

# **Ethnicity, Memory, and Violence:**

## **Reflections on Special Problems in Soviet & East European Archives**

Jeffrey Burds  
*Northeastern University*  
[j.burds@neu.edu](mailto:j.burds@neu.edu)

in

Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg, eds.  
Archives, Documentation, and the Institutions of Social Memory:  
Essays from the Sawyer Seminar, 2000-2001  
(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming November 2005).

**Biography:** Jeffrey Burds teaches history at Northeastern University. He is an associate of the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard University. This paper is part of the author's larger study of the Soviet counter-insurgency in West Ukraine after World War II.

## Ethnicity & Memory

“. . . memory is the most imperfect and selective vector of evidence.”

E. P. Thompson, Beyond the Frontier<sup>1</sup>

One of the greatest obstacles to understanding the history of Eastern Europe during and after the Second World War has been that the memories of the events themselves have been constructed ethnically--which is to say, each ethnic group has recorded their own versions of the tragic devastation of that era. The postwar phenomena of diasporas and refugee cultures have further splintered memories and perspectives, and subsequently channeled them through the prisms of the Cold War, East and West.

Polish historian Piotr Wróbel has used the phrase “double memory” to identify the phenomenon of distinct and often contradictory accounts of divergent ethnic groups who share the same history. How, for instance, is one to reconcile the memories of Poles and Jews when remembering wartime Poland? Wringing his hands at the seemingly irreconcilable divergencies between nationalistic accounts of shared events, Wróbel recently wrote with despair: “Are we destined to remain forever entombed within these two diametrically opposed visions of the Second World War? Each [ethnic memory] is so different from the other that at times it is difficult to believe that they portray the same events.”<sup>2</sup>

The task of reconciliation of these disparate memories is not only daunting, but in fact guarantees that the historian’s motives will be impugned no matter how diligent the research, or how conscientious his or her efforts to be fair.

Nowhere is the gulf that separates ethnic memories wider than in the study of inter-ethnic violence. For violence does not befall someone, it involves maleficent agency: by definition violence implies both perpetrators and victims. While social history and historical demography offer us reliable tools to count the victims--and every ethnic group in wartime Europe has its own substantial victimologies--considerable obstacles stand in the way of identifying and comprehending the perpetrators on their own terms.

Omer Bartov, among others, has identified the close affinity in the twentieth century between national identity and “a glorification of victimhood.” In his provocative social history of the origins of genocide in Germany, Bartov identified the complex dynamic which transformed German frustrations at the front into the search for ethnically defined “real” enemies who had “stabbed them in the back” at home: “An enemy, that is, whose very persecution would serve to manifest the power and legitimacy of the victimizer, while simultaneously allowing the persecutor to claim the status of the ‘true’ (past, present, and potentially future) victim.”<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Paul Parin, a physician who worked alongside Tito during the partisan war in Yugoslavia during World War II, coined the term “ethnopsychanalysis” to identify a

---

<sup>1</sup> E. P. Thompson, Beyond the Frontier--The Politics of a Failed Mission: Bulgaria 1944 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Piotr Wróbel, “Double Memory: Poles and Jews After the Holocaust,” East European Politics and Societies Volume 11, Number 3 (Fall 1997), p. 567. Cf., Timothy Snyder, “‘To Resolve the Ukrainian Question Once and For All’: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943-1947,” Journal of Cold War Studies Volume 1, Number 2 (June 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Omer Bartov, “Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,” American Historical Review Volume 103, Number 3 (June 1998), pp. 774-779.

special relationship between ethnic nationalism, nationalist violence, and the complex sets of experiences that go into producing a nationalist perpetrator of atrocities against an ethnically defined enemy.<sup>4</sup> Parin's perceptive observations bridge the divide between perpetrators and victims by identifying a distinct process in the construction of the enemy other.

Working mainly on the basis of his observations in modern Yugoslavia, Parin has emphasized the fundamental importance of the "production of an unconsciousness" which helps to generate a "new reality": the nationalist reality where our side is the good, just one, and their side is unjust, bad, dangerous. This projection of a distinct "image of the enemy" provides the foundation for a propaganda campaign that heats the flames of ethnic passions. The same events and images provoke diametrically opposite responses in both camps: "The continual presentation of the massacre victims incited fear, hatred, hysteria, and blood lust on both sides of the ethnic border."<sup>5</sup>

The result is the social construction of fear,<sup>6</sup> or what Robert Kaplan has referred to as a "region of pure memory" where "each individual sensation and memory affects the grand movement of clashing peoples":<sup>7</sup> the generation of ethnically distinct, non-overlapping accounts of shared events where "Both sides have selective perceptions of the past and know almost nothing about each other. One man's history is another man's lie."<sup>8</sup>

The very lack of consanguinity which precedes empathy creates a special category for ethnically defined enemy others. A Croat fascist, Ljubo Miloš--a confessed

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul Parin, "Open Wounds: Ethnopschoanalytical Reflections on the Wars in the Former Yugoslavia," in Alexandra Stigmayer, ed. Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 35-53. Cf., Ervin Staub, The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Samuel Totten, et. al., eds., Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views (New York: Garland, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> As cited in Parin, "Open Wounds," p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," Annual Review of Sociology Volume 24 (1998), pp. 441-443. Brubaker and Laitin rightly dismiss the usefulness of such "culturalist approaches" as a suitable tool for social scientists, even as they fail to understand that the intrinsic role of such "cultural constructions of fear" is not understanding, but rather the dynamic construction of a collective ethnic identity through the scapegoating of the enemy other. Cf., Vieda Skultans, "Theorizing Latvian Lives: the Quest for Identity," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute Volume 3, Issue 4 (December 1997), p. 761: "These accounts of the Soviet invasion and its long aftermath constitute a hybrid genre which unites personal and collective experience. They are intended by their authors to provide a literal representation of the past but in the process of acquiring coherence they come to act as potent carriers of literary and cultural meanings, which confirm personal identity and national loyalties. The authors are engaged in a quest for meaning in often disrupted and chaotic lives." Latvian life stories from the twentieth century transformed the context and parameters of Latvian collective experience, where "Latvians saw themselves not as immigrants but as political exiles seeking temporary asylum." For Latvians and other East European postwar diaspora communities, anti-Sovietism was not a Cold War between nation states, but a liberationist war against communism, a "crusade for freedom" against Soviet-sponsored communist totalitarianism. See also David S. Fogelson, "Roots of 'Liberation': American Images of the Future of Russia in the Early Cold War, 1948-1953," The International History Review Volume XXI, no. 1 (March 1999): 57-79. Scott Lucas, Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "A Reader's Guide to the Balkans," New York Times Book Review 18 April 1993, pp. 1, 30-32; and Robert D. Kaplan, Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Wróbel, "Double Memory: Poles and Jews After the Holocaust," p. 574.

