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Denis V. Volkov

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Fearing the Ghosts of State Officialdom Past? Russia's Archives as a Tool for Constructing Historical Memories of Its Persia Policy Practices

DENIS V. VOLKOV*

There is a time-honoured Soviet principle that is still generally adhered to by all manner of present-day Russian officialdom, namely *Лучше перебдеть, чем недобдеть*, which can be roughly translated as *There is no such thing as too much vigilance*. This, of course, was a major part of the traditionally strong Soviet anti-spy discourse which was born after 1917, when the Bolsheviks posed Russia against the rest of the world and the emphasized existence of an omnipresent external enemy helped consolidate their power grip over the country.¹ The Soviet oppressive and even genocidal past of present-day Russia's state security services was insightfully studied in the scholarly works such as 'A State Against Its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union'; 'Tools for Revolution: Wartime Mobilization in State Building' and 'An Intensification of Vigilance: Recent Perspectives on the Institutional History of the Soviet Security Apparatus in the 1920s' that analysed the formation, the modality of action and the place of state security organs within Soviet society.² Indeed, the virtually anti-national institutional practices of these organs were mainly justified by means of the discourse of the external enemy, inculcated to the peoples of the USSR from the top, by the Soviet officialdom. After a brief historical reprieve in the 1990s, since 2000 similar manifestations have started to gradually gain momentum anew. A rather obscure but no less menacing external enemy allegedly again settled at the gate.³

Taking into consideration that all Russian archives have had an omnipotent and secret so-called *special department* since Soviet times, the above-mentioned unspoken rule is rigorously observed. The implementation of the Russian version of what is known as the 30-year rule in the West, but which is in actual fact a 70-year rule in Russia, is at the discretion of these special departments. As a result, restrictions of access to archival holdings are habitually, and seemingly arbitrarily, extended for at least one decade at a time if not even simply doubled. Russia's archive professionals

*PhD in Middle Eastern Studies, University of Manchester, Samuel Alexander Building-SG.20, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK. E-mail: vdvman@gmail.com.

are far from happy with this state of affairs, and would in actual fact welcome greater openness, which would be in their own interest. They openly complain of ‘the absence of the necessary balance between the regime of safeguarding documents and the regime of their accessibility’.⁴ However, it is not they who make the decisions. Thus, the principle being followed by Russian archives at the moment is that of *otkrytaia zakrytost’* – ‘open closedness’⁵ – and everyone wishing to embark on the thorny path of archival research in Russia should be ready to do his or her own *battle for truth*.

The term ‘battle for truth’ was first coined by Michel Foucault (1926–84) who said:

These ‘general politics’ and ‘regimes of truth’ are the result of scientific discourse and institutions, and are reinforced (and redefined) constantly through the education system, the media, and the flux of political and economic ideologies. In this sense, the ‘battle for truth’ is not for some absolute truth that can be discovered and accepted, but is a battle about the rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power are attached to the true . . . a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays.⁶

Based on Foucault’s above-mentioned dictum, it becomes evident that over the last few centuries intellectuals have played an increasing role in the context of that model of the world that mankind constructed and adopted for themselves; since, in society, where there is no objective and dispassionate knowledge and truths are available only in certain acceptable (for such a society) forms and always work in the interests of particular groups,⁷ a formidable role accrues to intellectuals who are participating in the ‘battles’ for or around constructing those truths.

The situation with archives has always been far from unequivocal and straightforward in the periods of both Imperial and Soviet Russia. This is illustrated by the example of such historical personalities as Sergey Zhukovsky (1883–1966), who almost died in the course of his endeavours to clear up the Aegean stables, putting into order the archives of the *Persidskii stol* (Persian Desk) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of late Imperial Russia, and struggling with his superiors for the right to use archival materials for his scholarly work. In this sense, such an outstanding representative of late Imperial Russia’s Oriental studies should be, at a certain length, dwelled upon separately, along with his father. Sergey Valentinovich was born into the family of Valentin Alekseevich Zhukovsky (1858–1918),⁸ professor of Persian studies, who succeeded in masterly combining his academic career with administrative duties as Head of the St. Petersburg Faculty of Oriental Languages and the duties of an influential statesman, working as Head of the Oriental Training Section at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, thereby, strengthening the nexus between Orientological knowledge and state power, in true Saidian *Orientalist* terms.⁹ On the other hand, having become an author of the first *Persian Grammar*¹⁰ in Russia and a virtual founder of Persian studies as a self-contained sub-domain within Russia’s Oriental studies of the *fin de siècle*, he also made an enormous contribution to the institutional promotion of Oriental studies as a whole. In so doing, he turned out to be a scholar, most actively and successfully using the state in the institutional interests of his academic field, eventually for the benefit of scholarship itself.¹¹ In this

sense, Valentin Zhukovsky was the soundest illustration of a certain much broader notion than the one defined by Edward Said as *Orientalism* – and that is the interplay of many-fold multi-vector power relations, conceptualized by Michel Foucault.¹²

Naturally, it is not out of place to mention that Zhukovsky's only son Sergey was brought up in the same vein. Having graduated from the St. Petersburg Faculty of Oriental Languages, Sergey was assigned to an honorary lectureship in Persian studies at the university. However, after 1906 he opted to combine his scholarly activities with his service at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In 1910 he spent almost a year arranging the Persian archive of the ministry, which had remained unattended for decades. In so doing, he became infected, as he put it himself, with 'archival dust'¹³ and would have died from blood poisoning if he had not undergone two serious surgical operations on his face. The analysis of ministerial correspondence in the process of marshalling and codifying archival material resulted in his inventing an efficient code for diplomatic cables. The perfect command of Persian allowed Zhukovsky to integrate the philological specificities of the language into the code, thus enhancing its efficiency by decreasing the length of cables and increasing safety against decryption. Due to his insistence, it was immediately tested in communication between the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the former Shah of Persia Mohammad-Ali Qajar, recently fled from Persia and then residing in Odessa. From the beginning of 1913 the code became the main cipher used for communication between all the Russian consulates in Persia and Russia's Legation in Tehran and the Ministry in St. Petersburg. For his archival services, and the invention of the code, Zhukovsky was decorated with orders and was finally endowed with the exclusive right to use the ministerial archives for his scholarly purposes.¹⁴ From 1917 to 1919 he served in Persia under the direct management of Vladimir Minorsky (1877–1966), another archetypal figure of the Russian power/knowledge nexus, later professor of Persian studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. In 1919, after the demise of the Imperial Russian Legation in Tehran they both had to leave for France.¹⁵

Later on, under the Bolsheviks, Russian archives were doomed to experience a considerably worse destiny. Having survived the October coup and the sequential devastating events of the Civil War, during the twentieth century Russian archives suffered multiple reorganizations, tightenings and liberalizations of public access and other sociopolitical perturbations, which inevitably affected the regime of safeguarding the documents and even their survival intact. In general, during Stalin's period and later, archival documents could be easily transferred, suppressed or even destroyed, mainly by punitive organs.¹⁶ On top of that, access to them was severely restricted even for scholars who had, by the time, become the organic part of the ideological system. The loyalty to the state of the leading Soviet scholars – orientologists, such as Evgenii Bertels (1890–1957), Andrei Kononov (1906–86) and Mikhail Ivanov (1909–86) – could hardly be questioned.¹⁷ Having collaborated with the OGPU (the Joint State Political Directorate)¹⁸ as an informant and provocateur since the late 1920s, Bertels had become an acknowledged authority in Iranian studies by the early 1930s and personified those scholars who acted, using the terminology of Nikolay Kremontsov in his insightful *Stalinist Science*,¹⁹ as the *spokesmen* of their own scholarly fields in the process of interaction with the state.²⁰ Bertels's

widely required critical references were capable of completely ruining or immensely promoting scholarly careers.²¹ Later, Kononov and Ivanov possessed the same status in Soviet Turkology and Iranology, respectively. They also benefited from this 'embeddedness' in state scholarly bureaucracy and intelligence structures through being granted significantly less restricted access to internal and foreign archives, hence increasing their own operational autonomy and scholarly productivity.²² However, this was not the case for Soviet rank-and-file researchers – if one analyses their works in terms of the engagement with archival documents, it becomes clear that none of them had proper access to historical and political archives in the USSR, let alone foreign archives. Naturally, this state of affairs accustomed them to manage with only scarce archival material and domestic secondary sources in their works. The lack of interest regarding the engagement with archival materials that is manifested in present-day Russia's Iranology can also be explained by the continuity of institutional practices, rooted in the constraints of Soviet society.

