The materiality of secrets: everyday secrecy in postwar Soviet Union

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Abstract

The intensive culture of secrecy and censorship in postwar Soviet society was enabled by bureaucracies such as Glavlit, the principal agency for censorship, but also by a secondary level of 'parasitic bureaucracy' involving institutions and paperwork which drew lifeblood from the core regime of secrecy but had no reason to exist otherwise. In highlighting everyday secrecy at the office (through the 'first departments' responsible for workplace secrecy) and in libraries (in the work of special storage units for censored books), this article shows how this parasitic bureaucratic culture of secrecy prioritised the regulation of knowledge in its material and spatial forms.

'*Secrecy accompanied us throughout life. Even if you had nothing to do with it*'.[1]
  --- Engineer N. A. Kornev

1. Introduction

Through most of its existence, an enormous range of information was considered officially secret in the Soviet Union. Such knowledge included, of course, any information considered important for national security, such as the operation of its security services and the conduct and nature of its military. Yet, much other seemingly benign information remained highly restricted, available to only a select few at the top of the political order. These included, for example, statistics related to the functioning of the Soviet economy, news of accidents and disasters, the size of the Soviet carceral system, cartographic details on maps, information on many scientific and technological advances, and so on. Censorship was the principal instrument to enforce secrecy, maintained through a vast state apparatus that Russian historian Tat'iana Goriaeva has characterised as a 'triangle' involving the formal Soviet government body in charge of censorship known as Glavlit, the KGB (and its various antecedents), and the Central Committee of the Communist Party.[2] This conglomeration of state bureaucracies, along with scores of subordinate institutions spread through publishing agencies, workplaces, and regulatory bodies, deeply shaped the nature of all political, social, cultural, and economic activity in

the Soviet Union. So many official Soviet documents were stamped with the phrase *sekretno* (secret) or *sovershenno sekretno* (absolutely secret) that a person was less likely to find a document allowed free circulation than one whose distribution was circumscribed. Although control over printing and distribution was at the core of censorship practices and thus shaped what was secret and what was not, the relationship between censorship and secrecy was not simply of an instrument (the former) in service of attaining an idealised condition (the latter). The Soviet case, in fact, highlights how secrecy could be mobilised as an instrument to reorder social relations and sometimes the practice of censorship itself.

The complex and contingent relationship between secrecy and censorship was strikingly evident in the everyday lives of Soviet citizens. While most studies of secrecy in the Soviet context have focused on the high-stakes domains of espionage, military secrets, or elite politics, this essay redirects attention to the normative practices of secrecy at the level of ordinary social activities, such as working in an office, going to the library, or buying books. Here, this study not only investigates the granular experience of secrecy in everyday life but also the emergence of a bureaucratic culture of everyday secrecy distinct from the supra-level institutions such as Glavlit that were in charge of regulating the distribution of knowledge in Soviet society. This bureaucratic culture was enabled by what I term a 'parasitic bureaucracy', manifested in the 'first departments' – sectors responsible for maintaining secrets – within every Soviet office, as well as in the many forms, questionnaires, applications, reports, and cards that Soviet citizens had to fill out, file, save, and show to negotiate through their everyday lives. The principal argument here is that the set of practices associated with this bureaucratic culture of secrecy prioritised knowledge in its material and spatial forms. Thus, the problems of maintaining secrecy in everyday life was enacted largely through controlling objects and the spaces they occupied.

The scholarship on secrecy in Soviet society is vast, with a considerable corpus of writing in both Russian and English. The canon might be divided loosely along English-language works dating from Soviet times and those produced after the collapse of the Soviet Union when both Russian and Western scholars were able to make use of newly opened archives. Almost all of it has focused on the role of high politics and elite institutions in enabling censorship of printed material. Lacking access to archives, much of the earlier material was based on the insights of defectors or informed speculation, or focused on the pre-Revolutionary period.[3] Perhaps the best-known work in this genre, *Soviet Secrecy and Non-Secrecy* (1987) by Raymond Hutchings, offered a lengthy meditation on the topic but was light on reliable sources.[4] Although somewhat speculatory, Hutchings was able to offer a range of rationales that he believed drove the Soviet state – represented by the Communist Party leadership and the overlapping but notionally separate government – to create a regime of secrecy. These included, for example: the needs of national security, to present Soviet society in the best light possible, and to occlude any suggestion of social, religious, or cultural discord within Soviet society.[5]

As archival research became possible in the 1990s, scholars in the former Soviet Union writing in Russian were the first to mine this material. In addition to confirming some of the claims of Hutchings and others, these scholars drew deeper insights from the records. Among them was historian Arlen Viktorovich Blium

(1933–2011) who began his long career during Soviet times specialising in book history. With the benefit of archival access, he produced a considerable body of work in the 1990s including several volumes of previously classified documents related to the work of Glavlit that he edited for the public.[6] Blium also proposed a framework for understanding the various forms of censorship during Stalinist times, suggesting five different possible modes: self-censorship, editorial censorship (carried out by the media often on its own initiative), censorship by Glavlit, punitive censorship by the political police such as the KGB, and overall ideological censorship as mandated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party.[7] Like Blium, Tat'iana Goriaeva has examined the institutional and 'extra-institutional' modes of political censorship, but positioned censorship (and thus the culture of secrecy) in the Soviet Union as part of an 'all-encompassing systemic mechanism' for political control. Her work on the history of Glavlit produced a historical genealogy for this institution that underscored the contingent nature of its authority, waxing and waning over different periods of Soviet history, as well as the motivations behind the secrecy regime.[8] Others, such as D. K. Babichenko have written on Communist Party censorship of literature in the postwar years. M. V. Zelenov has detailed the bureaucratic maintenance of military secrets.[9] Considerable work is now available on the work of censors in various regions of the USSR.[10] What unites most of this canon is a focus on the institutional and political aspects of particular episodes of censorship rather than any larger exploration of the bureaucratic secrecy in the Soviet social context, especially at the everyday level.

Like their Russian counterparts, Western scholars in the post-Soviet era have devoted considerable attention to the work of Glavlit and the bureaucratic structure of enforced secrecy although this canon has moved beyond rote institutional histories into interrogating the motivations, practices, meanings, and implications of the censorship regime. Jan Plamper, whose work was empirically grounded in the 1930s in the state of Karelia (bordering Finland), has proposed thinking of censorship as operating in multiple modes, including one to 'eliminate heterodoxy' and another to 'abolish ambiguity' in Soviet discourse. He suggested that the state and Party's goal was to eliminate instances of semantic ambiguity where multiple meanings could be gleaned from the same language or image.[11] In my earlier work, I showed how secrecy in Soviet society was deeply unstable and produced an uneven topography of information across the social order. Since the goal of maintaining a stable regime of secrecy was never achieved, the Soviet regime's information control regimes existed in a state of 'stable volatily' that required constant prophylactic care through additional rules, procedures, and edicts.[12] Others have illuminated the structure, typology, and costs of secrecy in operation. Archival sources, for example, have confirmed the many categories and levels of secrecy within the operation of the Communist Party apparatus.[13]