murderer of Serbs in wartime Yugoslavia--put it best: "For my past, present, and future deeds I shall burn in hell; but at least I shall burn for Croatia."<sup>9</sup> Or, as a Jewish survivor of the Warsaw ghetto uprising recalled: "If you could lick my heart, it would poison you."<sup>10</sup> Such extremism is all too common: remarkably, ethnicity can stifle, shape, redefine, even suspend, all other categories of human behavior, and it fundamentally shapes the contents of historical archives. As Timothy Snyder wrote in his insightful study of the Polish anti-Ukrainian actions during 1947: "Ethnic cleansing always involves mutual claims, enabling each side to present itself as the innocent defender of legitimate interests and its opponents as savage nationalists."<sup>11</sup> Omer Bartov added: "The distorted features of the tortured and butchered served as evidence of their own, rather than of their murderers' inhumanity; the sense of moral outrage and physical disgust they aroused produced a powerful desire for revenge, which by a process of inversion was directed at the victims rather than the perpetrators, that is, the 'other' rather than oneself, for it was their presence which had made such atrocities necessary, their evident inhumanity which had revealed one's own barbarity. Hence, only by physically annihilating the victims and erasing their memory could one salvage one's own humanity."<sup>12</sup>

For scholars who do not specialize in the history of ethnic violence, it may be difficult to understand the degree to which genocide is a hate crime perpetrated not against random strangers, but more often than not targeting personal contacts. Jan Gross's poignant observations of multi-ethnic Galicia just prior to World War II are especially relevant here:

In these easternmost hinterlands of interwar Europe each hamlet or village was to a large degree an isolated universe. As often happens in such an environment, intense personal hatreds were harbored, and an ethnic and religious component gave them the potential to engulf entire communities. Yet, much as the violence represented an explosion of combined ethnic, religious, and nationalist conflict, I am nevertheless struck by its intimacy. More often than not, victims and executioners knew each other personally. Even after several years, survivors could still name names. Definitely, people took this opportunity to get even for personal injuries in the past.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Vladko Maček, In the Struggle for Freedom (New York: Speller, 1957), p. 245.

<sup>10</sup> As cited by Lore Dickstein, "Inside the Gray Zone," *New York Times Book Review*, 7 February 1999, Section 7, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Snyder, "'To Resolve the Ukrainian Question Once and For All,'" p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> Bartov, Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich (New York: Oxford, 1991), pp. 107-108.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Tomasz Gross, Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 43. For insights on neighbor-against-neighbor violence in Eastern Europe, see Jan T. Gross, Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Shimon Redlich, Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919-1945 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). On the recent scandals provoked by Gross's insistence that Poles must remember themselves not just as victims of Nazi aggression but also as perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence in World War II, see Alexander B. Rossino, "Polish 'Neighbors' and German Invaders: Contextualizing Anti-Jewish Violence in the Bialystok District during the Opening Weeks of Operation Barbarossa," Forthcoming in Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume 16 (2003).

In a rare and frank account of genocide by one of its perpetrators, Waldemar Lotnik--a young Pole in southeastern Poland--chronicled with amazing clarity and insight his flight from organized Ukrainian nationalist terror in 1943, and his return for vengeance as a soldier in a Polish nationalist partisan unit in 1944-1945. Though he was a Polish partisan, Lotnik made it clear that atrocities could be attributed equally to both sides, Ukrainian and Polish: "The ethnic Ukrainians responded by wiping out an entire Polish colony, setting fire to the houses, killing those inhabitants unable to flee and raping the women who fell into their hands, no matter how old or young. This had been the pattern of their behaviour east of the Bug [River], where tens of thousands of Poles had been either expelled or murdered. We retaliated by attacking an even bigger Ukrainian village and . . . killed women and children. Some of [our men] were so filled with hatred after losing whole generations of their family in the Ukrainian attacks that they swore they would take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. . . . This was how the fighting escalated. Each time more people were killed, more houses burnt, more women raped."<sup>14</sup> The failure of archives as institutions of memory is perhaps best exemplified in the gaps between such a vivid eyewitness account of an ex-perpetrator haunted by guilt as contrasted against the processed, often-homogenized memory of nationalistic institutions.

Unfortunately, while useful as an interpretive framework for understanding inter-ethnic violence, the concept of "double memory" reduces ethnicity to homogeneous monoliths. The problem in Galicia and--I would guess--everywhere else, is the very fluidity of ethnic memories: especially, that rival factions within ethnic groups usually compete to define the memory/identity of the whole group. Often, the battle for hegemony between rivals within an ethnic group has superseded the struggles between distinct ethnic groups. So that when speaking of the interweaving phenomena of ethnic identity and historical experience, we should refer not to double memory, but to a multiplicity of memories. Inevitably, few archives preserve all competing voices within ethnic groups, let alone the accounts of multiple ethnic groups within a given society. As former political prisoner and ex-member of the Ukrainian SS, K. Hromyk (from Khartsyzsk, Ukraine), wrote in a venomous open letter to the Ukrainian president in March 2001:

We are now all over seventy. Thank God, we have lived to see our independent Ukraine, the coveted goal for which we fought and suffered. Many of us have not yet been rehabilitated, for our butchers, security force investigators and military tribunals, did their best to denigrate us forever. You can find everything in our archival files: we are public enemies, Nazi henchmen . . . , and God knows what else. When our SBU [Ukrainian secret police] officers dig up such a file they put it in the bottom drawer, believing these brazen lies without listening to the victim himself or [to] the eyewitnesses of those events.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Waldemar Lotnik, Nine Lives: Ethnic Conflict in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderlands (London: Serif, 1999), pp. 66-67.

<sup>15</sup> As quoted in Stanislav Kulchytsky, "Veterans, Veterans. . . Gordian Knot of the OUN-UP Problem Nourishes Separatism," Den' [The Day] [Kyiv, Ukraine] Number 26 (2 October 2001). The conflict between institutional inertia of post-Soviet police agencies versus the nationalistic rehabilitation of German collaborationists and anti-Soviet rebels as "freedom fighters" still rages. On the one hand, veterans of the Ukrainian SS and other German military units were awarded state pensions in 2002; on the other, there has been no mass release of NKVD/NKGB secret police files of Ukrainian nationalists who perpetrated violent

Hromyk's struggle is a microcosm of a broader debate raging within post-Soviet Ukraine to reconcile nationalist history with the Soviet past. Such moments of profound political upheaval are often accompanied not only by distinct cultural artifacts, but the search for a national identity does itself become the filter for re-processing national memory preserved in national archives.

### **Intervening Contexts: Refashioning Ethnic Identities & Collective Memories**

Another complicating factor is that ethnicity and ethnic identity are not static, but rather do themselves adapt to changing circumstances. The filtering of collective and institutional memory is not a one-time event, but a continual process of homogenization, accommodation, assimilation, and change. In twentieth-century Galicia, for instance, locals have undergone no less than five major processes of ethnic cleansing--starting the century under Austria-Hungary, then subordinated to Polish control during the interwar period, a target of Soviet-instigated "class war" from 1939-1941, divided and ostensibly subordinated to Warsaw by the Germans during World War II, again re-conquered by the Soviets in 1944, and "liberated" with independent Ukraine since 1991. Each successive era promoted the interests of one ethnic group at the expense of others, so that census studies reflected dramatic (and contradictory) shifts in ethnic distribution among the Galician population.<sup>16</sup> Social scientists working in multi-ethnic zones where the dominant group frequently changes face the extraordinary obstacle of mass refashioning of identities as locals strive to adapt to the new dominant regime. For instance, during World War II, Jews throughout Central and Eastern Europe resisted Nazi arrest by masking themselves as Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, and others. The phenomenon became so widespread that German authorities were absolutely dependent upon wily locals to ferret out individual members of groups targeted for genocide. But more importantly, East European Jews culturally self-liquidated and melted into dominant ethnic groups as a spontaneous defense strategy against the threat of genocide.<sup>17</sup> The whole matter was further confused by the German occupation, which (from Spring 1943) systematically destroyed pre-war Jewish censuses and even unearthed mass graves of victims, transported and burned their corpses in order to stymie effective investigations into the scale of the Holocaust.<sup>18</sup>

---

acts against Ukrainian civilians or agents of Soviet power. I made twelve requests to the Ukrainian SBU in L'viv in March 2002 for access to files of specific Ukrainian nationalist rebels; all twelve were refused. Meanwhile, in 2002 original NKVD files began to appear for sale at flea markets in Kyiv and various provincial Ukrainian towns.

