

**DRAMATIC DESTINY OF NIKOLAY VOSKRESENSKIY,  
A RUSSIAN LAW HISTORIAN**

*Somewhere at the last stop  
We'll thank this very destiny, too...*  
Bulat Okudzhava

The article addresses the life and tortuous scientific career of the undeservedly forgotten historian and archaeographer N. A. Voskresenskiy, who worked during the extremely difficult interwar period. Nikolay Voskresenskiy, a teacher by training, became an ardent admirer of Peter the Great's state-building and legislative activity. Conducting research on an unprecedented scale, he discovered, analyzed and prepared for print archive documents on the history of the legislative process in Russia during the first quarter of the 18th century. In spite of his enthusiastic research and life-long devotion to science, N. A. Voskresenskiy was for a long time deliberately shunned by the scientific community, and had to work in isolation. Only late in his life was N. A. Voskresenskiy accepted by his fellow law historians. Boris Syromiatnikov, who helped ensure that the “Legislative Acts of Peter I” was eventually published, played a particularly decisive role in the fate of Nikolay Voskresenskiy. Our article, based on archival data, clarifies the circumstances in which Nikolay Voskresenskiy defended his ‘Candidate of Science’ dissertation, and his preparation of his doctoral dissertation entitled “Peter the Great as a Legislator.” Several facts which shed light on the negative role played by Alexander Andreev in the destiny of Voskresenskiy are also uncovered. Voskresenskiy was subjected to persistent and groundless allegations of incompetency throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, as a result of which most of his research remained unpublished.

Keywords: archaeography; Peter I; Alexander Andreev; Boris Syromiatnikov; legislative process; law history; 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Представлен систематический обзор биографии, а также ученых изысканий и публикаторской деятельности Н. А. Воскресенского – незаслуженно забытого российского историка и археографа второй четверти XX в. Проникшись пиететным отношением к государственной деятельности Петра I, педагог по образованию Николай Воскресенский предпринял уникальные по масштабу усилия по выявлению, анализу

и подготовке к печати архивных документов по истории законодательного процесса России первой четверти XVIII в. Несмотря на подвижнические исследовательские труды, Н. А. Воскресенский длительное время целенаправленно отторгался академическим сообществом историков, был вынужден работать в творческой изоляции. Лишь на позднем этапе жизненного пути Николай Алексеевич оказался интегрирован в среду правоведов. Наиболее позитивную роль в судьбе историка сыграл Борис Сыромятников, благодаря поддержке которого были опубликованы знаменитые Законодательные акты Петра I. На основании архивных данных освещены обстоятельства защиты Николаем Воскресенским кандидатской диссертации и подготовки докторской диссертации. Приведены факты негативной роли Александра Андреева и необоснованности обвинений Воскресенского на протяжении 1920–1940-х гг. в непрофессионализме, в результате чего большая часть научного наследия Н. А. Воскресенского осталась неизданной.

Ключевые слова: археография; Петр I; Александр Андреев; Борис Сыромятников; законодательный процесс; XVIII век.

The name of the law historian Nikolay Alekseevich Voskresenskiy (1889–1948) is not widely known. A passionate scientist, Nikolay Alekseevich remained unacknowledged professionally. Over the past seventy years only a small number of historians have commented favourably on the work of Nikolay Voskresenskiy [Панкратова, 1942, с. 30–31; Валк, 1944, с. 95; Новицкая, с. 54–55; Анисимов, с. 7–8<sup>5</sup>; Козлова, с. 33–34], and only two researchers have written short articles about him [Федосеева; Киселев]<sup>6</sup>.

This oblivion of Voskresenskiy as a researcher and sources publisher is by no means justified. His personality and life deserve respect – yet, even the events of his life have not been clarified enough.

According to Voskresenskiy's autobiography dated October 1, 1943, and a CV, completed on July 1, 1944 [Диссертационное дело, л. 88–89 об., 91–91об.], he was born March 30, 1889 in the village of Melehovo of Tula District and Tula province in a priest's family. In 1907, he graduated from Tula Seminary and the same year he joined the History Department of Nezhin Institute of History and Philology founded by Prince Bezborodko. It remains a mystery why the 18-year-old Nikolay Voskresenskiy did not choose nearby Moscow to pursue higher education, but opted instead for a remote provincial Nezhin in Chernigov district.

Nezhin Institute of History and Philology, founded in 1820, was a small institution with a four-year cycle of education, which prepared secondary school teachers in the fields of History, Russian Philology, and Classical Philology. After graduating in 1911 and defending his diploma on “Modern Trends in Russian Historiography,” Nikolay Voskresenskiy was appointed

<sup>5</sup> This monograph by Anisimov is devoted to the memory of N. A. Voskresenskiy.

<sup>6</sup> Despite of considering materials in several archives, M. A. Kiselev has contributed relatively small to the article of E. P. Fedoseeva, published 34 years earlier.

teacher of Russian language, history and geography in Vitanovskiy Gymnasium in the town of Lodz. [Диссертационное дело, л. 91; Отчет, с. 8].

In Lodz, Voskresenskiy encountered the First World War. After the occupation of the city by German troops, he was evacuated to Petrograd, where he continued to work as a teacher. In 1916, he joined the Law Faculty of the Imperial University of Petrograd, attending lectures as an external student, planning subsequently to study for a Master's in the history of Russian Law.

These plans were not destined to materialize, however. According to the Decree of the People's Commission for Education of the Russian Federation N 859 of 12 February 1918, "due to the fact that the curriculum is completely out of date" and "the curriculum design is not based on <...> scientific methodology", all Law departments of Russian universities were closed [цит. по: Берлявский, с. 18]. This effectively put an end to Voskresenskiy's law education.

The only detail known of Voskresenskiy's private life is that he was married to Zinaida Andreevna, a teacher [Весь Петроград, с. 111]. The couple had no children [Диссертационное дело, л. 89 об.].

