks searching for new sources of legitimacy. Archives, as the custodians of history, played a large part in the efforts of Bolsheviks to create stability and legitimacy through an established historical narrative. On August 23, 1920, the party deemed Riazanov's cultural approach to leading Tsentrarkhiv inadequate and he was sent to head the newly formed Institute of Marx and Engels, where his emphasis on the "'scientific and practical' significance of archives, and not on the political," presented less danger to the regime.[27] The new Director, Mikhail Nikolaevich Pokrovskii, was a Marxist historian and member of the Bolshevik faction since 1905.[28] He criticized Riazanov's lax leadership of Tsentrarkhiv and ushered in an era of strict politicization of archives, including an emphasis on the use of archival documents to influence public perception of past and current events. Pokrovskii strengthened the party control of Tsentrarkhiv and many of the policies of Riazanov were undone. Pokrovskii immediately removed non-party members from the Board of Tsentrarkhiv, although he continued to employ specialist in scientific positions during the early and mid-1920s.

One of the first tasks of Pokrovskii as the head of the Tsentrarkhiv was to remove it from the jurisdiction of the cultural ministry, Narkompros. In a 1921 memo to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet, VTsIK) Pokrovskii argued that under Narkompros, an agency interested in cultural institutions, the interest of archives would always come last after libraries and museums. Under Narkompros, archives were only valued for their scientific significance, when they

[27] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 2045, l. 26.

[28] Schreyer, *Die Zentralen Archive Russlands und der Sowjetunion*, 63.

were, in fact, "great political weapons."[29] He noted that these political weapons were being entrusted to specialists without proper communist oversight, a particularly dangerous undertaking in light of the recent appearance of several "spicy" (pikantnykh) documents from Russian archival collections in international publications. Pokrovskii argued that the only way to protect against this and worse indiscretions, was to transfer the archival administration from Narkompros to the highest organ of state power of the Republic, VTsIK.[30] After all, he pointed out, these indiscretions had not occurred where party members were responsible for documentary sources. He concluded that the archival system of Soviet Russia served all parts of the state government, all People's Commissariats, and it therefore could not be subordinated to one of them.[31] In 1922, Tsentrarkhiv was removed from Narkompros and began reporting directly to VTsIK. The removal of the cultural designation and the conveying of direct reporting powers to state leaders emphasized the political significance of the archive and signaled a shift from the earlier Bolshevik conception of the archive as an open, cultural resource. When Trotsky stated, "we have nothing to hide," no document was considered too "spicy" for the archive to release. In the post-civil war world, documents were to be more carefully protected from not only physical threats, but also improper use. To that end, after 1922 bourgeois specialists were also removed from many leadership positions throughout the provinces.

[29] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 10, l. 3.

[30] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 10, l. 3r.

[31] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 10, l. 6r

The new political role of archives ironically coincide with the great expansion of the EGAF to include vast resources not traditionally viewed as state archival material, including artistic and literary records. Sovnarkom enacted new laws throughout the 1920s that increased the scope of the jurisdiction of Tsentrarkhiv, including artists and authors materials (1919), the Romanov family papers (1923), and film and moving image archives (1926). Shortly after taking Riazanov's position, at a September 17, 1920 meeting of the Board of Tsentrarkhiv, Pokrovskii proposed the establishment of a State Archive of the RSFSR (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR, Gosarkhiv) as part EGAF. This was the first institution created to address directly the issue of documents of the Bolsheviks' own institutions. Gosarkhiv was to store "important documents of the RSFSR, and also the most valuable historical records of previous regimes."[32] The founding of Gosarkhiv of the RSFSR was a response both to the bureaucratic expansion of the new regime and the desire for control over political documents. It was the first response to the problem of paperwork associated with the increasingly bureaucratic regime, a problem unimaginable just a few years before when paperwork associated with the party was destroyed in order to protect their underground existence. The creation of Gosarkhiv was also an indication that Bolshevik leaders were becoming more concerned about the ideological and political custodianship of their documentary resources. Russian archival scholar, Khorkhordina argues that Gosarkhiv was an opportunity to "seize 'politically important, from the point of view of the authorities, sets of documents from the sections [of EGAF]," although each of these sections already had well established

[32] O. P. Kopylova, "Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR (1920-1925 gg.)," in *Istoriia Gosudarstvennogo Arkhiva Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Dokumenty, Stat'i, Vospominaniia,* ed. S. V. Mironenko, (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010): 67.

administrative apparatuses, and plans of acquisition and use.[33] Indeed, from the perspective of preservation these archival collections were certainly better off remaining in already established archival institutions, which were often better equipped and staffed largely with educated and experienced specialists. The seizure and centralization of documents was also a response to the archival catastrophes of the civil war and the need to concentrate and protect state documents. As a concept, Gosarkhiv only lasted until 1925, but one of its sections, the *Archive of the October Revolution*, inherited the role of repository for the state documents of the USSR.

Riazanov's removal from Tsentrarkhiv was not the end of his participation in 1920s Soviet archival development. In 1920 the Central Committee established the Institute of Marx and Engels (IME), which would gather the largest archival collection on Marx, Engels, and Marxist thought, and appointed Riazanov as the Director. Riazanov, whose cultural interest proved unsuited to the management of the repository for state and party documents, made extensive use of his experiences in exile in Western Europe to gather documents on European Marxism. IME also functioned as a research institution and carried out extensive publication efforts of the materials collected. The establishment of IME was symbolic, creating a center of Marxist research firmly in the first socialist state. As yet, the Bolsheviks had only inherited the cultural and state institutions of their predecessors. By establishing their own cultural institutions the Bolsheviks reinforced their status as a modern and transformative state and society, a society where not only the rulers were new, but so were history and culture.

[33] Kopylova, "Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR," 68.

In a similar vein, the Bolsheviks created the Commission for the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party in the USSR (Komissiia po Istorii *Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii i RKP(b),* Istpart) in 1920. The mission of Istpart was to collect, study, and publish resources on the history of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, particularly the Bolshevik faction (Rossiiskaia Sotsial-Demokraticheskaia Rabochaia Partiia, RSDRP(b)). Due to the conspiratorial existence of the party before the revolution, they possessed few archival resources of their own, causing them to rely on the documentary sources of their enemies for written information. Istpart was created to fill this void by conducting "archival drives" to encourage the donation of party members' paper resources and the solicitation of memoirs to fill in the gaps in records. In 1919, Lenin approached Pokrovskii and M. S. Ol'minskii, a longtime journalist for *Pravda*, separately about creating an institution for the study of history of the revolution. Pokrovskii, a trained historian, envisioned a scholarly organization to carry out serious and long term work on the history of the revolutionary movement closely tied to the archives, but Ol'minksii imagined an organization with much shorter term goals—the production of historical materials on the history of the party for immediate propaganda use. Lenin chose to combine these ideas in the creation of Istpart with Ol'minskii as the Directory and Pokrovskii as his deputy. Pokrovskii resigned four days after Istpart officially opened claiming too much other work. He later explained that he wanted to lead the commission toward serious, albeit militant, scholarship and believed it was moving in a direction in which he felt out of place. Pokrovskii believed that Istpart would settle for much less than serious scholarship and turned it over to Ol'minskii with Lenin's consent."[34] Ol'minskii's emphasis on the immediate publication of materials

[34] Larry E. Holmes and William Burgess, "Voice or Political Echo?: Soviet Party History in the 1920s,"

influenced his decision to reject bourgeois specialists to aid in the work of Istpart. When Istpart was transferred to direct subordination to the Central Committee, the emphasis on party membership for its cadres was further solidified. Istpart was given an all-union authority and the "right to organize local sub-commissions and bureaus, and to send its representatives to all provinces and regions of the RSFSR and the Soviet republics."[35] Soon Istpart had dozens of sections throughout the republics and provinces.

The establishment of Istpart proved significant for Tsentrarkhiv as it created an institution with a competing mission to collect and preserve historical documents. Indeed, the development of the archival structure over the 1920s was greatly shaped by the conflicts between these institutions. In the provinces, archival bureaus and Istpart sections often merged into one institution, or at least had great overlap in their staff, creating much ambiguity when central institutions tried to direct provincial institutions. The 1921 First Conference of Archival Workers offered an opportunity for archivists to address the overlap of the two institutions. At the request of the Istpart representatives in attendance, the conference resolved that local Istpart sections were to create "sections on policy and law" within the state archival bureau to store their collections. In the case of an archival institution with a non-communist as the director, the local Istpart section was to take control of the institution.[36] The creation of new archival institutions of 1920 further imposed on the records authority of Tsentrarkhiv. Although collections of Istpart

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Russian History/Histoire Russe 9, nos. 2-3 (1982): 381.

[35] RGASPI f. 70, op 1. d. 17, l. 1.

[36] RGASPI f. 70, op 1, d. 18, l. 1.

and were officially a part of EGAF, these institutions functioned outside the management of Tsentrarkhiv.

The creation and expansion of the new thematic archival institutions was paralleled in Tsentrarkhiv's expansion of its provincial archival bureaus after the civil war. By 1925 there were eighty-five archival organizations in the territory of the RSFSR, not including those in Moscow and Leningrad, and by1927 there were 105.[37] Although Tsentrarkhiv directed the work of local archives, local institutions were also subordinated to their local governments and all funding and resources came from local sources. Not only were archives potentially receiving orders from both Moscow Tsentrarkhiv and their local governments, at times archival bureaus fell under overlapping local administrative jurisdictions, making an archival bureau beholden to both its city and provincial governments.[38] With the establishment of a local Istpart section, the state archive's position could become even less clear. As there was great overlap between the two institutions, and they sometimes blended parts of their sections, local archival bureaus sometimes received two sets of orders from Moscow, from both Tsentrarkhiv and Istpart. In 1925, at the First Congress of Archival Workers, an archivist complained:

> All instructions that are obtained from Tsentrarkhiv talk of the Single State Archival Fond, and say that in the provinces this is managed by the Provincial Archival Bureau. But we see, that it is not, in fact the case. Gubsovnarkkhoz [Provincial Soviet of National Economy] received from the center, signed by Comrade Dzerzhinsky, instructions directing agencies to concentrate materials of an archival nature in Gubsovnarkkhoz. The same can be said of the Gosstrakh [State insurance

[37] V. A. Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit'*, (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2000): 162.

[38] Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit'*, 165.

> authorities]. I'm interested, is this just an inconsistency of Tsentrarkhiv or simply a lack of a unified course of action?[39]

Although local archives were subordinated to local powers, archivists often tried to contact Tsentrarkhiv directly as local governments often did not have the abilities or the interests to effectively guide the archival bureau.[40] Local archival bureaus' requests for more guidance from the center, however, were often not fulfilled as Tsentrarkhiv struggled with its own resource limitations.[41]

Archival administration of the first years of the new regime was often chaotic as a result of the splintered chains of authority and this chaos was compounded by resource shortages. Tsentrarkhiv leaders endeavored to create an ideological and practical vision for the new socialist archival administration, frequently reorganizing and changing course with the changing politics at the center. Even when archival leaders were able to articulate a plan, archival institutions could not always institute the vision of the center due to shortages or local political circumstances, leaving Tsentrarkhiv leaders scrambling to adapt their policies. Tsentrarkhiv was kept apprised of the conditions of provincial archives by dispatching inspectors, requesting reports from provincial archives, facilitating discussions at intermittent professional conferences, and even, in some cases, by reading newspaper reports detailing the problems archives faced. However, direct supervision of archival institutions was hindered by the scant resources of the administration, limiting the amount of unmediated contact administrative leadership had with archival institutions, especially outside of the center. As a result, archivists often

[39] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 841, l. 7.

[40] Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit'*, 167.

[41] For more on the struggle of archivists to attain resources from their local governments and guidance from Tsentrarkhiv, see Chapter Two of this study.

maintained a significant level of autonomy in their work. Some used this to their personal benefit, to advance their own agendas, conduct illegal, financially beneficial activities, or simply to indulge in idle, apathetic work, but many archivists also lamented the lack of supervision from the center. Local archival bureaus were responsible for creating their own yearly plans to implement archival instructions from Moscow, but continual failure on the part of local archives to live up to the expectations of the center resulted in Tsentrarkhiv establishing directed planning in local archival institutions beginning in 1925.[42]

The frequent lack of local government sympathy to the mission of local archival bureaus meant archival institutions often struggled to receive even the most basic resources needed for functioning. In February 1921, Tsentrarkhiv Inspector A. F. Iziumov delivered a report to the Board of Tsentrarkhiv in which he described the storage situation in the provinces as "truly hopeless." He stated that nothing had been achieved by the heads of many provincial archives to secure storage, despite the fact that this was the main task put to them by Tsentrarkhiv. He cited the example of the Orenburg Provincial Archival Bureau, which had received the building of the ecclesiastical consistory for archival storage from local officials only after persistent interference by Tsentrarkhiv.[43] The 1926 "Report on the Activities of Tsentrarkhiv, 1922-1926" noted that the storage issue continued to be one of the biggest obstacles to carrying out archival work in both central and provincial archives.[44]

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[42] Ibid. 61.

[43] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d.125, l. 21.

[44] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 370, l. 85.

Another issue felt keenly in the provinces was the paper shortage, or "paper famine" (bumazhnyi golod) of post-revolutionary Russia. This shortage shaped the nation's documentary record in two ways. First, it meant fewer documentary records were created in the first few years of Bolshevik rule, as there simply was not paper to produce records. What paper was available was often poor quality, reused, or scraps which were easily lost. Second, the legal transfer and theft of documents for recycling or reuse outside the archive resulted in the loss of countless archival collections. Tsentrarkhiv regularly battled with institutions illegally selling documents to be pulped for new paper. In some cases, the Main Administration of Paper Production (Glavnoe Upravlenie Bumazhnoi Promyshlennosti, or Glavbum) simply requisitioned archival documents for pulping from local archives over the protest of archivists, who were empowered in theory to prevent such events, but in practice were often helpless to stop Glavbum.[45] Additionally, selling documents from archival collections for paper pulp was a way to line the pockets of dishonest or desperate employees, or to raise funds for the administration of the archive. This was especially true in provincial archives, which were in an even more precarious financial position than the archival institutions of the center. In 1921 Inspector Iziumov suggested that Tsentrarkhiv institute more legal destruction of documents in order to gain control over the situation.[46] The move toward more legal destruction of documents was an attempt to combat the ongoing archival destruction issues, but was also made possible by the changes that came with the introduction of the New Economic Policy (*Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika,* NEP) in 1921. With NEP,

[45] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 271, l. 18.

[46] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1212, l. 10.

Tsentrarkhiv was able to sell their unneeded documents for profit in order to support archival work. This had particularly importance in areas where archives were dependent on unsympathetic, local governments for financial support. Iziumov noted, however, that the illegal destruction of documents in response to the paper shortage was not the only problem that needed to be solved. The lack of educated, qualified archivists capable of properly weeding collections meant that even potential legal avenues for selling archival collections for recycling still presented dangers. Tsentrarkhiv member S. K. Bogoiavlenskii, a bourgeois specialist, had suggested that decisions for what to destroy could be made on an individual basis, but Iziumov saw danger in leaving this permanent decision to individual archivists:

> If a person has an adequate historical education, if he knows how to evaluate documents, distinguish the necessary from the unnecessary, etc, then of course it can be based on his individual work. But for whom of us is it a secret, that among our workers there are people, often who simply love documents, but are totally unfamiliar with them, don't know the documents, don't understand their value. If these people are allowed to decide what to destroy, they will save the archive as a whole, every scrap of paper, or on the other hand, they will give up, their energy run out, and say, "take it all, there is nothing I can do."[47]

Instead, Iziumov proposed that Tsentrarkhiv establish a commission to create a policy for the destruction of archival documents. The creation of standards in response to the lack of resources, both financial and personnel, was a hallmark of early Soviet archival administration.

In an early move toward limiting access to historical documents, Tsentrarkhiv established sections on policy and law (sektsiia politiki i prava, *politsektsiia*) in archives in the center and provinces, as a result of an agreement between leaders of Tsentrarkhiv

[47] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 273, ll. 15-16.

and representatives of Istpart sections who were in Moscow for the 13th Party Congress in May of 1924. The *politsektsiia* were to be organized as a special section of the *Archive of the October Revolution* in Moscow and local archival bureaus. The stated basis for the establishment of these *politsektsiia* was Tsentrarkhiv leaders' desire to improve conditions at local archives for collections with historical-revolutionary or political significance.[48] The sections included the papers of existing local administrative, political, and judicial and organizations, and the papers of former services of the old regime.[49] The revolutionary break in society was reinforced by the periodization of the collections which where divided into two sections, pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary, and were to be stored in a separate storage space or on separate shelves, and to remain closed to anyone from outside the archive.[50] The establishment of the *politsektsiias* was the first institutionalized effort to separate sections of document for special and limited use. In an instruction to local archives, Tsentrarkhiv stated that "special rules apply to the storage and use of materials" in the *politsektsiia*, that information from these files was only to be given out to specified agencies, and that only representatives from "Istpart, the *Museum of the Revolution*, and other similar institutions" were allowed to use materials in the *politsektsiia*.[51] There was also stricter control over the cadres who were employed in *politsektsiia* work. Under no circumstances was the head of a *politsektsiia* to be a non-party member. This requirement further entwined local state archival bureaus and Istpart

[48] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 414, l. 48.

[49] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 414, l. 47.

[50] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 414, l. 47r.

[51] Ibid.

sections. In an effort to fulfill the requirements of party membership, state archives often employed Istpart worker as the heads of the *politsektsiia*.

The last significant archival institution founded in the 1920s was the Institute of Lenin, which the Moscow Party Commission established on March 31, 1923. In September of 1923 the Institute was transferred to the Central Committee and officially opened on May 31, 1924. The first Director was the high-ranking official L. B. Kamenev, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union, and the council was a who's who of party leaders, including J. V. Stalin, G. E. Zinov'ev, N. I. Bukharin, N. K. Krupskaia, and V. I. Nevskii. The Institute aggressively collected any and all documentary materials related to Lenin and his life. This collecting was done through the publication and solicitation of materials from private individuals as well as the seizure of relevant files from other archival institutions. As the definition of what constituted a "Lenin" document was widely inclusive (a memoir which mentioned Lenin, a manuscript with notes by Lenin, a letter written to Lenin), Tsentrarkhiv and Istpart both transferred numerous collections to the Institute of Lenin. The Institute was also involved in research and published extensively from the archive it created, including the seemingly ubiquitous volumes of the *Collected Works of Lenin*. The establishment of a research institution around Lenin not only created a symbolic cultural institution, but also reflected the Bolsheviks' aspirations to create a society based on new principles, but still very much operating in the bounds of traditional cultural values. The story being sold was very different, but the currency was the same. The Bolsheviks were concerned with their perception of the legitimacy of their authority and the establishment of cultural institutions engaged in a value system which much of their population, and to an even

greater extent the capitalist world, understood—archives as evidence, culture as achievement.

Archives in Service of Foreign Policy

Soviet leaders also used the authority presented in archival sources as it tried to establish diplomacy and other foreign relations. The 1921 *Peace of Riga*, which ended the war between Soviet Russia and Poland, also made provisions for the return of documentary sources to Poland, which were removed either in the time of its contentious tenure in the Russian Empire or during archival evacuations as a result of World War I. Similar agreements were made with the new governments of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland. Tsentrarkhiv put considerable resources into returning archives outlined in these treaties. Starting in 1921, when both material and human resources were seriously limited, Tsentrarkhiv conducted this work at a rapid pace and continued do so throughout the decade.[52] Tsentrarkhiv frequently instructed archivists to search out these materials in their collections and dispatch them to the center. These were not the actions of a dictatorship of a proletariat expecting imminent worldwide revolution, but a state seeking to establish its legitimacy and reliability as an international partner. Indeed, the Bolsheviks continued to faithfully fulfill requirements of the treaties even as the other governments treated them with hostility and did not carry out their portions of the treaty. The increased emphasis on using archives in diplomatic relations also reveals the continuing movement toward the emphasis on the practical and political significance of the archive away from a cultural significance.

[52] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 761, l. 1.

The introduction of NEP and the Bolshevik decision to participate in greater international relations and trade also influenced the political role of archives in the new state. On February 18 (February 3), 1918 the Central Executive Committee decreed, "all foreign loans are annulled unconditionally and without any exceptions."[53] The revolutionary regime had little incentive to honor such agreements, as they did not anticipate the need to engage in typical diplomatic and economic foreign relations. The Bolsheviks also nationalized much of the industry of the former Russian Empire throughout 1918: oil production, mining, factories, and so on. The transformation of the state and economy after the October Revolution was brash with little consideration for the losses of states, industrial companies, and private owners, as they represented the class enemy against which the Bolsheviks were fighting. The Russian Empire's capitalist development had been considerably behind the West and their track to industrialization relied heavily on many foreign investors and companies. When the Bolsheviks nationalized industry and claimed contracts made under previous governments were no longer valid it affected not only Russian owners, but also a large number of foreign investors from England, the United States, and other Western countries creating several foreign enemies with a personal stake in the outcome of the Russian revolution. However, when the Soviets ended the policy of War Communism and began to retreat from the ideology of imminent worldwide revolution in 1921, they re-strategized their plans for building industry and economy which included the renewed participation of

[53] "Dekret ob Annulirovanii Gosudarstvennykh Zaimov," *Biblioteka Elektronnykh Resursov Istoricheskogo Fakul'teta MGU im. M. V. Lomonosova*, accessed on September 18, 2012, http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/borrow.htm

these outside capitalist resources.[54] As a result of their drastic behavior, the Bolsheviks were in a position that required they establish themselves as legitimate and trustworthy enough for engagement with foreign capitalist enterprises. Numerous factors hindered this endeavor, including lack of diplomatic recognition from most nations, numerous foreign lawsuits brought against the Bolsheviks, and recent memories of their actions which did nothing to inspire trust in capitalist nations and enterprises. Tsentrarkhiv stressed the importance of archivists aid to foreign relations in an August 11, 1924 circular:

> At this time, archival materials preserved from the archives of former tsarist and provisional governments allow the USSR to navigate the calculations that take place in connection with the diplomatic recognition and trade agreements with the capitalist states.[55]

The careful adherence of new treaty agreements was one such way for the state to prove it was a trustworthy partner, that it respected not only international agreements with foreign governments, but also those with capitalist enterprises despite all ideological sentiments indicating otherwise.

The Bolsheviks found they could not continue to reject the financial claims brought against by foreigners whose industry had been nationalized in 1918 without facing further loss of potential diplomatic and economic credibility, but were also without the resources to remit the claims. They were compelled to develop different strategies for legitimately defending themselves against these claims. First, they invested much effort

[54] War Communism was the political and economic policy of the Bolsheviks from 1918-1921. This policy emphasized the priorities of the war in economic and political policies. Under War Communism the Bolsheviks outlawed private enterprise, nationalized industry, strengthened the discipline of workers, and requisitioned grain from peasants. Many aspects of this policy were unpopular and Bolsheviks replaced it with NEP in 1921, which allowed for some private enterprise and replaced grain requisitioning with a tax in kind.

[55] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 611, l. 15.

to carefully confirm the authenticity of the losses. Tsentrarkhiv carried out massive operations to search out and uncover the evidence related to financial claims of the foreign litigators to ensure the veracity of these figures. In a 1924 circular Tsentrarkhiv ordered all sections and departments of EGAF to "report on the availability all kinds of archival materials existing in provincial and regional archival bureaus that contain any data on foreign loans."[56] In 1925 Tsentrarkhiv requested information from provincial archives on any documents related to annulled stocks and bonds.[57] By 1930 the circulars about seeking out information related to privatization of industry and loans became more specific. Archivists inspected collections for information on exact financial losses of foreign enterprises, such as "clarification of owners of oil that was in storage, tank barges at the time of revolution in the Caucasus,"[58] information on the values of foreign currencies during past years to establish loan and other loss claims, materials on the gold holdings at the Lena Goldfields before the revolution.[59] These endeavors contributed to the further concentration of resources, as well as the limitation of access to their information. Unlike the Bolshevik regime of 1917, which declared they had nothing to hide and abolished secret diplomacy, new responses to foreign lawsuits and diplomatic relations required the protection of the Bolshevik position and the guarding of information to ensure its use only in favor of the Soviet government.

The second part of Bolsheviks strategy was to respond to foreign financial claims by making counter claims of their own financial losses. The Bolsheviks tallied the losses

[56] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 611, l. 15.

[57] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 300, l. 1.

[58] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 780, l. 37.

[59] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1633, l. 35.

incurred at the hands of these litigious countries when they intervened on the side of the Whites in the civil war and as a result of the corresponding wartime blockade. They backed these claims with evidence culled from their newly centralized archival resources. Archivists searched for collections which contained "data on the direct and indirect losses caused by the blockade of the Russian Federation and foreign intervention, as a result of the of the general disorder to economic life under siege, to both government and public institutions and organizations, and individuals," in order to concretely establish both their own losses and those being claimed against them.[60] They were also asked to seek out information on the Reds' enemies, such as A. V. Kolchak, the Supreme Ruler of the counter-revolutionary White forces, who was known to have had "less than platonic relations with the United States."[61] This information was used in financial counterclaims and navigating diplomatic relations. Once the Bolsheviks accepted their responsibility to answer for the loans of the former Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks began to seek out information and make claims of their own international losses, seeking to gather information on Romanov property abroad lost to the Bolsheviks and loans made to foreigners in Russia during the war period.[62] The Bolsheviks had created their ruling legitimacy from historical events and its evidence. The act of legitimizing its economy and state also required the objective evidence of archival documents. With the aid of archival sources, abstract ideological claims to legitimacy of early revolutionary

[60] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 111, l. 1.

[61] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 780, ll.16-16r.

[62] Ibid.

Bolsheviks were replaced by concrete claims grounded in the facts of archival documents.

Further Consolidation

As Moscow became the more important political and administrative center in the new regime, Tsentrarkhiv leaders began to object to of the continuing administrative powers of their Petrograd compatriots. Further, the resource shortages, which plagued Tsentrarkhiv, forced them to look for ways to decrease their spending and the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv became their target. Although the Petrograd Section oversaw many politically significant archival collections, the growing importance of Moscow favored a centralization of resources, financial and documentary. Efforts to physically centralize documents by Tsentrarkhiv reveal a desire to reverse local power over documents and effect greater control of their historical legacy. Tsentrarkhiv Board members established a commission to phase out the Petrograd Section and reduce their personnel as early as 1921. At a meeting on December 9, 1921 led by Moscow Tsentrarkhiv Board member V.V. Maksakov and attended by a representative from Petrograd Tsentrarkhiv, the pre-revolutionary archival specialist I. L. Maiakovskii, the commission discussed which archives in Petrograd could have their work curtailed and which were essential to continue working. The commissioned settled on maintaining the archives that addressed political, military, and economic needs, and those parts of the archive that were engaged in carrying out the return of documents in accordance with

peace treaties, and made severe cuts to all others.[63] In 1923, Tsentrarkhiv removed the bourgeois specialist S. F. Platonov from the directorship of the Petrograd Section.

After the cuts in resources to the Petrograd Section, a Tsentrarkhiv Inspector returned in 1923 to find the condition of the archive in a terrible state. He claimed the files of pre-revolutionary courts and police departments were piled on the floors of corridors. He continued that the *Historical Revolutionary Archive* in Petrograd was functioning outside of the purview of the Board of the Petrograd Section, under the leadership of a member of the Petrograd Istpart section, V. I. Nevskii. He had even stopped reporting on the archive's activities, instead sending reports directly to Moscow Istpart. The Petrograd Section Board also lacked control over the visitors to *Historical Revolutionary Archive* and could not guarantee that files and documents were not being taken from the archive. In fact, cases of removal of files were discovered the previous year as result of policies that allowed even rank and file Istpart workers unrestricted rights to use the archives.[64] The conclusion of the report was harsh: "the administration of the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv in effect, does not exist."[65]

In January of 1924 the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv ceased to exist as an administrative organ and was reorganized as the Leningrad Provincial Archival Bureau subordinated to Tsentrarkhiv Moscow. Capitalizing on this change in status, Tsentrarkhiv began to transfer several politically significant archival collections from Leningrad to Moscow. On December 25, 1925 Pokrovskii wrote to Sovnarkom

[63] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 6, l. 11.

[64] GARF f. R5325, Op. 1, D. 6, l. 142.

[65] GARF f. R5325, Op. 1, D. 6, l. 135.

requesting, on behalf of the Joint State Political Administration (Ob"edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie, OGPU), the transfer of the archive of the Police Department of the Ministry of Interior of Tsarist Russia from Leningrad to Moscow. Sovnarkom approved this request on February 24, 1926. From March to May of 1926, the majority of the archive was transferred to the Moscow *Archive of Revolution and Foreign Policy*.[66] In October of 1926, again at the request of the OGPU, archival collections of the Governing Senate (Pravitel'stvuiuschii Senat) of the Tsarist era were transferred from Leningrad to Moscow.[67] In March of 1927, Tsentrarkhiv transferred to Moscow the archival collections of sections of the Gendarme, the Criminal Division of the First Department of the Ministry of Justice, and the Main Prison Administration. Altogether, from 1926-1927 almost all the collections of the liquidated Petrograd *Historical-Revolutionary Archive* were transferred to the Moscow *Archive of the Revolution and Foreign Policy*.[68]

The consolidation of Tsentrarkhiv's authority over the nation's documentary records was not met without resistance, particularly in the case of the power of Tsentrarkhiv to manage the working files of still functioning institutions. In fulfillment of their records management responsibilities Tsentrarkhiv dispatched inspectors to evaluate the archives of functioning institutions. From December 1924 to October 1926

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[66] B. F. Dodonov and V. P. Naumov, "Arkhiv Revoliutsii i Vneshnei Politika (1925-1932 gg.) Gosudarsvennyi Arkhiv Revoliutsii (1932-1941 gg.)- Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv v Moskve (1941-1961gg.)," in *Istoriia Gosudarstvennogo Arkhiva Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Dokumenty, Stat'i, Vospominaniia,* ed. S. V. Mironenko, (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010): 100.

[67] The Governing Senate (Pravitel'stvuiuschii Senat) was a legislative, judicial, and executive body of Russian Monarchs, instituted by Peter the Great and lasting until the end of the Russian Empire. It included courts, the Department of Heraldry, and the authority to resolve disputes of political administration between central and local powers.

[68] Dodonov and Naumov, "Arkhiv Revoliutsii i Vneshnei Politika." 101.

Tsentrarkhiv inspectors made a survey of twenty-four central archives, including the People's Commissariat of Land, the People's Commissariat of Labor, the People's Commissariat of Justice, and the People's Commissariat of Education.[69] Although Tsentrarkhiv considered itself responsible for the care of documents while still at their creator agencies they often had trouble enforcing this authority. Tsentrarkhiv argued that, according to the June 1 decree, Tsentrarkhiv was currently responsible for the administration and care of documents that would come to Tsentrarkhiv only in the future. But government departments often preferred an interpretation of Tsentrarkhiv's role as merely offering guidance for the care of documents while still in the custodianship of the creator agency with Tsentrarkhiv only assuming full responsibility for these documents once they were transferred to the repositories of EGAF.[70] In one illustrative case in 1926, several documents of various People's Commissariats appeared in a food market in Moscow. A critical letter published in the newspaper, *Vechernaia Moskva* (*Evening Moscow*), titled "Are Archives Complete?" described a local bread seller who was using archival documents to wrap the bread he sold. The anonymous author wrote:

> Today, with the purchase of one pound [funt] of black bread I was also given, as the wrapping paper, the vacation information of the presidium of the VSNKh [Supreme Soviet of the National Economy] from February 16, 1924 sent to SNK SSSR and the NKVT [People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade]. In addition, many other archival scraps are also encountered, such as from the NKID [Peoples Commissariat of Foreign Affairs]: "objection to the departure of so and so abroad is not found." How do these papers end up at the market? This must be determined.[71]

[69] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1420, l. 10.