<sup>16</sup> See the maps and discussion in Snyder, "To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem Once and for All," pp. 102-103. Cf., Perez Zagorin, Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution and Conformity in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Berhard Chiari, Alltag hinter der Front. Besatzung, Kollaboration und Widerstand in Weissrussland 1941-1944 (Düsseldorf, 1998); Martin Dean, Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); and a first-hand account by Helene C. Kaplan, I Never Left Janowska (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), pp. 68-69. On Nazi efforts to erase historical memory by destroying archives, see Richard Breitman, Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> For a classic example, see Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. R-7021 Chrezvychainaia gosudarstvennaia kommissiia po ustanovleniiu i rassledovaniuu zlodeianii nemetsko-

If we reflect on memory filters over the course of the twentieth century, the most obvious is the role of the Cold War as a factor distinguishing East from West, native Ukrainian or Pole or Lithuanian or Latvian from their American, British, Australian, or Canadian diasporas.<sup>19</sup> There is no better account of the shifting sands of memory during fifty years of Cold War than E. P. Thompson's own study of the tragic fate of his brother Frank, a pro-communist British Special Operations Executive (SOE) officer killed in Bulgaria in 1944: "A good deal of contemporary history rests upon the information of 'people who know'. The problem is, not that they know nothing, but that they do, in fact, know a great deal. But what they know can pass, over the years, by a process of selection, into an ideological code which presents, in the form of anecdote or fact, what they wish to be believed. If, at the same time, harder evidential material is suppressed or destroyed, the truth of a past event may become irrecoverable."<sup>20</sup> In Thompson's view, 'anti-historians' actively involved in the destruction of evidence include not only governmental "weeders"--bureaucrats who cleanse the archives of potentially harmful material before releasing them to readers--but also officers in charge: for instance, the first chief of the CIA, Walter Bedell Smith, is known to have concealed agent files of East European nationals recruited to run anti-Soviet operations behind the iron curtain by burying them under a veritable mountain of governmental paperwork with deliberately mis-assigned labels.<sup>21</sup> That one act delayed the discovery of U.S. support for anti-Soviet paramilitary groups throughout Soviet Eastern Europe--Operation ROLLBACK--for nearly forty years: under the rubric of national security, U.S. archivists imposed a very heavy-handed policy of government censorship of materials relating to U.S. covert support of East European anti-Soviet guerillas after the war.<sup>22</sup> (See illustration in Appendix I, p. 19.) Similarly, the problem of vigilante censorship, whereby nationalist or ideological warriors "correct" the "misinformation" of archival files by stealing and/or destroying them, is fairly common as an obstacle to research in contemporary Eastern Europe.

Inevitably, not just the writing of history, but even asking the questions, becomes tantamount to an act of provocation. Again, E. P. Thompson's experience as evocative questioner is relevant: "[T]hese questions . . . remained and remain sensitive. Certain questions clearly provoked discomfort many years after the events, and these sensitivities

---

fashistskikh zakhvatchikov, op. 67, d. 82, ll. 26-27 ob., the handwritten affidavit of Ukrainian peasant Semen Sholopa, from village Dornfel'd, Drohobych oblast, dated 11 September 1944. Sholopa described in detail the rounding up of 118 Jews in his village in 1943, who were then forced to strip naked, then one by one leap into a specially prepared pit, where they were shot, and buried. A few months later, a special SS unit returned to the field where the mass grave lay hidden, ordered nearly a hundred young Jews to excavate the site, then collected and transported the corpses for burning in a pit behind Ianovskii camp in Vynniki. The Jewish workers were likewise subsequently liquidated. Without Sholopa's detailed account, there would be no record of the German atrocity.

On the mutability of national identity and the processes of ethnic assimilation and differentiation, see John J. Kulczycki, "The National Identity of the 'Natives' of Poland's 'Recovered Lands,'" National Identities Volume 3, Number 3 (2001): 205-219.

<sup>19</sup> On the transformation of ethnic politics with the growth of diaspora cultures, where "both challengers and incumbents may increasingly seek resources from dispersed transborder ethnic kin," see Brubaker and Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," p. 425.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, Beyond the Frontier, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> John Loftus, The Belarus Secret: The Nazi Connection in America (New York: Knopf, 1982).

<sup>22</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Jeffrey Burds, The Early Cold War in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944-1948, Number 1505 in The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2001).

increased rather than diminished over the years. As the Cold War developed it required on both sides a continual reprocessing of approved views of the past (or amnesia about the past) and the accretion of new dimensions of myth.”<sup>23</sup>

### Soviet Police Archives

Just as memories are reshaped by ethnicity, and by intervening contexts, their correction or re-interpretation is profoundly inhibited and controlled by the selective construction, destruction, and reconstruction of archives. Heavily influenced by postmodernist critique, French archivist Paule René-Bazin recently noted: “The archivist is more and more ‘the person who knows how to destroy.’ He has learnt that representation of the past, individual and collective, is inseparable from its material traces and knows better than anybody that they are threatened with disappearance.” Archives are constructed by human beings, and are therefore subject to the same all-too-human limitations. The archivist “sometimes forgets that he is also an active part of a society in which certain traces are removed and destroyed; others are provisionally suppressed or definitely forgotten.”<sup>24</sup> With few exceptions, perpetrators of violence--both individuals and institutions--generally conspire to conceal their crimes from investigators. Likewise, victims of ethnic or gender violence--whose identities are often disorganized by torture and brutality--unwittingly conspire through their silence. The Latvian émigré writer Agate Nesaule put it best: “No one ever wants to hear about the painful parts of my past. People have hundreds of ways, both subtle and harsh, to reinforce my own reluctance to tell.”<sup>25</sup>

Any nation’s “correction” of history takes various forms, not least of all restriction of archival access and actual destruction of collections. But it is important to emphasize that filtering occurs long before the documents themselves are collected in archives. Working in Soviet secret police archives over the past decade, I have regularly discovered the coattails--so to speak--of systematic secret police efforts to conceal compromising evidence. With remarkable consistency, for instance, field officers in the Soviet secret police at war against Ukrainian nationalist partisans regularly reported that partisans, before they were killed, had managed to douse their archives with acid, or that the partisan archives had been burned during a firebombing attack to subdue the rebel hideout. Why? Because among their principal tasks rebels regularly maintained documented records of Soviet police abuse in their region. When captured intact, these archives were often transferred to Moscow, where central police administrators vetted the contents of files, and regularly charged abusive police officers for excessive use of force.<sup>26</sup> For just one of myriad examples, I cite the file of the Ukrainian Communist Party’s rare indictment of a provincial police chief for rape: “Chief of the Gliniavskii