In the period between the Russian Civil War and the Second World War, Voskresenskiy's biography can be traced relatively easily. He taught in several middle schools in Petrograd/Leningrad, and then in the first half of the 1930s in military schools. (In 1930–1933 he taught in the United School for Betterment of Industrial Military Security Commanding Staff in Strelna, and in 1934, the Leningrad School for Tank Technicians.)

Voskresenskiy never held any administrative or public posts, and neither did he join the Bolshevik party [Диссертационное дело, л. 88]. In spite of being born into a priest's family, he managed to survive the Leningrad 'purges' of the first half of the 1930s and was not touched by the 'Great Terror' of 1937–1938.

In 1932, while working in the United School in Strelna, Nikolay Voskresenskiy compiled a voluminous (311 pages) "Картотека по пожарному законодательству, промышленности и коммунальному СССР и РСФСР" ("File on the Firefighting Law in the Industrial and Communal Spheres of the USSR and the RSFSR") [see Картотека]. This publication became his first printed work.

Teaching, however, was just one side of N. A. Voskresenskiy's life. The second side, obviously more important for him, was his research into the legislative activity of Tsar and Emperor Peter the Great. Choosing such a topic was not a successful career move in the political context of Soviet Russia of the 1920s–1930s.

When and why Nikolay Voskresenskiy decided to begin researching the legislative activity of the first Russian emperor, is unclear. Neither do we know who stimulated his interest in the Russian history of the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As for the motives behind Voskresenskiy's interest in studying the history of the legislative process in Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we know one or two things.

Nikolay Voskresenskiy was an admirer of Peter I's personality and his state-building activities. Naturally, being himself a citizen of the Soviet State (and a seemingly sensible one), Voskresenskiy could not praise the Emperor in the style of Feofan Prokopovich, a poet who lived during Peter's reign: "Peter is our glory which the Russian people will not cease to praise till the end of the world" [Прокопович, с. 133]. Yet, this statement might also sum up Nikolay Alekseevich's own attitude towards Peter I. This attitude is reflected in his scientific works, despite the obvious self-censorship that characterizes them.

In 1941, N. A. Voskresenskiy praised the first emperor as "one of the great historic figures of the past, who worked tirelessly towards the benefit of Russia" [ОП РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 17, л. 12]. In 1943, Voskresenskiy commented: "Peter's name is currently being besmirched by the forces of obscurantism, ignorance, parasitism, hypocrisy, self-conceit and disrespect for the law, – all vices once defeated by him, but now followed by many in our society..." [ОП РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 15, л. 6 об.]. Voskresenskiy also called Peter I "the greatest legislator in world history" and "a truly gifted mastermind and inspired creator of legislative acts" [Там же, кн. 15, л. 10 об.; кн. 14, л. 13].

It seems possible that this great respect towards the first Russian emperor played a crucial role in the researcher's turn towards the history of the legislative process in Russia of the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thanks to his deep emotional attachment to Peter I, N. A. Voskresenskiy succeeded in his long-term painstaking archival studies, in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles.

The archival research of Nikolay Voskresenskiy started in 1923 in the Senate Archive (Leningrad), as mentioned by the scientist himself in his autobiography of 1943. In 1926, he also began working in the Moscow archives [Диссертационное дело, л. 91].

At the center of Voskresenskiy's attention were the documents connected to Peter the Great's legislative work. He was specifically interested in the original documents containing the legislative acts, authored and written by Peter himself. Voskresenskiy made it his priority to locate these documents, scattered within dozens of archival funds. To this end, Voskresenskiy searched through hundreds of archival cases in six major archives of Moscow and Leningrad, and in the process, he managed to decipher the notoriously illegible handwriting of Peter I.

Documents authored by Peter I were not the only thing of interest to Voskresenskiy during his archival research. He discovered a much wider range of materials – mainly, a massive amount of documents reflecting various stages of the legislative process in Russia in 1700–1725, ranging from legislative initiatives to published finalized normative acts. Drafts of certain laws passed during Peter's reign were of particular interest to him.

Nikolay Voskresenskiy was not merely discovering and meticulously studying the documents, however; his aim was to publish them. He developed a specific method for publishing the normative acts of the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and their drafts, and gave a speech on this topic at the

meeting of Archaeographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences on 29 December 1925 [Летопись, с. 61–62].

Towards the end of the 1920s, N. A. Voskresenskiy prepared for print two volumes of the normative documents, entitled “Законодательные акты Петра Великого” (“The Normative Acts of Peter the Great”). Voskresenskiy conducted his research in his own free time, while simultaneously teaching, and the volume of his archival research and the number of the manuscripts, prepared for print, seems therefore truly astonishing. A true enthusiast, he carried out an amount of work.

Voskresenskiy encountered serious obstacles while researching early 18<sup>th</sup> century legal history. In the 1920s–1930s he was not affiliated to any research institution, working in the archives as a private person. For years, Voskresenskiy also lacked any support from the Academy, both the pre-revolutionary specialists, and the newly established ‘red professors.’

Subsequently, Nikolay Voskresenskiy wrote with great bitterness: “From 1929 to 1939, the hardest thing of all was [my] scientific solitude as an author... and the total indifference [of the scientific community] to my work” [ОР РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 14, л. 14]. At any rate, before 1929, his situation was no better. Alongside the above mentioned speech to the Archaeographic Commission in 1925, Voskresenskiy made another public appearance in front of the same Commission on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1927 with a paper entitled “К постановке вопроса о характере и степени заимствований иностранных законодательств в эпоху Петра I” (“On the Nature and Extent of Borrowing from Foreign Legislation in the Epoch of Peter I”) [Федосеева, с. 228]. Unfortunately, the Commission presided by the famous historian and academician Sergey Platonov, gave no support to the researcher. Voskresenskiy was not invited to work in any of the numerous scientific organizations headed by Platonov, and neither were any plans made to publish his work.