[70] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 486, l. 81.

[71] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1212, l. 10.

Not only does the incident reveal much about the shortcomings of Tsentrarkhiv's authority and effective custodianship of archival resources, but the follow up attempts to rectify the situation reveal how disorganized and weak the archival administration was in 1926. In an attempt to investigate and rectify the incident, Tsentrarkhiv administrators, V. V. Maksakov and A. P. Iodko, entreated the OGPU and the editor of *Vechernaia Moskva* to reveal information about the identity of the author of the letter.[72] The *Vechernaia Moskva* editor offered little help, claiming not to have information on the author of the letter. Eventually Tsentrarkhiv dispatched Senior Inspector Dombrovskii to meet with the editor of *Vechernaia Moskva* in person. In his report to the Tsentrarkhiv Board, Dombrovskii explained that the editor continued to deny knowledge of the identity of the author, stating he sent the only copy of this information to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (Narodnyi Komissariat po Inostrannym Delam, NKID).[73] Dombrovskii's following attempts to attain information on the author and his address from NKID were continually met with resistance. He called the excuse that NKID provided him for refusing to provide the information "strange." NKID officials stated they wanted to determine exactly how many of these documents found in the market were really from the NKID and wanted to carry out their own investigation into the matter. After their investigation NKID concluded there were not, in fact, any NKID documents included in those seen at the market, and they were now willing to transfer the entire matter to Tsentrarkhiv. [74] NKID took advantage of Tsentrarkhiv's deficient ability

[72] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1212, l. 9 and 11.

[73] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1212, l. 24.

[74] Ibid.

to exercise authoritative power over documentary matters in government institutions to delay Tsentrarkhiv's investigation, allowing NKID to handle the matter privately with plenty of opportunity to cover up or eliminate the evidence of shortcomings in their institutional records practices.

Many government institutions also did not want to relinquish their documents to EGAF at the appointed transfer date. In 1927, Sovnarkom, at the request of Tsentrarkhiv, issued a circular to all its institutions "on measures to combat the illicit trade of archival materials" which reiterated Tsentrarkhiv's authority in all decisions about the destruction of documents. Tsentrarkhiv had requested this resolution because of the absence of special legislation providing punitive regulations for illegal sale and destruction of archival materials and the fact that there had not been a satisfactory result from the July 9, 1922 circular of the Presidium of VTsIK on the protection of archival materials from destruction."[75]

As early as 1923 Tsentrarkhiv began address issues of greater control over far-flung republic archival institutions. The Board created a draft proposal on a Central Archival Administration of the USSR in 1923 that proposed creating a Single All-Union Archival Fond to be administered from Moscow.[76] Until this point Tsentrarkhiv Moscow had functioned as a first among equals in the republics. But in line with the prevailing movement toward further consolidation and control, Tsentarkhiv leaders began to imagine an institution that would give them greater all-union influence. The draft proposal described the materials that would fall under the "immediate superintendence"

[75] GARF f. A259, op. 9b, d. 29, l. 2.

[76] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 478, l. 25.

of Tsentrarkhiv Moscow and included all documents considered by Tsentrarkhiv to be of an all-union significance.[77] On March 13, 1925 the Tsentrarkhiv Board called a meeting of representatives from republic central archival administrations while they were in Moscow for the First Congress of Archival Workers to discuss the draft proposal on central Soviet archival administration. In general, the participants from the republics reacted negatively to this proposition, perhaps because many were not aware of the meeting until they arrived for the conference. S. K. Chkhetia of Georgia said that Georgian archival leaders were only given notice of the meeting on March 13, and even then they did not know what the topic of the meeting would be. He asked if the meeting could be postponed so he could attain proper approval from his party organ to participate in the meeting and speak on behalf of Georgia.[78] Melshko from Belarus, who had received the draft proposal on an all-union archival administration, had already discussed it with Sovnarkom of Belarus:

> They understood [the proposal] to mean that all archives to do with all-union issues would be concentrated in the center, including even old collections. Sovnarkom of Belarus reacted negatively to this ... In fact, they are even now trying to get documents back that were evacuated to Moscow.[79]

Another meeting was scheduled to give the participants who had not received the draft proposal an opportunity to read it and confer with their party organs. When the commission was reconvened a week later on March 20 the majority of participants remained opposed to the proposal. Of those in attendance at the meeting, only the

[77] GARF f. A2306, op. 1, d. 2776, l. 5.

[78] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 478, l. 76-77.

[79] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 478, l. 83.

representative from the Uzbek Republic voted in favor of the proposal, with the representatives from the Georgian, Turkmen, Belorussian, and Ukrainian Republics voting against it.[80] Pokrovskii ended the meeting by stating that if they were all against, he would not fight them, and the issue was shelved for another few years.

The party officially prioritized the role in providing information from archival documents for building the industrial economy with the introduction of the first five-year plan. In a 1927 all-union meeting of Istpart leaders, Maksakov, the head of the *Archive of the October Revolution*, stated in his presentation that "our archival materials are used not only by historians, not even mainly by historian-researchers, but mainly for the economic state agencies that are interested in studying the experiences of the past."[81] Interestingly, in the discussion that followed few acknowledged Maksakov's statement, prompting him to respond:

> All comrades who spoke here approached our archival work solely in terms of the need to use the archives for research and almost no one paid any attention to the comment that was made by me that the archive for us, for the Soviet state, is a political weapon. And we do not have to use the archives just for historical research, but first of all, and above all, must use them for our state and economic construction.[82]

The resistance of Istpart members was natural, as their institution was founded and developed as a research organization for party history, and they were the most resistant to the transformation of the mission of archives away from historical research work. The widespread, inclusive research, collecting, and publication endeavors of the early and mid-1920s had proved unwieldy in the production of a cohesive, functional Soviet wide

[80] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 478, l. 141.

[81] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 34, l. 75.

[82] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 183-184.

historical narrative and party leaders looked for ways to limit the potentially unsuitable expressions of history. With the historical research use of archives trending down, Istpart's resistance made it a casualty within a few years as it was subsumed into the Institute of Lenin in 1929 and ceased to exist as an independent organization. Arguments in favor of combining the institutes noted that objectives of both institutions were not only very close, but also completely intertwined. These institutions "could not function without intruding on the other," and as a result there was wasteful parallelism in their work.[83] With the merger of the institutions, most Istpart sections in the provinces were closed.[84]

By the late 1920s leaders were less interested in the development of a multi-voiced historical narrative in support of the legitimacy of the party. Indeed, the works of the widespread archival institutions had proved more dangerous than helpful in the creation of an appropriate revolutionary story, resulting in the publication of materials at times in direct contradiction to the narrative the Bolsheviks wished to establish. Tsentrarkhiv and Moscow Istpart found cases of local archival bureaus or Istpart sections misidentifying significant leaders in archival exhibits or publishing memoirs of local revolutionary participants which revealed not only a lack of proper ideological understanding on the part of the Bolsheviks' own party members, but also emphasized the weakness of structured Bolshevik participation in many areas of the country. In response to each discovered shortcoming, the center slowly increased control over documentary sources beginning with the establishment of *politsektsiias* and continuing

[83] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 40, l. 75.

[84] Ibid.

with the actual physical centralization of archival resources to Moscow institutions and increasingly centralized instruction and plans for provincial and republic archival materials. Attempts to concentrate the materials on the revolution in Moscow were part of an effort to establish a monopoly over the revolutionary narrative and were not welcomed by many local archives. Ukrainian archival administration leaders responded to the efforts of Tsentrarkhiv to concentrate documents on the revolution in Moscow by dramatically claiming that Tsentrarkhiv may as well take their whole *Museum of the Revolution* since they wanted so many of Ukraine's materials. Pokrovskii justified the need for these materials in the capitol of the Soviet Union by responding that it was "hard to take the point of view that the struggle in Ukraine was a local affair. It was conducted by the Red Army, of which nine-tenths were not Ukrainians, which was led [rukovodilas'] from Moscow."[85] What had started as an endeavor for widespread and inclusive documentation of the revolutionary movement in an attempt to include locals in the narrative of historical legitimacy had become a progressively controlled and centralized collection administration under an increasingly apprehensive party leadership.

The turn from extensive historical research efforts freed archivists to play a significant role in the domestic development of the socialist economy. The new nationalized economy was based on an underdeveloped and highly decentralized system of industry and natural resource extraction. The nationalization of industry by the Bolsheviks in 1918 made the documents of all nationalized factories, mines, refineries, and other businesses a part of EGAF. Early leaders of local archival organs actively searched out these disparate collections and brought them under the auspices of the new

[85] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 834, l. 8.

Soviet archival system. The centralizing and massive attempts to establish bibliographic control over far flung documentation of information on the nation's industry and natural resources created a lumbering, but nevertheless basically functional, catalog of information for Soviet leadership in their attempts to exploit the nation's resources. Now, planners in Moscow were able to dispatch telegrams instructing far-flung archivists to search out and provide information on their local natural resources gathered from diverse archival collections. In a circular to all provincial archival bureaus, Tsentrarkhiv stressed the significance of practical use of archives for the economy, "Archiving, over time, is gaining more and more of a serious practical value. The rich materials stored in the archival repositories are unique sources, allowing the opportunity to take stock of the information and experience of the work done by society for many decades in all areas of the economy "[86]

In 1928 Tsentrarkhiv re-assigned its main goals: "the five-year plan for the archival construction of the RSFSR will be built on the basis of the tasks set by the party and Soviet government bodies in the five-year plan for the national economy."[87] Archival workers, who had recently been collecting, processing, publishing, and exhibiting historical material related to the revolution, were now instructed to spend their days familiarizing themselves with the relevant laws and knowledge on economic and industrial processes represented in their archives. Tsentrarkhiv instructed archivists to study the specific regulations of the industries represented in their collections, such as reading the statutes of mining for the exploration of resources on mining, or the statutes

[86] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 611, l. 15.

[87] GARF f. R4325, op. 9, d. 1656, l. 12.

on forests for the exploration of forest resources.[88] Archival exhibits shifted from glorifying historical revolutionary achievements to glorifying the current industrialization. Additionally, bourgeois specialists, who had contributed greatly to the administration of Tsentrarkhiv, were purged during the attack on specialists in the late 1920s, with 115 arrested as part of the "Academic Case" brought against Platonov in 1929 and 1930. Furthermore, throughout the 1920s Tsentrarkhiv also expanded its control over provincial and republic level archival administration, culminating in the establishment of an all-Union archival administration, Tsentrarkhiv USSR in 1929.

On June 28, 1929 the Central Committee approved the foundation of a *Single Party Archive* as part of the Institute of Lenin. This institutionalized the party's trend of retracting their record keeping from Tsentrarkhiv's influence, and consolidated all party related documentary materials under one institution, the Institute of Lenin. Before 1929, many of the party's documents were housed as part of EGAF in Tsentrarkhiv institutions, especially the *Archive of the October Revolution*. With the creation of the *Single Party Archive*, these documents were removed from Tsentrarkhiv's jurisdiction and placed under the care of the Institute of Lenin. The Institute of Lenin creating even greater control over party archival documents, demanding increasing approvals for research in the shrinking number of unclassified documents. Finally, in 1931 the Institute of Marx and Engels merged with the Institute of Lenin forming the Institute of Marx, Engels, Lenin (Institut Marksa-Engel'sa-Lenina pri VKP(b), IMEL), which reported directly to the Central Committee. With this move the party effectively created a monopoly over revolutionary and party materials in the form of IMEL. While Tsentrarkhiv focused on

[88] GARF f. P5325, op. 9, d. 1938, l. 14.

aiding the construction of the Soviet industrial economy, IMEL had full ideological control over the revolutionary narrative. This centralization of sources and production of history for the public allowed for an easier shaping of the Bolsheviks historical narrative to fit the whims of politics, to exaggerate the achievements of some, and to erase those who had fallen out of favor. The experiment of the role of the archive in society finally achieved a form of stability by 1931. Although archival polices would vacillate in response to changing politics throughout the Soviet period, the major institutions established by 1931 remained in place until 1991, with IMEL directing party archival sources and Tsentrarkhiv directing those of the state.

Chapter Two

An energetic organizer.
He loves his work.
He is active in party and non-party work.
He organized a commission in the village on Istpart matters.
Attends all party meetings and conferences related to Istpart, is very productive.
Regrettably, he is semi-literate.
-Evaluation of the Director of Taganrog Provincial State Archive and local Istpart section 1928.[1]

A glowing review, tempered only by the postscript regarding the man's deficient literacy, was given of the head of the Istpart section and local State Archival Bureau for the Taganrog Region in southern Russia in 1928.[2] Such absurd observances (an illiterate archivist!) of 1920s Soviet archival workers were not uncommon. The massive transformation of archives under the new regime left the party and the newly created Main Archival Administration (later Tsentrarkhiv) rushing to not only staff their growing archival institutions with qualified employees, but also to reach an understanding of what it meant to be a qualified archival professional. As the new archival policy greatly broadened the definition of archives in society during a period of limited financial resources and qualified personnel, the Bolsheviks relied heavily on pre-revolutionary professionals including, not only archivists, but also museum curators, historians, and

[1] Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI) f. 70, op. 1, d. 140, ll. 6-8.

[2] The Commission for the History of the Party (Istpart) was founded in September 1920 with an aim to create a documentary collection of the party and the Revolution. Local Istpart sections solicited archival materials and memoirs from those involved in the Revolution or civil war, created educational exhibits for the locals with these materials, published collections of archival documents, and hosted various events on the topic of the Revolutionary movement, such as lectures and plays.

other cultural professionals, to staff their archival institutions. As a result, the professionalization of archivists in the 1920s was a negotiation of ideas and customs from various professions and ideological backgrounds with great implications for traditions of Soviet archival work.

Bolsheviks acted quickly to transform archives with the June 1, 1918 decree, which created a unique state archival system. The new system was unprecedented in its scope and centralization of administration. The Marxist methodology of history placed great emphasis on the importance of archival documents—the evidence of the scientific process history. Reverence for the written document was not particularly unique among modern states; however, Bolshevik ideology ascribed great importance to the power of documents. M. N. Pokrovskii, the Bolshevik historian and later decade long leader of Tsentrarkhiv, noted that "even the most insignificant archival document, when placed in capable hands was like the small stone in David's hands as he faced Goliath."[3] Further, the Bolsheviks came to rely on history and its evidence, archives, as a source of legitimacy for their power, investing further importance into the archival record. This expectation of archives shaped the regime's approach to the past and its artifacts. The protection of documents, as well as their active use by archivists to influence public historical and political understanding, was more pronounced in 1920s USSR than in the West, even as the USSR had a much lower literacy rate. As a result, Soviet archivists took a much more active, even intrusive, role in the creation and use of archival collections in a way very much at odds with Western archival traditions. Where Western archivists regarded their roles as impartial "keepers" of records to be used by others for

[3] M. N. Pokrovskii, *Politcheskoe Znachenie Arkhivov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Tsentral'nogo Arkhiva RSFSR, 1924): 11.

interpretation later, their Soviet counterparts were often asked to create and shape archival collections or to interpret documents through exhibits and publications to influence public perception of the past and its links to the present.

The Bolsheviks' ideological and theoretical expectations for archives were implemented within a framework of practical limitations throughout the 1920s with significant resulting implications for the archival profession. Scarcity shaped the development of the archival profession in the 1920s, both as catalyst for professional standardization and as a hindrance to the implementation of these standards. The combination of rapid expansion and limited resources led to the consolidation of professional identity earlier in Russia than in the West. The lack of a qualified workforce encouraged archival leaders to develop standards for archival education and practices in order to assert control over their vast and geographically diverse collections. Similar attempts to establish profession wide standards did not occur in the West until the mid twentieth century. By 1931, with the establishment of the Moscow State Archival Institute, Soviet citizens were choosing to pursue educations with the goal of becoming archivists. In this same time period, archival scholars James O'Toole and Richard Cox point out, Western archivists were still "most often individuals who had fallen into their profession on the way to something else."[4]

[4] James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006): 77.

A Bourgeois Base

The Bolsheviks' attempts to take control over and exploit the pre-revolutionary archival legacy for political and economic means were hindered by the inheritance of a system of archives which was highly decentralized and generally lagged behind Western European states in development and organization. Archival reform garnered little interest from Tsarist authorities and much of the development of Russian archival science was carried out through the efforts of a "cultured and scholarly elite working in opposition to rather than in cooperation with ruling government circles."[5] In 1917 the Bolsheviks acquired these dispersed and isolated archival repositories and immediately began plans for reforms, but the party lacked educated archival workers within their ranks to facilitate the transformation of this system. Consequently, the Bolsheviks looked to "bourgeois specialists" of the old regime to fill leadership roles in reforms.[6] The use of bourgeois specialists was not unique to the archival profession, as the Bolsheviks made great use of specialists in scientific and technical positions in the 1920s. In the summer between the revolutions, Lenin mused about the potential need for the participation of bourgeois specialists in a new socialist society which had not yet undergone full capitalist industrialization, noting that not only would they be necessary to fill the education and training gap of the regime's cadres, but also that their treatment would "greatly affect

[5] Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR, Moscow and Leningrad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972): 22.

[6] "Bourgeois specialists" was the term used by Bolsheviks to refer to non-communist professionals of pre-revolutionary society employed in new socialists enterprises where the party lacked suitable educated and qualified cadres. These specialists were employed most extensively in scientific and technological positions. This study uses this term as the Bolsheviks did, to refer to the archivists and historians of the pre-revolutionary period who continued their careers after the October Revolution.

foreigner's views of the new regime."[7] From the specialists' side, the Bolsheviks' desire to gain physical and intellectual control over the vast archival resources of the former Russian Empire dovetailed well with the reforming and modernizing desires of pre-revolutionary archivists who had sought for years to unify and reform their profession, but were hindered by Tsarist authorities.

The founding leader of Tsentrarkhiv, David Borisovich Riazanov, made considerable use of bourgeois specialists. Riazanov was a long-time member of the Russian Social-Democratic Party and a highly educated historian with an extensive knowledge of Western European archival practices accumulated during his years in exile. He was instrumental in the adoption of many French archival practices, such as *respect des fonds*, for the new socialist archival system. Riazanov took a cultural and intellectual approach to archival work, as opposed to the later emphasis under Pokrovskii on the political and economic work of archives, which allowed for a greater leniency toward bourgeois specialists even in top positions. The first governing Board of Tsentrarkhiv included only one communist, Riazanov, the remaining members were the non-communist specialists, V. N. Storozhev (a historian and professor who had worked at the Moscow *Archive of the Ministry of Justice*), M. K. Liubavskii (a historian and academician, who also had worked at the Moscow *Archive of the Ministry of Justice*), and S. B. Veselovskii (a historian, academician, and professor at the Moscow Archaeological Institute).[8] Tsentrarkhiv also continued to employ pre-revolutionary specialists

[7] Robert F. Byrnes**, "**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession, 1917-1934," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 299.

[8] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1644, l. 3.

throughout archival repositories in the first few years of the new archival administration. In 1919 only 0.2% of archival workers in Moscow and Petrograd were party members.[9]

Already after the February Revolution, Russian archivists had moved to take advantage of the changing political system by unifying to bring changes to their field. As pre-revolutionary archivists were greatly decentralized and isolated in their work, they had limited professional interaction with each other. In 1917 archivists began to agitate for standardization to establish basic principles and best practices which would indicate the existence of an archival profession, rather than the solitary work of intellectuals within different institutes. Archivists were further motivated to cooperate and make changes by the new threats to documents as a result of the changing balance of power after the February Revolution. Archives, particularly those of the more ominous Tsarist organizations such as the gendarme, were frequently targeted for destruction by either their own creators, in attempts at self-preservation in a new political order, or disgruntled citizens, empowered by the new political order. Russian archival scholars, V. A. Starostin and T. I. Khorkhordina recount events just after the Tsar's abdication:

> On the very first days of March 1917, when the Provisional Government had only just managed to announce its existence, there were huge bonfires in Petrograd and Moscow burning almost simultaneously in the courtyards of the buildings of the organs of the secret police and gendarmerie that had been abolished by the new government. Crowds burned piles of documents that someone threw out of the window or carried out by the armful in improvised bags and sacks. Ten years later a witness to the Moscow arson recalled, "it was difficult to figure who there were more of in the crowd, curious onlookers or former guards, who sought, before it was too late, to conceal in the blaze of the fire the traces of their participation in the protection of autocracy."[10]

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[9] V. A. Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit'* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2000): 103.

[10] E. V. Starostin and T. I. Khorkhordina, *Arkhivy i Revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2007): 58.

With the upheaval after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II the long held goals of pre-revolutionary archivists to increase the care and preservation of archives assumed a more urgent status. On April 8, 1917 Petrograd archivists established the Union of Russian Archival Workers, which stated as its goals: to unify, organize, and streamline archival work in Russia.[11] The council of the Union read as a who's who of later reformers under Tsentrarkhiv, including the famous historian A. S. Lappo-Danilevskii, Prince N. V. Golitsin, Ia. L. Barskov, and V. G. Druzhinin, and S. F. Platonov, who later headed the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv.

The major tasks set forth in the Union's charter were to unite archival workers on general principles and methods of work, establish a proper organization of archival practice in Russia, and protect the professional interests of archival workers. They planned to publish on archival science, archival descriptions, leadership for organization and management of archives, and any other subjects consistent with the objectives of the Union.[12] The Union also emphasized forming a central archival system with an all-government scale to be led by a "central organ for the administration of Russian archives."[13] Like their Bolsheviks successors, the Provisional Government expressed an interest in documenting their unique history as separate from that of the Tsarist regime. On June 22, 1917 the Ministry of the People's Enlightenment officially solicited the Union to prepare a draft resolution of the Provisional Government on the founding of a special organization "for the planning and systematic collection of materials of the

[11] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1644, ll. 1-2.

[12] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1644, l. 1.

[13] Starostin and Khorkhordina, 72-73.

Russian Revolution of 1917."[14] However, the short lived and fairly chaotic 1917 inter-revolutionary period did not allow for the implementation of this resolution or most of the reforms set forth by the Union of Russian Archival Workers. However, the Union did carry on its work beyond the October Revolution. With the reorganization of archives after the June 1 Decree, the Union was subordinated to the People's Commissariat of the Enlightenment and continued to perform its work on archival reforms until 1924.[15]

The establishment of Bolshevik power and Tsentrarkhiv did, however, significantly alter the Union's mission. The new party created archival administration completely usurped Union-led plans for reforming archival administration. Party leaders considered the administration of archives to have much political significance and reforms about its structure could not be entrusted to a pre-revolutionary organization. Instead, the members of the Union refocused their activities on scientific and technical work of archival science. At a 1919 meeting of the Union, they entertained suggestions for their new focus, settling on developing description and preservation standards for archival collections.[16] The Union's significance must not be underestimated; many of those who were active in the Union played considerable roles in developing foundational archival reforms under Tsentrarkhiv. Indeed, many of the tasks put forth in the original charter of the Union were later taken up by Tsentrarkhiv and Union work on reforms led to the adoption of many European and cultural policies of early archival reforms. Starostin and Khorkhordina argue that the basis for rationalization, particularly, the call for

[14] Ibid., 71.

[15] GARF f. R7789, op. 1, d. 1, l. 127.

[16] GARF f. R7789, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 30-32.

professional standards, which would define the archive reforms of the 1920s, emerged in the Union.[17] The Union's call for an all-government central archival system would be realized with the foundation of Tsentrarkhiv in 1917, and the Union's early work on developing an institution to collect and document the February Revolution would be echoed in the 1920 foundation of Istpart to collect and document the October Revolution.

The Bolsheviks needed the education and experience of the bourgeois specialists, and the specialists in turn, needed the Bolsheviks' new emphasis on the transformation of the archival system to implement their long sought after reforms. However, even in the earliest days of Tsentrarkhiv, under Riazanov's more tolerant cultural policies, this proved at times to be an uneasy alliance. Bourgeois specialists often presented difficulties, their non-Marxist values conflicting with the long-term archival goals of the Bolshevik regime. In a February 6, 1919 meeting of Petrograd archivists, the head of the third Branch of the Political Section of EGAF, N. V. Golitsyn, stated that after reading a report in the newspaper of the death of Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich, who had been shot by the Bolsheviks, he felt he must draw the attention to "the enormous contribution of the former Grand Duke to archival matters in Russia," and gave specific evidence of his activities in the field of protection of ancient written monuments.[18]

Despite the ground-breaking nature of the June 1 decree and the push to initiate reforms, lack of financial resources and specific enabling legislation to support the general declarations of the decree, and continuity among personnel meant that little

[17] Starostin and Khorkhordina, 58.

[18] Golitsyn was arrested in 1923 and served three years Butyrka prison. O. N. Kopylova and T. I. Khorkhordina, "Spaseny Arkhivnye Dela, Fakticheski Spaseny ot Gibeli," *Otechestvennye Arkhivy* 4 (2010): 84.

changed in early archival practice; many pre-revolutionary technical methods of archival science were maintained, as well as the pre-revolutionary cadre of archival workers.[19] In general, during the first few years of the Bolshevik regime there was no real success at changing functional archival practices even as the role of archives in the state and society was being re-imagined. Nevertheless, the theoretical ideas explored and put to paper by the mixed group of new socialist archival leadership and old bourgeois specialists were influential, as Tsentrarkhiv implemented many of them in the coming decade.

After three years of rule, most of which was consumed by a brutal civil war, the Bolsheviks were in a position of maintaining, rather than overthrowing, power. In this capacity they were met with many of the same issues as their predecessors, including disgruntled, striking workers, dissatisfied peasants, and a struggling economy and industry. But unlike the Tsars, whose legitimacy came from God, the Bolsheviks lacked a clear claim to legitimacy. As Marxists they found this legitimacy in history, and archives were employed in attempts to display this legitimacy, through the collecting of proper archival evidence of the Bolshevik historical narrative, creating access to these significant sources of potential propaganda, and communicating this propaganda to the public. With the increasing political significance of archives, the party deemed the development of the field of archival science for the first two years under Tsentrarkhiv insufficient and on August 23, 1920 Riazanov was removed as its leader. The new head, Mikhail Nikolaevich Pokrovskii brought a political focus to archival science with a belief that Marxism was "the unification of theory and practice," where bourgeois society

[19] Ibid,, 31.

considered theory and practice two separate specialties.[20] Pokrovskii's beliefs allowed for less separation of ideological and practical work and required more careful observation of, and compliance from, bourgeois specialists. Under Pokrovskii Tsentrarkhiv strengthened party control of archival institutions, increasingly limited access to archives by researchers, and continually reevaluating archival cadres. Pokrovskii immediately purged pre-revolutionary specialists from the Board of Tsentrarkhiv replacing them with V. V. Adoratskii (a historian, political theorist, and party member since 1904) and V. V. Maksakov (a historian and party member since 1903). However, as a trained historian with an interest in serious historical scholarship, Pokrovskii still found value and a temporary necessity for the use of bourgeois specialists to carry out current archival work and to train new "red specialists."[21]

The increased interest of the party in history as a legitimizing force resulted in the development of another important Bolshevik archival institution, the Committee on the History of the October Revolution and Communist Party (Istpart) in August of 1920. This organization, which, unlike Tsentrarkhiv, was directly subordinated to the party, both collected archival materials and produced historical scholarship on the party and revolutionary movement. The development of a party institution of archives had a great impact on archival cadres, particularly for the remaining bourgeois specialists. Pokrovskii viewed the study of the history of the revolution as a serious and long-term process that required working with educated and trained bourgeois specialists.

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[20] Pokrovskii, *Politcheskoe Znachenie Arkhivov*, 5.

[21] Helena Sheehan, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: A Critical History* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1993): 154.

The head of Istpart, M. S. Ol'minskii did not value specialists, instead he surrounded himself with "old party cronies" and focused Istpart's work on collecting memoirs and quickly supplying party propagandists with material.[22] In Istpart sections, political qualifications of archival workers were emphasized over professional qualifications, as was speed over quality. Pokrovskii had suggested Istpart sections be placed within local state archives allowing them the benefits from already established archival institutions, but Ol'minskii chose separate provincial sections supported by volunteer efforts. In practice, however, in the provinces, where there were fewer resources for archives, Istpart sections and state archival bureaus were often housed in one institution with overlapping staff. Istpart prioritized party membership for their cadres and where the Istpart section was entwined with the state archival bureau, this requirement resulted in the removal of many bourgeois archivists. In Novgorod, for example, the local archive reported to have a "close relationship" with its local Istpart section from its inception, and by 1923 this relationship had become so close the head of the state archival bureau and the head of the Istpart section were the same person.[23]

The changing idea of archives in Soviet society also affected the employment of specialists in archival institutions. As the party looked to history and archives as a source of legitimacy and as a means to engage in foreign diplomatic relations, the political provenance of certain archival workers became more significant. The party also favored a policy of greater physical centralization of archival materials that was not welcomed by many of the local archival workers with pre-revolutionary cultural backgrounds. In

[22] Larry E. Holmes and William Burgess, "Voice or Political Echo?: Soviet Party History in the 1920s," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 9, nos. 2-3 (1982): 381.

[23] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 666, l. 4.

Novgorod, for example, Istpart workers struggled to collect relevant archival materials of the previous regimes from specialists who did not want to turn over these materials.[24] In 1923 an inspector of Tsentrarkhiv argued for the reduction of the number of specialists among Petrograd archival workers in key positions in the archives and for their replacement by party members. The inspector pointed out that the non-party specialists were engaged in political activities in Petrograd, working on the transfer of archives to Poland, Finland, helping the OGPU, and preparing materials for the Commissariats.[25] He continued that this important political work was being carried out "exclusively by professionals, without any control by the party comrades."[26] In 1924, Tsentrarkhiv carried out a *chistka* of its archival employees, vastly reducing the number of pre-revolutionary specialists in archival leadership positions.[27] Tsentrarkhiv leaders particularly target the director positions of archival institutions, allowing many specialists to remain within the administrative apparatus of Tsentrarkhiv as employees subordinated to new, appropriate archival directors. At the request of Tsentrarkhiv, the Central Committee distributed a circular to local party authorities instructing them to appoint party members to head the local archival bureaus to replace the purged specialists. Most complied, and by May of 1924, almost all the directors of provincial archival bureaus

[24] Frederick Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the October Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2004): 131.

[25] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 6, l. 135r.

[26] Ibid.

[27] A *chistka* was a "cleaning" or review of employees of the apparatus whereby workers deemed in violation of requirements were removed from their positions. Chistkas were used throughout the 1920s and 1930s as a means to purge the party and institutions of problem individuals.

were party members hired in 1923 or 1924.[28] As a result of the 1924 *chistka*, party status changed most dramatically in the two major cities, and by 1925 forty-one percent of workers in Moscow and thirty-eight percent of workers in Leningrad Tsentrarkhiv were party members. In the provinces party membership in local Tsentrarkhiv institutions remained a dreary eighteen percent, although directors of archival bureaus had achieved a seventy-five percent rate of party membership.[29]

Archivists in the Provinces

The political priority Moscow party leaders placed on archival work was not usually reflected in the attitudes of local authorities. Archival work in the provinces was not for weak. Archivists faced difficult working conditions, a lack of respect, and a reputation that afforded them the nickname "gravediggers." In theory, Russian archival practices had been transformed by the June 1 decree, but in practice Tsentrarkhiv and archivists had a long struggle ahead to establish effective authority over the state's documentary record, to develop a practical plan for enacting the theoretical and ideological changes of the decree, and to secure the resources necessary to carry out these plans. A lack of understanding and respect for the profession by the largely illiterate society and by party members with more pressing agendas meant archivists faced resistance from within and without of their institutions as they tried to carry out the reforms dictated to them. Legislation throughout the 1920s expanded the domain of Tsentrarkhiv to include much more than just the government documents designated in the

[28] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 61, l. 88.

