

Recent Work in Archives in Uzbekistan and Russia

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During 2000-01, I spent 8 months in the archives in Uzbekistan and Russia doing the basic primary source research on a project entitled "The Making of Soviet Central Asia, 1918-1929." My research was funded by a research scholarship from the American Councils for International Education (ACTR/ACCELS) and a grant from Carleton College. The project is conceived as a broad study of the social, cultural, and political transformation of Central Asian life in the first decade or so of Soviet rule. I wish to pay particular attention to the period from 1917-1924, which has tended to be neglected by the several important dissertations done on the early history of Uzbekistan. I also wish to highlight the role of local actors (the Jadids, Muslim communists, Basmachi/Qo'rboshi, etc.). I worked in Uzbekistan for over five months and in Moscow for another three. The purpose of this report is to describe conditions in the archives and the holdings that I found useful.

The Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Located in Tashkent, this archive contains extremely rich documentation on the Governorate-General of Turkestan (1865-1917), the Turkestan Autonomous Republic (1918-1924), the People's Soviet Republic of Khiva (1920-1924), the People's Soviet Republic of Bukhara (1920-1924), and Uzbekistan (from 1924 on). The archive has excellent guides to its holdings. They are printed, but available only in the reading room. There are, in addition, typed handlists describing other collections not included in the guides. There is also an extensive card catalogue that locates documents in given subjects. I was told, however, that it was not open to foreigners (even though I had used it in the past). Its usefulness is compromised to an extent by the fact that it uses the old Soviet system of classification, which can obscure more than it reveals.

I worked through about 15 collections (*fondy*), including the major ones devoted to the Central Executive Committees and Councils of Ministers of Turkestan and Bukhara, as well as the two ministries of education.

The archive has a small and helpful staff who service a small reading room. Since the number of foreign researchers is small, one can develop very good relations with the staff. I have been working at the archive since 1991 (this was my fourth visit), and have only very good things to say about the institution and its staff. They also have excellent copying facilities. Photocopies cost 51 *so'm* (about 17 cents at the official rate, but only 7 cents at the street rate) and are done overnight. There seems to be no limit on the number of copies that may be ordered, except for the proviso that complete files (*dela*) may not be copied.

Other Archives in Uzbekistan

The Tashkent city archive is located on the edge of the city in the Sorok Let Pobedy neighborhood. It is housed near the Yangiobod bazaar in a nine-story residential building, which it shares with several other offices of the city government. The archive is little used and the staff are not used to foreigners doing historical research. Photocopying is available, but not professionally done.

I also made an exploratory trip to the Samarqand *viloyat* archive. It is a small archive with a very friendly director. Photocopying is readily available.

On the whole, the scope and quality of material remaining in regional archives does not compare with the centralized collections held in Tashkent. The Party archives (the former Uzbek branch of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, now the Presidential Archive) remains closed to foreigners and indeed to most Uzbekistani scholars, except those with official permission (and this seems to be granted only to those working on the "repressions" of the 1930s).

The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI)

I worked primarily in the collections of the Central Asian Bureau of the Communist Party, which was the highest organ of power in Central Asia between 1922 and 1934. Its collection is copious and extremely rich. Unfortunately, RGASPI is open only

three days a week. It is a much bigger operation than the Central State Archives of Uzbekistan, and is constantly crowded. Many of the *fondy* have been microfilmed, and are available only in microform. Original paper copies can, however, be ordered. Copying is possible, although each researcher is limited to 400 copies per visit (apparently regardless of the length of the stay). Copies are expensive (paper copies cost \$1; microfilms are 35 cents apiece, and actually are of better quality) and take a long time to make, with two months being the usual time frame for fulfillment. One usually needs to have a friend pick up orders.

Library Work

I hoped to examine complete runs of several Uzbek-, Russian-, and Tajik-language periodicals. The main holdings of Russian-language materials are in the Rare Books Section of the Alisher Navoiy Public Library in Tashkent. Uzbek- and Tajik-language sources are to be found there and at the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies at the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences in Tashkent. Both of these institutions have extremely rich holdings that complement each other, but neither institution has any copying facilities (although at Beruni,

microfilms of small numbers of pages may be ordered at \$2 per page; this is useful enough if one's research concerns the intensive study of a unique manuscript, but not practical for periodical research). Beruni charges foreign researchers an annual "membership fee" of US\$30. This is completely legitimate and answers a pressing need for cash. Its working hours are unfortunately short: the reading room is open Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and then from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Navoiy is open seven days a week, the hours are longer, and no fee is required, but no copying is possible. The periodicals not housed in the rare books sections are in a different location, which shut down in mid-February for repairs, and was still closed as of this writing.

In Moscow, the Russian State Library (the Leninka) remains closed for repairs, although the periodical section, housed in the annex in Khimki, is open. The holdings, including those in Central Asian languages, are wonderful, featuring complete runs of most major magazines after 1923. Microfilming is available at about 60 cents per exposure. The commute to Khimki (45 minutes from the center of the city) can, however, be daunting.

Preparing and Conducting a Field Trip to Baku and Bishkek

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The collapse of the Soviet Union opened new horizons for scholarly research on Central Asia mainly in the areas of social science and humanities. The previously understudied areas offered new case studies, but offered little infrastructure for the researchers bound for the field. Scholars of social science and humanities were among the first who introduced the images of the Westerners to Central Asia and visited the area on a regular basis. This paper will share some of the experiences during my field trip to Baku and Bishkek.

The research was conducted in Baku and Bishkek in the summer of 2000. The goal of the research was to interview and survey the participants of the social movements in the late 1980s and early 1990s and to do archival work in the libraries. I should note that the general atmosphere and attitude

towards the research on political issues was more open in Baku than in Bishkek.

Using E-mail

I started to plan the field trip from my desktop computer at the University of California, Riverside by subscribing to various email distribution lists such as Caucasus@yahoogroups.com, CentralAsia-L@fas.harvard.edu, and others. Such lists can be useful in planning your accommodations and getting the first contacts. However, I found it difficult to network based solely on email. Many people do not have email accounts. Others have changed email addresses. Some do not check their accounts regularly. Most of my networking was done through telephone contacts and personal referrals upon my arrival to Baku and Bishkek.