---

<sup>23</sup> Thompson, *Beyond the Frontier*, p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> See especially: Paule René-Bazin, “The Influence of Politics on the Shaping of Memory of States,” in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> Agate Nesaule, *A Woman in Amber* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 9. On the aftermath of rape as an act of ethnic warfare, and the obstacles to evidence gathering, see Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> See example in Arkhiv MVD SSSR (Moscow, Russia), f. 488 Upravlenie vnutrennikh voisk MVD Ukrainского okruga, op. 1s, d. 232, ll. 14-16, “ Otchet o metodakh i deistviiax bol’shevikov v Tovstvenskom raione.” At every point where Ukrainian nationalist rebels had recorded police abuse, the Moscow bosses instructed their personnel to launch an investigation “to verify” the details of the violations.

raion MVD in L'viv oblast Matiukhin P. E. in February [1946], while interrogating [ethnic Ukrainian woman] Mikhal'skaia E. G., raped and brutally beat her. Kept under arrest from 27 January to 18 February of this year, Mikhal'skaia has been released from prison [following a determination that she had been arrested on the basis] of unsubstantiated charges. Matiukhin likewise raped at least four other illegally arrested girls: Paternak, Kostyv, Pokyra and Stepanova. [In each case], they were released after having been subjected to violence and insults."<sup>27</sup> The initial compromising material against Matiukhin had been gleaned from a captured rebel archive. The result? The emergence of a sort of "blue code" among Soviet policemen that decreed the systematic destruction of possibly compromising rebel archives: through time, operational objectives were subordinated to schemes of self-protection among local police.<sup>28</sup>

Caught between Moscow's insistence on speedy results side-by-side with Moscow's regular failure to allocate sufficient resources or cadres, provincial police organs tried to manipulate the information trails as documents and reports flowed through raion, oblast (L'viv), republic (Kiev/Ukraine), and federal (Moscow) offices. Murders were covered up with euphemistic deceptions like "prisoner was shot trying to escape"; compromising labels of "Ukrainian nationalist bandit" were applied to ordinary citizens to cover up cases of arbitrary police brutality.<sup>29</sup> Even worse, it was standard Soviet police practice in special "struggle against banditry" deception (maskirovka) units to dress up as rebel bandits and to perpetrate atrocities against local citizens (following the modus operandi of partisan rebels) so as to drive a wedge between rebels and the local population. As the Procurator of the West Ukrainian Military Tribunal reported to Nikita Khrushchev in February 1949: "On the night of 23 June 1948 the same [Soviet special forces] unit from Podvysots'ke village abducted in the forest a young woman REPNYTSKA Nina Iakovlevna, born in 1931. In the forest REPNYTSKA was subjected to tortures. While interrogating REPNYTSKA, members of the unit beat her severely, hung her upside down by her legs, forced a stick into her genitalia, and then one-by-one raped her. In a helpless condition, REPNYTSKA was abandoned in the forest, where her husband found her and took her to the hospital, where REPNYTSKA spent an extended period recovering."<sup>30</sup> Though these were police actions, such flagrant cases of police

---

<sup>27</sup> Top Secret report of N. Gusarov, Inspector TsK VKP(b), to Secretaries of the Central Committee of the USSR, Stalin, Zhdanov, Kuznetsov, Patolichev, and Popov, "Nedostatki i oshibki v ideologicheskoi rabote KP(b)U[krainy]," 13 August 1946. For further discussion, see Jeffrey Burds, "Gender and Policing in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944-1948," Cahiers du Monde russe Volume 42, Number 2-4 (April-December 2001): 279-320.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., Vladimir A. Kozlov's account of Soviet MVD efforts to block the flow of anti-police denunciations in the late 1940s. "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance: A Study of Denunciations and Their Bureaucratic Handling from Soviet Police Archives, 1944-1953," in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, eds., Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789-1989 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 121-152.

<sup>29</sup> See, for instance, the text of the denunciation of local police abuse by a typist in the L'viv office of the Ministry of State Security, Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob"ednan' Ukraïny (TsDAHOU), f. 1, op. 23, d. 5174, ll. 86-104. This denunciation led to the investigation and indictment of several MGB officers.

<sup>30</sup> Secret memorandum of the procurator of the Soviet Military Tribunal in Ukraine Koshars'kyi to Khrushchev, 15 February 1949, TsDAHOU, f. 1, op. 16, d. 68, ll. 10-17. For the full account, see Jeffrey Burds, "AGENTURA: Soviet Informants' Networks & the Ukrainian Rebel Underground in Galicia, 1944-1948," East European Politics and Societies Volume 11, Number 1 (Winter 1997): 89-130.

abuse were nonetheless regularly included in official Soviet reports of rebel terror: evidently, the Soviet bureaucracy had developed a filter to transform individual acts of police abuse into institutional memories of alleged documented evidence of rebel terror.

Pressed by Moscow to get results, provincial police came up with innovative solutions to meet Moscow's demands without risking their careers, or lives. In an especially enlightening insider's account, Petr Dmitriev, a guard from the Soviet state prison labor camp system during the late-Stalin era, recalled in his hair-raising memoirs published in 1991 a presentation of his commanding officer in 1951. "Our unit commander recounted with a great feeling of pride the cruel tortures inflicted on prisoners":

They made us chekisty stop using the sorts of coarse, medieval tortures to which we were accustomed. Left in the past as mere anachronisms were the tortures of the Inquisition--roasting limbs, needles under the [finger- and toe-]nails, sleep deprivation, starving [prisoners] to death, quartering.

"[Our sergeant Iurii] Pospelov stuck out his chest and hit it with his fist:"

"We chekisty have developed an alternative method for [inducing] confessions, one which does not leave behind traces of torture and which gives us the chance to extract any evidence we want from the zek [Soviet political prisoner], maintaining complete propriety on the surface. [This method leaves] neither bruises nor trauma. We call this method 'koromyslo'--'the yoke'."

Using a leather strap we would fasten the [prisoner's] heels to the back of his head, doing so gradually--sometimes pressing in on the [prisoner's] spinal column, other times stretching it, tearing it. This generated unendurable pain. In front of his own comrades, even the most obstinate zek soon began to ask for mercy, then to beg for it, then to cry and moan, and eventually to howl and lose consciousness. We would pour water on him, bring him back to consciousness, and then begin the torture anew. The prisoner would beg us [to stop], promising his tormenters that he would do everything we wanted. Then we would untie him and force him to lap up his own urine from the floor like a cat.

The problem with such torture was that it strained personnel--limiting a night's work to just one or two prisoners. Pospelov's innovative solution was to establish special "guard rooms" where up to twenty-five prisoners could be interrogated at a time.

They hung [prisoners] there by their hands, tied their legs so they could not kick, and then beat them in the kidneys. Using the palms of their hands, [guards] would repeatedly beat [prisoners] about their sides and back with sharp, stinging blows. In that position, the kidneys would tear away from the body and be displaced lower. The person doomed to such intense torture could be left hanging there for days.

The shocked Dmitriev recalled that "The sadist Pospelov recounted all this without remorse. . . . 'The worst thing,' Pospelov summed up, 'is when you torture [your prisoner] to death, since then you have to fill out a lot of paperwork for the deceased.'"<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Petr Dmitriev, *«Soldat Berii» Vospominaniia lagernogo okhrannika* (Leningrad: "Chas pik", 1991), pp. 24-25.

Even regimes that sponsor widespread institutional violence to maintain state control tend to discourage open discussion of the violence. Like individual perpetrators, institutions of violence commonly adopt self-filtering procedures that euphemize the atrocities and serve to conceal the perpetrator's responsibility.