In thinking about the secondary structure of bureaucratic secrecy that operated at the level of everyday life, this study draws from the work of Samantha Sherry. In her work on censorship of foreign language works in Soviet culture, she departs from the model of an all-encompassing state imposing censorship, instead suggesting that censorship was 'a heterogenous, dispersed set of practices that varied historically and geographically and were carried out by different "censorial agents"'.[14] Also germane here is Mark Harrison's work on the hidden 'transaction costs' of

maintaining secrecy in Soviet society, costs distributed through institutional structures.[15] On bureaucracy specifically, there is the valuable work of the late Larissa Zakharova who foregrounded 'trust' as a key element in the functioning of the Soviet system of censorship. She argued that censorship was effective in the Soviet context because it operated within a 'bureaucratic apparatus [with] prescribed rules for securing and transmitting confidential information' where certain 'hierarchical relations … replaced interpersonal trust with *systemic* trust'.[16]

In exploring the quotidian, everyday aspects of Soviet life, a considerable body of scholarship on Soviet social history has been particularly helpful. Emerging in the 1970s as a distinct category through the work of Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alex Rabinowitch, Kendall Bailes, and others, the social history of the Soviet Union was originally framed as a counterpoint to earlier 'totalitarian' literature that excluded the possibility of popular support, dissent, and resistance in everyday life; their goal was to decenter power and agency from the Stalinist elite to the broader population.[17] As further works elaborated on this line of inquiry in the following decade, the opening of the archives in the 1990s pushed social historians into new and exciting directions, including exploring issues of power and subjectivity.[18] Perhaps the most powerful distillation of this work was Fitzpatrick's own *Everyday Stalinism*, which explored 'the ways in which Soviet citizens tried to live ordinary lives in the extraordinary circumstances of Stalinism… [and] present[ed] a portrait of an emerging social species, *Homo Sovieticus*, for which Stalinism was the native habitat'.[19] Unlike others who highlighted the private sphere, the workplace, or modes of passive or active resistance, Fitzpatrick focused on '*practice* – that is, the forms of behavior and strategies of survival and advancement that people develop to cope with particular social and political situations'.[20] This article echoes her focus on 'practice' – both the practices of the apparatus of censorship but also the population subject to these practices – in a culture where scarcity was 'a permanent feature of Soviet life'.[21] Here, scarcity was not simply one measured in economic registers but also in terms of information which was censored, controlled, and circumscribed producing conspicuous absences in the topography of Soviet life.

The article is organised in three parts. The first part provides some brief context to the work of Glavlit. The two longer sections that follow, each reveal practices of secrecy and censorship in everyday Soviet life spanning the 1940s to the 1980s. The second section focuses on a landmark set of instructions issued in 1948 that enumerated the basic rules for controlling information in workplaces in the Soviet economy. Although superseded by subsequent amended versions, this document set the tone for workplace rules concerning secrecy for the remainder of the Soviet period. The bulk of the section focuses on the everyday work of the 'first departments' in Soviet offices that shaped secrecy regimes at work. The third and final section of the essay explores secrecy within Soviet libraries, focusing particularly on the way in which the regulation of knowledge was manifested in the control of objects and spaces, in this case, books and storage spaces, respectively. Through these examples, this article highlights a bureaucratic culture of everyday secrecy where the maintenance of secrecy functioned through controlling access to material objects and the spaces they occupied.

2. Glavlit

Secrecy edicts were a common and frequent feature of Soviet governance from the very origins of the Bolshevik state. Already, within days of their seizure of power in Russia in October 1917, the Bolshevik Party signed into law the so-called 'Decree on the Press', which warned that 'the bourgeois press is one of the most powerful weapons of the bourgeoisie… [and that it would be] impossible to leave this weapon entirely in the hands of the enemy, given that it is no less dangerous at such moments than bombs and machine guns'.[22] A few years later, in 1922, the Soviet government established the original version of Glavlit, short for the Main Administration for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press (*Glavnoe upravlenie po okhrane gosudarstvennykh tain v pechati*). Throughout the Soviet era, it was reorganised many times, and its authority either devolved to other agencies or more concentrated within it. After a major reorganisation in 1930, Glavlit operated for nearly a quarter of a century as an organ within the People's Commissariat for Education, the 'ministry' in charge of mass education and literacy in the Soviet Union. Although military and security concerns drove much of Glavlit's work – and in fact, Glavlit's chief was closely involved in enacting military security – the work of censorship within the military was separated from Glavlit in the 1930s.[23]

The principal mode through which Glavlit organised its work was through the issuance of irregular but usually annual lists (*perechen'*, singular) which enumerated all the types of information no longer allowed in print. The *perechen'* (often informally called the 'Talmud' of Soviet censorship) was interpreted at various levels of the bureaucracy in different ways, resulting often in contradictory outcomes. Its importance was also contingent upon all manner of subjective factors such as the fundamentally unstable nature of what the Communist Party considered the proper scope of 'ideological-political control' of information available to the public. While the first *perecheny* in the 1930s were relatively short – perhaps a few pages – by the late Soviet era it had ballooned into more of a book. In 1987, the list was 183 pages long. The lists were, of course, secret themselves and this fact often enabled extra-cautionary behavior whereby people, having no idea of the contents of the *perechen'*, would assume more information was secret than was legally so.

Glavlit experienced steady reorganisation and transformation after the death of Stalin in 1953 as part of a broader process of de-Stalinization. During the Thaw under Nikita Khrushchev, there was a brief process of 'temporary liberalization' that involved modernising the bureaucratic apparatus of the organisation, i.e., 'moving away from the "Stalinist model" on the one hand, but not wanting to lose its leading functions in culture, on the other'.[24] From 1966 onwards until the late 1980s, Glavlit operated through what Goriaeva calls 'a period of bureaucratic "prosperity and peace" during which the role and place of [the institution] in the political system of the state remained practically unchanged'.[25] Glavlit's edicts were nominally about the control of information but in practice this predominantly implied control over the written word – documents, books, pamphlets, etc. – which contained said information. By classifying a whole host of information about the functioning of Soviet society as secret, all documents that contained this information immediately fell into a complicated and Byzantine world of regulation, codes, and conduct. This was no more strikingly evident than in the

everyday workplace which depended considerably on the use of paper for all manner of work. As I show here, once a particular piece of information was typed or printed on a piece of paper, the focus of the state censorship apparatus was redirected from the contents of the page to the page itself.

We find this epistemic shift evident in the draconian secrecy regimes imposed on the Soviet people after the end of World War II just as the Cold War was heating up and Glavlit's work was reinforced by paranoia about enemies everywhere. Historian Yoram Gorlizki has argued that at this moment, in the late 1940s, with Cold War tensions rising, 'Stalin pressed the [new secrecy] campaign beyond any rational limits so that it assumed a completely inconsistent and illogical form'.[26] On 8 June 1947, the USSR Council of Ministers issued an important set of guidelines on censorship, published in the Communist Party newspaper *Izvestiia* (News), one superseding a prior set of public instructions issued in 1926.[27] Divided into four sections (military intelligence, economic information, discoveries and inventions, and other information), this decree's purview was so extensive that it required many secondary and subsidiary edicts and lists – all classified secret – prepared by different branches of the government later in the year. These lists were then used as foundations for annual amendments and corrections well into the late 1950s, ones that deeply shaped two domains of social activity in postwar Soviet Union: the workplace and the library.[28]

