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Introduction

Relevance of the topic of dissertation research. The activities of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency (hereinafter referred to as SPTA or PTA) were an important part of the relationship between the Russian government and the media in the early 20th century. The agency played a significant role in the development of information policy and the formation of the state's information strategy. During this period, the task of telegraph agencies and, in particular, the largest in Russia, the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, was to receive, process and disseminate information. SPTA, being a government agency, transmitted news to both the authorities and the population. For the Russian state, the creation and management of the largest telegraph agency in the country was a new experience in the field of information policy. Studying the history of SPTA is necessary for understanding the features of the functioning of the state system of the Russian Empire in the early 20th century.

The degree of development of the problem (historiography). The history and activities of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, as well as its influence on society, are the subject of a number of works in Russian historiography, published both in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

The first studies that touched on the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency were devoted to the history of journalism. In 1924, S. N. Sredinsky's book «Newspaper publishing: Main issues of newspaper business» was published, which was supposed to serve as a practical guide for newspaper employees. In his work, S. N. Sredinsky used episodes from the history of pre-revolutionary newspapers as examples, and also talked about the organization of their work. The author also briefly and without citing sources touched on the topic of telegraph agencies, including the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, retelling its history¹. As modern researchers have noted, S. N. Sredinsky made a number of factual

¹ Sredinsky S.N. Newspaper publishing: Main issues of newspaper business. M.: Gos. In-t zhurnalistiki, 1924. P. 68. (*in Russian*)

errors. For example, he called the state SPTA the successor of the private Russian Telegraph Agency, which was a gross mistake². Thus, the book by S.N. Sredinsky is of interest only as the first work on the history of SPTA.

In 1955, the work by N.G. Palgunov «Basics of Information in the Newspaper: TASS and Its Role» was published. Like the book by S.N. Sredinsky, this was also a training manual for journalists with historical references. However, N.G. Palgunov used sources in his work, including archival ones, and created a brief overview of the history of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency based on them, and also analyzed its work. According to the author, SPTA was much weaker than foreign telegraph agencies, and it had relatively few correspondents. N.G. Palgunov concluded that for these reasons, SPTA was almost entirely dependent on the information provided by foreign agencies³.

In 1960, B.I. Yesin's article «On the History of Telegraph Agencies in Russia in the 19th Century» was published. It provided an overview of the history of telegraph agencies in Russia. However, the author concentrated his attention on private agencies⁴. Thus, the state-owned St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency was not the object of analysis in this work and was only mentioned as a competitor to private agencies.

In addition, Soviet historiography also mentioned the participation of employees of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency in foreign policy matters. The monograph by B.V. Ananich «Russia and International Capital (1897-1914)», published in 1970, was devoted to the study of the history of Russian government loans in the late 19th - early 20th centuries. One of the main creditors was France, and this work mentioned the activities of A.A. Efron, a freelance

² Kostrikova E.G. Russia on the Threshold of Information Wars. Russian Government Policy in the Sphere of Mass Media at the Beginning of the 20th Century. SPb: Petroglif, 2020. P. 8. (*in Russian*)

³ Palgunov N.G. Basics of information in the newspaper: TASS and its role. M.: MGU, 1955. P. 26. (*in Russian*)

⁴ Esin B.I. On the history of telegraph agencies in Russia in the 19th century // Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. 1960. Vol. VII. - №1. P. 11. (*in Russian*)

employee of the Russian Government in Paris. As the author noted, A.A. Efron lived and worked in Paris for several years and corresponded with finance ministers S.Y. Witte and V.N. Kokovtsov. B.V. Ananich noted that in 1901 A.A. Efron transmitted to S.Y. Witte, and in 1906 and 1908 – V.N. Kokovtsov with information about the attitude of the Parisian press towards Russia and the prospects for loans⁵.

In 1981, E.G. Kostrikova's article «Organization of the Foreign Information Service of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency» was published. In it, the author briefly examined the relationship of the SPTA with foreign partners⁶. In this article, the SPTA became the central object of the study, which was the first time in historiography. The St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency was also mentioned in works on the history of the pre-revolutionary press. For example, in 1984, A.I. Bokhanov in his monograph «The Bourgeois Press of Russia and Big Capital. The End of the 19th Century – 1914» studied the finances of pre-revolutionary newspapers, their income, expenses, use of profits, and the identities of their owners. As the author briefly noted, one of the newspapers' expense items was a subscription to the SPTA telegrams⁷. Однако более подробный анализ финансовых отношений газет с агентством он не делал.

It is worth noting that the topic of the history of telegraph agencies in the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century was considered not only by Soviet and Russian researchers. In 1990, a monograph by the Finnish historian T. Rantanen was published «Foreign News in Imperial Russia: The Relationship Between International and Russian News Agencies». The central themes of this work were the formation of several telegraph agencies in Russia, changes in their legal status, and the relationship between Russian and foreign agencies. Within the

⁵ Ananyich B.V. Russia and international capital. 1897 - 1914. Leningrad: Nauka, 1970. P. 234. (*in Russian*)

⁶ Kostrikova E. G. Organization of the foreign information service of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency // Vestnik MGU. Istorica. 1981. № 4. P. 58. (*in Russian*)

⁷ Bokhanov A.N. The bourgeois press of Russia and big capital. The end of the 19th century. - 1914. M.: Prospect, 2023. P. 8. (*in Russian*)

framework of these themes, the author examined the interaction of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) telegraph agency with the German agency «Wolf». In her opinion, the German agency usually dictated its will to the Russian agency during its cooperation with it, because its capabilities and status were higher⁸.

The topic of the relationship between newspapers and the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency was touched upon in the book by S.Y. Makhonina, «The History of Russian Journalism at the Beginning of the 20th Century», published in 2004. In her work, the author reviewed the contents of many newspapers published between 1900 and 1917. She pointed out that individual newspapers took information for their issues from SPTA telegrams⁹.

In 2008, N.A. Gutorova's article «Formation of a Local Newspaper Type (Ryazansky Vestnik, 1905-1907)» was published. In it, the author examined the history of the Ryazan press in the aforementioned years, which was associated with the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. Thus, the founder of the Ryazansky Spravochny Listok newspaper, V.N. Rozanov, collaborated with the SPTA as a correspondent. In his newspaper, he published telegrams from the agency and was able to make his publication successful. In addition, the «Golos Ryazanii» newspaper, which was founded in early 1906, already in April 1906 came into conflict with the SPTA due to anti-Semitic articles. This led to a breakdown in cooperation, loss of income, and the closure of «Golos Ryazanii» in 1907. According to N.A. Gutorova, the appearance of the SPTA telegrams became the beginning of a completely new period in the history of Ryazan and other provincial media¹⁰.

In 2010, V.V. Tatochenko's article «Newspaper Wars» in the Russian Empire in the Late 19th - Early 20th Century: Episodes, Trends, and Essence» was

⁸ Rantanen T. Foreign News in Imperial Russia: The Relationship Between International and Russian News Agencies, 1856-1914. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1990. P. 172.

⁹ Makhonina S.Y. History of Russian journalism of the early 20th century: Textbook. 3rd version. M.: Nauka, 2004. P. 214. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰ Gutorova N.A. Stanovleniye tipa mestnoy gazety («Ryazanskiy vestnik» 1905 -1907 gody) // Vestnik SPBGU. Yazyk i literatura. 2008. №3-2. P. 293. (*in Russian*)

published. In it, the author examined several aspects of the development of private newspapers, including their relationship with the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency using the example of the conflict between the large newspaper «Odesskie Novosti» (1884-1920) and the agency. In 1906, this newspaper criticized the high prices for SPTA telegrams and the nature of the relationship between newspapers and the telegraph agency in principle. The author also paid attention to the conflicts between newspapers and government agencies, which he called «newspaper wars». The author placed special emphasis on the relationship between private newspapers and government agencies, since due to the institution of state censorship, the existence of each printed publication depended on the permission of these agencies¹¹.

In 2010, E. G. Kostrikova published an article entitled «The St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency and the First Russian Revolution». As the author noted, the revolution was the first difficult test for the agency, which was supposed to transmit abroad the information that met the interests of the government, while hushing up news that was unfavorable to it could damage its reputation. During the First Russian Revolution, the SPTA found a compromise approach and began to focus on events that testified to support for the authorities and loyal sentiments, but did not ignore reports of protests and terrorist attacks by revolutionaries. As the author noted, the SPTA was able to adapt to the circumstances and cope with the tasks that arose during the First Russian Revolution, including the most important one – promptly providing government structures with information¹².

Not only individual episodes from the history of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency were also studied, but also its participation in the state information policy. This topic was touched upon in the article by V.V. Shevtsov «Central and Regional Press in the Information Policy of the Autocracy

¹¹ Tatchenko V.V. «Newspaper wars» in the Russian empire in the late 19th - early 20th centuries: episodes, directions, essence // Vestnik SamGU. 2010. №75. P. 107. (*in Russian*)

¹² Kostrikova E.G. St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency and the First Russian Revolution // Via in tempore. Istorica. Politologia. 2010. №19 (90). P. 147. (*in Russian*)

(1901-1916)», which was published in 2011. The author mentioned the St. Petersburg Agency in the context of changes in policy regarding state media («Pravitelstvennyy vestnik», «Torgovo-promyshlennaya gazeta», «Sankt-Peterburgskiye senatskiye vedomosti», etc). V.V. Shevtsov in his article examined S.S. Tatishchev's project of October 26, 1905, to merge two Russian telegraph agencies, the Russian Telegraph Agency and the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency, into a single government telegraph agency. As V.V. Shevtsov noted, this project was not implemented due to large financial costs, and the new state information policy strategy did not include radical reforms of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency¹³.

In 2013, G.A. Naberezhnov published an article entitled «The Trade and Telegraph Agency in 1902–1904: the First Experience of Russian Government in the Global Information Market». The author traced the history of the Trade and Telegraph Agency from 1902, when the Russian government, on the initiative of S.Y. Witte, first opened its own telegraph agency (Trade and Telegraph Agency). As the author noted, the old structure of the Trade and Telegraph Agency could not cope with the expansion of the range of news. Also, the Russo-Japanese War forced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to look for a new strategy for transmitting information about the situation at the front that the authorities considered favorable for themselves. According to the author, this combination of factors led to the Trade and Telegraph Agency being closed in 1904 and the new St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency being created on its basis¹⁴.

Also in 2013, another article by G.A. Naberezhnov, «The St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency and the Consortium of World Telegraph Agencies in the Fall of 1904: Relationships and Formation of Independence of the Russian Information

¹³ Shevtsov V.V. Central and regional press in the information policy of the autocracy (1901-1916) // Vestnik RUDN. Istoriya Rossii. 2011. №3. P. 156. (*in Russian*)

¹⁴ Naberezhnov G.A. Trade and Telegraph Agency in 1902–1904: the first experience of the Russian government in the global information market // Izvestiya RGPU im. A. I. Gertsen. 2013. №162. P. 10. (*in Russian*)

Service», was published, which continued the previous work. This article examined the topic of the formation of the SPTA as an independent Russian telegraph agency through agreements with other agencies. According to the author, these agreements played an important role in the development of the SPTA and brought it to the world level¹⁵.

The SPTA is related to the issues of the legal status of journalists. In particular, the status of war correspondents in the period in question was covered in the article by S.A. Novikova, «The Legal Status of Russian War Correspondents in the Second Half of the 19th Century – Early 20th Century», which was published in 2013. The author examined the history of the institution of Russian war correspondents, which emerged along with telegraph agencies that accelerated the delivery of information. Novikova paid attention, first of all, to correspondents who participated in the Russo-Japanese War. The author also examined the order of the Viceroy of the Far East, E.I. Alekseev, dated February 17, 1904, a legal act that defined the status of war correspondents. According to S.A. Novikova, this was an increase in censorship that interfered with the activities of the media, including the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency¹⁶.

An important legal and organizational issue for the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency was the accreditation of correspondents to the State Duma of the Russian Empire. This topic was addressed in the article by P.S. Nikitin «Accreditation of journalists to the State Duma of the Russian Empire and the struggle for influence on the public (1906-1907)», published in 2017. It analyzed the institution of accreditation to the Duma. The author, among other things, examined an episode related to the history of SPTA in 1906, when its employees did not receive their

¹⁵ Naberezhnov G.A. St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency and the Consortium of World Telegraph Agencies in the Autumn of 1904: Relationships and Formation of Independence of the Russian Information Service // *Izvestiya RGPU im. A. I. Gertsen*. 2013. №159. P. 36. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶ Novikova S.A. Legal status of Russian war correspondents in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries // *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*. 2013. Seriya 8. №2. P. 38. (*in Russian*)

seats in the Duma due to a conflict between other journalists and representatives of government newspapers¹⁷.

The connections of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were examined in the article by I.V. Kryuchkov, «Domestic and Foreign Policy Factors in the Development of Austria-Hungary in the Reports of V.P. Svatkovsky (1910-1914)», published in 2017. The main topic of the article was the work of the representative of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency in Vienna, V.P. Svatkovsky, in particular, his cooperation with the Russian embassy in Austria-Hungary. According to the author, V.P. Svatkovsky played an important role in diplomatic and intelligence activities, taking advantage of the granted diplomatic immunity and contacting Austrian, Hungarian and Czech figures, and his reports were used in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹⁸.

In 2017, L.A. Obukhov published an article, «Periodical Press as a Source for the History of the 1917 Revolution», in which the author analyzed the materials of the Perm province newspapers for 1917. The purpose of the work was to analyze provincial newspapers, which allow one to study various aspects of provincial life. L.A. Obukhov noted that the largest section in the newspaper consisted of telegrams from the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (the entire second page of the publication and part of the third). But he also emphasized that these materials actually duplicated what was published in other newspapers in Russia¹⁹.

In 2019, K.V. Kaulin published an article entitled «Interaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Press under the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky». The author paid special attention to the organization of interaction between SPTA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the strengthening of the

¹⁷ Nitkin P.S. Accreditation of journalists to the State Duma of the Russian Empire and the struggle for influence on the public (1906-1907) // *Manuskript*. 2017. №12-5 (86). P. 179. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸ Kryuchkov I.V. Domestic and foreign policy factors in the development of Austria-Hungary in the reports of V.P. Svatkovsky (1910-1914) // *Slavyanskiy almanakh*. M., 2017. №3-4. P. 92. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹ Obukhov L.A. Periodical press as a source on the history of the Revolution of 1917 // *Vestnik Permskogo universiteta*. Ser.: *Istoriya*. 2017. №. 2 (37). Pp. 17–26. (*in Russian*)

influence of this ministry on the agency under the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky, who achieved the appointment of the MFA employee A.A. Girs as the director of SPTA. According to the author, the minister himself considered the role of the agency to be very important for shaping public opinion and used SPTA for diplomatic purposes, but at the same time helped him²⁰.

In 2020, E.G. Kostrikova's book «Russia on the Threshold of Information Wars. Russian Government Media Policy at the Beginning of the 20th Century» was published. In this study, the author examined the information policy of the Russian Empire in the 1900s, before and after the revolution of 1905-1907. Considerable attention was paid to those government agencies that worked with the independent press (the Main Directorate for Press Affairs and the Information Bureau under the Ministry of Internal Affairs). E.G. Kostrikova traced the history of those government agencies that were involved in collecting and processing information. She also described in general terms the history of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from its foundation until the end of the 1900s. E.G. Kostrikova examined a number of episodes in the history of SPTA in the 1900s, for example, its activities during the Revolution (1905-1907)²¹.

There were also articles dedicated to the personalities of the correspondents of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, their lives after finishing their work for the agency. Articles were published about the correspondents K. M. Ketov²², A.I. Markov²³ and V.G. Yanchevetsky (Vasily Yan)²⁴.

²⁰ Kaulin K.V. Interaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the press under the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky // *Izv. Sarat. un-ta. Nov. ser. Ser. Istoriya. Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*. 2019. Vol. 19. P. 154. (*in Russian*)

²¹ Kostrikova E.G. *Russia on the Threshold of Information Wars. Russian Government Policy in the Sphere of Mass Media at the Beginning of the 20th Century*. SPb: Petroglif, 2020. P. 130. (*in Russian*)

²² Garzonio S. Konstantin Ketov, Russian revolutionary and correspondent in Rome // *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*. 2016. (*in Russian*)
URL: <http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/21/gardzonio21.shtml>

²³ Bogomolov I.K. Correspondent of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency A.I. Markov // *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*. 2021. №5. Pp. 155-160. (*in Russian*)

Thus, the history of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency has been studied in a number of works. Some examined individual episodes or aspects of the activities of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, and only up to 1910. Other works studied the personalities of the employees (correspondents) of the SPTA, as well as its influence on individual aspects of life in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century (for example, on the provincial press). However, there are many gaps in the historiography devoted to the history of the St. Petersburg agency. This work is an attempt to fill them.

Scientific novelty of the study. The problems of the formation of the state information policy of the Russian Empire and, in particular, related to the creation of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, have rarely come to the attention of researchers. To date, only a few works have been published devoted to individual aspects of the history of the SPTA. There are also a number of works indirectly affecting its activities. This study is the first attempt to trace the history of the formation, development and termination of the SPTA. Within the framework of this work, the processes of creating agency branches in the Russian Empire and in other countries, hiring and rotation of personnel in them were studied and described. The mechanisms of interaction between the central links of the Russian government apparatus - ministries with the SPTA were analyzed and the degree of their influence on the agency was clarified. The dissertation also examines the process of creating the legal basis for the activities of the SPA and the methods of its work.

The purpose of the work is to comprehensively describe and analyze the activities of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency from the moment of its opening until its liquidation.