The most flagrant cases of police filtering appear in the construction of criminal files of accused "enemies of the people." Post-Soviet revelations about Stalinist police interrogation methods have been staggering in their excruciating and gruesome detail. In a handwritten petition for release from political confinement written in 1940, Italian Communist Edmundo Peluzo left a vivid account of the fate of political prisoners. Peluzo had been arrested on the night of 13-14 May 1938. He was immediately thrown into solitary confinement at KGB headquarters on Kuznestkii most in Moscow--an underground 'special cell' in old Lefortovo prison:

The first torture began, if my memory does not betray me, on the fourteenth of May, the last [was] in August 1938.

Two, then four men took part in this torture. On the fourth of June at 4 o'clock in the morning four men armed with different instruments savagely beat me for almost forty minutes. So that I would not lose consciousness, they hung me upside down with my legs in the air and dragged me through a large room. Then they furrowed my back [with a belt buckle] to the point that I almost lost consciousness. The result of this was, as the doctor at Lefortovo determined, a blood clot in the veins [of my back] and a serious contusion of my spinal column. . . . I still feel [the pain] today. Then, the torture was continued under the direction of investigators Arsenovich and Krepkin, as a result of which my side was broken, I was spitting up blood. . . .

Only after this savage method in order to force me to recognize my guilt did the interrogator Arsenovich say to me: "We don't want to kill you, but [merely] compel you to sign the confession which we want." I was supposed to resign myself [to this].

In order to be saved from my inquisitors as soon as possible, I--in as much as Krepkin added that the Party required this [of me]--signed the affidavit in which I admitted guilt to all sorts of crimes.<sup>32</sup>

If police investigations and the files they created were often nothing more than tautological exercises which sustained official ideologies of ubiquitous enemies even as they protected the careers of individual policemen, provincial Communist Party personnel were likewise forced to operate within the constraints of Stalinist terror. Police and Party cadres alike were blinded by the myopia of "omnipresent conspiracy," a

---

<sup>32</sup> USSR People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs Investigative File, Department of the NKVD of the USSR, Arkhiv FSB, [no fond number available], d. 19062. Peluzo was arrested in April 1938 for conspiring against the Soviet state and working as a foreign spy. The cited letter was written in his own hand in French on 14 May 1941. Peluzo's petition for release was declined, and he died in hard labor eighteen months later. The author is grateful to Frederikh I. Firsov, former archivist at RGASPI, for generously sharing this material.

pathological search for enemies that ultimately undermined Soviet internal and external security.<sup>33</sup>

There is no better illustration of the damage suffered than the fiasco of the Soviet failure to prepare for German attack in World War II. In the months leading up to the launch of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, Hitler's plans to invade the Soviet Union were reported by no less (and probably far more) than 84 confirmed intelligence sources. But Stalin and his close cohort were so driven by the imperative of avoiding what Stalin called "Churchill's dirty provocations" to bring the Soviets into the war against Hitler, that any report on Germany's aggressive intentions was interpreted as an act of treason.<sup>34</sup> As historians L. Dvoinykh and N. Tarkova recently discovered, "just six days before the German invasion--Soviet secret agents in Berlin sent a report to Moscow stating that Germany's armed forces were completely prepared for an armed offensive against the USSR, and that an attack could be expected at any moment. On the report, Stalin wrote in his own hand: 'You can tell your "source" in the headquarters of the German air force to go f--k his mother. He's not a source, he's a disinformation agent.'" Stalin's deputy "Lavrentii Beria wrote the following order on a dispatch, warning that Germany was going to attack: 'In the recent past, many personnel have succumbed to blatant provocations and are sowing panic. For passing on systematic disinformation, these secret personnel . . . need to be pulverized into prison-camp dust as abettors of international provocateurs who hope to lure us into a quarrel with Germany.'" <sup>35</sup>

The lesson here is that the conditions of Stalinist leadership imposed distinct patterns of deception in Soviet archives, patterns that must be taken into account as historians take on the monumental task of uncovering the past.

### Post-Soviet Obstacles

While we can assume that post-Soviet archives often contain deliberately deceptive accounts, the challenges of ferreting out the fuller story of past events and policies are even greater because of conditions specific to post-Soviet and East European archives. Typical of nationalist manipulation of archival holdings is concealment of documents. Post-communist regimes regularly and inexplicably restrict access to collections. Moreover, there are many recent instances of theft and destruction of archival files by nationalist groups. A typical instance, in 1995, involved the files of the Ukrainian Catholic Church that were deemed inconsistent with the nationalist interpretation of history. What sort of materials were nationalist groups "weeding out" of archives? Here is just one of several documents that I read one year, but which were inexplicably missing

---

<sup>33</sup> Gábor Rittersporn, "The Omnipresent Conspiracy: On Soviet Imagery of Politics and Social Relations in the 1930s," in *Stalinism and Its Aftermath: Essays in Honour of Moshe Lewin* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), pp. 101-120.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), p. 260; Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> L. Dvoinykh and N. Tarkova, "What Military Intelligence Reported: Historians Have a Chance to Analyze Soviet Dispatches on the Eve of the War," in Bruce W. Menning, ed. *At the Threshold of War: The Soviet High Command in 1941*, in *Russian Studies in History: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1997-98), pp. 76-93. On the atmosphere of suspicion surrounding Soviet agents in the 1930s and 1940s, see Genrik Borovik, *The Philby Files: The Secret Life of Master Spy Kim Philby* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1994).

in subsequent years. In the final days of July 1944, NKVD Colonel S. T. Danilenko, posing as the Soviet religious representative in L'viv, met with Metropolitan Andrij Sheptitskij to determine his reaction to the return of the Soviets. Danilenko reported that the Metropolitan was "obviously disoriented" by the whirlwind events of the past few days, but that he seemed anxious to dissociate himself and his Church from both the Nazis and the organized Ukrainian nationalist movement. Sheptitskij was, according to Danilenko, eager to cooperate with the new regime:

Now I am certain that the fate of all Slavic peoples is being decided [said Sheptitskij], therefore they must rise up to do battle with racial Germanism. I condemn the activities of the UPA [Ukrainian Insurrection Army] and the [OUN-] Banderists, but I absolve the Melnikovtsy [the more moderate wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists] and those who served in the SS-Galicia. Their intentions were good but the Germans let them down, so now it is time to move away from a pro-German orientation. . . . Now, given the circumstances of the international situation, there is but once choice--to [reconcile] with Soviet power. I want to give instructions to all priests in the western oblasts of Ukraine to remain at their posts and to expound on this in their church sermons.

Information recorded by Colonel Danilenko and his agents reveals that the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy truly believed that Moscow had adopted a new religious policy. Soviet secret informant "Vishnekov" spoke with the Metropolitan at a reception for his 79th birthday on 29 July 1944, two days after the Soviet entry into L'viv:

The Metropolitan is firmly convinced that Soviet power has changed its previously hostile attitude . . . toward religion, the clergy, and the faith. They are reopening the seminaries and theological academies in L'viv. The soldiers hail the priests in the streets. This is additional proof of the respect that Soviet power has for religion.