Based on the statistics carried out by Russian archives, it is reckoned that the first period of relative openness of the Soviet archives is associated with the crucial twentieth congress of the CPSU (the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in 1956 and Nikita Khrushchev's *Thaw*. Before that, a mere handful of authorized people were allowed to conduct research in archives, although in 1958 the number of researchers working in the precursor of the present RGASPI – Russia's State Archive of Socio-Political History – amounted to 2609, and in 1992 this figure was 1326, which is reckoned to be the second spike of activity. These two records have never been beaten. It should be mentioned that the extent of the spike of 1958 can also be accounted for by the number of ordinary people who were trying to find relatives who had disappeared in the wake of Stalin's repressions and the Second World War. However, this archival openness was not destined to last for longer than several years and the next wave of liberalization came only at the very end of the 1980s, provoking enormous interest in archival materials from researchers throughout the 1990s.²³ Since 2000, researchers have again been witnessing a rollback, as if the history of Russian archives is trying to prove its rightful place within world history with its assumed laws of cyclicality.

Reflecting the practical experience, gained by the author during his protracted archival research in Russia and Georgia, and containing the unique and specific information, which can be found neither on internet sites nor in the directories of the archives in question, this article pursues the goal of introducing the main archival venues to the researchers of Russia's late Imperial and early Soviet foreign policy towards Persia in the context of its nexus with Russian orientological scholarship. The contextualized *ad hoc* historiographical data given in the text of the article and its endnotes are intended to serve a practical guide for the further study of those individuals and institutions that were deeply engaged in the realization of Russia's foreign policy tasks in the Middle East, in particular in Persia, and used their area-study scholarly expertise for that purpose, on one hand, and, on the other, simultaneously, exploited their powerful capacities, resulting from their deep integration into state power structure, for the promotion and advancement of knowledge within their own scholarly domain. Given its recent totalitarian past, present-day Russia's power/knowledge nexus possesses its own specificity compared with that existing in the West. The manifestations of this specificity are particularly well discernible in the vital functions of Russia's

archival body and can tangibly affect the efficiency of any archival research. Thus, the article also seeks to add to the awareness of such a status quo.

The materials retrievable at the venues mentioned in this article provide for an exhaustive study of the correlation between Oriental studies and Russian/Soviet foreign policy towards Persia/Iran during two consecutive historical periods, namely late Imperial and early Soviet Russia. Focusing on the interface between Russian scholars of Persian studies within their multi-layered institutional set-up, on one hand, and Russia's foreign policy towards Persia in the period from the late nineteenth century to 1941, on the other hand, such research cannot avoid engaging with a historiographical debate on Russian Orientalism, which was initiated at the turn of this century by Nathaniel Knight and Adeb Khalid and has been recently developed by the interventions of scholars such as Vera Tolz, David Schimmelpenninck, Alex Marshall, Michael Kemper and others. Since the initial stage of the debate, embracing mainly the study of the applicability of Said's *Orientalism* to the Russian case, scholars have moved much farther beyond his simplistic assertion of the 'complicity of knowledge with imperial power',²⁴ in so doing, reaching back to Foucauldian postulates on the role of institutions and the intellectual in the interplay of power/knowledge relations.²⁵ And it is the study of the involvement of late Imperial Russian orientologists in four distinct domains of Persian studies knowledge production in Russia, namely academic scholarship, the military, the diplomatic service and the Russian Orthodox Church's missionary activities, that promises to give a powerful impetus to the further development of this debate.²⁶

The array of archival documents explored in this article exhaustively substantiates the fourfold structure of late Imperial Russia's Oriental studies and supports that the same categorization also applies to the early Soviet period, with the obvious exception of the Church since the Russian Orthodox Church missionary activities had virtually run dry in Persia by 1917. This was caused by the turbulence of the First World War which severely affected western and north-western areas of Iran where the Russian Church was most active because of the Assyrian population, who were originally believers in Nestorian Christianity.²⁷ In addition, after 1917 the Russian missionaries lost the traditionally strong link of their activities abroad to Russia's state interests. The new state of affairs was juridically secured in 1921 by the 15th Article of the *Persia and the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic Treaty of Friendship* which stipulated:

In accordance with the principle of liberty of conscience proclaimed by Soviet Russia, and with a desire to put an end, in Moslem countries, to religious propaganda, the real object of which was to exercise political influence over the masses and thus to satisfy the rapacity of the Tsarist Government, the Government of Soviet Russia declares that the religious settlements established in Persia by the former Tsarist Governments are abolished. The Soviet Government will take steps to prevent such missions from being sent to Persia in the future.

Soviet Russia cedes unconditionally to the nation represented by the Persian Government, the lands, property and buildings belonging to the Orthodox Mission situated in Urmia, together with the other similar establishments. The

Persian Government shall use these properties for the construction of schools and other institutions intended for educational purposes.²⁸

Hence, the above-mentioned many-fold structure of late Imperial and early Soviet Russia's Oriental studies entailed the need to consult a variety of different relevant archives both in the two main cities of Russia and in the capital of Georgia. This was undertaken in the period between June and December 2012. The following archives in Moscow proved to be an abundant source for retrieving documents pertinent to the research field in question:

- The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire affiliated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (AVPRI MID RF) –
<http://www.hist.msu.ru/Links/avpri.htm>,
- The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation affiliated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (AVPRF MID RF) –
<http://www.mid.ru/Nsite-sv.nsf/0/FEBDFD6520D3D2AF43256987005492DE?OpenDocument>,
- Russia's State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) –
<http://rgvia.com>,
- Russia's State Military Archive (RGVA) –
<http://rgvarchive.ru>,
- Russia's State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) –
<http://rgaspi.org>,
- The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) –
<http://www.statearchive.ru>,
- The Archive of Russia's Academy of Sciences (ARAN) –
<http://www.arran.ru/?q=ru/readingroom>,
- Russia's State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI) –
<http://rgali.ru>.

In St. Petersburg the venue similar to the above-mentioned is the Archive of Orientalists of the Institute of Oriental manuscripts (AV IVR – <http://www.orientalstu>

dies.ru), while in Tbilisi it is the Archive of the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts (<http://www.manuscript.ge>).