In accordance with the **purpose** of the work, the following **research tasks** were set:

²⁴ Prosvetov I.V. Ten Lives of Vasily Yan: White Guard Who Was Awarded by Stalin. M.: Centrpoligraf, 2017. P. 87. (*in Russian*)

- trace the history of the creation, development and liquidation of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency;
- show what influence the political conflicts experienced by Russia at the beginning of the last century had on the work of the agency;
- study the methods of the agency's activities;
- consider the process of organizing and developing the activities of the agency's branches in Russian cities;
- analyze the work of correspondents in other countries;
- consider the legal basis for the work of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency;
- study the process of hiring agency employees and their work;
- trace the agency's relationship with the legislative and executive authorities of Russia.

The object of the study is the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, its divisions and employees who worked in the agency.

The subject of the study was the activities of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency; its relationship with the executive and legislative authorities; its place in the information policy of the Russian Empire; the personnel policy of the agency; the service of its individual employees.

The chronological framework of the study is determined by the fact that the Trade and Telegraph Agency, which was later transformed into the St. Petersburg (since 1914 - Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, was created in 1902. In 1917, after the October Revolution, the agency practically ceased its work. In 1918, by decision of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Printing Bureau under the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Petrograd Telegraph Agency were merged into the state Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA).

The methodological basis of the study was the principles of historicism and

scientific objectivity in assessing historical events, which made it possible to avoid bias and engagement in the results. Both general scientific (system analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction) and traditional methods of historical research were used:

1) The historical-biographical method was used in the work. It is characterized by recreating the biography of the individual being studied. In this case, the biographies of the agency employees were recreated.

2) The comparative method consists of variable and comprehensive comparisons. It made it possible to analyze the activities of directors, departments, their managers, correspondents and other agency employees using comparisons. Thus, the comparative effectiveness of the work of both individual employees and the entire agency at different periods of time was assessed.

3) The historical-typological method in this study was used to characterize the departments of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency and its correspondents.

4) The historical-genetic method, based on the disclosure of the properties and changes of the studied system of relations between the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency and government bodies, allows us to trace how the status of this agency changed, the evolution of its organization and activities as a body of state information policy and information transmission network.

Approbation of research results. The provisions and conclusions have been approved in the following articles by the author in peer-reviewed scientific publications included in the list of the Higher Attestation Commission:

1. Morev E.A. «Petrograd Telegraph Agency in March-July 1917»²⁵;
2. Morev E.A. «Petrograd Telegraph Agency under Director I.Y. Gurlyand in 1916–1917»²⁶;

²⁵ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency in March-July 1917 // *Istoricheskiy byulleten.* - 2023. Vol. 6, №6. Pp. 90-95. (*in Russian*)

²⁶ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency under Director I.Y. Gurlyand in 1916–1917 // *Nauka. Obschestvo. Oborona.* 2023. Vol. 11, №4(37). Pp. 47-52. (*in Russian*)

3. Morev E.A. «St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency at the Beginning of the First World War»²⁷.

The practical significance of the work lies in the fact that its provisions and conclusions allow to expand knowledge about the information policy and state system of Russia in the early 20th century. The results obtained in the course of the work can be implemented in the educational process: in lecture courses on national history, history of state institutions, history of news agencies, history of journalism in higher education institutions of the Russian Federation. The results of the study can be used in the preparation of educational and teaching aids and courses in the following disciplines: history of news agencies in Russia, history of state information policy, history of national journalism, as well as general works on the history of domestic policy of Russia in the early 20th century, history of state institutions and general history of Russia. Thus, the results obtained in the course of the study can be used in the process of teaching national history in higher education institutions, as well as in school courses on the history of Russia.

Sources. In covering the topic, a wide range of sources was used, mainly archival, most of which were introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. The sources used in working on the dissertation are divided into five types:

1. Normative acts;
2. Office documents;
3. Periodicals;
4. Memoirs and diaries;
5. Statistical sources.

The activities of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency were regulated by normative acts. Firstly, it is worth noting the Rules on the Press of 1905 and the additions to them of 1906. Secondly, it is worth noting the various instructions and regulations of the work of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency. The

²⁷ Morev E.A. St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency at the Beginning of the First World War // *Klio*. 2023. №11 (203). Pp. 80-86. (*in Russian*)

main one was the «Regulation on the establishment of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency», which was created in 1904 and amended in 1909. It formulated the goals, objectives and rules of the agency. In addition, the agency subsequently adopted additional instructions and sets of rules. All of them are stored in the Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA), in the fund of the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (RSHA F. 1358).

The office documents on the topic of this work are mainly kept in the RSHA. The main array is concentrated in the already mentioned fund of the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (RSHA F. 1358). A number of documents are also in the fund of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (RSHA F. 23), in the fund of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance (RSHA F. 564), in the fund of the Main Directorate for Printing Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (RSHA F. 776), in the fund of the Council of Ministers (RSHA F. 1276) and in the fund of V.N. Kokovtsov (RSHA F. 966). The fund of the Petrograd Telegraph Agency contains many documents on its activities: correspondence with representatives of other departments, correspondence with other agencies and newspapers, internal correspondence, meeting logs, reports, analytical notes, etc. The fund of the General Chancellery of the Ministry of Finance, which was in charge of the agency until 1909, contains some documents on its activities. The collection of the Ministry of Trade and Industry includes correspondence on the legal aspects of the agency's work. The collection of the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov, who actively participated in the creation and management of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency until his resignation in 1914, contains his business correspondence on the work of the agency. In addition, the PTA's office documents for the period after October 1917 were used, which are stored in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (SARF), in the collection of the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) under the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (SARF F. R391).

Published office documents were also used. The «Special Journals of the

Council of Ministers of the Russian Empire» reflected the participation of the Council of Ministers in the affairs of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. Other published sources are «Reports of L.K. Kumanin from the Ministerial Pavilion of the State Duma», «State Duma III convocation», «International Relations in the Age of Imperialism. Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Government. 1878-1917» in Russian and «Die Große Politik der europäischen Kabinette. 1871–1914. Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes» in German.

The work used materials from periodicals. Newspapers paid attention to the work of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency. Large newspapers with their correspondents considered the agency a competitor and often devoted articles to it, and other newspapers bought news from it or were even created with the direct support of the agency. Therefore, for writing the dissertation, materials from 18 newspapers were used, which contained information important for the study: «Birzhevyye vedomosti», «Vestnik Vremennogo pravitel'stva», «Vozrozhdeniye», «Golos soldata», «Delo naroda», «Den», «Moskovskiye vedomosti», «Nash vestnik», «Nizhegorodskiy listok», «Novoye vremya», «Pravitelstvennyy vestnik», «Rech», «Russkaya volya», «Russkaya mysl», «Russkiye vedomosti», «Russkoye znaniye», «Russkoye slovo», «Utro Rossii».

Memoirs and diaries of people associated with the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency were also used. These sources revealed those details of its history that were not recorded in the office documents. These are the memoirs of the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister S.Y. Witte, the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky, the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs S.D. Sazonov, the employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Y.Y. Solovyov, the State Duma functionary Y.V. Glinka. In addition, memoirs of other contemporaries were used, which reflected the history of the agency.

Statistical sources are presented in the already mentioned fund of the

Petrograd Telegraph Agency (RSHA F. 1358). During the agency's activities, its management regularly collected various statistical data on its work: on the number of employees, the number of subscribers, the income and expenses of the entire agency and its departments, as well as other materials. Separately, it is worth noting the book «Periodical publications of the Ministry of Finance. 1865-1915» published in 1915 by the Ministry of Finance. It published documents, including on the work of those structures of the ministry on the basis of which the Trade and Telegraph and St. Petersburg Telegraph Agencies were created.

The structure of the dissertation. The dissertation research consists of an Introduction, four chapters, twelve paragraphs, a Conclusion, two appendices and a list of sources and literature. The content of the dissertation is presented on 253 pages. The list of sources and literature includes 65 items, as well as 86 archival cases.

Conformity of the dissertation to the passport of the scientific specialty. The work is completed within the framework of specialty 5.6.1 – Domestic history and corresponds to the following points of the passport of the scientific specialty of the Higher Attestation Commission: point 4 – History of the relationship between the government and society, state bodies and public institutions of Russia and its regions; point 5 – History of the international situation and foreign policy of the country at various stages of its development; point 15 – Historical experience of Russian reforms; point 16 – History of Russian revolutions; point 17 - Personality in Russian history, its personalities; point 24 - History of state and social ideology, public sentiment and public opinion.

Main scientific results

1) The business correspondence within the SPTA and its regulatory documents stored in the archives were analyzed. On their basis, the agency's working methods were determined, the reasons and exact circumstances of important events in its history were clarified.

2) The financial documents of the SPTA were studied. On their basis, conclusions were formulated about the financial efficiency of the agency, the degree of its dependence on the state, and the connection between changes in the SPTA and its financial condition was traced.

3) The office documents of other government agencies (the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Finance, etc.) that were associated with the agency were also studied. Based on them, the degree of influence of these institutions on the agency was determined, and their interaction with each other was analyzed.

4) The memoirs of contemporaries of the SPTA, who determined its fate (V.N. Kokovtsov), witnessed the agency's work (S.D. Sazonov) or were familiar with its employees (K.N. Gulkevich), were considered. It was established that these memoirs recorded events that remained outside the office documents, and also indicated the personal opinion of contemporaries about SPTA and its activities.

5) A study of periodical press materials for the period of SPTA activity was conducted, since some newspapers were the agency's clients, while others were its competitors. Based on this, the attitude of the press towards SPTA was determined, and the mistakes made by the agency, which were regularly noted by the newspapers competing with it, were investigated.

6) With the help of sources, SPTA divisions and the names of all employees who headed them were established, which is reflected in the supplements.

7) Based on the results of the study, scientific articles were published in peer-reviewed journals from the Higher Attestation Commission list²⁸.

Concepts submitted for defense

²⁸ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency in March-July 1917 // *Istoricheskiy byulleten.* - 2023. Vol. 6, №6. Pp. 90-95. (*in Russian*); Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency under Director I.Y. Gurlyand in 1916–1917 // *Nauka. Obschestvo. Oborona.* 2023. Vol. 11, №4(37). Pp. 47-52. (*in Russian*); Morev E.A. St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency at the Beginning of the First World War // *Klio.* 2023. №11 (203). Pp. 80-86. (*in Russian*)

1) The activities of the SPTA (TTA, PTA) in 1902-1917 can be called successful. The agency fulfilled all of the tasks initially assigned to it (supplying information to government agencies, transmitting news in an interpretation favorable to Russia, ensuring information security, using correspondents as spies, agents of influence, couriers with secret information). At first, as TTA, it was able to establish an operational and reliable supply of information to government agencies, while transmitting news to newspapers in Russia and other countries in an interpretation favorable to the state.

2) The Trade and Telegraph Agency, founded in 1902 as a division of the Ministry of Finance, had already gone beyond its original competence (receiving and transmitting economic news) by 1904. Therefore, it was decided to reorganize it into a full-fledged news agency – SPTA, which could deal with news from all spheres of life.

3) By 1907, SPTA had fulfilled its main task – ensuring the country's information security, becoming the country's largest agency, since the previous leader, RTA, depended on the German agency «Wolf». SPTA took control of the majority of the information and news market and the flow of information coming into and out of Russia. Since 1907, the authorities could not fear that news coming into or out of the country would be distorted in the interests of another state.

4) SPTA correspondents also helped the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by transmitting information from the countries where they worked. Some of them became participants in diplomatic combinations, unofficial envoys. Some correspondents (such as V.P. Svatkovsky and V.G. Yanchevetsky) participated in the work of local public organizations in order to strengthen Russia's influence in the countries where they were staying.

5) SPTA was created on the basis of the structures of the Ministry of Finance. Its first employees were representatives of this department, and the first correspondents were those who were associated with the Ministry of Finance. After the competence and complexity of the tasks set before SPTA increased,

representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs were involved in its work. At the same time, a triune system of agency management was formed with the participation of three ministries. Each of them delegated its employees to SPTA, and the directors of the agency were representatives of all three ministries.

6) The agency was a state-owned company that worked practically without subsidies on the principle of self-sufficiency. At the same time, the methods and rules of work, the reporting system were created empirically. Thus, the agency learned from its mistakes.

7) The reasons for transferring SPTA under the management of the Council of Ministers in 1909 were both the financial difficulties of the agency, which worked practically without state subsidies, and the desire of Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin to take control of the information agency, which had developed by that time.

8) The director of SPTA, O.I. Lamkert, appointed by P.A. Stolypin, carried out successful reforms of the agency. In 1910-1914. the growth of income allowed the agency to invest in infrastructure and a network of correspondents. In these years, SPTA reached the peak of its development.

9) The St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency (SPTA) after the outbreak of World War I was renamed the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (PTA). At first, PTA was able to operate stably even during the war, but the social upheavals of 1917 and frequent changes of directors in 1916-1917 led to financial difficulties and an imbalance in work.

10) Soon after the RSDLP (b) came to power on October 25 (November 7), 1917, PTA was completely reformed, and the personnel were replaced. Therefore, the continuity of the updated PTA from the pre-revolutionary one can be considered controversial. However, the legacy of SPTA (TTA, PTA) in the form of infrastructure, equipment and work methods in the future served the state telegraph agencies of the USSR (ROSTA and TASS).

Chapter 1. Creation and organisation of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency (1902-1906)

1.1. Prehistory of the State Telegraph Agency of Russia and the Trade and Telegraph Agency (1902-1904)

The issue of fast transmission of information over long distances has always been important for mankind, and in the 18th century, scientists and inventors began working hard to create a special device for this purpose. It was called the «telegraph». The first telegraph devices that transmitted signals between themselves were complex and ineffective, and telegraph communication did not become widespread until the middle of the 19th century. The first electromagnetic telegraph, which worked on a new technical principle, was created and tested in 1832 by the Russian scientist P. L. Schilling. Then other versions of this device appeared, developed in Prussia and Great Britain. At the same time, the telegraph gradually began to be used for commercial purposes to transmit information for a fee. In 1840, the American scientist Samuel Morse patented the first electromechanical telegraph, which was more effective, and also developed a special telegraph code (Morse code). Morse established a combination of telegraph signals for each letter; his code made it possible to streamline the transmission of information via telegraph and thus speed up the work. After the successful testing of an extended telegraph line in 1844, telegraph communication began to spread widely throughout the world²⁹.

All this led to a sharp increase in the volume and speed of information transfer. Special information (telegraph) agencies began to be created for its processing and subsequent transfer to newspapers or other customers. The first agency in Russia, the private Russian Telegraph Agency (RTA), was created in

²⁹ Esin B.I. On the history of telegraph agencies in Russia in the 19th century // Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. 1960. Vol. VII. №1. P. 11. (*in Russian*)

1866. In parallel, government agencies were included in the use of telegraph capabilities³⁰.

The first of the Russian state institutions to actively engage in the issues of publishing (and therefore collecting and processing) large amounts of news information was the Ministry of Finance. This was important for its work, which was connected with events both in Russia and in other countries that affected markets, product prices, etc. Therefore, the Ministry of Finance needed to receive and process a lot of information.

The history of the news agencies under the Ministry of Finance began with a collection called the «Yearbook of the Ministry of Finance», which began to be published every year, starting from August 20, 1869. It was under the jurisdiction of the Chancellery of the Minister of Finance. The collection published various information about the activities of the said ministry. In 1883, under the Minister of Finance N.K. Bunge, the «Yearbook» was replaced by the publication «Index of Government Orders for the Ministry of Finance – Bulletin of Finance, Industry and Trade». Seven employees from the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance worked on it. This publication began to publish all official documents on the activities of the ministry. A separate supplement, the «Bulletin of Finance, Industry and Trade», was also created, which was published once a week. It published various statistical data and news about events related to finance and the economy³¹.

However, as the work of the new media showed, it needed more information. At first, the «Bulletin» took news from company circulars, reports from chambers of commerce and from the Ministry of Finance. Foreign news for the «Bulletin» was reprinted from foreign newspapers. Diplomatic workers of Russia also helped the media with collecting information. Agricultural news came from employees of

³⁰ Esin B.I. On the history of telegraph agencies in Russia in the 19th century // Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. 1960. Vol. VII. №1. P. 11. (*in Russian*)

³¹ Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. 1865-1915. Petrograd: Izdatelstvo Ministerstva finansov, 1915. P. 24. (*in Russian*)

zemstvo administrations. The management realized that it was necessary to create its own staff of correspondents to create uninterrupted channels of information. The «Bulletin» began searching for future correspondents in business circles: in banks, stock exchange committees, firms. As a result, the «Bulletin» had its own network of correspondents, first in large cities, then in the rest. A special set of rules was developed to regulate their tasks and responsibilities.³²

The volume of information for the «Bulletin» increased, and from the beginning of 1889 the «Index of Government Orders for the Ministry of Finance» and the «Bulletin of Finance, Industry and Trade» were divided into independent publications. In 1891, the editor of the publication, A.K. Veselovsky, died, and his deputy, M.M. Fedorov, received the post³³.

In 1892, S. Y. Witte became the Minister of Finance, and in the 1890s he carried out a series of reforms. In 1897, a gold-backed ruble standard was established, and in 1898, an industrial tax reform was implemented. The series of reforms was also aimed at attracting foreign investment to Russia, which was necessary for its development (especially for the construction of a road network). But in order to increase the flow of investment, it was necessary to create an image of Russia abroad as a reliable and attractive country for investment³⁴. And for this, in turn, a large state telegraph agency was needed, which would transmit news from Russia in an interpretation favorable to its government. S. Y. Witte would come to this decision later.