[29] GARF f. R5325, op, 9, d. 370, l. 82.

1918 decree, and came to include ecclesiastical documents, artistic, and cultural records. This expansion brought Tsentrarkhiv in contact with other historical and cultural institutions, which Tsentrarkhiv leadership sometimes viewed as potential partners in their attempt to reform archives in a scarcity environment and allies in promoting the importance of archives to often indifferent local authorities. However, those workers with different professional provenances were often resistant to the ongoing evolution of the concept of the archive in Soviet society, which moved it further away from their own cultural interests. Disagreements by these professionals with Tsentrarkhiv policy usually led to either voluntary resignation from archival work or resistance and insubordination resulting in termination of employment by Tsentrarkhiv. As a result there was a consistently high turnover in the profession throughout the 1920s.

Archivists were overwhelmed by the task of protecting documents from the establishment of Tsentrarkhiv in 1918. Although the Marxist emphasis on historical determinism and scientific approach to history meant many Bolsheviks placed value in the preservation of pre-revolutionary materials, there was not complete agreement or understanding among revolutionaries that archives should be preserved, and the instinct among many of the rank and file soldiers was to destroy bourgeois libraries and archival collections when they came across them. The average proletarian worker or peasant, in whose name the Bolsheviks carried out the revolution, often did not have a sophisticated understanding of history and archives as historical evidence, an obstacle which challenged archivists throughout the 1920s.[30] Petrograd archivist A. E. Presniakov noted that the revolutionary spirit often proceeded "with no looking back, in a stormy rise,

[30] For more information on the challenges of bringing the historical narrative to the public, see Chapter Three of this study.

sweeping away, often without a trace" the institutions of the old regime. These institutions were "hated as the bearer of old ways, the opposition to the emergence of a new way of life," and their archival collections were a physical representation of this stagnation that needed to be destroyed.[31] The first revolutionary impulses of anger meant the masses "repeatedly turned on archives and office management of the especially hateful establishments of the police and judicial institutions."[32] These symbolic acts had real consequences for the nation's archival legacy and revealed the significant gap in the intellectual appreciation for archival documents between the leaders of the new Bolshevik regime, and the mostly illiterate, uneducated public. Even those with a better understanding of archives and history often chose to destroy collections as a calculated move to ensure permanence of the new regime as so many revolutionaries before, viewing destruction of records as "necessary for final liquidation of the old system of civil relations."[33]

Less dramatic politically, but no less consequentially, a great number of archives were lost in this period due to shortages, especially of paper. Selling documents to be pulped and recycled into paper was the most common reason for selling archival materials, but throughout the 1920s, archival papers were often sold and used in other ways as well. In fact, archival documents were reported to have been seen across the country in various uses: wrapping bread at local markets, fashioned into a paper bags to carry goods, and reused in local offices. Ignorance or indifference on the part of the

[31] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 480, l. 19.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

population that allowed for archival documents to be so carelessly sacrificed would greatly shape the development of the profession. Archivists were forced to educate and advocate on behalf of their institutions and profession, which to many represented a hateful vestige of the past, in order to carry out the most basic of archival practices or even prevent the destruction of their materials. Their constant inability to do so resulted in the loss of many valuable collections. In the Volga German ASSR, for example, head archivist Prints, complained "almost fifty percent of the archive of Istprof [Commission of the Study of the History of the Trade Union Movement] has ended up at the bazaar used to wrap fruits and berries."[34]

General resource shortages were endemic throughout the nation in the early 1920s and archivists were at a disadvantage when competing for these resources, as their position within governing bodies afforded them little authority. Although local archival bureaus took orders from the center, they received funding from local governments to carry out these orders.[35] Conditions varied widely from province to province, as local archival institutions were dependent on the sympathy and whims of local officials. This was particularly problematic where, because of their priorities, archivists were met with less than sympathetic or respectful local leaders who were not quick to supply archival bureaus with the resources they requested. Ongoing storage problems ranged from grossly inadequate space to an utter lack of space for archival storage. Archivists often complained of no electricity in the archives, no heat in the winter, and various other difficulties. In some cases, a Tsentarkhiv letter to VTsIK explained, local authorities

[34] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1850, l. 38.

[35] Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit',* 55.

seized storage space from archives to give to other organizations, and the "archival materials, often very valuable, were dumped in a basement or other unsuitable storage place where they suffered damage or theft."[36] In 1921, the Viatka State Archival Bureau lost one of the storage areas, assigned to it in 1919, to the Provincial Food Committee (Gubernskii Prodovol'stvennyii Komitet, Gubprodkom) to store potatoes. In the same year, the Ryazan Consistorial Archive was also forced to vacate its storage location for Gubprodkom, which needed the space to store salt.[37] In 1926 Tsentrarkhiv requested that VTsIK distribute a circular on strengthening the cadres and resources for provincial archives. In their request, they explained that local archives often could not fulfill their plans to concentrate materials related to the revolution because they did not have enough equipment and space to carry out these tasks. They argued that not all local authorities gave the proper attention and interest to archival matters. However, the circular did not have the extensive results that archival leaders had desired. In January 1927, an inspector to the Central Mezhevoi Archive (Land Survey Archive) reported that due to fuel shortage, the temperature of the repository of the archive was currently hovering around ten degrees below zero. As a result, archivists were only working three hours a day and labor productivity was at fifteen to twenty percent of normal performance.[38]

Finally, the shortage of resources in the archives was compounded by the shortages in society in general. The party sometimes mobilized qualified Tsentrarkhiv archival workers for other work. The result was distressing, and Tsentrarkhiv would

[36] GARF f. A259, op. 9b, d. 44, l. 4.

[37] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 686, l. 58.

[38] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1425, l. 5. As a result Tsentrarkhiv decided to close the Mezhevoi Archive for the winter and distribute its workers among other archival institutions. (GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1425, l. 4r)

appeal, often unsuccessfully, to the party to have workers returned. These reassignments sometimes reached high into the leadership of Tsentrarkhiv. In 1926 the Khamovniki district committee mobilized comrades A. P. Iodka, the academic secretary of the Board of Tsentrarkhiv, and D. G. Istniuk, the head of the Inspectors Section of Tsentrarkhiv, to the countryside for other party work. Tsentrarkhiv protested, explaining that removing two of their educated workers would be devastating to the institution.[39] But mobilization was not limited to educated party members; in the fall of 1930 archival workers in the provinces were mobilized for grain procurement and in the spring of 1931 for sowing. As a result of this mobilization several state archival bureaus had to operate on extremely limited manpower, with only two to three employees. This reduction in staff greatly disrupted the work of archival bureaus and thwarted the fulfillment of projected work plans, especially the uncovering of materials for the building of the socialist economy.[40]

At the 1925 First Congress of Archival Workers of the RSFSR, archivist Luk'ianov of Voronezh spoke of the terrible conditions facing archival workers:

> I will say a few words on an issue which no one has yet touched on at this congress, but which has great significance for us. This is a question of a professional nature—in what conditions we carry out our work. Our work takes place in the most unsanitary, unhygienic conditions. The majority of you, comrades, know well, of course, that we frequently work in dark, cold accommodations, damp, unheated barns, and often in basements. Archival files, which we use our hands to sort, carry, leaf through, are covered with a thick, timeworn dust. Although we have overalls, they don't protect us. The majority of archival workers, sooner or later, are victims of some kind of illness. We have our professional diseases: tuberculosis, eczema, frequently rheumatism. You all already know this.

[39] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 315, l. 3.

[40] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1899, l. 21.

> Meanwhile, with respect to our wages, they differ in no way from those carrying out clerical work.[41]

Once Luk'ianov broached the subject, archivists from around the country reaffirmed his position. I. V. Gorbatskaia, an archivist at the *Archive of the October Revolution* in Moscow, also commented on the various illness afflicting archivists and called tuberculosis "our most basic professional illness."[42] She cited statistics from medical exams given to ninety-nine Tsentrarkhiv workers in which the doctor reported that sixty to seventy percent suffered from illnesses, among them tuberculosis, anemia, and rheumatism.[43]

These poor conditions contributed to a negative association with archival work and a lack of prestige of the profession. Archival work was often derided as boring and not at all the glorious endeavor championed by the intellectual party members of the center. In fact, Tsentrarkhiv struggled to get local party administrations to appoint not only qualified, but healthy, party members to local archival positions. In a 1926 letter to the Central Committee, Pokrovskii complained that although there was a positive response to a 1923 Central Committee circular, "On increasing party membership at Gubarkhbureus [Provincial Archival Bureaus]," there was some misunderstanding on the part of the provincial party committees who sent to the archives party members "from among those who require a relaxed atmosphere."[44] Although the percentage of local archival leaders who were party members had reached seventy-five percent, half of them

[41] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 846, l. 13. Luk'ianov's proposed solution to this problem was increasing vacation for archival workers from two weeks to a month and increasing pay.

[42] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 846, l. 26.

[43] Ibid.

[44] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 172, l. 431.

were physically sick.[45] Considering the increasingly political role of Tsentrarkhiv, Pokrovskii asked if the Central Committee would again distribute a circular to local party organizations instructing them to give more attention to local party work and to allocate appropriate party members for this work.[46]

The illnesses associated with archival work extended to the party institution of archives, Istpart. In a 1928 evaluation of the directors of Istpart sections, of the fifty evaluated, several were reported as so sick as to disrupt or completely stop their work.[47] Despite their status as a party organization, Istpart sections also struggled to acquire resources from local authorities. In a February 7, 1925, circular to the secretaries of all party committees, A. A. Andreev, the secretary of the Central Committee, chastised local party organizations for their treatment of Istpart sections. Although Istpart sections were independent sections of the provincial committee since the August 10, 1923 Central Committee "Regulation on Istpart Sections," local party committees were still often treating Istpart sections like sub-sections of Agitprop and liquidating their work.[48] This was absolutely in violation of party tasks, which included gathering a history of local party organizations and participation in the October Revolution.

A lack of favorable allocation of resources had much to do with the prevailing negative perception of archive work. At the Second Congress of Archival Workers of the RSFSR in 1929, archivist Guraev from Taganrog spoke of how the notion of "archivists as 'gravediggers' still resided deep in the consciousness of our community." He

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 140, l. 6-8.

[48] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 187, l. 6.

continued that local Taganrog party officials jokingly referred to the State Archival Bureau as the "Funeral Home," even writing it on the outside of envelopes addressed to the bureau.[49] This hindered not only the attempt to recruit qualified cadres, but also attempts to gain support from local populations for archival projects. The head of the Yaroslavl State Archival Bureau, Petrovich, reported at the June 4, 1926 meeting of the Organization Section of Tsentrarkhiv, that his bureau continued to struggle with cadre issues. He claimed that they mostly received young Komsomol workers who had never worked before and therefore ended up at the archive because they could get no other work.[50] And even then, he complained, they did not receive enough of these inexperienced workers. This shortage had a direct effect on the archival work. Petrovich confirmed that as result of the worker shortage the Yaroslavl State Archive was only twenty-five percent processed.[51]

High turnover of staff was a constant problem for archival institutions. Not only were working conditions significantly difficult, pay was also extremely low for archival work. In 1925 the "Report on the Activities of Tsentrarkhiv from 1918-1925", it noted that the financial position of archival workers was directly related to their inability to keep specialists and attract new personnel. Acknowledging the reputation of archival work as "still unpopular," the report noted it was important to raise the remuneration of archival workers to at least "not worse than other workers of government agencies." Wages were so bad that many archivists were forced to work at both the archival

[49] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1850, l. 27a.

[50] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 58.

[51] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 59r.

institution and at another Soviet institution in order to make ends meet.[52] In a 1923 meeting of the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv, the Board acknowledged that wages of Petrograd archival workers barely reached one third of subsistence level and they were often paid weeks late.[53] The Petrograd Istpart section suffered similar financial problems and was unable to keep qualified personnel. A 1926 report on the Petrograd Istpart Section noted that almost all qualified employees had left the Petrograd Istpart Section, preferring to work in more physically comfortable positions at the Main Political-Education Committee (Glavnyi Politiko-Prosvetitel'nyi Komitet Respubliki, Glavpolitprosvet) or the Main Administration of Professional Education (Glavnoe Upravlenie Professional'nogo Obrazovaniia, Glavprofobr), organizations they felt were more likely to provide "a basic means of subsistence."[54] In a 1926 Tsentrarkhiv meeting, Inspector D. G. Istniuk noted that archives were having difficulty attracting the required party members to lead the *politsektsiias* because the pay for archival work was too low to attract ranking workers.[55]

As local authorities often created obstacles to the work of local archivists, Tsentrarkhiv leaders sought other partners for improving the status of their local institutions. In the early 1920s local historical organizations, kraevedenie societies, played a significant role in the development of many provincial archival bureaus. Kraevedenie, the study of local history, had a pre-revolutionary tradition in many parts of

[52] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 28r.

[53] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 477, l. 77.

[54] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1644, ll. 119-119r.

[55] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 68.

Russia.[56] These local history groups carried out many of the same activities that Tsentrarkhiv and Istpart employed in the post-revolutionary regime, such as collecting local historical documents and artifacts, establishing local history museums, and engaging in historical research for publications. Within Tsentrarkhiv bourgeois specialists were often the most vocal supporters of partnerships with kraevedenie organizations. In 1923 report to the Board of Tsentrarkhiv, V. I. Picheta, a pre-revolutionary historian and the head of the Research and Theoretical Division of Tsentrarkhiv, noted that kraevedenie organizations could have a positive effect for local archives in the face of resource problems, such as the lack of finances to implement archival reforms and uninterested, even hostile relations, between archival institutions and local powers. He remarked that the goals of kraevedenie organizations coordinated well with Tsentrarkhiv's interests, as kraevedenie groups were interested in the preservation of archives in order to conduct local history. Picheta reminded the Board that the centralization of archives carried out by local archival bureaus was done with the goal to create scientific laboratories for the study of the local regions. He noted that, "in the presence of a kraevedenie organization, whose immediate goal is the study of the local region, archives can actually become such laboratories."[57]

In the same year as Picheta's report, S. N. Chernov, a member of the Central Bureau of Kraevedenie, a professor at Saratov State University, and the founder of the Saratov State Archival Bureau, gave a report "Kraevedenie and Archival Science" to the

[56] Kraevedenie was the study of local history and dated back to the early 19th century with increased participation after the 1861 Great Reforms. Local historians collected and preserved local historical artifacts and documents, created museums, held public lectures, and published on local topics.

[57] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 517, l. 51.

Fourth Session of the Central Bureau of Kraevedenie, where he outlined the importance of local archival institutions to kraevedenie organizations. He first noted that the destruction of a great number of documents that began with the revolution continued in 1923 and that Tsentrarkhiv was financially unable to respond to this problem. Chernov claimed it was the task of kraevedenie organizations to dispel the negative sentiments the population and authorities held about archives. In the conclusion to his report he proposed a resolution, confirmed by the session, which included establishing relations between local kraevedenie societies and archival bureaus to form a plan to work together in archival work.[58] Tsentrarkhiv was receptive to this proposal, balking only at the points that would incur a financial cost for them (i.e. providing kraevedenie societies with printed instructional materials on archival work).[59] Efforts of aid to local archival bureaus by kraevedenie societies were commonplace in the mid 1920s. In 1926, the Director of the Yaroslavl State Archival Bureau reported that a local kraevedenie society had sent students to help with the processing of archival materials. The kraevedenie society even set aside one hundred rubles for the identification of research materials.[60]

The limitations of early archival development created an environment where the individual personality of the local archivist had a great impact on the development of a provincial state archival bureau. Unfortunately, the negative perception of archival work, the difficult working conditions, and a plethora of other pressing issues meant that archives rarely attracted the enthusiastic, active leaders needed by the struggling archival

[58] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 517, l. 44.

[59] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 517, l. 52.

[60] GARF f. 5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 59.

bureaus. However, when an archival bureau did obtain an energetic, active employee, Tsentrarkhiv's inability to implement effective oversight or strict direction from the center allowed an individual to have great influence on the development of the local archive. One such case was that of Bolshevik, V. D. Vegman who became Director of the Siberian State Archival Bureau on July 1, 1920. Vegman was a dynamic leader and attracted numerous groups of people to work at the archive, including pre-revolutionary specialists, former Red Army soldiers, and young communists. He recruited the pre-revolutionary historian archivist, N. N. Bakai, to work at the archival bureau. Where other provincial archival bureaus stagnated, Vegman and Bakai conducted courses on archival topics for the new archival workers and reached out to related cultural institutions to recruit individuals for archival work. In the summer of 1921, Vegman recruited history students from Tomsk University to aid in the efforts to collect and centralize archival documents. Bakai provided basic training to the students who were then dispatched to different parts of Siberia to collect archival collections on political exiles, documents of industry and mining, and private libraries.[61]

At the 1929 Second Congress of Archival Workers, Prints, the head archivist of the Volga German ASSR State Archival Bureau, after listening to his colleagues complain of the lack of authority they encountered and how this prevented them from completing their work, offered his own successful experience as a model for other archives. Prints admitted that archival workers were disparaged as gravediggers and that he lived among peasants who did not even understand the concept of archive. But this lack of interest did not deter the enthusiastic Prints, who set out to win over the local

[61] V. S. Poznanskii**, "**Arkhivnoe Stroitel'stvo v Sibiri v Pervoe Desiatiletie Sovetskoi Vlasti**"** *Sovetskie Arkhivy* 2 (1968): 32-33.

peasants through lectures and showing them original documents that related to their ancestors. And indeed, he managed to stir such excitement about archives in the local community that the bureau soon had almost seventy-five comrades helping the archive with its work with amazing results: "before 1927 we had a thirty percent concentration of historical documents, and now we have one hundred percent concentration."[62] Prints suggested that all provincial archival bureaus instigate greater contact with the masses to aid them in their archival work. Looking for help beyond the archival institution by motivated archivists was not uncommon, as they came into close contact with many different cultural institutions with the expansion of their sphere of documentary responsibility throughout the decade.

Most archivists who struggled with a lack of resources, storage space, and support from local governments, however, looked to the center for instruction, and frequently complained that they were not receiving this guidance. At the 1929 Second Congress of Archival Workers in Moscow, when the discussion was opened after Tsentrarkhiv Inspector Istniuk's report, "Archive Building in the Provinces in Relation to the Division of RSFSR into Districts," several provincial archivists voiced their concerns about the continued lack of direction from the center. Dvornikov, an archivist from Novosibirsk, after lodging the standard grievance about lack of adequate storage space for documents, continued to criticize the lack of guidance from the center:

> It still seems to me that there is insufficient, active guidance from the center for the provinces. During the entire existence of the archival institutions in Siberia only one person has visited us from the center, Comrade Andreev, who primarily gathered and concentrated military archival materials and only incidentally gave attention to general archival science matters. I believe that active management and instruction of the

[62] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1850, ll. 40-41.

> provinces, a dispatch of instructors to the provinces, would be of great benefit.[63]

Dvornikov commented that in the provinces they could do nothing to mitigate the lack of qualified archivists, as they did not have the necessary materials to conduct proper training. He continued, "and what instructional materials we do have are scattered throughout *Archival Science*, *Bulletin of Tsentrarkhiv*, or other publications."[64] Dvornikov touched on a subject that troubled local archival institutions: when provincial archivists sought to follow the rules set down by Tsentrarkhiv, or laws related to archives passed by VTsIK, the lack of organized communication from the center hindered their efforts. At a 1927 meeting of the Organization Section of Tsentrarkhiv, Petrovich, Director of Yaroslavl State Archival Bureau, defended his bureau's inability to fulfill Tsentrarkhiv's expectations by citing the lack of guidance from the center. He claimed Tsentrarkhiv was so out of touch with work in provincial bureaus that they created plans too ambitious for local resources, and furthermore, that communication from the center was delayed.[65] Tsentrarkhiv Board member V. V. Maksakov accused Petrovich of not working vigorously enough to transfer the materials of Decembrist Prince Shakhovskii to Moscow as instructed. Petrovich claimed, not only were there technical difficulties related to this work which they did not seem to understand at the center, but also that the initial request for the materials was vague and efforts for clarification by the Yaroslavl State Archival Bureau were met with slow response by Tsentrarkhiv.

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[63] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1850, l. 23.

[64] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1850, l. 24.

[65] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 61- 61r.

The leaders of Tsentrarkhiv had their own incentives to produce greater guidance over the local archival institutions, but these did not always correspond to the kind of guidance desired by local archivists. Archival institutions were significant conduits of historical agitational propaganda materials to the public. Party leaders had hoped that the development of local institutions would anchor the Bolshevik historical narrative within the different regions of the USSR. However, the lack of qualified, ideologically sound cadres coupled with a lack of resources resulted in local archival work that dissatisfied leaders at the center. Tsentrarkhiv, no stranger to resource limitations, responded the hazards of poor regional guidance with a triage approach. When Dvornikov of Novosibirsk State Archival Bureau complained that only one representative from Tsentrarkhiv had visited his bureau, he noted that this visitor, Comrade Andreev, carried out little in connection with general matters of archival science, but spent most of his time gathering military archival materials for concentration.[66] Rather than invest in policies that would ensure the protection and preservation of significant archival materials in the provinces, Tsentrarkhiv chose instead to use their resources to prioritize the short-term solution of removing politically significant documents from their originating archives and concentrating them in Moscow. Indeed, throughout the 1920s, as certain topics of documents became more important to the party and state, Tsentrarkhiv centralized collections in Moscow, rather than address the problems with long-term solutions at the local level, even as local archivists kept agitating for Moscow's input. Dvornikov's complaint of a lack of centralized information on the rules and legal regulations of archival matters, came two years after the 1927 resolution of the Second

[66] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1850, l. 23.

Conference of Archival Workers to establish reference libraries on archival work at all archival bureaus, revealing the center's unwillingness to provide these resources.[67] Tsentrarkhiv leaders preferred centralized attempts at educating workers. Indeed attempts at forming archival education courses in the provinces were often thwarted by Moscow archival leaders who focused instead on developing archival educational institutions at the center to serve the provinces.

Archival Education: Archivists as Historians

> *An archivist must be a historian to work with the documents, otherwise he is only fit to guard the archive.*[68]
>
> -Pokrovskii, 1924

The increasing size and scope of materials under Tsentrarkhiv's care created a parallel development in the need for qualified archival workers. Although party leaders had adopted a policy of tolerance toward bourgeois specialists with the founding of Tsentrarkhiv, the employment of these non-communists was only intended to be a temporary means to bridge the gap and prepare the "red specialists" who would replace their bourgeois mentors. Pokrovskii, who was both the head of Tsentrarkhiv and the leader of historical educational policies for the regime, stated, "one cannot be a Marxist without being a historian."[69] This attitude was reflected in the importance the party

[67] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1899, l. 8; and d. 1657, l. 88.

[68] Pokrovskii, *Politcheskoe Znachenie Arkhivov,* 9.

[69] Ibid., 7.

placed on archives and their instincts to preserve documents, as well as their emphasis on a historical education for archivists. Bolshevik archival leaders and party members spoke vividly of the virtues of, and necessity for, archivists with training in Marxist history. The historical emphasis was not unique; Western archivists also most often came from historical educational backgrounds. However, the Bolsheviks placed more emphasis on archivists as historical interpreters with vast responsibilities for collecting, publishing, exhibiting archival documents than their Western counterparts. Archival literature claimed a proper Marxist historical education was sufficient to prepare archivists to discern what documents to keep and what to destroy, as well as how to interpret and convey those documents deemed valuable to the public through publications, exhibits, and lectures. Still, the Bolsheviks were constantly faced obstacles in training archivists with this necessary Marxist worldview.

Pre-revolutionary archivists were most often trained at the St. Petersburg Archeological Institute, founded in 1877, and the Moscow Archeological Institute, founded in 1907.[70] Like Western European archival education, Tsarist era archival institutes emphasized historical scholarship. Archivists were considered historians with a specialty for working with documents. This specialization was fostered through a strong background in the history of state institutions and paleography. Pre-revolutionary educational programs included much coursework on Western archival science and education, as well as the history of the Russian Empire. The Bolsheviks inherited these institutions for training archivists, but disbanded the programs soon after the revolution, replacing them with short-term courses of three to six months, hosted at archival

[70] Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR*, 21.

institutions in Moscow and Petrograd. Although Tsentrarkhiv purged a significant number of pre-revolutionary archival workers from repositories in the mid 1920s, many bourgeois specialists remained in the administration of Tsentrarkhiv and assumed important roles in Soviet archival education. Frequent lecturers included the non-Marxist historians, A. S. Lappo-Danilevskii, S. F. Platonov, I. L. Maiakovskii, Iu. V. Got'e, and others. New socialist archivists still received an education greatly influenced by Western bourgeois archival science and early archival curricula remained unchanged by Bolshevik ideological influences, especially during the civil war period.

The hasty, on-site archival training initiated in 1918 stressed traditional archival topics with lectures on the history of Russian archives supplemented by lectures on the history of archives in France, Belgium, Italy, England, Germany, and Austria.[71] Bolshevik ideology certainly reinforced the traditional emphasis on history as part of the archival education, however, most early history courses for archivists were taught by pre-revolutionary historians, who lacked the training and appropriate ideology to provide the proper training in Marxist principles that the party stated was necessary. The Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv organized the first course at the Archaeological Institute in 1918-1919 and workers from central and provincial state archival institutions attended the classes.[72] Soon after, on November 18, 1918, the first six-month short-term course began in Moscow with ninety-three students in attendance. Courses were free with dormitory accommodations provided for those from outside Moscow. The backgrounds of the students varied widely from those with higher educations to those with unfinished middle

[71] GARF f. 5325, op. 9, d. 56, ll. 2-129.

[72] G. A. Dremina, "Iz Istorii Arkhivnogo Obrazovaniia v SSSR (1918-1930 gg.)" *Trudy MGIAI* 15 (1962): 159.

educations. The short-term course also drew a significant number of students with library backgrounds.[73] By 1919, Tsentrarkhiv had reworked the short-term courses to include two specialties: *kantseliarsko-arkhnyi* (clerical-archival), for those who were to work in offices of state institutions in Moscow, such as the People's Commissariats, and *istorico-arkhnyi* (historical-archival), for those who were to work with the pre-revolutionary archival collections. In the 1919 course, there were fifty-six students, of whom the majority had only finished grades four to six of middle education or were listed as having "selskoe obrazovanie" (village education).[74]

Although these courses had a respectable number of attendees, in comparison to the size of the archival staff, the attendance numbers fell far short of fulfilling the need of the growing state archival administration. From 1918 to 1919, Tsentrarkhiv grew from 502 to 902 employees, far outpacing the production of minimally qualified students from these short-term courses.[75] In 1924, V. V. Maksakov, a member of the Board of Tsentrarkhiv and Director of the *Archive of the Revolution*, reported on the expansion of archival cadres in the provinces, noting that in 1919, there were only fourteen provincial archival bureaus with a total of eighty-six employees, and by 1923 there were forty-five archival bureaus with a total of 348 employees.[76] Pokrovskii stated in 1924, that Moscow was "drowning in archival documents" and that they lacked qualified workers to process these papers.[77] Thus, Tsentrarkhiv leaders began to plan a more permanent, socialist

[73] V. V. Sorokin, *Arkhivy Uchrezhdennii SSSR (1917-1937 gg.)* (Moscow: MGIAI, 1982): 25.

[74] Ibid., 26.

[75] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1891, l. 3.

[76] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 686, l. 57.

[77] Pokrovskii, *Politcheskoe Znachenie Arkhivov,* 9.

archival educational institution.

The first years of experience in archival practice also encouraged the development of a more permanent educational institution that could centralize and disseminate standards of practice. The resulting inclusion of archival workers from different professional backgrounds, librarians, museums workers, historians, with the increasing scope of EGAF (Single State Archival Fond) also acted as a catalyst for the establishment of permanent practices in professional standards for archival work. The 1921 First Conference of Archival Workers of the RSFSR resolved that archival workers should be trained as historians and that the directors of archival bureaus should receive an archival education at a special institution with a three-year term of study.[78] By 1923, Tsentrarkhiv had further developed the plans for a new permanent state archival educational institution, reaffirming the three-year term of study suggested at the 1921 conference to be carried out at a proposed *Moscow Archival-Archaeographic Institute*. The first year was to focus on history and language courses, with each subsequent year focusing on the more practical aspects of archival work, including an in-house practicum at an archival institution.[79] In 1923 archival leaders acknowledged that the quickly expanding documentary record, and the very real shortcomings of an undereducated population, meant that accommodations needed to be made for less educated incoming students. In order to attract as many candidates as possible, the proposed institute was to be opened to a wide student population, accepting people with middle, and not only higher

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[78] Dremina, "Iz Istorii Arkhivnogo Obrazovaniia v SSSR," 160.

[79] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 312, l. 12.

educations.[80] However, Tsentrarkhiv was unsuccessful in securing funds for a permanent institution in the 1920s and short-term courses remained the method of archival education throughout the decade. The short-term archival education retained its focus on historical education after the end of the civil war, but Tsentrarkhiv added now courses which reflected the vast expansion of archivists' duties in the development of the Bolshevik historical narrative. Traditional archival courses taught by pre-revolutionary specialists were supplemented by classes on the Constitution of the RSFSR and USSR and the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

Short-term courses were plagued with problems from the start. Tsentrarkhiv advertised widely to attract potential students through notices in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, and printed flyers. People were eager to enroll in the short-term courses, but Tsentrarkhiv could never accept as many as wanted to attend. However, these short-term courses consistently dropped to low enrollments as the classes progressed and were sometimes cancelled mid-course. The courses also constantly struggled to secure suitable class space, as they were usually held at archival and not educational institutions. One of the lecturers of the first short-term courses of 1918-1919 recalled classrooms with thick frost inside, and classes cancelled due to lack of electricity revived only when teachers brought church candles to teach by.[81] A report on the 1924-1925 Moscow Tsentrarkhiv course noted that the students were not given a properly equipped room for the class; instead they were crowded in rooms, suffered from a lack of air, and were inconvenienced by "seats that did not have backs and music stands for recording lectures,

[80] Ibid.

[81] S. I. Muraschov and V. I. Vialikov, "40 let Moskovskomu Gosudarstvennomu Istoriko-Arkhivnomu Institutu" *Sovetskie Arkhivy* 5 (1970): 20.

by the constant noise in the next room, and even by outside persons walking through the audience of the courses."[82] In one case, a teacher and his students resorted to conducting class on the entrance stairs to the Club of Tsentrarkhiv.[83] In 1925, after almost the entire course at Moscow Tsentrarkhiv was completed it was cancelled due to "carelessness" and lack of space before final exams could be held.[84] Course enrollments dropped as the dispatching archival institutions recalled students to work. Archival institutions faced a catch-twenty-two—they possessed uneducated, untrained cadres, which greatly limited productivity, but institutions were so overwhelmed with work they could not afford to release their employees for training courses in Moscow to improve this productivity. In an effort to circumvent this problem, Tsentrarkhiv began offering night classes, allowing students at local institutions to continue their archival work while they received better training. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of these courses was limited by the fact that students were usually found to be too "overburdened by evening classes, exhausted after a day of labor," to get any real results from the class.[85]

By the mid-1920s the dependence on bourgeois specialists for archival education became a significant problem as Tsentrarkhiv struggled to find appropriate lecturers for the courses crucial to their new socialist form of archival education, such as history of revolutionary movements, or the constitution of the USSR.[86] Further, the bourgeois specialists, who were previously accustomed to teaching privileged and educated

[82] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 25.