The most difficult to access of all the above-mentioned institutions and the one most liable to preserving the continuity of institutional practices at its worst Soviet doom and gloom is the AVPRF, which holds documents relating to the time after 1917. For researchers holding a Russian passport it can take up to two months for a permit to be issued; while foreigners might have to wait twice as long to obtain access, which needs to be authorized by a post no lower than Head of the Historico-Documental Directorate of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. It quite often happens that the access is not granted and the rejected are denied the right to inquire about the grounds.²⁹ The AVPRF's employees may also appear to be the least helpful in comparison to those of other archives. Archival files are given out at the discretion of the employees, rather than exactly according to the details of researchers' demands. So, in contrast with other archives, where quite helpful or modest guidance is rendered to researchers, in the AVPRF, the possibility of deliberate misguidance and unconventional obstacles specifically created by the staff of the archive cannot be ruled out completely.

Moreover, documents concerning the activities of individuals who played controversial roles in the history of the USSR are still classified, even if they relate to events that happened almost 100 years ago. This statement can be supported, for example, by the implicit Foucauldian *regime of truth* regarding historical personalities such as Nikolai Bravin and Fedor Raskolnikov who were active in Persia and Afghanistan at the dawn of the Bolshevik state. The former became the first diplomatic envoy to Persia, Turkestan and Afghanistan, and was liquidated on the territory of Afghanistan on Moscow's orders with the direct participation of his successor, Iakov Surits, when trying to flee to British India.³⁰ His activities and fate are still hushed up, for example, by acting staff of Russia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in particular, in the present-day Russian Embassy in Tehran.³¹ The documents related to his activities are not accessible in the ministry's archive, either.³² Raskolnikov, who headed the Bolshevik invasion to Persia in 1920 and later worked as a Soviet plenipotentiary to Afghanistan, was also liquidated by the NKVD (the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) agents in the 1930s after his refusal to return to the USSR and, hence, turned out to be an undesired historical personality for state patriotic discourse. His correspondence and drafts of scholarly articles on Persia and Afghanistan dated 1923 are still classified.³³ On the other hand, however, much interesting material can be retrieved from the abundant correspondence between the Iranian Embassy in Moscow and the *Narkomindel* (the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs) in the 1920s–1930s – for example, on the life of the Iranian Baha'is in Soviet Russia and their oppression by the Bolsheviks – which is relatively freely given out to researchers.³⁴ So, the virtual appropriation of history by the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, under the pretext that the archive bears departmental status and, thus, the ministry has the right – presumably regardless of the relevant legislation – to determine the destiny of the documents in such a manner, appears rather outdated and demonstrates either a residual totalitarian mentality or the resurrection of the old pseudo-patriotic discourse on the hazard to national interests resulting from the undermining of the historical prestige of state organs.

It should also be noted that the institutional practices of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs aimed at the creation of its own history – convenient for the current regime in Russia – do not only suffice for the above-mentioned suppression of undesirable archival documents. They also include proactive measures meant to propagandize ‘convenient truths’ among the personnel of the ministry and other Russian citizens. A sound example of that is the removal of ‘defector’ Nikolai Bravin (1881–1921) from official and historiographical discourse and the positioning of ‘martyr’ Ivan Kolomiitsev (1896–1919) as the first diplomatic representative of Soviet Russia in the ministry’s information outlets and memorial ceremonies and plaques inside and outside Russia (see [Figure 1](#)).

At the same time, Kolomiitsev’s issue is a pointer to data array witnessing other institutional practices of *Narkomindel* and INO OGPU (OGPU’s Foreign Section – external intelligence)³⁵ of the early Soviet period. Russian historiographers argued that on 21 August 1919 Colonel Staroselskii sent a telegram to the then Prime Minister of Persia Vosugh-od-Douleh, informing him of the arrest of Kolomiitsev and the Persian Prime Minister ordered the arrested person to be brought to Tehran. So, the execution of Kolomiitsev was indeed not authorized. However, the possible reasons of the Cossacks’ behaviour who were disciplined enough not to commit such a serious crime without solid grounds were never mentioned. An interesting explanation was offered by Father Superior Aleksandr (Zarkeshev), based on his research in AVPRF in the late 1990s. Kolomiitsev was carrying the so-called Bolsheviks’ hard currency – the Orthodox Church golden sacred articles and vessels – expropriated by the Bolsheviks and officially allocated to him by NKID to cover the mission expenses. During the first post-revolution years, the Bolsheviks officially regularly confiscated the gold from Churches and used it in export–import trade operations. The Cossacks were traditionally very religious, especially those who served under General Baratov – an ardent Orthodox believer. Having been shocked by such sacrilege, they decided to try and execute the Bolsheviks’ representative themselves.³⁶ This is also supported by the documents kept in the RGASPI: new Soviet money was not accepted abroad and the state did not have enough foreign currency, so the conventional practice was to provide the agents being sent abroad, in this case to Persia, with the so-called ‘Bolshevik hard currency’, namely golden ritual articles, expropriated from Russian Orthodox churches.³⁷ In 1923, the same ‘currency’ helped Iakov Bliumkin (1900–29) set up an antique shop in British Palestine where he was sent as INO OGPU’s Station Chief of the whole Middle East.³⁸

The crucial venue, such as the RGASPI, is worth mentioning separately since it possesses a large depository of historical documents on the political activities of the same period. This contains a vast body of materials relating to the foreign policy of Soviet Russia and later of the Soviet Union towards Persia and Afghanistan, as well as the primary documents on the activities of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia during the first years after 1917, which were critical for that region. For example, the recently declassified collection of files bearing the revealing name of ‘Secret Persia’ is worth mentioning separately. It has the second name after Sergo Ordzhonikidze (1886–1937), a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, who was the founder of the Persian Red Army and one of the main characters of the Bolsheviks’ policy towards Persia, Afghanistan and in Central Asia between 1918 and 1922.³⁹



Figure 1 Politics of History in Action (2015). The ‘good guy’ should become the first and the ‘bad guy’ should vanish. A memorial plaque on the Russian secondary school inside Russia’s Embassy in Tehran. In addition to the suppression of the archival documents regarding the activities of the first Soviet Plenipotentiary to Persia, Turkestan and Afghanistan, Nikolai Bravin, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation still makes efforts towards perpetuating Ivan Kolomiitsev as the first Soviet Plenipotentiary to Persia.

In general, the character of the documents ranges from political and military to social, scientific and even private. This archive is also the main venue for the Comintern archives, some of which have been recently made available, albeit mainly due to the help of international institutions.⁴⁰ In the RGASPI one can be fortunate enough to find copies of many of the documents to which he is denied access in the AVPRF.⁴¹ Researchers can also ultimately benefit from the valuable and altruistic guidance of Mikhail Strakhov, one of the archive experts, whose expertise and knowledge of every corner of the archive can compete with, and quite often exceeds, the performance and knowledge of the local computer database – though, of course, one must adjust oneself to the unexpected frequent changes in his mood. So, the RGASPI can be regarded as a very generous source of documents on the history of the Communist movement from its very inception, and other events of the sociopolitical history of Russia, even in view of the fact that since the early 2000s some documents –including those concerning the OGPU-NKVD activities abroad during the 1920s and 1930s, Soviet experts, including orientologists, and those who defected from various overseas Soviet political, military and trade structures –have been transferred from Moscow to the very depths of Russia, a fact which, based on the testimony of the employees of this archive, makes the retrieval of documents practically impossible for researchers. For example, some of the documents used by researchers in the 1990s were transferred to a very distant town somewhere in Tatarstan.