By the early 1890s, a technical revolution had taken place in the work of the entire information service of the Ministry of Finance, which was engaged not only in its own periodicals, but also in the collection and analysis of information. Employees of the information service, including the Editorial Board of periodicals, on the instructions of the Minister of Finance S. Y. Witte, began to use telegraph

³² Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. 1865-1915. P. 38. (*in Russian*)

³³ Ibid. P. 43. (*in Russian*)

³⁴ Ananyich B.V. Russia and international capital. 1897 - 1914. Leningrad: Nauka, 1970. P. 234. (*in Russian*)

communication more actively. At first, these were telegrams with prices for goods that came to the Department of Trade and Manufactures from cities in Russia and other countries. The Minister of Finance allowed this information to be published in the «Bulletin». The increase in demand for information led to the fact that in 1892 S. Y. Witte decided to create a daily newspaper of the Ministry of Finance. It was called «Trade and Industrial Newspaper», and M. M. Fedorov was approved as editor. In addition, the expanded Editorial Board of periodicals of the Ministry of Finance was transferred to the General Chancellery of the Minister of Finance. Along with the volume of responsibilities, its staff was increased. The staff processed correspondence, systematized information, compiled statistics on the cost of basic goods. The editorial office handled economic issues. Proofreaders and temporary employees also worked in the editorial office³⁵.

In 1894, a special telegraph department of the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance was created to handle telegrams. Initially, it dealt only with the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» and commercial telegrams for it³⁶. However, the demand for a reliable source of commercial telegrams led to the telegraph department acquiring more and more clients from business circles. For a fee, various commercial telegrams were transmitted to subscribers. The profit was invested in expanding the department. In addition, the telegraph department worked with a network of correspondents and by the beginning of the 20th century had created a full-fledged system for receiving information. Correspondents from other cities regularly forwarded news that was published in the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper».

In 1895, with the growth of information volumes, the Editorial Board staff increased from 13 to 29 people. Commercial telegram and announcement departments were also created. The announcement department was also responsible for accounting of stock statistics and work with enterprises. Some of

³⁵ Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. 1865-1915. P. 45. (*in Russian*)

³⁶ Ibid. P. 45. (*in Russian*)

the employees hired at that time would also work at SPTA. For example, from 1896, A.A. Gelfer, the future long-term assistant to several SPTA directors, worked at the newspaper. From July 22, 1895 until its closure, the Editorial Board was located in the building of the Ministry of Finance (Galernaya Street, 2). Issues of the newspaper and supplements to it were printed in the printing house of V.F. Kirshbaum, which was located nearby³⁷.

Since January 1, 1897, the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» has been published in a larger format, as it was popular and the editorial board had a lot of material. The newspaper's staff also worked on the magazine *Russian Economic Review*, which published analytical articles on various areas of the economy³⁸. Their authors were both academic economists and active entrepreneurs. In addition, in 1898, the reference publication «Yearbook of the Ministry of Finance», which was worked on by the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance, was reorganized. It became a collection that included all statistical data on the economy without author's comments. «Yearbook» for 1898 contained information on the territory and population of Russia, the fleet, railways, the work of banks, income and expenses of cities, taxes, crop sizes and other financial and economic issues. Perhaps «Yearbook», published in the year of the tax reform, was also a kind of advertising material that told potential foreign investors about Russia and its economy. The «Yearbooks» were and remain valuable sources of statistical information about the Russian Empire at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

By 1902, the telegraph department of the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» was handling large volumes of information and was already de facto a telegraph agency with its own network of correspondents and well-established work methods. Therefore, in 1902, Finance Minister S. Y. Witte decided to create a state

³⁷ Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. 1865-1915. P. 45. (*in Russian*)

³⁸ Ibid. P. 45. (*in Russian*)

telegraph agency on the basis of the telegraph department of the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper»³⁹.

In turn, from 1902 to 1906, the Editorial Board of the periodicals of the Ministry of Finance and the Trade and Telegraph Agency (later the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency) occupied the same building and had one accounting department. However, in 1906 they were separated, and the agency moved to the building at 15 Pochtamtskaya Street. It housed the City Telephone and Telegraph Administration. Thus, the agency had direct access to the central communications hub and could quickly receive and send information. But the commercial department of the SPTA remained in the same building as the Editorial Board, since its area of activity was economic news⁴⁰. In turn, «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» continued to be published until 1918, having worked under the Emperor, the Provisional Government, and the Bolshevik regime.

The main reasons for the creation of the state telegraph agency in 1902 were not only the desire to improve Russia's investment attractiveness through its own information channel, but also the need to ensure the independence of the transmission and reception of news from other countries to Russia, which private telegraph agencies could not achieve. Moreover, both reasons were closely related, and the problems were solved in one way. By the beginning of the 20th century, only private telegraph agencies operated in Russia, and the largest of them was the Russian Telegraph Agency (RTA). It was founded in 1894 and was jointly owned by the publishers of the St. Petersburg newspapers «Novoye Vremya» and «Novosti». At the same time, RTA was bound by an agreement and worked together with a consortium of large European telegraph agencies, which included «Havas» (Paris), «Reuters» (London) and «Wolf» (Berlin). This consortium was practically a monopolist in the world news transmission market at the beginning of

³⁹ Witte S.Y. *Memories. The Reign of Nicholas II. Volume 2.* M.: Skif Alex, 1994. P. 181. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰ Report by E.S. Karatygin. July 1, 1906 // RSHA. Fund 23. Inventory 1. Document 6. List 57. (*in Russian*)

the 20th century. In turn, other independent agencies de facto became branches of the consortium. RTA and the Russian information market were at that time in the sphere of influence of the German agency «Wolf». RTA became its branch⁴¹.

But it is worth noting that foreign agencies did not feel comfortable in Russia. The work of correspondents of foreign newspapers and telegraph agencies in the Russian Empire of those years was associated with numerous difficulties and risks. Correspondents were forced to work under censorship and try to bypass it in order to transmit information to another country. Because of this, telegrams and letters from correspondents were often lost. A special procedure was developed to bypass censorship. First, a correspondent of a foreign newspaper or telegraph agency sent the received news by mail to a city near the border. There, another correspondent received this information and manually transmitted the records abroad. As representatives of foreign telegraph agencies noted, because of censorship, they were distrustful of any news from Russia, even from their own correspondents⁴².

The fact that the main Russian telegraph agency was directly dependent on the German agency worried the highest circles of Russia, especially the Minister of Finance S. Y. Witte. In the spring of 1902, in a letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs D. S. Sipyagin, the Minister of Finance noted that RTA had few of its own correspondents abroad, which is why it received information through the Wolf agency. S. Y. Witte pointed out that Russia actually received and transmitted information through a German company that was connected with the German authorities. Therefore, the Russian authorities could not influence the news transmitted abroad in any way. There was another risk factor. In the 1890s, France became Russia's main ally. Germany, in turn, was a long-standing enemy of France. Therefore, the Minister of Finance had reason to worry about the fact that news flows were coming to Russia and leaving it through Germany. And the latter

⁴¹ Memo by M.M. Fedorov. November 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 79. (*in Russian*)

⁴² Ibid. L. 86-87. (*in Russian*)

had full access to this information and could distort it if it wanted to. The Minister of Finance was particularly concerned that certain news could negatively affect Russia's trade relations with other countries and the issuance and terms of loans⁴³. After all, at that time, Russia's economy was heavily dependent on foreign investment and loans. Therefore, Russia's investment attractiveness was critically important. And having its own telegraph agency, which would transmit news from Russia in a way that was favorable to the government, could help improve it.

S. Y. Witte then called for a quicker solution to the issue of news transmission, because in 1902 some trade agreements with other countries were ending, and the Minister of Finance needed to secure their extension and achieve better conditions for Russia. The creation of the TTA was one of the last major actions of S. Y. Witte as Minister of Finance. Already in 1903, due to increasing pressure from opponents, he was transferred to the post of Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, and E. D. Pleske became the new Minister of Finance.

On June 14, 1902, the Trade and Telegraph Agency (TTA) was created within the telegraph department of «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» under the Ministry of Finance, headed by the former editor of the Trade and Industrial Newspaper, M.M. Fedorov. P.I. Miller became his assistant. The TTA was to begin full-fledged work on January 1, 1903. Before that, the process of organizing the work and establishing business contacts took place. M.M. Fedorov was sent abroad for negotiations with foreign telegraph agencies and potential subscribers. P.I. Miller, in turn, established business contacts in Russia and organized the work.

During the trip, M.M. Fedorov studied the situation on the telegraph agency market in Europe, which he reflected in a report on the results of the trip in November 1902. As he noted, the consortium headed by the agencies «Wolf», «Reuters» and «Havas» continued to dominate the European market. In turn, independent agencies were small and could not develop because of the

⁴³ Letter from S. Y. Witte to D.S. Sipyagin. 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 9. (*in Russian*)

consortium⁴⁴. The consortium itself was well organized, operated successfully and enjoyed the trust of local authorities and clients, so other European agencies could not compete with it.

In Europe, M. M. Fedorov was also faced with the task of organizing TTA branches in the three largest cities in Europe (Berlin, Paris, and London), which housed the three largest telegraph agencies in the world (Wolf, Havas, and Reuters, respectively). The first destination was Berlin. This city was also interesting to M. M. Fedorov because the central office of the Wolf agency was located there, which effectively ran RTA, the current telegraph agency of Russia. As M. M. Fedorov noted in his report, he had a choice of three courses of action. Either conclude an agreement with the Wolf agency (most likely on unfavorable terms), or with the much smaller British agency «Laffan», which had an office in Berlin, or try to organize his own branch in the capital of Germany⁴⁵.

Having studied the situation, M.M. Fedorov decided not to enter into negotiations with the Wolf agency. As the director noted later, he decided to first organize and make TTA influential, and only then conclude agreements with the German agency. Only by making TTA influential enough could an equal agreement be achieved. In turn, the Wolf agency was interested in M.M. Fedorov's visit to Berlin and made inquiries about him with the help of RTA employees⁴⁶.

Then M. M. Fedorov took up the organization of the TTA branch in Berlin and for this purpose contacted G. B. Iollos, a doctor of law and a correspondent for the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» in Berlin. G. B. Iollos was not only a journalist, but also an active scientist-economist with extensive connections in the German press and financial circles. However, he was in opposition to the Russian government. M. M. Fedorov considered this an advantage for the TTA, since cooperation with G. B. Iollos would divert suspicions from the agency of

⁴⁴ Memo by M.M. Fedorov. November 8, 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 78. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵ Ibid. L. 78. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶ Ibid. L. 81. (*in Russian*)

dependence on the Russian government. As an assistant for G. B. Iollos, M. M. Fedorov, on the advice of specialists, chose the German journalist Georg Schweitzer, who worked with a number of German newspapers and had extensive connections, as well as knowledge of telegraph business⁴⁷.

However, in the end, G.B. Iollos refused to head the TTA department, agreeing only to cooperate as a hired correspondent, which lasted until 1905. But M.M. Fedorov's plans did not go unnoticed by the Wolf agency, whose representatives entered into negotiations with the TTA director. The Wolf agency representatives offered M.M. Fedorov to conclude a contract for the supply of news on terms favorable to the Russian agency⁴⁸. As it turned out, even attempts to create their own branch brought TTA certain benefits.

The next destination of M. M. Fedorov's trip was Paris. Despite the fact that France was an ally of Russia at that time, the director of the Russian state telegraph agency spoke negatively about the French telegraph agency market and their work with newspapers in his report. As M. M. Fedorov noted, the work of French newspapers with local telegraph agencies was chaotic. According to his observations, local newspapers did not trust even the largest French telegraph agency «Havas», a member of the world consortium of agencies. In addition, French newspapers did not publish telegrams in full, but retold their contents in articles. M. M. Fedorov also found out that TTA, in the event of an independent entry into the French information market, would have to pay newspapers themselves to work with it⁴⁹. Therefore, it was decided to abandon the idea of creating a French branch for now.

Then M. M. Fedorov visited London, where he met with representatives of agencies independent of the world consortium. The director of TTA chose the British agency «Central News» as the largest among the independent agencies. At

⁴⁷ Memo by M.M. Fedorov. November 8, 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 80. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸ Ibid. L. 84. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹ Ibid. L. 85. (*in Russian*)

first, the representatives of «Central News» agreed to conclude a contract for sending their news to TTA. However, the British categorically refused to conclude a contract for receiving news from TTA. The representatives of «Central News» stated that they did not trust the information that the Russian state telegraph agency would provide. They named the existence of strong censorship in Russia, which distorts the news coming from there, as the reason for their mistrust. The representatives of «Central News» noted that due to censorship in Russia, they would not receive truthful information, and therefore there was no point in them cooperating with TTA in this area. The British stated that it was enough for them to maintain their own correspondent in Russia, whose news was subject to censorship anyway. In parallel, M. M. Fedorov hired a correspondent in Rome through correspondence. It was the Italian citizen G. Bava, a local journalist⁵⁰. This ended M.M. Fedorov's trip to Europe, and he returned to Russia.

As M.M. Fedorov noted in his report to the Minister of Finance S.Y. Witte on November 8, 1902, following the results of his trip, foreign telegraph agencies and the press abroad did not trust the information from TTA as an official source of the Russian Empire in advance. M.M. Fedorov linked this not with the usual errors and inaccuracies that occur in the work of a telegraph agency, but with censorship. As the director noted, TTA, due to censorship restrictions, would often not be able to transmit reliable information to foreign media on a number of issues of Russia's domestic policy⁵¹. As a result, some foreign media refused to work with TTA. The agency's management realized that hushing up negative information did not lead to achieving the goal of forming the desired opinion abroad, but to the loss of the agency's authority. However, TTA could not significantly influence censorship.

⁵⁰ Memo by M.M. Fedorov. November 8, 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 86. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹ *Ibid.* L. 87. (*in Russian*)

Thus, during his business trip to Europe, M.M. Fedorov was able to find a correspondent in Berlin. And in Paris and London, he concluded contracts with independent correspondents to supply news to the future TTA.

In turn, P.I. Miller in 1902 dealt with issues of branches in Russia. He was also in charge of the regions of the Far East, in particular Manchuria and the Kwantung region. For the foreign policy of Russia at that time, the Far East was a key direction. At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, the tasks of connecting the Russian territories in the Far East with Central Russia and acquiring an ice-free ocean port, which would help to pursue a more active policy in this region, were being solved. In 1898, Russia leased the Kwantung Peninsula with an ice-free port in the city of Port-Arthur (Lyushun) and began construction of the port of Dalniy (Dalian). However, the Japanese Empire laid claim to these same territories, annexing them following the war with China in 1894-1895, but was forced to abandon them under pressure from Russia, France and Germany. In addition, Russia had kept its troops in Manchuria since 1900, not withdrawing them immediately after the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion. Only in 1902 was an agreement concluded with China on the gradual withdrawal of troops, which Russia eventually delayed. Other negotiations with China were conducted in parallel⁵².

It was very important for the state to obtain a permanent and reliable channel for transmitting news from the Far East, but its creation was accompanied by unforeseen difficulties. In August 1902, the TTA management approached S.Y. Witte with a request to grant TTA the same privileges for transmitting telegrams to Manchuria and the Kwantung region that the private RTA had. S.Y. Witte agreed with the agency's request in a reply letter, but for some unknown reason the privileges were not granted. The issue with the privileges was resolved only at the

⁵² International Relations in the Age of Imperialism. Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Government. 1878-1917. Series Two. Volume 19. Part 2. Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo politicheskoy literatury, 1939. Pp. 192-193. (*in Russian*)

end of 1903 after the resignation of S.Y. Witte and through the efforts of P.N. Durnovo, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs⁵³.

However, in cases of providing other benefits, the authorities actively went to meet TTA, which had to compete with the already developed and occupied information market RTA. TTA used a special tariff for data transmission by telegraph and paid 50% of the standard price. Also, the agency's telegrams were transmitted out of turn. In addition, TTA received an additional 30,000 rubles from the state for a year of operation⁵⁴.

On January 1, 1903, TTA officially began its work. On the same day, branches were opened in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Samara and Kyiv. In the same year of 1903, the agency expanded. On July 1, 1903, branches were opened in Nizhny Novgorod, Riga, Rostov-on-Don and Kharkov. Each branch, at a minimum, had a director, a stenographer or editor, a technical specialist and service personnel. The branch had several tasks. Firstly, to find new subscribers for the agency. Secondly, to supply subscribers with news. Thirdly, to collect, process and send to the Central Branch of TTA news of their city and region. However, in 1903-1904, the branches were still recruiting employees and working in an experimental mode⁵⁵.

Telegrams were also sent to cities where there were no branches yet, but enough subscribers had already been found (Warsaw, Bialystok, Tiflis, Baku, Odessa, Nikolaev, Voronezh, Rybinsk). Representatives of the agency, focused on economic news, actively worked and negotiated with business circles of the cities where branches were opened. Before the branches started working, meetings were held with representatives of the stock exchange, banks and large traders. Based on

⁵³ Letter from M.M. Fedorov to S.Y. Witte. December 8, 1903 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 12. L. 1. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴ Ibid. L. 1-2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵ Ibid. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

their suggestions, an application was formed with news on topics that were interesting to them as representatives of business circles⁵⁶.

In the first days of TTA's work, most banks from large cities subscribed to its telegrams. This happened, among other things, thanks to the manager of the State Bank E.D. Pleske, who actively spread news about the opening of TTA in banking circles. The State Bank became one of the first subscribers, and private banks began to follow its example. Also, at the suggestion of S.Y. Witte, TTA telegrams began to be sent to ministers and many high-ranking officials⁵⁷.

The initial goal of the TTA was to serve the interests of the Ministry of Finance, collecting and transmitting information on financial issues. However, the TTA processed more and more news and expanded its scope of competence. Since the main declared task was the exchange of information with foreign intermediaries, the TTA, as a division of the Ministry of Finance, began to actively interact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 1902⁵⁸. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a separate order ordering Russian diplomatic workers to provide possible assistance to TTA correspondents in other countries. Thus, each TTA correspondent, having verified his identity and position, could work in Russian diplomatic missions in other countries⁵⁹.