[83] Ibid.

[84] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 614, l. 13.

[85] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 25.

[86] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 25r.

students, did not adjust well to the new student body. Iu. V. Got'e, a specialist who lectured on the history of Russian archives for the Moscow short-term course, echoed the sentiment in a diary entry in 1919: "Yesterday I lectured at the archive institute. In front me sat a proletarian girl in a kerchief. What can she get out my lectures?"[87] The lack of previous education of many of the students, who were now being culled from working class and peasant backgrounds, meant they often found the coursework too "abstract and difficult to grasp."[88] The "Report on the Activities of Tsentrarkhiv from 1918-1925" noted that students of "lower educational qualifications barely understood and had little interest in that which those students with the highest qualifications readily listened."[89] However, the problems presented by the lack of education extended beyond the courses taught by bourgeois specialists; the emphasis on Marxism in new, more politically appropriate coursework also had to be deemphasized to accommodate a more practical approach to archival training. Many students simply were not prepared to understand the abstract concepts of many of the Marxist theoretical courses.[90]

Istpart also struggled with educating their workforce. Their insistence on party membership resulted in even lower levels of qualifications among cadres. In a 1928 report on personnel of local Istpart sections, it was still of note when a local Istpart director was considered literate.[91] Of those who did have some form of middle or higher

[87] Iu. V. Got'e, *Time of Troubles: The Diary of Iurii Vladimirovich Got'e*, trans. and ed. Terence Emmons (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988): 320.

[88] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 25r.

[89] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 25.

[90] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 14, l. 23r.

[91] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 140, ll. 6-8.

education, there was rarely a worker with archival experience. Istpart sent their archival workers to Tsentrarkhiv's short-term courses, but they also sent representatives from Central Istpart to local areas to conduct short-term training in on site courses.[92]

At the 1927 Second Conference of Archival Workers of the RSFSR, archivists sought alternative educational sources as short-term courses continued to have difficulties and were not meeting the widespread needs of the growing archival system. The conference resolved to expand short-term courses by arranging additional courses at universities. To combat the issues created by the inability of archives to release their workers for months a time, such as early cancellation of courses when enrollments dropped, they proposed the development of *kruzhoks* (circles) at local archival institutions for group study, and the creation of a reference library on archival matter at every archival bureau, to be stocked with publications from Tsentrarkhiv.[93] Following the conference, Tsentrarkhiv shifted its activities to prioritize educating provincial archival workers, holding more vacancies in short-term courses for students from local bureaus over central institutions, and establishing correspondence courses through Moscow State University (Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, MGU).[94]

In 1928, Tsentrarkhiv also established a one time short-term course with the intention of improving the qualifications of archival leadership. The course attracted forty students, including the directors and deputy directors of local archival bureaus, heads of *politsektsiias*, inspectors, and representatives from the central archival

[92] Corney, *Telling October*, 131.

[93] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1899, l. 8; and d. 1657, l. 88.

[94] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1899, l. 8.

administrations of several of the republics.[95] This leadership course covered some of the regular archival courses, such as Russian and revolutionary history, but also included classes on how to establish reference libraries at their institutions to fulfill the resolution of the Second Conference of Archival Workers.[96] Tsentrarkhiv followed with a more permanent educational plan for leadership based at MGU. In April 1927 Tsentrarkhiv proposed the organization of a two-year archival cycle at the Historical-Archeological Institute of MGU, but was initially denied by Glavprofobra, which claimed Tsentrarkhiv's course plan was not organized enough to open for the 1927-1928 academic year. Tsentrarkhiv redrafted their course plan and resubmitted it in May of 1928. Glavprofobra approved this plan, but told Tsentrarkhiv they were not allowed to admit students to the cycle until September, when acceptance to the university was already closed for the year.[97] Students, who had been admitted the year before were able to enroll in the second year of archival coursework and twenty-one students from the Historical-Archeological Institute did so. The class of the 1930 cycle at MGU included a number of students from archival institutions of the republics and representatives from local party and professional organziations. Tsentrarkhiv gave preference to party and komsomol members and students with a working class background in applications. Unlike those who attended short-term courses, cycle students who were nominated by their local institutions and had to sit for entrance exams to qualify for the cycle.[98]

[95] Dremina, "Iz Istorii Arkhivnogo Obrazovaniia v SSSR," 163-64.

[96] Ibid., 164.

[97] Ibid., 166.

[98] Ibid., 168.

The start of the 1930s marked a turning point for archival education in the USSR. In connection with the general policy of the party on the preparation of new cadres of highly qualified professionals, the Central Committee decreed the opening of an institute of archival science at Tsentrarkhiv USSR on September 3, 1930. The *Archival Institute* (renamed the *Moscow State Historical-Archival Institute, MGIAI,* in 1932) opened in Moscow in April of 1931. The terms of study reflected ongoing problems with attracting educated students. Coursework was set at two years, but there was also an optional year of preparatory work for those students not yet qualified for higher education, mimicking the Rabfaks[99] of the 1920s.[100] In 1930, Tsentrarkhiv widely distributed advertisements to attract students to their new *Archival Institute* to newspapers throughout the Soviet Union. The advertisement explained the basic concept of the institute as a two-year program for training leaders and scientific workers of archival institutions of the USSR and described the terms of admittance. They accepted party and Komsomol members first, and also gave preference to those with working class and communal farm backgrounds and children of those with long histories of social work. The application process required a reference of political work, photographs, a certificate of health, and a completed questionnaire, which could be picked up at local archival institutions.[101] Tsentrarkhiv continued to periodically call short-term courses even after the establishment of the *Archival Institute*, but these courses were more specialized with the goal of further raising the qualification of workers.

[99] Rabfaks (Rabochii Fakul'tet) were workers' universities. They were founded in 1920 to respond to the problem of the lack of education among working and peasant class populations. Rabfaks prepared less educated workers and peasants to attend higher educations institutions.

[100] Dremina, "Iz Istorii Arkhivnogo Obrazovaniia v SSSR," 170.

[101] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 2163, l. 6.

Archival education of the first years of the 1920s was, in many ways unsuccessful. Coursework was often cancelled and they never turned out the number of educated archival workers needed by the Soviet archival system. In addition, even when courses were successfully completed the turnover rate for working archivists was high. Less than fifty percent remained employed in archives a year after completing coursework.[102] A report on the activities of Tsentrarkhiv from 1929-1930, noted that turnover for the 1928-1929 year reached fifty one percent, and then was surpassed by 1929-1930 year turnover rate, which reached fifty six percent.[103] The report attributed the high number of people leaving archival work to a number of issues, for personal desires, education, mobilization to the Red Army or various other campaigns of the party, but the overall poor working conditions for archivists was the major contributing factor. Nevertheless, the establishment of a permanent archival education institution marked a significant step in the development of the profession and was the structural culmination of Tsentrarkhiv's attempt to assert control over the profession of archivist. Indeed, MGIAI became the center of Soviet archival education and remains the flagship institute of current Russian archival education.

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Throughout the 1920s, the Bolsheviks increasingly looked to history and its evidence as their source of legitimacy. They desired an institution to concentrate,

[102] Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit',* 102.

[103] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1899, l. 8.

process, protect, and create access to vast archival collections, which they could use to create the historical narrative to support the regime. However, work as an archivist in the first fifteen years of Bolshevik power was fraught with difficulties, lack of resources and respect, and constant interaction with hostile forces, which hindered their attempts to create an institution with firm control over the nation's documentary records. Although the Soviet archival system was centralized with leadership coming from the center, the infrastructure of the archival system left provincial archival bureaus dependent on local authorities for distribution of resources—cadres, finances, space, and equipment. At the center, archival leaders also struggled with resource shortages that severely limited their ability to oversee, or even provide guidance for provincial archives. As a result the development of local archival organizations was highly dependent on the personalities of individual leaders. With the increasingly political significance of archives to the Bolshevik regime, the tolerance for such variation in cadres became less acceptable. As a result, Tsentrarkhiv leaders eliminated the remaining specialists and local historians who did not conform to the new archival expectations by the early 1930s, and worked to establish profession-wide standards to ensure a more uniform development of local archival institutions.

By the mid-1920s party leaders in Moscow had grown wary of the unrestrained narrative emerging from the archivists of local archival bureaus and Istpart sections and began to establish more control over their work. In particular, the local historians of kraevedenie societies, now employed by state archival bureaus, frequently did not have the same historical goals as those pursued by Tsentrarkhiv and were rarely party members. Maksakov's 1927 report, "On improving the Quality of Administration of

Local Archival Bureaus" he noted that local historians were still not shifting their focus to the new historical demands of the regime. Under the archivist A. A. Bers, for example, an archeologist by training, the Ural State Archival Bureau lost significant numbers of important documents on local industry:

> Of course, local historian Bers, trained as an archeologist, could not possibly sense the importance of archival material of the mining—metallurgical archives of the Urals, if not for historical value, then for its practical value for the development of Soviet industry.[104]

Interestingly, Bers was not a pre-revolutionary specialist like so many of the other workers culled from kraevedenie organizations. He had graduated from the Moscow Institute of Archaeology only in 1922, after which he moved Yekaterinburg and joined the Ural Kraevedenie Bureau (under Narkompros).[105] Other kraevedenie members were removed from archival leadership positions for devoting all working hours to research (Orenburg), taking archival materials home (Astrakhan), selling archival documents without proper verification from Tsentrarkhiv (Kursk), and concealing documents of the White Guard marked for transfer to Tsentrarkhiv (Simferopol).[106] The feeling of disappointment was often mutual and Maksakov noted that many of the provincial non-party archival leaders who came from the kraevedenie organizations approached Tsentrarkhiv to ask for leave from their position so they could have the opportunity to focus more on their scientific research.[107]

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[104] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d.1641, l. 22r.

[105] "K 105-letiiu so Dnia Rozhdenia Aleksandra Andreevicha Bersa," *Institut Sistem Informatiki im. A. P. Ershova SO RAN*, accessed September 19, 2012, http://www.iis.nsk.su/news/events/20070130_alexander_baehrs

[106] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d.1641, l. 23-23r.

[107] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d.1641, l. 22r.

By the late 1920s the role of archives in Soviet society had shifted nearly entirely away from local interests and focused on the development of centralized Soviet plans—the development and support of a single historical narrative and the planning and construction of the Soviet industrial economy. With the declaration of the first five-year plan in 1928 industrial and economic planning became ever more centralized with decisions affecting local governments increasingly made in Moscow. Archivists' tasks were carried out in full support of this centralized planning. Earlier workers in state archives with cultural backgrounds, many kraevedenie leaders and other non-communist specialists, became ever more awkward in the Soviet archival system. Even when Tsentrarkhiv leaders deemed archivists with kraevedenie backgrounds proper historians their focus on cultural issues made them unworthy administrators for the new socialist archives with their changing mission to aid the state in practical economic and political matters. Maksakov noted:

> It is possible to list all the local archival institutions which were headed by honest, non-party workers, who were connected with scientific work, the work of museums and the work of local history societies and organizations, but who as administrators, did not warrant the trust of the administration; their inability to organize and helplessness in this area did not allow for the proper creation of archives.[108]

The new Soviet archival system required active, if not enthusiastic, leaders to aggressively seek out document collections, advocate on behalf of their institutions for funds, and create historical works and exhibitions which were accessible to an ever-widening, relatively uneducated audience. All of these tasks were at odds with many of the aging scholars who were interested mostly in continuing their research and academic work in local history. Kraevedenie leaders, who had previously worked in support of

[108] Ibid.

only their local community, were unhappy with increasing standardization of practices and instruction from the center, incensed by decisions to centralize parts of their collections in Moscow, and completely marginalized by the shift of archives to the service of the centralized five-year economic plan in 1928.

Most remaining kraevedenie leaders fell victim to the increasing suspicion of bourgeois specialists in the late 1920s. Although, most bourgeois specialists were purged from leadership positions by the mid-1920s, many remained within the administrative apparatus of Tsentrarkhiv until the late 1920s Soviet wide attack on specialists.[109] In the historical fields this was represented most clearly in the "Academic Case" brought against S. F. Platonov in 1929, which also targeted historians of the Academy of Sciences and eventually resulted in the arrest of 115 historians. Because of the close ties between the leaders of historical fields and archival science, many of those arrested and exiled as a result of the Academic Case were significant bourgeois specialists in the archival field, including Platonov who was a leading historian of Imperial Russian history in the pre-revolutionary period and the leader of the Petrograd section of Tsentrarkhiv from 1918 until 1923.[110] On January 12, 1930 Platonov was accused of taking part in a royalist conspiracy, arrested and exiled to Samara, where he died three years later. M. K. Liubavskii, who had been a member of the Board of Tsentrarkhiv under Riazanov, a representative to the Board under Pokrovskii, head of the Moscow Region Administration of Archival Science, and the head of the *Moscow Judicial Archive* from 1920-1929, was

[109] The start of the crackdown on specialists was signaled by the 1928 Shakhty Trial show trial of specialists who worked as engineers for the coalmines in Donbas, Ukraine. The engineers were accused of sabotage and collusion with foreign enemies. Fifty-three of the accused engineers were sentenced to death and another forty-four imprisoned.

[110] Savin, *Khranit' Nel'zia Unichtozhit',* 124.

arrested in August of 1930 and exiled to Ufa. E. B. Tarle, who had been one of the members of the Board of the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv and a frequent lecturer in archival courses, was arrested in early 1930, accused of plotting to overthrow the Soviet government, and exiled to Alma Ata in August of 1931. Iu. V. Got'e, was an archival educator and the Deputy Director of the *Rumiantsev Museum* until his arrest in 1930 and subsequent exile to Samara. V. I. Picheta, a historian, archival educator, and the head of the Research and Theoretical Division of Tsentrarkhiv, was arrested in 1930, and accused of great-power chauvinism, Belarusian bourgeois nationalism, and pro-Western orientation, and exiled to Viatka.[111]

The problems arising from the quick expansion of archival institutions in a period of great shortage and the need to replace ideologically suspect specialists inspired the development of professional standards much earlier in the Soviet Union than in the west. The correlation between a less experienced workforce and party membership was significant. After the purge of specialists from leadership positions in the mid-1920s, a 1926 report stated that forty-six percent of archival workers reported no experience in archival work and had only just begun their posts in an archive, with another sixteen percent with less than a year experience working archives.[112] The lack of an experienced workforce inspired Tsentrarkhiv leaders to development Soviet-wide archival standards. In 1925, at the First Congress of Archival Workers, Andreev revealed the results of the efforts to develop an official archival terminology. Defining terms not only helped Tsentrarkhiv to create more uniform practices among its far-flung workers, and ensured a shared vocabulary, but it also gave archivists a language to use when challenging their

[111] Byrnes, **"**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession," 305-306.
[112] Ibid.,102.

cultural rivals for archival documents and resources. Predictably, the term "archival document," garnered a very detailed description, as archivists were constantly at battle to exercise their authority over manuscripts and other materials that increasingly came under the jurisdiction of EGAF.[113] Official, standardized terminology also gave archivists tools to aid their cases before the local authorities on whom they depended for financial support. In particular, Tsentrarkhiv struggled with local authorities to provide appropriate leaders for archival bureaus, often receiving cast-off party members. By establishing standards, Tsentrarkhiv hoped to encourage the appointing of higher quality cadres needed to meet these standards.

The purge of archival workers deemed inappropriate for evolving socialist archival work in the late 1920s further catalyzed the development of professional standards. By 1929, provincial and republic level archival leaders were provided with detailed job descriptions and the required qualifications for each of the positions in an archive.[114] Nevertheless, local authorities still often appointed unqualified leaders who knew little about archival work to state archival bureaus. The new employment descriptions and requirements acted as a guide for uneducated archival leaders to staff their institutions. With the 1931 establishment of an institute for specialized archival education, MGIAI, Tsentrarkhiv was finally equipped with a central apparatus to begin methodically producing the workers who could meet the qualifications outlined in these job descriptions. Tsentrarkhiv had addressed the problems of 1920s archival development through a continual centralization of infrastructure culminating in 1931 with

[113] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 835, ll. 76-77.

[114] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 577, ll. 1-3.

one center of state archival management, Tsentrarkhiv, one center of party archival management, the Institute of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and one center of archival science education direction and research, MGIAI. The establishment of Tsentrarkhiv USSR, with the same directing Board as Tsentrarkhiv RSFSR, in 1929 gave Moscow archival leaders increased authority to enforce new professional standards throughout the other Soviet republics. Although the centralization of infrastructure did not immediately solve the many problems of the Soviet archival system, it was significant, as the institutions formed by 1931 became the basis of archival management for the rest of the Soviet period, with continued influence in present day Russia.

Chapter Three

The history of our party is a battle weapon.
-*Bor'ba* July 17, 1925[1]

We should not only feel, but must also know the revolution!
-N. V. Romanovskaia, 1927[2]

A 1925 article from the newspaper *Bor'ba* (Struggle) asserted, "the history of the party is not a subject for study by the idle amateur, the office worker, but a battle weapon, a necessary means by which to bind our ranks, to produce the 'iron discipline necessary for the victory of the proletariat.'"[3] As the Bolsheviks took power, they found themselves a ruling regime with a foundational ideological emphasis on history as scientific force, but without a documentary past or a precise and well-established historical narrative of their own. This dilemma resulted in the establishment of several institutions to collect and create materials from which to produce a proper historical narrative. History, under the new regime, served both ideological and practical purposes. The intersection of these purposes had lasting effects on the foundational myth that was formed in the 1920s, and the archival collections created to support it.

The Bolshevik Marxist philosophy viewed history through a prism of historical materialism imbuing the study of history with scientific and deterministic meaning. In 1894 Lenin described the approach of historical materialism as not an "arbitrary

[1] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 15.

[2] Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI) f. 70, op. 1, d. 36, ll. 5-6.

[3] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 15.

conception," but composed as other sciences, with its own methods and principles, and the same necessity to meet standards of rigor.[4] The Bolsheviks believed that history's evidence, including archival documents, when studied with the appropriate methodology could produce truth and guidance for the future. This belief in the scientific nature of history and its scholarship influenced not only the decision to preserve pre-existing archival collections, but also the impetus to create "artificial," thematic archival collections in support of the process of history which led to Bolshevik victory.[5] Once freed by the revolution to begin openly publishing historical narratives that contradicted those of their enemies, the Bolsheviks sought to bring the same rigorous study of sources to the history of their own movement.

The impetus for the development of the Bolshevik narrative of history had a basis in Marxist ideology, but was also a means to shape public opinion and solidify state power. The Bolsheviks constantly had to demonstrate the legitimacy of their claim to power, a legitimacy they rooted in a Marxist narrative of history. Their efforts to centralize, organize, and even create archival collections were attempts to document the Bolshevik version of the past, as well as opportunities to counter problematic aspects of the historical narrative. Most notably, this endeavor to document a proper narrative was reflected in the emphasis on the creation of collections which established the success and durability of the *smychka* (alliance between the workers and the peasants), but was also seen in the emphasis on participation of groups outside the center in the revolutionary

[4] Louis Althusser, "On Marxism," in *The Spectre of Hegel: Early Writings*, ed. François Matheron, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 1997): 142.

[5] An artificial collection is defined as "collection of materials with different provenance assembled and organized to facilitate its management or use." -*Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, Society of American Archivists.

movement and defining the enemy in documentary collections.[6] Traditional archival principles, such as *respect des fonds* and *original order*, were discarded when political or ideological desires presented a need to craft a collection.[7] Frequently shaping a collection involved the physical rearranging of existing archival sources, such as the establishment of the *Archive of the October Revolution*, which archival leaders created by concentrating items related to the revolution assembled from other archival institutions in one repository. Sometimes establishing archives also involved the creation of archival materials. When the largely illiterate, uneducated base of Bolshevik support did not readily yield archival materials, the Bolsheviks established institutions like the Commission for the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party (Komissiia po Istorii Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii i RKP(b), Istpart), which facilitated the creation of archival materials through the writing or recording of revolutionary participants' memoirs. Additionally, the 1920s historical narrative of Russian revolutionary history referenced figures, events, and symbols of the Russian and revolutionary past in order to reinforce the direct line of connection between these events and the present Bolshevik victory.

The development of archival collections in the early Soviet period was closely tied with new historical scholarship. After the revolution, the Bolsheviks established

[6] As communists, the Bolsheviks were confronted by the problem of fomenting a proletarian revolution in a country that had not yet undergone extensive industrialization, and therefore lacked a sizable working class base to claim as supporters. Lenin and his supporters expanded Marxism to include the possibility of a communist dictatorship of the proletarian *and* peasantry in Russia before it had undergone industrialization. "*Smychka*" (alliance or union) was the term the Bolsheviks used to refer to this alliance between the proletariat and peasantry. As this fundamental alliance was often tenuous, the political significance of promoting this *smychka* was significant to the legitimacy of the Bolsheviks' power.

[7] Original order is defined as "The organization and sequence of records established by the creator of the records." -*Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, Society of American Archivists.

numerous institutions for the study of history. Many of the members of these institutions also held leading positions in the archival institutions of the 1920s. In the 1920s, Historical scholarship and the Soviet archival system had a symbiotic relationship, each dependent on and influencing the other's development. The development of the 1920s revolutionary narrative was also influenced by contemporary political and social events and availability of resources, both archival and financial. Historical scholarship came to define certain individuals and groups as enemies or allies, often excluded those who did not fit the teleological tale that led to Bolshevik victory. However, creating Bolshevik history in the 1920s was also in many ways inclusive, writing peoples far and wide into the narrative, and depending greatly on non-communist experts. As politics changed, so did the leader's approach to history and archive collecting. When the regime moved away from expectation of imminent world revolution to "socialism in one country," a corresponding shift occurred in their approach to both collecting archives and the historical narrative.

A New Historical Narrative

A 1920 Istpart brochure, *To All Party Members*, encouraging the protection of historical documents, offers some interesting insight into the logic behind the Bolshevik view of the importance of well-developed historical scholarship on the revolution.[8] Using the French Revolution as an example, the brochure explained the power that stemmed from the control of the production and dissemination of a historical narrative. It

[8] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 51-58.

stated that the bourgeoisie picked and chose among documents to maintain the way they wanted the history of the French Revolution to be remembered over the last century in order to support their class interests. The bourgeoisie glorified the Bastille, but did not speak of June 2, 1793 when the Jacobins, the representatives of the French poor, overwhelmed the Girondists. Making clear the contemporary significance of such a treatment of history, the pamphlet referred to Georges Danton as the "French Kerensky," and to whom the French built memorials and named streets after, instead of remembering the "leaders of the true French democracy—Robespierre and Marat."[9] The bourgeoisie celebrated these particular events and figures of history, making "the past serve the present," in order to promote their own class interests.[10] By producing their own historical scholarship Bolsheviks tried to ensure that the October Revolution did not fall similar victim to bourgeois falsification, especially when several of their enemies had already started to publish on their revolutionary movement.[11] Without a scholarly historical response from the Bolsheviks, the pamphlet warned of a dire outcome: "Can it be possible to allow future communists to study the Russian revolution in the writings of its enemies?"[12]

The Bolsheviks, however, claimed their plan was not to "distort the past," as the bourgeoisie had: "the proletariat does not need to hide the truth."[13] The Bolsheviks had

[9] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 52.

[10] Ibid.

[11] The pamphlet references the publications of several volumes on the revolution by P. N. Miliukov, the founder of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) and N. N. Sukhanov's "thick book," *Notes on the Revolution,* a memoir of his experiences of 1917. (RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 52r.)

[12] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 52r.

[13] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 52.

the tools for a truthful study of history through a Marxist materialist method of history. In 1908, Lenin wrote:

> From the standpoint of modern materialism, *i.e.,* Marxism, the *limits* of approximation of our knowledge to objective, absolute truth are historically conditional, but the existence of such truth is *unconditional,* and the fact that we are approaching nearer to it is also unconditional. The contours of the picture are historically conditional, but the fact that this picture depicts an objectively existing model is unconditional.[14]

With the success of the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks believed the historic conditions to approach the objective, unconditional truth were finally being achieved. The writing of a proper Marxist interpretation of their revolution would serve to aid future revolutions, the Russian Revolution acting as a "beacon for other revolutionaries," as the French Revolution had for bourgeois advocates of democracy. In pursuit of this truth, the Bolsheviks established their own "scientific factories," institutions such as those bourgeoisie used to produce their history of personalities.[15] With the establishment of a national archival administration on June 1, 1918, the Bolsheviks were able to assert authority over pre-revolutionary government papers, which gave them a platform of legitimacy to speak from when writing histories. However, years of exile and their conspiratorial secrecy severely hindered the accumulation of the Bolsheviks' own paperwork. The Director of Tsentrarkhiv and leading Bolshevik historian, M. N. Pokrovskii, described the party archives as having been "carried in the pockets of secretaries and destroyed tens of times over."[16] This lack of evidence of their own

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14 V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970): 136, (emphasis in original).

15 GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 224, l. 15.

16 Frederick C. Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event: The October Revolution as a Memory Project" *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 397.

movement, and thus existence, beyond the present day was troublesome, as it meant the Bolsheviks could easily be "disappeared" from history, and hence the present.

In many ways, the Bolsheviks were outsiders in the regime they ruled. They were communists, traditionally a party of the working class, in a nation without a large working class population. This proletarian base of support was also greatly reduced by fatalities of the civil war. As a result, the Bolsheviks were ruling a country whose largest group was the peasantry. The already tenuous and controversial connection between workers and peasants was exacerbated by the peasant response to the grain requisition policy of War Communism. Further, the Bolsheviks were not only seen as outsiders to many from the countryside, in a center-periphery, city-country dichotomy, but the years spent in exile by many of the Bolshevik leaders made them and their ideology even more exotic.

Creating a Historical Methodology

The intellectual leaders of the Bolshevik Party valued history as part of their ideology. However, as a small, conspiratorial organization for so many years, they did not have a developed Bolshevik historical methodology or schools for historical education. At the time of the revolution there were fewer than ten Bolsheviks who were trained as historians.[17] In the first years after the revolution, leaders frequently complained that even party members were ignorant of revolutionary history and the Marxist understanding of history, or even a basic understanding of the revolutionary

[17] Robert F. Byrnes**, "**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession, 1917-1934" *Slavic Review* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 297.

movement. Although party members tended to be better educated than the general population, many still lacked higher educations and there was a high degree of illiteracy, especially in the provinces. Among the thousands of new members who joined the party upon Lenin's death in 1924, were many who, some party leaders complained, "had not lived through the revolutionary hardening, were not familiar with its history, and were not brought up in the party-historical traditions."[18] Literacy and advancing education was a major modernizing goal of the regime, but the need to educate its own party members, the new leaders of the society, was especially pressing. To combat this educational gap, historian George Enteen points out, the Bolsheviks established a system of historical education with a "network of scholarly institutions staffed by Marxist scholars which paralleled the traditional institutions staffed and led primarily by non-Marxist scholars."[19]

This pressing need to educate cadres in a timely manner had a great influence on the development of historical and archival organizations. This need also created a rift among Bolshevik historical scholars in regard to prioritizing the quick, less rigorous creation of historical educational materials over carrying out more time-consuming, serious historical scholarship on the revolutionary movement. This rift resulted in parallel, and sometimes competitive, communist institutions charged with document collecting and the development of historical scholarship. However, the most visible rivalry in 1920s historical scholarship was between Marxist and non-Marxist institutions. Enteen argues that by the early 1920s, the party had accepted that it was a socialist regime in an underdeveloped country and would therefore have to use "non-communist

[18] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 5, l. 45.

[19] George M. Enteen, "Marxists versus Non-Marxists: Soviet Historiography in the 1920s," *Slavic Review* 35, no.1 (March 1976): 91.

hands" to build communism, even in what Pokrovskii described as the most political of sciences—history.[20] The lack of Bolshevik scholars and the party's acquiescence in the face of practical needs meant that in the first half of the 1920s non-Marxist scholars formed a significant portion of the historical field. Like the pre-revolutionary archivists who were finally able to implement long awaited and planned reforms under the new Bolshevik archival administration, so did many of the bourgeois historians take advantage of the greater access to archival materials in this period, especially under Riazanov's lax "cultural" policies of archives from 1918 to 1920. Enteen argues that the early period of Bolshevik power was a "distinctively creative period" for the older generation of Russian scholars who were enjoying greater use of documents to recast the problem of serfdom.[21] Although part of an uneasy alliance, the non-Marxist pre-revolutionary historians were eager to "contribute to the long-term welfare of their native land," and seemed "willing to approve any arrangement that allowed them to continue their profession. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a more malleable group."[22] The diary of the well-known Moscow bourgeois historian, and longtime Rumiantsev Museum archivist, Iu. V. Got'e demonstrated that "neither he nor any of his Moscow colleagues or Petrograd acquaintances undertook actions of any kind against the regime, although all thought it a disaster."[23] Although the Bolsheviks emphasized the value of history to the regime, their early treatment revealed a distracted, if not blasé, attitude toward non-Marxist specialists, with historians, archivists, and librarians being so "invisible to party

[20] Ibid., 93.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Byrnes**, "**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession," 298.

[23] Ibid.

leaders that no policy affecting these inconspicuous people would have attracted much interest or attention."[24]

The Bolsheviks considered the pre-revolutionary specialists a resource to aid in establishing historical educational institutions that would train a new generation of "red specialists" with proper class backgrounds to replace their bourgeois mentors. The major centers for non-Marxist scholarship were the pre-revolutionary Academy of Sciences in Leningrad and the Institute of History at the Russian Association of Social Science Institutes (Rossiiskaia Assotsiatsiia Nauchno Issledovatel'skikh Institutov Obschestvennykh Nauk, RANION) founded in 1921 in Moscow. Marxist scholars oversaw both of these institutions, but the faculty enjoyed a certain level of autonomy in the work they carried out.[25] Many on the staff of the Institute of History were also leading participants in archival administration, including, A. E. Presniakov, E. V. Tarle, M. M. Bogoslovskii, M. K. Liubavskii, and V. I. Picheta.

The Bolsheviks began working on the development of their own Marxist historical institutions soon after the revolution. In June 1918, the same month as the decree on reorganization of archives, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet, VtsIK) established the Socialist Academy of Social Sciences (renamed the Communist Academy in 1924), which included departments in social sciences, history, and theory and practice of socialism. The Bolsheviks viewed a well-developed and widely disseminated historical scholarship as an integral part of the new socialist society. History was not merely something for

[24] Ibid.

[25] Enteen, "Marxists versus Non-Marxists," 94.

academics to study and share within their elite circles, but something that should involve the public, or at least be brought to the public. This view of history and society was contrasted by historical scholarship of the pre-revolutionary era, which was isolated with historians rarely engaging in public service.[26] At a meeting of the Fourth All-Union Conference of Leaders of Istpart sections in 1927, P. O. Gorin, the Deputy Director of the Institute of History at the Communist Academy, touted the advantage Marxists had over the pre-revolutionary bourgeois specialists[27] because of their scientific approach to history, claiming that bourgeois professors would say it was doubtful that history was scientific. Gorin argued,

> I think it is possible for us to write scientifically, and we do. We have Marxist methodologies, use Marxist-scientific methods, and are subjective with our Bolshevik point of view. [28]

According to Gorin, their scientific view added a level of authority to the process of writing history. There was a "correct" way to write a historical narrative and it could be achieved by careful observation of the rules of Marxism. Imbuing history with the quality of "science" gave it a certain power, what had occurred before spoke to the fate of the present. The creation of Istpart, an institution with the goal of historical scholarship and document collecting, reflected these views and highlighted a rift within the party for how to best carry out this new type of historical scholarship.

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[26] Byrnes, **"**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession," 298.