A Russia-based researcher, Vladimir Genis,⁴² points out that the systematic study of the activities of Soviet experts abroad and *the problem of defectors*, as a separate issue, was first formulated in 1928 when the OGPU prepared a special report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party, with a detailed analysis of the relevant statistics and the sequential fates of defectors for the preceding eight years, which was followed by organizational conclusions on the projected counteraction. Thus, in 1929 a decree appeared, proclaiming *beyond the law* all Soviet citizens who had refused or would refuse to return to the USSR – by this legitimizing their *liquidation* on the territory of other countries with no investigation or conventional trial, the practice widely used by the *KGB Department V* up to 1972, the year the department was dismantled.⁴³ Hereafter, such institutional practices became rather exceptional but have not been given up completely, as the case of Georgii Markov –and much more recent cases, namely that of 2006, arguably –demonstrate.

In general, according to the Russia-based researchers, the process of tightening public access to archival documents in Russia began immediately after 2000; in addition, some archival materials declassified in the 1990s were even reclassified in the 2000s. This is, of course, denied at the official level. During his speech, delivered in February 2013 at the enlarged session of the Board of the Federal Archival Agency, its Head Andrey Artizov separately touched upon the issues of the process of declassification and the restricted access to archival materials, saying, in particular:

In order to reduce the speculations on the topic that ‘archives are being closed’, a special data-base, aimed at informing the public about the work on declassification, has been created that contains the information on almost 24,500 files declassified during the last period. It is planned to allocate this to the portal *The Archives of Russia*, which is planned to be kept regularly updated with the information on the documents being declassified.⁴⁴

However, in addition to the fact that the time for the realization of these ‘plans’ was not fixed, the speaker did not specify what ‘the last period’ in question was – since 2000 or since the start of Perestroika in 1985 – and, what is considerably more important, the quantity of declassified documents was measured in *dela* (files), which are called *edintsy khraniia* (store items) in the Russian professional archival language. For example, merely in RGASPI there are 2,147,000 ‘store items’; and in total 609 million in Russia.⁴⁵ According to the relevant statistics, the official average amount of classified files shows that only two per cent of them are in public archives; however 47 per cent of all archival documents in Russia are kept in departmental archives similar to the archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and suchlike.⁴⁶ Statistics on classified files in such archives simply do not exist, because, in addition to official restrictions, even declassified documents are given out to the reading hall at the discretion of the employees of these archives, and depending on the citizenship and credentials of a particular researcher. As the author’s experience shows, in AVPRF one can be denied access to 70 per cent of the requested materials relating to the period of almost a century ago. So, given the above figures, one can easily judge the actual speed and volume of the work on declassification.

The extremely low and discontinuous pace of the declassification process was also pointed out by Head of RGASPI Andrey Sorokin at the session of its Scholarly Council in 2011:

The current process of the declassification of documents [...] discredits the whole notion of *state secret*. And the 10–15 years’ extensions of the terms of secret storage of the documents of 50–70 years’ age that concern a historically completely different State, in the best manner works for the creation of a negative image of Russia in the eyes of intellectuals and public figures from all over the world.⁴⁷

The above quotation and Artizov’s words which, in contrast, sound like a failed attempt to clear himself, turn out to be proof not only of the serious character of the problem, but fortunately also of the existence of a rapidly developing debate, although still nascent and weak, among Russian historians and state bureaucrats – the debate that questions the intensifying state trend on tightening the custody of archival records.

However, taking into consideration that in fact there are no unified rules for working with archival documents in Russian archives, although most of them are subordinated to the above-mentioned Federal Archival Agency of the Russian Federation, each archive tends to have its own *regime of truth* which ultimately rewards a daring and persistent researcher. In 1976 Foucault gave the following definition of this term:

Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it – a ‘regime’ of truth. This regime is not merely ideological or superstructural; it was a condition of the formation and development of capitalism. And it’s this same regime which, subject to certain modifications, operates in the socialist countries.⁴⁸

Taking into consideration that present-day Russia keeps demonstrating strong discursive continuities in the practices of its state institutions, the preceding utterance precisely corresponds to the current situation in the Russian archival guild. While working in Russian archives, one should pay attention to a whole set of factors, from the status and specialization of a particular archive, its corporeal facilities and local rules, to the level of expertise of its personnel and the technicalities of dealing with them – the human factor is decisive in this field. Bearing in mind all these crucial factors can help researchers significantly raise their efficiency and successfully carry out their research.

Both the RGVA, covering the historical period up to 1917, and the RGVA, holding documents dated after 1917, possess highly qualified and helpful staff. The first, among other documents, contains the private archival collections of Domantovich – the founder of the Persian Cossack Brigade; Kosagovsky – the most outstanding commander of the Brigade who turned it into a powerful political tool and, simultaneously, into an efficient orientalist institution which profoundly contributed to late Imperial Russia's Persian studies;⁴⁹ Kuropatkin – who throughout his whole career up to the Minister of War level intensively contributed to Oriental studies;⁵⁰ as well as the materials about the scholarly activities of the Learned Committee of the Russian War Ministry.⁵¹ However, researchers who hope to find sets of documents on the Imperial Russian past of the military men who served in the Russian army before and after 1917 but were repressed by the Bolsheviks later on, cannot seriously rely on the RGVA depositories: the painstaking work of the NKVD investigators has wiped out all significant traces. According to the employees of the RGVA, it was a conventional practice for the OGPU-NKVD and the Procurator Office to *collect* the archival files of people under investigation. Thus, archival files of Leonid Tageev (1871–1938), Konstantin Smirnov (1877–1938) and other repressed military officers – *vostochniki*⁵² were suppressed from public archives. The exception is the lonely service record – *posluzhnoi spisok* – of Lieutenant General Andrey Snesarev, albeit he died in 1937 after his release, completely exhausted by the preceding imprisonment.⁵³

The RGVA holds documents including those on the activities of the troops of the 11th Army of the Turkestan front, which played a significant role in the Bolsheviks' foreign policy towards Persia and Afghanistan in the first years after 1917. It also discloses interesting materials on the establishment of the newspaper *Soviet Iran* by the Bolshevik military intelligence.⁵⁴ In the RGVA, researchers can also find Leon Trotsky's letters and cables with detailed instructions on the organization of a Soviet state on Persian territory, as well as *The investigatory materials on the catastrophe of the Persian front*, composed by Vladimir Ivanov, later a General and earlier a member of the first Bolsheviks' plenipotentiary mission to Kabul, headed by Nikolay Bravin.⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the report was composed by Ivanov based on the results of his inspection visit to Persia, preceded by his mission to Afghanistan as a Bolshevik military representative during which he, with the assistance of Iakov Surits, the then Plenipotentiary to Afghanistan, designed and perpetrated the liquidation of Bravin in 1920–21.⁵⁶ Both above-mentioned archives are surprisingly straightforward in their equal treatment of Russian and foreign researchers and grant permission to access the site within a day.

The AV IVR in St. Petersburg is also worth mentioning, because of the professionalism of its personnel and the unique importance of the materials which are held

there. The private collections of Vladimir Minorsky,⁵⁷ Valentin Zhukovsky and Lieutenant General Andrey Snesarev are veritable gems within its depositories. This archive deserves to be regarded as one of the most crucial venues for scholars studying the Russia–Iran nexus merely because of the complete private archive of Minorsky, Persian studies professor at SOAS, bequeathed by him to the USSR in 1966. It generously sheds light on the sinuous cause of not only the Great Game in the early twentieth century but also of the political interaction between the Russian anti-Bolshevik Movement and the British in Persia after 1917 as well as of the fierce struggle between the Bolshevik government and Britain.⁵⁸ However, the AV IVR severely suffers from the lack of properly trained personnel and a huge amount of documents remain in dusty boxes – in conditions which are appalling and completely inappropriate for archival storing – unmarshalled and uncodified for decades, including a considerable part of Minorsky’s collection. The archive also has a very complex mechanism for approving the copying of materials. The unfairly high price for copying – the equivalent of 10 US dollars per page – is aggravated by the apparently arbitrary manner in which the Board of Wardens denies researchers the right to photocopy certain documents from the above-mentioned and other collections which, in actual fact, can be deemed as another component of the *regime of truth*.