3. Office space

Office work (also known in Soviet management argot by the term *deloproizvodstvo* or literally 'the production of affairs') had been a central concern of Bolshevik bureaucrats who imagined an ideal socialist form of daily work that eschewed capitalist (and Tsarist-era) modes of wasteful competition in favor of efficient collective work. Already in the 1920s, Taylorist aspects of work were adopted in Soviet offices, ostensibly to combat the perception of over-bureaucratisation of such work in Communist Party offices and infrastructure. Ambitious and sometimes experimental models of office work were abandoned by the early 1930s for a more stable bureaucratic form that drew from a combination of older Tsarist forms and Bolshevik experience with running the vast Communist Party apparatus. Historian Liudmila Mazur has argued that, 'the document act[ed] as an instrument of the power of the bureaucracy, not so much supporting management processes as protecting the interests of responsible workers and insuring their liability'.[29] With the document as a core organising principle, a rethinking of office work was evident by the late 1960s after the Soviet government invested resources in creating the so-called Unified State System of Office Work. This system, aspects of which were adopted into the Soviet bureaucratic system, focused on standardised modes of document handling, allocation of skills for personnel, instructions for planning, conducting, and recording meetings, and an improved system of documenting and tracking productivity.[30] The central organising heuristic of the system was the office document, to be handled with extra care, given ever-shifting codes of secrecy.

Secrecy was always a part of Soviet office work, inherited from both the Tsarist administration and the Bolshevik Party itself, whose inner workings were shrouded in secrecy already in the 1920s.[31] There was a marked increase in the security of the

Soviet workspace through the 1930s but it reached a turning point after World War II when anxieties about 'enemy spies' at the height of the Cold War compelled the Soviet government to issue new guidelines for workplaces. The most important one, issued on 1 March 1948, was produced in-hand with a 47-page guide under the title, 'Instructions to Maintain the Protection of State Secrets in Organizations and Enterprises in the USSR'.[32] This manual, which laid the blueprint for subsequent decades of secrecy in all Soviet workplaces, stipulated that every single enterprise in the Soviet economy should have a 'secret department' (or 'secret unit'), subordinate to the chief or director of the whole organisation, whose goal was to ensure that the necessary secrecy regime was maintained in that organisation. This department, later generically called the 'First Department', would have direct contact with the state security ministry (later, the KGB) who in turn would advise and monitor the work of the department. According to the manual, the main focus of the department was two-fold: to keep certain aspects of the actual work at the enterprise secret (either through physical boundaries or regulations about what workers could reveal outside of work); and to strictly regulate the movement of documents within and beyond the enterprise. The document also reaffirmed three levels of secrecy: 'secret', 'absolutely secret', and 'absolutely secret of special importance', with correspondingly detailed rules about each category of secrecy.

This guide (henceforth 'the 1948 Instructions') bears further scrutiny given its long reach into the Soviet workplace. First, we find an overarching fascination with documents and their physical locations. Of the thirty-three sections of the guide, the vast number focused on regulating movement and access to documents, especially those containing secret information, stored in the First Department of an office. These include guidelines on the storage of documents (Part 3), access to such documents (Part 4), how to handle documentary correspondence involving secrets (Part 9), different practices for handling documents with varying levels of secrecy (Parts 10 and 11), loss of documents (Part 13), use of documents on business trips (Part 15), deliberate destruction of documents (Part 19), and so on. In fact, the goals of the First Department, enumerated in 13 points, almost all deal with the control of and access to documents, including correspondence.[33] Knowledge here is considered in its material and spatial registers. This principle was articulated clearly and succinctly in the 1948 Instructions:

> For secret departments… of institutions…, isolated office premises suitable for secret work must be provided. Doors and windows of the premises of secret departments… and depositories of secret documents must be strong, equipped with reliable locks; the windows of these premises should be equipped with iron bars, shutters, curtains. Entry into these premises for persons who are not employees of secret departments… is allowed only with the permission of the heads of institutions… or heads of secret departments…[34]

The section on rules for office libraries, which, depending on the particular institution, also often functioned as an archive depository, echoes this framework. Referring to libraries, the Instructions note that 'books, brochures, instructions, summaries, reports, directories, [and] bulletins' containing secret information were to be sequestered either in the First Department or in a separate secret section

of the 'open' library, with the '[o]rder of use of forbidden literature to be deter-mined by Glavlit'.[35]

As new technologies such as electric typewriters, long-distance telephony, and copy machines entered the workplace, the challenges of maintaining secrecy also adjusted although a fetishisation of the document remained a principal concern of the First Departments everywhere. In exploring the techniques of secrecy, Zakharova noted that the 'material, *written* culture of secrecy' that existed begin-ning of the 1930s in the Soviet Union, especially when dealing with documents at the highest level of the Communist Party apparatus, never 'functioned' properly because it was 'violated' at the day-to-day level by leaks and inefficiencies. As a result, she argued, Soviet planners sought alternative technological solutions, such as the use of telephones, to maintain secrecy at the top levels of power.[36] Yet, there is also evidence to show that because telephones were notoriously unre-liable and themselves vulnerable to surveillance, there remained a deep inertia that continued to favor documents. When new technologies were introduced into the office, they were, in fact, considered as part of a system supporting documentary work.

In the 1948 Instructions, for example, we find reference to a holistic 'technology of special secrecy' (*tekhnika osoboi sekretnosti*, or TOS), that included systems for encryption, copying, and securing storage, all focused not so much on replacing the document but taking steps to circumvent its vulnerability to 'leakage'. Printing and typing documents with secret information, for example, required access to a special room ('a typing bureau'), a parallel typists' center responsible for the secret job that was independent and separate from the 'open' typists' pool for non-secret paper-work. Even here, the focus was on securing documents. The guide cautions that '[t]ypists are prohibited from keeping any documents in their desks outside of working hours' while 'all damaged documents and sheets of paper placed to protect the [typewriter] rolls must, at the end of the work[day], be handed over to the senior typist or the head of the secret department … for storage or destruction'.[37] When communication with outside enterprises required encryption of telegrams – to be done 'only on secret issues [and] in extremely necessary and urgent cases' – the sender of the telegram had to write the text 'legibly and in only one copy'. The text would then be typed 'by specially designated persons' who were 'prohibited from making copies' of the document.[38]

In focusing on the document and its location in the workplace, the Soviet system of office secrecy generated a considerable amount of overhead paperwork, a kind of 'parasitic bureaucracy' that itself required maintenance. When originally issued in 1948, the Instructions came with nearly 30 pages of forms to be filled out by rele-vant parties handling secret documentation in the office. In examining the 'life course' of secret documents in the Soviet economy, historian Mark Harrison found that there were significant 'transaction costs' in maintaining a bureaucratic regime of secrecy, which he describes as 'something akin to a secrecy tax on the turnover of government business'.[39] This transaction cost – the myriad additional documentation required to maintain, track, and destroy secret information as well as a system to track violations of the secrecy regime – was parasitic in the sense that it had no reason to exist if the core secret documents did not exist themselves. The extra paperwork included, for example, a detailed personal questionnaire on each

employee's background as well as an oath in which the undersigned agreed to 'keep [secret] all information known to me that is a state secret'. Although the guiding principle is a promise to prevent the 'disclosure of information', the core of the oath is directed at deliberate or accidental loss of control over objects: 'materials, documents, and publications containing information constituting a state secret'.[40] There were also inventory lists of secret documents and drawings; registration logs for secret packages and documents; various passbooks and receipt logs; journals for encrypted telegrams; and logs to keep track of changing locations of books and documents within the office.[41]

The level of secrecy in Soviet workplaces, of course, varied across time and sector. Post-Stalinist era practices were relatively liberal minded yet paradoxically more draconian in places because of Cold War tensions, especially in those institutions that were linked to defense production, military operations, or intelligence work. For military-related institutions, which constituted fully one-third to one-half of the Soviet economy at any given point, the head of the First Department, usually the deputy chief of an institution, essentially functioned as a co-manager of the office. Such deputy directors supervising the First Departments were introduced into all defense-related offices by the mid-1950s, and especially at institutions within the so-called 'closed cities' of the defense industry of the Soviet Union.[42] Their ubiquity beyond the confines of defense and defense-cognate institutions was especially evident from the 1960s onwards as many of the practices of secrecy were inherited from the defense sector.