At first, TTA dealt with information related to economic issues, sometimes making exceptions in the form of the most notable political news. But gradually the Agency's area of interest expanded more and more, since other spheres of life and events in them also affect the economy. As it turned out, TTA's audience was interested in political news⁶⁰. Their absence caused discontent among subscribers.

⁵⁶ Letter from M.M. Fedorov to S.Y. Witte. December 8, 1903 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 12. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷ Ibid. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸ TTA Board Circular. 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 46. L. 10. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹ Circular of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 39. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰ TTA Board Circular. 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 46. L. 10. (*in Russian*)

In early 1903, the TTA changed its strategy and began to focus more on other news topics. It significantly increased the number of its political news bulletins. Correspondents were no longer collecting only economic and financial news, as before. At first, correspondents had to learn new duties and were ordered to report news about «events of prime importance». This caused confusion and slowdowns, because correspondents had to decide whether a news item was «of prime importance». They were then ordered to report all news items.⁶¹

The decision to expand the scope of interests turned out to be correct from the point of view of TTA development, because the updated range of information attracted newspapers. They wanted to work with a state agency that often received exclusive news. This led to the fact that Russian newspapers began to choose TTA as their source of information.

In 1903, TTA subscribers included 18 newspapers from the largest cities in Russia. At the same time, St. Petersburg newspapers were in no hurry to work with TTA. Of the 18 newspapers that signed up, there were only 4 from St. Petersburg, while there were 7 from Moscow and 5 from Nizhny Novgorod⁶². As the agency's management noted, the wide distribution of contracts with newspapers was hampered by the cost of subscriptions, which was too high.⁶³ The agency tried to get new benefits for itself in order to reduce the subscription price, but to no avail.

In parallel, TTA's foreign activities were developing. The agency's correspondent in Berlin, G.B. Iollos, worked successfully and was able to interest the local press, which began publishing TTA's reports on events in Russia. As the agency's management noted, the task of supplying Germany with reliable (from the

⁶¹ Letter from M.M. Fedorov to S.Y. Witte. December 8, 1903 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 12. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁶² Report by M.M. Fedorov about the activities of TTA. August 2, 1903 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 126-127. (*in Russian*)

⁶³ Letter from M.M. Fedorov to S.Y. Witte. December 8, 1903 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 12. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

authorities' point of view) news from Russia was accomplished⁶⁴. However, problems arose with other information markets where there were no TTA branches. As experience showed, M.M. Fedorov's forecast about the lack of trust in the news of the state telegraph agency was fully confirmed. According to reports from foreign TTA employees, newspapers in Britain, France and Austria-Hungary rarely used the agency's telegrams and considered them unreliable⁶⁵.

At the same time, TTA continued to fight for the Russian information market with the private RTA. In June 1903, the state agency managed to significantly outpace the private one in this fight. On June 11, 1903, the King of Serbia Alexander I Obrenovic was killed in Belgrade during a coup d'etat. Immediately after the murder, a de facto race began between telegraph agencies to see who would be the first to receive information about the events that had taken place. TTA, which had its own correspondents in Belgrade, received and published the news first in Russia⁶⁶. In turn, RTA received information from intermediaries, foreign telegraph agencies, and for this reason was late. As a result, the popularity of TTA services among newspaper management increased, and it received several new contracts with newspapers. From this point on, TTA began to outpace RTA in demand and influence. By 1905, RTA had completely lost the competition and even lost contracts with foreign agencies⁶⁷.

However, as TTA evolved from a print organ of the Ministry of Finance into a separate news agency, it encountered certain problems. Since a competitive news agency by its nature must act quickly, the information transmitted could not always be double-checked. There were cases when TTA transmitted unreliable information. Because of this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs constantly

⁶⁴ Report by M.M. Fedorov about the activities of TTA. August 2, 1903 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 126-127. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁵ Ibid. L. 128. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁶ Ibid. L. 126-127. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁷ Report by S.S. Trubachev. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 2-3. (*in Russian*)

approached the agency with requests that it issue special refutations of unreliable news⁶⁸.

In 1904, the TTA management, in the context of increasing demand and its expansion, planned to create branches in London, Vienna and Paris. A template for the organization was created for the branches. The director was to come from Russia, the employees were local journalists or economists with extensive connections either in the press or in financial circles. According to the new plan, the future TTA branches would divide Europe among themselves. The London branch would deal with news from Britain and Scandinavia, the Paris branch with news from France, Spain and Portugal, and the Vienna branch with news from Austria-Hungary, Italy and the Balkans. To create them, assistant director P.I. Miller planned to go on a business trip around Europe and visit Austria-Hungary, Germany, Belgium, Britain and France to select personnel and establish business connections⁶⁹.

However, these plans had to be adjusted due to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. TTA began to cover its progress. On the first day of the war, January 27, 1904, on the initiative of P.I. Miller, TTA began sending all bulletins to the highest military command: A.N. Kuropatkin, Z.P. Rozhestvensky and others. A system of bulletins under the letter «A» with top secret data was also created. They were a channel for transmitting news to the military leadership. Such bulletins were also received by Emperor Nicholas II, and in his absence, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna⁷⁰.

For TTA, the Russo-Japanese War was the first war that the agency covered. Special correspondents were sent to the front to work on the news of military operations. One of them was V.G. Yanchevetsky (the future writer under the

⁶⁸ Memo by M.M. Fedorov. November 8, 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 86-87. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁹ Letter from P.I. Miller to A.G. Bulygin. January 27, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 12. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* L. 5. (*in Russian*)

pseudonym V.G. Yan), who would work for TTA for many years. The problem for the correspondents was the still unregulated status and censorship. The mechanism for censoring telegrams in wartime conditions had not yet been worked out, and telegrams that did not contain prohibited information were often blocked. But there were also opposite situations when secret information got into the press due to an oversight. However, TTA avoided such scandals due to the verification of news in the Central Office.

By 1904, TTA even exceeded the tasks that were set for it. Having started as an agency dealing only with economic issues, TTA turned into a full-fledged news agency. It needed expansion and a new legal status that would capture its expanded scope of competence.

1.2. Structure and management of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency in 1904-1906

The Russo-Japanese War that began in 1904 affected the work and status of TTA. In the new conditions, the agency, which had transformed from an economic agency into a full-fledged news agency, needed expansion, new opportunities and legal status. In addition, the authorities were interested in TTA as a source of operational information and an organization with agents in other countries, which could also be used for the benefit of the state. Several ministries united to reform TTA. On June 1, 1904, Foreign Minister V.N. Lamzdorf addressed a letter to Finance Minister V.N. Kokovtsov, who replaced E.D. Pleske in this post. The latter headed the ministry from August 1903 to February 1904 and did not have time to make a significant contribution to the affairs of TTA. In turn, V.N. Kokovtsov, like S.Y. Witte, was actively involved in loan issues and understood the importance of investment attractiveness for the Russian economy. V.N. Kokovtsov took part in the management of TTA from February 5, 1904, when he took up the post of Minister of Finance. As V.N. Lamzdorf noted in a letter to V.N. Kokovtsov, since the beginning of the war with Japan, information that was disadvantageous to Russia began to be actively disseminated in foreign media. The Minister of Foreign Affairs proposed to combat this with the efforts of TTA and, with the help of the agency, to form an information agenda in foreign media that was advantageous to Russia⁷¹.

V.N. Lamzdorf also proposed to completely revise the concept of TTA, to transform it from a specialized agency into a full-fledged state telegraph agency. According to his plan, TTA was transferred to the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it was supposed to transmit the information received to it without intermediaries. In turn, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by its foreign employees, would provide any assistance to correspondents and promptly

⁷¹ Letter from V.N. Lamzdorf to V.N. Kokovtsov. June 1, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 23. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

transmit the information that was permitted to be published. The agency would receive a special status and many privileges for transmitting telegrams⁷². V.N. Kokovtsov partially agreed with the plan, after which discussions of the project began⁷³. As a result, the agency remained under the control of the Ministry of Finance, and in July 1904, the amended and adjusted reorganization plan was finally approved by Nicholas II⁷⁴.

The updated and expanded Trade and Telegraph Agency was reformed and renamed the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency (SPTA) by August 1904. On August 6, 1904, the «Regulations on the Establishment of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency» were signed by the Emperor and officially published. The agency's staff was expanded and new employees were hired. P.I. Miller, who had previously been an assistant director of the TTA, was appointed its director. He saw his goal as director as ensuring the gradual development of the agency, which was to become equal to the world's largest agencies: «Wolf», «Havas», «Reuters»⁷⁵.

P.I. Miller formulated the following tasks for the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. First, to provide the public with information through newspapers, to which the agency transmitted the information it received. Second, to promptly supply particularly important information to senior government officials with bulletins under the letter «A». Third, to work with the foreign press, to transmit news from Russia to them. A system of 3 categories of news was also created. The first category is official statements and messages from government agencies. The

⁷² Letter from V.N. Lamzdorf to V.N. Kokovtsov. June 1, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 23. L. 4-5. (*in Russian*)

⁷³ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to V.N. Lamzdorf. June 25, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 23. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

⁷⁴ Letter from V.N. Lamzdorf to V.N. Kokovtsov. June 26, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 23. L. 13. (*in Russian*)

⁷⁵ Letter from P.I. Miller to G.B. Iollos. August 6, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L.2. (*in Russian*)

second category is official messages from local authorities. The third category is private information that correspondents provided to the agency⁷⁶.

SPTA, despite its declared desire to become an independent agency, continued to depend on the «Wolf» agency in the first years, as was the case with the previous main telegraph agency of Russia, RTA. However, SPTA soon managed to become a significant enough agency, which allowed it to join the consortium as an equal participant. The agency corresponded with other members of the consortium. Work with other agencies was also entrusted to special representatives (they were often SPTA correspondents), who were accredited with these agencies⁷⁷.

Based on the practice of selecting information, a system of work between SPTA and foreign agencies was formed. Correspondents accredited with foreign agencies looked through the telegrams that these agencies planned to send to Russia and selected the ones needed for SPTA under their own responsibility. Special programs were compiled for them, as well as to facilitate and systematize their work. These were lists of topics that were of interest to SPTA, and news on these topics were sent to Russia. In turn, there were representatives of foreign agencies with similar responsibilities at SPTA. All this, including the topic programs, was agreed upon within the framework of agreements between SPTA and other agencies.

SPTA also had the right to transmit information to foreign agencies directly, bypassing representatives, for efficiency. Sometimes the information transmitted was not included in the agreed program of news topics. The Russian agency paid for the forwarding of such news separately. Usually, this was done by various departments for their own purposes. These departments also separately indicated which specific countries should receive this news, and did not send it to other

⁷⁶ SPTA Circular on message categories. 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 46. L. 19. (*in Russian*)

⁷⁷ Extract from the report of an agent of the Ministry of Finance. May 15, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 17. L. 228 (*in Russian*)

countries. For example, in a letter dated May 13, 1905, member of the council of the Minister of Internal Affairs N.V. Shakhovsky noted that certain news should be sent only to Germany⁷⁸.

The principle of work of SPTA representatives at other agencies continued for many years. For example, in 1911, the then director O. I. Lamkert instructed the correspondent A. V. Lyarsky, who was sent to London, to the Reuters agency: «The Reuters agency must continue to supply the agency (SPTA – note) with news from official sources. You, however, are pleased to supplement this news with your own observations and correct those Reuters reports that will be presented from an English point of view»⁷⁹.

Correspondents encountered various problems in their local work, including unexpected ones. They often had conflicts and misunderstandings with representatives of local telegraph agencies. For example, P.N. Apostol, a representative of SPTA in Paris, was supposed to work at the «Havas» agency according to his duties. However, the French side did not allow him to work, demanding additional documents certifying his identity and authority. P.N. Apostol reported this to the management in St. Petersburg. And only after receiving another set of documents was the SPTA representative allowed into the central office of «Havas»⁸⁰.

Problems with local telegraph agencies arose even after many years of cooperation. For example, in 1912, director O. I. Lamkert wrote to K. M. Ketov, the new representative of SPTA in Rome, that he might have a misunderstanding with the local telegraph agency «Stefani». The director told the correspondent that in such a case it was necessary to contact the management of SPTA, which would

⁷⁸ Letter from N.V. Shakhovsky to S.G. Kovalevsky. May 13, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 21. L. 37-38. (*in Russian*)

⁷⁹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to A.V. Lyarsky. November 27, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1497. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁸⁰ Telegram from P.N. Apostol to the Agency's Board. March 17, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 996. L. 14. (*in Russian*)

resolve disagreements with the Italian agency through its own communication channels⁸¹.

Representatives of the SPTA in other countries did not limit themselves to working with the information that was given to them by other telegraph agencies. According to the instructions, «correspondents serve the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency independently, regardless of foreign agencies, in cases where the latter, for one reason or another, cannot, are not obliged or should not participate in informing the St. Petersburg Agency of one or another piece of information»⁸². It is obvious that rules were set for the news sent by correspondents. The news had to be reliable and supported by facts. Correspondents were also forbidden to interpret the information according to their personal views. The news had to be clear and unbiased⁸³. For the transmission of knowingly false information and forgery, employees were held accountable up to and including dismissal.

From the moment SPTA began its activities, its management took a course on ensuring the highest quality of the agency's work. Foreign directions were especially important. It was established that all inaccuracies, errors, and delays of employees who received or transmitted information to other countries were recorded in documents. Then the guilty employee was informed about this by his immediate management. Several such offenses led to the dismissal of the employee. Even its foreign partners in the consortium noted the high discipline in SPTA⁸⁴.

The St. Petersburg agency, despite the proposal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs V.N. Lamzdorf to transfer it under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then remained under the control of the Ministry of Finance. The position

⁸¹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to K.M. Ketov. February 28, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1497. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁸² Instructions for SPA correspondents // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

⁸³ Ibid. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

⁸⁴ Letter from the Board of the Continental-Telegraphon-Compagnie to the Board of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. April 13, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 17. L. 215. (*in Russian*)

of managing director was always occupied by a representative of this department. The Minister of Finance V.N. Kokovtsov paid great attention to the issues of the agency's work. He pointed out to the director that for SPTA the most important information was about the economy, and only then all other news. V.N. Kokovtsov planned the development of the agency and its becoming a monopolist in the sphere of telegraph agencies in Russia⁸⁵.

However, representatives of two other ministries, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were required to participate in the management of the SPTA. This system of the Council of Three Representatives was necessary in order to fully coordinate the agency's activities with the course of economic, foreign and domestic policy of the authorities. The SPTA interacted with other ministries as sources of information. V.N. Kokovtsov also ordered that letters be specially sent to local city authorities: governors-general, governors and mayors, in which he called on them to assist the work of the agency's departments in every possible way and not to create obstacles for them. The Minister of Internal Affairs P.D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, in turn, ordered the units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to supply the SPTA with news, with the exception of classified information⁸⁶.

The Council that managed the SPTA initially included the managing director P. I. Miller (from the Ministry of Finance), A. A. Neratov (from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and N. V. Shakhovskoy (from the Ministry of Internal Affairs). According to the «Regulations on the establishment of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency» of August 6, 1904, the competence of the Council included issues of finance, organization of work and cooperation with foreign organizations. The Council approved the terms of contracts with foreign agencies, the subscription price for SPTA messages, the installation of new telegraph wires and

⁸⁵ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to S.S. Trubachev. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 34. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

⁸⁶ Letter from P.D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky to V.N. Kokovtsov. October 24, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 46. L. 12. (*in Russian*)

the financing of this work, the annual estimate of income and expenses, the conditions for opening new branches in Russia and abroad, instructions for branches and correspondents⁸⁷.

Since its opening on September 1, 1904, SPTA, as the successor to TTA, was economically linked to the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. SPTA itself was engaged in financial activities. But at the same time, the cash desk and settlements with the Treasury were common with the Editorial Board of Periodicals, and the head of the general cash desk worked with the amounts received by SPTA without involving the agency's accounting department. As a result, there were cases when income from subscriptions to SPTA telegrams passed through the accounting department of the entire Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance as its income and was later directly credited to the agency's account⁸⁸.

The accounts of the SPTA were constantly checked by the employees of the Ministry of Finance, but the agency's expenses often exceeded the funds allocated by the state for the maintenance of personnel and economic needs. At that time, the SPTA borrowed money from other government agencies. The agency had several creditors. The Main Administration of Posts and Telegraphs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs provided loans for needs within Russia during the specified period. The Foreign Department of the Special Chancellery for the Credit Section of the Ministry of Finance issued a loan for the telegraph expenses of correspondents in other countries. However, the loans had to be repaid, and the SPTA's debts remained. At the same time, in 1905, the Main Administration of Posts and Telegraphs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs wrote off the agency's debt in the amount of 96,142 rubles, which saved the SPTA from losses in 1905⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Regulations on the establishment of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. August 6, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 24. (*in Russian*)

⁸⁸ Report to the Minister of Finance on the audit of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from February 1 to September 4, 1908 // RSHA F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 6-7. (*in Russian*)

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* L. 29-33. (*in Russian*)

Despite certain control by the Ministry of Finance, SPTA had no clearly established accounting document flow since 1906, the moment of separation from the Editorial Board of Periodicals, as revealed by the audit conducted in 1908. As it turned out, the books of records of correspondents, subscribers, money transfers, settlements with the Main Administration of Posts and Telegraphs, as well as general accounting were kept in a disjointed and unsystematic manner. For example, there were no cash book entries for the period from July 1 to November 1, 1906. There was also no systematization of SPTA debts and its total debt. As auditors noted in 1908, this made it difficult to determine the agency's current financial position⁹⁰.