However, the study of the early period of Soviet Iranology (1917–41) is to be considerably facilitated by working in the GARV, which contains the private archival collection of Mikhail Pavlovich, Stalin’s deputy in the *Narkomnats* – the People’s Commissariat for Nationalities Affairs, the virtual founder and zealous propagator of the so-called practical Oriental studies.⁵⁹ A number of other archival files are dedicated to the activities of VNAV – the all-Russia Scholarly Association of Orientalologists – and its members. The study of the activities of this association, which functioned from 1920 to 1929, can lead to a straightforward conclusion about its being a sound example of the *orientalist institution* depicted by Said.⁶⁰ It regarded the direct link of scholarly knowledge to state power as of paramount importance and gauged the quality of orientological knowledge by its usefulness to practical state tasks. However, a more scrupulous and integrated research into the activities of early Soviet orientological institutions which is well documented in the GARV’s depositories reveals a much more sophisticated interplay of power/knowledge relations than the somewhat simplistic Saidian orientalist model.⁶¹ In contrast to the AVPRF and the AV IVR, the archive allows researchers to copy all materials in public access for the period in question and is relatively straightforward in its regulations, albeit modest in facilities.

The second archive directly subordinated to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation – AVPRI – contains the documents related to the period from the reign of the Peter the Great to the Bolshevik coup. Unfortunately, the disastrous condition of the building forced it to close down for capital repairs in early summer 2012, which are scheduled to last at least four or five years.⁶² This is also a testimony to Russia’s state approach towards historiography since the access to the foreign policy documents of the whole Imperial period of Russian history will be totally closed to domestic and foreign researchers for up to five years, whereas the employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will remain provided with the opportunity to work with the documents.⁶³ The archive depositories possess exhaustive documentation on the activities of Imperial Russia’s Legation in Tehran and Russian consulates all

over Persia during the Persian Constitutional Movement of 1905–11 and the sequential period when the northern and western parts of Persia turned into a virtual colony of the Russian Empire where local administration was run by Russian consuls.⁶⁴ However, some rare *expedient* exceptions may occur in terms of granting access to the most controversial – from the political point of view – documents. This can be substantiated by their poor physical condition and in this case, according to the rules, they are not available for researchers as, for example, Minorsky's reports on atrocities perpetrated by the Russian troops in Persian Kurdistan during the First World War.⁶⁵

Another crucial venue for the study of late Imperial Russian and early Soviet *Iranology* is the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, which, in addition to truly Oriental genuine hospitality and the readiness to render required professional assistance, contains the large private archival collection of Konstantin Smirnov, the Russian Imperial Army Colonel, Deputy Head of Intelligence Unit of the Caucasian Military District Staff, and personal tutor of Soltan Ahmad Mirza, the later Ahmad Shah Qajar (1907–14). His reports were one of the main sources of political, economic and ethnographic information on Persia for the General Staff in St. Petersburg in the early twentieth century.⁶⁶ He participated in the First World War on the Persian and Turkish fronts and after the Russian Civil War he worked as an interpreter of Persian, Turkish and French in the Bolsheviks' Army in the Caucasus. While keeping up his old intimate friendship and scholarly contacts with Minorsky via frequent correspondence, in the 1920s–1930s he worked as a research associate and an expert on Persian manuscripts in the Academy of Sciences of Georgia before he was repressed in 1938. His private collection includes scholarly works on Persian history, ethnography and social life, written by himself before and after 1917, as well as his wife Ksenia's private diaries, depicting her last almost four years of life after the second, this time fatal, arrest of her husband in 1938, full of heartbreaking grief and testimony about the harsh realities of the life of a wife of an *enemy of the people*.⁶⁷ Taking into account that the bulk of archival inventories in this archive were composed in the Soviet time, Russian-speaking researchers do not experience significant encumbrances while looking through them. The inventories for recently processed materials are in Georgian; however, the archive staff are always ready to kindly translate them for foreign researchers on site. Another advantageous distinction from Russian archives is that researchers are officially allowed to take photos of archival inventories, which is strictly forbidden in all Russian archives.

Thus, on balance, the above-mentioned archives allow researchers to consult essential documents on the organizational set-up of Oriental studies in Russia, as well as on the activities of some key individuals involved in the process of shaping Russia's foreign policy towards Iran and Afghanistan, along with the simultaneous production of scholarly knowledge. The analysis of these documents greatly assists in the Foucauldian *archaeology of knowledge*,⁶⁸ enabling researchers to trace back the entanglements of power/knowledge relations within the context of late Imperial Russian and early Soviet Oriental studies and, particularly, Persian studies therein. However, notwithstanding antiquated status, documents on some key historical individuals who played an underlying role in the early Soviet foreign policy towards Persia and Afghanistan but later turned out to be at odds with the Bolshevik state and

were murdered are still classified. In addition, there are still restrictions of various kinds on the access to other documents which may, allegedly, further undermine the historical prestige of Russia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and intelligence institutions. Hence, a question arises: What kind of state secrets may there be that a completely different state is so eager to preserve them after almost a century? Perhaps they are shameful institutional practices and were merely subsumed under the category of state secrets by means of the power abuse and the creation of the discourse of safeguarding national interests.

Indeed, the present-day work in Russian archives is greatly informative on the present multi-vector link of scholarly knowledge to state power in Russia. In 2013, Sorokin pointed out that the majority of archivists and historians referred to archives as 'the tool of national identification' and 'today this tool is in the hands of archivists and should not be transferred to anybody else'.⁶⁹ One cannot agree with him more regarding the use of the term 'tool', which illustrates how throughout the last 100 years the Russian archives have indeed become an instrument in the process of constructing historical memory based on the needs and order of state power during each given period, in other words greatly contributing to the politics of history. Moreover, as the whole Soviet period, the last decade and the present day of Russia's archives demonstrate, Sorokin's thesis on the control over this instrument is completely questionable, if not deliberately misleading. Therefore, one would logically suggest that, rather, these archives should also be under relevant public control, in addition to the hands of archival professionals congenitally subordinated to state influence in Russia. Otherwise, historians, and ultimately society itself, encounter the permanent creation of selective historical narratives on behalf of state power, instead of conventional historiography.

Of course, there is no debate on the inability of scientific and scholarly knowledge, especially in humanities, to be neutral or objective and, as if reproducing Foucauldian postulations, the Head of Russia's Federal Archival Agency Artizov himself reiterates that '[N]o scholar, particularly no scholar-humanist, can abstract away from the circumstances of life, from the society he lives in'⁷⁰; however, such a phenomenon has nothing in common with the justification of the direct coercive intervention of certain state institutions into the organically public sphere of historiography since, otherwise, it is, in actual fact, the covering up of the crimes of their institutional past that is undertaken under the pretext of safeguarding national interests. As the former Human Rights Commissioner of the Russian Federation Vladimir Lukin said about the hindered declassifying process at the RGASPI Scholarly Council session:

The point is not in the numbers but rather in the principle. There are certain archival materials which are unique, but without them a whole chain of historical process, historical analysis and its comprehension is ruptured and history [...] is perceived in a distorted way. The [Soviet] state in question has ceased to exist. There are no fundamental issues of secrecy that transfer from one state to another, except some very fine operative issues of special services which can be dealt with completely separately. Thus, according to its definition, the documents are not secret and should have been declassified long ago.⁷¹

But they have not been, yet. So, for the time being, the above-mentioned ‘tool’ is not in the hands of historians or even archivists in Russia, but rather in the hands of the currently ruling state establishment, which mostly consists of people who originated from those state organs whose historical prestige they are so seemingly afraid of undermining by opening archives.