Nevertheless, even a brief positive review by the famous academician who mentioned an unknown ‘enthusiastic’ researcher in 1927, was considered an extraordinary event by Nikolay Voskresenskiy [ОР РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 14, л. 14–15]. One depressing paradox of the Soviet era was that this quite limited interest in his research, expressed by the Archaeographic Commission in mid-1920s, apparently saved Voskresenskiy from prosecution by the state. Had Nikolay Alekseevich entered the influential circles of S. F. Platonov, he may well have been destroyed as part of the OGPU-inspired “Academic Case” of the 1929–1931.

The prolonged refusal to acknowledge Voskresenskiy’s work was certainly connected to the general situation in the scientific community of Soviet historians in the second half of the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s. Mikhail Pokrovskiy and his followers, with their primitive sociology-bound approach, were considered the leading historic school at the time. Their approach had a devastating effect on high school teaching – a particularly bitter fact for Nikolay Voskresenskiy who was an undoubtedly talented pedagogue.

This is why Voskresenskiy, abidingly indifferent to political and ideological trends, never citing neither obligatory Marxist-Leninist classics, nor Stalin himself (!) in his works, decided to quote a hefty officious 2-volume publication “Против исторической концепции М. Н. Покровского” (“Against The Historical Conception of M. N. Pokrovskiy”), 1939, in the Preface to his monograph, prepared for print in 1945 [ОР РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 14, л. 14]. One can easily see that he had in mind Anna Pankratova’s article, “On the development of the historical views of M. N. Pokrovskiy.” The page, contained in the footnote, probably attracted Voskresenskiy’s attention with Pankratova’s words that “history in schools was replaced by a schematic form of sociology with elements of political literacy,” that “[school] programs on history <...> disoriented the students,” that “studying specific, factual history was replaced by study according to the formations and problems” [Панкратова, 1939, с. 6]<sup>7</sup>.

Yet all of this came later. During the 1920s and 1930s the only assistant and true acolyte of Nikolay Voskresenskiy was his wife, Zinaida Andreevna. Her admiringly clear ‘teacher’s’ handwriting appears on thousands (!) of pages, prepared by her husband for print (18<sup>th</sup> century documents and his research.) Zinaida Voskresenskaya offered genuine spiritual support to Nikolay Alekseevich.

Despite all his difficulties, Voskresenskiy continued his work, and at the beginning of the 1940s prepared three extensive volumes of “The Legislative Acts of Peter the Great” for print. The first volume contained, as formulated by Nikolay Voskresenskiy, “acts on the highest state decisions,” the second volume (in two parts) – acts “on society classes,” and the third (in two parts) – acts “on industry and trade.” There was also a fourth (unfinished) volume that contained acts on “the constitution of the army and navy” [Диссертационное дело, л. 74].

In the beginning of 1941, Voskresenskiy also compiled two impressive volumes of photocopies of the legislative acts and their drafts that were signed by Peter I. Attached were the transcriptions and the special tables of the appearances of every letter, hand-written by the Tsar reformer. The volumes were entitled “Peter the Great as Legislator” [ОР РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 17 (Вып. 1); кн. 19 (Вып. 2)]. Voskresenskiy himself paid for these expensive photocopies from his modest teacher’s salary [Там же, кн. 14, л. 14]. Being essentially paleographic albums, these volumes served as massive illustrative material to “The Legislative Acts of Peter the Great.”

At the beginning of the 1940s, N.A. Voskresenskiy’s destiny took an unexpected turn for the better. It was not entirely connected to the process of the denunciation of ‘M. N. Pokrovskiy’s school,’ which resulted in a partial return to academic traditions in the historical sciences. A more important

<sup>7</sup> Who knows what emotions did Nikolay Alekseevich experience, reading on the same page the vindictive discourse of the ex-conspirator from Odessa and the graduate of the Institute of Red Professors Anna Pankratova on “pest ‘work’ of the enemies of the people in the field of historic science,” on “rascals from the spy-pest gang of pseudo-historians?” Was he horrified? Was he satisfied? Was he not impressed at all by the lines with the rhetoric so ordinary for his time?



event for Voskresenskiy personally was his meeting with Boris Syromiatnikov. It is possible that their acquaintance happened in 1939, in the walls of the State Feudal and Serfdom Epoch Archive (now РГАДА, The Russian State Archives for Ancient Acts, Moscow.)

The son of a district doctor and a native-born Muscovite, Boris Syromiatnikov was 15 years Voskresenskiy's senior. Upon graduating from the Law Department of the Imperial Moscow University in 1899, Boris Ivanovich was invited to the Cathedra of Russian Legal History for entry into the professorship. He interned in the universities of Paris, Dijon, and Berlin. Upon returning to Russia, he taught and was engaged in public and social work; he published widely in the liberal media.<sup>8</sup>

A dedicated ideologist of the Constituent Assembly, Boris Syromiatnikov initially did not accept the October Revolution of the 1917. He chose not to emigrate, but for a long time could not adapt to Soviet reality. He worked in various educational institutions in Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Kazan; for a few years, he was director of the library of the Central Research Institute for Textile. Finally, in 1938 he managed to obtain a position as junior research assistant in the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Law (now The Institute of State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences.) By his education and experience, B. I. Syromiatnikov was a superbly trained law historian, capable of judging the scientific significance of N. A. Voskresenskiy's work on the history of the legislative process in Russia of the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Boris Syromiatnikov could fully appreciate the scale and the quality of Voskresenskiy's research. Syromiatnikov was the first person to provide organizational support to the historian. Thanks to his efforts, in 1940 the Institute of Law approved the first two of the three volumes of the "Legislative Acts of Peter the Great" – "Acts on the Highest State Decisions" and the "Acts on Society Classes" [Диссертационное дело, л. 93]. Syromiatnikov became the executive editor of the edition and prepared an ample introduction for it [Сыромятников, 1945]. Additionally, Boris Ivanovich published a lengthy positive review of the as yet unpublished manuscript of the first volume in the November 1940 issue of the journal "Soviet State and Law" [Сыромятников, 1940].