Most of the SPTA's income came from subscriptions to its news telegrams. For newspapers, which accounted for the majority of subscribers, the price was 150 rubles per month. Income from subscriptions gradually increased: from 248,439 rubles in 1904 to 656,638 rubles in 1907. However, at the same time, income from foreign subscribers fell: from 65,292 rubles in 1904 to 17,994 rubles in 1907 (more than 3.5 times). In 1908, auditors in their report explained this decline by an unsuccessful contract with the German agency «Wolf», which acted as an intermediary and demanded 30,000 rubles annually from SPTA as a commission alone⁹¹.

Payments from subscribers were received at the cash desk by means of money transfers or in cash. The funds received were deposited in the Main Treasury, and from there – in the State Bank, to a special account of the agency⁹².

SPTA had several expense items. At first, the main expense item was the fee for using telegraph and telephone communications. In 1904, communication expenses amounted to about 46% of all agency expenses. The actual cost of these services gradually increased until 1907, when a preferential tariff for using

⁹⁰ Report to the Minister of Finance on the audit of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from February 1 to September 4, 1908 // RSHA F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 9-10. (*in Russian*)

⁹¹ Ibid. L. 24-26. (*in Russian*)

⁹² Ibid. L. 22-23. (*in Russian*)

telegraph communications (approximately 50%) was established for SPTA. Of the expenses for 1907, payment for communication services already amounted to about 14.5%⁹³.

The SPTA also paid for the work of its correspondents and other employees. This expense item was constantly growing both in percentage and actual terms. In 1904, payments to employees amounted to 63,622 rubles (20% of expenses), in 1906 – 173,635 rubles (30%). In 1907, after the establishment of a new preferential tariff for the use of telegraph communication and, accordingly, a reduction in the share of expenses on communication services, the share of expenses on employee salaries increased significantly – up to 40% (262,794 rubles). The constant and sharp increase in actual expenses on salaries from 63,622 rubles in 1904 to 262,794 rubles in 1907, in turn, was directly related to the expansion of the SPTA in these years⁹⁴.

Despite the fact that SPTA was de jure and de facto a government agency, it stopped receiving direct subsidies from the treasury for its activities in 1906. SPTA began to operate exclusively at the expense of funds earned from subscriber subscriptions. This situation of SPTA was noted in business correspondence by both the agency director and the Minister of Finance V.N. Kokovtsov, who supervised SPTA. At the same time, the agency had government benefits. Payment of the tariff for sending telegrams from 1907 was made at the expense of the state⁹⁵. However, it is worth noting that after 1906 the agency de facto still received money from the state, but not directly, as will be discussed below.

In the first years of its existence, the agency worked with a relatively small subscriber base and was short of funds. A sharp increase in the number of subscribers began in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War and the First Russian

⁹³ Report to the Minister of Finance on the audit of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from February 1 to September 4, 1908 // RSHA F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 28. (*in Russian*)

⁹⁴ Ibid. L. 27. (*in Russian*)

⁹⁵ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to N.A. Maklakov. February 13, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 211. (*in Russian*)

Revolution. Since January 1905, after the shooting of a workers' march in St. Petersburg, demonstrations and riots of workers, peasant revolts took place across Russia. There were also unrest in the army and navy. The goal of their participants was to obtain greater freedoms and establish social equality in the country. These events were called the First Russian Revolution. They also led to a sharp increase in the interest of all strata of society in political news and, accordingly, to an increase in subscriptions to SPTA telegrams, which promptly transmitted information. As a result, the agency's income in 1905 increased sharply compared to previous years⁹⁶.

At the same time, the SPTA faced increased state censorship and could not transmit all the information about the unrest in Russia to the press and other countries, since this, in the opinion of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, could provoke new protests and damage the country's international reputation⁹⁷.

The publication of the Manifesto on the Improvement of the State Order on October 17, 1905, which promised political freedoms, led to an upsurge in socio-political activity in the country, an increase in demand for news and the creation of new periodicals. In turn, the new newspapers needed sources of information to function, and they began working with SPTA, subscribing to its telegrams for 150 rubles per month. All this led to an increase in the agency's income⁹⁸.

It is worth noting that, despite its status as a state agency, SPTA employees sometimes had difficulties interacting with other state institutions.

During the formation of SPTA, its most important problem was its relationship with censorship, as was pointed out by TTA Director M.M. Fedorov in

⁹⁶ Letter from P.I. Rachkovsky at SPTA. 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 21. L. 84. (*in Russian*)

⁹⁷ Kostrikova E.G. St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency and the First Russian Revolution // *Via in tempore. Istorica. Politologia*. 2010. №19 (90). P. 147. (*in Russian*)

⁹⁸ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to the newspaper editors. November 27, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1180. L. 31. (*in Russian*)

1902⁹⁹. In the autumn of 1904, the Agency Council began to discuss how to achieve a softening of censorship. The idea was supported by V.N. Kokovtsov back in October 1904. However, at that time, the Russo-Japanese War was taking place, and military censorship existed in the country. The Minister of Finance approached the Minister of War, as well as the Minister of Internal Affairs with a proposal to relieve SPTA of the obligation to forward its telegrams with news from the war for review to the Special Censorship Commission at the General Staff¹⁰⁰.

In turn, the SPTA Council discussed the issue of censorship on November 29, 1904. Council members P. I. Miller and A. A. Neratov indicated that the agency's work was in the interests of the Russian state, and there was no information in its telegrams that was undesirable from the point of view of censorship. As the Council noted, censorship hindered the work of the agency, a government agency, and delays in providing information due to censorship prevented SPTA from competing with private companies¹⁰¹.

The Agency Council sent a petition to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to exempt SPTA from preliminary censorship of telegrams. However, the Ministry of Internal Affairs initially disagreed with the Council, pointing out that there was a war going on. But soon the decision to exempt from censorship was made. According to the order of the Main Administration of Posts and Telegraphs, SPTA telegrams were not subject to examination by censorship bodies. SPTA circular telegrams began with the word «Bulletin», they were identified by this code word¹⁰².

The SPTA also continued to have a system of transmitting classified information in bulletins under the letter "A". A special list of people who received

⁹⁹ Memo by M.M. Fedorov. November 1902 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 86-87. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰⁰ Letter from P.D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky to V.N. Kokovtsov. October 24, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 46. L. 12. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰¹ Journal of the meeting of the Council of the SPA. November 29, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 14. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰² Journal of the meeting of the Council of the SPA. December 14, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 15. (*in Russian*)

classified information was created. In 1904, 10 members of the Imperial family and the highest dignitaries of the Russian Empire were included in this register. The number of recipients of classified information fluctuated, for example, in 1905 there were 45 such people. Also, all telegrams from the agency were delivered to Nicholas II by his personal order¹⁰³.

The said register, of course, changed over time. For example, P.A. Stolypin, having become Minister of Internal Affairs on April 26, 1906, was also included in the list of persons who had access to secret information from SPTA. At the same time, even in the matter of the register of trusted persons, there were bureaucratic errors. Because of one of them, P.A. Stolypin did not receive secret telegrams from the agency from 1907 to 1909, already being the Prime Minister. But, apparently, he managed without them, and the error was corrected on the initiative of SPTA itself only in 1909¹⁰⁴.

Another problem was the bureaucratic restrictions for the agency. Since SPTA was a government agency, and in order to prevent the transmission of false information (which would be unacceptable for a government agency), all bulletins with recordings were additionally double-checked. The problem of restrictions was especially acute when working with news from the Duma. For example, Duma deputies could look at the recordings of their speeches and make edits to them if necessary. All this led to large delays in the transmission of information, which was critical for a telegraph agency. Because of the checks, the texts of news and speeches for a given day arrived at the agency in the evening or at night, when St. Petersburg newspapers were already finishing the layout of the issues for the next day. It did not help that information could be quickly delivered to St. Petersburg newspapers by telegraph. In this situation, the situation was even worse for newspapers from other cities, as they received information about events in St.

¹⁰³ List of persons receiving «A» ballots. 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1264. L. 1. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰⁴ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to P.A. Stolypin. March 29, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 39. (*in Russian*)

Petersburg the day after the events themselves. Sometimes there were cases when checking news took more than a day. Then SPTA decided that there was no point in broadcasting such news, since it was too outdated¹⁰⁵.

As a result, the following work order was formed. The agency's branches in other cities and correspondents transmitted news to the Central Branch at a set time, at 10, 14, 18 or 21 o'clock St. Petersburg time. This was directly related to the fact that the agency's bulletins were published at 12, 16, 20 and 23 o'clock. If the news arrived 2 hours before the release of a new bulletin, it was edited and included in the publication¹⁰⁶.

In turn, correspondents of private newspapers easily outpaced SPTA and transmitted news before them, although, for example, speeches of ministers or deputies were transmitted in the form of a brief retelling. As a result, this led to the fact that the agency's foreign partners were extremely dissatisfied with its work, because private sources sent news faster. For these reasons, foreign newspapers did not use SPTA telegrams that arrived too late or did not renew their subscriptions at all¹⁰⁷.

The first years of SPTA's work can be called successful, the agency continued to expand and demonstrated economic growth. The reasons for this were the participation of three ministries in its work, as well as the desire of the management to ensure high quality of the agency's services. SPTA also became financially independent. It used its own earned funds, without subsidies from the state, which, however, did not always meet the agency halfway in controversial situations (for example, in the case of bureaucratic restrictions).

¹⁰⁵ Note from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰⁶ Instructions for SPTA correspondents // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰⁷ Note from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

1.3. Formation of the network of correspondents of the SPTA in 1904-1906

Special correspondents of SPTA in other countries became the most important part of the agency system. They were engaged in searching for news for SPTA independently or received it from local agencies. Any information from abroad was extremely important for the agency. Firstly, it was of great interest to subscribers, and regular news from other countries attracted a new audience. Secondly, government agencies also needed news from abroad, and SPTA supplied it promptly and could obtain valuable information. Thirdly, having its own correspondents in other countries was important for the agency's status and, accordingly, for attracting new clients. In 1904-1906, the creation of a broad system of SPTA correspondents began both in Russia and in other countries. Their work was described in the agency documents as follows: «Foreign correspondents of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency are, first of all, its representatives at those foreign agencies to which they are assigned, and must keep in mind that their direct responsibility and one of the main purposes of being abroad is the appropriate and appropriate direction of foreign agencies in the matter of servicing the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency with information from abroad»¹⁰⁸. It was also the duty of the correspondents to regularly visit those foreign telegraph agencies to which they were accredited to collect information¹⁰⁹.

At the same time, significant funds were spent directly on correspondents and on communication with them. Therefore, the management of the SPTA required correspondents to provide high quality work and often contacted them. Moreover, the director of the agency or his assistant was engaged in correspondence with correspondents. An important part of such correspondence was notifying correspondents about the mistakes they had made. If a correspondent made a mistake in his work (late transmission of information about an event or,

¹⁰⁸ Instructions for SPTA correspondents // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. L. 347. (*in Russian*)

even more so, false information), then in a letter from the SPTA he was pointed out this, giving an example of this mistake.

In turn, it was the responsibility of the correspondents to respond to such letters and explain their mistakes. In addition, in the letters they answered various questions from the management or transmitted to them the information that could not be sent by telegraph. Usually, a foreign employee sent a report to the SPTA once a week¹¹⁰.

The management noted that not only special correspondents but also the agency's central apparatus learned from error reports. SPTA correspondents in other countries had no clear directives on duties and methods of work until 1908¹¹¹. The reports improved the quality of the correspondents' work, which was an undoubted benefit for SPTA. Those employees who could not cope with the tasks or were too conflictual for such work were also weeded out. The agency created the rules of work practically empirically.

The primary task of correspondents in other countries was to work with representatives of foreign agencies that worked with the main array of news. Correspondents visited their representative offices, where they took news, and also monitored the coverage of events in Russia, as well as its politics. Their task was to monitor news related to Russia and negotiate with foreign agencies to correct errors in such news. At the same time, the agency specifically indicated that errors should be pointed out «in the most polite and decent form and not in the form of reproaches»; conflicts on this basis had already occurred¹¹².

In addition, correspondents collected information themselves. As SPTA constantly pointed out, employees in other countries had to observe three rules for working with information: awareness, accuracy and efficiency. A list of possible

¹¹⁰ Instructions for SPTA correspondents // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

¹¹¹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.P. Svatkovsky. October 16, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 929. L. 90. (*in Russian*)

¹¹² Letter from A.A. Gelfer to P.N. Apostol. January 3, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 995. L. 297. (*in Russian*)

sources of news for correspondents was compiled empirically. Embassies and diplomatic employees of Russia, as well as agents of the Ministry of Finance, were indicated as the main and absolutely trustworthy sources. Personal connections of correspondents were named as secondary, but also important sources. The instructions stated that SPTA employees abroad should establish contacts in public circles, among local authorities. With their help, they obtained even more information for the agency. A rule of preliminary approval for the transfer of large amounts of information was also introduced. First, the correspondent reported a summary to SPTA, which itself decided whether it needed all the information.

The next duty of SPTA correspondents in other countries was to analyze the local press (special attention was paid to news and articles about Russia) and compile its brief reviews. As was the case with the agency's Paris correspondent P.N. Apostol, these reviews were also received by the Russian embassy. If the press came across articles that contained important or scandalous information about Russia, the correspondents reported this to SPTA¹¹³.

The correspondents transmitted the collected information to St. Petersburg at the appointed time, trying to calculate it so that the telegrams would arrive at 10, 14, 18 or 21 hours St. Petersburg time. This was directly related to the schedule of the agency's news bulletins at 12, 16, 20 and 23 hours. Particularly important news was obviously sent by the correspondents as quickly as possible, and in these cases they did not take into account the time of sending¹¹⁴.

The issues of financing the SPTA correspondents were discussed when this institute was created. Correspondents sent telegrams with news through the department of the telegraph agency where they took the information and with which a special contract was concluded. Payment for such telegrams was separately specified in the estimate of the entire SPTA. If a telegram with news for various reasons was sent by a correspondent independently, bypassing the

¹¹³ Instructions for SPTA correspondents // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

¹¹⁴ Ibid. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

specified agency, then it was paid for separately and indicated in the estimate of a specific employee¹¹⁵.

Correspondents abroad had their own separate instructions, which took into account the specifics of work in the respective country and special tasks for employees. For example, the management carefully instructed the correspondent in London about the local press, which was hostile to Russia. The correspondent had to be vigilant when working with news from British newspapers. Failure to follow the instructions led to dismissal, which happened, for example, in 1912 with the correspondent in London A. V. Lyarsky. He worked in the position for only a few months and was fired, according to the director O. I. Lamkert, for ignoring the instructions in his instructions¹¹⁶.

After the transformation of the Trade and Telegraph Agency into the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency, the MFA employees continued to implement the 1902 instruction on assistance to the agency employees in other countries. On August 25, 1904, the director of the SPTA P.I. Miller confirmed the continuation of cooperation between the agency and the MFA in a letter to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs A.A. Neratov¹¹⁷.

The MFA also helped the SPTA in selecting candidates for representative positions in other countries, using its knowledge and agents. In the same letter, P.I. Miller asked A.A. Neratov to provide candidates for the representative position in Constantinople¹¹⁸. As the tone of this letter shows, there were friendly relations between P.I. Miller and A.A. Neratov, which at that time further helped the joint work of the MFA and the agency.

In turn, the MFA also benefited from this cooperation. Representatives of SPTA abroad were also informants for the MFA. During their work in other

¹¹⁵ Instructions for SPTA correspondents // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

¹¹⁶ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to A.V. Lyarsky. May 10, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1494. L. 27. (*in Russian*)

¹¹⁷ Letter from P.I. Miller to A.A. Neratov. August 25, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 62. L. 1. (*in Russian*)

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* L. 1. (*in Russian*)

countries, correspondents made useful acquaintances, connections in the press and business circles. Some successful employees were even able to acquire connections in local government agencies, for example, the correspondent in Berlin A.I. Markov¹¹⁹. SPTA employees with local connections could obtain information that would be very useful for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In turn, the authorities of the countries where the correspondents worked knew about it. If for some reason the transfer of certain information through official channels was undesirable, the authorities of the respective countries would pass it all on to Russia through SPTA employees.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was engaged in the selection of candidates for the posts of SPTA correspondents in other countries, and the agency was completely dependent on it in this matter. In some cases, foreign employees of the Trade and Industrial Newspaper and the Finance Herald, that is, employees of the Ministry of Finance, became SPTA correspondents. This was convenient for SPTA, because they were already experienced employees. They continued their previous work, only their individual tasks became more complicated. The problem for SPTA was that in many cases the foreign correspondents of the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» and the «Finance Herald» were local residents, that is, foreigners. The SPTA leadership had doubts about how reliable foreign employees would be for a state telegraph agency whose purpose was to ensure Russia's information security and to refute erroneous reports about Russia in foreign newspapers. Therefore, the SPTA tried to hire only Russian citizens as correspondents. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not trust foreign employees as such, and believed that matters of national importance were best entrusted to correspondents from Russia.

The SPTA strictly followed this instruction. Foreigners did work for the agency, but only as assistants to local correspondents. Subsequently, the SPTA leadership noted both the merits of foreigners and the fact that, after some cases,

¹¹⁹ Report by A.I. Markov. April 29, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 941. L. 58. (*in Russian*)

their mistrust of them turned out to be justified. Because of this policy of selecting correspondents, the SPTA created difficulties for its own work. For example, in 1904, the newly formed agency refused the correspondent in Rome, G. Bava, who had been «inherited» from the TTA, because he was an Italian citizen¹²⁰. However, SPTA failed to find a replacement for him, and it remained without a correspondent in Rome until 1907.