Alphabetical List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- AVPRF (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii) – The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation;
- ARAN (Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk) – The Archive of Russia’s Academy of Sciences;
- AV (Arkhiv Vostokovedov) – The Archive of Orientologists (St. Petersburg);
- AVPRI (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii) – The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire;
- Cheka (Chrezvychainaia kommissiia po bor’be s kontrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem) – The Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage;
- GARF (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii) – The State Archive of the Russian Federation;
- GNCM – The Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts;
- GPU (Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie) – The State Political Directorate;
- INO OGPU (Inostrannyi Otdel Gosudarstvennogo Politicheskogo Upravleniia) – The Foreign Department of the United State Political Directorate;
- KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti) – The State Security Committee;
- MID (Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del) – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Narkomnats (Narodnyi Kommissariat Natsional’nostei) – The People’s Commissariat of Nationalities;
- NKID (Narodnyi Kommissariat Inostrannykh Del) – The People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs;
- NKVD (Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del) – The People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs;
- OGPU (Ob’edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie) – The Joint State Political Directorate;
- RGASPI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial’no-Politicheskoi Istorii) – Russia’s State Archive of Socio-Political History;
- RGVA (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennyi Arkhiv) – Russia’s State Military Archive;
- RGVIA (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv) – Russia’s State Military Historical Archive;
- SOAS – School of Oriental and African Studies;
- SVR (Sluzhba Vneshnei Razvedki) – The External Intelligence of the Russian Federation;
- VeCheka (Vserossiiskaia Chrezvychainaia Kommissiia po Bor’be s Kontrevoliutsiei i Sabotazhem) – The All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage;

VNAV (Vsesoiuznaia Nauchnaia Assotsiatsiia Vostokovedov) – The All-Union Scientific Association of Orientologists;
ZVORAO (Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniia Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshestva) – The Notes of the Oriental Section of the Russian Archaeological Society.

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Notes

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1. S. Finkel, 'An Intensification of Vigilance: Recent Perspectives on the Institutional History of the Soviet Security Apparatus in the 1920s', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol.5, No.2 (2004), pp.302–3.
2. N. Werth, 'A State Against Its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union', in S. Courtois et al. (eds.), *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp.33–268; P. Holquist, 'Tools for Revolution: Wartime Mobilization in State Building, 1914-1921', *Ab Imperio*, Vol.4 (2001), pp.209–27; Finkel, 'An Intensification of Vigilance', pp.299–320.
3. Iu. Dzhibladze, *Open Democracy Russia*, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/yury-dzhibladze/russian-government-declares-%E2%80%98cold-war%E2%80%99-on-civil-society> (accessed 05.02.2014); A. Samarina, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-10-09/3_russians.html (accessed 05.02.2014); F. Lukyanov, *Russia and India Report*, http://indrus.in/articles/2012/10/12/brand_putin_a_look_at_the_russian_presidents_global_image_18475.html, http://indrus.in/articles/2012/12/19/putin_outlines_his_moral_vision_for_modern_russia_21135.html (accessed 05.02.2014); S. Kocherov, *Nezavisimoe politicheskoe obozrenie*, <http://www.polit.nnov.ru/2004/10/21/kolonna/> (accessed 05.02.2014).
4. S. Sorokin, 'The Speech at the Enlarged Session of the Federal Archival Agency Board, 28.02.2013', <http://archives.ru/coordination/kolls/video-28-02-2013/sorokin.shtml> (accessed 12.02.2014); S. Sorokin, 'The Speech at the RGASPI Scholarly Council Session, 18.01.2011', http://www.rusarchives.ru/federal/rgaspi/protokol_180111.shtml (accessed 12.02.2014).
5. O. Matsnev, *OpenSpace*, 10/01/2013, <http://www.openspace.ru/article/788> (accessed 08.03.2013); Sorokin, 'The Speech at the RGASPI Scholarly Council Session'; SVR (The Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation), *The RGASPI News*, 12/07/2012, <http://www.rgaspi.su/news/20120712> (accessed 10.02.2014).
6. M. Foucault, *Power* (New York: New Press, 2000), p.132.
7. S. Mills, *Michel Foucault* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.79.
8. Valentin Alekseevich Zhukovsky (1858–1918) who can rightfully be regarded as the token figure of the nexus of state and scholarly knowledge in late Imperial Russia has surprisingly been little studied even in Russia itself. For the last 50 or more years there has been no comprehensive research into the scholarly and administrative activities of this individual whatsoever, although, in addition to his scholarly contribution which laid the foundations of Russia's Persian studies of the twentieth century, he played the key role in the development of Russia's practical Oriental studies. There are three brief works on Zhukovsky which were authored by his colleagues Bartol'd and Ol'denburg and his disciple Romaskevich shortly after his death in 1918, namely V. Bartol'd, *Pamiati V.A. Zhukovskogo* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), pp.689–703; S. Ol'denburg, 'Valentin Alekseevich Zhukovsky, 1858-1918', *Izvestiia Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk* 2 (1919), pp.2039–68; Aleksandr Romaskevich, 'V.A. Zhukovsky i persidskaia narodnaia poeziia', in *ZVORAO* 25 (1921). There is also another brief article, later published in the Soviet Union: P. Bushev, 'Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' V.A. Zhukovskogo', in V. Avdiev (ed.), *Ocherki po istorii russkogo vostokovedeniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1959), pp.116–36.
9. E.W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp.190–1.