Thus, in 1940 destiny brought Nikolay Voskresenskiy into close proximity with the Institute of Law of the USSR Academy of Sciences.<sup>9</sup> From 1937 to 1941, the director's chair was occupied by Andrey Vyshinskiy. The dangerous Chief Prosecutor of the USSR during the Great Terror, personally accountable for countless crimes, Vyshinskiy was an ambiguous person. He was an educated lawyer and an outstanding

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<sup>8</sup> The most detailed, although not exactly systematic, biographical data on B. I. Syromiatnikov, see [Дурновцев, Тихонов, с. 7–9, 28–37].

<sup>9</sup> The Institute of Law that got its new name in March 1938, was founded in 1925 as the Institute of Soviet Building at the Communist Academy.

court speaker,<sup>10</sup> as well as a serious scientist, and author of original works on criminal law. Acting as a head of the Institute of Law, Vyshinsky tried to turn it as much as possible into an authoritative academic institution at that time.

The recruiting policy of the director was to attract capable law researchers of the Soviet generation, who showed inclination to intellectual work, along with scientists of the older generation, familiar with pre-revolutionary scientific traditions (if, and only if, their loyalty was beyond doubt.) Moreover, in Vyshinskiy's time, the Institute commenced extensive research in legal history. In 1938 the Cabinet for the History of State and Law was created; in 1940–1941 the Group for the History of State and Law followed, and shortly after came the Sector with the same name [Советская историко-правовая наука, с. 66].

It is highly improbable that A.Ya.Vyshinskiy, who combined, starting in May 1939, his directorship with the post of the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, was personally capable to go into the details of every research and publishing project conducted by members of the Institute. Therefore, it is highly likely that the question of the approval of Nikolay Voskresenskiy's work for print was not specifically discussed with the Director. Whatever the truth of the matter, the inclusion of the "Acts of the 1st quarter of the 18th century" in the Institute's publishing plans became possible due to the changes in the Institute initiated by Vyshinskiy.

The publication of the first volume of the "Legislative Acts of Peter the Great" was commissioned to the First Typography of the USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House in Leningrad. The edition was prepared in 1941 [Диссертационное дело, л. 91 об.]. Further printing, however, was put on hold. The WWII came to the USSR, and the Blockade of Leningrad had begun.

N. A. Voskresenskiy and his wife did not evacuate and continued to work. They endured all the hardships of living in a city under siege. Unbelievably, during the Blockade, Voskresenskiy and Zinaida Andreevna prepared for print almost 1,760 additional pages of the documents from the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the documents, copied by hand, contain Zinaida Voskresenskaya's marginalia in graphite pencil: "Copied during the artillery fire... 17/VII 43," "Strong artillery fire 3/IX," "Written under artillery fire 14/IX 43." [цит. по: Федосеева, с. 228].

Nikolay Voskresenskiy also continued teaching economic geography in high school. For his teaching work during the Blockade, Nikolay Alekseevich was awarded a military medal "For the Defense of Leningrad" on February 15, 1944 [Диссертационное дело, л. 70].

Voskresenskiy's work finally received the approval of established historians. An official collection of historic works "25 Years of the Historical Sciences in the USSR," 1942, contained a few lines praising Voskresenskiy.

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<sup>10</sup> The details of Vyshinskiy's pre-war biography, and especially his prosecutor activities, see, mainly [Звягинцев, Орлов, с. 7–92].



Corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Anna Pankratova, wrote: "N. A. Voskresenskiy undertook incredibly vigorous archival research, and discovered several papers from the Petrine era, including papers signed by the tsar himself, previously not seen by anyone." It would seem, however, that Anna Pankratova did not personally see the publication, which is why she exaggerated the number of volumes of the "Legislative Acts of Peter the Great" prepared for print, mentioning an "eight-volume (!) edition of the documents on Peter's state-building activity" [Панкратова, 1942, с. 30].<sup>11</sup>

This review, albeit long-awaited, did not bring any changes to Nikolay Voskresenskiy's life under the Blockade. The next year, however, brought some improvements. The reason was not that the Blockade was broken in January 1943, and from 23 February 1943, food rations in Leningrad increased. Neither was it the fact that on 1 June 1943 Voskresenskiy was included in the Commission for publication of the "Letters and papers of Peter the Great" in the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of History [Диссертационное дело, л. 88 об.; Новые публикации документов].

The decisive factor was that during the third year of war in the USSR, the 54-year-old Nikolay Voskresenskiy finally became, with the help of Boris Syromiatnikov, a full-time member of a scientific institution.

The question of N. A. Voskresenskiy's employment in the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Law was possibly discussed back in 1940–1941. It is probable that in 1941 Boris Syromiatnikov could have reached an agreement on Voskresenskiy's candidacy with the leadership of the Institute. This protection was obviously renewed in the summer of 1943, immediately upon Syromiatnikov's return from evacuation in Tashkent. Based on his recommendation, on 1 September 1943 Nikolay Voskresenskiy was hired as a Senior Research Assistant for a permanent position in the Institute of Law, with the right to live in Leningrad [Диссертационное дело, л. 88 об.; Федосеева, с. 222].