He reported that Sheptitskij displayed "extreme optimism" for West Ukraine's future under Soviet rule: "Everything is in God's hands, now," remarked the Metropolitan, "and surely all will end well."<sup>36</sup>

According to the Soviet account, Sheptitskij--a Ukrainian Catholic candidate for probable sainthood in the next decades and a symbol of the Ukrainian nationalist resistance against Hitler and Stalin--had broken with the dominant Ukrainian nationalist military and political forces aligned with rebel leaders Yaroslav Stets'ko and Stepan Bandera. This evidently proved too potent for modern-day right-wing Ukrainian nationalists, who identify closely with Bandera. As a result of weeding efforts of

---

<sup>36</sup> Emphasis added. 30 August 1944. Top Secret Report, "On the Metropolitan of the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church--Count Andrij SHEPTITSKIJ" by Colonel Karin (Danilenko); witnessed by NKGB Captain V. Khodin. Robert H. Greene, "'A New War Has Begun': The Destruction of the Greek Catholic Church in West Ukraine, 1939-1946," Senior Thesis in History and Russian Studies, University of Rochester, 1997.

Ukrainian nationalists, the xerox I made in 1993 may well be the sole remaining copy of the documents.<sup>37</sup>

No less serious are threats against researchers who engage in the study of taboo topics, for example, on the scale of wartime collaboration with the Germans. There have been numerous reports from the 1990s regarding archivists' efforts to stymie controversial research agendas.

Yet another problem is the selective release of documents for incitement against a particular political or ethnic group. In April 1990, the pro-Milošević Communist leadership of Montenegro released the documents on the Tito-era persecution of pro-Soviet communists, thereby distancing itself from the Titoist legacy, which was increasingly ethnically defined ("Croat-Slovene domination"). Most recently, in October 2000, in advance of key Bosnian political elections, the Bosniak nationalist-dominated secret service (AID) released documents on the communist terror in the Cazin area in 1950, attempting thereby to associate communist anti-Bosniak misdeeds with the Social-Democrats, the communist successor party.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, nationalist groups within the former Soviet Union have long opposed full archival access, with greater and greater success. In April 1993, the Moscow-based Russian right-wing newspaper Den' (Day) carried an article with an attack on the Hoover Project, a project to microfilm significant sections of Russian archives, sponsored by the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University. The Den' author charged that, in the aftermath of the Cold War, America, "as a victor country, is taking materials and spiritual values out of the vanquished country in amounts and of a quality sufficient to deprive the vanquished state of any possibility to resist, and to preclude any possibility of national resurgence. In the twentieth century information is the highest value and those who have information gain the upper hand over those who do not. Russia has been deprived of its seaports, geostrategic defense frontiers, the military-

---

<sup>37</sup> Successive regimes in the Soviet Union have displayed a distinct tendency to destroy archival files. Christopher Andrew recently noted that there are numerous "KGB files which the SVR [Russian (post-Soviet) Foreign Intelligence Service] is still anxious to keep from public view. Unlike the documents selected for declassification by the SVR, none of which are more recent than the early 1960s, his [Mitrokhin's] archive covers almost the whole of the Cold War. Most of it is still highly classified in Moscow. The originals of some of the most important documents noted or transcribed by Mitrokhin may no longer exist. In 1989 most of the huge multi-volume file on the dissident Andrei Sakharov, earlier branded "Public Enemy Number One" by Andropov, was destroyed. Soon afterwards, Kryuchkov announced that all files on other dissidents charged under the infamous Article 70 of the criminal code (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda) were being shredded. In a number of cases, Mitrokhin's notes on them may now be all that survives." The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 22.

The practice of restricting or destroying secrets is not unique to the Soviets. See the fascinating account in Richard J. Aldrich, The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence (New York: The Overlook Press, 2002), pp. 1-16, 637-645. Cf., "Use of Special Intelligence by Official Historians," Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee [JIC (45) 223 (0) Final (20 July 1946)], Public Record Office, CAB 103/288/109123. The Western allied effort to conceal the fact that they could read German ciphers led to the suppression and denial of official knowledge of the genocide in the East. See Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew*, passim.

<sup>38</sup> Ivo Banac, "Silencing the Archival Voice: The Destruction of Archives and Other Obstacles to Archival Research in Post-Communist Eastern Europe," Arh. Vjes. [Croatia] God. 42 (1999), str. 217-222; and personal communication from Banac in Autumn 2000.

industrial complex and military potential. It has been deprived of its material products and resources and independent domestic and foreign policy. National ideology and culture have been strangled. Now Russia is being deprived of its information 'gene', its organizational secrets that contain the substance of the structure, the engineering blueprint that helped to bring up a power that won the biggest war in human history and developed unique forms of civilization that have withstood the test of postwar history."<sup>39</sup> (See Appendix II, pp. 20-21.) Similarly, the Russian Orthodox Church has effectively blocked research into its record of covert cooperation with the Soviet secret police, targeting not just individuals (defrocking outspoken Duma member and former Orthodox priest Gleb Yakunin), but also collections (like the Politburo's subcommittees on Religious Affairs and Religious Cults).<sup>40</sup>

Pressures of this sort have inevitably led to the reclassification of Russian archives. After a relatively open period of archival access (1991-1993), the State Secrets Act of August 1993 (but not imposed until after the October 1993 coup attempt) reversed the period of openness and ushered in the familiar regime of restriction. In essence, this law deprived archival administrations of the independent right to declassify documents, a process that henceforth was transferred back to successor institutions (under the rubric of *vedomstvo*) of the relevant Soviet agencies. The consequences were immediate. Whereas in 1992 the Central Party archives in Moscow declassified 2,867 documents, in 1995 the number dropped to 663.<sup>41</sup> Archivists at the State Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow have confirmed that the rate of declassification slowed considerably after 1993, and still more from 1996.

Most ominously, there is the pattern practiced in various countries, where personal archives from the crisis periods of twentieth-century history are considered too sensitive for research access. The "personal files" (those under the rubric of *prava lichnosti*) in Russian archives were effectively closed by an imposition of a new 75-year limit: declassified under the rubric of state secrets procedures after thirty years, sensitive materials were reclassified under the new rubric of "rights of privacy" for 75 years.<sup>42</sup> As a Russian archivist told me a few years ago when refusing me access to Soviet crime files from the State Procurator's Office: "A person living today has a right not to know that his grandfather was a rapist." Similar impediments were introduced in Ukraine in 1995, and in several other ex-Soviet states, significantly restricting the archival access of foreign scholars.

Meanwhile, various discriminatory rules and procedures targeting foreigners are common. Copying fees for foreigners in Russian archives are often more than five to ten times higher than those for domestic users. Some depositories started requiring fee payments, and several St. Petersburg archives introduced daily admission and research fees. In the Central Party archives in 1998, I was charged a 100-dollar fee to process and copy restricted files from the newly declassified Kaganovich collection, then given only six hours to read the materials. At the Russian Military Historical archive, numerous

---

<sup>39</sup> "Russia Under Siege: Western Scholarly Research as Intellectual Imperialism," *Den'* (Moscow), April 11-17, 1993. See Appendix II, pp. 19-20.

<sup>40</sup> Burds' interview with A. I. Barkhovets, then Deputy Director of the State Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow, where the collections are stored, July 1994.

<sup>41</sup> J. Arch Getty, "Secrets and Money: an Update on Russian Archives," *Newsnet: The Newsletter of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies* Volume 37, Number 5 (November 1997).

<sup>42</sup> Personal communication from archivists in Tver, Perm, and Moscow, Russia.

researchers have reported being charged up to five dollars per page for xeroxes. In dozens of reported cases, archivists who were particularly cooperative with foreigners have been subjected to harassment, ostracism, or worse. One key figure in our Russian archive project, where in the 1990s we published twelve large volumes of inventories to several Moscow archives, was investigated for illegal release of classified materials; three of four American members of the editorial board were slurred with attacks as spies in 1993; while the key Russian expediter/manager of the project was fired from his university post.

Discriminatory measures have been imposed not just for ideological reasons, but also for financial ones. In many of the former communist countries, particularly in the former U.S.S.R., state support of archives has dramatically declined since 1991. For example, the 1992 budget of RGASPI, the former Central Party Archive in Moscow, declined by 25 percent from the previous year. In addition to the reduction of budgetary support, the budget appropriations frequently were not made at all. By 1993 the state debt to the Russian archives in Moscow alone exceeded 50 million rubles (\$25,000). In L'viv, the State Archive of L'viv Oblast (DALO) in 1993 had a state operating budget of less than fifteen hundred dollars annually! Due to the decline in state support and low staff salaries Russian and Ukrainian archives slashed preservation activities and radically reduced the purchase of basic office supplies. The archives started saving on such necessities as light bulbs and heating, or--in the case of RGASPI--drastically reduced staff and reading room hours (from 32 hours a week in 1995, to 12 hours in 2000, and 21.5 hours in 2002); strict limits were imposed on the number of files that could be ordered each day. Inevitably, much of the well-trained veteran staff started leaving in search of better opportunities, to be replaced by uninformed, unmotivated, and poorly paid substitutes. Hence, the need for the archives to generate income outside the limited state budgets.

This desperate search for income led to various corrupt practices, which themselves provoked a backlash in Russia and elsewhere following the election of President Vladimir Putin in 2000. As an American scholar reported from Moscow in 2000: "The long-expected restrictions in Russian archival policy have arrived. The Putin regime has had a powerful chilling effect on research access (especially among foreigners) to previously classified materials in Russian archives. Even documents that have been cited in publications, or read by researchers in earlier years, have over the past year been reclassified. According to archivists in Moscow, the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] and FSB [Federal Security Service, the post-Soviet KGB] have sent agents to each archive and communicated the clear message that patterns of special access observed throughout the 1990s are now over. For the first time, researchers have found sealed (stapled, with glued seals attached) documents inside of previously opened files. Xerox facilities are far more stringent about what they will copy. It is far more difficult to get official permission for taking previously classified documents abroad. As one archivist imparted: 'People outside the archives have no idea what's happening. Big changes are occurring behind the scenes.'" These changes all fall under the rubric of Putin's reforms of the mass media in Russia, reforms based upon a new concept of

“informatsionnye oruzhiia”--“informational weapons”--and how best to combat the threats posed by the information revolution to Russian national security interests.<sup>43</sup>

The threats to the integrity of archival collections are political, in the form of abruptly shifting prevailing political winds, where a succession of archivists threaten to weed out and reshape history to fit their own perspectives and agendas. The threats to archival integrity are also religious and ideological. Working without restriction in the consistory and personal files of Metropolitan Andriy Sheptitskij in L’viv, Ukraine, in 1992, I found that many of the documents had disappeared from archival shelves when I returned just a year later. Soon after, all foreign researchers were banned from doing research in the Ukrainian Catholic consistory or Metropolitan Sheptitskij’s personal files altogether. Similarly, during the Tadjman era in Croatia, portions of the communist-era collections that referred to the regime’s pet projects (e.g., the glorification of Croat communists who were repressed by Tito), were removed from the state archives and incorporated within closed presidential collections.<sup>44</sup>

The threats to archival integrity are also economic--as reflected in the brain drain of experienced yet horribly underpaid archivists and scholars into the more lucrative private sector; the collapse of archival buildings and infrastructure; the decay of collections, or failure to develop or preserve new collections; and in the commodification and sale on the black market of especially valuable archival materials. Well-substantiated reports of the sale of documents (originals, or access to copies) in archives throughout the East have been common during the last decade, with three documented cases leading to the arrest and imprisonment of archival staff: the illegal sale of antiquities out of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts in Moscow in 1992-1993, the sale on the black market of rare Polish heraldry books out of the State Historical Archive in L’viv in 1993-1994; and the sale of Khrushchev autograph documents in Ivan-Frankiivsk to an American dealer in 2002. Valuable documents from formerly classified archives are now a regular feature of markets in Kiev and Moscow, and many are eventually sold and resold at premium prices on internet auctions sites.

It should be clear that special problems of archival collection, preservation, organization, and access apply in the former Soviet Union. These factors--above all, the Soviet Union as a multi-ethnic empire, the ideologically charged character of Soviet rule in the 20th century, as well as the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the nationalist

---

<sup>43</sup> Confidential Report (Anonymous) to the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, August 2000. Another American researcher, Roberta Manning of Boston College, provided still more chilling details in Autumn 2000: “There are rumors in Moscow that the ‘crackdown’ was caused by one American scholar who went around Moscow trying to ‘buy secret documents.’ Some FSB [Federal Security Service] operatives decided to set him up and ‘sold’ him some ‘secret documents,’ hoping to get them back at the border and create a scandal. But the scholar was able to send them out of the country by other means. So the police part of the FSB went crazy and start to inspect the archives like they used to, concentrating on the security of documents that still aren’t classified or are in some limbo but were being published in various collections, like the osobyie papki [“special files”] of the Politburo. . . . The inspection began with the FSB archive and all sotrudnitsy [archival personnel] who were not employees of the FSB were forbidden to work there. The Military Archive, which was inspected for three days running, was accused of selling state secrets and its head called down to the prosecutor’s office and told an investigation along these lines was being launched. . . . Anyway lots of archivists were pretty scared and foreigners don’t roam as freely around.” From RUSARCHIVE, an internet discussion group moderated by J. Arch Getty at UCLA, 26 August 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Banac, op.cit.; Tim Judah, “Croatia Reborn,” New York Review of Books (August 10, 2000).

backlashes that ensued--profoundly affect the writing of East European and Eurasian history.

**APPENDIX I. Archivists as 'Persons Who Know How to Destroy'**

**SUBJECT: "[American Military Intelligence] CIC Offered Use of [Ukrainian Nationalist] SB [Counter-]Intelligence Network"**

REGRADED CONFIDENTIAL  
ON FEB 20 1985  
BY CDR USAF/SCDM RPO  
Auth Para 1-603 DOD 5200. 1-R

HEADQUARTERS  
SUB-REGION BAD NAUHEIM  
COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS REGION III

APD 757  
807  
17 November 47

III-WE-536.21  
RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE  
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]  
Re: [REDACTED]

1. a. Reference is made to par 3e of Top Secret letter, Headquarters, 970th CIC Detachment, USFET, dated 14 February 1947, Subject: Counter Intelligence Corps Under Surveillance by AMLBANK-23.

b. [REDACTED]

(1) [REDACTED]

Age: 27  
Nationality: Ukrainian  
Round face  
Full, sensuous lips

[REDACTED]

SUSC 552 (b) (1)

pages 46  
copies

CONFIDENTIAL  
SUSC 552 (b) (1)

NOIC, Subject: [REDACTED] 64d 17 November 1947, OOW'D.

c. On 30 October 1947 this Agent was contacted by Subject.

[REDACTED]

(1) [REDACTED]

(2) [REDACTED]

(3) [REDACTED]

(4) [REDACTED]

(5) [REDACTED]

(6) The channel for transmission of a reply to the above proposition would be through Subject who would channel it to its ultimate destination.