A case from 1954 in a rocket research institute highlights the extent to which secrecy regimes were directed to the regulation of objects. On 27 September 1954, an engineer working in an institute (known as 'NII-88') in the northwestern Moscow suburb of Kaliningrad noticed that two copies of a report on testing a missile guidance system were missing from his briefcase. Violating the rules, he waited a week before reporting it to the First Department at his institute. The officials at the First Department then inexplicably waited another five days (9 October) before reporting the loss to an appropriate contact at the KGB. The ministry overseeing the institute immediately looked at the 1948 Instructions on how to proceed, and, as per the guide, convened a commission to review whether the lost documents revealed secret information. They determined that although the document was officially stamped secret, it contained no information that was actually secret. Yet, under pressure from the ministry, the entire institute continued to search for the lost report since the document itself was marked 'secret'. They expanded their search to at least three other major research institutions through the fall of 1954. In the end, the reports were never found. Apologetic, the ministry chief promised that it had 'taken measures to eliminate shortcomings in the conduct of secret office work and strengthened the leadership of the First Department…'.[43]

Fetishisation of the document could easily slip from bureaucratic burden to pointless farce. In the summer of 1969, Soviet engineers from a major industrial research organisation attended an international exhibition on machine tools in Paris. Upon their return to Moscow, they drew up a lengthy report of about 350 pages on their observations which was typed by the 'open' typing pool. After the report was prepared, it was discovered that, unknown to the visiting engineers, a recent order had been issued that rendered secret any report made by a Soviet

expert visiting a foreign country. The First Department of their institute immediately demanded that the authors rewrite the entire report by hand and then have it be retyped by the 'closed' typing pool so as to be officially classified secret. It was only under great pressure from the head of the enterprise (nominally superior to the chief of the First Department) that the First Department conceded and accepted the originally typed report, now with an ink stamp on the reverse of every page to indicate that it had been produced by the 'closed' typing pool.[44] Here again, we find the bureaucratic imperative centered on procedure and artifact rather than the information contained within the artifact.

For ordinary Soviet scientists and experts, i.e., the ones that did not work in exclusive 'closed cities' or in elite military research institutions, the vagaries of the secret regime meant constant brushups against the First Department. N. A. Kornev, a scientist working in a laboratory at the Radio Engineering Faculty at the Leningrad Electrotechnical University (colloquially known as 'LETI') recalled periodic visits from representatives of the university's First Department to make sure secret work at the laboratory was compliant with the rules set out by the Instruction guide. Their concern about regulating both documents and spaces was starkly evident in the 1970s and the 1980s with the advent of copy machines and personal computers, respectively, in workspaces. As the first rudimentary copy machines were introduced into workspaces in the late 1970s, the First Department introduced a practice known as 'sealing' (otpechatyvaniia).[45] To use a copy machine in an office, one had to fill out a dizzying array of forms to assure the First Department that the documents to be copied contained no secret information. Because of widespread anxiety about the printing and reproduction of 'anti-Soviet' materials, the First Department took extra precautions during national holidays when, it was believed, seditionists might sneak into an office and photocopy some offending material. As a result, First Departments in offices adopted the practice of 'sealing' the copy machines over national holidays, whereby each copier was wrapped in a cover and imprinted with a seal that was checked after the holiday was over. Any paper issued from the printer would break the seal. Once desktop computers were introduced into offices in the 1980s, for a period, First Departments insisted on continuing old methods, 'sealing' the copy machines and printers but neglecting the computer because the computer neither used nor produced any paper. It was only during the perestroika years in the late 1980s that the practice of 'sealing' was fully abandoned.[46]

Although workplace secrecy was shaped by the vicissitudes of changing censorship levels, there was also remarkable consistency and continuity in the overall structure set by the Instructions dating from 1948. For example, a non-disclosure form for an employee in a defense-related enterprise from 1985 shows almost no difference to the proscribed form included in the 1948 Instructions, displaying an identical fascination with protecting documents above all else.[47] In the waning days of the Soviet regime, First Departments continued to play an important role although it is clear that, in addition to protecting documents, there were now other concerns at play, largely driven by technological advancements. This is evident in an annual report issued in 1987 by a research institute specialising in the design and production of various types of copy machines for the civilian economy which had a small unit working on defense contracts, necessitating 'separate

sections for technical documentation' for secret work.[48] The report noted that all secret work at the institute was managed by four units. Two of these would have been familiar to Soviet workers in the 1940s, underscoring the deep continuities across four decades: a 'regime bureau' of guards (to secure the premises of the institution) and the First Department for the 'organisation and management of secret office work'. The other two, a group to combat foreign spies from radio monitoring telephone calls and a 'bureau' for classified communications equipment, suggests an accommodation for newer technologies of secrecy in the waning years of the Cold War. Although by its own admission the institute 'did not produce armaments and military technology', the concern for revealing secrets dominated the institute's report on its 'operative environments'. There are lengthy sections on possible ways that 'enemy' actors could discern the true goal of the institute, either through intercepting documentary communications with outsiders, spies within the institute, or through increasing emigration of Jewish workers to Israel in the 1980s.[49] All of these factors led the institute to increase the complement of paperwork required for mundane activities such as contact with other enterprises on subcontracts for components, attending meetings, taking notes and, most importantly, the circulation of documents beyond the physical premises of the enterprise. For ordinary workers, such continual impositions across more than four decades produced a bureaucratic culture of parasitic paperwork that intertwined control of objects with control of spaces.

4. Libraries

By the 1960s, Soviet society was one of the most literate in the world. By 1959, almost the entire population of the nation – official figures suggest 98.5 per cent of the population – was literate by most standards.[50] Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev had famously announced at the 24th Party Congress in 1971 that 'by right, the Soviet people are considered the largest readership in the world'.[51] Reading books and magazines consumed a substantial portion of the free time of the population even as censorship constricted what was available to read. In his important work on reading in Soviet society, Stephen Lovell argues that by the Stalinist era, the Party had essentially abandoned its advocacy of a distinctly proletarian culture in favor of a more conservative 'truly "middlebrow" culture which tried to preserve the "high" values and relatively cultural homogeneity of a bourgeois educated public… with the scale of a mass public'.[52] Beginning in the 1960s, the notion of an erudite and well-read intelligentsia signified an important, albeit contested, category of social and intellectual engagement that paradoxically paid lip service, at least on ideological terms, to a kind of proletarian homogeneity.