[27] "Bourgeois specialists" was the term used by Bolsheviks to refer to non-communist professionals of pre-revolutionary society employed in new socialists enterprises where the party lacked suitable educated and qualified cadres. These specialists were employed most extensively in scientific and technological positions. This study uses this term as the Bolsheviks did, to refer to the archivists and historians of the pre-revolutionary period who continued their careers after the October Revolution.

[28] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 22-23.

The Bolsheviks envisioned two audiences for historical education: the party and the public. General histories were to be produced for the broad population, and primers and readers on the history of the party for party members.[29] The differentiation and production of material for these competing audiences was contentious, and scholarship and politics often clashed. Istpart was formed at the request of Lenin out of a compromise of the proposals of Pokrovskii, a trained historian, and Ol'minskii, a long time editor of Bolshevik newspapers. Originally appointed the deputy head of Istpart, Pokrovskii left over disagreements with Ol'minskii within two weeks of its founding. They clashed over the tasks of this history commission, Pokrovskii preferring long-term, in-depth scholarly research, and Ol'minskii choosing to quickly produce historical materials for immediate use. Pokrovskii, who headed the Communist Academy, and later founded the Society of Marxist Historians in 1925 with a goal to "guide all Marxist historiography in and out of the Communist Academy and to contain and modify non-Marxist scholarship," would have his own institutions with which to continue to carry out his brand of historical scholarship.[30]

By the late 1920s the stable, but uneasy alliance between Marxist and non-Marxist historians was beginning to crumble. The Bolsheviks had established their historical institutions and were less dependent on their bourgeois counterparts and the Bolsheviks soon began to attack the non-party dominated institutions and scholars. The non-communist approach to history was becoming less tolerable and increasingly dangerous as the Bolsheviks conception of historical narrative became narrower and

[29] Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the October Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004): 109.

[30] Enteen, "Marxists versus Non-Marxists," 91.

narrower. The 1928 *Congress on History* in Norway likely did much to seal the fate of bourgeois specialists. The Soviets brought a delegation of eleven to the Congress, including a contingent of non-Marxist scholars. The congress was generally a failure for the Soviet Marxist scholars. Not only was their eleven member delegation significantly smaller than those of other participants—the French had one hundred representatives, and the Polish had fifty—but the less educated Marxist scholars were unable to communicate well in German, the language of the conference. Enteen, notes that some of the papers by Soviet Marxists "attracted attention," but "Russians spoke German so badly that they could not even understand each other" and their meetings were usually adjourned without discussion.[31] The more educated non-Marxist Soviet scholars, however, were able to communicate freely with conference participants in German. Additionally, M. I. Rostovtsev, a historian of antiquity who had emigrated from Russia during the civil war and was at Oslo as part of the American delegation, publicly attacked Pokrovskii's scholarly credibility and claimed he destroyed higher education in Russia.[32] Upon return from the Congress, Pokrovskii began to attack Bourgeois elements in the historical profession incorporating "Stalin's assumption that conspiracy between imperialists abroad and bourgeois elements within—kulaks and members of the old intelligentsia—had become active against Soviet power."[33] As a result of the paranoia over conspiracies, the Bolsheviks allowed less and less room for alternate voices in the historical scholarship. The Bolsheviks began to silence non-Marxist scholars of history

[31] Ibid., 99-100.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 100.

at the start of the first five-year plan.[34] The peak of this silencing was the arrest of 115 historians in the "Academic Case" brought against S. F. Platonov in 1929 and 1930, as part of the larger crackdown on bourgeois specialists beginning most famously in 1928 with the *Shakhty* Trial.[35] Finally, the Bolsheviks liquidated the specialist stronghold, the RANION Institute of History, in 1930.

The academic debates on writing history greatly influenced how archivists at the ground level carried out the gathering, publishing, and exhibiting of documents, as well, lectures, and other public events as the leaders of Tsentrarkhiv adjusted archival policies with the changing political winds. As the "proper" historical narrative evolved, leaders passed instructions to lower level archival institutions to change the way archivists collected and used historical documents in support of this narrative. There was also much overlap between those who helped develop Soviet historical institutions and those who led Tsentrarkhiv, created its policies, and trained and educated its cadres. The historians most involved in the scholarly debates and historical education development also served as the professors and lecturers in archival courses throughout the 1920s. Most notably, Pokrovskii, the head of Tsentrarkhiv, was also the head of the Communist Academy, the Society of Marxist Historians, the Institute of Red Professors, and the Russian Association of Social Science Institutes. The overt shaping of archival institutions and collections throughout the 1920s reflected the leaders' decisions concerning the appropriate narrative of the revolution. The periodizations settled on by

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[34] George M. Enteen**, "**Writing Party History in the USSR: The Case of E. M. laroslavskii," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21, no. 2 (April 1986): 325.

[35] The start of the crackdown on specialists was signaled by the 1928 Shakhty Trial show trial of specialists who worked as engineers for the coal mines in Donbas, Ukraine. The engineers were accused of sabotage and collusion with foreign enemies. Fifty-three of the accused engineers were sentenced to death and another forty-four imprisoned.

historical scholars affected the way collections were brought together and organized. As historian Frederick Corney notes, the Marxist scientific, deterministic view of history resulted in narratives that, "all told a teleological tale of revolutionary inevitability."[36]

Collecting Documents

The archival system the Bolsheviks inherited was very decentralized. With the June 1, 1918 decree they planned to establish control over these scattered resources through centralization of administration, and, at times, physical resources. The first legislation on the administration of archives focused on state institutions asserting, "all archives of government institutions [were] abolished as department institutions, and files and documents preserved in theme henceforth [formed] the Single State Archival Fond."[37] At this time Bolsheviks believed that the documents would speak for themselves, that world revolution was imminent, and that revolutionary power would prove its own legitimacy. The initial focus of concentrating materials reveals an acquiescing to practical limitations of the first years of Bolshevik rule. During the first few years of Tsentrarkhiv's existence the party was most focused on the pressing issues of the civil war. As a result, treatment of archival collections reflected a need to effect control without major investment into transforming the archival institutions. The eight divisions of the *Single State Archival Fond* (*Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhivnyi Fond,* EGAF) established in 1918 fell by and large within the bounds outlined by previously

[36] Corney, *Telling October*, 116.

[37] Patricia Grimsted, "Lenin's Archival Decree of 1918: The Bolshevik Legacy for Soviet Archival Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 45, no. 4 (Fall 1982): 442.

established archival institutions: political (legislative administrative, foreign policy), juridical, military-naval, educational, historical economic, internal administrative, historical-revolutionary, and printed documentary.

As the intensity of the civil war lessened with victories in favor of the Bolsheviks, they faced new problems as evolving from the rebels to the rulers of Russia. By the end of the civil war much of the country was in ruins, the population had shrunk by millions due to war, disease, and emigration, and agriculture and industry were functioning below pre-revolutionary rates. The Bolsheviks found themselves leading a society in more trouble than the one that spurned the revolutionary fervor that brought them to power. Indeed, many of their early supporters had turned against the Bolsheviks, with peasants rioting and workers striking. The party responded through a hardening of political tactics, a softening of economic policy with the introduction of the New Economic Policy (*Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika,* NEP), and propaganda campaigns to establish their legitimacy through history. The party reorganized Tsentrarkhiv and established several institutions in the 1920s to create thematic archival collections and use them to produce historical works and public exhibits, which presented the proper historical narrative to the new Soviet population. Traditional Western archival practice, which formed the basis for many of Tsentrarkhiv's early reforms, placed importance on respecting the organic production of archival materials. Soviet archival practice embraced the policies of *respect des fonds* and *original order*, which instructed that records of different origins should not be mixed and be kept in the original order in which they were created, for the collections they inherited and for the production of institutional archival materials moving forward. Archival scholar, Luciana Duranti, notes that original order introduces

problems for documenting certain aspects of the population, as it leads archivists to "evaluate records on the basis of the importance of the creator's mandate and functions, and fosters the use of a hierarchical method, a 'top-down' approach, which has proved to be unsatisfactory because it excludes the 'powerless transactions,' which might throw light on the broader social context, from the permanent record of society."[38] In attempting to access the history of the Bolsheviks, a social movement, in archival collections, the top-down approach of *respect des fonds* produced limitations. In order for the Bolsheviks to create the collections which would reflect their historical past, they abandoned *original order* and *respect des fonds* and employed overt attempts to re-shape archival collections and to create collections which would "throw light" on the documentarily underrepresented parts of society, namely Bolsheviks and their supporters. As the first decade of Bolshevik rule progressed they provided explicit, though often fluctuating, instruction on how to shape these collections. Instructions included the historical periodization framing collections, the overt decisions about what was to be collected, and in the recording of memoirs, the detailed instructions of what was to be recorded when recounting one's experience in the revolutionary movement.

The establishment of a preferred historical narrative was reinforced in archival institutions. Tsentrarkhiv and Istpart instructions for collecting documents for Soviet archives had a significant impact on the historical record of the nation. The archivists who carried out archival leaders' decisions about collecting and reorganizing archives add another level of interference to the collecting process. Although archival bureaus were usually given the same instructions for collecting, the end result could vary widely

[38] Luciana Duranti, *Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science* (Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with Scarecrow Press, 1998): 177.

as each provincial archivist faced various sets of obstacles—lack of local cooperation by cultural institutions and individuals who housed archives targeted for concentration, and a lack of resources from local powers to carry out acquisitions—as well as their own social and cultural biases. Particularly in the first half of the 1920s, when political leaders promulgated most legislation on the composition of the EGAF, bourgeois specialists who made up a significant portion of the staff of local archives and often had competing allegiances to other local cultural institutions, resisted the concentration of archival materials in EGAF, whose scope had grown outside the bounds of a typical state archive to include documents of churches and monasteries and the personal papers of artists, authors, and noble families.

The collecting of sources related to the revolutionary movement began immediately after the October Revolution. Within just a few months of the June 1, 1918 decree establishing the new regime's control over the existing state documentary collections, the Bolsheviks began to address their own lack of archival heritage. The November 1, 1918 edition of the newspaper *Izvestiia* ran a front page advertisement which asked "all 'comrade participants of the October overthrow' to send articles, reminiscences, poems, and 'materials related to the October Revolution' for a special jubilee issue."[39] The documents of monasteries and churches, which had been landlords to a large number of Russian peasants, became increasingly important for the study of serfdom and peasantry, a social group of particularly interest to the Bolsheviks, and were targeted for inclusion in EGAF early on.[40] Tsentrarkhiv dispatched inspectors outside of

[39] Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event," 399.

[40] V. V. Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR: 1917-1945.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1969): 73.

Moscow and Petrograd to uncover and bring back these pertinent archival documents. In 1919, Tsentrarkhiv sent Inspector M. S. Vishnevskii to Suzdal where he found and brought back the archive of the Savior Monastery of St. Euthymius.[41] The threats to archival documents in the first few years of the existence of Tsentrarkhiv inspired further concentration of materials in Moscow. In 1920, when Tsentrarkhiv Inspector A. Fokin returned from a trip to the Gomel Province to evaluate and take measures to preserve private archival collections of historical significance, he claimed the danger to archives was great, many papers were lost to fires and other damage as a result of the civil war, and suggested the remaining archives of Gomel be sent to Moscow for their safety.[42] Many times, the collecting and protecting of documents required immense sacrifice on the part of archival workers as they carried out their tasks in adverse conditions. For example, as the civil war came to an end, Tsentrarkhiv again dispatched Vishnevskii to carry out collecting efforts, this time to the Don Region for materials on the civil war. As Tsentrarkhiv received no word from Vishnevskii for an extended time and he did not appear on his planned return date, they sent workers to the train station where he had been scheduled to return. Station attendants told the Tsentrarkhiv of representatives of a still sealed freight car on a side track. They opened the doors to the car and found Vishnevskii passed out in the heat on piles of bundled files, having fallen sick from typhus during the trip.[43]

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[41] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 123, l. 6.

[42] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 124, l. 26.

[43] O. N. Kopylova and T. I. Khorkhordina, "Spaseny Arkhivnye Dela, Fakticheski Spaseny ot Gibeli," *Otechestvennye Arkhivy* 4 (2010): 84.

The party's decision to replace Riazanov with Pokrovskii as the head of Tsentrarkhiv in 1920 resulted in further thematic collecting of documents. At a September 17, 1920 meeting of the Board of Tsentrarkhiv, Pokrovskii proposed the establishment of a *State Archive of the RSFSR* (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR, Gosarkhiv) as part of EGAF. Gosarkhiv was to store "important documents of the RSFSR, and also the most valuable historical records of previous regimes."[44] Gosarkhiv was also significant as it established a key structure of periodization of collections that remained past its administrative dissolution in 1925 and was echoed throughout the Soviet Union in provincial and republic level archives. The new archive was to have four sections drawing from the collections of EGAF. The first included documents related to foreign and domestic policy of Russia until the end of the eighteenth century. The second section housed state documents of Russia of the nineteenth and early twentieth century until March 1, 1917. The third repository of documents included the history of the revolutionary movement until March 1, 1917. And the fourth contained documents after March 1, 1917.[45]

In 1920, a directive by Lenin created the *Archive of the October Revolution* (AOR) to gather "all the records of revolutionary events and their aftermath."[46] In fulfillment of the establishment of AOR, Tsentrarkhiv distributed instructions to its local archives on collecting materials for this new thematic section. Archivists were told to approach their local executive committees in order to gather all "printed circulars, draft

[44] O. P. Kopylova, "Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR (1920-1925 gg.)," in *Istoriia Gosudarstvennogo Arkhiva Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Dokumenty, Stat'i, Vospominaniia,* ed. S. V. Mironenko, (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010): 69.

[45] Ibid., 69.

[46] Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR,* 39.

reports, posters, agitation materials, photographs, political brochures, flyers, and newspapers."[47] By 1920, AOR collections included the papers of the congresses of the Soviets, sessions of VTsIK, Council of People's Commissars (Sovet Narodnykh Kommissarov, Sovnarkom), Council of Labor and Defense (Sovet Truda i Oborony, STO), documents on the activities of Lenin in the civil war period, and documents on foreign interventions in the civil war. A February 3, 1925 regulation extended this archival designation to the provinces instructing that all state documents were to be organized into two archives, *Historical Archives* for materials pre-dating March 1917, and *Archives of the October Revolution* for materials created after March 1917.[48] These categories enforced a periodization on the archives, making it less and less possible to find a narrative of continuity between the Bolshevik and previous regimes in document sources. By making this significant distinction in the archival collections the Bolsheviks reinforced their revolution as a real break with the past and gave Bolsheviks a monopoly on creating continuity with past events. They used this advantage to solidify their power by creating connections and continuity between the current Bolshevik regime and certain, proper events from the past.

The Single State Archival Fond came to include a greater and greater variety of documents as party and state authorities passed legislation that specifically stated the inclusion of certain types of archival collections in EGAF, such as the papers of noble estates, palaces, churches, military sections, authors, scientists, and artists, or as they fell under Tsentrarkhiv's jurisdiction as a result of nationalization measures taken by the

[47] Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR,* 78.

[48] Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR, Moscow and Leningrad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972): 41.

Bolsheviks. For example, when the Bolsheviks nationalized private banks and brought them under People's Bank of the RSFSR, their corresponding record collections defaulted to the jurisdiction of Tsentrarkhiv. These collections included the working papers of the institutions, but also countless manuscript collections found stored in the former private banks' safes, including manuscripts of Chekhov, Dostoevsky, and other well-known authors.[49] As a result of the concentrating of materials, the size of the collections of archives increased rapidly. As of the June 1, 1918 decree Moscow archives held 10,000,000 files, by 1924 this number had doubled to 20,000,000 files.[50]

The Bolsheviks also looked beyond the history of their party, drawing lines of connection between past revolutionary events in Russian history and the Bolshevik revolutionary success. Rebellions, such as those of Pugachev and the Decembrists, were reevaluated from a Marxist point of view and portrayed in a way that showed them to be part of a grand revolutionary narrative leading directly to the events of 1917. As historians took up these narrative strains, Tsentrarkhiv began to centralize materials related to the Decembrists, for example, in anticipation of publicly celebrating the anniversary of the revolt. Tsentrarkhiv demanded that provincial archival bureaus send to Moscow all materials related to the Decembrists, which were scattered throughout the RSFSR as a result of the participant's time in exile.[51] Tsentrarkhiv carried out similar concentration and publication campaigns with Pugachev materials.

[49] Ibid., 70-71.

[50] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 370, l. 402.

[51] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 116, 170, 173 and op. 9, l. 975.

Some individuals were resistant to the creation of these artificial archives, particularly if they were on the losing side of archival transfers. In 1925, a prominent senior archivist in Leningrad, Shaffov, took it upon himself to burn old documents which Tsentrarkhiv claimed "discredited officials of the Romanov regime."[52] He also stole many documents from the archive, which were discovered during a search of his apartment. In 1927, the head of AOR noted that the well-known archivist of Simferopol provincial archive, Markevich, was let go for concealing materials on the White Guard which were to be transferred to Tsentrarkhiv in Moscow.[53] Lack of resources and authority hindered Tsentrarkhiv's campaigns to combat those resisting the transfer of documents. At times Tsentrarkhiv engaged the police when trying to secure documents. In 1920, at the orders of F. E. Dzerzhinskii, the Cheka acquired and transferred the papers of Kolchak's Siberian Government to Tsentrarkhiv.[54] As a "liquidated governing institution" the papers of counter-revolutionary movements were formally part of EGAF, however Tsentrarkhiv continued to struggle to acquire many of these collections.

Throughout the mid-1920s, party political leaders passed a series of decrees reinforcing the rights of Tsentrarkhiv to certain document collections, which were already officially within their jurisdiction. On August 2, 1923 a Sovnarkom decree reemphasized that all archives of active participators in counter-revolutionary movements and those that

[52] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 841, l. 1. Tsentrarkhiv leaders complained when Shaffov received only a one year suspended prison sentence for his crimes.

[53] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1641, l. 23r.

[54] Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR,* 80.

emigrated outside of the republics since 1917 were to be concentrated in EGAF.[55] The decree ordered that any institution or individual was to send all "official documents, draft papers, memoirs, diaries, personal notes, scientific work, manuscripts, proclamations, brochures, flies, notes, photographs, and so on" related to these movements in their possession to Tsentrarkhiv in Moscow.[56] On September 12, 1923 a VTsIK and Sovnarkom decree restated necessity for the concentration of the archives of the Romanov family at Tsentrarkhiv. In May of 1925, Tsentrarkhiv increased their efforts in the "liquidation of archival storage areas at museum, libraries, and other scientific institutions," an area where Tsentrarkhiv leaders had encountered much trouble.[57] These efforts were aided by a series of government decrees in the second half of the 1920s.

In 1929, Maksakov, the Deputy Director of Tsentrarkhiv and Director of AOR, reported on the complicated relationship with academic institutions over the years, citing the series of decrees issued in 1926-1927 in regard to the transferring of materials to Tsentrarkhiv.[58] For example, although the combination of the 1917 decree "On Land" and the June 1, 1918 archival decree established EGAF's claim to Monastery archives, in 1926 Sovnarkom saw fit to issue a decree reaffirming Tsentrarkhiv's jurisdiction over these documents. Maksakov stated that, "tremendous efforts were needed to overcome the traditional views of museums, libraries, as institutions for the gathering and

[55] The mid-1920s saw a spike in literature published on counter-revolutionary movements. In 1927, Tsentrarkhiv published a book series, *On the History of the October Revolution and Counter-Revolution.* (GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 369, ll. 63-66.)

[56] *Sbornik Rukovodiaschikh Materialov po Arkhivnomu Delu (1917-Iun' 1941 gg.)*. (Moscow: GAU MGIAI, 1961): 24.

[57] *Sbornik Rukovodiaschikh Materialov*, 114.

[58] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d.1848, l. 29.

preservation of archival materials."[59] He referenced the destruction of the *Donskoi Monastery Museum* archive to support his point. In 1924, Tsentrarkhiv sent an inspector to the Donskoi Monastery to take inventory of the archive in preparation for its transfer to Tsentrarkhiv, but the Main Museum Administration (Glavnoe Muzeinoe Upravlenie, Glavmuzei) delayed the transfer of materials claiming the archives were "necessary to the scientific work of the museum," and the documents remained there under the administration of Glavmuzei until the passing of the 1926 decree.[60] Three days after the publication of this decree, which ensured the transfer of the Donskoi materials to EGAF, the archive mysteriously caught fire and was destroyed. Upon investigation, Tsentrarkhiv Senior Inspector V. A. Dombrovskii concluded that the fire was likely arson set by someone who did not want the archive transferred to Tsentrarkhiv. He speculated that this arson was likely the result of fear that Tsentrarkhiv, which had compiled an inventory of the archive in 1924, would discover that a member of the staff had stolen documents from the archive. Dombrovskii further noted that the *Donskoi Monastery Museum* administration's defense that the fire was a prank carried out by hooligans from the local orphanage could not be valid, as on investigation he found the "orphanage" was in fact a sewing workshop for girls, who were all on furlough to the town from early in the morning to late at night on the day of the fire.[61]

The founding of Istpart in September 1920 created another competing institution for the collecting of documentary sources. The written documentation of the Bolshevik

[59] Ibid.

[60] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d.172, l. 198.

[61] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d.172, l. 198-99.

movement was only represented in their enemies' files, most notably those of the police and other security organizations. Access to these files enabled by the revolution was significant, as they would be used to lend legitimacy to the Bolshevik historic narrative, especially as it claimed to be grounded in a scientific foundation. But, the Bolsheviks had to contend with a dearth of their own materials. Istpart, along with several other similar commissions, the Commission for the Study of the History of the Russian Youth Movement (Kommissiia po Izucheniiu Istorii Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuza Molodezhi i Iunosheskogo Dvizheniia, Istmol), the Commission for the Study of the History of the Trade-Union Movement in Russia (Komissiia po Izucheniiu Istorii Professional'nogo Dvizheniia v Rossii i SSSR, Istprof), and the Society of Old Bolsheviks, were created to fix this omission and to document the social side of the revolutionary movement from the point of view of the oppressed and not just the oppressors. Under Istpart, attempts to create a documentary history of the revolution and of the Communist Party ranged from soliciting the creation of materials, memoirs and questionnaires, to the reorganization of existing collections to create an archive of a Bolshevik revolutionary history.

Periodization was also significant in the establishment of Istpart collections. An early plan for work on the history of the party in 1920 described the themes for the types of materials to be collected by Istpart. The periodization was simplistic, but significant, with two major sections. The first section was from March to October 1917: the party struggle for power, and the second, from October 1917: the party building a proletarian state, echoing the periodization established in the state repository, the *Archive of the*

Revolution.[62] The plan also described exactly what was to be considered archival material. Most materials were those that related to party conferences and meetings, and materials related to the working of party organizations—protocols, speeches, and circulars. In 1920 Istpart instructions on the collecting of documents to be transferred to the collection of the new Commission for the History of the Party stated that above all attention must be given to materials covering the activities of political parties, and public organs of power leading up to the October Revolution and after.[63] It also emphasized the need for documents depicting moments of struggle in the October days (orders, proclamations, reports of revolutionary committees, verdicts and other rural gatherings). Special attention was to be given to archives of the provincial zemstvo (local self-government institutions established in Imperial period) police institutions in order to recover documents that depicted the agrarian revolution of 1917-1918. The focus on institutional and governing files was not radical for this time period in traditional Western archival theory. However, the Bolsheviks expanded the traditional view of the archive to include a focus on everyday materials and documents related to the general population, including the experiences of the illiterate population. As the party of the worker and peasant, which claimed to have carried out a social revolution, everyday items were historically and politically significant to a comprehensive story of the Bolsheviks.

Early collecting goals of Istpart greatly emphasized the provinces and the role of the peasantry in the revolution. In the section on archival materials in the 1920 "Plan for work on the history of the party for the period of 1917-1920," Istpart sections were told

[62] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1 d. 45, l. 85.

[63] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 17, l. 21.

to emphasize the collection of materials on "the activities of the Bolsheviks among the peasantry."[64] This archival reinforcement of the *smychka* was aimed not only at the peasants themselves, but also to foreign Marxist intellectuals who rejected the possibility of a communist revolution in a mainly agrarian state. Further, the troubles encountered with peasantry due to grain requisitions during the civil war did much to harm their base of support in the countryside. The Bolsheviks, whose legitimacy depended on the historic and contemporary support of the peasantry, needed archival sources that could corroborate such support and feared the loss of any related resource. In the early 1920s, Istpart worker V. A. Kutuzov noted that:

> It is quite possible that in ten years we won't be able to paint a picture of provincial Russia in the bourgeois and conciliatory periods of the Russian Revolution. Another possibility is that soon we will have absolutely no data speaking to the process of our agrarian revolution.[65]

The collecting of documents to support the peasant role in the revolution was constantly reinforced throughout the tenure of Istpart.

The physical gathering of documents usually required a sacrifice on the part of the original owner. As Istpart actively collected the papers of well-known revolutionary leaders, many wanted some input on the terms of donation. At an October 1924 meeting of the Istpart commission on the withdrawal of archives from private persons and institutions related to the party archive, Ol'minskii stated that Kollontai gave her archives to Istpart, but with a section of it to be sealed and not opened for twenty-five years. He noted that this restriction was unfortunate and that such deals should not be made with

[64] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 85.

[65] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 121, l. 197.

other party members.[66] Other party members requested copies of their files upon donation, which Ol'minskii rejected because it would take too much time.[67]

The mostly illiterate population's inability to produce large quantities of written records hindered attempts to collect documents that reinforced the *smychka* of the worker and peasant or reflected everyday life. In response to this lack of written evidence, Istpart sought to create of documentary resource through recording memoirs of revolutionary participants. Historian, V. I. Picheta described memoirs as the "only possible resources for seeing inside the minds of those in the revolutionary movement." He continued, "it is important for us not only to know who was a revolutionary, but how he became a revolutionary, what was his mood, his psychological experiences, his feelings."[68] Memoirs were the antidote to the police archives, which constituted the bulk of archival material on the Bolsheviks. A 1920 Istpart plan for work described archives of the former police and courts as a source for facts (i.e., the date of arrest, names of those arrested, and the sentences) which would "serve as a skeleton for the story, but to become living historical material, they should be supplemented with a memoir."[69] Memoirs were solicited with great caveats. Guidelines were established and distributed as to what was to be included in the memoirs, and became stricter and more descriptive throughout the decade. The omission of certain events from one's personal account was not permissible. Memory was not necessarily to be trusted, and Istpart employed methods to compensate for potential weaknesses in the memories of reminiscers and to

[66] RGASPI f. 70, op. 2, d. 446, l. 7.

[67] RGASPI f. 70, op. 2, d. 446, l. 9.

[68] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 272, ll. 44-45.

[69] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 32.

provide them with the necessary perspective.[70] Istpart workers were instructed to inspect submitted memoirs and "in the event of significant gaps, demand supplements by the author."[71] Historian, Frederick Corney notes, the highly detailed questionnaires drawn up by Istpart offered a richer and more insistent script of an inexorable revolutionary movement *as a function* of a coherent party organization," with the October Revolution as the culmination of the movement.[72]

The original plan for collecting memoirs was broadly inclusive. The 1920 Istpart pamphlet, *To All Party Members,* cast a wide net stating "everyone who was in Russia over the past three years, or had the opportunity to observe or even participate in the events," was a potential memoir source.[73] The collecting of these memoirs included those from the ranks of the Mensheviks, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs), as well as the Bolsheviks. Istpart instructed their workers to collect as many as memoirs as possible as "one corrects and supplements, or supports the other."[74] The creation of these memoirs was not limited to those who had survived through the revolution and civil war. There was also a push to create memoirs for one's fallen comrades. The questionnaires were filled with leading questions and provided the language with which the reminiscer was to describe his allies and enemies. The dogma of Bolshevik victory was established immediately, even in 1920 as the Bolsheviks were still at war with counter-revolutionary forces, the first questions asked not about the struggle of workers and peasants, but how

[70] Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event," 403.

[71] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 17, l. 15.

[72] Corney, *Telling October,* 122.

[73] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 55.

[74] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 55.

they had organized and *achieved* power: "How in your area (city, township, county, province), did power pass to the hands of workers and peasants."[75] "How was a workers' and peasants' government organized in your community?"[76] The questions were framed in such a way that supported an answer of victory and a solid union between workers and peasants. The questions asked for a description of an accomplishment, not a process. These leading questions were intended to tease out local participation in the revolutionary movement and encouraged a narrative that included the establishment of worker and peasant power before the arrival of outside Red Army troops. The wording of the instructions for memoirs to elicit a story that wrote locals into the greater revolutionary narrative and ensure that the revolutionary movement was not seen as something imposed upon the provinces by the center, or even worse, by a group of recently returned, out-of-touch, exiled intellectuals. Corney describes Istpart's efforts as a memory project "not about 'recovering' historical memory but rather about framing it in the very process of elicitation."[77]

The enemy was also clearly delineated in the process of reminiscing. When asked about the nationalization of industry in his province, the reminiscer was told to describe how locals reacted with an open-ended question. But when asked about the business owners' reactions, the reminiscer was given two possibilities for answers: the owners responded either through "open or masked resistance and sabotage."[78] The form made the enemies clear and they were always described in terms of their resistance: "Was

[75] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 55r.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event," 401.

[78] RGASPI f .70, op. 1, d. 45, l. 55r.

there a municipalizing of trade, if so what resistance was this met with? How did the intelligentsia try and sabotage the revolution?"[79] The narrative of counter-revolutionary actions was also given a vocabulary in which to be recounted. When describing his local counter-revolutionary movements, the reminiscer was given the following elements from which to choose: landowners, former bourgeoisie, former officers of the Tsarist army, former bureaucrats, the clergy, intellectuals, students, kulaks, and deserters, and lastly, any groups of workers or peasants.[80]

The celebration of the ten-year anniversary October Revolution was further opportunity to buttress the narrative of the revolution with the commemorative events themselves feeding back into the process of creating archival collections. In a 1927 *Pravda* announcement, Istpart instructed its sections to put on events for the ten-year anniversary of the October Revolution using their archival collections and to save everything from these events, posters, and minutes of meetings, to also become a part of the archival collection.[81]

The collecting and creating of archives was not limited to the revolutionary movement within the Russian Empire. The Bolshevik historical narrative also sought to place their revolution within the trajectory of revolutionary and Marxist development outside of Russia. When the party removed Riazanov from as Director of Tsentrarkhiv, he was appointed Director of a new institution to compiling a thematic collection, and later become part of the Party Archive, the Institute of Marx and Engels (Institut K.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] "Ot Istparta TsK VKP(b)," *Pravda*, November 2, 1927.

Marksa i F. Engel'sa, IME). IME was charged with collecting documents and publications of, and related to, Marx, Engels, and Marxist thought. The Institute conducted an extensive collecting process on a global scale. Most sources came from Western Europe, but the Institute also established extensive connections with American scholars, libraries, and sympathetic political organizations in an effort to create the most comprehensive collection possible. This search for Marxist materials brought Bolshevik scholars into close contact with many foreign scholars and institutions. For example, Riazanov had extensive contact with Scott Nearing of the American Fund for Public Service, an organization created in New York in 1922 to support radical social and economic causes. It was through this organization that IME was able to acquire issues of the *New York Daily Tribune* 1852-1861, which included the articles Marx wrote as their European correspondent.[82] The relationship with Nearing also resulted in documents on American radical movements being added to IME's collections. IME and Tsentrarkhiv also formed relationships of exchange with many non-leftists organizations, among them the New York Public Library and Stanford University.

