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THE PAPERS OF GRIGORII N. TRUBETSKOI

A new source publication for the study of diplomacy,
orthodoxy, and liberalism, 1900-1931

Grigorii N. Trubetskoi was a unique and contradictory figure in the first three decades of the twentieth century. He was a leading liberal — often scathing — critic of autocracy, yet was perhaps most influential in pushing the regime toward an aggressive annexationist stand in the Balkans. Personally deeply religious and idealistic about his faith, he became the proponent of deep reforms of Orthodoxy and pragmatic solutions to the divisions between the church that remained in the Soviet Union under Patriarch Tikhon and the Orthodox in emigration. A prince in one of Russia's most exalted noble families, he spent his life working long hours as a civil servant and writer.

This research note aims to briefly introduce this influential individual and point to possible avenues for research using his personal archive. But first, I would like to use the opportunity to encourage the field to think about supporting scanning projects of this nature to make archival and other primary sources available online. While there have been some major institutional scanning projects, few if any small-scale projects like this have been completed in the field of Russian history.

My enthusiastic undergraduate research assistant Yuliya Iskhakova scanned 93 of the 104 files in the collection. It took about 200 hours of work to scan roughly 10,000 pages and create PDF files using Adobe Acrobat Writer. We then donated the pdf files to the Hoover Institution at Stanford along with a comprehensive inventory (*opis'*) that I composed. Lenora Soroka strongly supported the project from the start and generously took on the task of uploading the files to the internet

with the help of Lisa Miller. The actual files will be accessible through links in the inventory.¹

Thus, for less than it would cost for a single overseas research trip, the whole archive will now be available for free to the entire world in perpetuity. Most of the original documents will be donated to the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) in Moscow. Nineteen original files will be returned to the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) in Syosset, NY (which generously loaned the files to us for scanning and gave permission for them to be posted on the Hoover website). The key to the future of such projects is not technical or fiscal constraints so much as copyright issues and proprietary attitudes of individuals and institutions toward their original documents. Here the Trubetskoi heirs were remarkably far-sighted and open in their donation of the archive for scholarly use.² We can only hope that other proprietors of valuable collections will see the scholarly and historical significance of their materials and make them available for this kind of project.

*

Born to one of the oldest of Russia's noble families, a family which traces its princely title to the twelfth-century Grand Prince of Lithuania Gediminas, Trubetskoi became a career publicist and diplomat, closer to the liberal Kadet party than to any other. He was often unrestrained in his criticism of reactionaries and the opponents of the newly emerging liberal legal and semi-constitutional order, using his social connections and influence to oppose autocracy. He and his brothers played important roles in liberal politics and intellectual life from 1905 through the revolution. One of his brothers, Sergei Nikolaevich, was the rector of Moscow University, a prominent philosopher, and a popular professor. His funeral spurred large student demonstrations and proved to be an important event in the 1905 revolution. Grigorii worked in close collaboration with another brother, Evgenii Nikolaevich, who was one of Russia's leading philosophers, a professor at Moscow University, and the editor of *Moskovskii ezhenedel'nik*, an important liberal weekly journal that published broadly on foreign affairs and other topics from 1906-1911.

After ten years of service at the Russian embassy in Constantinople, where he quickly rose to the post of first secretary, he left government service in 1906 to pursue publicistic and scholarly work, throwing himself into work for "a free liberal Russia." Freed from the constraints of service in the foreign ministry, his articles in this period often took on a sharply critical tone. But his liberal critiques of domestic policies are

1. The url for the collection has not yet been established. It should be possible to locate the collection through one of the following sites:

<http://www-hoover.stanford.edu/hila/ruscollection/default.htm>

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/institutions/>.

I invite correspondence and questions about the materials, and would like to hear about research that uses them (elohr@american.edu).

2. This project was inspired by discussions with Grigorii Nikolaevich's son Sergey Grigorievich, who expressed a strong desire to make these sources easily accessible to historians living in Russia.

less historically significant than his extensive commentary on Russian foreign policy. He contributed 53 articles to the liberal journal *Moskovskii ezhenedel'nik* between 1906 and 1911 and wrote an influential long article for the collection *Velikaia Rossiia* on the tasks of Russian diplomacy and its great power interests.³

He quickly became one of the leaders of a very important political orientation among the liberals that began to express opposition to the tsar not only on questions of political freedom and domestic political reform, but also by criticizing the tsar's foreign policy on nationalistic grounds. Trubetskoi's critiques of imperial foreign policy were a nuanced mix of his attraction to pan-Slav ideas and his realist views on the best ways to maintain a balance of power and avoid war. But on the whole, his influence probably made it more difficult for the tsar to compromise in the Balkans when Russian and Slav interests were threatened by Austria, and thus he may have unintentionally contributed to one of the key causes of World War I.