N. A. Voskresenskiy's employment raised the question of his defending a dissertation. According to the Report by Serafim Pokrovskiy, staff member of the History of State and Law section from 3 October 1943, the initial plan was Voskresenskiy's Doctorate defense [Диссертационное дело, л. 87–87 об.]. It becomes clear from that Report that the three volumes

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<sup>11</sup> A. M. Pankratova's compliments to N. A. Voskresenskiy's work (including the phrase about the eight volumes) were subsequently copied almost word-by-word by S.N. Valk in his article from 1944. [Валк, 1944, с. 95.] This allows us to assume that Valk either told Anna Pankratova about the works of Voskresenskiy, or was himself the author of a related fragment from her article. This assumption appears yet more plausible, considering that Sigismund Valk not only took part in the preparation of the "25 Years of the Historical Science in the USSR" edition, but also was, during its compilation, in evacuation in Central Asia, along with Anna Pankratova. Valk, who had been working from 1918 to 1941 in various scientific, archival and educational institutions in Petrograd/Leningrad, was undoubtedly acquainted with the research of Nikolay Voskresenskiy. From where could Valk have obtained information about the "eight-volume edition of the documents of Peter the Great"? Was this mistake a mere echo of Voskresenskiy's pre-war publishing plans that he had shared with Valk? Is it possible that Voskresenskiy ultimately planned to publish an eight-volume edition?

of “The Legislative Acts of Peter the Great” (by that time renamed as “The Legislative Acts of Peter I”) were planned to be submitted as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Law.

In his report, Pokrovskiy spoke out in support of Nikolay Voskresenskiy and suggested to grant him not just a Doctor of Law degree, but also to assign Voskresenskiy the rank of Professor “for his course on ‘History of the State and Law in the USSR’” [Там же, л. 87 об.]. However, soon the situation had changed.

The Institute leadership, having reasonably considered that the publication of three volumes of documents could not qualify as a bona fide dissertation, proposed Voskresenskiy defend a ‘Candidate of Science’ dissertation. Since N. A. Voskresenskiy had not prepared a finalized dissertation text at that time, he was allowed to present the first volume of the “Legislative Acts,” already prepared for print in 1941.

Boris Syromiatnikov and Alexander Andreev, the Senior Research Assistant at the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of History, were invited as the opponents for the defense.

By 1944, Alexander Andreev had experienced a considerable amount of hardships himself.<sup>12</sup> Voskresenskiy’s senior by two years, a native of St. Petersburg, Alexander Ignatievich came from a poor family. Andreev joined the History and Philology Department of The Imperial St. Petersburg University in 1907, but, being constantly short of funds, graduated from the course formally only in 1916.

His financial difficulties by no means affected the quality of his education. He trained under the supervision of A. S. Lappo-Danilevskiy and A. E. Presniakov, and in 1913 took part in the multivolume edition of the «Грамота Коллегии экономии» (“Economy Collegium Charter”). From 1921, A. I. Andreev began acting as Permanent Academic Secretary to the Archaeographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences. The young scientist has been publishing extensively, and gained scientific acknowledgment rather early, entering the circles of Sergey Platonov.

His career came to a halt on 24 October 1929 when Andreev was arrested, following the investigation on the “Academic case.” On 8 August 1931, he was sentenced to five years’ exile in Siberian Eniseisk of Krasnoyarsk Region [Брачев, с. 116]. He returned from exile in April 1935. In spite of all his difficulties, including problems relating to registering his address, and finding himself in a vulnerable position as a recently repressed person, Alexander Ignatievich resumed active scientific life. He worked in the Institute of the Peoples of the North, the Institute of Ethnography, and in the Leningrad branch of the Institute of History. In 1940 he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation entitled “Essays on the Study of Siberian Historical Sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.”

Andreev also lived for a while in Leningrad under the Siege. In 1942, he was evacuated from the city and lived first in Kazan and then in Tash-

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<sup>12</sup> On A. I. Andreev see [Сербина].

kent. While still in Tashkent, he was invited to join the Institute of History in Moscow. Being an experienced sources researcher and archaeographer himself, A. I. Andreev was well placed to appreciate the work of Nikolay Voskresenskiy.

The dissertation defense of Senior Research Assistant N. A. Voskresenskiy was scheduled at 18.00 on 21 July 1944 in the Institute of Law. At the scheduled time, Voskresenskiy stood facing the members of the Scientific Council of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Law (separate Dissertation councils did not exist at that time.) What were the people to decide on Voskresenskiy's scientific destiny?

According to the Dissertation case materials, 13 out of 18 members of the Scientific Council of the Institute were present at the defense [Диссертационное дело, л. 73]. Acknowledging the wide variety of these people's destinies, we can roughly divide them into two groups. On the one side, there were the scientists of the senior generation, educated in Russian Imperial universities, whose scientific views had been formed in the milieu of pre-revolutionary academic traditions. On the other hand, there were younger law researchers trained in the Soviet system. Of the former group (all born between 1873–1890), M. M. Agarkov, V. N. Durdenevskiy, S. F. Kechekyan, N. N. Polianskiy, S. M. Potapov and B. I. Syromiatnikov were present at the defense; from the latter group (born between 1900–1905), there were N. D. Durmanov, M. P. Kareva, I. D. Levin, B. S. Mankovskiy and S. A. Pokrovskiy.

Although, strictly speaking, of all the 'senior generation' members of the Academic Council in 1944, only B. Syromiatnikov and S. Kechekyan were specialists in the History of State and Law, this did not change anything for Voskresenskiy. Despite the differences in their research specializations, all the 'senior' members of the Council had received both fundamental legal and generalist humanitarian training, thanks to their studies in pre-revolutionary Gymnasiums and Universities. Thus, the individuals present at the Council meeting on July 21, 1944, were able to fully appreciate the scientific level of Voskresenskiy's work.

The situation concerning the junior members of the Council was more complicated. They had received their education in the 1920s, in the difficult context of the deliberate destruction of pre-revolutionary academic traditions in the humanities; they had difficulty differentiating between science and propaganda, true research and populism. Moreover, many of them were distinctively more successful in writing propaganda texts than research.