This centralization of Marxist literature also supported the tactic of creating a point of coherence between the Bolsheviks and other revolutionary traditions. By creating, and publishing considerable aspects of, the largest archive of documents of Marx and Engels, the Bolsheviks implied the direct heritage of their party from the founders of the Communist Party. Indeed, the broadening of this collection to include other Western revolutionary thinkers allowed Bolsheviks to produce exhibits and publications on European revolutionary traditions based on primary sources located

[82] RGASPI f. 71, op. 50, d. 2, l. 37.

within their own archives. Where Imperial era nobles and bourgeoisie had collected famous art of the Western world to assert their place in cultured, modern society, the Bolsheviks collected revolutionary documents to assert their place in revolutionary heritage. This "heritage" was trotted out in museums and publications for the public. For example, Istpart produced exhibits that drew parallels between the Russian Revolution and the Paris Commune.[83]

On March 9, 1923, within weeks of Lenin's third stroke, the Moscow Committee of Communist Party formed the Lenin Institute under the leadership of L. B. Kamenev, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. In October, the Institute was transferred to the Central Committee and "immediately launched an aggressive campaign to collect materials for a museum, an archive, and a library."[84] In July 1923, the Central Committee published an appeal to party members in local newspapers to collect and donate anything in their possession related to Lenin to the new Institute of Lenin. They also instructed all secretaries of party committees and cells to quickly appoint special comrades for the review of institutional archives for papers with inscriptions or notes by Lenin and his manuscripts, which were to be sent to Moscow.[85] A November 26, 1923 decree of the Central Committee confirmed the Institute of Lenin as the *only* storage place for all manuscript materials of Lenin and materials related to

[83] B. F. Dodonov and V. P. Naumov, "Arkhiv Revoliutsii i Vneshnei Politika (1925-1932 gg.) Gosudarsvennyi Arkhiv Revoliutsii (1932-1941 gg.)- Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv v Moskve (1941-1961gg.)," in *Istoriia Gosudarstvennogo Arkhiva Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Dokumenty, Stat'i, Vospominaniia,* ed. S. V. Mironenko, (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010): 118.; and RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 33, l. 6. For more on the public use of archival materials, see Chapter Four of this project.

[84] Larry E. Holmes and William Burgess, "Voice or Political Echo?: Soviet Party History in the 1920s," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 9, nos. 2-3 (1982): 386.

[85] RGASPI f. 347, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 2-5.

him and instructed Tsentrarkhiv and Istpart to remove appropriate materials and send them to the institute.[86] Periodization in the archive of Lenin documents echoed the breaks established by AOR and Istpart, dividing material into two parts, *old archive*, 1895-1917, and *new archive*, 1917 to the present.[87] Not only was a preferred periodization reinforced with the establishment of this new thematic, artificial archival collection, more than ever the tenants of *respect des fonds* and *original order* were tossed aside in favor of creating a homage to Lenin. Any piece of paper, which was in anyway related to Lenin, was a legitimate item for the new collection. Workers of the Institute tenaciously pursued documents related to Lenin. Archivists sent letters to people they suspected of having letters from Lenin and requesting their transfer to the Institute. By February 1, 1928 the archive housed 34,749 documents, of which 21,012 were categorized as "Leninskii."[88] Once archivists received materials they would often follow up asking for clarifications of events or people mentioned in the collected documents. V. D. Bonch-Bruevich responded to a request for information on a letter from Lenin he submitted, explaining that Lenin signed his 1910 letters to him with "S" as it stood for Starik (Old Man), a frequent nickname for him in secret letters at that time.[89]

By placing documents in any way related to Lenin in one institution, the party reinforced Lenin's participation in all accomplishments of the Bolsheviks. The primacy of Lenin was further buttressed in the catalog of materials in the Institute. Instructions to archivists compiling the catalog of archival materials of the Institute of Lenin, told them

[86] RGASPI f. 347, op. 1, d. 1, l. 20.

[87] RGASPI f. 347, op. 1, d. 1, l. 15.

[88] RGASPI f. 347, op. 1, d. 43, l. 13.

[89] RGASPI f. 347, op. 1, d. 190, l. 11.

to list the authors, if there was more than one, in alphabetical order, except when on of the authors was Lenin, whose name was always to appear first.[90] As a result, materials on many aspects of the revolutionary movement and early Bolshevik rule, even if they were only tangentially related to Lenin, were most accessible by searching Lenin. This dominance of Lenin spread beyond the categorization of collections, for example, the June 1, 1918 decree on archives was referred to by archivists throughout the tenure of the Soviet Union as the "Lenin Decree," although it was signed by both Lenin and Bonch-Bruevich, and most likely drafted by Riazanov.

Decrease in Collecting

Historians William Burgess and Larry Holmes state that after S. I. Kanatchikov became the head of Istpart in 1925, "it became increasingly evident that Istpart was responding to the political struggle in the party more than to any independent scholarly motives as it had done previously."[91] With the struggle for power within the party there was a changing narrative of the revolution and the party purged non-Bolsheviks from Istpart textbook readers in 1925. Previously deemed appropriate, writings by those such as the Menshevik leader, Iu. O. Martov were removed and workers in Istpart sections were discouraged from further collecting or engaging in academic work on the history of Menshevik and SR parties.[92] The exclusion of alternate voices was not without controversy among party members. In August 1930, Ol'minskii sent a (never published)

[90] RGASPI f. 347, op. 1, d. 9, l. 4.

[91] Holmes and Burgess, "Voice or Political Echo," 393.

[92] Ibid., 392.

critical letter to the editors of *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia,* arguing that propaganda could ignore such historical facts as the cooperation of Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, but a "true party history" had to mention them.[93]

By 1927, the Bolsheviks had grown intolerant of many of the alternate or unique stories of the early developments of the revolutionary historical narrative. Even with all the guidance of the questionnaires, the party did not always collect memoirs that supported the Bolshevik historical narrative. Corney notes that many of the memoirs created in this process actually recounted a negative tale of the revolution. For example, a reminiscer from Rybinsk in the Yaroslavl Province recalled that the general population of the city "'viewed the Bolsheviks with hostility'" and depicted the Bolshevik rise to power as occurring by default after the Mensheviks and SRs lost credibility.[94] Such "mistakes" were particularly foul, as the center had already purged even the previously acceptable Mensheviks and SRs from the official revolutionary narrative. Istpart responded to these failures by increasing instruction in questionnaires as to what should be included, thus creating less room for the creation of an original revolutionary story. There was also a waning enthusiasm on the part of the public to participate in this party history process by the late 1920s. Initially, many citizens rushed to record their memoirs, but by the mid-1920s Istpart sections were struggling to continue to attract participants to their collection campaign. Central Istpart placed pressure on local Istpart sections to increase collection efforts and offered incentives to potential reminiscers. In 1927, the Board of Istpart decided to publish the list of the names of the comrades who had sent in

[93] Ibid., 397.

[94] Corney, *Telling October,* 127.

their filled out questionnaires in the next issue of Istpart's journal, *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia.* (*Proletarian Revolution*).[95]

In 1927, a report to the party on Istpart's work noted the shortcomings in memoir collecting and publication efforts and described the deficiencies as resulting from attacks by "bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements" trying to make an ideological impact on the party line, such as "Trotsky and his cronies" who tried to revise Leninism after Lenin's death.[96] These attacks had weakened Istpart and it had yet to produce a comprehensive and systematic history of the party, while a number of historical studies of the party were undertaken outside of, and with no connection to, Istpart.[97] To remedy these weaknesses the reports suggested that there should be a reduction in the collection of "often quite historically inaccurate memoir literature," and a new emphasis on the task of "deepening of the study of the history of the party and Leninism."[98] The emphasis on the social, everyday, and inclusive aspects of the revolutionary movement were deemphasized in favor of a stronger focus on collecting party materials. The history of the revolutionary movement was not to be abandoned, but in 1927 it was reevaluated:

> As the basic organization and ruling power of the proletariat revolution is our party, then documents related to the activities of our party must be collected above all in our party archive.[99]

In 1927, instructions on collection of historical materials ordered Istpart sections to collect "all official materials: all minutes, conferences, congresses, etc. of provincial,

[95] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 5, l. 33.

[96] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 5, l. 46.

[97] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 5, l. 44.

[98] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 5, l. 45.

[99] RGASPI f. 70, op. 2, d. 454, ll. 33-34.

regional, and district committees, general party meetings, and all party cells, party publications, personal archives, and letters of active comrades."[100] The party reinforced the shift away from the collecting of memoirs toward more official party materials with the combination of the collections of Istpart and the Institute of Lenin under the leadership of the Institute of Lenin in 1928. In 1929 the new Institute established the Single Party Archival Fond as separate from the Single State Archival Fond. The establishment of the Party Archive set off another wave of transfers, as AOR had acted as a repository of party archival materials since its creation.

The late 1920s shift to the use of documents in assistance to the construction of the socialist economy in place of cultural and historical endeavors was reflected in the collecting of documents. Although, Tsentrarkhiv was already the formal custodian of records of mining and industry with the nationalization of industry in the first years of Bolshevik power, many of these collections were never centralized under Tsentrarkhiv's care. With the 1928 introduction of the first five-year plan the party exhibited a renewed fervor to ensure that all of these papers were truly in the possession of EGAF for exploitation by the state in building the industrial economy. Where the early to mid-1920s saw Tsentrarkhiv work to concentrate the materials on revolutionary movements, the peasantry, and counter-revolutionary movements, efforts to centralize by Tsentrarkhiv in the late 1920s and early 1930s focused on materials related to industry and natural resources. Further, the NEP era allowed for a considerable amount of re-privatization and renewed concession contracts with foreign industrialists, which by 1928 were mostly cancelled, opening more industrial archives to inclusion in EGAF. As with the

[100] RGASPI f. 70, op. 2, d. 454, l. 32.

concentration of cultural and revolutionary materials, Tsentrarkhiv encountered resistance among those who did not want to give up their custodianship of industrial materials. In March of 1928 Tsentrarkhiv contacted the Joint State Political Administration (Ob"edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie, OGPU) about seizing archival materials on gold mining of the former Trust "Sibzoloto" from a local teacher in Salair, Tomsk Province who "categorically refused to sell them."[101] Tsentrarkhiv also requested the aid of OGPU to acquire the materials on gold industry held by Ivan Cherkasov, a former owner (and son of an owner) of gold industry, and then renter (under Soviet rule) of the gold deposit on river Kyzas, who arrested in August of 1927.[102] In 1929, the Board of Tsentrarkhiv achieved their long sought after goal of the creation of a union wide administrative organ, Tsentrarkhiv SSSR, which had the same governing Board as the RSFSR Tsentrarkhiv, and granted them extensive authority over archival collections at an all-union level. As a result, the concentration of archival materials in Moscow on industry and natural resources from the republics increased greatly in aid of centralized planning of the industrial economy.

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The physical rearrangement of collections and massive collecting campaigns which took place throughout the 1920s had a lasting impact on the way history was written in the Soviet Union, and the way it continued to be collected. Centralization and consolidation of power in the regime was reflected in the increased centralization and

[101] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 472, l. 17.

[102] Ibid.

control over historical institutions. Beginning in the late 1920s, the relative autonomy of non-Marxist historians and their institutions had been liquidated. The party combined Istpart and the Institute of Lenin in 1928 in favor of the leadership and goals of the Institute of Lenin. The Director of the Institute of Lenin, M. A. Savel'ev, argued that merger was necessary as "Lenin cannot be separated from the party, and the party cannot be separated from Lenin."[103] The union of these historical institutions in favor of the Institute of Lenin was a telling event, as the commission that was formed to document the people of the revolutionary movement was subordinated to the institute that focused on the achievements of one leader. In 1929, the Institute of Lenin formed the Single Party Archive, which existed outside the realm of Tsentrarkhiv's jurisdiction, thus institutionalizing the separation of powers between the party and state in the nation's historical record. This separation of archival collections had a great effect on the way research was conducted in the Soviet Union, as access to party documents became increasingly restricted.

By the early 1930s, the Bolsheviks had effectively established a monopoly on history. They adequately established their legitimacy and turned their attention to other uses of archives, most notably in the building of socialism starting with the first five-year plan. The heady days of excitement and plurality in scholarship brought by the opening of the archives in 1918, had given way to a rigid, official narrative of one voice. This narrative continued to adapt to political situations, but the need for historical researchers and proper archival documentation was no longer prioritized. In 1931, the party announced that universities were only to provide instruction in mathematics and pure

[103] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 15, ll. 2-49.

science. Only universities in Yerevan, Dnepropetrovsk, and Samarkand taught history from 1931 to 1934.[104] The 1938 publication of Stalin's "anti-history" history, the *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Short Course* was perhaps the final symbol of the triumph of one voice over lively historical scholarship. Here history had been pruned, repackaged, and twisted into the necessary narrative with no need for supporting documentary sources and no room for debate, scholarly or otherwise.

[104] Byrnes, **"**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession," 306.

Chapter Four

The Archive. Until recently, just this one word struck horror in even the most well meaning and culturally minded people. What tedium. The archive mouse was held in even lower esteem than the clerical rat.

Then suddenly, near the half-decayed pages, the rotting notebooks, and fading ink, a crowd of animated people. That is, lively people of the villages and suburbs.[1]
-from a review of the archival exhibit at the Winter Palace
December 5, 1920,
Petrogradskaia Pravda

Dusty decaying pages juxtaposed with a lively crowd—the archive had reached its apogee in the new revolutionary Russian state. The Bolsheviks espoused revolutionary principles, but the were nonetheless the product of the era and they embraced, even advanced, the traditional early twentieth century positivist view of the archive as a repository of objective truths. The facade of truth ascribed to archival sources vested documents with great power. The Tsarist regime, whose legitimacy was established by God, feared the "objective truth" of documents and carefully guarded and censored archives. With their ascension to power, the Bolsheviks were in need of their own legitimizing rational for their rule. From a Marxist perspective, history offered this justification and archives held history's infallible evidence.

The success of the October Revolution was quickly followed by the challenges of not only running a state, but, as they were an ideologically revolutionary party, also transforming a state. The Bolshevik revolution was heralded as a force for positive and

[1] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. R5325, op. 9, d. 228, l. 4.

transformative change, a sweeping away of the repression of the previous regimes, and the ascendency of the first ever dictatorship of the proletariat. Once the Bolsheviks secured their power, they were tasked with determining just how they would undertake this transformation of state, economy, and society. The Bolsheviks, schooled in a philosophy of communism born of great Western industrialism, were somewhat anachronistic in the society of the former Russian Empire, with a relatively small part of the population and economy exhibiting the characteristics of a society considered ripe for revolution under traditional Marxist thought. Further, as the first off the starting line, the Bolsheviks had no models for their new, modern, communist society. Undaunted, the Bolsheviks set out to shape the new society into a utopia and to mold a dictatorship from the proletariat from a country of peasants. These efforts were continually met with resistance and setbacks resulting in changing strategies on how to fashion the model society, state, and economy and a constant need to prove their authority.

The Bolsheviks' use of archival documents in the first fifteen years of their rule clearly reflected an agenda to re-shape society and to re-make it in the image of Marxism-Leninism. However, the meaning of this image evolved throughout the 1920s. In the first years following the revolution, the Bolsheviks' propagandistic use of newly accessible archival sources and publication of previously classified international treaties was intended to discredit the previous Tsarist and Provisional regimes, establish the permanence of the October Revolution, win over the domestic population, and act as a catalyst to the worldwide revolution the Bolsheviks believed was imminent. When these expectations were not immediately realized, the Bolsheviks retreated and reframed their role in the revolutionary historical progress in a way that was accessible to their citizenry,

who were proving problematic in the Bolsheviks' claim to power. Historian James von Geldern points out that even some of the Bolsheviks biggest supporters, soldiers, "were being asked to fight for a cause they barely understood."[2] This reframing of the Bolsheviks role was further shaped by the tumultuous period following the revolution, which was characterized, by massive and widespread shortages, war, and chaos. As historian Shelia Fitzpatrick explains, "within six months of taking power, the new Bolshevik rulers were experiencing problems with the working class that were similar in kind if not in degree to those of previous regimes."[3] With the acknowledgment that perhaps the world, and their local populations, were not yet ready for the final revolutionary stage, the Bolsheviks engaged in a more instructive approach to exploiting documentary resources. The party concluded that the population's consciousness was not sufficiently raised to properly respond to the catalyst that was the revelation of the Tsarist government's dirty deeds. In the 1920s the Bolsheviks attempted to teach their citizenry, and to an extent, the greater world, its place in the revolutionary historical narrative, to shape it into the class conscious population needed for a new socialist society, and to cement the Bolsheviks role as the leading party of such a society. This was done most notably through numerous publications and exhibits of historical documents from the central metropolitan areas of European Russia to far-flung provinces and republics, which taught the public the significance of archives, history, and perhaps most importantly, their place in the revolutionary narrative of October.

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[2] James von Geldern, "Putting the Masses in Mass Culture: Bolshevik Festivals, 1918-1920," *Journal of Popular Culture* 31, no. 4 (Spring 1998): 124.

[3] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Bolsheviks' Dilemma: Class, Culture, and Politics in the Early Soviet Years," *Slavic Review*, 47, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 599.

Archival Document as Battle Weapon

When the Bolsheviks first took power, their perception of the archive was as a resource only detrimental to their enemies. The Bolsheviks had nothing to hide and everything to gain by revealing the secrets and everyday workings of their predecessors through extensive archival publication efforts. Within days of the revolution Bolsheviks searched the archives for publishable documents that would aid their cause. Early publications sought to establish the legitimacy of the Bolsheviks' claims to the necessity of revolution by disclosing the "lies" of the previous regimes and their allies and dispelling the propaganda that had been used against them in the pre-revolutionary era. Leon Trotsky, the new Commissar for Foreign Affairs, famously said that his job was "to publish the secret treaties and close up shop." Lenin described the immediate publishing of Tsarist treaties as way "to make public the disgraceful predatory aims of the tsarist monarchy and *all*, without exception, bourgeois governments."[4] A late November 1917 publication of a collection of documents of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs included this introduction from the editors:

> The goal of this collection is to familiarize the wide masses with the contents of the documents stored in the armored rooms and the fireproof cabinets of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a branch of the bourgeoisie of all countries. Every document is a betrayal of the people. Every document has the stamp of the oppressors. To let the workers of the world know, how behind their backs diplomats in offices sold their lives… To let all know just how imperialists, with one stroke of pen, seized entire regions and irrigated the fields with human blood.[5]

[4] V. V. Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR: 1917-1945* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1969): 38.

[5] Ibid., 39.

The Provisional Government was also a target as Bolsheviks uncovered and published documents that they claimed proved the falsification activities employed by the Ministry of Justice during the July Days of 1917 to justify using violence against Bolshevik leaders.[6]

The Bolsheviks were utilitarian materialists and assumed transparence in history. In his investigation of early mass culture in Soviet Russia, Von Geldern notes, "by placing a monument on a square, providing it with the proper inscription and testimonial, [the Bolsheviks] assumed that their audience would get the message."[7] But the audience did not always get the message. The Bolsheviks had hoped that the simple revelation of the detestable secrets of their predecessors, and their predecessors' allies, history laid bare, would be the spark that would ignite the worldwide communist revolution, of which the Russian revolution was only a starting point. When this result was not borne out, the Bolsheviks shifted their governing and economic plans away from revolution toward creating stability and growth domestically and these polices were reflected in the new use of archival documents. Although archival institutions continued to publish document collections, there was no longer an expectation of an immediate revolutionary response. With the shift away from the immediate goal of worldwide revolution, the Bolsheviks began to employ archival documents to support the legitimacy of the Bolsheviks by establishing their revolutionary and Russian heritage. Documents were used in extensive propaganda campaigns to educate their citizens on the proper historical narrative.

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[6] Ibid., 40.

[7] Von Geldern, "Putting the Masses in Mass Culture," 128.

Preservation

However, before the Bolsheviks could implement historical educational propaganda with documents they had to manage the continual, serious threats to archival resources by a society that did not value documents as much as its leaders did. Many early publications relating to, and emerging from, archival institutions placed great emphasis on archival preservation. The Bolsheviks knew they inherited a widely uneducated population, yet another shortcoming of the repressive and backward Tsarist regime, but they were constantly confronted with a lack of understanding on the part of the population beyond the Bolshevik imagination. Already after the February Revolution archives disgruntled citizens and worried sitting bureaucrats who sought to protect themselves by destroying evidence of their actions targeted archival collections for destruction. When the general population did consider the archives, they often viewed them as the vast repository of Tsarist repression, the place that kept the information gathered by the more sinister organizations of the regime, such as the police, or the papers of their manor lords, which supported claims to the land and peasant debt. Even party members, the vanguard of the revolution, were at times uneducated in their understanding of the significance of archives and destroyed documents. As a result, shorter pamphlet publications, which could be widely distributed and read aloud to reach an illiterate audience, were often the chosen format for early popular publications.

Attempts to argue the value of archival documents in early publications was based on establishing their capacity to discredit and punish the offenders of the previous regimes. One of the most significant pamphlets among the rush of early self-referential publications was V. D. Bonch-Bruevich's 1919 *Preserve Archives* (*Sokhraniaite Arkhiv*).

Lenin commissioned *Preserve Archives* after hearing that the Red Army had destroyed manuscripts and correspondence of authors in a building in Moscow in which they were quartered. Lenin asked V. D. Bonch-Bruevich to produce a pamphlet on the significance and value of archives to the political struggles of the proletariat in laymen's term, so it could be published as a pamphlet and in newspapers for a wide audience.[8] In *Preserve Archives,* Bonch-Bruevich described the significance of documents to their modern revolutionary society. Since the autocracy had relied too much on police repression, it had "documented the evidence of its own misdeeds," from which Soviet writers and historians "might fashion an indictment of the monarchy's crimes, allowing the once silenced rebels and victims to have their say."[9] He further contended that as the new rulers they had a duty to preserve the height of national culture and heritage, as even high literature reflected the "revolutionary and social struggle of the time and much of it had been silenced by censorship."[10] Historian, Laura Engelstein calls this sentiment "overly optimistic (for a party hoping to deprive the past of its power to haunt or defeat them)."[11] However, the Bolsheviks staked their legitimacy in this very past and hence supported the preservation of potentially threatening materials. Also in 1919, the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv's published the brochure, *Why it is Necessary to Collect Documents and How Each of Us Can Help in this Matter,* which took up the call to preserve documents and instructed anyone who came across archival documents to contact Petrograd or

[8] Iu. G. Dement'ev, "Vklad V. D. Bonch-Bruevicha v Sovetskoe Arkhovnoe Stroitel'stvo," *Sovetskie Arkhivy* 1 (1971): 28.

[9] Laura Engelstein, "Archives Talk Balk: The Unofficial Collections in Imperial, Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia," *Jahrbuecher fuer Geschichte Osteuropas,* 51, no. 1 (2003): 70.

[10] Dement'ev, "Vklad V. D. Bonch-Bruevicha v Sovetskoe Arkhovnoe Stroitel'stvo," 27.

[11] Engelstein, "Archives Talk Balk," 70.

Moscow Tsentrarkhiv. The Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv also published a shortened version in leaflet form that concluded:

> Citizens! Read and explain this leaflet to all illiterate people, disseminate among the literate, explain to children and adults the great importance of careful preservation of documents and papers for the opportunity to learn from them about the past and then calmly and deliberately replace all bad customs of the past with new and better customs.[12]

Publications at this time continued to stress the significance of documents in discrediting the previous regimes, as a source for an anti-model in building a new and better society, and emphasized the Bolshevik regime as a break from the Imperial past. M. B. Pokrovskii's pamphlet, *The Political Meaning of Archives* (*Politicheskoe Znachenie Arkhivov)*, published six years later, revealed a further problem encountered by the Bolsheviks as they tried to educate on the value of archives, general society's lack of understanding of the importance of not only archives, but also history. Bonch-Bruevich made his arguments in favor of documents with an as assumption of a respect for history. Pokrovskii's pamphlet assumed no such respect and clarified the significance of history in a modern Marxist society as an effort to illustrate the importance of these "old papers" to the general public.

Despite the propaganda efforts on the part of archival organizations, documents were continually physically threatened from the first days of the February Revolution and throughout the 1920s, by fires, theft, poorly managed evacuations, and illegal sales. These threats influenced another motivation for publication, to assure preservation of the intellectual content of documents. Many times the impetus for these types of publications came from outside cultural institutions and from agencies concerned with continued

[12] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 25-26.

practical use of archival records. Many agencies overseeing financial and industrial activities expressed concern for preservation of documents as they attempted to establish the new economy on the foundations of the old. For example, The People's Commissariat of Land Use (Narodnyi Komissariat Zemledeliia, Narkomzem) believed that the documents of the Mezhevoi Archive (the archive of the Land Survey Office) were necessary for the long promised land reforms. During the chaotic period of the civil war, Narkomzem leaders were particularly concerned about these archives falling into unfriendly hands or succumbing to fire, and requested they be published to create multiple copies. In June of 1918, the Ministry of Justice "confirmed the necessity of quickly enacting the decision of Narkomzem, granting it the power to publish archives of former old and young notaries" which documented real estate ownership.[13]

The Bolsheviks' great efforts to propagandize by publishing left out a vast portion of the population that the Bolsheviks wished to reach with their new narrative, namely the widespread illiterate masses in whose name the Bolsheviks ruled. Although difficult to precisely calculate, Ben Eklof places the population wide literacy rate in the Russian Empire at the start of World War I at around forty percent, with the literacy rate of those in the countryside at only around fourteen percent.[14] Not only could most of the population not read collections of documents or historical monographs being produced by archival institutions, their lack of education limited their understanding of the significance of these documentary sources and weakened the documents efficacy as a

[13] Maksakov, *Istoriia i Organizatsiia Arkhivnogo Dela v SSSR,* 36.

[14] Ben Eklof, "Russian Literacy Campaigns 1861–1939," in *National Literacy Campaigns and Movements: Historical and Comparative Perspectives,* eds. Robert F. Arnove and Harvey J. Graff (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008): 128–29.

propaganda tool. An extensive and far-reaching literacy campaign was established by the Council of People's Commissars (Sovet Narodnykh Kommissarov, Sovnarkom) decree of December 1919, "On the liquidation of illiteracy of the population of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic."[15] The campaign achieved a slow, but steady success and by 1926 literacy rates were reported at fifty-one percent and by 1930 at nearly ninety percent in the Soviet Union.[16] Nevertheless, the rate of education and literacy was still significantly low for most of the 1920s requiring archival institutions to seek other ways to reach the public with their agitational—educational materials, and the means chosen were museums and travelling exhibits.

The first archival exhibits were temporary installations that attempted to educate the population as quickly as possible. A 1920 exhibit of archival materials at the Winter Palace in Petrograd reflected the same goals of early archival publications: discrediting the Tsarist regime. The exhibit, "Archives also Keep Mistakes of the Past," supplemented the written documentary evidence of the Tsar's crimes, with examples of torture tools of the Tsarist police.[17] The harsh financial conditions of archival institutions greatly hindered the impact of early exhibits and made a very public display of the resource scarcity. A review of the exhibit in the November 18, 1920 issue of the newspaper *Petrogradskaia Pravda* noted that initial enthusiasm for the extensive and fascinating documentary exhibit was dampened by the physical experience of the visitor to the museum:

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[15] L. I. Shekhanova, "Istoriia Kul'turnogo Stroitel'stva v Dokumentakh," *Sovetskie Arkhivy* 1 (1972): 15.

[16] Charles E. Clark, *Uprooting Otherness: The Literacy Campaign in NEP-Era Russia* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2000): 23.

[17] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 228, l. 1.

> Lighting is extremely poor, in many parts there is not even a chandelier lit, but just small overhead electric light bulbs, and guides are simply not available. Most of the public is limited to a cursory walk through the halls of the palace and then leave.[18]

The resource scarcity reported by *Petrogradskaia Pravda* in 1920 would continue to create problems of archival institutions throughout the decade as they tried to create effective public exhibits of documents.

A New Task for Documents

Once the Bolsheviks achieved victory in the civil war and embarked on establishing a peacetime government, they shifted the focus of the public use of documents away from discrediting the previous regimes toward building their own cache of legitimacy. The devastation of the civil war to the economy, countryside, and population, as well as the wartime implementation of political and police repression placed the Bolsheviks in a similar position to their predecessors. This position no longer benefited from the uncensored publicity of past dirty secrets of the former rulers, as the Bolsheviks could also be accused of similar atrocities and shortcomings during their brief wartime rule. Also, the simple exposure of the public to the proof of the crimes of the Tsar had not proved as powerful as was first expected. The Bolsheviks would not abandon the discrediting of the Tsarist and Provisional Governments, but determined they needed to bolster the positive impressions of their regime and to create a basis of legitimacy extending beyond Marxist revolutionary ideals. Rather than wholesale

[18] Ibid.

publication of archival materials, the Bolsheviks developed institutions to create and distribute a proper historical narrative.

The Bolsheviks extolled the relatable values of their regime by drawing parallels between their revolutionary movement and past Russian revolutionary events in an attempt to establish "stability and coherence in unstable and inconstant times."[19] In an effort to support a Marxist historical teleological tale of Bolshevik victory, direct connections between past major historical events were crucial. Further, the Bolsheviks' early revolutionary hopes of freeing their new society from the shackles of the past were soon disillusioned by the persistence of many aspects of the pre-revolutionary regime and society to remain firmly rooted in the present. The Bolsheviks asked the population, and the international community, to view their rule as a total break from the previous rulers, truly revolutionary. And although the Bolsheviks did make revolutionary changes to state and society, a lack of resources or established plans meant that they had to keep many of the institutions, specialists, and practices from the previous regimes. With a realization that a total break from their past was not possible, the Bolsheviks had to find a way to use this past to their advantage. To this end, the Bolsheviks "rescued" many events, gave them a Marxist spin, and included them in the grand teleological narrative of Bolshevik victory.

However, this increased development of historical research presented its own problem. The Bolsheviks were a party of the masses and did not revere the erudite, insular work of academics. In fact, in the 1920s the term "academic" was an anathema.

[19] Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the October Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004): 111.

In a 1926 all-union meeting of the Commission for the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party (Komissiia po Istorii Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii i RKP(b), Istpart), Istpart worker Sergei Gusev addressed the issues of Istpart publications referring to an ongoing debate from 1924 as to whether Istpart should publish more monographs or memoirs:

> Monographs are not quite enough. They suffer from academicism, alienated from the history of the party and other significant everyday tasks. We, Bolsheviks, we are not academics. Remember the history of our party. We never allowed ourselves the luxury to distract the party from its political objectives for academic issues. The party only started studying the philosophical when it acquired political meaning.[20]

Despite such sentiments, the party leadership was primarily composed of intellectuals, at odds with the proletarian identity of the Bolshevik Party.[21] Many were trained in bourgeois academic institutions that produced the academia that they disparaged. "Intellectual" and "academic" were words that clashed with the identity the Bolsheviks were constructing, but as Marxists they valued the careful study of history. They tempered this disparity by bringing archival documents to the public in unprecedented levels. Archival documents were used to create educational materials, party primers, textbooks, document collections with more extensive commentary, and perhaps most significantly, public exhibits.

Early solicitation for historical publications was widespread as the Bolsheviks hoped an inclusive narrative would demonstrate the legitimacy of their power and unite geographically far-flung locations and the disparate proletarian and agrarian classes. The Bolshevik belief in the existence of a scientific process of history and the truth

[20] Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI) f. 70, op. 1, d. 33, l. 9.

