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## Register of the Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bazili papers

Finding aid prepared by Anatol Shmelev

Hoover Institution Archives

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**Title:** Nikolaï Aleksandrovich Bazili papers

**Date (inclusive):** 1851-1973

**Collection Number:** 65017

**Contributing Institution:** Hoover Institution Archives

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 29 manuscript boxes, 1 card file box, 1 oversize box, memorabilia(14.0 linear feet)

**Abstract:** Correspondence, writings, memoranda, reports, notes, photographs, memorabilia, and artwork relating to Russian political and foreign affairs (1900-1917), Russian involvement in World War I, the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, the Russian Revolution and Civil War, and Soviet economics and politics. Includes drafts and background materials for N. A. Bazili's books.

**Language of the Materials :** In English, Russian, French, Italian, German, and Spanish.

**Physical Location:** Hoover Institution Archives

**Creator:** Bazili, Nikolaï Aleksandrovich, 1883-1963.

**Access**

The collection is open for research with the following restrictions:

The artwork is located primarily in the de Basily Room in the Hoover Tower and in the Archives vault. Some items are on display at the Cantor Museum. Various other items of material value, as listed in this register, have been removed to the Archives vault; these may be viewed only with the permission of the director of the Library and Archives and under direct supervision of a member of the Archives staff.

The Hoover Institution Archives only allows access to *copies* of audiovisual items. To listen to sound recordings or to view videos or films during your visit, please contact the Archives at least two working days before your arrival. We will then advise you of the accessibility of the material you wish to see or hear. Please note that not all audiovisual material is immediately accessible.

**Publication Rights**

For copyright status, please contact the Hoover Institution Archives.

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Nikolaï Aleksandrovich Bazili papers, [Box no., Folder no. or title], Hoover Institution Archives.

**Acquisition Information**

Materials were acquired by the Hoover Institution Archives in 1965, with increments received in May 1978, December 1979, April 1982, July 1983, and June 1986.

**Accruals**

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. To determine if this has occurred, find the collection in Stanford University's online catalog at <https://searchworks.stanford.edu> . Materials have been added to the collection if the number of boxes listed in the online catalog is larger than the number of boxes listed in this finding aid.

**Separated Materials**

Printed materials (books from personal library donated by Lascelle De Basily) are in the Hoover Institution Library. They include titles by or related to Bazili's ancestors, such as E. de Basily-Callimaki, Jean-Baptiste Isabey (Paris: Frazier-Soye, 1909) and N. Iorga, *Documente privitoare la familia Callimachi*, 2 vols. (Bucuresti: Minerva, 1902-1903). These books and books purchased with funds from the Bazili bequest are listed in a special card catalog in the Hoover Library Reading Room.

**Related Materials**

Lascelle De Basily papers, Hoover Institution Archives

Eva de Basily-Callimaki papers, Hoover Institution Archives

Sergei Dmitrievich Botkin papers, Hoover Institution Archives

Vladimir L'vovich Burtsev papers, Hoover Institution Archives

Congress of Paris miscellaneous records, Hoover Institution Archives

Mikhail N. Girs papers, Hoover Institution Archives

International Peace Conference photographs, Hoover Institution Archives

Dmitrii Nikolaevich Liubimov memoirs, Hoover Institution Archives

Vasilii A. Maklakov papers, Hoover Institution Archives

Russia. Posol'stvo (France) records, Hoover Institution Archives

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Sergei D. Sazonov papers, Hoover Institution Archives

Grigorii Nikolaevich Trubetskoi papers, Hoover Institution Archives

1883 March  
4 Born, Paris, France

1903 Entered Russian diplomatic service, on the staff of Count Lamsdorff, minister of foreign affairs

1905 Married Tatiana Hall

1907 Senior secretary of the Russian delegation to the 2nd International Peace Conference in the Hague

1908 May  
19 Death of Tatiana Hall

1908-1911 Second secretary of the Russian embassy in Paris

1911 Deputy director of the chancellery of the minister of foreign affairs in St. Petersburg

1914-1917 Representative of the Russian foreign office at the headquarters of the Imperial Army in Mogilev

1917 Member of the council of the ministry of foreign affairs  
Director of the diplomatic chancellery at army headquarters

1917 March  
(February in  
Gregorian  
calendar) Drafted the abdication act of Nicholas II

1917 July Counselor and chargé d'affaires (with title of minister) of the Russian embassy in Paris

1917  
October-November Member of Russian embassy in Paris

1919  
November  
25 Married Lascelle Meserve (1890-1989)

1920 July Member of delegation representing anti-Bolshevik forces at the Inter-Allied Conference on Reparations in Spa, Belgium

