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FOREIGN SCHOLARS AND ARCHIVAL POLICY IN POST-SOVIET UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The article gives a description and assessment of the situation with the availability of foreign researchers in the archives of Uzbekistan. The analysis of publications of foreign researchers on archival policy divides them into two categories: publications with scientific and practical value for prospective researchers and works layered political implication. At the same time, given the criticisms of researchers, the author stresses the need for the liberalization of access to documents of the Soviet period and taking into account the world practice of developing specific legislation on the opening of archives to researchers.

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INTRODUCTION

Organization of use and access to archival documents is an important aspect of quality of work of the state archives. Over the past quarter of the century in the archives system of modern Uzbekistan there is carried out a radical reform of the legal framework, the positive changes are observed in the field of democratization of archives management and the use of archival sources. Consistently with the weakening of the no-access policy the state archives have begun to remove restrictions on access of researchers to the documents. The number of users of archives significantly expands due to the number of foreign researchers. In particular, according to the statistics, Uzbekistan archives became open to foreign researchers from the USA, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Israel, France, Japan, South Korea, China, etc. In considering the interaction of foreign researchers and archives, one can face the fact that in recent years very often one can observe that there are different views, both from national and foreign historians about the availability of the archives of Uzbekistan. These public opinions, related mainly to: a) the problem of the off-limits to foreigners of many archives; b) the difficulty of execution of documents for access for foreign researchers. Indeed, in this respect, the national archives are far behind the global process of declassification of archival materials. Despite the fact that the regulations for temporary storage of

classified documents in organizations, enterprises and institutions were defined as thirty years after which departments should consider the issues of declassification and transfer documents to the state archives for open use. However, as world experience demonstrates regarding archives, the practice aims to highlight the most "sensitive" files in a special category and to establish long term restrictions on their use (Starostin, 1997). In this situation, the archives as single instance are powerless. The solution to the first question, as the history and contemporary social movements demonstrate, to a large extent depends on the activity of the same researchers – historians. As it is known, the development of historical science in the second half of the 19th century and public demands for the establishment of centralized archives by historians helped transform archives from "arsenals of power" to the archives of "laboratory of history" (Prozorova, 2008). Or in 2008, the modernization of the French archival law was not claimed as a result of the state apparatus reforms or the development of information technology, and largely is associated with a change in the relationship between civil society and the state, citizens and authorities with respect to the accessibility and openness of the archives (Prozorova, 2008). In other words, the liberalization of the use of and access to archival material in the first place, can be achieved by increasing scientific interest in research and the consolidation of archivists and historians. The second question requires a special study. Why the archives of Uzbekistan in the first years of independence were not well known to researchers, but were readily available?

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Years	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
CIS countries	20	28	3	1	1	1	4	2	6
Other countries	9	11	6	7	8	7	6	9	4
Total	29	37	9	8	9	8	10	11	10

(Gorshenina, 2007). Today, after they were actively quoted in the works of a significant number of foreign researchers on the history of Central Asia, they are according to some of them are "unavailable" or even "closed"?

Of course, it is difficult to agree with last opinion. The following table shows that the archives policies in Uzbekistan make provisions for foreign researchers an access to work in them. As the table shows, the number of users and the dynamics though insignificant, but the number of foreign users remains almost unchanged. Thus, included in this table, researchers from Japan each year have access to the archives of Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, according to the regulatory rules of users in the reading rooms of the state archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, registered by the Ministry of Justice dated 17.06.2002, No 1053-1 for the admission of foreign users in reading rooms of archives made public with the written consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- a) on the basis of bilateral agreements on scientific and cultural exchange on the principles of reciprocity, to the extent to which citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have access to the archival documents of the partner state,
- b) in the absence of a bilateral agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the government of a foreign user, he is allowed to work with documents in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan is issued through embassies and consulates of the state in the Republic of Uzbekistan or the organization, which officially receives the user. The written agreement specifies the name of user's country of residence, user's name, surname, patronymic, education, degree, name of the topic and its chronological framework, the purpose of research and public archives where he/she may conduct research. A considerable attention is paid to the scientific discussion of the legal issues of state regulation and improvement of the archives activity on organization of access and use of archival materials, including different discourses of high important value of foreign scholars who have worked in the archives of Uzbekistan over the past decades in the international archival publications.

Access and use of archival documents

The number of foreign publications reflecting the assessment of Central Asian archives of and Uzbekistan in particular is insignificant. However, in the selection of publications, we were guided by the principle of targeted and thematic interconnectedness with Uzbekistan archives. In this respect, historiographical analysis of publications allows, according to the theory of Orientalism by Edward Said (1978), who continues to live in the academic world, in the doctrines and

theses about the Orient and Oriental people, to divide the researchers into the following two categories:

The first group consists of scholars pursuing research purposes only and who serve for the benefit of science. The second group includes the researchers conducting research under the auspices of science "custom" survey, in which the political strategy is more considered in which the intellectual potential is used, and most importantly, financed all the costs associated with obtaining the desired result. The financial dependence of the latter often causes them to forget the essence of the mission of the products they produced. The first group of researchers includes Adeeb Khalid, who based on the study of archival materials on the history of Central Asia in the early twentieth century, published articles, which have both practical and source studying value for further research. In the published research report on the eight month work in the archives of Uzbekistan (2000-2001), he gives an overview of the activities of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state archives of the city of Tashkent and Samarkand region, as well as a brief overview of archival depositories. Adeeb Khalid, who began his research in the archives of Uzbekistan in the first years of independence (1991), is very sympathetic about the professionalism of the archival staff, and pays special attention to the conditions of researchers who order copies of archival documents. As a comparison, Adeeb Khalid has mentioned that equivalent copy of archival documents in Uzbekistan, which cost 5 times cheaper, in contrast to the Russian archives (Khalid, 2002). In another article dealing with archives and source studies the author gives valuable advice on the use of archival material. Describing the scheme of archives structure in terms of their documentary heritage, Adeeb Khalid divides them into: 1) state archives that store documents of various bodies and institutions of government; 2) archives of the Communist Party and its various bodies; 3) archives of law enforcement agencies. Regarding the availability of data archives, he stressed that in contrast to the last two departmental archives, public records are easily accessible to researchers (Khalid, 2008).

Comparing the documentary potential of archives of Uzbekistan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan in studying the Muslim issue, he divides them into two historical periods (colonial and Soviet). The author focuses on the acquisition of the sources and the origins of the formation of archives in the former Soviet archives, most of which was equipped in the imperial and Soviet periods. From this perspective, Adeeb Khalid criticizes the work of Robert Graves, who used Muslims petitions sent to the imperial authorities, and the study of Douglas Northrop, who used the GPU (State Political Department) reports. As an advice, he offers to potential researchers to use materials from state archives, combined with the periodical press materials, manuscripts and books published in local languages, as well as documents from the collections of private citizens. According to the author, materials that do not intersect with the state will help to hear the real voices and objectively assess the social and political reaction of the Muslim population on the new policy. As practice shows, the scientific approbation of such materials has

a significant impact on the quality of subsequent works. For example, J. Pickett, who defended his PhD in 2015, Princeton University (USA), emphasizes the special role of Adeeb Khalid who had influence in choosing his research topic. Being a student at Carleton College the researcher had acquired his initial knowledge on Central Asia from Adeeb Khalid who until today assists him in improving his researches by giving recommendations. Pickett's work also was written with combination of different types of historical sources, among which, as the author claims, archives of Uzbekistan were of no less importance. Appreciating archival documentary heritage of the country, the author expressed his gratitude to the archive which played an important role in his work (Pickett, 2015).

However, it is difficult to agree with the opinion of Adeeb Khalid that there were not sacred institutions in Uzbekistan as in Bakhchisaray, Ufa and Tbilisi. In this connection it is difficult to hear the real voices of the Muslim elite in the archives generated in the colonial period. However, the publication of a number of other scholars proves the existence of the traditional practice of archiving and storage of documents in Central Asia, even in the ancient period (Sims-William, 1997). For example, Paolo Sartori states, 'The Archive of the Khans of Khiva' is one of the richest and best preserved collections of records from Central Asia the period prior to the Russian conquest" (Sartory, 2016). In addition, in his publications, Paolo Sartori (2012, 2016), underscores how the archival materials of Uzbekistan help researchers explore the local office practices and a variety of historical sources, accumulated in given archives allow increase research capabilities. Based on thorough analysis of archival materials in Uzbekistan, these publications disclose the value of the collection of archival documents of Central Asian khanates, qadi's and biy's courts, waqf collections generated mostly in pre-colonial period. Several researchers such as Alexander Morrison (2008, 2016) and Mark Kramer (2012) expressed critical opinions about the inaccessibility of certain archives associated with the activities of the Communist Party, the Politburo and the KGB (State Security Committee) of the Soviet period, which are difficult to access, not only for foreign researchers, but also for a large number of domestic scholars. Indeed, in relation to the liberalization of access to documents of the Soviet period archival policy of Uzbekistan lags far behind some post-Soviet republics. This situation requires the consideration and taking into account the world practice to develop a special law on access to archival documents.

At the same time, it should be noted that the publication of the abovementioned researchers, whose works are far from political accretions, are of great scientific and practical value to researchers unfamiliar with the archives of Uzbekistan. However, in the works of some researchers there also found negative reviews about the archival policy of Uzbekistan. Unfortunately, unlike the above mentioned scholars, humanists, whose research has greater political implications, have a significant and long term impact on modern views and the formation of opinions and evaluations on archives of Uzbekistan. For example, Christine Evans who has worked in the Samarkand regional archive describes all external pictures surrounding her, such as the environment, public conditions, and unavailability of equipment in the archive, which according to the author prevented her from focusing on research (Evans, 2003). However, the author is silent about her

research findings and information potential of the archive as discovered during her work with archival funds. Another researcher, Jeff Sahadeo who had worked for a long period in the archives of Uzbekistan, was trying to draw a parallel between the archives and the history of power in Uzbekistan (Sahadeo, 2005). The study of this publication of the author gives the idea that the goal was not directed towards the archives or archival policies, but the subjective evaluation of the work of local researchers. In general, it is difficult to evaluate the significance of research and purpose of authors of recent publications. These works leave negative emotions and form a negative perception and humiliated assessment of country with which many readers and future researchers are introduced through these publications.

Conclusion

The study of the abovementioned publication is a valuable source for comparative analysis of the development trends of archival policy and regulatory issues of access to post-Soviet republics. In addition, the present research opinions and estimates of archival policy of Uzbekistan help to look at the situation from the outside, to identify weaknesses in the national archive building and determine the future direction of its improvement. The survey results show that a modern legislative framework for access to archives of Uzbekistan requires further liberalization and fundamental reform. The implementation of these tasks, along with local archivists should participate actively in scientific and social forces of the country. In the future the liberalization of the rules to access to archival documents pave the way for information to all researchers and will contribute to enhance the knowledge and dissemination of priceless national heritage.

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