[REDACTED]

This Agent stated to Subject that such a proposition was highly unorthodox and in some measure far-fetched.

page 2 of 3 pages  
copy 3 of 7 copies  
47

REGRADED CONFIDENTIAL  
ON FEB 20 1985  
BY CDR USAF/SCDM RPO  
Auth Para 1-603 DOD 5200. 1-R

SUSC 552 (b) (1)

NOIC, Subject: [REDACTED] 64d 17 November 1947, OOW'D.

d. This Agent and Subject plan to meet again during the middle part of December 1947.

3. Agent's Notes, Comments and Recommendations:

a. It is recommended that CIC Region IV be forwarded a copy of this report. It is also recommended that CIC MEXICH surveil Subject in order to determine Subject's contacts and his method of operation.

b. [REDACTED]

c. This Agent is not in a position to comment on the possibility of considering Subject's proposition.

d. [REDACTED]

e. This Agent requests definite guidance and direction as to how Subject is to be dealt with in the future. In the absence of further directions from higher headquarters, this Agent will attempt to evade a definite reply to Subject regarding the proposition.

APPROV'D:

JOE A. MOELLERGRADNER  
Special Agent, CIC  
Operations Officer

ANDREW DIAKUN  
Special Agent, CIC

CONFIDENTIAL

page 3 of 3 pages  
copy 7 of 7 copies  
48

REGRADED CONFIDENTIAL  
ON FEB 20 1985  
BY CDR USAF/SCDM RPO  
Auth Para 1-603 DOD 5200. 1-R

These are three pages of the document summarizing chief of Ukrainian nationalist counter-intelligence Mykola Lebed's contact with American intelligence in 1947, as released to the author in November 1996. The materials were blacked out on the basis of Section 1.5 (c) of Executive Order 12958, which stipulates that "information pertaining to intelligence activities, intelligence sources or methods, and cryptologic information shall be considered for classification protection." Fortunately, three indications provided the thread for deciphering the document: (1) the fact that the contact involved a meeting between an agent of the U.S. Counter-Intelligence Corps and the Banderist Sluzhba Bezpeki, the Ukrainian nationalist underground intelligence service; (2) that this contact had been made by a young, ethnic Ukrainian man with a "Round face" and "Full, sensuous lips"--features which were repeated in other declassified documents relating to Lebed; and (3) the CIC Special Agent Andrew Diakun's response that "such a proposition was highly unorthodox and in some measure far-fetched." Following a formal appeal, these and several thousand pages of other materials relating to Lebed's recruitment and service were fully declassified and released in 1997 under the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. The released information proves beyond any doubt that U.S. intelligence had recruited agents from within the Ukrainian nationalist community for paramilitary and espionage operations on Soviet territory. See Jeffrey Burds, The Early Cold War in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944-1948, Number 1505 in The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2001). In contrast to the common U.S. policy to black out compromising materials for review and release in future years, the standing policy in many parts of the Soviet satellite countries is simply to destroy compromising material in the archives, or--where there are strong central states (as in Russia)--not to release classified materials at all, and to deny researchers any mechanism by which to expedite release.

## APPENDIX II. The Nationalist Right & Archival Memory in Post-Soviet Russia

### Russia Under Siege Western Scholarly Research as Intellectual Imperialism

#### “WHEN A COUNTRY IS OCCUPIED ITS ARCHIVES ARE TAKEN OUT” (Yeltsinites Secretly Selling Soviet Archives)

(Den' [Day, a right-wing newspaper published in Moscow until October 1993. Since then, the newspaper has borne the name *Zavtra*, or *Tomorrow*.], April 11-17, 1993). The unattributed translation below was distributed on the internet in Spring, 1993.

*This translated document is provided in order to illustrate the precarious position of scholarly research in post-Soviet archives in the wake of dramatic right-word shifts in Russian politics in recent years. I want emphasize that this document has been presented to illustrate extreme right-wing Russian perspectives only, and in no way is it being used to indict or challenge the importance of the Hoover Project or any other ongoing or future projects. Needless to say, I do not share the views expressed in this excerpt.*

This paper has got hold of some curious documents connected with the “Hoover Project” whereby key Soviet archives will be put on microfilm and handed over to Americans. The topics that interest the Americans involve vital secret activities of the state. The agreement, signed by R. Pikhoia, D. Volkogonov and N. Pokrovsky on the Russian side and by J. Dunlop, R. Conquest, T. Emmons, J. Howlett on the American side, includes the following items.

“In the selection of documents the emphasis shall be put on documenting the following themes:

1. Mechanisms of power in the USSR.
2. The end of NEP and the emergence of the system of Stalinism.
3. Russia's population trends in the 20th century.
4. Religion in the USSR.
5. The Soviet administrative system in regard to industry, agriculture and the trade unions.
6. Popular aspirations and government response.
7. International activities of the USSR.
8. Any other themes as jointly determined.”

Among the jointly determined themes are inventories of Fund R-393 (NKVD of the RSFSR), and other funds of supervisory bodies contained in the Main Archives (Supreme Court, etc.) as well as the archives of Military Prosecution and documents of the Beriia case.

The Hoover Project is being carefully concealed from the public, the Supreme Soviet and from historians. It includes a confidentiality clause.

All this suggests some obvious conclusions.

We witness the consequences of full and unconditional capitulation of this regime in the face of victorious America which, as a victor country, is taking materials and spiritual values out of the vanquished country in amounts and of a quality sufficient to deprive the vanquished state of any possibility to resist and to preclude any possibility of national resurgence. In the 20th century information is the highest value and he who has information gains the upper hand over him who hasn't. Russia has been deprived of its sea ports, geo-strategic defense frontiers, the military-industrial complex and military groups. It has been deprived of its material products and resources and independent domestic and foreign policies. National ideology and culture have been strangled. Now Russia is being deprived of its information "gene", its organizational secrets which contain the substance of the structure, the engineering blueprint that helped to build up a power which won the biggest war in human history, and developed unique forms of civilization which have withstood the test of post-war history.

As soon as these archives arrive in America hordes of historians, military, intelligence agents, and social engineering specialists will converge on them to extract the precious ferments and to use them for the good of America and as poisons against Russia.

"The organizational weapon" has been used by America to destroy the USSR and it included a powerful information element. The information obtained under the Hoover Project will increase the potency of America's "organizational weapon" a hundred times. All this gives rise to several questions.

Why was such an important state act involving national security carried out secretly without the sanction of the Supreme Soviet and the government by a group of Democratic Russia members in which the notorious General Volkogonov continues to act as a renegade?

Why does the Hoover Project flout the interests of the republics of the Soviet Union since the "archive secrets" involve not only the present Russia but all the other components of the USSR?

Why are the terms of the "projects" so unequal for Russia and the USA, with the latter offering a banal and universally known part of the Library of Congress in exchange for precious information containing state secrets?

We want to draw the attention of the patriotic public, the people's deputies and the members of Parliament to this fact hoping that it will lead to a query in the Supreme Soviet over this outrageous fact. Occupation is a fact of current Russian history and those Yeltsinites who have opened the gates to the enemy and secretly and treacherously let the enemy into our home are now helping the marauders who are stripping their dead and wounded hosts of their clothes and jewelry.

The Hoover Project secretly signed by Volkogonov is an act of betrayal of Russia's fundamental national interests by the Yeltsinites.

(Den' security service)