[21] Fitzpatrick, "The Bolsheviks' Dilemma," 604, 612.

represented in documents fueled a naïve belief that soliciting of wide-ranging narratives would create a reaffirming and positive representation for their historical point of view. There was a confidence among revolutionaries in general "that if the right questions could only be asked of the right people in the right places, the revolutionary movement would give up its story."[22] When the Bolsheviks opened archives, they also allowed bourgeois scholars access to documents denied them under the Tsarist regime, and although most were not enthusiastic about the new regime, they were eager to take advantage of their new access to archival documents and publishing resources. Non-communists specialists, with their educated backgrounds, played a significant role in establishing policies for the publication of documents. With the rush of new publications after the revolution, well-known pre-revolutionary historians, V. G. Druzhinin, S. F. Platonov, and A. A. Shakhmatov developed the "Regulations on the Publication of Documents" which was accepted at September 1919 meeting of the Petrograd Section of Tsentrarkhiv.[23] These regulations offered standards for reproducing original texts for publication, dating texts, and creating titles for documents. The tolerance of bourgeois historians in publishing efforts, however, at times proved hazardous to the Bolsheviks. In an emergency meeting of the Tsentrarkhiv Board in 1920, Pokrovskii, Adoratskii, and Baturin discussed the incident of the unsanctioned publication of excerpts from the diary of Nicholas II and other state documents in various publications, both Russian and foreign. The non-Marxist historian, V. N. Storozhev, who was formally employed by

[22] Frederick C. Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event: The October Revolution as a Memory Project" *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 402-403.

[23] M.S. Seleznev, "Iz Istorii Razvitiia Arkheograficheskoi Mysli v 1917-1920 gg.," *Trudy MGIAI* 15 (1962): 148.

Tsentrarkhiv to work with these documents, had passed a copy of Nicholas II's diary to the editors of the journal *Dela and Dni* (*Works and Days*), without the authorization of Tsentrarkhiv.[24] In response to this blunder, Tsentrarkhiv requested funds from the Presidium of VTsIK to establish its own publication house for the publication of important documents, which "due to their high priority should be under state monopoly, and not at all available for private use."[25] Bourgeois historians were later purged from Tsentrarkhiv and their contributions downplayed or derided as "ignoring the party and class approach to the publication of documents."[26] However, in the first years of the revolution and NEP era, Tsentrarkhiv relied heavily on bourgeois historians and archivists to create and implement the reforms and rules that enabled quickly publishing vast quantities of documents.

The audience for various publications was widespread—academic and popular, domestic and international. Soviet archives published documents in newspapers, as collections in pamphlets and books, and beginning in 1921, in several historical journals that published documents with commentary and historical articles based on newly accessible documents. These journals included *Krasnyi Arkhiv* (*Red Archive*, Tsentrarkhiv, 1922), and *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia* (*Proletarian Revolution*, Moscow Istpart, 1921) and *Krasnaia Letopis'* (*Red Chronicle*, Petrograd Istpart, 1922). The domestic audience for many of these publications was limited, as most of the population lacked the education and literacy levels to engage with such works. Nevertheless, a

[24] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 10, l. 38.

[25] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 13, l. 11.

[26] Seleznev, "Iz Istorii Razvitiia Arkheograficheskoi Mysli," 149.

significant effort was made to provide wider access to (and preserve the content of) documentary materials through publication efforts.

Publications released in the post-civil war era revealed clear historical allies and enemies and included extensive coverage of Tsarist foreign policies (e.g., documents on Russian-Polish relations, Tsarist diplomacy in World War I, correspondence between Tsars and European leaders, Russian imperialism in the Far East), the history of literature (e.g., previously unpublished works, diaries, and letters of Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Brodsky, Chekov), various revolts, usually framed as the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia, drawing a clear connection between past revolutionary events and the current revolutionary regime, (e.g., documents on Pugachev, the Decembrists, Russian documents on the French Revolution and Paris Commune), and similarly, the history of the workers movement (e.g., documents on the Lena massacre of 1912, the Morozov Strike of 1885).[27] These publications efforts posited the Bolsheviks as the heirs to a long revolutionary heritage and culture. Although they switched their tactics for use of documents, and were disillusioned about their potential for immediate influence, the Bolsheviks still believed historical documents contained a truth that could not be refuted. At the 1925 Second Conference of Archival Workers of the RSFSR, archivist Zhdanovich further invoked this truth when discussing the crucial role archival publications played in the perception of the Soviet regime in the West. He argued that even those hostile to the Soviet Union would believe what they read in collected document publications:

> These editions can be accused of certain shortcomings, but they cannot be accused of containing pre-revolutionary material that is fabricated to show

[27] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 369, ll. 63-69.

> a one-sided or partial view. The Soviet government was not interested in that. It even prints documents hostile to its own power.[28]

Despite the revolutionary aspects of much of Bolshevik ideology, they still placed great faith in the positivist view of archival document as source of truth that could not be refuted even by their enemies.

Archivists created exhibits of their materials to temporarily circumvent literacy issues, as well as tackle the issue of the other literacy significant to Bolsheviks, "political literacy." The low levels of both of these literacies among the Russian population played a role in the public's less than favorable reaction to early Bolshevik publications on the Tsar's crimes. The Bolsheviks expected an exhibit to educate and raise political consciousness, as well as reinforce revolutionary connections between positive historical events and figures and the Bolshevik party. Not only were museum and travelling exhibits more accessible than many publications of Soviet archival organs, they were also more focused in their message. An early 1920s statement from Tsentrarkhiv described the dual role of exhibits as the "popularization of historical knowledge and promoting among the masses a sense of respect for historical documents."[29] Istpart, which was the party agency for archives, made a more ideologically charged statement on the role of exhibits claiming they were to disseminate "a correct understanding of revolutionary ideas and the spreading of revolutionary ideas."[30] Since the Bolsheviks had staked their legitimacy in history, a proper historical understanding by the population took on new importance. Moscow and Leningrad, as the centers where great numbers of document

[28] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 869, l. 14.

[29] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 283, l. 4.

[30] Corney, *Telling October*, 20.

collections were concentrated, had some of the most well developed museums on the history of the revolution, but museums and exhibits were established, and widely attended in far-flung provinces, throughout the republics, and even at international conferences and events attended by Soviet representatives.

Those who curated the exhibits on the revolution in Moscow and Leningrad were well-educated and high level party members, at times including M. S. Ol'minskii, V. V. Adoratskii, N. N. Baturin, P. N. Nevskii, and D. B. Riazanov, N. K. Krupskaia, and E. I. Elizarova. There was less room for alternate voices in the exhibited narratives in the center as their proximity allowed easy access to, and surveillance of, the histories presented by party leaders. Even so, the more tolerant NEP era allowed for the development of more than one major exhibit on party history at the center. On March 22 (April 4), 1917 a museum was established and housed in the building of the former *English Club* in the center of the city to commemorate revolutionary movements in Moscow. In its first years, the museum's mission was to facilitate the comprehensive study of the history of Russian revolutionary movements. Unlike the later Bolshevik museums, the society that supported this first museum of revolution compromised people of many political persuasions allowing for a wide and inclusive exhibit of revolutionary groups of the Russian Empire.[31] On November 12, 1922, the permanent exhibit *Krasnaia Moskva* (Red Moscow), documenting the history of the communist revolution in Moscow, was added to the museum at the former *English Club*. At the same time, Istpart opened its own exhibit on the history of the party and the revolution and for half of the 1920s there were two competing museums on the history of the revolution in Moscow.

[31] "History," *The State Central Museum of Contemporary History of Russia*, accessed October 16, 2012, http://eng.sovr.ru/museum/history/.

However, by mid-1923, S. I. Mitskevich, the head of the Istpart *Museum of the Revolution*, began lamenting the "irrationality" of the existence of two Moscow museums on the revolution and the need to combine them under the single direction of Istpart.[32] In 1924, these two permanent exhibits on the revolution were combined forming one *Museum of the Revolution* and subordinated to the direction of Istpart.

The new *Museum of the Revolution* reflected the growing importance of Moscow as the center of the RSFSR. Although the museum would include information on the labor movement in Moscow and the Moscow region, it was charged with having an "all-Russian" importance, allowing for only up to thirty percent of the exhibits to maintain a local focus.[33] The new integrated museum was responsible for preserving "all varieties of material and documents of the revolution" in order to reconstruct the history of the revolutionary movement in exhibits that were to be visited by "masses of workers, Red Army soldiers, peasants, and students of various educational institutions for the introduction and study of the history of the revolution and the party's history.[34] By 1924 this "reconstruction of the history of the party and the revolution" occupied eleven exhibition halls beginning with the era of the 1840s and the1880s and continuing to the October Revolution with the last two exhibit rooms making up a "Corner of Lenin." The Museum administration had plans to open more exhibit rooms on exile, penal servitude, the civil war and Soviet Construction.[35] Indeed, the *Museum of the Revolution* was a constantly developing exhibit, adding recent historical moments of Soviet achievement to

[32] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 3, l. 13.

[33] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 12, l. 8.

[34] Ibid.

[35] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 209, l. 51.

the narrative of the revolutionary movement and drawing a very clear, continuous line between past revolutionary events and the developing Bolshevik state. By the end of the decade, the Moscow *Museum of the Revolution* became the official model and leader for regional museums.

The inadequacy of funding for archives was still significant in the mid-1920s and the quality of exhibits in archives suffered for it. Finding qualified archival workers was difficult enough, when it came to the artistic needs of building an exhibit archives would also often fall short. In 1924 Senior Inspector of the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate (Narodnyi Komissariat Raboche-Krest'ianskoi Inspektsii, NKRKI) V. Nikol'skii attacked the aesthetic quality of the exhibits of the Moscow *Museum of the Revolution* saying they "lacked quality artistry," portraits were almost caricatures, and there were not enough graphics (posters, maps, diagrams).[36] Provincial archival bureaus suffered even harsher circumstances with many local party organs unconcerned with providing funding or basic resources for local archival institutions. In an effort to remedy this lack of appreciation for archives by provincial party authorities, Tsentrarkhiv took advantage of the confluence of party members in Moscow for the 1925 Fourteenth Party Congress to create an exhibit on the importance of archival documents at the congress. The exhibit displayed the "most valuable and characteristic documents on the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia," which was intended to acquaint "the delegates of the content in archives and documentary storage technology."[37] The section "historical materials" displayed documents on Pugachev, the Decembrists,

[36] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 209, l. 30.

[37] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 878, l. 4r and 63.

Dmitry Karakozov, the years 1881, 1905, and 1907, and was followed by displays "the structure and activates of Tsentrarkhiv," and "publication of documents."[38] The delegates of the congress visited the exhibit through several guided excursions.[39]

The memorializing of significant anniversaries became a major part of Soviet state and society through publication of relevant documents, the creation of permanent and traveling exhibits, and even through developing local events and lectures for the public. Many anniversary jubilees were expected choices, like the 1905 Revolution, which loomed large in Bolshevik mythology. The founding of the Society of Old Bolsheviks under Istpart, which required uninterrupted party membership since before January 1, 1905, cemented this connection between the Bolshevik party and the 1905 Revolution.[40] In 1924, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR (Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet SSSR, TsIK) created an All-Union Commission on the Commemoration of the Twentieth Anniversary of 1905 and appointed the head of TsIK, M. I. Kalinin, the committee's chair. This commission worked directly with Istpart to carry out the preparations for the jubilee. The slogan of the campaign, which was "the demonstration of the fighting union of the workers and peasants," echoed some of the ongoing concerns evidenced in the general Istpart plan for the collecting of documents.[41] Istpart Director, M. S. Ol'minskii reiterated this to provincial Istpart workers in fall of 1924: "Make the fighting alliance between workers and the peasantry the basis of all

[38] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 369, l. 11.

[39] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 878, l. 4r.

[40] RGASPI f. 91, op. 1, d 181, l. 75.

[41] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d 187, l. 2.

work for the 1905 jubilee."[42] Another 1924 memo to Istpart sections instructed that their task was to identify the revolution or its reflection in their region and depict these local events. There was an emphasis on collecting Bolshevik or Social-Democrat papers and memoirs of the active participants, and publishing collections accessible to the masses by August 1925.[43]

The Bolsheviks took advantage of the celebration the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1903 Second Party Congress to strengthen their current position and to address directly present political issues. The Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee (Organizatsionnoe Biuro TsK, Orgburo) stipulated that exhibits organized around the anniversary of the Second Party Congress were not only to be historical, but also linked with "the present reality, mainly through the identification of differences and the struggle within the party."[44] The anniversary exhibit offered a chance to discredit contemporary enemies with historical archival evidence. The center of the exhibit was meant to illustrate "the Lenin wing of the party in its struggle against Menshevism and the role of Lenin in creating the party," and also to show that Trotsky's "current position has its roots in the past" through the exhibition of brochures and reports from the Second Congress period.[45]

Edification through public commemorations of events was intended for two audiences. The celebration of the anniversary of the Second Party Congress was deemed

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[42] Larry E. Holmes and William Burgess, "Voice or Political Echo?: Soviet Party History in the 1920s," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 9, nos. 1-2 (1982): 393.

[43] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 187, l. 2.

[44] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 65, l. 8.

[45] Ibid.

worthy of mass consumptions, as it was considered more significant than the first since it was at this congress the Bolshevik faction emerged. The First Party Congress, which pre-dated the rise of the Bolshevik faction, was deemed unfit for mass celebration; exhibits and anniversary events were limited to regional party and Komsomol meetings.[46] Central Istpart member, and later Director of the Institute of Lenin, S. M. Savel'ev described the difference between exhibits for the masses, such as the *Museum of the Revolution*, and exhibits prepared for party members at their various events, congresses, seminars, which were to be pedagogical in orientation and intended for "more prepared party comrades."[47] The anniversary celebration of the First Party Congress presented the problem of the existence of a form of the party before Bolshevism and was not to be shared with the uninitiated, especially as the party became increasingly intolerant of non-Bolshevik participants in the revolution. The Second Party Congress was rich with potential touchstones for the contemporary Soviet society. The building of the cult of Lenin as the father of Bolshevism was well supported with a jubilee on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Second Party Congress where Lenin first coined the term.

Other events gave Bolsheviks the opportunity to not only to place themselves in the historical narrative, but also to establish that their revolution was on track and not making the mistakes of revolutionaries of the past. Commemorating the 1871 Paris Commune not only afforded them the chance to place themselves in the narrative of greater European revolutionary history, but also offered the opportunity to justify current, sometimes unpopular Soviet policies. At a 1927 all-union meeting of the directors Istpart

[46] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 135, l. 4.

[47] Corney, *Telling October,* 117.

sections, Sergei Gusev suggested that in connection with the celebration of ten years of the October Revolution they build an exhibit comparing the "ten years of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR to the Paris Commune," illustrating why one only lasted three months and the other already ten years.[48] This exhibit highlighted the differences that made the Bolshevik revolution more successful. Gusev claimed that the united party of the Bolsheviks, in place of several parties in Paris, was a reason for their success and a justification for the oppression of opposition parties and the ban on factions. He argued that the "unity, centralization, and discipline of our party were the most important conditions, which gave our dictatorship of the proletariat the ability to last a whole decade."[49] He also touted the Bolshevik policy of "ruthless oppression of the bourgeoisie" as a major factor in their victory, whereas the Paris Commune eventually failed because its "aspect of terror was very weak." And finally, the Bolsheviks were victorious where the French were not because of the proper policy toward peasants in the Soviet Union. They were able, through Leninism, to find a basis for a union between proletariats and peasants, which enabled them to build socialism as they held out for international revolution.[50] The common criticisms of the Soviet regime after Kronstadt and the suppression of factions as being too intolerant, ruled by terror, and not a proper proletarian, and therefore Marxist, revolutionary regime were all addressed in the framework of one exhibit on the failure of the Paris Commune.

[48] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 33, l. 6.

[49] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 33, l. 7.

[50] Ibid.

Publications also contributed to the efforts to establish the Soviet Union as the proper revolutionary heir to European Marxism. During the civil war, archival institutions already began the "publication of the classics of Marxism-Leninism and other documents on the history of the Bolshevik party and Soviet government" which had been heavily censored in the pre-revolutionary era.[51] With the establishment of the Institute of Marx and Engels (IME) in 1920, an endeavor to create the largest archive of Marxist materials in the world, the Soviets produced extensive publications of the works of Marx, Engels, and other revolutionary thinkers. IME also used the collection as the basis for publications such as a *Dictionary of Marx and Engels*, and an *International Bibliography of Socialism and* Marxism.[52] Publication efforts merged well with exhibit efforts that placed the Bolshevik revolution in a trajectory of not only Russian revolutionary tradition, but also the greater European revolutionary tradition that created Marxism. IME also published extensively in foreign languages for distribution abroad. Attempts to create and publish the largest collection of Marxist documents in the heart of Soviet Russia was as a symbolic attempt to establish Moscow as the center of Marxist thought. Indeed, many Western socialist intellectuals and party members did turn to IME for their vast scientific resources. IME fielded requests from leaders of communist parties in the West for affordable editions of Marx's works to distribute to their local workers.[53]

[51] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 3, l. 1.

[52] RGASPI f. 374, op. 1, d. 5, l. 97.

[53] RGASPI f. 71, f. 50, l. 10, 113-117.

Experiencing the Archival Museum

Archival exhibits had a wider reach than publications. They were well attended and at times even inspired great enthusiasm among attendees. An early "Public Education" archival exhibit in the Winter Palace was reviewed in the newspaper *Petrogradskaia Pravda* on Sunday, December 5, 1920. Here, the author noted, that until recently, just the word, archive "struck horror in even the most well-meaning and culturally minded people... The archive mouse was held in even lower esteem than clerical rat."[54] But this had recently changed as visitors to the exhibit, "workers, Red Army soldiers, sailors, daily by the thousands, literally thousands, flocked from factories, schools, clubs, ships, and the barracks of near and distant cities."[55] The author described a "lively crowd" among the "half-decayed pages, the rotting notebooks, and fading ink," captivated by a speaker describing the physical dangers to archival materials of fire, dampness, and pests. This enthusiastic portrayal was completed with a recounting of a sailor who returned to the exhibit with some of his friends and took them from exhibit case to exhibit case retelling the stories he had heard from the speaker.[56]

Visits to museums were customarily highly structured. One did not often wander into a museum to explore an exhibit on his own, but was taken as part of a guided excursion, usually organized through his place of occupation or education. Museums are inherently a guided interpretation of history, with what is chosen to display (or not to

[54] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d 228, l. 4.

[55] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d 228, l. 4.

[56] Ibid.

display) further constrained by the framework, placement, and description of various items. Corney describes the collecting of historical materials as project not so much "about 'recovering' historical memory but rather about framing it in the very process of elicitation."[57] The Bolsheviks were similarly concerned with framing the reception of these documents. The visit to a museum was not a personal experience, a chance to reflect on and develop one's own interpretations of the items exhibited as he interacted with them, but a guided experience. This did much to lessen the barrier of illiteracy to propaganda efforts as exhibited documents and photos were described and given context by a trained tour guide. Guided exhibit tours also further limited the potential for various interpretations of the presented historical narratives. The Bolsheviks had learned early that "even a properly placed symbol could be undermined by ill will or accident," such as a monument to the Ukrainian poet of peasant origins, Taras Shevchenko, erected in Moscow, which was presented with a wreath by the Ukrainian consulate on behalf Hetman Skoropadsky, head of the nationalist and anti-Bolshevik government in Kiev.[58] Such gaffes encouraged the careful guidance of visitors at archival exhibits, ensuring they received the documents with the proper interpretations.

The significance of the guided tour to the legitimacy of an exhibit experience was reflected in reported attendance statistics. Some institutions omitted the information on "individual" visitors, or simply did not collect such information in the first place, reporting only the number of visitors who attended on guided excursions.[59] Often single

[57] Corney, "Rethinking a Great Event," 401.

[58] Von Geldern, "Putting the Masses in Mass Culture," 128-129.

[59] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 8, l. 84.

visitors were turned away. In a 1927 letter to the newspaper *Pravda*, a Moscow citizen complained:

> Having read today in the newspaper, in the section "Moscow," of the organization by Tsentrarkhiv of an exhibit of documents on the history of the October Revolution, I was naturally very interested in this. But when I arrived at the exhibit, I was dumbfounded by the statement, "access to the exhibit only in group tours, single visitors are not admitted." Despite all my arguments and persuasions about the absurdity of such an order (after all, it is not always and everywhere possible to organize a group to visit the exhibit) they very graciously agreed with me, but still did not let me into the exhibit and I had to leave disappointed.[60]

The use of this additional layer of active interpretation also made the excursion guide a point of potential criticism. In April 1924, two students of the University of Sverdlov wrote a letter to the council of the *Museum of the Revolution* complaining of the ideological shortcomings witnessed during their visit, particularly those displayed by the guides. One guide in particular, a man of about thirty-two to thirty-five years of age with brown hair and a mustache, was imparting particularly weak guidance. In one reported example the guide approached an exhibit case and stated:

> And here's the Lena shootings of workers by captain Tereshchenko, for which the Tsar sent him an "imperial thanks." That's how it was comrades, we were beaten and shot, and he even got a thank you for it.[61]

"And that was it," the students complained, "not a peep on the role and significance of the Petrograd Soviet, not a word about the importance of the Lena events as the incentive of the mass labor movement of the years 1912-1914."[62] In 1926, after Comrade Tikh-Minkh visited the Moscow *Museum of the Revolution*, he wrote to Istpart and

[60] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1501, l. 18.

[61] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 213, l. 12r.

[62] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 213, l. 12r.

complained, "the composition of the staff is very unfortunate…the guides are boys who cannot provide any explanations and have no connections to the revolution."[63] These accusations were an affront to the head of the museum, Mitskevich, who claimed that of the sixteen "scientific" staff of the museum, only two members were younger than thirty-three. Great value was placed in employing guides who were themselves relics of the revolutionary struggle. Museum leaders expected significant members of the museum staff to be not only well versed in revolutionary history, but also participants in major revolutionary events.[64] Mitskevich stressed that half of the staff were not only active in the October Revolution, but the 1905 Revolution as well, an event the Bolsheviks had done much to illustrate as a direct line of heritage.

The Provinces

The domestic policy of the 1920s Soviet regime encouraged the participation of provincial and republic level archival institutions in unique publication and exhibit efforts. As the newly empowered Bolsheviks sought to establish, stabilize, and distinguish their rule, they embarked on inclusive policies to set them apart from that of the repressive, Russo-centric successor regimes. The policy of *korenizatsiia* (nativization), which encouraged the development of local language and culture, was one such effort to differentiate the new regime from the old and to offer an alternative vocabulary for the continued rule of far flung peoples by the Moscow center without engaging the terms of empire. Archival efforts merged well with the policy of

[63] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 120, l. 72.

[64] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 82, l. 1.

korenizatsiia as Tsentrarkhiv encouraged the publication and exhibition of local revolutionary histories and in local languages when relevant. Local historical publications were commissioned to create narratives that would write local provinces into a grand revolutionary narrative being fashioned by the Bolsheviks, establish a connection between center and periphery, present and past, and reaffirm the revolution as a local experience. Corney describes the publication plans for local Istpart sections as accommodating the "twin goals of narrative coherence and flexibility."[65] Indeed, publications were all to tell a tale of teleological revolutionary inevitably and required the inclusion of the Bolshevik party as part of this tale, but left room for the individual interpretation and periodization of local events.

State archival bureaus published articles and books focusing on local revolutionary events to reinforce the local experience as a part of the national event. The Siberian State Archival Bureau, for example, published its first contributions in the new journal *Сибирские огни* (*Siberian Fires*) in March of 1922 and included an article by the archivist G. M. Puskarev on the brutality of the White Guard in the summer of 1918 and memoirs from the Old Bolsheviks, A. A. Shiriamov, V. M. Kosarev, and E. M. Iaroslavskii, who hailed from the region.[66] In Astrkhan, the local archival publications included the books, *January Days in Astrakhan*, and *The Civil War in the Astrakhan Province*.[67] The Tatar Regional Istpart Section published "in addition to numerous newspaper articles, eleven books in the Russian and Tatar languages, in runs of one to

[65] Corney, *Telling October,* 115.

[66] V. S. Poznanskii**, "**Arkhivnoe Stroitel'stvo v Sibiri v Pervoe Desiatiletie Sovetskoi Vlasti," *Sovetskie Arkhivy* 2 (1968): 34.

[67] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 8, l. 82.

three thousand" and distributed this literature free of charge."[68] The extensive efforts by local Istpart sections to collect memoirs of local revolutionary participants formed the basis for many local archival publications. By early 1923, local Istpart sections had published thirty-three booklets, mostly filled with memoirs of local experiences.[69]

Exhibits in the provinces were an opportunity for local institutions to make their developing revolutionary historical narratives accessible to a wider range of regional populations. In June of 1925, archivist K. Voinov described the differences between the expectations for archival exhibits in the center and provinces in a report to the Exhibit Commission of Tsentrarkhiv. Exhibits in the center, Moscow and Leningrad, were to be exhibits with a research approach, with materials selected for exhibition based on research themes. However, in the provinces archival exhibits were to have a "local history bias," and in the republics, a "national bias," befitting of *korenizatsiia* policies.[70] In 1925 the Orlov State Archival Bureau's museum stated its objectives as "conducting information to the masses with an explicitly local history bias." Their exhibits covered the revolutionary movement in general (especially in the Orlov province), the old regime and society, issues of the church and its relations to the states, the value of archival materials and the need to preserve them, and the work of archival organs and Istpart.[71] A 1921 Exhibit of the Kharkov Istpart Section emphasized their unique experience in the periods of the Hetmanate and the counter-revolutionary leaders Denikin and Wrangel

[68] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 8, l. 84.

[69] Corney, *Telling October,* 131.

[70] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 975, l. 3r.

[71] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 975, l. 39.

during civil war.[72] As in the center, jubilee celebrations were significant vehicles for the public use of documents in the provinces. In 1922, the Tula State Archival Bureau used the fifth anniversary of the revolution as an opportunity for archivists to bring the message of the revolution to the people through celebratory events, including meetings with public talks on the basis of archival materials.[73] For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Second Party Congress, the Tatar Istpart section planned to publish a pamphlet, and organize a jubilee exhibition in Kazan, which would then travel to many counties and districts.[74]

By the mid-1920s most local Istpart sections and state archival bureaus had developed some form of exhibit or museum on the revolutionary movement and attendance rates were significant. In 1925, the Odessa *Museum of the October Revolution* received 27,926 visitors.[75] In Ulyanovsk from January 1927 to May 1928 the *Historical Revolutionary Museum* had 14,835 visitors.[76] In eight months of 1928, 9,800 people visited the Tatar Istpart section's *Museum of the Revolution*.[77] These high visitation statistics were repeated throughout the Soviet Union owing in significant part to the fact that many locals were brought in too museums as part of group excursions organized by their place of work or study. However, lack of resources available to provincial archives interfered with their ability to take advantage of this enthusiasm for

[72] Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Hromads'kykh Ob'edinan' Ukrainy (TsDAHO) f. 1, op. 20, d. 600, l. 17.

[73] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 666, l. 7.

[74] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 8, l. 84.

[75] GARF f. R 5325, op. 9, d. 1103, l. 6.

[76] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 8, l. 89.

[77] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 8, l. 84

exhibits. The Archangel Istpart section complained that they did not have the resources to create a museum and that the interest of the working masses, youth, and those of all ages of the population was massive. This was evident as around 6,000 people visited just the small part of an exhibit they were able to organize at the archive.[78] Active, energetic local archivists carried out campaigns to popularize archives and their work, but were then frustrated by the dearth of resources to sate the appetites they whetted. In Ukraine, the head of the exhibit section of the *Museum of the Revolution Ukrainian SSR* wrote to the editors of *Letopis' Revoliutsii* (*Chronicle of the Revolution*, Istpart Ukraine's journal) requesting that they reduce the price of the journal. When the museum took a travelling exhibit to the Donbas, "35,0000 workers became familiar with the journal" and it became popular among workers, but the subscription price was beyond their means.[79]

Central supervision of provincial archival management was scarce in 1920s, with local bureaus publishing documents and articles with little input from, or correspondence with, the center. In 1928 Central Istpart asked local Istpart sections to send copies of each of their local publications to Moscow, as they often could not attain copies otherwise.[80] Istpart leaders were in many ways at the mercy of a local section's willingness to participate in being managed. A lack of supervision, coupled with Bolshevik policies, which encouraged the development of independent local revolutionary narratives, produced results, which often did not come to the same historic conclusions as those of the historical leadership in the center. Local revolutionary

[78] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 120, l. 122.

[79] TsDAHO f. 1, op. 20, d. 2710, l. 55.

[80] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 135, l. 5.

historical narratives published and exhibited in the 1920s were at times not only improperly developed, but even contradictory to the grand historical narrative emanating from the party historical institutions at the center. In 1923, the Vladimir Istpart section published memoirs in the local journal which suggested "that early organizational activity in the area was generally not reducible to party labels and that an illegal, hectographed party newspaper published in the area from 1906 had been a cooperative venture of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Social Democrats."[81] In Tula, the publication of memoirs presented a picture of party organizations in 1905 with no real ties to striking workers in the Tula plants. Provincial sections were also publishing documentary sources without proper interpretation. In 1924, Istpart warned their local sections of "leav[ing] historical interpretation to the public," especially in regard to the history of the party. Local sections were publishing so many documents of the gendarme and pre-revolutionary courts that they were creating a "the history of the police, not the revolution."

> This does not mean that the documents of the gendarme offices, the courts, etc. should not be used. No, it means that we should not reprint them in full, we should not "rely" on them, as if they were uncontroversial documents, we need to correct, annotate, and supplement them. We must remember what is most important of the document of the sections of the secret police is the physical evidence and testimony of witnesses and defendants, dates, and not the conclusion of the prosecutor or the court.[82]

Istpart sections were also reprimanded for carrying out similar work with counter-revolutionary materials. Some were writing articles on the history of the revolution after October mostly referencing materials of the White Guards and "forgetting" the other, rather large, archives of Soviet and party institutions. The Deputy Directory of Istpart M.

[81] Corney, *Telling October,* 136.

[82] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 187, l. 1.

A. Savel'ev ordered local Istpart sections to stop investing so much effort into preparing essays and research work on counter-revolutionary events and rebellions, such as Kaledin and Kornilov Affair.[83] Ukrainian Istpart lamented that the local Istpart sections were employing non-party members as "party historians," who were publishing on topics such as architecture, and the history of Odessa.[84] As late as 1929 Tsentrarkhiv found local archives were publishing documents that were classified as secret despite a "series of circular instructions on the inadmissibility of publishing such documents in the press and individual departmental publications."[85]

Moscow instructed the provinces to carry out publication and exhibits of archival materials on certain jubilee events, but at times found the local focus of events to be misguided. In a November 1924 memo, Moscow Istpart chastised certain Istpart sections for the overzealous celebration of anniversaries:

> Istpart Kyrgyzstan is actively preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Pugachev movement. Kiev Istpart organized an exhibition devoted to the Ukrainian poet Shevchenko on the 110th anniversary of his birth. The Far Eastern Istpart prepares a special collection for the centennial of the Decembrists. Are all of these anniversaries, revolutionary anniversaries?[86]

Central Istpart argued that the topics of the Decembrists and Pugachev were already adequately covered by the leading Soviet historian, Pokrovskii, and did not want regional institutions wasting resources on these important, but less politically significant events,

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[83] Ibid.

[84] TsDAHO f. 1, op. 20, d. 2710, ll. 75r-76.

[85] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 579, l. 1.