Libraries were important vehicles to cultivate the Soviet notion of *partiinost'* (loosely translated as 'Party-mindedness'), a general consonance with the ideals of the Communist Party. Lenin himself extolled the power of libraries (and books in general), saying 'we must give the book wings and increase its circulation many times over…'.[53] That the library should play a central role in cultivating *partiinost'* was explicitly articulated in several official and publicised decrees of the Soviet Communist Party, such as one in 1974 that prioritised libraries in 'carrying out active propaganda of the Communist Party and the Soviet state'.[54] Beyond

ideological conditioning, reading also constituted, as Jennifer Brine has noted, an important element of growing leisure time in Soviet society, especially into the 1970s and onwards. The increase in and importance of free time was driven by a host of factors, including: the reduction of the work week from six days to five days; the concomitant increase in free time by about one-fifth of the total; larger numbers of people with higher education; better housing; urbanisation; and the relative increases in disposable income.[55]

Although there was a substantial book-selling industry in the post-Stalinist period, libraries still constituted the *most* important source for books for most Soviet citizens. By 1980, there were 329,000 libraries in the Soviet Union with some estimates suggesting a total stock of five billion items (including both books and journals).[56] These libraries included national libraries (such as the State Lenin Library) which were theoretically open to all; research libraries under the aegis of the Academy of Sciences open to scientists; libraries in various economic institutions (such as factories) open to their employees; libraries in educational institutions open to students, and, the most prevalent, 'mass' libraries akin to Western public libraries 'for the ordinary reader', as Brine has noted. By 1982, there were 133,200 such libraries with holdings of about two billion publications, with mid-1970s official figures indicating a registered readership of over 120 million.[57] By 1981, it was estimated that 54.4 per cent of the Soviet population, or about 147 million people were officially members of libraries with a larger number patronising them.[58]

Undoubtedly the first and foremost factor that shaped the Soviet library goer's experience was the deep imprint of state edicts on the content of the library. Driven by the needs of secrecy which blanketed a vast range of Soviet life – its history, its economy, its achievements, and anything that subjected its ideology and functioning to critique – Glavlit's decrees deeply circumscribed what a Soviet citizen might find in the library. The implication of this regime of secrecy and censorship was manifested not only in what was available in a library but also in how a library was organised spatially, with considerable numbers of books stored in spaces from which they were never removed. From the 1920s on, we find a steady stream of injunctions from Glavlit that both limited the availability of books in libraries and limited access to books that were already in libraries. In 1923, Lenin's wife Nadezhda Krupskaia, who was the head of the organ in the new Soviet government responsible for education, agitation, and propaganda work for the Bolshevik Party (*Glavpolitprosvet*), authored a memo lamenting that regional libraries in Soviet Russia had not been following edicts to remove certain books (e.g., 'books that mix science with religious fiction, [books on] the immorality of Darwinism and materialism') from public access. She argued that '[t]he intensification of political and educational work cannot be carried out if the book staff of libraries is not freed from counterrevolutionary and harmful literature'.[59] Materials removed could be seemingly benign, such as the collected works of the famous nineteenth century Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov, or the works of the original generation of Bolsheviks heroes who had become enemies of the state in the 1930s, such as Lev Trotsky and Grigorii Zinoviev.[60]

As orders emanated from the center, the process was often chaotic, with the wrong books frequently removed from circulation. A report from 1926, for

example, found that regional libraries had mistakenly removed books from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and many others.[61] The process of removing books could often spiral out of control at local levels, with the center losing track of what was available and what was restricted, putting the lives of officials in danger. In the 1930s, for example, there was an explosion of instructions from Glavlit calling for the removal of books from Soviet libraries, principally as a result of the show trials of former Bolsheviks now considered enemies of the state. On the ground, overzealous and semi-literate Glavlit officials began removing books from libraries that were not even on the Glavlit lists, perhaps in the hope of pleasing their superiors. At the height of the Great Terror in 1937–1938, such chaos inevitably came to roost at the top-levels of Glavlit when its managers were blamed for the chaos; Glavlit's chief, Sergei Borisovich Ingulov, was fired, arrested, and then shot for sedition. The man who took over briefly, Aleksandr Stepanovich Samokhvalov sought to 'correct' the perceived shortcomings of Glavlit, principally the unlawful removal of thousands of books from libraries that should have remained in the public domain. He fired those in charge of removing said books, undoubtedly putting them in the crosshairs of the NKVD.[62] After Stalin's death and especially during 'the Thaw' under Nikita Khrushchev, many thousands of books were restored to open access in libraries although this process was moderated once more by the late 1960s. As historian K. V. Liutova notes '[b]oth of these processes, classifying and declassifying of [library] literature, proceeded in parallel' in the years after 'the Thaw'.[63]

The process of removing a book from public consumption began with the issuance of a new *perechen'* (list) of forbidden topics from Glavlit, and ended not with the destruction of the book but its physical displacement to a different part of the library, usually called a *spetskhran*, for *spetsial'nogo khraneniia* or special storage. Such *spetskhrany* (plural of *spetskhran*) were created by the Bolsheviks, and championed by Lev Trotsky, as early as 1921 in a number of archives and libraries in Moscow and Petrograd.[64] By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the *spetskhran* as an organisational model for libraries and archives became formalised in regional libraries across the Soviet Union, although their precise nature and content were shielded from the public. As the late historian Nadezhda Ryzhak has noted:

> Officially there was no *spetskhran* in the library. There was no mention of it in the library's schedule for readers, it was not in public telephone directories, or in the index of rooms, and no information about it appeared in library publications… it was a kind of library within libraries.[65]

By the late years of Stalinism, after World War II, the collections of *spetskhrany* ballooned, especially at the largest library in the Soviet Union, the Lenin State Library (or informally the 'Leninka'), coinciding with the postwar nationwide cultural campaign known as *Zhdanovshchina* which vilified any Western-identified cultural and scientific ideas. Glavlit's lists expanded in leaps and bounds as huge swaths of published material were moved from open stacks to the *spetskhran*: alone between 1948 and 1949, the *spekshran* collection of the Leninka increased three times from 36,500 to 129,956 books.[66]

Although Glavlit had little direct involvement in the inner workings of Soviet libraries, its frequent and updated 'Consolidated List of Books to Be Excluded from Libraries and the Book Trade Network' was of paramount importance, and considered the last and final source for all arbitration. A memo from the chief of Glavlit in 1950 underscores how libraries constantly checked with Glavlit on which books to make available and which to keep in the *spetskhran*. As a first step, Glavlit's bureaucrats annotated particular books recently published and checked with the appropriate apparatchik in the Central Committee of the Communist Party on whether it was acceptable to remove it from circulation. Once given approval, the offending book or article was included in a consolidated (and growing) list.[67] This list was then passed on to libraries where *spetskhran* employees dutifully removed the books from public access to the *spetskhran*, where employees with special access, according to their own procedures, cataloged the items in secret catalogs.

