

On publishing activities of the History and Records Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Publishing has traditionally been one of the most important areas of activities of the Archives Service of the Russian Foreign Ministry. The issuance of diplomatic history documents was initiated by the Empress Catherine II at the end of the 18th century. Since then, the Ministry, practically on a continuous basis (though with varying intensity) has been publishing materials on foreign policy activities of our country. That work did not stop even at the time of the World War II, in spite of the hardships of that period.

Lately, the publishing activities of the Russian Foreign Ministry have been evolving in the following directions.

First of all, the Ministry has been issuing serial publications, such as *The Foreign Policy of Russia in the 19th Century* (17 volumes issued), *The USSR Foreign Policy Documents* (24 volumes issued), *Russia's Foreign Policy* (has been issued on an annual basis since 1990). Also, it has issued 46 volumes of the publication entitled "International Treaties, Agreements and Conventions concluded by the USSR, which are still in Force".

The second direction is publication of thematic collections. The latter include publications devoted to Russia's struggle for disarmament, against colonialism and neo-colonialism, for security and cooperation in Europe, as well as publications on our efforts to facilitate the Middle East settlement, to protect human rights, etc... Much interest has been aroused by documentary publications containing correspondence between the leaders of the USSR, the United States and Great Britain in the period of World War II, materials on Soviet-American, Soviet-British and Soviet-French relations in 1941-1945, and materials on the policy of the Soviet Union concerning the German issue in 1941-1949. Of continuing

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importance are collections of diplomatic documents and materials related to the preWar period, including those from the archives of Soviet diplomatic missions in Baltic States.

The third direction is cooperation with foreign archives services, including in the publication of bilateral documentary collections compiled by the Foreign Ministry of Russia together with Foreign Ministries of interested countries. Since 1956, in cooperation with our foreign colleagues (including from Argentina, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland and Switzerland), we have published 40 such collections with 15 more in the pipeline.

In addition, the Department of History and Records periodically issues specialized publications, including those devoted to various anniversaries. Just recently, for example, we presented in Moscow a documentary collection issued on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of our diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. Last year, a similar collection was published in connection with the 125th anniversary of our diplomatic dialogue with Bulgaria. Currently, we are preparing a publication containing statements by heads of Soviet and Russian delegations to the UN General Assembly sessions, devoted to the 60th anniversary of the United Nations.

Also, the Department had played the leading role in the preparation and publication of such important research works as “History of Diplomacy”, “Diplomatic Dictionary” and “Articles on the History of the Foreign Ministry of Russia, 1802-2002” which have become a handy reference for Russian scholars specializing in international affairs.

The expertise and vast archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry make it possible to carry out research and publication activities on a broad front. The only impediment to the implementations of our ambitious plans is the lack of financial resources. But the economic and financial situation in the country has been improving, and we hope that, eventually, we will be able to intensify the important publishing activities intrusted to us.