An example of this are publications by Serafim Pokrovskiy (born 1905)<sup>13</sup> – two brochures which appeared in 1927, entitled "Questions of the Chinese Revolution" and "Trotskyism Then and Now." Subsequently he prepared an immense (353 p.) work entitled "A Theory of the Proletarian Revolution" that was printed in 1930–1931 in Leningrad and ran to three editions with a total circulation of 40,000 (!) copies. Publications of that sort

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<sup>13</sup> On S. A. Pokrovskiy's biography (mainly pre-WWII period) see [Киселева].

had not saved Pokrovskiy from state prosecution. In January 1934, when he was acting head of the Cathedra of Leninism in Leningrad Institute of Textile, Serafim Pokrovskiy was arrested and charged with organizing an underground anti-communist circle. On March 3 1934, a Special Commission of the USSR Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) sentenced him to three years' exile in Ufa and expulsion from the Communist Party.

One's career had almost no chance of a new start after events of such scale and character. Serafim Pokrovskiy, however, succeeded in this respect. In 1941, he found himself a member of the Law Institute's full-time staff. Without being officially rehabilitated, he also managed to regain his Communist Party membership. At that time, this was only possible with the help of a powerful person or institution. In this case, the institution in question was the OGPU.

Serafim Pokrovskiy paid back in full those who did him the favor of giving him a job and restoring him to the party ranks – not merely by being an OGPU informer. At the beginning of the 1950s, he played a fatal role in the destiny of Valentin Livshits, an Institute of Law graduate student.

Professor Pokrovskiy managed to gain the confidence of his younger colleague and to provoke him into making some harsh statements about Stalin. However, in his zeal to expose the next 'enemy of the people' (this time in line with the struggle against 'cosmopolitanism,') Serafim Pokrovskiy went for direct falsification of evidence. Regularly visiting the apartment of Valentin Livshits, he typed an anti-Soviet letter on Livshits' typewriter on behalf of the graduate student<sup>14</sup>.

As a result, Livshits was arrested on October 3, 1952. The investigation was very brief. On December 27, 1952 Valentin Yakovlevich, charged with counter-revolutionary and terrorist activity by the Court-Martial of Moscow Military District, was sentenced to death by firing squad. On February 6, 1953 the sentence was carried out [Расстрельные списки, с. 273]<sup>15</sup>.

However, all of this came later. In 1943–1944 Serafim Pokrovskiy, then a fellow in the Section of State and Law, was invariably acting in favor of N. A. Voskresenskiy.

It seems unlikely that Serafim Pokrovskiy was harboring any provocative plans towards Voskresenskiy. Nikolay Voskresenskiy was at that time utterly unknown and very apolitical. It is more likely that S. A. Pokrovskiy was either complying with a request by Boris Syromiatnikov, or looking forward to further collaboration with Nikolay Alekseevich on an indefinite research project studying the History of State and Law in Russia of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, using Voskresenskiy's unique materials.

Unlike the senior generation, not all junior colleagues of the Academic Council were able to evaluate adequately the scientific significance of

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<sup>14</sup> The details of this utterly gruesome story can be found in [Каминская, с. 54–58]. The activity of Serafim Pokrovskiy was revealed to the author of this article by one of the senior fellows of the Academy of Sciences Institute of State and Law, E. A. Skripilev (now deceased.)

<sup>15</sup> V. Ya. Livshits was rehabilitated posthumously by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR on October 15, 1959 [Там же].

Voskresenskiy's work. On the other hand, they were accustomed to Soviet 'production discipline', and if the leadership of the Institute approved the defense of Senior Researcher Nikolay Voskresenskiy, there was no reason for 'throwing black balls'.

A dissertation defense in 1944 was conducted very much as it is today. There were the opening remarks by the Chairman of the Council, the reading out of personal information on candidate, the presentation of the dissertation, the speeches of the official opponents, the free debate, the candidate's answers on the comments made, and then the secret vote and the announcing of its results. According to the verbatim record, Nikolay spoke briefly, outlining twelve 'theses' in his work [Диссертационное дело, л. 75–76], and then came the moment for Syromiatnikov and Andreev to speak.

The most critical review of the dissertation was given by A. I. Andreev<sup>16</sup>. His remarks can be divided into four groups. A. I. Andreev criticized Nikolay Voskresenskiy, firstly, for not using materials from the 'Menshikov Archive', and secondly, for never referring to earlier publications of the Acts identified in the research, and for ignoring the works of previous authors.

The third mistake, according to Andreev, was that the author of the dissertation had observed erroneous rules for the publication of historical documents. Finally, the opponent identified mistakes in the rendering of the texts of certain documents texts in the First volume of the "Legislative Acts." Despite of copious critique, A. I. Andreev spoke in favor of awarding the Degree of the Candidate of Law to Voskresenskiy.

The members of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Law voted unanimously in favor (21 votes) [Там же, л. 71]. Thus, by a weird twist of fate, Nikolay Voskresenskiy who has been rejected by the historians for a long time, was much more willingly accepted into the Legal Sciences community.

The life of Nikolay Alekseevich had finally been normalized. He had acquired the long-awaited status of a scientist; his work had begun to receive recognition, even if limited. He had new plans for his scientific research. In the Information Paper of the Institute of Law, published in September 1944, the Section of State and Law reported the forthcoming completion of a Doctoral dissertation "Peter I as a Legislator" by the Senior Research Assistant N. A. Voskresenskiy [Покровский, с. 109].

In the victorious year of 1945, the epic story of the editing of the first volume of "Legislative Acts of Peter I" came to an end. Three thousand copies of this work were finally published. Nikolay Alekseevich now had to take the second volume to print, as well as to complete his doctoral dissertation.

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<sup>16</sup> See "Отзыв о трудах Н. А. Воскресенского, представленных в Институт права Академии наук СССР для получения ученой степени кандидата юридических наук" from 14 April 1944. This review was not included into the Verbatim Record, but only attached to it [Диссертационное дело, л. 82–86]. At the defense, A. I. Andreev came forward with extended additions to this Review, and those were reflected in the Verbatim Record [Там же, л. 8–15].