The precise mandate of the *spetkshrany* was articulated vaguely, leaving open the possibility of a wide range of books to be deposited there. For example, the bylaws from 1972 regulating the work of the *spetskhran* of the library of the Soviet Academy of Sciences noted that this department was to 'organize the accounting, storage, and correct use of politically defective literature [including] 1. domestic [literature] withdrawn from the general collection of the [library] and its departments according to the documents of [Glavlit] and its local bodies; [and] 2. foreign [literature]'.[68] A survey from 1988 suggested that the six largest literary genres deposited in the Lenin Library's *spetskhran* included banned Russian literature from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (such as *Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov); foreign fiction (such as works by Marcel Proust, Jorge Luis Borges, and F. Scott Fitzgerald); works by banned Soviet-era writers (including Boris Pasternak and later Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn)[69]; religious books (such as the Bible, the Koran, and the Talmud); books on foreign philosophy, psychology, and ethics published by Soviet scholars or their translations; and books by Soviet and foreign critical thinkers on structuralism and semiotics (including, for example, by Mikhail Baktin).[70] After Khrushchev's famous speech in 1956 denouncing Stalin, the *spetskhran* reduced somewhat in size. By some estimates, at least half of the Russian-language literature as well texts from the different Soviet republics were returned into general circulation although there was a slow uptick again in the 1970s and early 1980s.[71] By 1985, the *spetskhran* of the Lenin State Library held more than one million items and about 30,000 to 35,000 publications were added each year.[72] The vast majority of such acquisitions were foreign literature. At Leningrad's largest library, the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, from the 1950s, roughly 97 to 99 per cent all literature added to its *spetskhran* was of foreign origin, largely in English, German, and French. In comparison, only 2 per cent of its 'open' acquisitions constituted foreign books and journals.[73]

How did all this affect the everyday experience of visiting libraries? Foremost, it meant that the average reader lacked access to a substantial canon of works in history, literature, and the sciences, both in Russian and non-Russian languages. In fact, one of the most persistent complaints from readers during the post-Stalinist era was the lack of interesting material to read, censorship and secrecy practices having whittled the acceptable canon down considerably. Although

readers could still, for example, find in their libraries the works of Alexander Dumas, Arthur Conan Doyle, James Fenimore Cooper, as well as many Russian writers, poets, and playwrights from the Tsarist eras, the genre of contemporary twentieth century fiction was either overtly doctrinaire or entirely absent. Instead, libraries were filled with newer editions of the collected works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin; sanitised and dry literature on the achievements of the Soviet state; books published in time for various Soviet anniversaries; and books and booklets issued to coincide with mass national campaigns such as the one against alcoholism in the early 1970s. Two large-scale sociological surveys, one from 1969–1973 and another from 1978–1981, showed in both cases, that over half of the Soviet readership were deeply dissatisfied with the available stock of library literature, particularly with the lack of modern fiction, children's literature, history books, and reference works.[74]

For a curious reader in search of a book that they actually wanted to read, entering any library began a lengthy process involving a series of check-ins, registrations, and inquiries, all manifestations of a parasitic bureaucracy of secrecy, above and beyond the normative one in a library, one that regulated objects and spaces. Most medium and large libraries in the Soviet Union were organised around closed stacks, even for books that were officially accessible to the public, although some small non-research and regional libraries opened their stacks directly to the public in the early 1960s.[75] If one wanted to peruse the collections of major libraries such as the Leninka, there were other hurdles. Although the library was technically open to all Soviet citizens, access to its open collection was in fact restricted to those with a higher education, or those with education beyond the equivalent of high school. The four reading rooms at the Leninka were, in fact, reserved for exclusive groups. The first and most important was allocated to those with Ph.D.s, university professors, political figures, military officers, and the occasional foreign visitor. The other three reading rooms were reserved for scientists in the physical and natural sciences, humanities scholars, and other junior scholars including undergraduates, respectively.[76] This type of social fragmentation was common in most large libraries, such as the massive Saltykov-Schchedrin State Public Library in Leningrad, but less so in regional or mass libraries where all visitors sat in one reading room.

Once in the library, readers perused through a library catalog, a step complicated by the existence usually of two different catalogs, one a public catalog and one for 'official' use, which was a closed catalog that contained *all* the holdings of the library (including the material in the *spetskhran*) accessible only to the library staff. If requesting from the open catalog, forms, including a biographical form and a 'control slip', were to be filled out, the latter of which remained with readers throughout their stay on the premises to indicate what books they had in their possession. Although in theory the *spetskhran* was a 'secret' section in each library, in practice, the division between open collections and the *spetskhran* was neither immutable nor impermeable. Increasingly through the post-Stalinist era and into the 1980s, many were granted limited access to the contents of the *spetskhran*, depending on the importance of the person underwriting their visit to the library. In the 1973 version of the rules for accessing the *spetskhran* of the library of the Academy of Sciences, we find that:

Persons who need the literature of the *spetskhran* for scientific work must bring a written application from the institution with which their scientific activity is associated. The application must indicate: the position and a clearly formulated topic of scientific work that is connected with the literature to be issued. The application must be signed by the head of the scientific institution with a round seal attached. Postgraduate students must have two signatures in their application [including the] aide to the rector for postgraduate studies and [their] scientific supervisor.[77]

In other words, the identity of the reader was crucial signifier of access. As Edward Kasinec noted, '[l]ibrary services … [were] very carefully differentiated, depending on one's academic and professional status'.[78] If a reader, armed with all manner of permissions and forms, was granted the request to peruse an item from the *spetskhran*, they were then required to sign yet another form, promising not to disclose or repeat the information from the source in writing anywhere else. Excepting exceptional cases, foreign visitors were not allowed access to *spetskhran* holdings. A 1973-era set of rules clearly notes that 'foreigners should not be aware of the existence of the *spetskhran*'.[79]

Access to these closed library special sections gradually increased through the 1970s and 1980s but varied from library to library. For example, by the 1980s, the Lenin Library's reading room for the *spetskhran* had 43 seats and as many as 4,500 registered readers per annum with 200,000 items checked out per year.[80] In specialised libraries such as those within the Academy of Sciences system, the percentage of people granted access in the 1980s was relatively low – about 1 per cent.[81] Yet, with so many millions of books to be filed away, sometimes a lucky reader might accidentally be issued a forbidden book because it was stored in the wrong place. An audit by Glavlit found that the book *1941. 22 June* (1965) by A. M. Nekrich, a stinging critique of Stalin's failures in anticipating the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, was mistakenly available to the public at the Gogol Library in Leningrad for a period of five years after it was banned.[82] In 1975, many libraries (including several children's libraries) in Leningrad were found to be in violation of Glavlit's secrecy edits.[83] Undoubtedly, regular audits missed much material that was accidentally stored in open sections of the library, although by-and-large these were esoteric material or works by obscure authors.