The SPTA management tried not to hire foreign citizens for the position of special correspondent, even in special cases. For example, in 1910, the SPTA correspondent in Bulgaria N.G. Molostvov died, and then the Bulgarian journalist N. Bobchev offered the agency his candidacy for the vacant position. Despite the fact that N. Bobchev had successfully collaborated with SPTA for several years, the then director O.I. Lamkert refused him, citing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' ban on hiring any foreigners for the position of special correspondent¹²¹.

Any SPTA correspondent abroad, as in the times of TTA, received letters of recommendation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs upon employment, with which he was received at the diplomatic mission of Russia. Correspondents established contacts with diplomatic workers. They helped the SPTA employees to do their work, as well as in everyday matters, supplied them with information about events. At the same time, ambassadors gave instructions to correspondents, and the work of the latter depended on them. In most cases, correspondents managed to establish interaction with diplomatic workers. However, there were exceptions, for example, the SPTA employee in Constantinople I.N. Perosio was fired in 1905 due to a conflict with employees of the Russian embassy¹²².

In 1907, the director of the SPTA, A.A. Girs, wrote about the interaction of his correspondents in other countries with Russian embassies and diplomatic

¹²⁰ Letter from P.I. Miller to G.P. Zabello. October 4, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 953. L. 18. (*in Russian*)

¹²¹ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. P. Svatkovsky. June 2, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 929. L. 63. (*in Russian*)

¹²² Letter from A.A. Neratov to P.I. Miller. February 5, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 62. L. 22. (*in Russian*)

workers: «The practice of the activities of special correspondents of telegraph agencies in general, and those of an official nature in particular, has revealed that the success of the activities of such correspondents is primarily determined by the relations that are established between them and the official missions in a given country. The missions act for the purpose of correctly serving Russian public opinion with reliable and at the same time useful news for Russia's foreign policy»¹²³.

The first correspondent posts of SPTA in other countries were posts in the most important cities of Europe at that time: in Berlin, Vienna and Paris. The main post was considered to be the Berlin one, which was the first to be created. In addition, the Wolf agency was located there, which was the main channel of information for SPTA for geographical reasons, since telegraph lines from the rest of Europe went to Russia through Germany. All the main news from the West was transmitted to Russia by the German telegraph agency. The first correspondent was G.B. Iollos. In 1905, he left Berlin and his post for a place as a deputy in the State Duma of the first convocation. After the dissolution of the Duma, G.B. Iollos was already engaged in journalism in Russia and died as a result of an assassination attempt on March 14, 1907. It was organized by a member of the Union of the Russian People, Kazantsev, because of the professional activities of G.B. Iollos¹²⁴.

In January 1906, SPTA found a new correspondent in Berlin, A. I. Markov, a translator from German and a specialist in Germany. Until 1905, he worked in the stock exchange committee of the city of Libau and had sufficient competence to work with economic news¹²⁵.

Relations between Russia and Germany in the 1900s were complicated, because Russia had already become close to France, which was extremely hostile

¹²³ Letter from A.A. Girs to A.P. Izvolsky. December 9, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 62. L. 22. (*in Russian*)

¹²⁴ *Russkoe slovo*. 28.03.1907. № 87. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

¹²⁵ Information about A.I. Markov. January 1906 // RSHA. F. 564. Inv. 2. D. 1383. L. 20. (*in Russian*)

to Germany. In addition, Russia was preparing for a rapprochement with England, which was eventually formalized by the agreement of 1907. In turn, Germany sought to secure its eastern borders and insisted on the conclusion of the Treaty of Björkö in 1905. However, it was soon terminated at the initiative of Russia. In an environment of increasing tension and the creation of large military alliances, information from the capital of a potential enemy was extremely important. Therefore, A.I. Markov had a special responsibility.

As the SPTA itself noted, A.I. Markov took a long time to get used to his new position and made mistakes at first. Despite this, the leadership believed in his potential. Moreover, he always acted carefully and had extensive connections both in the Wolf agency and in the German press. A.I. Markov always knew what information the German agency had on hand and what part of it they would pass on to Russia. He was in good standing with the management. For example, using his connections, he helped the SPTA management in 1907, when the Wolf agency was appointing its new representative in St. Petersburg. Thanks to A.I. Markov, who promptly reported this, SPTA quickly came to an agreement and began to work successfully with the new representative¹²⁶.

The second most important correspondent post of the SPTA was in Vienna. The agency «Korrespondenz-Bureau» was located in this city, which, like the agency «Wolf», was a channel of information from Europe for the SPTA, but to a lesser extent. However, by the beginning of the 20th century, Austria-Hungary had become one of the main potential opponents of Russia, with which it actively competed in the Balkans. Thus, the correspondent in Vienna received a particularly important and promising area of work, where the interests of the authorities of Austria-Hungary and the Slavic and Balkan peoples clashed. A.G. was hired for the position of correspondent in Vienna. Fichtengolts, who had previously served in TTA and was considered a valuable employee. He was especially noted by the

¹²⁶ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to A. V. Lyarsky. November 27, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1497. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

director of SPTA P.I. Miller, who praised his efficiency in a letter. During his work in his new position, A.G. Fichtengolts was praised by the management. As a reward, the correspondent's annual salary was increased by 1/3, from 2,400 rubles to 3,256 rubles.¹²⁷ It is worth noting that, in comparison with the next correspondent in Vienna, V.P. Svatkovsky, A.G. Fichtenholz performed much smaller volumes of work. He only performed the duties of a correspondent specified in the contract and participated little in the affairs of the local embassy.

The third most important correspondent post of the SPTA was in Paris. By the 1900s, France had become Russia's main ally and creditor. Therefore, the SPTA correspondent in Paris had to pay special attention to news related to the economy and the interest of French investors in Russia. In 1904, P.N. Apostol, who served in the agency of the Ministry of Finance in France as an official on special assignments and was the author of a number of scientific works on the topic of economics, became the SPTA correspondent in the capital of France. Thus, he was already well-established in the financial and economic circles of France and knew this country well. In addition, being an employee of the agency of the Ministry of Finance, P.N. Apostol wrote articles and supplied news for the newspapers of the Ministry of Finance: «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» and «Herald of Finances»¹²⁸.

After the creation of three correspondent posts, the SPTA set its sights on London. Even the Russian embassy staff asked for a correspondent of the Russian telegraph agency to appear in this city. They noted that in 1905 hostility towards Russia was growing in Britain against the backdrop of the Russo-Japanese War, the local press was dishonest, and it published a lot of unreliable information about

¹²⁷ Letter from P.I. Miller to A.G. Fichtengolts. March 4, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 928. L. 82. (*in Russian*)

¹²⁸ Letter from P.N. Apostol to A.A. Girs. February 5, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 996. L. 14. (*in Russian*)

Russia. The embassy ironically called such news «a flight of wild ducks flying away from London in dense flocks»¹²⁹.

In 1905, an experienced employee of the Ministry of Finance, Y.G. Kamensky, was appointed to the responsible post of correspondent in London. The Russian ambassador to Britain, A. K. Benkendorf, approved his candidacy. Y.G. Kamensky was assigned a salary of 6,000 rubles per year. His work was highly appreciated by both the leadership of the SPTA and the embassy¹³⁰.

In 1904, the management of SPTA discussed having its own correspondent in Rome. TTA already had its own correspondent in Rome, G. Bava, whom SPTA inherited. However, the agency refused his services as a correspondent because he was an Italian citizen¹³¹. But SPTA could not find a candidate to replace him, because there were no Russian citizens in Italy at that time who could work as a correspondent. The agency refused to hire a correspondent in Rome. Since 1904, the Russian agency received news from Italy from the local agency «Stefani».

However, there was an exception to the agency's rule not to hire citizens of other countries as correspondents. In Belgrade, SPTA employed the former Serbian ambassador to Vienna and an experienced diplomatic worker, K. Khristich. He was recommended by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The agency doubted whether it was worth hiring him, given his citizenship. However, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, K.A. Gubastov, was able to convince the SPTA Board that K. Khristich could be trusted with matters of national importance despite the fact that he was a citizen of Serbia. In 1904, K. Khristich became a

¹²⁹ Letter from A.K. Benckendorff to P.I. Miller. 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 923. L. 29. (*in Russian*)

¹³⁰ Letter from P.I. Miller to Y.G. Kamensky. 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 923. L. 32. (*in Russian*)

¹³¹ Letter from P.I. Miller to G.P. Zabello. October 4, 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 953. L. 18. (*in Russian*)

correspondent in Belgrade and initially justified the trust. His work was highly praised by management, who noted the style and tact of his messages¹³².

Another important area of work for SPTA was Turkey. Since 1904, from the beginning of the agency's work, an active search was underway for a correspondent to work in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, there were candidates who contacted SPTA themselves. For example, in October 1904, Ahmed Rashid Bey, who lived in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, contacted the agency's board. He had already collaborated with the newspaper «Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti» and stated that he had extensive experience in journalism, as well as extensive connections in Constantinople. However, Ahmed Rashid Bey's work would be associated with great difficulty. According to him, he served in the Ottoman army and could not openly work for SPTA. Ahmed-Rashid-Bey offered to transmit telegrams through his friend. Despite the obvious risk and the fact that Ahmed-Rashid-Bey was not a Russian citizen, the agency's management considered his candidacy. However, SPTA Council member A.A. Neratov rejected Ahmed-Rashid-Bey's candidacy, indicating that he could be a fraudster or an agent of the Ottoman secret services¹³³.

At the end of 1904, I. N. Perozio became a correspondent of the SPTA in Constantinople. However, soon after he started working, he had a conflict with the employees of the Russian embassy. Because of this, he stopped working with the embassy. This had an extremely negative impact on the quality and quantity of information that I. N. Perozio sent to Russia. In fact, he worked alone. The management of the SPTA knew about this situation and rather sympathized with their correspondent. However, the management did not have the opportunity to

¹³² Letter from P.A. Stolypin to S.S. Trubachev. February 14, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

¹³³ Letter from P.I. Miller to A.A. Neratov. October 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 62. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

correct the situation and settle the conflict, so I. N. Perozio was fired in February 1905, when a candidate was found to replace him¹³⁴.

The new correspondent was the agent of the Russian Society of Steamships and Trade (RSOST) A. Petropulo, who had already worked in Constantinople. A.A. Neratov noted his diligence, but criticized him for expressing his personal opinion on certain events in his telegrams. The new correspondent also transmitted much less information to SPTA compared to his colleagues from other telegraph agencies¹³⁵. Therefore, the management of the SPTA considered the possibility of replacing A. Petropulo with a professional correspondent. In November 1906, the management of the agency held negotiations with P.A. Georgiadis and agreed to take him on as a correspondent in Constantinople. However, the Russian ambassador I.A. Zinoviev spoke out against his candidacy. Then the management of the SPTA, remembering the unsuccessful experience of I.N. Perosio, refused the services of P.A. Georgiadis and left A. Petropulo as a correspondent in Constantinople¹³⁶.

In 1904-1906, the foundation of the network of SPTA correspondents in other countries was created, posts were created in the most interesting cities of the world for the agency. Rules for hiring correspondents were also formulated, and the methodology of their work began to be created empirically.

¹³⁴ Letter from A.A. Neratov to P.I. Miller. February 5, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 62. L. 22. (*in Russian*)

¹³⁵ Letter from P.I. Miller to A.A. Neratov. March 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 62. L. 26. (*in Russian*)

¹³⁶ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to I.A. Zinoviev. December 13, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 982. L.132. (*in Russian*)

1.4. Organization of the network of branches of the SPTA in 1904-1906

In order to better organize work on the territory of the Russian Empire and to communicate with local clients, in 1904 SPTA began to create a network of its regional branches. SPTA inherited some of them from TTA. Since January 1, 1903, TTA branches operated in Moscow, Kyiv and Samara. By 1905, branches had opened in Odessa, Tiflis, Warsaw, Revel, Riga, Lodz and Kharkov. By 1907, SPTA's information transmission network was even in remote regions of the empire. At the same time, the management itself admitted that it worked well enough only in the northwestern part of the Russian Empire, from Moscow to Warsaw¹³⁷.

Since the branches did not have extra funds to hire additional personnel, the branch manager performed the duties of an accountant (control and issuance of funds), editor-in-chief and correspondent. Each branch manager resolved everyday and organizational issues, kept accounting and other paperwork. He also had to pay attention to correspondents and personally check telegrams, which were then sent to the Central Branch of the SPTA.

Thus, the manager actually formed the information policy of the branch, unless there were special instructions on this matter, or if this policy did not contradict the goals of the SPTA itself. The heads of local branches had to know the city and the local press well, and also have active connections, primarily in business circles. Connections in other areas were desirable. At first, some branches shared offices with other organizations, but later they were necessarily located in separate premises. In addition, after an unsuccessful experience in the past, a condition was formulated that the branch manager should not combine work in the SPTA with other professional or commercial activities. However, this condition was still not always observed. In some cities, the agency had no other candidates for the position of head, and it had to hire already part-time specialists. Another

¹³⁷ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to T.B. Shemplinsky. February 19, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 67-68. (*in Russian*)

responsibility of the heads was to find new subscribers. The SPTA Board carefully monitored these indicators and regularly reminded the heads of the branches about this.

The largest regional branch of SPTA was the Moscow branch. The branch in Moscow was inherited by SPTA from TTA, which already had its own full-fledged representative office in Moscow. It was opened on January 1, 1903. The Moscow branch of SPTA was not only the second largest after the Central St. Petersburg branch, but also the most important node in the data transmission system in Russia. Since July 1903, the Moscow branch was headed by an experienced TTA employee I.V. Polyakov, who had served in the Ministry of Finance since 1895. Before his transfer to Moscow, he headed the branch in Kyiv, and also participated in the creation of the Kharkov and Odessa branches of TTA¹³⁸.

In 1903, I.V. Polyakov faced the task of stabilizing the financial situation of the Moscow branch, which had a budget deficit under its previous leaders. In his new position, he received a salary of 3,300 rubles per year. In 1903, I.V. Polyakov failed to ensure a budget surplus, and the Moscow branch ended the year with a loss of 357 rubles. However, already in the following year, 1904, the branch's profit amounted to 20,358 rubles, and its growth then continued¹³⁹.

When SPTA had to compete with private agencies, Moscow was one of the most important markets for which they fought. In February 1905, Director P. I. Miller approached the head of the SPTA branch in Moscow I. V. Polyakov with a question about competitors. In response, the head wrote a report on the Moscow information market. As I. V. Polyakov noted, in Moscow, SPTA's main competitor was not RTA, but a private company called «Telephone», which was also engaged in distributing news to newspapers. This was news about Russia's political life and the progress of the war with Japan. The central office of «Telephone» was located

¹³⁸ Letter from the SPTA Board to I.V. Polyakov. 1904 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1119. L. 18. (*in Russian*)

¹³⁹ Report by I.V. Polyakov. December 22, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 97. (*in Russian*)

in St. Petersburg, and it also had its own correspondents throughout the country. The company's activities were financially successful, its net profit amounted to 12,000 rubles. As I. V. Polyakov noted, SPTA could beat «Telephone» on the Moscow market and in other cities only by improving the quality and efficiency of the services provided¹⁴⁰. In this case, newspapers would choose SPTA as their information provider and would not use the services of «Telephone».

I.V. Polyakov also pointed out that SPTA actually has to compete with those Moscow newspapers that have their own correspondent service. As an example, the head of the Moscow branch of SPTA cited the newspaper «Russkie Vedomosti». This newspaper had its own correspondents, including in St. Petersburg, who transmitted news to the editorial office by telephone. According to Polyakov, «Russkie Vedomosti» spent 1,900 rubles a month on the services of a correspondent in St. Petersburg, of which 1,200 rubles were spent on telephone communications.¹⁴¹ Thanks to such investments, the information of the «Russkiye Vedomosti» in Moscow often outpaced the information of the SPTA in terms of its efficiency.

In addition, in 1905, I.V. Polyakov had to give explanations on a matter directly related to another private telegraph agency, the RTA. In June 1905, Director P.I. Miller informed Polyakov of a very revealing incident. The employees of the SPTA in St. Petersburg discovered that the RTA telegrams with news from Moscow were very similar to the SPTA telegrams. The agency's management suspected the Moscow branch of having connections with competitors and passing information to them. Therefore, the director demanded an explanation from the head of the Moscow branch¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to P.I. Miller. February 26, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1091. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

¹⁴¹ Ibid. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

¹⁴² Letter from P.I. Miller to I.V. Polyakov. June 8, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 124. (*in Russian*)

I.V. Polyakov responded by stating that he himself had noticed such coincidences, and that his employees did not pass information to RTA. He also made several assumptions about the reasons for these cases. According to I.V. Polyakov, the texts coincided because SPTA and RTA correspondents used the same sources of information. SPTA employees also bought news from circulators, independent reporters who sold information to anyone, including RTA. At the same time, I.V. Polyakov acknowledged that information leakage from the Moscow SPTA office could indeed have taken place. The head of the office noted that correspondents Eiber and Brilliantshchikov aroused his suspicions, which were not yet supported by facts. However, I.V. Polyakov stated that all other correspondents were honest with their employers¹⁴³. The SPTA management was satisfied with the answer of the head of the Moscow branch.

Moreover, in 1905 the financial situation of the Moscow branch continued to improve. I.V. Polyakov managed to achieve a significant increase in the number of subscribers in Moscow, and the branch's income amounted to 49,842 rubles. At the same time, expenses increased slightly compared to the figures for 1904 (27,000 rubles) and amounted to 28,000 rubles. Thus, the net profit amounted to 21,842 rubles, which the agency's management was pleased with¹⁴⁴.