[86] RGASPI f. 70, op 1, d. 187, l. 4.

when they should be preparing for the twentieth anniversary of the 1905 events.[87] The historical interpretations of provincial Istpart workers, with less than ideal political and educational backgrounds, were potential liabilities when drawing connections to past events for the public. In order to minimize such mistakes the Moscow archival administrations began limiting access to archival documents. A 1926 Tsentrarkhiv memo instructed provincial state archival bureaus to permit employees of Istpart sections to study the documents of police and security department collections only with the permission of the Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the party *and* the Director of Istpart.[88]

Provincial museums operated for years without any oversight from the center. Sometimes, when inspectors did finally reach museums, they were astounded by what they found. In 1928, an Istpart inspector reported "inattention to work" at the Saratov *Museum of the Revolution* resulting in the "haphazard installation of exhibits," such as the displays in the section on the Sormovskii armed uprising of 1905 which exhibited photographs of the Mensheviks with a caption claiming that "X" was the leader of the uprising. The inspector wrote:

> In fact, all living participants of the uprising know that X and his party were, on principle, against armed insurrection, and that X did not participate in the rebellion. The actual leaders of the insurrection were not in the exhibit.[89]

These cases were extremely troubling to the center, as the Bolsheviks had staked much of their legitimacy in a narrative that posited them as the true heir to revolutionary heritage.

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[87] Ibid.

[88] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 1410, l. 1.

[89] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 8, l. 86.

When the provinces proved they could not keep up with changing politics of the center, mistakenly labeling a Menshevik a hero of the 1905 Revolution was even more ghastly after the disgrace of Trotsky, the center abandoned the policy of encouraging a heavy local slant and relative autonomy for provincial museums. The Inspector from NKRKI**,** V. Nikol'skii, pointed out that there were too many differences between analogous museum exhibits in the republics and center.[90] Exhibits were the most direct link between the high level academic historical work of the party and the people, making an exhibit's ideological weaknesses significant.

Because of the disjointed structure of funding (local) and management (central) of provincial archival institutions, archival exhibits did not always respond to attempts of centralized control. At times due to the decisions of local governments, exhibits fell under the jurisdiction of agencies other than Tsentrarkhiv or Istpart, usually Narkompros, which oversaw work of non-political museums. In 1924, Istniuk, head of the Inspector Section of Tsentrarkhiv, reported to the Scientific-Theoretical Board of Tsentrarkhiv that in the provinces there were many exhibits under the Museum Section of Narkompros that were being carried out improperly. They were "exhibiting documents which can not be regarded as artifacts in the inherent sense of the term. They have the invalid view that almost every document is worthy of an exhibit." Istniuk requested Tsentrarkhiv assert its authority over these museums as, after all that was "Tsentrarkhiv's sphere of influence."[91] However, this sphere of influence over documents was contentious, as their existed several historical and archival institutions with overlapping missions. Istpart leaders

[90] RGASPI f. 70 op. 1 d. 209, l. 30.

[91] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 485, l. 22.

asserted the same authority over the exhibit of documents as Tsentrarkhiv. At a 1927 meeting of Istpart leaders, Troitskii of Ulyanovsk Province, complained that because of the way local funding and hierarchies were established some historical-revolutionary museums were falling under the direction of various institutions. He argued that no matter where its funding originated, ideological leadership of a museum should always come from Istpart and only Istpart.[92] In Moscow, it was easier to delineate the roles of Istpart and Tsentrarkhiv, but in the provinces the local sections for both institutions were often one and the same, creating an institution with two heads, two hierarchies of leadership, and occasionally, two conflicting sets of orders. By the late 1920s central leadership for both institutions had made concerted efforts to reduce this confusion. Tsentrarkhiv instructed its local bureaus to defer to the local Istpart section, if one existed, in the building of a museum on the revolution, and to aid them in this process by providing them with necessary materials from their collections.[93]

Getting Control

In a 1927 report Mitskevich, head of the *Moscow Museum of the Revolution*, argued for more guidance from the center for all museums of the October Revolution:

> At the current time there are many museums of revolution in the USSR, but not one leader or organizational center. This is unacceptable because museums are responsible as agitation and educational centers, requiring sustained ideological guidance and the necessary funds for a wide and unfettered development.[94]

[92] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 35, l. 40.

[93] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 975, l. 9.

[94] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 120, l. 165.

Mitskevich suggested the establishment of an all-union directive center to provide ideological leadership. This center comprised a commission led by scientific, educational, and literary publishing institutions of the TsIK SSSR, more specifically, the head of Istpart, the Director of the *Museum of the Revolution*, the Director of Tsentrarkhiv, the head of the Museum Division of Main Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions (Glavnoe Upravlenie Nauchnym, Nauchno-Khudozhestvennymi i Muzeinymi Uchrezhdeniiami, Glavnauka) and the head of the Military-Historical Section of the Revolutionary Military Council.[95] A 1929 plan for exhibits by Tsentrarkhiv indicated that the use of archives for political education purposes was now to be made in agreement in agreement with the work plans of the Lenin Institute, Communist Academy, Museums of the Red Army, and Main Political-Education Committee of the Republics (Glavnyi Politiko-Prosvetitel'nyi Komitet Respubliki, Glavpolitprosvet). Indeed, the trend in the late 1920s in archival institutions was toward consolidation. In 1928 Istpart and its collections were combined with the Institute of Lenin. The founding of the *Single Party Archive* in 1929 institutionalized the party's trend of retracting their record keeping from Tsentrarkhiv's influence and consolidated all party related documentary materials under one institution, the Institute of Lenin. Finally, in 1931 the Institute of Lenin was further consolidated with the Institute of Marx and Engels. The newly created Institute of Marx, Engels, Lenin created central ideological control over publications and exhibits on all aspects of the revolutionary movement—Marxist tradition, Lenin, and the party. The trend of consolidation and centralization in the center was also reflected in relationship of the provinces to the

[95] Ibid.

center. Provincial archives were no longer actively encouraged to forge their own path in exhibit organizations. Increasingly stringent instructions were dispatched from the center for development of topical exhibits, and at times, even exhibit materials came from the center. With the merger of Istpart into the Institute of Lenin in 1928, many local Istpart sections were immediately closed, some subsumed into research organizations, and all eventually closed by the late 1930s.

As the party developed a stricter control over the historical narrative, access to documents by researchers became increasing limited. By the late 1920s, access was limited to researchers dispatched from appropriate communist research institutions, e.g. the Institute of Lenin, Communist Academy, and Istpart. As the decade progressed researchers were often denied access to materials with the explanation that Tsentrarkhiv had already published on that subject ensuring the maintenance of specific perspective on many topics.[96] Access to documentary sources was also limited in more subtle ways. In 1929 evaluations of the experiences in archival reading rooms, almost all of the researchers who were still admitted to work with archival materials responded with complaints that the archival workers would not give them inventory lists (*opisi*) on their approved topics.[97] The movement toward consolidation of archival institutions resulted in further limited access to documents for historical research, as certain institutions exercised increasing control over their collection domains. In an order from 1930 sent to all archival institutions, Tsentrarkhiv instructed that they were to allow the study of

[96] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1425, l. 238.

[97] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1898, ll. 92-93.

materials on the work of party organizations and members, and relating to the life of Lenin, only with the approval of the Institute of Lenin.[98]

The narrative had been established, the government was fairly stable, and the need to cater to ideologically suspicious participants had passed. Bourgeois historians, who were certainly always a suspicious group as their approach lacked a Marxist ideology and methodology, became less tolerable to the Bolsheviks with the changing policies of the party in the late 1920s. A 1927 inter-departmental letter reveals the increasing distrust by party members of bourgeois historians. On May 22 of that year, Istpart received news that L. M. Dobrovolskii was scheduled to give a report entitled, "Publications of Istpart" to the Scientific and Research Institute of Bibliography in Leningrad. Istpart quickly blocked this report, stating it considered "it inappropriate for non-party community organizations, such as this Scientific-Research Institute of Bibliography, to discuss the work of departments of party organizations and requests the wide notification of all relevant agencies and organizations."[99] Non-Marxist historians and archivists were eliminated from archival apparatuses during the purge of specialists in the late 1920s, with 115 arrested in 1929 and 1930 as in connection with the "Academic Case" brought against the historian S. F. Platonov.

The repeated failures of local archival publications and exhibits to live up to the expectation of the center, and the inability of the center to directly observe local institutions, encouraged party leaders to reevaluate their policy of inclusiveness. Early Bolshevik enthusiasm imagined that the proper consciousness coupled with new access to

[98] GARF f. R5325, op. 1, d. 765, l. 1.

[99] RGASPI f. 70, op. 1, d. 119, l. 221.

the archival evidence of history would result in the revealing of the truth of history. Perhaps the Bolsheviks' hypothesis was flawed and a truthful, universal narrative could never be reliably reproduced with the proper ingredients. But the Bolsheviks never had the appropriate ingredients for such on outcome in the first place. Attempts to approach truth in historical publications were hindered by a lack of resources which first made many non-Marxist specialists responsible for writing and disseminating this new revolutionary history, and then replaced them with uneducated, sometimes only partially literate party members. The relative autonomy for publishing in the provinces was curtailed with much more censorship and oversight. Finally, the much-vaunted memoirs of the early 1920s, the staples of Istpart collections, which filled the pages of *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia* and local archival publications, were to be published "only in exceptional cases," instead favoring "articles of a research nature."[100]

From 1927, with the introduction of widespread archival jubilee exhibits and events for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, historic revolutionary exhibits shifted focus from a long view of revolutionary heritage to the short view of revolutionary history with October as the starting point. During the previous decade, the focus had been on establishing the October Revolution as part of the greater revolutionary heritage. Whereas October had once been the climax, it was now the starting point with the industrial program as the climax.[101] In keeping with the consolidation of historical institutions, Orgburo declared the journal *Proletarskaia*

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[100] RGASPI f. 91, op. 1 d. 68, l. 54.

[101] James von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 228.

Revoliutsiia as the central authority on the history of the party and instructed it to "shift the center of gravity of research to after 1917, on Soviet building, and not on facts of the civil war."[102] The emphasis on post-1917 history included a move away from celebrating revolutionary events toward events of industrialization. New archival work was less focused on historical research and more and more toward the practical service of building the state and economy. New exhibits featured displays on "Soviet construction, economy, culture, and way of life" and provincial archival museums were increasingly offered photocopies of exhibit materials ensuring a greater uniformity among exhibits.[103] Mass technology allowed for centralized production of historical propaganda to be widely disbursed. In 1929 Tsentrarkhiv began hosting a cycle of radio shows, "The Hour of Memoirs," where the Deputy Director of Tsentrarkhiv, V. V. Maksakov, discussed archival documents and their role in the struggle against the Soviet's enemies and the practical construction of building the USSR.[104]

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When the Bolsheviks took power they soon discovered that most of their countrymen and the world did not embrace or even understand the often abstract ideology on which they based their revolution. Their Marxist value of history supported a scientific belief in the inevitability of proletarian victory and also engaged in terms and values of history that could be used to communicate to a large part of their population and

[102] RGASPI f. 91, op. 1 d. 68, l. 54.

[103] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, d. 1656, l. 12r.

[104] GARF f. R5325, op. 9, 1656, l. 31.

foreign countries. Attempts to create a coherent public display of a proper historical narrative across the vast lands of the Soviet Union, while encouraging distinct accounts by various groups, was for the most part a failure. By the end of the decade, the party had consolidated and centralized archival institutions and their production of public commodities. But the final incarnations of these institutions formed throughout the 1920s became permanent fixtures of Soviet archival science. The model of public historical celebration of anniversaries was taken up and expanded throughout the Soviet period, particularly during World War II, when historical examples of great Russian leadership were rescued from their graves and trotted out in service of the Soviet war effort.

Conclusion

> *Who, except hopeless bureaucrats, can rely on written documents alone? Who, except archive rats, does not understand that a party and its leaders must be tested primarily by their deeds and not merely by their declarations?*
>
> -J. V. Stalin, 1931

A 1932 report on the struggle to uproot the remnants of the *Menshevist Riazanovschina* (Menshevik Riazanovism) in Soviet archival science claimed that "new achievements in Soviet archives are possible only by resolutely advancing archival theory, sustained in the spirit of Marx and Lenin, by ruthless struggle with open and disguised forms of the bourgeois and opportunist ideology."[1] The development of the Soviet archival system was intimately tied to the Bolshevik experiment of establishing a new state, economy, and society after the October Revolution. In the early 1930s, the party, which had already begun to liquidate bourgeois specialists in the previous decade, began to investigate and purge the enemies within its own ranks. This process of reevaluation extended to the archival and historical professions. The party endeavored to root out the undesirable influence of party members once employed in archival work, but who, like D. B. Riazanov, had recently fallen out of favor. Further, the massive centralization of the Soviet economy and state marked by the introduction of the first five-year plan in 1928 was reflected in the centralization of archival administration under two leadership organizations; a party institution (Institute of Marx, Engels, Lenin, IMEL)

[1] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. R5325, op. 9, d. 2045, l. 1. The *Riazanovschina* referred to the inappropriate work carried out in archives under the leadership of D. B. Riazanov, who led Tsentrarkhiv from 1918-1920 and the Institute of Marx and Engels from 1920-1931.

and a state institution (Central Archival Administration USSR, Tsentrarkhiv). Both institutions had achieved vast consolidation of the administration of archival documents and leadership of their repositories, and were increasingly classifying and limiting access to collections in line with the greater intolerance and paranoia of politics in 1930s Soviet Union. Indeed, by 1931 the Bolsheviks had laid the groundwork for the infamous Soviet system of information control that came to characterize the regime. In the tumultuous period of the 1930s the party presented an increasingly narrow view of the Bolshevik historical narrative signaled by J. V. Stalin's 1931 letter to the editorial Board of *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia,* the historical journal of Istpart (Commission for the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party) and its successor organization, the Institute of Lenin**.** Stalin criticized the state of historical research presented in the journal, particularly in an article by the historian and party member A. G. Slutsky, which Stalin denounced as "anti-party" and "semi-Trotskyist," in its slander of Lenin.[2]

This famous attack on Soviet historical scholarship was also an attack on the role of archives in history. In his letter, Stalin stressed that "rummaging among casually selected papers" of archives was not a reliable means to judge the acts of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.[3] He chastised, "Is it not obvious that if Slutsky really wanted to test the relentlessness of Lenin and the Bolsheviks towards Centrism, he should have taken as the basis of his article, not individual documents and two or three personal letters, but a test

[2] John Barber, "Stalin's Letter to the Editors of Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya," *Soviet Studies* 28, no. 1 (Jan 1976): 21.

[3] J. V. Stalin, *Works, Volume13, July 1930 to January 1934*. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954): 100.

of the Bolsheviks by their deeds, their history, their actions?"[4] Stalin offered, however, no explanation of where to find the evidence of these deeds if they were not to be found among archival records. In the years following the letter, *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia* entered a yearlong hiatus from publishing, the history departments of most Soviet universities were closed for several years,[5] and the historical narrative was most notably redefined by the 1938 *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Short Course*, which relied more on the imagination of Stalin than historical evidence provided by archives. In the same year as the publication of the *Short Course*, the party revoked Tsentrarkhiv's independent status reporting directly to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet, VtsIK) and subordinated it to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del, NKVD).

Yet this outcome was not predictable. As this study has shown, the development of the controlled archival system of the Soviet Union was an evolution from relative openness to crushing censorship that spanned over a decade. With the early excitement at their initial success in 1917, the Bolsheviks imagined a near future in which other major capitalist societies would fall to the unstoppable forces of the proletarian revolution. Early notions of archives in the Soviet state were shaped by an objective to advance this inevitable worldwide revolution by making public the damning secrets of the previous regimes and their allies, and a political outlook, which included no need for strict secrecy or control of information.

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[4] Stalin, *Works*, 99.

[5] Only universities in Erevan, Dnepropetrovsk, and Samarkand taught history of from 1931 to 1934.

The Bolshevik ideological basis of Marxism did, however, encourage a scholarly respect for documentary resources and their preservation after the October Revolution, even as the physical manifestations of the information represented in these documents was expected to wither away. Bolshevik leaders in 1917 had not yet imagined the later tightly controlled, political role of archives which is reproduced in both Soviet and Western literature. Indeed, archives were initially assigned a cultural role by the June 1, 1918 decree, which subordinated the archival administration, along with museums and libraries, to the People's Commissariat of the Enlightenment (Narodnyi Komissariat Prosvescheniia, Narkompros).

The harsh realities of the civil war challenged the early Bolshevik conception of archives rooted in theoretical musings of party leaders before they took power. The continued opposition to Bolshevik power in the very visible form of war, and the continued lack of an industrialized proletarian society meant Bolsheviks had to face the practical implications of ruling a beleaguered regime. As a regime based on a "dictatorship of the proletariat" in a nation of peasants, the Bolsheviks endeavored to reshape the way the public conceived their collective history. The creation of a usable past that offered legitimacy to the regime became more significant as the present continued to fail to yield clear grounds for the Bolsheviks' power. Sheila Fitzpatrick points out that the Bolsheviks had reason to worry: "The party was led by intellectuals who believed in the working class, being Marxists, but had no real reason to believe that the working class believed in them."[6] The party employed archives to create and disperse this new collective revolutionary history as a means to unify and stabilize the population

[6] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Bolsheviks' Dilemma: Class, Culture, and Politics in the Early Soviet Years." *Slavic Review* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 599.

behind the new regime, and to give the working classes and the peasants a reason to not only to respect the Bolsheviks as their leaders, but also to be Bolshevik. In 1922 the party institutionalized this shift away from cultural work of archives by removing Tsentrarkhiv from under Narkompros and assigning it directly to the highest state political body, VTsIK.

Historians have tackled the development of the legitimizing historical narrative at the top levels, considering party motivations and the jockeying among communist and non-communist historical scholars. George Enteen examines the conflict between Marxist and non-Marxist historians as an explanation of the process that led to the narrow interpretation of the historical narrative by the end of the 1920s. He posits that the final narrative was affected by the struggle for power within the party and an effort to suppress opposition through "the elaboration and inculcation by the victorious faction of a comprehensive, yet highly specific, view of the past."[7] Robert Byrnes and Roman Szporluk also offer interpretations that prioritize reactions to high politics in the development of the Bolshevik narrative.[8] While the party politics were indeed influential on the creation of the historical narrative, this study argues for the necessity of extending the investigation of the Bolshevik historical narrative to the practical aspects of the development of the Soviet archival system. The narrative imagined by party leaders at the center shaped, and was in turned shaped by, collecting and publication efforts of local archival institutions. Efforts to create collections in support of the preferred Bolshevik

[7] George M. Enteen, "Marxists versus Non-Marxists: Soviet Historiography in the 1920s," *Slavic Review* 35, no.1 (March 1976): 110.

[8] Robert F. Byrnes**, "**Creating the Soviet Historical Profession, 1917-1934," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 297-308, and Roman Szporluk, "Pokrovskii's View of the Russian Revolution," *Slavic Review* 26, no. 1 (Mar 1967): 70-84.

historical narrative were never as successful as party leaders desired and led to an increasing disillusionment and fear of open access to information and forums for debate.

The Soviet archival administration developed in the 1920s is recognized as the most extensive and centralized archival organization of its time, with archives and archivists having far reaching influence beyond what was traditionally expected of archival repositories. However, the archives exhibited a relative level of openness in the 1920s, unacknowledged in Western literature on Soviet archives, which retains a Cold War influenced perspective of archival development. This study shows that the continued relative openness of the archival system reflected, and reinforced, many early Soviet policies. For example, early provincial and republic level archival work reflected the regime's emphasis on *korenizatsiia* as local Istpart sections and state archival bureaus were encouraged to collect, exhibit, and publish documents which reflected the local role in the revolutionary struggle, and in native languages when relevant. This policy highlighted the difference between the regime and its Imperial predecessors, allowing Bolshevik leaders to claim an anti-imperialist objective, while maintaining power over minority groups. It also attempted to localize the revolutionary experience for those outside the center. But the failure of efforts by the party to create and distribute an inclusive, yet consistent narrative, led to policies of increasing consolidation of voices in the Bolshevik narrative. As historians have pointed out, this eventually played out at the highest levels with the suppression of alternative voices from within the party, but this study highlights the as yet unexplored influence of the failures at the local level that encouraged a stricter interpretation of the historical narrative.

This study also engaged the recent reassessment of attempts to create a preferred historical narrative in archives by archival scholars. As archival scholars Schwartz and Cook note, attempts at creating systems of power in archives are complicated and often inconsistent. [9] This was especially true of early Soviet archives as they developed at a time of instability, lack of resources, and political conflict. Archivists navigated many competing ideological and practical pressures to make everyday decisions about what to preserve or destroy, how to organize, and how to describe. Each decision had a great impact on the development of the Soviet documentary heritage. Eric Ketelaar points out that, "people create, process, appraise and use archives, influenced consciously or unconsciously by cultural and social factors."[10] There was significant impact on the development of historical record as a result of the employment of a mix of holdover "bourgeois specialists" alongside hastily trained members from the working and peasant classes who all brought their own cultural biases. Although Marxist-Leninist ideology was stressed as a guiding principle of archival science and institutions received pamphlets such as Pokrovskii's *The Political Meaning of Archives*, which extolled the importance of dialectical materialism in archival practices, most early archivists were hastily trained with pre-revolutionary curriculums by pre-revolutionary specialists. Often in place of Marx and Lenin, in the 1920s archivists learned about the history of German, French, Belgium, and Italian archives.[11] Attempts by archival leaders to effectively control this motley crew of workers to create a system of archives that could produce consistent and

[9] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (March 2002): 14.

[10] Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (June 2001): 136.

[11] GARF f. 5325, op. 9, d. 56, l. 44.

appropriate historical narratives and collections were further hindered by endemic financial shortages of the 1920s Soviet Union. As a result, archival leaders adopted policies of centralization and classification to remove the authority and autonomy of the archivists of local institutions that Tsentrarkhiv could not properly supervise.

This study also examines the practical use of documents in the Soviet Union and the resulting effect on the development of a closed archival system. The unplanned and ideologically suspect return to a partial private economy under the New Economic Policy (*Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika,* NEP) and the desire for re-introduction of foreign industrial investment meant the Bolsheviks had to establish their regime as an acceptable partner for diplomatic and economic endeavors. This role was unanticipated by the 1918 Bolsheviks who had brashly cancelled all foreign debt responsibility and nationalized foreign property within the former Russian Empire. The scars of the civil war, in which numerous capitalist countries directly aided the Bolsheviks' enemies, made the Bolsheviks weary of these same countries as they now endeavored to conduct, if not friendly, then stable relations with them. The mistrust of these nations prompted the Bolsheviks to search out, comb over, and protect the papers of counter-revolutionary organizations in the civil war to ascertain just what role, and to what extent, their current international associates were involved in attempts to destabilize Bolshevik power. This increasing suspicion of foreigners in a state that had shifted from a policy that anticipated worldwide revolution to "socialism in one country," resulted in the further consolidation and classification of sources and a shift toward the more practical use of archival resources.

Finally, with the advent of the first five-year plan and the increased focus on industrialization, archives were re-imagined as tools to be used in building the economy, shifting the primary tasks of Tsentrarkhiv completely away from goals in the historical fields. Tsentrarkhiv instructed archivists to abandon their traditional tasks in order to search out and uncover papers related to the specific plans of the industrial economy. Although at first glance this shift may seem in opposition to the historical propaganda use of archives that came before, the focus on aiding the industrialization of the Soviet economy was yet another use of documents to aid in the search of a legitimizing source of Bolshevik power. The retreat to a mixed market economy of the 1920s under NEP upset a number of the Bolshevik claims to legitimacy as a communist revolutionary regime. The first five-year plan was intended to vault the USSR into an industrial status appropriate to a proletarian society and the party enlisted archives in the effort to provide the necessary information for fulfilling the plan. While historians have not referenced this shift to non-historical role of archives as a contributing factor to the increased censorship of history by the end of the 1920s in the Soviet Union, the shift did contribute to the narrowing of the historical narrative. Indeed, Stalin affirmed the end of archives as a source of historical narrative with his 1931 statements rejecting archival resources as basis for historical scholarship. The vast institutions of archival exhibits were enlisted to create displays on building the industrial economy and to emphasize the achievements of the five-year plan as the culmination of the new communist historical narrative.

Although the Soviet archival infrastructure was established by 1931, archival administration was by no means as universally effective as Soviet literature may lead one to believe. Resource shortages remained a problem throughout the Soviet period

ensuring echoes of the problems faced by the first archivists of the Bolshevik regime. Further, the 1930s introduced another form of instability as the party turned on itself and political and ideological battles permeated state institutions. As the archivist and academic N. V. Brzhostovkiia pointed out in her memoirs, development of archival theory in the 1930s was characterized by "fierce ideological and political battles" over what a socialist archival science should be, revealing that genuine stabilization within archival science was still years away.[12] Attempts to extend standardization and professionalization established in the 1920s were hindered by the purges of the 1930s, which created immense changes in leadership, personnel, and institutional culture. Among 1930s administrative records of MGIAI are countless files on the purging of faculty, students and staff for "counterrevolutionary" and "Trotskyist" statements made in class or institutional meetings.[13] The shifting politics of the 1930s affected the highest ranks of the archival administration. When Soviet leaders consolidated the Institute of Marx and Engels with the Institute of Lenin in 1931, they removed Riazanov from the position of Director. He was later arrested and shot in 1938. Although Pokrovskii died a natural death in 1932 before the major political upheaval of the mid and late 1930s, his works fell out of favor and the party banned his books in the late 1930s. Pokrovskii's successor as head of Tsentrarkhiv, I. A. Berzin was arrested and shot in 1938.

The Bolsheviks came to power as the liberators of Russia from the repressive Tsarist regime. Their goals were extensive and included the transformation of the economy and the establishment of a society free from the repression of the Tsarist past. While this study does not engage in a critical analysis of the success or failure of the

[12] N. V. Brzhostovkiia, "Istoriko-Arkhivnyi Institut v Pervye Gody," *Otechestvennye Arkhivy* 2 (1998): 79.

[13] GARF f. 5325, op. 1, d. 1046.

Bolsheviks' overall goals, the analysis of the Bolsheviks approach to the creation of usable past through their policies on archives reveals much about their perception of their own power and the areas where they failed to live up to their goals. The freshman revolutionaries of 1917 did not imagine the world of strict archival control of 1931. Not only was this image at odds with their basic ideology, the outcome of the first socialist experiment was as yet beyond the bounds of imagination. The increasing control of information and history which emerged after 1917 reflected a failure by the Bolsheviks' to free Russia from its past. In the end, the Bolsheviks found they did have something to hide, and party control of the evidence of the past under the most extensive archival administration in the world reached levels that surpassed those of their repressive predecessors.

Appendix
List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Title (Russian Transliteration)	Full Title (English Translation)
AOR	*Arkhiv Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii*	Archive of the October Revolution
Cheka	Chrezvychainaia Komissiia	Extraordinary Commission
CC	—	Central Committee (of the Communist Party)
CPSU	—	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
EGAF	Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhivnyi Fond	Single State Archival Fond
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii	State Archive of the Russian Federation
Glavarkhiv	Glavnoe Arkhivnoe Upravlenie	Main Archival Administration
Glavmuzei	Glavnoe Muzeinoe Upravlenie	Main Museum Administration
Glavnauka	Glavnoe Upravlenie Nauchnym, Nauchno-Khudozhestvennymi i Muzeinymi Uchrezhdeniiami	Main Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions
Glavpolitprosvet	Glavnyi Politiko-Prosvetitel'nyi Komitet Respubliki	Main Political-Education Committee of the Republics
Glavprofobr	Glavnoe Upravlenie Professional'nogo Obrazovaniia	**M**ain Administration of Professional Education
Gosarkhiv	Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR	State Archive of the RSFSR
Gubprodkum	Gubernskii Prodovol'stvennyii Komitet	Provincial Food Committee
IME	Institut K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa	Institute of Marx and Engels

IMEL	Institut Marksa-Engel'sa-Lenina pri VKP(b)	Institute of Marx, Engels, Lenin under the CC CPSU
Istmol	Kommissiia po Izucheniiu Istorii Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuza Molodezhi i Iunosheskogo Dvizheniia	Commission for the Study of the History of the All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League and the Youth Movement in the USSR
Istpart	Komissiia po Istorii *Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii i RKP(b)*	*Commission on the History* of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist *Party in the USSR*
Istprof	Komissiia po Izucheniiu Istorii Professional'nogo Dvizheniia v Rossii i SSSR	Commission for the Study of the History of the Trade-Union Movement in Russia and the USSR
MGIAI	Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoriko-Arkhivnyi Institut	Moscow State Historical-Archival Institute
Narkompros	Narodnyi Komissariat Prosvescheniia	People's Commissariat of the Enlightenment
Narkomzem	Narodnyi Komissariat Zemledeliia	The People's Commissariat of Land Use
NEP	*Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika*	New Economic Policy
NKID	Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del	People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
NKRKI	Narodnyi Komissariat Raboche-Krest'ianskoi Inspektsii	People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate
NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
NKVT	Narodnyi Komissariat Vneshnei Torgovli	People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade

Orgburo	Organizatsionnoe Biuro TsK	Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee
Politsektsiia	Sektsii Politiki i Prava	Section on Policy and Law
RANION	Rossiiskaia Assotsiatsiia Nauchno Issledovatel'skikh Institutov Obschestvennykh Nauk	Russian Association of Social Science Institutes
RKP(b)	Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bol'shevikov)	Russian Communist Party (bolsheviks)
RSDRP	Rossiiskaia Sotsial-Demokraticheskaia Rabochaia Partiia	Russian Social Democratic Labor Party
RSFSR	Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublik	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
Sovnarkom	Sovet Narodnykh Kommissarov	Council of People's Commissars
SRs	Partiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov	Party of Socialists-Revolutionaries
SSSR	Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
STO	Sovet Truda i Oborony	Council of Labor and Defense
Tsentrarkhiv	Tsentral'noe Arkhivnoe Upravlenie	Central Archival Administration
TsIK SSSR	Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet SSSR	Central Executive Committee USSR
TsK	Tsentral'nyi Komitet (RKP(b) or VKP(b))	Central Committee (of the Communist Party)
VSNKh	Vysshii Sovet Narodnogo Khoziaistva	Supreme Soviet of the National Economy
VtsIK	Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet	All-Russian Central Executive Committee

VKP(b)	Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bol'shevikov)	All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks)

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Archive references are noted as f (*fond*; collection), op. (*opis'*; series), d. (*delo'*; file), l. (*list*; page)

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Fond A2306- Ministerstvo Prosvescheniia RSFSR (Ministry of Enlightenment RSFSR)

Fond R130- Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov RSFSR (Council of People's Commissars RSFSR)

Fond R3316- Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet SSSR (Central Executive Committee USSR)

Fond R53250- Glavnoe Arkhivnoe Upravlenie pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR (Main Archival Administration under the Council of Ministers of the USSR)

Fond R7789- Obschestvo Rossiiskikh Arkhivnykh Deiatelei (Society of Russian Archival Workers)

Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History) Moscow, Russia.

Fond 17- Tsentral'nyi Komitet KPSS (Central Committee of the Communist Party)
Op. 34- Uchetno-Raspredelitel'nyi Otdel (Registration and Distribution Division)
Op. 60- Otdely: Agitatsii i Propagandy; Pechati; po Agitatsii, Propagande i Pechati (Departments: Agitation and Propaganda, Printing, on Agitation, Propaganda and Printing)

Fond 70- Komissiia po Istorii Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii i Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (bol'shevikov) (Commission on the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party in the USSR)

Fond 71- Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS (Institute of Marxism-Leninism)

Fond 91- Ol'minskii (nast. Aleksandrov) Mikhail Stepanovich, 1863-1933 (Ol'minskii, Mikhail Stepanovich)

Fond 374- Institut K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa pri TsIK SSSR, (Institute of Marx and Engels)

Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Hromads'kykh Ob'edinan' Ukrainy (TsDAHO, Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine) Kiev, Ukraine

Fond 1- Tsentral'nyi Komitet Kommunisticheskoi Partii Ukrainy (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine)

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