1938 Author, *Russia under Soviet Rule*, which also appeared in French, Russian, and Italian. The French edition (Plon, 1938) received a prize from the Académie Française

1963 March  
20 Died, Miami, Florida

1973 Publication of Bazili's memoirs, *Diplomat of Imperial Russia, 1903-1917*

### Scope and Content of Collection

This collection contains correspondence, writings, memoranda, reports, notes, photographs, and memorabilia relating to Russian political and foreign affairs, 1900-1917, Russian involvement in World War I, the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, and the Russian Revolution and Civil War. It includes drafts and background materials for N. A. Bazili's books.

This collection was reprocessed in 2011 after it became apparent that many of the writings attributed to Bazili in the original register were not actually his. In the course of the reprocessing, it further emerged that the bulk of the subject file actually contained drafts and materials relating to a book Bazili had intended to write (referred to as "Untitled book on Imperial Russia" in the register). The correspondence revealed that in the early 1930s, Bazili undertook to write his memoirs (published posthumously in 1973). This project quickly expanded into a more general examination of pre-revolutionary Russia, due to Bazili's desire to explain the causes of the revolution to his foreign readers and place his personal memoirs in a broader context. For this reason, Bazili turned to three primary collaborators: Prince V. A. Obolenskii (who wrote most of the original draft texts), D. M. Odinets, and A. V. Rumanov (who contributed little material, but played an important role in coordinating the project, especially during Bazili's frequent and lengthy absences from Paris on business). In addition, he commissioned a large number of treatises from various authors on specialized topics.

In this new register, an effort was made to restore Bazili's original conception of this book by identifying and listing the authors of the works and their titles. Furthermore, it has been possible to restore several of the draft chapters (which had previously been allocated to the subject file) including six numbered chapters that form the core of the work. Similarly, background materials to *Rossiiia pod sovietskoi vlast'iu* and Bazili's posthumously published memoirs have been allocated to their proper place in the register hierarchy. This approach made it possible to restore a collection that had previously been seen as primarily a source for political and diplomatic history into prominence as a source for Russian intellectual history, since many of the writings commissioned by Bazili were produced by leading émigré scholars and thinkers, such as M. V. Bernatskii, P. B. Struve, G. P. Fedotov, K. I. Zaitsev, I. I. Tkhorzevskii, and N. V. Vol'skii. In order to facilitate locating materials previously cited by researchers using the previous collection structure, the register was heavily cross-referenced and folder contents disclosed. Increments received after the compilation of the original finding aid have also been

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incorporated into the body of the register.

Reprocessing further allowed the identification of previously unidentified correspondents and authors and the identification of significant portions of material that were not included in the published version of Bazili's memoirs. Order was also established in the writings and interviews of A. I. Guchkov, a key figure in the events of the February 1917 revolution in Russia. Bazili's interview with Guchkov was published-with some inaccuracies and omissions-as *Aleksandr Ivanovich Guchkov rasskazyvaet* (Moskva, 1993). Guchkov's typescript memoirs, previously attributed to Bazili, have been properly attributed to their true author.

Two other related collections, that of Bazili's wife (Lascelle De Basily) and mother (Eva de Basily-Callimaki), are also held by the Hoover Institution. Rules of cataloging have created a regrettable, but unavoidable confusion in the spelling of the surname: Bazili is the Russian name as transliterated using the Library of Congress system, De Basily is the Americanized spelling taken by Lascelle, but applies only to her as she was born American and this is her married name, and de Basily is the name under which Eva de Basily-Callimaki published her writings in France, with the "de" denoting her nobility, hence it is applied to her individually.

The collection dates refer only to the papers, not the artwork, which dates from the 17th to the 20th centuries.

The **Biographical File** contains passports, certificates and other identity papers, a brief autobiographical sketch and partial curriculum vita, as well as family correspondence and lecture notes from Bazili's years as a student of the Imperial Alexander Lyceum.

**Correspondence** mostly relates to *Russia under Soviet Rule*, Bazili's major work on the conditions that brought about the revolution and the economic situation of the Soviet Union: most correspondents thank Bazili for sending them his book, some discuss reviews, and publishers address the issue of translations. But some letters of substance reveal Bazili's and/or his correspondents' views on a variety of topics, particularly involving the writing of this book, his other (untitled and unpublished) work on Imperial Russia or his memoirs.