For the non-specialised reader without access to the *spetskhran*, the most important quality of the library experience was one of scarcity, of books but also of space, enabled to a great degree by the secrecy regime. Architecturally, the Soviet library, dictated by the needs of censorship and secrecy, was designed as a coercive space where the denial of access was the principal organising heuristic. The late historian Richard Stites noted about his experience working in Soviet-era libraries, that they 'possess[ed] enormous proportions but [had] tiny reading rooms with chairs jammed together and card catalogues closely aligned'.[84] By the late Soviet era, studies showed that more than 70 per cent of the public libraries under the purview of the Soviet Ministry of Culture, or roughly one-third of the total of all Soviet libraries, lacked reading rooms. Of the libraries under the jurisdiction of the various republics ('branch libraries'), a full 60 per cent had premises that were less than 50 square meters in area.[85]

The lack of selection in libraries, the onerous process of obtaining books, and the spatial limitations of public libraries – all driven by the needs of secrecy and censorship – led many to seek other sources for books. It is not surprising that there was considerable attrition in library readership (as tracked by membership) through the 1980s – by some estimates there were 10 million fewer library readers in 1990 than in 1980.[86] Retail markets for new and used books were one source but they too suffered from the limitations of censorship and the whims of Glavlit.[87] A considerable minority of Soviet citizens made use of the one source free from this constraint: the illegal black market for books, a place to find banned books but more frequently books that were officially sanctioned but unavailable or hard to get in libraries or retail markets.[88] The illegal book market, which included private residential book collections, came with a great degree of risk and sanction if discovered but lacked the three unavoidably deleterious features of the library experience: limited reading stock; above-normative levels of bureaucratic control and paperwork; and spatial division of books into accessible and inaccessible worlds.

5. Conclusions

Over a century ago, the famed sociologist of secrecy Georg Simmel wrote that 'the way in which [a secret is] constructed is always conscious and intentional'.[89] In the Soviet setting, this conscious and deliberate process was enacted through a range of legal and institutional instruments, including Glavlit but also through many local institutions, which profoundly shaped the experience of everyday life for Soviet citizens. This essay argues that the effects of the regime of secrecy was experienced not only in the absence or presence of information but rather in *material* and *spatial* terms. Through illustrations from the operation of secrecy in postwar office work and libraries, two of the most important and common sites of everyday life for late Soviet population, the essay shows that the culture of secrecy was manifested largely in the regulation of objects and spaces. More specifically, in this context, knowledge was considered in its material form, as manifested in documents, books, and so forth, and thus the problems of maintaining secrecy through censorship was shaped through controlling access to documents and books.

The essay focuses on two specific sites for the enforcement and enactment of secrecy, the First Department in the workplace and the *spetskhran* in libraries. The former, present in nearly all enterprises, and the latter, found in almost every library, functioned in similar ways in everyday life in postwar Soviet society, by creating degrees of separation between the open and closed worlds of information. Through the many decades of operation, these types of institutions within Soviet workplaces and libraries adapted to new technologies of distribution and control yet also retained surprising continuities across time. The managers of First Departments saw new technologies such as copy machines and telephones first and foremost as part of a larger system of information control, yet the document remained at the center of bureaucratic control through generations of changes in technical infrastructure. This consistent emphasis on the materiality of secrets was sustained from the moment that the 1948 Instructions on workplaces was issued to the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. In the case of libraries, the principal evolution over the postwar period was one of a deep instability in the holdings

of the *spetskhran*, where forbidden books were held after vetting by Glavlit ('act [ing] something like a border guard', in the words of Samantha Sherry[90]), a process that enabled continuing fluctuations over the kinds of information that was politically, economically, and culturally acceptable for open access. While Glavlit continued to produce longer and lengthier versions of its *perechen'* (list), the *spetskhran* ballooned through the post-Khrushchev era, even as access to it (at least in some major libraries) grew on a limited level. Ultimately, the effects of secrecy – including a limited stock, an onerous bureaucracy, and difficulties in accessibility – produced a growing flight of readers from the library into the illegal market for books.

To help regulate control over objects and spaces at the quotidian levels of social activity, Soviet institutions such as the First Department and the *spetskhran* produced a continually-growing bureaucratic and documentary culture of extra forms, regulations, and requirements that burdened the population. This bureaucracy of ordinary secrecy was contradictory, costly, and coercive and it often produced deeply counterproductive outcomes, such as when a manuscript was not typed on the 'correct' secret typewriter or as when interested readers abandoned libraries in favor of informal or illegal markets. It was also *parasitic*, since it functioned as an appendage to already operating full-formed bureaucracies that served normative office-work and library operations, while drawing personnel and resources from them. Such parasitic bureaucracies, a distinct feature of everyday life in postwar Soviet society, represented by their forms, rules, and requirements, existed formally to produce order, hierarchy, and containment in the world of information. In the end, they produced absences, tensions, and desires which remained unresolved until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Notes

1 N. A. Kornev, 'Oratoriia laboratorii 17-A', in two parts in *Al'manakh 'Metronom Aptekarskogo ostrovova'* 2 (2006), 92–102 and *Al'manakh 'Metronom aptekarskogo ostrovova'* 3 (2006), 67–77.

2 Tat'iana Goriaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v sssr, 1917–1991 gg.*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 2009), 349.

3 Daniel Balmuth, 'The origins of the tsarist epoch of censorship terror', *American Slavic and East European Review* **19**, 4 (1960), 497–520.

4 Raymond Hutchings, *Soviet secrecy & non-secrecy* (Houndmills, 1987). For other useful Cold War-era scholarship on secrecy and censorship in the Soviet Union, see Peter B. Maggs, *Nonmilitary secrecy under Soviet law* (Santa Monica, 1964); Martin Dewhirst and Robert Farrell eds., *The Soviet censorship* (Metuchen, 1979); Marianna Tax Choldin and Maurice Friedberg eds., *The red pencil: artists, scholars, and censors in the USSR* (Boston, 1989); V. Rubanov, 'From the "cult of secrecy" to the information culture', *Soviet Review* **30**, 5 (1989), 87–109; Leonid Vladimirov, 'Glavlit: how the Soviet censor works', *Index on Censorship* (Autumn/Winter 1972), 31–43.

5 Hutchings, *Soviet secrecy & non-secrecy*, 230–9.

6 A. V. Blium and V. G. Volovnikov eds., *Tsenzura v sovetskom soiuze 1917–1991: dokumenty* (Moscow, 2004).

7 A. V. Blium, *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epokhu total'nogo terrora, 1929–1953* (St. Petersburg, 2000). In earlier works, he covered the 1920s. See his *Za kulisami 'ministerstva pravdy': tainaia istoriia tsenzury, 1917–1929* (St. Petersburg, 1994). See also his work focused on Leningrad: *Kak eto delalos' v Leningrade: tsenzura v gody ottepeli, zastoia i perestroika, 1953–1991* (St. Petersburg, 2005). For a short English-language translation of Blium's work, see A. V. Blium, 'Forbidden topics: early Soviet censorship directives', *Book History* **1** (1998), 268–82.

8 Goriaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v sssr, 1917–1991 gg.*, 12–4; T. M. Goriaeva ed., *Iskliuchit' vsiakie upominaniia…: ocherki istorii sovetskoi tsenzury* (Minsk, 1995). She also edited a volume of declassified

documents on Soviet censorship. See T. M. Goriaeva ed., *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury: dokumenty i kommentarii* (Moscow, 1997). In this vein, see also works by others: V. N. Paramonov, 'Sekretnost' v sovetskom obshchestve v 1920–1940-kh gg.', *Vestnik SamGU* **2** (2012), 125–33; L. V. Lozhkov, 'Tsenzura v sssr v uslovkiiakh razriadki mezhdunarodnoi napriazhennosti (1970-e gg.)', *Vestnik un-ta. Ser. 21. Upravlenie (gosudarstvo i obshchestvo)* **1** (2013), 146–66.

