

three days a week. It is a much bigger operation than the Central State Archives of Uzbekistan, and is constantly crowded. Many of the *fondy* have been microfilmed, and are available only in microform. Original paper copies can, however, be ordered. Copying is possible, although each researcher is limited to 400 copies per visit (apparently regardless of the length of the stay). Copies are expensive (paper copies cost \$1; microfilms are 35 cents apiece, and actually are of better quality) and take a long time to make, with two months being the usual time frame for fulfillment. One usually needs to have a friend pick up orders.

Library Work

I hoped to examine complete runs of several Uzbek-, Russian-, and Tajik-language periodicals. The main holdings of Russian-language materials are in the Rare Books Section of the Alisher Navoiy Public Library in Tashkent. Uzbek- and Tajik-language sources are to be found there and at the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies at the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences in Tashkent. Both of these institutions have extremely rich holdings that complement each other, but neither institution has any copying facilities (although at Beruni,

microfilms of small numbers of pages may be ordered at \$2 per page; this is useful enough if one's research concerns the intensive study of a unique manuscript, but not practical for periodical research). Beruni charges foreign researchers an annual "membership fee" of US\$30. This is completely legitimate and answers a pressing need for cash. Its working hours are unfortunately short: the reading room is open Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and then from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Navoiy is open seven days a week, the hours are longer, and no fee is required, but no copying is possible. The periodicals not housed in the rare books sections are in a different location, which shut down in mid-February for repairs, and was still closed as of this writing.

In Moscow, the Russian State Library (the Leninka) remains closed for repairs, although the periodical section, housed in the annex in Khimki, is open. The holdings, including those in Central Asian languages, are wonderful, featuring complete runs of most major magazines after 1923. Microfilming is available at about 60 cents per exposure. The commute to Khimki (45 minutes from the center of the city) can, however, be daunting.

Preparing and Conducting a Field Trip to Baku and Bishkek

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The collapse of the Soviet Union opened new horizons for scholarly research on Central Asia mainly in the areas of social science and humanities. The previously understudied areas offered new case studies, but offered little infrastructure for the researchers bound for the field. Scholars of social science and humanities were among the first who introduced the images of the Westerners to Central Asia and visited the area on a regular basis. This paper will share some of the experiences during my field trip to Baku and Bishkek.

The research was conducted in Baku and Bishkek in the summer of 2000. The goal of the research was to interview and survey the participants of the social movements in the late 1980s and early 1990s and to do archival work in the libraries. I should note that the general atmosphere and attitude

towards the research on political issues was more open in Baku than in Bishkek.

Using E-mail

I started to plan the field trip from my desktop computer at the University of California, Riverside by subscribing to various email distribution lists such as Caucasus@yahoogroups.com, CentralAsia-L@fas.harvard.edu, and others. Such lists can be useful in planning your accommodations and getting the first contacts. However, I found it difficult to network based solely on email. Many people do not have email accounts. Others have changed email addresses. Some do not check their accounts regularly. Most of my networking was done through telephone contacts and personal referrals upon my arrival to Baku and Bishkek.

Getting Appointments

I found it easier to get appointments in Baku than in Bishkek. First, political activists and scholars in Baku are quite open to interviews on political issues. They did not evade the meetings, did not decline any questions, were willing to meet for follow-up meetings, and were helpful with finding new contacts and materials. As for Bishkek, some former political activists and officials in Bishkek were very cautious and reserved when talking about political issues. In some cases it was extremely difficult to make appointments with officials, former activists or scholars.

Second, the better infrastructure of the political parties in Baku made it easier to locate the activists and to contact them. Most of the political parties have their own permanent offices, where you can find their members, find their contact information, or leave a message for them. Very often, a direct phone call to the political party can get you the home phone number of the person you are looking for. In Bishkek, political parties do not have a good infrastructure. They change their location and phone numbers quite often, may not answer the phone, and lack contact information of their members. However, the experience with NGOs in Bishkek was quite different — they were more open and easier to locate and interview.

Xerox and Internet Access

There are many Internet cafes in Baku. Most of them are on the major streets. Some are open 24 hours a day. The fee for Internet access is two-three dollars per hour. The speed is slow but acceptable. There are few Internet cafes in Bishkek and the Internet connection is incredibly slow.

In Baku free public access to the Internet is provided at the Open Society Institute, Soros computer center, and the USIS's office of the Information Resource Center. In Bishkek free public access to the Internet is available only at the National Library, where an advance appointment in person is required.

Xerox machines are hard to find in Baku and Bishkek. Xerox machines are usually available in all libraries. Flyers in the library lobby indicate where

the xerox service is located. The price is about 5 cents per copy.

Receipts

If you have a grant or scholarship, there may be a requirement for reporting expenses during the trip. In Baku, most places (other than street markets and bazaars) give receipts automatically, or upon request. In Bishkek it is necessary to ask for a receipt. In some cases people might see the request for a receipt as a strange or even offensive inquiry.

Libraries

Bishkek and Baku libraries are not computerized; instead they use card catalogs. Most of the catalogs are in Cyrillic. In recent years, the Azeri libraries moved away from Cyrillic and started to catalog their new acquisitions in Latin script. Unfortunately, open access to the library holdings is limited to just a few collections. In most cases, one has to fill out book search forms and submit them to librarians. The book search usually takes one hour.

In Azerbaijan the best libraries are the Akhundov National Library, the Library of the Academy of Science, the Institute of Manuscripts (for ancient and medieval documents), and Baku State University Library. Most of the microfilms of the Azeri newspapers archived at US libraries lack the issues published during the turbulent times of November 1988, January 1990 and August 1991. The Akhundov National Library carefully cataloged the newspapers during these times.

In Bishkek, the Kyrgyz National Library, Chernyshevskii Library, and the Academy of Science are the main libraries to go to. Newspaper archives are divided between the Kyrgyz National Library and the Chernyshevskii Library. The current and recent newspapers (from the last two years) are stored at the National Library, while older newspapers are kept in the archives of the Chernyshevskii Library.

Access to the libraries in Baku and Bishkek requires two 3 x 4 cm pictures, a passport, and a document certifying affiliation with an educational institution (student ID in my case). There is a small library membership fee, and symbolic charge for every book search.