Evidently, Voskresenskiy continued working on the final version of his doctoral dissertation throughout 1945; he was not distracted by teaching at school any more. The result of more than twenty years of scientific research by Nikolay Voskresenskiy were 719 pages entitled “Петр Великий как законодатель: исследование законодательного процесса в России в эпоху реформ первой четверти XVIII века” (“Peter the Great as a Legislator: A Study of the Legislative Process in Russia in the Epoch of the Reforms in the First Quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century”). The final draft was hand-copied by Voskresenskiy’s faithful assistant Zinaida Andreevna [ОР РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 14].

It was a competent research text in twelve chapters, equally suitable both for being presented as a doctoral dissertation, and for publication in the form of a monograph. There is no doubt that the manuscript of “Peter the Great as a Legislator” was meant for publication.

Nevertheless, neither this publication, nor publication of the Second and the Third volumes of “Legislative Acts of Peter I” took place. N.A. Voskresenskiy expressed concern about the publication of the Second volume as early as 12 August 1946, in his letter to B.I. Syromiatnikov: “I continuously request your benevolent support <...> without it “Le[gal] Acts of Peter I” <...> will not gain further advancement” [цит. по: Киселев, с. 260]. His concern proved well-founded. A lengthy negative review of the First volume of “The Legislative Acts of Peter I” written by A. I. Andreev appeared in the journal “Voprosy istorii” in 1946 (N 2–3).

This review differed little from the opponent’s comments during Voskresenskiy’s defense in 1944. However, its tone was noticeably harsher. No longer restrained by the ethical conventions governing doctoral dissertation opponents, Alexander Ignatievich completely refuted the scientific relevance of the 602-page work.

How can one explain Andreev’s persistent and severe criticism of the “Legislative Acts of Peter I” and, generally, of all Voskresenskiy’s published work? Of course, Voskresenskiy’s edition had a number of flaws: the absence of information about the previous publications of the Acts; errors in the reproduction of the texts of the Acts; and a rather complicated methodology for the publication of interim drafts of the normative acts.

Considering all of the above and given the enormous amount of work carried out by Voskresenskiy, such ‘flaws’ were either inevitable minor errors, or alternative archaeographic methods that were quite acceptable under the research conditions of the Soviet Russia of the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, does the absence of reference to the previous edition generally devalue the publication of a given Act if it was accurately reproduced according to the archival manuscript? And it is unlikely that the methodology for the publication of interim drafts of the normative acts invented by Voskresenskiy would have posed problems for anybody other than first-year students.

As for the ‘Menshikov archive’ (St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History Archive f. 83; РГАДА, f. 198), it does indeed contain a lot of interesting documents on the history of Peter the Great. Even so, only isolated legislative documents of little importance



to Peter's legislative activity can be found there. Thus, from an archaeological point of view, N. A. Voskresenskiy's work could certainly not be considered improper.

S. N. Valk who was as an authoritative source researcher as Alexander Andreev, did not find anything archaeographically wrong with Voskresenskiy's publications. On the contrary, in his book of 1948 Valk described Voskresenskiy's edition as 'rather remarkable' [Валк, 1948, с. 171].

It would appear that Andreev's harsh and contentious critique of Voskresenskiy had deep private implications – namely, total resentment of Voskresenskiy as an archaeographer. Rather obviously, this resentment had begun to emerge before 1944.

By the time Alexander Andreev and Nikolay Voskresenskiy became acquainted in the early 1920s<sup>17</sup>, the former was already a fairly recognized researcher with a splendid scientific schooling, while the latter was an unknown recent graduate of a provincial pedagogical institution who did not have the slightest idea about archaeography but was passionate about studying the legislative activity of Peter I. If Voskresenskiy, initially so unprepared for any publishing activity, had then become Andreev's student – or, for that matter, any 'archaeographically enlightened' Petrograd scholar – this would have been normal.

Yet, the Nezhinsk History and Philology Institute graduate had not just omitted archaeological studentship; he had even dared suggesting his own rules for the publication of historical documents! He had also defended those rules and prepared his own editions in accordance with them, having been blatantly overlooked by the ageing Sergey Platonov.

It is evident that in such circumstances, Alexander Andreev, who himself was an ardent student of the prominent archaeographer A. S. Lappo-Danilevskiy, considered Voskresenskiy a presumptuous dilettante and neophyte who persisted in his archaeological ignorance. In his eyes, Voskresenskiy was an obnoxious and untrustworthy 'stranger' in the guild of archaeographers who were the ardent keepers of academic traditions. Alexander Ignatievich persisted in this belief throughout the subsequent decades – even through his mistreatment at the hands of the OGPU, his exile in Krasnoyarsk and the Blockade.

Andreev made an interesting reference to the 'isolated character' of Voskresenskiy's work. In his review of Voskresenskiy's dissertation, Andreev gently complained that Nikolay Alekseevich worked 'outside of the continuous and invariably fruitful communication within the team of historians from our academic institutions' [Диссертационное дело, л. 82 об.]. In his review, Andreev also directly accused N. A. Voskresenskiy in putting himself 'in an isolated position with respect to our long-standing archaeological institutions and traditions' [Андреев, с. 142].

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<sup>17</sup> In his response during his dissertation defense in 1944, N. A. Voskresenskiy had mentioned that he had been communicating with A. I. Andreev for "more than 20 years." Alexander Ignatievich, in his turn, recalled a few details from Voskresenskiy's address at the meeting of the Archaeographic Commission in 1925 [Диссертационное дело, л. 10, 43].

Yet, was it not the other way around? Perhaps it might be more accurate to say that it was not Voskresenskiy who had put himself in ‘an isolated position,’ but rather that he was put in this position by the high-brow archaeographers from the ‘long-standing archaeographic institutions’? Perhaps, Voskresenskiy’s burdening ‘scientific solitude’ was not of his own making.

Could it have been Andreev all along who during all these years (except during his arrest and exile) has been intentionally blocking Voskresenskiy’s attempts at publishing the “Legislative Acts of Peter I”? Subsequently, while Andreev was arrested and in prison, and then during his Krasnoyarsk exile, this blocking activity may have been continued by the followers of M. N. Pokrovskiy who, albeit for very different reasons, have ‘restricted Voskresenskiy’s oxygen supply’ during the first half of the 1930s. In the Introduction to “Peter the Great as a Legislator,” Nikolay Voskresenskiy quoted one derogatory remark, which he had heard addressed to himself before the war in one of the corridors of the renowned ‘academic institutions’: “Your opinions have not been examined and found eligible by science” [ОП РНБ, ф. 1003, кн. 14, л. 14]. This remark sounds perfectly in line with Alexander Andreev’s criticisms expressed to Voskresenskiy in 1944 and in 1946.

Was there a real chance for Voskresenskiy to reach agreement with Andreev, to work out a compromise concerning the methodology for publishing historical documents? We think there was. Yet for this chance to materialize, a dialogue between these two great academicians was necessary; Andreev had to find the logic behind the archaeographic method of Voskresenskiy, which were neither absurd nor anti-scientific but differed from the publication canons of the 1900s and 1910s.

Andreev, nonetheless, chose to behave in a dogmatic fashion and refused to consider an alternative viewpoint. Blinded by his rejection of the archaeographic method of Voskresenskiy, Andreev, himself a typical scientific enthusiast and a profound expert on the Petrine epoch, could not even begin to appreciate the scientific significance of Voskresenskiy’s work. Moreover, Alexander Andreev very nearly destroyed the results of Voskresenskiy’s titanic research.

If not for Boris Syromiatnikov and his position in the powerful Institute of Law, it would have been impossible for the First volume of the “Legislative Acts of Peter I” to see the light. It is highly unlikely that A. I. Andreev could have tolerated the publication of such a ‘heretical’ book. The whole body of Voskresenskiy’s work could have been totally submerged in historiographic oblivion.

All the same, having failed to prevent the publication of the First volume of “The Legislative Acts of Peter I,” Alexander Ignatievich, apparently acted out his ‘revenge’ on the Second volume. It is no accident that after the war this volume remained – in manuscript form – in the Library of the Institute of History (where it is stored even today) [ОРФ Института российской истории РАН, ф. «А», оп. 1, кн. 90].

Alexander Andreev did not miss the opportunity to deal Voskresenskiy yet another blow. Andreev acted as executive editor of the “Peter the Great”

collection, prepared by the Institute of History and published in 1947. For the first time since 1917, the life and activities of a Russian monarch had found their way into a separate collection of articles – moreover, an academically significant collection, without the usual propaganda or denunciation. Quite remarkably, in the 433-page collection, there were only six references to Stalin's works (all of them in the article by B. B. Kafengauz [Кафенгауз, с. 337, 349, 351, 365]) – highly anomalous for those years.

Editing a collection with such an ideologically ambiguous topic, Andreev had to demonstrate not only considerable effort but also remarkable resilience, especially because he still had the conviction connected to the famous “Academic Case” hanging over his head. Andreev published three of his articles in the collection [Петр Великий, с. 63–103, 284–333, 424–432], but he could find no place for a single article by Voskresenskiy, even though by that time Voskresenskiy had already prepared his monograph “Peter the Great as a Legislator,” many fragments of which could have been printed as independent articles. In Voskresenskiy's list of works from 1 October 1943, one can find such titles as “Research on the Legislative Acts of Peter [the Great],” “Foreigners in the Staff of Peter I: Heinrich Fick, An. Chr. Luberus, Cornelius Cruys and Vilim Henning” – those pieces were cited as being ready for publication [Диссертационное дело, л. 93–93 об.].

It is not entirely clear why Nikolay Voskresenskiy was not allowed to contribute to the collection, whether this has always been Andreev's intention, or whether instead, Andreev had proposed but then rejected Voskresenskiy's article. Naturally, considering that the collection was entirely devoted to Peter I who was practically worshipped by Voskresenskiy, the impossibility of publishing even a small article on his icon came as a bitter blow for Nikolay Voskresenskiy.

1947 brought a further setback for Voskresenskiy. On January 12, 1947, Boris Syromiatnikov died, aged 73 [Сыромятников, 1947, с. 87]. Nikolay Voskresenskiy was left without anyone to provide him with the moral and organizational help he so desperately needed.

Those were the last blows of destiny that Voskresenskiy had to endure. In 1947, he was still trying to work, and had finished preparing the third, revised edition of the Third volume of the “Legislative Acts of Peter I” [Федосеева, с. 226]. Alas, he had very little strength left. On January 28, 1948, Nikolay Voskresenskiy died. He was not yet 59.

His ever-faithful spouse, Zinaida Andreevna, saved his manuscripts from otherwise inevitable loss. In 1954, she managed to pass the entire scientific archive of her deceased husband to the Manuscript Department of the State Public Library of Saltykov-Shchedrin (now Российская национальная библиотека (Russian National Library)) [Там же, с. 223]. Nothing better could have been done in order to preserve Nikolay Voskresenskiy's memory. It was only due to Zinaida Voskresenskaya's efforts that the main body of the unpublished work of N. A. Voskresenskiy has survived.

What should we say in conclusion? Nikolay Voskresenskiy had a difficult and painfully dramatic life. He was passionate about scientific research, and

in a very complex historical context he became a sincere admirer of the state-building activities of Peter I, completing an incredible amount of archival research. He was neither rewarded with the recognition he so deserved, nor did he see most of the results of his research in print. Unfairly rejected and fatally misunderstood by members of the academic historical community, N.A. Voskresenskiy nevertheless managed to realize a document-publishing project on the history of the legislative process in Russia in the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that was larger in scope than anything published in the previous 180 years. There is an old Latin saying: *Litera scripta manet* («The written word remains»). We would indeed like to hope that all the works once written by Nikolay Voskresenskiy will one day find their readers.

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