9 D. L. Babichenko, '*Literaturnyi front': istoriia politicheskoi tsenzury 1932–1946 gg.: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, 1994); D. L. Babichenko, *Pisateli i tsenzory: sovetskaia literatura 1940-kh godov pod politicheskim kontrolem TsK* (Moscow, 1994); M. V. Zelenov, 'Voennaia i gosudarstvennaia taina v RSFSR i SSSR i ikh pravoe obespechenie (1917–1991 gg.)', *Leningradskii iuridicheskii zhurnal* **1** (2012), 143–59; M. V. Zelenov, 'Glavlit i istoricheskaia nauka v 20–30-e gody', *Voprosy istorii* **3** (1997), 21–36.

10 E. V. Buliulina and L. S. Tokareva, 'Dokumenty mestnykh organov politicheskoi tsenzury sssr 1922–1991 gg.', *Izvestiia Tomskogo politekhnicheskogo universiteta* 320, **6** (2012), 162–6; M. S. Vinogradov and M. V. Zelenov, 'Evoliutsiia struktury i shtatov upravleniia po okhrane voennykh i gosudarstvennykh tain v pechati pri Gor'kovskom oblispolkome (Obllit, 1953–1966 gg.)', *Vestnik Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. A. S. Pushkina* **4**, 1 (2012), 100–6; S. A. Dianov, 'Organy sovetskoi tsenzury v Komi-Permiatskom natsional'nom okruge v 1920–1980-e gg.: struktura, funktsii, kadry', *Manuskript* **12**, 6 (2019), 20–4; E. V. Galenko, 'Politicheskaia tsenzura na sovetskom dal'nem vostoke (1946–1954 gg.)', *Vestnik dal'nevostochnogo otdeleniia rossiiskoi akademii nauk* **2** (2008), 55–65; G. V. Kostyrchenko, 'Sovetskaia tsenzura v 1941–1952 godakh', *Voprosy istorii* **11** (1996), 87–94; A. Guzhalovskii, 'Glavlitbel: instrument informatsionnogo kontrola belorusskogo obshchestva (1922–1941 gg.)', *Acta Slavonica* **31** (2012), 77–104; P. V. Pechkovskii, 'Tzenzura v pechati, kak element gosudarstvennoi politiki v oblasti informatsionnoi bezopasnosti sovetskoi rossii', *Vestnik brianskogo gosuniversiteta* **3** (2015), 116–21.

11 Jan Plamper, 'Abolishing ambiguity: Soviet censorship practices in the 1930s', *Russian Review* **60**, 4 (2001), 526–44. See also the work of Brian Kassoff, who suggested that the goal of ideological censorship was not only to limit the circulation of dangerous ideas but also to 'facilitate the creation of works [the Soviets] believed necessary to build socialism'. See Brian Kassoff, 'Glavlit, ideological censorship, and Russian-language book publishing, 1922–1938', *Russian Review* **74** (2015), 69–96.

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15 Mark Harrison, 'Secrecy, fear and transaction costs: the business of Soviet forced labour in the early Cold War', *Europe-Asia Studies* **65**, 6 (2013), 1112–35; Mark Harrison, 'Accounting for secrets', *Journal of Economic History* **73**, 4 (2013), 1017–49.

16 Larissa Zakharova, 'Trust in bureaucracy and technology: the evolution of secrecy policies and practice in the Soviet state apparatus (1917–1991)', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* **21**, 3 (2020), 555–90. Emphasis mine. See also Epp Lauk, 'Practice of Soviet censorship in the press: the case of Estonia', *Nordicom Review* **20**, 2 (1999), 19–31.

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18 The later generation of social history works would include: Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin's industrial revolution: politics and workers, 1928–1932* (Cambridge, 1988); Lewis R. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the politics of economic productivity in the Soviet Union, 1936–1941* (Cambridge, 1988); Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the state and revolution: Soviet family policy and social life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge, 1993); Sarah Davies, *Popular opinion in Stalin's Russia: terror, propaganda, and dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, 1997); Lynn Viola, *Peasant rebels under Stalin: collectivization and the culture of peasant resistance* (New York, 1996); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's peasants: resistance and survival in the Russian village after collectivization* (New York, 1994). Post-revisionist works focusing on power and subjectivity were

influenced by Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic mountain: Stalinism as civilization* (Berkeley, 1997) and Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, 2006).

19 Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: ordinary life in extraordinary times* (Oxford, 2000), 1.

20 Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 2. Emphasis mine.

21 The quote is from Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 6. For an insightful discussion of 'practice' as a heuristic concept in thinking about society, see Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*, trans. Steve F. Rendall (Berkeley, 1984).

22 'Dekret o pechati' (27 October 1917) in *Dekrety sovetskoi vlasti, t. 1 (25 oktiabria 1917 g. – 16 marta 1918 g.)* (Moscow, 1957), 27–8.

23 Zelenov, 'Voennaia i gosudarstvennaia taina v RSFSR i SSSR i ikh pravoe obespechenie (1917–1991 gg.)'.

24 Goriaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v sssr, 1917–1991 gg.*, 17.

25 Goriaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v sssr, 1917–1991 gg.*, 17.

26 Yoram Gorlizki, 'Ordinary Stalinism: the Council of Ministers and the Soviet neopatrimonial state, 1946–1953', *Journal of Modern History* **74**, 4 (2002), 699–736; Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *Cold peace: Stalin and the Soviet ruling circle, 1945–1953* (Oxford, 2004), 62.

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28 Zelenov, 'Voennaia i gosudarstvennaia i taina v RSFSR i SSSR'.

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French Abstract

Dans la société soviétique d'après-guerre, la culture intensive du secret et de la censure reposait non seulement sur des institutions bureaucratiques telles que *Glavlit*, principal organe de censure, mais aussi sur un second niveau de 'bureaucratie parasitaire' qui impliquait services administratifs et gestion de paperasses, au sein d'organismes se nourrissant d'un régime fondé sur le secret, et qui sinon n'avaient aucune raison d'exister par eux-mêmes. L'auteur met l'accent sur le devoir de garder le secret, cela quotidiennement au bureau, sous l'autorité hiérarchique des 'premiers départements', en charge de faire respecter non seulement le silence du personnel administratif, mais aussi celui des bibliothécaires et conservateurs, tout particulièrement responsables des ouvrages frappés de censure. Cet article démontre comment, par le biais d'une bureaucratie parasitaire, cette culture du secret a pu, en priorité, réguler des formes de connaissance essentiellement matérielles et spatiales.

German Abstract

Die intensive Kultur der Geheimhaltung und Zensur in der sowjetischen Nachkriegsgesellschaft wurde ermöglicht durch Bürokratien wie Glavlit, die Hauptzensurbehörde, aber auch durch eine sekundäre Ebene einer 'parasitären Bürokratie', die mit Einrichtungen und Aktenbeständen einher ging und ihr Lebenselexier aus dem Kernsystem der Geheimhaltung bezog, aber sonst keinen anderen Existenzgrund besaß. Indem der Beitrag die alltägliche Gemeinhaltung in Büros (durch die 'Ersten Abteilungen', die für die Geheimhaltung am Arbeitsplatz verantwortlich waren) und Bibliotheken (durch die Arbeit spezieller Lagerungseinheiten für zensierte Bücher) beleuchtet, zeigt er, wie diese parasitäre und bürokratische Geheimhaltungskultur die Regulierung des Wissens materiell und räumlich priorisierte.