



Russia's Turn to Persia

Iran has remained one of the most effective tools in Russia's foreign policy towards the West for more than two hundred years. Drawing on previously unpublished and recently declassified sources which change the established wisdom on many aspects of the history of Russia and Iran, Denis V. Volkov examines this relationship and situates it within the broader context of Oriental studies.

With a particular focus on the activities of scholars-diplomats, as well as scholars involved in academia, missionary activities and the military within their own professional domains, Volkov analyses the interaction of intellectuals with state structures and their participation in the process of shaping and conducting foreign policy towards Iran. This work explores the specific institutional practices of Russia's Oriental studies, including organisation of scholarly intelligence networks, taking advantage of state power for the promotion of institutional and individual interests, and profound engagement with Russia's domestic and foreign policy discourses of its time.

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Orientalism in Diplomacy and Intelligence

DENIS V. VOLKOV

University of Manchester



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To the memory of my parents
To the love of my wife and son

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Note on Transliteration

The language of the major part of primary source material used in this monograph is Russian. The transliteration of Russian names (personal names, book titles, journals, newspapers and organisations) is provided in accordance with the Sixteenth Edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. Bibliographical references also comply with the same style. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Russian are by the author.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ARAN (Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk) – Archive of Russia's Academy of Sciences;
- AV (Arkhiv Vostokovedov) – Archive of Orientologists (St Petersburg);
- AVPRF (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii) – Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation;
- AVPRI (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii) – Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire;
- Cheka* (Chrezvychainaia Komissiia po Bor'be s Kontrevoliutsiei i Sabotazhem) – Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage;
- DST (La Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire) – French Counterespionage Service;
- FSB (Federal'naia Sluzhba Bezopasnosti) – Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation;
- GARF (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii) – State Archive of the Russian Federation;
- GNCM – Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts;
- GPU (Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie) – State Political Directorate;
- GRU (Glavnoe Razvedovatel'noe Upravlenie) – Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Army;
- GULAG (Glavnoe Upravlenie Ispravitel'no-Trudovykh Lagerei) – Chief-Directorate of Corrective Labour Camps and Labour Settlements of the OGPU/NKVD;
- INO OGPU (Inostrannyi Otdel Gosudarstvennogo Politicheskogo Upravleniia) – Foreign Department of the United State Political Directorate;
- IRGO (Imperatorskoe Russkoe Geograficheskoe Obshestvo) – Imperial Russian Geographical Society;
- IVRAN (Institut Vostokovedeniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk) – Institute of Oriental Studies of Russia's Academy of Sciences;

- KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti) – State Security Committee;
 KIPS (Komissiiia po izucheniiu plemennogo sostava naseleniia Rossii) – Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of Russia;
 KUTV (Kommunisticheskii Universitet Trudiashikhsia Vostoka) – Communist University of the Toilers of the Orient;
 MID (Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del) – Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
 MIV (Moskovskii Institut Vostokovedeniia) – Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies;
 Narkomnats (Narodnyi Komissariat Natsional’nostei) – People’s Commissariat of Nationalities;
 Narkomvneshtorg (Narodnyi Komissariat Vneshei Torgovli) – People’s Commissariat of Foreign Trade;
 Narkomvoendel (Narodnyi Komissariat Voennykh Del) – People’s Commissariat of Military Affairs;
 NEP (Novaia Ekonomicheskaiia Politika) – New Economic Policy;
 NKID (Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del) – People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs;
 NKVD (Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del) – People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs;
 NKVT (Narkomvneshtorg, i.e. Narodnyi Komissariat Vneshei Torgovli) – People’s Commissariat of Foreign Trade;
 OGPU (Ob’edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie) – United State Political Directorate;
 PGU KGB (Pervoe Glavnoe Upravlenie Komiteta Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti) – First Chief-Directorate of KGB (external intelligence);
 Politbiuro (Politicheskoe Biuro) – Political Bureau of the Communist Party;
 Polpred (Polnomochnyi predstavitel’) – Plenipotentiary;
 Razvedupr (Razvedovatel’noe Upravlenie) – Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army;
 Revvoensovet (Revoliutsionnyi Voennyi Sovet) – Revolutionary Military Council;
 RGALI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva) – Russia’s State Archive of Literature and Arts;
 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;
- RKISVA (Russkii Komitet dlia Izucheniia Srednei i Vostochnoi Azii) – Russian Committee for the Study of Central and Eastern Asia;
- RKKA (Raboche-Krestianskaia Krasnaia Armiia) – Red Army of Workers and Peasants;
- RSFSR (Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika) – Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic;
- Sovnarkom (Sovet Narodnykh Komisarov) – Council of the People's Commissars;
- SVR (Sluzhba Vneshnei Razvedki) – External Intelligence of the Russian Federation;
- VeCheka* (Vserossiiskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia po Bor'be s Kontrrevoliutsiei i Sabotazhem) – All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage;
- VNAV (Vsesoiuznaia Nauchnaia Assotsiatsiia Vostokovedov) – All-Union Scientific Association of Orientologists;
- VTsIK (Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Iсполnitel'nyi Comitet) – All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party;
- ZVORAO (Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniia Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshestva) – Proceedings of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society.

Archives Used for Research (Russia and Georgia)

Russia (Moscow)

- ARAN (Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk) – Archive of Russia's Academy of Sciences (Moscow Branch);
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Russia (St Petersburg)

- ARAN (Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk) – Archive of Russia's Academy of Sciences (St Petersburg Branch);
 AV (Arkhiv Vostokovedov) – Archive of Orientologists of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts;

Georgia (Tbilisi)

- GNCM – Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts.