

Gubernatorial Reports of Russian Imperial Governors 1855 - 1864

For the first time permission has been granted to microfiche large archival collections of the Central State Historical Archive (RgIA) in St. Petersburg. In September 1995 IDC signed a long-term exclusive agreement with Dr. Vladimir V. Lapin, Director of the RgIA, to microfiche important sections from these fascinating historical archives.

As a first project, the Gubernatorial Reports of Russian Imperial Governors for the period 1855 -1864 have been selected. This project has been prepared in cooperation with Prof. Paul Bushkovitch of the History Department at Yale University and Tanja Lorkovic, curator of Slavic and East European Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. Both have spent considerable time at the Archives in St. Petersburg making proper selections and arranging with the archivists all the necessary details with respect to the preparation and organization of materials for filming.

The Gubernatorial Reports

The reports of the provincial governors of the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century, dispatched annually to the Ministry of the Interior and ultimately to the Tsar himself, are a fundamental source for research on all aspects of the history of Russia. From their inception in 1804 until their cessation during the revolution of 1917, these reports documented economic changes, political events, and popular disturbances, as well as the actions of provincial administration. In them, an unparalleled first-hand contemporary account of life and politics in Tsarist Russia is preserved.

The reports are voluminous (sometimes filling 1,000 folios in one year), largely because of the fastidious detail which the central authorities in St. Petersburg demanded. The resulting documents not only provide a unique glimpse of provincial life, but a record of the workings of the attempt to implement state policy on the provincial level. The task of administering decisions made in the faraway capital was daunting, and the reports vividly portray the governors attempts to enforce often abstract and ill-conceived mandates handed to them by a distant bureaucracy, and the governors attempts in turn to influence the center.

Governors reports were made obligatory in 1804, and formalised in 1828 by the



The complex of the Central State Historical Archive by the Neva River.

Photo: Alexei Sergei Melentiev.

addition of rules for the compilation of the reports. Up until 1837, not all governors reported and not always regularly. New rules for preparing the reports came out in that year, according to which one copy went to the Tsar, one to the Minister of the Interior, one to the Governor general (if there was one in the area), and one remained in the province. In 1842 this was changed to a unified form of governors report with 27 obligatory groups of statistical information in the appendix. This model was changed somewhat in 1853, but the obligatory 27 tables remained. In the era of Tsar Nicholas the governors reports

were extraordinarily uniform, with the result that they became rather formal. In 1870 the form of the reports was relaxed, but as an appendix a survey of the province was required that consisted of both text and tables. The report included the main events and evaluations, while the survey (which the provincial statistical committees compiled) had statistical information and a general description of the province.

The Tsar himself read the reports and made marginal comments in his own hand. The Committee of Ministers

reviewed these comments in order to ensure that the appropriate measures were taken.

Until the 1880s, the reports were handwritten, but the surveys were printed typographically (15 to 220 copies). In subsequent years the reports were also printed (up to 50 copies). The reports for 1837 - 1916, however, did not come in so regularly and thus have not been fully preserved. There are also lacunae as a result of wars and the revolution of 1905.

The originals of the reports are kept in the Central State Historical Archive (St. Petersburg), in the fonds of the Committee and Council of Ministers. The copies are stored in the fonds of the Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, so that where the originals are missing the copies can be used.

The microfiche project first stage

The Yale/IDC project does not plan to film all of the reports at once but rather filming initial parts of the archive selected by the advisors of the project.

The first part which is now available, is the period of Great Reform 1855-1864, containing the following guberniias:

- Arkhangel'skaia guberniia
- Ekaterinoslavskaia guberniia
- Iaroslavskaia guberniia
- Kazanskaia guberniia
- Moskovskaia guberniia
- Nizhegorodskaia guberniia
- Novgorodskaia guberniia
- Peterburgskaia guberniia
- Permskaia guberniia
- Saratovskaia guberniia
- Tobol'skaia guberniia
- Voronezhskaia guberniia

The gubernias have been selected on different aspects such as industrial, agricultural, economical and regional importance.

Further stages of the project

A second selection which has been made, and is now ready for filming, is the period 1905-1917, the Revolutionary Time. The same gubernias that have been selected for the first stage, will be included.

Depending on the interest in this project, IDC will develop further selections, either of other entire provinces or other periods.

Scope	12 titles
Number of fiche	1,176
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	Varies according to the size of the original
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers with title on each fiche

Gubernatorial Reports

**Arkhangel'skaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

115 microfiche
Order no. RG-1/1

**Ekaterinoslavskaia guberniia, for the
years: 1855-1864.**

79 microfiche
Order no. RG-2/1

**Iaroslavskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

76 microfiche
Order no. RG-3/1

**Kazanskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

67 microfiche
Order no. RG-4/1

**Moskovskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

127 microfiche
Order no. RG-5/1

**Nizhegorodskaia guberniia, for the
years: 1855-1864.**

160 microfiche
Order no. RG-6/1

**Novgorodskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

70 microfiche
Order no. RG-7/1

**Permskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

88 microfiche
Order no. RG-9/1

**Peterburgskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

57 microfiche
Order no. RG-8/1

**Saratovskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

124 microfiche
Order no. RG-10/1

**Tobol'skaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

103 microfiche
Order no. RG-11/1

**Voronezhskaia guberniia, for the years:
1855-1864.**

110 microfiche
Order no. RG-12/1