The **Office File** is composed of original historical documents, mainly correspondence and reports relating to diplomatic affairs during World War I, when Bazili headed the Diplomatic Chancellery at Russian GHQ in Mogilev.

**Speeches and Writings** include background materials, drafts and notes for Bazili's major work, first published in Russian in 1937 by La Maison du Livre Etranger (Paris) under the title *Rossiia pod sovietskoï vlast'iu*; then in French in 1938 by Librairie Plon (Paris) as *La Russie sous les Soviets: Vingt ans d'expérience bolchévique*; then in English in 1938 by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. (London) as *Russia under Soviet Rule: Twenty Years of Bolshevik Experiment*; and finally in Italian, by Fratelli Bocca-Editori, in 1939 for the first volume, *La Formazione dello stato sovietico: La Russia sotto il dominio sovietico*, and in 1940 for the second volume, *Vent'anni dell' esperimento bolscevico*. Bazili's other writings, particularly his untitled work on Imperial Russia and his memoirs are also represented by notes, drafts, research materials, interviews and writings by others commissioned by Bazili.

The **Vladimir Burtsev File** consists of biographical material on Burtsev, his writings and collected papers relating to Boris Savinkov, received by Bazili from Burtsev (via Arkadii Rumanov).

The **Subject File** contains materials collected by Bazili or retained from his diplomatic career on various subjects, some potentially for use in the production of the books he sought to write. Of particular significance are the documents relating to the abdication of Nicholas II.

The **Photograph File** contains prints depicting N. A. Bazili, colleagues in the diplomatic service, members of the Imperial Family, Sergei D. Sazonov, General Mikhail Alekseev, as well as other people, places, and events associated with Bazili's life and work. There are also numerous prints and negatives of the artwork collected by Bazili and his wife Lascelle.

**Memorabilia** includes various items associated with Bazili's career and apparently also his wife's charitable activities, such as orders and decorations. Also included are various miscellaneous items and a dress sword worn by his great-grandfather.

The **Vault File** includes Bazili's notes and drafts of the abdication manifesto (use copies are included in the collection available directly to researchers). It also includes certain photographs and artwork which may be viewed by arrangement with the director of Library and Archives under direct supervision.

The **Art Collection** belonging to Bazili and his wife, Lascelle, is located in the vault and in the Nicolas de Basily Room and is not generally available for public viewing. In his memoirs, *Pravo na proshloe* (Moscow, 2005), A. P. Shcherbatov wrote that the Hoover Institution has "closed the Bazili Museum and partially sold the collection." This statement is patently false. The collection was specially surveyed by the compiler of this register in order to ascertain its completeness. Fortunately, both the Bazilis and the Hoover Institution kept meticulous records on the artwork: not only are acquisitions reflected in Lascelle De Basily's *Memoirs of a Lost World*, but the papers contain photographs of each individual work of art and furniture, hand-labeled by the donor. Those items photographed but not now located at Hoover were never donated to Hoover: a search of the Hoover Institution Records revealed lists and appraisals of all donated works and no indication of any sale, disposal, or dispersal of artwork beyond the territory of Stanford University (three drawings by Auguste Rodin are

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on display at the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford, having been donated to said museum by Lascelle De Basily herself, and two paintings-Nicolas-Antoine Taunay's "Empress Josephine Receiving Gifts of Contemporary Artists" and Thomas Hand's "Rustic Scene"-are on loan to the Cantor Arts Center). Based on these records it can be established that all the artwork donated by Lascelle De Basily is accounted for and nothing has been sold or disposed of otherwise. Because Shcherbatov's memoirs contain at least ten glaring errors in the brief section on Bazili alone, the book's reliability is highly dubious in all respects. For a listing of the artwork in the Nicolas de Basily Room, see Lascelle De Basily, *Works of Art in the Nicolas de Basily Room of the Hoover Institution* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1972; reprinted 2015).

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, 1868-1918.
- Romanov, House of.
- Diplomats--Russia.
- Russia--Court and courtiers.
- Russia--Foreign relations.
- Russia--Politics and government--1894-1917.
- Soviet Union--History--1917-1936.
- Soviet Union--History--Revolution, 1917-1921.
- World War, 1914-1918--Campaigns--Turkey.

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Box 1-31

**Container List**

[Downloadable PDF file of Container List](#)