10. V. Zhukovsky and K. Zaleman, *Persische Grammatik mit Literatur-Chrestomatie und Glossar* (Berlin: H. Reuther's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1889).
11. In this respect, many noteworthy documents are kept in the Archive of Orientalists (AV) of the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (Fund 17 'V.A. Zhukovsky', files 4, 22, 37, 184, 188, 193, 195) that demonstrate how Valentin Zhukovsky actively used his connections in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the War Ministry of Russia for the development of orientalist academic knowledge and for the institutional promotion of Oriental studies, first of all, Persian studies.
12. J. Simons, *Foucault and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.82; Mills, *Michel Foucault*, pp.33,58.
13. AVPRI, f. *Persian Desk*, op. 489, d. 1058, l. 14 (S. Zhukovsky, 'Report to the Head of the Middle East Section of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1913').
14. *Ibid*, l. 14ob.
15. M. Sorokina, *Rossiiskoe nauchoe zarubezh'e: materialy dlia bibliograficheskogo slovaria* (Moscow: Dom Russkogo Zarubezh'ia, 2010), pp.87–8.
16. D. Khubova, 'Imprisoned History: The KGB Archives', *The Journal of the International Institute*, Vol.1, No.1 (1994), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4750978.0001.103> (accessed 02.03.2014).
17. Personal files, concerning the scholarly and administrative activities of Russian/Soviet academicians, are kept in two archives, according to the place of the bulk of their scholarly activities – ARAN (The Archive of Russia's Academy of Sciences) in Moscow and its St. Petersburg branch. For example, Bertels's personal collection is kept in ARAN (f.411).
18. OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate) existed in 1922–34 as a successor to GPU, before that – Cheka; NKVD (The Peoples Commissariat of the Interior Affairs) was formed in 1934 and existed until 1943, finally evolving into the widely known KGB (Committee of State Security) in 1954, after some reorganizations, mergers and transformations.
19. N. Krementsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p.29.
20. On Bertels's collaboration with the Soviet secret police see Ia. Vasil'kov and M. Sorokina, *The Bibliographical Dictionary of Orientologists – Victims of Political Terror (1917-1991)* (in Russian) (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 2003), <http://memory.pvost.org/pages/bertelsee.html> (accessed 08.02.2014).
21. For Bertels's politicised criticism of Konstantin Chaikin's scholarly works shortly before his arrest and execution see GARF, f. 7668 (Personal file of Chaikin), op. 1, d. 2889, l. 2-3ob.
22. For more details on Professor Mikhail Ivanov's activities see D. Volkov, 'Individuals, Institutions and Discourses: Knowledge and Power in Russia's Iranian Studies of the Late Imperial, Soviet and Post-Soviet periods', *Middle East – Topics & Arguments*, Vol.4 (2015), forthcoming.
23. T. Bondareva, 'Kto ne liubit svoiu rabotu – v archive ne zaderzhivaetsia', *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, Vol.6 (2010), pp.64–73.
24. Said, *Orientalism*, p.342.
25. Krementsov, *Stalinist Science*, pp.4–5,29–30; Simons, *Foucault and the Political*, p.82; Mills, *Michel Foucault*, pp.33,58.
26. On the debate on Russian Orientalism which took place on the pages of *Slavic Review* and *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* see N. Knight, 'Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?' *Slavic Review*, Vol.59, No.1 (2000), pp.74–100; N. Knight, 'On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol.1, No.4 (2000), pp.701–15; A. Khalid, 'Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol.1, No.4 (2000), pp.691–9; M. Todorova, 'Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate Between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol.1, No.4 (2000), pp.717–27. The debate was continued and extensively developed by such works as D. Schimmelpenninck, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (London: Yale University Press, 2010); V. Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); M. Kemper and S. Conermann (eds.), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (London: Routledge, 2011). See also a scrupulous work A. Vigasin and A. Khokhlov (eds.), *Istoriia otechestvennogo vostokovedeniia s serediny XIX veka do 1917 goda* (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN, 1997).

27. A. Zarkeshev, *Russian Orthodox Church in Persia-Iran (1597-2001)* (in Russian) (St. Petersburg: Satis, 2002), pp.68–123.
28. 'Persia and Soviet Russia (1921) Treaty of Friendship, signed at Moscow, February 26, 1921' in *The League of Nations Treaty Series*. Vol.9, pp.383–413, <https://treaties.un.org/pages/LONOnline.aspx> (accessed 02.03.2014).
29. The official site of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs quotes a one-month period and the equality of treatment for Russian and foreign citizens (The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *The Archives of the Ministry* (in Russian), <http://www.mid.ru/Nsite-sv.nsf/0/FEBDFD6520D3D2AF43256987005492DE?OpenDocument> (accessed 08.02.2014); however, the reality considerably deviates from what is stated on the site (M. Pye, 'Researching Pahlavi-Soviet Relations in Moscow', *BIPS Newsletter* (October 2012).
30. They both occupied various high-ranking positions within the Narkomindel, representing the Bolshevik government abroad, and were murdered on Moscow's orders after their refusal to return to Soviet Russia. On the activities of Fedor Raskolnikov (1892–1939) see Vassil'kov and Sorokina, *The Bibliographical Dictionary of Orientalists*. On the activities of Nikolay Bravin (1881–1921) see J. Modrzejewska-Lesniewska, 'A Spy or the First Russian Dissident?' *Przegląd Historyczny*, Vol.94, No.4 (2003), pp.411–8. See also P. Dailami, 'Bravin in Tehran and the Origins of Soviet Policy in Iran', *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol.12, No.2, pp.63–82. See also V. Genis, *Nevernye slugi rezhima: Pervye sovetskie nevozvrashetsy, 1920-1933* (Moscow: Avtorskoe izdanie, 2009).
31. See the photo of the memorial plaque mounted on the building of the Russian school inside Russia's Embassy in Tehran (attached), according to which the first Bolshevik plenipotentiary to Persia was another individual who was later executed by Russian White Cossacks which, of course, is a more opportune option for constructing politics of history. On the Kolomiitsev case see D. Volkov, 'Oriental Studies and Foreign Policy: Russian/Soviet 'Iranology' and Russo-Iranian Relations in Late Imperial Russia and the Early USSR', a PhD thesis submitted to the University of Manchester (2014), pp.117–9. See also D. Volkov, 'Rupture or Continuity? The Organizational Set-up of Russian and Soviet Oriental Studies Before and After 1917', forthcoming in a special themed issue of the journal *Iranian Studies*, Stephanie Cronin and Edmund Herzog (eds.) (September 2015), 27 pages.
32. For example, AVPRF, f. 94, op. 2, d. 14 (Bravin, diplomatic agent in Persia).
33. For example, AVPRF, f. 028 (Raskolnikov).
34. AVPRF, f. 94, op. 2, d. 3.
35. INO OGPU – Inostrannyi otdel OGPU (OGPU's Foreign Section – External Intelligence Service).
36. See Zarkeshev, *Tserkov'*, pp.111–4,120–1.
37. RGASPI, f. 454, op. 1, d. 8, l. 28, 29, 30, 243, 290, 292.
38. On the activities of the individual who would nowadays be characterised as a fully fledged professional terrorist – Iakov Bliumkin – see Iurii Sushko, *Deviat' zhiznei Iakova Bliumkina* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2012). RGASPI, f. 85'Secret Persia', d. 26, l. 1. See also Igor Simbirtsev, *Spetssluzhby pervykh let SSSR, 1923-1939* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2008), pp.95–6. See Marshall, *General Staff*, 191.
39. This collection (Fond 85) also contains ample correspondence between Fedor Rotshtein (pseudonym Mirza) (1871–1953) (he had been a member of the Bolsheviks' Party since 1901; during the First World War he worked in the British Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence and was one of the founders of the British Communist Party), who was the Soviet representative to Persia and Turkey in 1920–21 and one of the authors of the epoch-making 1921 Soviet–Persian Treaty, Fedor Raskolnikov, commander-in-chief of the Soviet forces, who landed in Anzali in May 1920, and was the Soviet plenipotentiary to Afghanistan in 1921–23, and Iakov Surits (1882–1952), the Soviet Diplomatic representative to Afghanistan in 1919–21, on one hand; and the Soviet Narkomindel and other Soviet military entities, on the other hand.
40. In this sense the most interesting collection, though accessible only in the archive itself, is Fond 495 (*Ispolkom Komintern*), op. 90, *Iranskaia Kommunisticheskaia partiia, 1917-1943*. However, the materials on the Iranian Tudeh party, founded in 1941 with the decisive help of the USSR, are still completely classified. *The Comintern Archive*, <http://www.comintern-online.com> (accessed 10.02.2014).
41. For example, on the same above-mentioned personalities of Bravin and Raskolnikov see f. 5, f. 122, f. 133, f. 159.