In 1912 Trubetskoi returned to the foreign ministry. His close colleague and friend, Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, appointed him to head the Near Eastern Department of the Foreign Ministry, which was responsible for Balkan and Ottoman affairs. His influence on foreign policy during the following years was considerably greater than his title might suggest, in large part due to the deep respect of Sazonov for Trubetskoi's opinions and expertise.⁴

In June 1914, the Russian representative in Serbia, Hartwig, died unexpectedly, and Trubetskoi was immediately appointed as his replacement. Trubetskoi's position thus put him at the center of Russian diplomacy during the crucial period of the Russian entry into the war, and his memoirs of this period are an important source for the study of the outbreak of the war.

Allied negotiations in early 1915 led to plans to occupy Constantinople, envisioning future control to go to Russia. In secret, G. N. Trubetskoi was named the future Russian commissar of the city. In spring 1915, Trubetskoi accompanied the retreating Serbian army to Corfu, and in 1916-1917 he served as head of the diplomatic chancery at the headquarters of the Russian Army. That this proponent of an aggressive vision of annexation and Russian empire-building at Ottoman expense in the Balkans could not only survive, but flourish both in the leading liberal opposition party in Russia and in the government points to an important aspect of the crisis of the old regime that deserves further exploration: the role of Russian nationalism in the crisis of the old regime.

Trubetskoi's influence on foreign policy did not come to an end in 1917. He continued his diplomatic career through the time of the Provisional Government,

3. For a full bibliography of his pre-World War I articles, see Sophie Schmitz, "Grigori N. Trubetskoy: Politik und Völkerrecht, 1873-1930." Unpublished dissertation, University of Vienna, 1971. This dissertation is reproduced in full with the permission of Sophie Schmitz in the collection (see d. 103). (It is also available at the Austrian National Library and the juridical department of the Library of the University of Vienna).

4. D. C. B. Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 91; see also the obituary by B. E. Nol'de in P. B. Struve, *Pamiati Kn. Gr. N. Trubetskogo, Sbornik statei* (Paris: E. Siial'skoi, 1930).

then continued similar work in the White movement from January 1919 in Kiev and Ekaterinodar as a member of the Special Conference (Osoboe soveshchanie) to the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Southern Russia and as head of the Special Conference's religion department. He worked closely with the movement until forced to leave Russia through the Crimea on one of the last boats to leave prior to the Bolshevik conquest of the peninsula.

The most valuable parts of his personal archive may well be the materials that relate to the fate of Orthodoxy during and after 1917. Already in summer and fall of 1917, Trubetskoi became deeply involved in the politics of church reform as a delegate to the All-Russian Council of the Orthodox Church. He played an important role in the decision to restore the Moscow patriarchate. After leaving Russia at the end of the civil war, he settled in the Paris suburb of Clamart, where he became a benefactor to the émigré community and continued political and scholarly activities, focused primarily on church matters. From his Paris base, he quickly became the sort of unofficial diplomat between the émigré church groups and the church that remained in the Soviet Union.

Here again, he carved out a unique and contradictory position. He continued to support some of the fundamental reforms of the Great Sobor of 1917 and argued with those in emigration who wanted to make a clean break with the church in the Soviet Union. Trubetskoi strove for compromise, flexibility, and above all, for unity of the Orthodox world against the growing forces of division. As his correspondence with Catholic priest and writer Michel d'Herbigny suggests, he extended his diplomatic efforts toward unification beyond the Orthodox world to the Catholic church as well. In one of his late letters to d'Herbigny, Trubetskoi expressed his dream that the crises of Russian Orthodoxy and Europe as a whole might provide an opportunity for peace and universal regeneration.⁵ The events of the post-revolutionary decade had great significance for the fate of Orthodoxy in Russia and abroad. Given many of the unresolved issues regarding the fate of the reforms and ideas of the Great Sobor, the issues of reestablishing ties between Moscow and the Orthodox churches that grew out of the Russian emigration, and the continuing tensions between patriarch and the papacy in working toward Christian unity, the records of this proponent of liberalization and unity of the church should have particular contemporary interest.

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5. For comments on the limits of Trubetskoi's tolerance and universality of values, see Oleg Budnitskii, "Russian Liberalism in War and Revolution," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 5, 1 (Winter 2004): 160.