In 1906, the Moscow branch of SPTA began selling four types of subscriptions to customers: political, Duma, commercial news, and stock exchange news. There was a great demand for Duma news from SPTA in Moscow, and this brought the Moscow branch significant income. The reason for such interest was the publication of stenographic reports of the State Duma, which also included notes on the work of the Duma commissions. As the management of SPTA noted,

¹⁴³ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to the SPTA Board. June 10, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 125. (*in Russian*)

¹⁴⁴ Report by I.V. Polyakov. December 22, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 97. (*in Russian*)

the transfer of stenographic reports to another city required large expenses (up to 135 rubles per day), but they eventually paid for themselves¹⁴⁵.

The Warsaw branch of SPTA was opened on August 17, 1904. The management repeatedly noted its importance, because it was formally the main branch of the agency in the territory of the Kingdom of Poland, responsible for collecting and transmitting news in this region. The branch was headed by S.A. Kempner. The agency management gave him complete independence in his work and did not control him in any way, obliging him only to send reports. As the audit of 1906 showed, S.A. Kempner abused the trust of the management. In parallel with his work at SPTA, S.A. Kempner was the editor of the newspaper «Gazeta Nova» (New Newspaper), and also participated in the creation of several companies. Therefore, he physically could not devote enough time to the agency's affairs. In addition, S.A. Kempner, as the head of the Warsaw branch, cut its expenses too much in order to get as much profit as possible. For example, the branch in Warsaw did not have its own premises. Assistant to the head Krolkiewicz worked with SPTA materials in the building of the editorial office of the newspaper «Gazeta Nova», headed by S.A. Kempner. Also, the head of the department rarely contacted correspondents, they worked without a specific plan. In addition, S.A. Kempner did not even keep separate accounting for the department. Its income and expenses were recorded in one cash book with other enterprises of S.A. Kempner: the newspaper «Gazeta Nova» and the publishing house «Rudolf Okrit». In addition, several Warsaw newspapers de jure used SPTA telegrams free of charge, this permission was given to them by the head of the department. It is worth noting that at that time SPTA issued 4,300 rubles per year for the expenses of the Warsaw department¹⁴⁶. Due to such organization of work, its quality was very low for the SPTA branch.

¹⁴⁵ Report of the SPTA Chancellery Manager on the Organization of the Moscow Branch. January 15, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 129-132. (*in Russian*)

¹⁴⁶ Audit report of the Warsaw branch. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 13. (*in Russian*)

The Warsaw branch had three correspondents, each of whom dealt with news on a specific topic and combined work in the SPTA with other activities. N.A. Blumenthal worked under the Governor-General and dealt with political news. N.F. Akaemov was an official under the Chief of Police and kept a criminal chronicle. K. Olkhovich was the editor of the newspaper «Varshavsky Kurier» and dealt with news on various topics.¹⁴⁷ Under S.A. Kempner, they did their work as they wanted, there was no direct management.

In turn, another branch of the SPTA in the Kingdom of Poland was organized much better. The branch in the city of Lodz began its work on November 16, 1904, almost 3 months after the branch in Warsaw. It was headed by I.S. Klyuchinsky, there were no complaints about his work. Even the inspector from the SPTA M. Krampon noted in 1907 that all employees of the branch in Lodz worked carefully and quickly. However, the inspector had complaints about the office work. According to M. Krampon, all the business papers were lying together without any sorting, and it was difficult to understand them. I.S. Klyuchinsky responded to this complaint by saying that there were no clear instructions from the management, and he had little experience in office work. However, M. Krampon managed to find financial reports, and there were no questions about them. The auditor positively assessed the work of I.S. Klyuchinsky in the final report¹⁴⁸. He continued to head the Lodz branch, to which there were no complaints. Then he was replaced by S.A. Kontsevich.

The Riga branch of SPTA was the successor to the TTA branch in Riga. Its head was an experienced employee F.I. Mettus. Despite the fact that he was in good standing with the Board, the branch had a number of problems at the time of 1905. At that time, there was no correspondent in Riga who worked specifically for SPTA; there were a number of independent correspondents with whom the branch

¹⁴⁷ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to T.B. Shemplinsky. June 3, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 18. (*in Russian*)

¹⁴⁸ M. Crampon's report on the trip to inspect the SPTA branches in Warsaw and Lodz. November 16, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 76. (*in Russian*)

collaborated. The agency's management was not satisfied with the income that the branch was bringing in¹⁴⁹.

There was also a shortage of staff, which had an effect in early 1905, when the flow of news increased sharply during the Russo-Japanese War. As F. I. Mettus himself noted in a letter to the Board, in 1904 the department received telegrams every day with a total volume of approximately 825 words, then at the beginning of 1905 this figure increased to 1750 words¹⁵⁰. The management took note of this information, gave F.I. Mettus permission to hire a special correspondent for the department and allocated funds for this. However, the head of the Riga department refused the three candidates proposed by the SPTA Board, and the issue with the correspondent was not resolved at that time.

The Board was dissatisfied with this situation and the work of F.I. Mettus. In a letter in August 1905, Director P. I. Miller expressed complaints about his work. The director pointed out that the Riga department poorly covered the popular unrest in the Baltics. P.I. Miller also noted F.I. Mettus's responsibility to the German agency «Wolf». The latter was interested in events in Riga, where many Germans lived, and concluded a separate agreement with SPTA for the transmission of news from Riga with payments to the Russian agency. But it turned out that the Riga department was transmitting too little news, and this agreement was under threat. Also P.I. Miller demanded to hire a correspondent, especially since funds had already been allocated for him¹⁵¹.

F.I. Mettus tried to quickly resolve the problem with the correspondent at the office in Riga and soon, in August 1905, appointed his assistant E.B. Vagengeim

¹⁴⁹ Letter from P.I. Miller to F.I. Mettus. March 14, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 44. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵⁰ Letter from F.I. Mettus to P.I. Miller. February 10, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 36. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵¹ Letter from P.I. Miller to F.I. Mettus. August 19, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 68. (*in Russian*)

to this position¹⁵². However, even this decision could not improve the situation in the department, which the management was dissatisfied with.

The first Russian revolution did not initially affect the work of the SPTA too much. However, in September 1905, large strikes began throughout Russia. The work of the branch in Riga suffered the most from the popular unrest. The unrest in the territory of Livonia was especially strong, because it had not only socio-economic, but also national-political causes. A full-fledged armed uprising began. The rebels not only committed robberies and murders, but also deliberately damaged infrastructure, including telegraph lines. These incidents paralyzed the work of the branch in Riga several times. As a result, by December 1905, the full-fledged work of the Riga branch was almost completely stopped. The branch received news not via telegraph, but in written form through couriers who traveled to Riga by train. However, a railway strike cut off this method of communication as well. F. I. Mettus had to send a report on the events via a courier on horse-drawn transport¹⁵³.

In his report to the management, F. I. Mettus reported that during the strikes in Riga, no companies or stores except grocery stores were operating. The department temporarily suspended operations because it became impossible to send and receive news bulletins¹⁵⁴. However, Director P.I. Miller noted in a letter to independent correspondent E. Iogihes in Riga that RTA correspondents were able to regularly transmit news from the city engulfed in strikes¹⁵⁵. This meant that F. I. Mettus was not diligent enough in his duties, since competitors were still actively working at the same time.

¹⁵² Letter from P.I. Miller to F.I. Mettus. August 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 69. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵³ Letter from F.I. Mettus to the Agency Board. November 28, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 86. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵⁴ Letter from F.I. Mettus to the Agency Board. December 2, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 87. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵⁵ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to E. Iogihes. December 6, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 88. (*in Russian*)

The unrest in Riga and the disorganization of the department's work had a negative impact on F. I. Mettus's health, and he was forced to temporarily leave the city. E. B. Wagengeim became acting head of the department. He was already more active, but he still failed to organize full-fledged work in Riga, which was engulfed in strikes. At the same time, E. B. Wagengeim continued to work as a correspondent, and he did not have the strength and time to fulfill all his duties. The management of the SPTA criticized him for delays in transmitting news. The board strongly advised him to hire two new correspondents and concentrate on managing the department himself¹⁵⁶.

However, E.B. Wagengeim responded by offering to remain as a correspondent. As an advantage, he indicated his willingness to work as a correspondent for a lower salary than the other candidates for this post were demanding. In this way, SPTA could save money. In addition, finding a new correspondent in Riga, which was engulfed in strikes, was practically impossible at that time. Therefore, the agency's management did not want to take risks and accepted E.B. Wagengeim's conditions. At the same time, a second correspondent, N.N. Gerzdorf, was hired¹⁵⁷.

After the unrest in Riga ended in early 1906, the local branch faced a new problem in the form of disputes with subscribers. The newspapers that had subscribed to SPTA telegrams did not receive them during the unrest, because the branch's work was suspended. In January 1906, these newspapers notified E. B. Wagengeim that they would not pay subscriptions for December 1905, when the branch was closed. This statement was made by the newspapers «Rizhskie Vedomosti» and «Rizhsky Vestnik», as well as the syndicate of four German-language newspapers. E. B. Wagengeim reported this to the assistant director A. A. Gelfer. He decided to compromise and offered the newspapers to pay half the

¹⁵⁶ Letters from the Board of Directors of the Agency to E.B. Wagenheim. December 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 91. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵⁷ Letter from E.B. Vagengeim to the Agency Board. December 24, 1905 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 95. (*in Russian*)

subscription price for the days when the branch was closed. The newspapers accepted these conditions. Also in January 1906, F. I. Mettus resigned from the SPTA due to health reasons, and E.B. Wagenheim, who had been acting head of the department, officially took over this position¹⁵⁸. The agency management considered other candidates, but no suitable one was found, and E. B. Wagengeim met the criteria established for the head of the department.

However, the management of the SPTA was not completely satisfied with the work of E. B. Wagengeim and in January 1906 decided to reduce his salary. It directly depended on the number of telegrams sent that were valuable to the agency. The head of the Riga department was paid for each one. In January, the Board decided to reduce the fee for one telegram by almost 50%. Director P. I. Miller informed E. B. Wagengeim about this in a letter and explained this decision by the fact that their previous agreement was concluded at the height of unrest in Riga, and the head of the department received an allowance for working in difficult conditions. But when the unrest ended, the management decided to remove the allowance¹⁵⁹.

However, E.B. Vagengeim did not put up with this. In a reply letter, he stated that if his salary was reduced, he would unilaterally stop working and resign from the following day. In this case, E.B. Vagengeim planned to shift all his duties to the correspondent N.N. Gerzdorf¹⁶⁰. In turn, the management of SPTA was not ready for the departure of the head of the Riga branch and the search for a replacement for him. Therefore, director P. I. Miller entered into negotiations with E. B. Vagengeim, who was effectively blackmailing the agency. As a result, the parties managed to reach a compromise, and the salary of the head of the branch

¹⁵⁸ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to E.B. Vagengeim. January 12, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 99. (*in Russian*)

¹⁵⁹ Letter from P.I. Miller to E.B. Wagengeim. January 13, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 111. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶⁰ Letter from E.B. Vagengeim to P.I. Miller. January 16, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 115. (*in Russian*)

was not reduced so significantly¹⁶¹. Despite this scandal, E.B. Vagengeim continued to manage the Riga branch. He managed to improve its work compared to the period of F.I. Mettus, and there were no more complaints from the agency's management about E.B. Vagengeim.

The Kiev branch of SPTA was also inherited from TTA. It was created in the structure of TTA on January 1, 1903. The first head of the Kiev branch was I.V. Polyakov, who successfully carried out his work. In July 1903, he was transferred to Moscow to head the local branch. I.V. Polyakov was replaced as the head of the Kyiv branch by Z.V. Polyakov¹⁶².

The SPTA branch in Kharkov, which had been opened under the TTA, began operating in August 1904. However, it too was problematic. In Kharkov, it was not possible to find enough subscribers for the general news bulletins. Therefore, the local branch worked only with commercial telegrams, for which there was demand.

TTA also had a branch in Rostov-on-Don, which began operating in 1903. However, it was not able to find enough subscribers to cover the costs of the entire branch. Therefore, by 1904 and the transformation of TTA into SPTA, the Rostov branch was closed. The head of the branch remained as a correspondent in Rostov-on-Don. In 1908, there was an attempt to recreate the branch, but the SPTA employee S.K. Penevsky, who was sent for this purpose, was unable to find enough subscribers¹⁶³.

Thus, in 1904-1906, the majority of the SPTA branch system was created in the cities of the Russian Empire (mainly in its western part). The purpose of creating the branch system was to more evenly distribute the workload within it, since some of the responsibilities were delegated from the Central Branch to the

¹⁶¹ Letters from P.I. Miller to E.B. Vagengeim. January 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1107. L. 116-117. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶² Letters from P.I. Miller to Z.V. Polyakov. July 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1081. L. 99. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶³ Report by S.K. Penevsky on the results of the trip to the South of Russia. April 7, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 166. (*in Russian*)

regional branches. This initiative was successful, the branches began to attract new clients and, as a result, more profit. However, at first, the branches received too much independence, which in some cases harmed SPTA.

Chapter 2. SPTA in 1906-1910

2.1. Development of the structure of the SPTA in 1906-1910

At the end of May 1906, P. I. Miller left the post of managing director of SPTA and was appointed financial agent in Berlin. As the former director noted, despite the difficulties of work during the Russo-Japanese War and the fight against censorship, the agency was actively developing and was of benefit to all of Russia, supplying the population with news¹⁶⁴. Before that, on April 24, 1906, V.N. Kokovtsov became the Minister of Finance and, therefore, the curator of SPTA for the second time, replacing I.P. Shipov. The latter was the Minister of Finance from October 28, 1905 to April 24, 1906 and practically did not participate in the affairs of the agency.

P.I. Miller was replaced as director by S.S. Trubachev, a literary historian, critic and censor. A.A. Gelfer became his assistant. Now the assistant received more powers and responsibilities. A.A. Gelfer dealt with issues of servicing and working with foreign agencies, and conducted the main correspondence with foreign correspondents of SPTA. He also personally supervised the agency's branch at the State Duma¹⁶⁵. Probably, the change of the director of SPTA was, among other things, initiated by V.N. Kokovtsov. The Minister counted on improving the agency's efficiency under the new director, who immediately began reforms.

On July 1, 1906, SPTA was separated from the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance, received its own cash desk and became a completely independent institution. At the same time, the position of director of

¹⁶⁴ Letter from P.I. Miller to SPTA correspondents. May 29, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 101. L. 146. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶⁵ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to A.A. Gelfer. June 30, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 70. L. 15. (*in Russian*)

SPTA for finance was established with its own staff of employees who dealt with the agency's financial issues¹⁶⁶.

S.S. Trubachev also reformed the agency's structure. The Internal Affairs Communications Service now included four departments. The first department, headed by G.E. Kalin, dealt with official news. The second department, headed by Y.V. Aleksandrovsky, dealt with local political and party news. The third department, headed by V.S. Ermilov, dealt with economic news and information from the trade and industrial spheres. The fourth department, headed by A.N. Kireyenko, dealt with various news from the life of society that were not within the purview of the previous departments of the Internal Affairs Communications Service. In addition, a branch of the SPTA was created under the State Duma of the Russian Empire, which began its work in May 1906 together with the Duma of the 1st convocation¹⁶⁷.

The new structure was formed in July 1906. Each of the four department heads was given an explanation of their responsibilities. For example, in the notice to Y.V. Aleksandrovsky it was stated that the area of responsibility of his department was the City Duma, zemstvos and class institutions. Their activities were to be covered. Y.V. Aleksandrovsky himself had to participate daily in meetings on morning newspapers, which took place at 10 a.m.¹⁶⁸

In turn, the letter to the head of the department of news from the trade and industrial spheres V.S. Ermilov stated that he and his employees should especially strictly check the information with which they work and which they publish. As noted in the letter, the head of the department will be responsible for the reliability¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁶ Report to the Minister of Finance on the audit of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from February 1 to September 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 6-7. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶⁷ Notification to Y.V. Aleksandrovsky. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1209. L. 138. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* L. 138. (*in Russian*)

¹⁶⁹ Letter from A.V. Shpiganovich to V.S. Ermilov. July 27, 1906 // RSHA F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1209. L. 140. (*in Russian*)

Changes in the structure of the SPTA, gradual expansion and complication of work required strict accounting of employees. In the first years of the agency's activity, there was no comprehensive and detailed accounting of its personnel. Brief information was collected about most of its employees: last name, first name, patronymic, date of birth, religion and class affiliation. The collected information was mainly limited to these facts. At the same time, there were not even forms in which the promotion of employees was recorded.

Therefore, S.S. Trubachev ordered the creation of a database of the SPTA personnel. On November 29, 1906, the management sent out a special letter to correspondents with an order to provide detailed information about themselves, which included educational qualifications, type of service and occupation before joining the SPTA¹⁷⁰.

The above information, as well as other information about employees, was considered secret in SPTA. However, up to a certain point, this was not legally secured, and individual employees did not observe secrecy and disclosed information. For example, in August 1907, a scandal occurred within SPTA when the management learned of a leak of information about the organization's work to the *Birzhevye Vedomosti* newspaper. This newspaper published an article with substantive criticism of SPTA's activities, and its author managed to find out internal information from the agency. After this incident, SPTA employees signed special documents on non-disclosure of information about the agency's work¹⁷¹.

Also, after the SPTA left the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance, changes were made to the regulatory documents - instructions for employees. At the same time, other ministries paid more attention to the SPTA, which also wanted to participate in its management. In the fall of 1906, the Minister of Trade and Industry D.A. Filosofov in a letter to the Minister of Finance

¹⁷⁰ Circular of the SPTA Board. November 29, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1209. L. 156. (*in Russian*)

¹⁷¹ Circular of the SPTA Board. August 23, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1209. L. 227. (*in Russian*)

V.N. Kokovtsov proposed to expand the Agency Council and include a representative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. D.A. Filosofov motivated this by the fact that the director of the SPTA did not have access to information from the Ministry of Trade and Industry¹⁷².