42. V. Genis, *Nevernye slugi rezhima: Pervye sovetskie nevozvrashetsy, 1920-1933* (Moscow: Avtorskoe izdanie, 2009), pp.4–5,9,33,38,41.
43. V. Kuzichkin, *Inside the KGB: My Life in Soviet Espionage* (London: Ivy Books, 1990), pp.81–2. As far as the suppressed collections are concerned, the author of this article was unable to receive these documents, for the whole ‘Fond 17’ in question turned out to be among the removed documents. The author still keeps the written request, marked ‘removed’ by the archive authorities.
44. See the amateur video of Andrey Artizov’s speech (A. Artizov, *The video-record of the Speech delivered 28.02.2013 at the enlarged session of the Federal Archival Agency Board*, <http://archives.ru/coordination/kolls/video-28-02-2013/artizov.shtml> (accessed 01.02.2014) and its official transcript (A. Artizov, *The official transcript of the Speech delivered 28/02/2013 at the enlarged session of the Federal Archival Agency Board*, <http://archives.ru/reporting/report-artizov-2013-kollegia.shtml> (accessed 01.02.2014). It is also noteworthy that the amateur video contains a more complete version of the speech than the official transcript (politically sensitive parts were not included).
45. ‘The Characterisation of Holdings, 2012’, on RGASPI site, <http://www.rgaspi.su/funds/characteristics> (accessed 10.02.2014).
46. Matsnev, *OpenSpace*.
47. Sorokin, ‘The Speech at the RGASPI Scholarly Council Session 18.01.2011’.
48. M. Foucault, *Power* (New York: New Press, 2000), p.132.
49. Vladimir Andreevich Kosagovsky (1857–1918), lieutenant general. Between 1894 and 1902 he was the chief commander of the Persian Cossack Brigade and during 1905–8 he served as Head of the Transcaspian region. He is the author of multiple works on economy, finance, governmental set-up, history, geography and military forces of Persia. He retired in 1909 and lived on his private country estate. After 1917 he had to resort to farming and after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks burdened him, a ‘class-alienated landowner’, with extremely high taxes, which would have bankrupted him had they not been voluntarily paid by the peasant population of five neighbouring villages as a mark of respect towards their former landlord. They also several times saved him from being arrested by the Bolsheviks but he was finally executed in 1918. His diaries are kept in Russia’s State Military Historical Archive, Fund 76 (See also M. Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye vostokovedy* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literature RAN, 2005), pp.126–7. N. Ter-Oganov, ‘Persidskaia kazach’ia brigada: period transformatsii (1894-1903 gg.)’, *Vostok. Afro-aziatskie obshchestva: istoriia i sovremennost’* 3 (2010), pp.69–79).
50. General Aleksei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin (1848–1925), an eminent Russian orientalist (including works on Persia), full member of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society, in different periods served in Turkestan, was Head of the Asian Department of the General Staff, Head of the Trascaspian Region, War Minister and Governor General of Turkestan. In 1895 A. Kuropatkin was sent to Tehran as a special representative of the Tsar at the Persian court. As War Minister he took an active part in establishing Tashkent Officers’ School of Oriental Languages and the Officers’ Faculty at the Oriental Institute (Baskhanov 2005, pp.135-6).
51. RGVA, f. 401 *The Military Learned Committee, 1804-1903*; see also f. 846 *The Scholarly Military Archive, 1520-1918*; see also f. 446 ‘*Persia, 1726-1916*’.
52. The term *vostochniki* derives from *Vostok* (‘the East’ or ‘the Orient’ in Russian) and officially was used in late Imperial Russia for differentiating the military officers and the employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs from their colleagues who had not received the appropriate Oriental studies’ training. It can be translated as ‘orientalist’. Since the early 1920s a term *vostokoved* (‘orientologist’) has officially been used for everyone professionally trained in Oriental studies. The latter sounds more scholarly in Russian.
53. Andrei Snesarev (1865–1937), Lieutenant General of the General Staff of the Russian Imperial Army, served in Persia and Afghanistan and authored a considerable number of scholarly works on the history and ethnography of the region. In 1920 he participated in the establishment of the Military Academy of the Red Army of Workers and Peasants, becoming its first head and also leading its Oriental section. He still remains the most famous Russian officer-*vostochnik* (military orientologist) (RGVA, f. 409, op. 2, p/s 338-604).
54. RGVA, f. 195 ‘*The 11th Army*’. Files (*dela*) 261 and 62 contain ‘*Orders issued within the Persian Red Army*’, whereas file 352 contains the documents on the activities of the Political Directorate of the Persian Soviet Republic.
55. RGVA, fond 157 *The Revolutionary Military Council of the 1st Persian Army*.

56. RGASPI, f. 133, op. 1, d. 26 (Kobozev's private notes), l. 30. It is noteworthy that this *delo* has a tag on it: *Not available for the Reading Hall*.
57. Vladimir Fedorovich Minorsky (1877–1966) graduated from the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages. Since 1902 he had been visiting Persia with various secondments on behalf of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in 1915–19 worked as Russia's Chargé d'Affaires and the Head of the Russian Mission after 1917. Having refused to subordinate the Mission to the Bolsheviks, he virtually dismissed it and left for France in 1919. In the period of 1932–66 he worked as professor of Persian studies in SOAS, London, and spent his retirement in Cambridge (see Sorokina, *Rossiiskoe nauchnoe zarubezh'e*, pp.137–8).
58. AV IVR, f. 17 (Minorsky's private collection).
59. GARF, f. P5402.
60. Said, *Orientalism*, pp.190–1,223–4.
61. GARF, P1335, op. 1, d. 5 (The Oriental Scholarly Commission); d. 6 (The Communist University of the Toilers of the East); d. 17 (VNAV).
62. In general, almost all archival employees I have dealt with complain of the lack of attention on behalf of the state: archives are heavily underfunded, which results in the bad conditions the employees have to work in, and extremely low salaries. These issues have actively, but in vain, been raised throughout the last decade. The information presented by Andrey Artizov seriously contradicts both the words of archival employees and the speech of Andrey Sorokin (see Artizov, 'The official transcript of the Speech delivered 28/02/2013', and Sorokin, 'The Speech at the Enlarged Session of the Federal Archival Agency Board, 28.02.2013'), particularly, in terms of remarks on salaries and the lack of funding.
63. As was mentioned before, a whole set of factors should be taken into account, when starting archival research in Russia. Using this opportunity, I am happy to hereby express my sincere gratitude to Head of the AVPRI Dr Irina Popova who after a series of negotiations, explicitly for the sake of scholarly knowledge alone, benevolently consented to cooperate and authorized the retrieving (*in absentia*) of the documents indicated in my application, notwithstanding my coming after the closure of the archive. I thus succeeded in receiving copies of a considerable amount of the documents pre-indicated in my request.
64. AVPRI, f. 144 (The Persian Desk), f. 147 (Vvedensky). See also V. Genis, *Vitse-konsul Vvedenskii: Sluzhba v Persii i Bukharskom khanstve (1906-1920 gg.)* (Moscow: MYSL', 2003).
65. AVPRI, fond 144, op. 489, d. 148b.
66. See the section on Smirnov in Vasil'kov and Sorokina, *The Bibliographical Dictionary of Orientalists*.
67. The Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, fond 39 'Konstantin Smirnov's private collection', d. 143 'The diaries of Kseniia Karlovna Smirnova'.
68. In brief, the Foucauldian term *archaeology of knowledge* can be defined as analysing scientific and scholarly notions and the process of their production in the sociopolitical context of a particular historical period within a certain society. M. Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980); M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1989).
69. Sorokin, 'The Speech at the Enlarged Session of the Federal Archival Agency Board, 28.02.2013'.
70. A. Artizov, 'The Speech at the RGASPI Scholarly Council Session, 18.01.2011', http://www.rusarchives.ru/federal/rgaspi/protokol_180111.shtml (accessed 01.02.2014).
71. V. Lukin, 'The Speech at the RGASPI Scholarly Council Session, 18.01.2011', http://www.rusarchives.ru/federal/rgaspi/protokol_180111.shtml (accessed 10.02.2014).