In his response letter, V.N. Kokovtsov spoke negatively about D.A. Filosofov's idea. The Minister of Finance noted that the SPTA essentially follows the interests of the state policy in matters of finance, domestic and foreign policy. V.N. Kokovtsov stated that for the successful operation of the SPTA, it must be managed promptly. The Minister noted that excessive bureaucratization and the excessively large size of the Council would harm the work of the agency. He also pointed out that it was for this reason that other ministries (except for the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) did not have their representatives on the Agency Council, but this did not interfere with the successful operation of the SPTA¹⁷³. But in the end, D.A. Filosofov's project to attract the Ministry of Trade and Industry will be partially implemented by 1909, when the candidacy of one of the three members of the Council (the head of the Commercial Department) will be sent to the Minister of Trade and Industry for approval¹⁷⁴. In turn, the full meetings of the SPTA Council were not held often. Usually, issues related to the agency's activities were resolved in the course of business, without meetings and bureaucratization. The most important issues were discussed at the meetings, for example, changes to the instructions for the agency's employees.

At the same time, the SPTA began to cooperate more actively with the Printing Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was headed at that

¹⁷² Letter from D.A. Filosofov to V.N. Kokovtsov. September 27, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 34. L. 45. (*in Russian*)

¹⁷³ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to D.A. Filosofov. October 9, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 34. L. 7-9. (*in Russian*)

¹⁷⁴ Special Journals of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Empire. 1909–1917. 1909 / Federal Archives Agency, Russian State Historical Archives, responsible for compilation, author introduction and notes B.D. Galperin. M.: Rossiyskaya politicheskaya entsiklopediya (ROSSPEN), 2000. Pp. 84–86. (*in Russian*)

time by A.A. Girs, the future director of the agency. In November 1906, the then director of the SPTA, S.S. Trubachev, approached him and proposed that he transfer copies of foreign press reviews, which were made in the Printing Department for ministers and high-ranking officials, to the agency every day. As S.S. Trubachev noted, the SPTA itself was engaged in reviewing the foreign press in order to refute the false news about Russia published there. However, the director noted that the employees of the SPTA and the Printing Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were doing the same job. Moreover, in the opinion of S.S. Trubachev, his employees were doing it worse. Therefore, the director of the SPTA asked the head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to send reviews of the foreign press. S.S. Trubachev stated that his employees who were engaged in the analysis of the foreign press could improve their skills using the example of the employees of the Press Department¹⁷⁵.

In turn, A.A. Girs agreed with S.S. Trubachev's proposal and in a reply letter stated that the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would provide SPTA with press reviews. However, he noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would not send reviews to SPTA itself, and an agency employee would have to come and get them¹⁷⁶.

By 1907, SPTA had become a virtual monopoly in Russia, because on January 1, 1907, RTA, unable to withstand competition with the state agency, closed. The SPTA management dedicated a special circular to its employees to this event. In it, it noted that in the absence of competition, SPTA should work as reliably and efficiently as it did during the competition with RTA¹⁷⁷.

In turn, by 1907, SPTA became an equal member of a consortium of 17 of the largest and most developed telegraph agencies from Europe and North

¹⁷⁵ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to A.A. Girs. November 3, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 24. L. 32. (*in Russian*)

¹⁷⁶ Letter from A.A. Girs to S.S. Trubachev. November 5, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 24. L. 32. (*in Russian*)

¹⁷⁷ Circular letter of the Agency Board to correspondents. January 4, 1907. // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 101. L. 225. (*in Russian*)

America. By that time, it had representatives in the largest cities of Europe, the Far East and the Middle East. SPTA also had about 2,000 permanent correspondents in provincial and district cities of the Russian Empire¹⁷⁸.

By 1907, a subscription system had been formed. SPTA offered customers paid subscriptions to news telegrams on political or commercial issues. A mandatory condition for those purchasing a newspaper subscription was the need to leave a link to SPTA when publishing news. If the condition was violated, the subscription was revoked¹⁷⁹.

The subscription to political circulars included several types of news. Firstly, various political news from Russia and other countries. Secondly, government announcements, decrees, orders (only SPTA, as a state agency, had the right to distribute them). The subscription to commercial telegrams included news related to economic issues. Firstly, stock and currency quotes on the St. Petersburg Stock Exchange. Secondly, bread prices on Russian and foreign markets. Thirdly, cotton prices. Fourthly, flax prices. Telegrams on the first three topics were delivered to clients every day. In turn, telegrams with flax prices arrived 3-4 times a week¹⁸⁰.

However, the development of SPTA as an agency for informing the population was uneven and difficult. In a report to V.N. Kokovtsov on February 1, 1907, the director of the agency S.S. Trubachev noted that the development of SPTA was ahead of the development of the press in Russia. He gave an example that about 100 cities did not have their own daily newspapers, but at the same time there were printing houses where the agency's news bulletins could be printed. According to the director, because of this, the growth in the number of subscriptions to SPTA would stop, and a significant part of the population would be left without news. To solve this problem, S.S. Trubachev proposed merging SPTA with private business. He created a draft agreement between SPTA and

¹⁷⁸ Advertisement for subscription to SPA Bulletins for 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 101. L. 230. (*in Russian*)

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. L. 230. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. L. 230. (*in Russian*)

entrepreneur V.S. Yakobson, who proposed publishing the agency's telegrams in those cities that did not have their own newspapers¹⁸¹.

But V.N. Kokovtsov rejected this agreement and ordered to first hold consultations with other members of the Council of Ministers. In addition, the Minister of Finance considered V.S. Yakobson an unreliable business partner for SPTA, cooperation with whom could damage the agency's reputation¹⁸².

On March 13, 1907, S.S. Trubachev died, and the next day, A.A. Girs, who had previously headed the Printing Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was appointed the new director of the SPTA¹⁸³.

Under the management of A.A. Girs, SPTA continued to develop and expand. In 1907, an important event for the status of the agency took place. Negotiations began with the government of Serbia regarding the exchange of information between the telegraph agencies of the two countries directly, without intermediaries in the form of a consortium of agencies. Serbia was the initiator of the negotiations. On behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia N. Pašić, they were handled by I. Ivanić, the director of the Serbian telegraph agency «Press Bureau», which was managed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The negotiations dragged on for several months, but the Russian and Serbian sides came to an agreement. Direct cooperation between the two state agencies began in 1908¹⁸⁴.

For this purpose, a special instruction was developed, which included topics, news on which should be transmitted directly to Serbia via the new communication channel. According to the instruction, these were: «debates in the State Duma, in which Serbia and the Balkan question are touched upon; the opinions of political

¹⁸¹ Memo from S.S. Trubachev to V.N. Kokovtsov. February 1, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 16. L. 10. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸² Ibid. L. 10. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸³ Circular letter of A.A. Girs to correspondents. March 18, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 101. L. 235. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸⁴ Letters of I. Ivanich to the Agency Board. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1042. L. 1-5. (*in Russian*)

figures of Russia on these issues; the views of the Russian government and official circles on issues concerning Serbia, the Slavic states and the Balkan question»¹⁸⁵.

However, direct transmission of news from Russia to Serbia and back was ultimately impossible for logistical reasons. Telegrams on this route went via Vienna anyway. In turn, Austria-Hungary had its own interests in the Balkans and was at odds with Serbia, which could create problems for the transmission of bulletins. Therefore, SPTA and the «Press Bureau» jointly developed a system of codes and code words for exchanging information with each other. For example, news about Serbia and Macedonia that went from the «Press Bureau» to SPTA were marked with the code word «Paul» and had to be published without reference to the Serbian agency¹⁸⁶.

In the same year of 1908, a similar agreement was concluded with the state telegraph agency of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency. As in the case of the «Press Bureau», telegrams were sent via the Austrian «Korrespondenz Bureau». Therefore, for the exchange of particularly important news between the agencies, a special code was also used in the form of the phrase: «Sofia servi». According to the instructions, news on the following topics was transmitted to the Bulgarian agency: «on the actions of the Russian government and the people's representation in political matters concerning the affairs of the Balkan Peninsula; summaries of articles in the Russian press that may be of interest to Bulgaria; opinions expressed by statesmen and party leaders on issues concerning Bulgarian policy; general news of interest to all agencies»¹⁸⁷.

By 1910, a network of 9 branches of the SPTA had been formed on the territory of the Russian Empire: in Moscow, Kyiv, Kharkov, Odessa, Revel, Riga,

¹⁸⁵ Instructions for servicing the Serbian Press Bureau and the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency. 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1042. L. 26. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸⁶ Letters of I. Ivanich to the Agency Board. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1042. L. 11. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸⁷ Instructions for servicing the Serbian Press Bureau and the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency. 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1042. L. 26. (*in Russian*)

Tiflis, Warsaw and Lodz. In 1906-1910, all branches were expanded, new employees were recruited there¹⁸⁸.

However, the expansion had a downside, it required more and more investment. And the increase in expenses for branches led to the fact that SPTA still had little available funds. In addition, as noted in the agency, there were not enough funds to implement the entire plan to create an information service¹⁸⁹.

Therefore, from October 1, 1906, the cost of a subscription for 1 month was increased from 150 rubles to 200 rubles. The press, already subscribed to the SPTA telegrams, tried to get discounts for themselves. At the same time, there were newspapers that received subsidies from the state to pay for subscriptions. These were right-wing newspapers with small circulations¹⁹⁰.

The debate about discounts on newspaper subscriptions continued for several more years. In April 1907, the leader of the «Union of October 17» party, A.I. Guchkov, personally approached the SPTA with a request to reduce the fee for news about the Duma for the Octobrist newspaper, Voice of Moscow. A meeting of the Agency Council was held on April 18, 1907, to discuss this issue. Director A. A. Girs spoke out against a discount for Voice of Moscow, since this would create a precedent and force other publications to actively demand discounts for themselves. L.V. Polovtsov, a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, disagreed with him. He tried to convince the Council that the «Union of October 17» party was completely loyal to the state, and therefore deserved a privilege from the agency. However, A.A. Neratov, a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Council, agreed with A.A. Girs, and not with L.V. Polovtsov. According to Neratov, it would be strategically disadvantageous for SPTA to make such discounts and lose revenues, which were insufficient at that

¹⁸⁸ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 222. (*in Russian*)

¹⁸⁹ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to the newspaper editors. November 27, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1180. L. 31. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. L. 31. (*in Russian*)

time. As a result, the Council voted that subscription prices would remain unchanged even for the «Golos Moskvy»¹⁹¹.

After this, in 1908, A.A. Girs decided to conduct an audit of the financial position of SPTA for all the past years. On January 29, 1908, he contacted the Minister of Finance V.N. Kokovtsov about this. As A.A. Girs noted in his letter, he did not believe that the agency was spending its funds effectively. According to the director's plan, having received and analyzed data for several years of work, it would be possible to change SPTA and make its activities more effective and profitable¹⁹².

V.N. Kokovtsov supported the idea of A.A. Girs and instructed officials from the Special Chancellery for the Credit Section of the Ministry of Finance to fully study the economic activity of SPTA¹⁹³. The audit of the agency lasted 7 months. It began on February 1, 1908, and was completed only on September 4, 1908¹⁹⁴.

The audit committee concluded in its report that SPTA was operating inefficiently from a financial standpoint. They noted that the agency's expenses were not in line with its revenues, and even strong growth in subscription revenues could not correct the problem. Meanwhile, the deficit was also growing¹⁹⁵. The auditors stated in their report that the budget overruns at SPTA were not an accident, but the result of miscalculations in the organization of the agency's work and constant management errors. They noted that the management of SPTA had in

¹⁹¹ Minutes of the meeting of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency of April 18, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 49. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹² Letter from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. January 29, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 4. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹³ Copy of the report of P.A. Stolypin. March 14, 1908 // RSHA. F. 776. Inv. 33. D. 111. L. 81. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹⁴ Report to the Minister of Finance on the audit of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from February 1 to September 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 9-10. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* L. 29-32. (*in Russian*)

fact misled government agencies by stating in their reports that the agency's financial position was favorable¹⁹⁶.

Based on the calculations and facts, the commission concluded that in its current form, SPTA cannot exist solely on subscription revenues and that it needs internal financial reforms. The auditors particularly noted that the agency needs a new accounting and reporting system to prevent further losses¹⁹⁷.

The commission proposed an action plan for SPTA to improve its financial situation. First, reduce expenses as much as possible. Second, create a new accounting department. Third, draw up income and expense estimates using the experience of previous years. Fourth, reconcile the income and expense balance every month. Fifth, organize a commission independent of the administration to audit the finances. Sixth, use the net profit to pay off existing debts. The commission's customer, V.N. Kokovtsov, generally approved its plan¹⁹⁸.

On August 4, 1908, when the preliminary results of the audit were already known, a meeting of the SPTA Council was held to discuss the new financial policy and the budget for 1909. The meeting began with a discussion of the reduction in the agency's income from subscriptions, which was noted in the report to the budget for the past year of 1907. The SPTA employees explained the reduction by the changed socio-political situation in the country, in which, with the end of the revolution, the population's interest in political events began to decline. The loss of demand hit the sales of newspapers, some of which were forced to close. In turn, the closure of newspapers reduced the number of subscribers and the SPTA's income. As noted in the report, this trend began in 1907 and continued in 1908. The report proposed drawing up the budget for 1909 taking into account an even greater decline. As it turned out, the Political Department was unprofitable,

¹⁹⁶ Report to the Minister of Finance on the audit of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency from February 1 to September 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 33. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. L. 34-35. (*in Russian*)

¹⁹⁸ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov. September 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1632. L. 35-37. (*in Russian*)

and it was because of it that the agency had financial problems. The Commercial Department was financially successful with a net profit of 17,500 rubles in 1908 and de facto helped support the Political Department¹⁹⁹.

Based on these assumptions, a drop in the SPTA's income in 1909 by 33,146 rubles relative to the income for 1908 was expected. Because of this, it was proposed to reduce the agency's operating expenses as much as possible. It was decided to reduce the salary fund by 22,000 rubles. It was decided to reduce the expenses on telegraph communication by 27,000 rubles. They planned to save especially significantly on correspondents' fees; they decided to reduce this expense item by 43,173 rubles, almost half of the expenses on them in 1908²⁰⁰.

A.A. Evtifiev, a member of the Council and a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, disagreed with the note. He noted that reducing the number of correspondents and the use of the telegraph would reduce the flow of information coming to SPTA. A.A. Evtifiev stated that in this way the quality of the agency's work would decline and it would continue to lose subscribers. The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs considered cutting expenses on such items to be an extreme temporary measure that was better not to use. He also disagreed with the conclusion from the note that the reduction in the number of subscribers was due to the stabilization of the socio-political situation. A.A. Evtifiev noted that SPTA has room for growth and the capture of new markets in Russia²⁰¹.

In turn, A.A. Evtifiev proposed to the other members of the Council his plan for improving the economic situation of the agency. He believed that the representation of SPTA abroad could be reduced, because it mainly provided unimportant, in the opinion of the Council member, news. And the remaining correspondents could handle the important ones. The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs especially emphasized that too much money was spent on the

¹⁹⁹ Journal of the meeting of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency of August 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 42. (*in Russian*)

²⁰⁰ Ibid. L. 42. (*in Russian*)

²⁰¹ Ibid. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

foreign direction and cited expenditure figures. Receiving news from other countries cost SPTA 70,200 rubles per year. This amount included: payments to foreign news agencies (37,000 rubles), salaries of correspondents (32,000 rubles) and a monthly fee (1,200 rubles). In turn, the corresponding expenses in Russia amounted to only 16,700 rubles²⁰².

A.A. Evtifiev placed special emphasis on the conceptual side of the agency's work. He believed that it should not pursue news that intrigues the public (incidents, crimes, scandals), but should transfer resources to covering life in Russia and especially highlight positive news. According to A.A. Evtifiev, the new strategy would help to win over more subscribers in the provinces, who would be interested in this kind of news. But at the same time, he believed that there was no point in sending detailed reports on events in the Duma to the regions, explaining this by the lack of interest in it among residents of the provinces²⁰³.

A.A. Evtifiev also suggested taking into account the successful experience of the Commercial Department within the entire SPTA, adjusting the direction of the Political Department. According to the representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Political Department needs to be more involved in trade, industrial and financial news in order to attract new clients, which brought success to the Commercial Department²⁰⁴. However, this could lead de facto to the dissolution of the Political Department into the Commercial Department.

But at the same time, A.A. Evtifiev presented a program to change the structure of the SPTA in order to ensure efficient operation. He proposed to review the system of branches in different cities and transfer unprofitable ones to those cities where it would be more profitable to work. He also formulated a list of new requirements for correspondents in Russia and other countries, which could help to

²⁰² Journal of the meeting of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency of August 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

²⁰³ Ibid. L. 42. (*in Russian*)

²⁰⁴ Ibid. L. 42. (*in Russian*)

weed out unreliable or ineffective employees. A.A. Evtifiev proposed to review the instructions for correspondents and the amount of their remuneration²⁰⁵.

The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs also noted that correspondents could work better, which required upgrading their qualifications. And circulars and other business documents, in his opinion, could not help with this. Therefore, A.A. Evtifiev proposed introducing the position of agent-instructors within the SPTA. According to the plan, they were experienced and successful employees who were sent on business trips to cities where there were branches or correspondents for a certain period of time. During their business trips, agent-instructors were to share their experience with colleagues, train them, analyze the work of branches and suggest ways to improve the economic situation and increase the popularity of the SPTA in the region. In turn, the Council supported the initiative of A.A. Evtifiev and submitted it along with the estimate to the Minister of Finance²⁰⁶. Subsequently, individual provisions of A.A. Evtifiev's plan will be taken into account and implemented.

Despite attempts to reform the SPTA and change its financial policy, it was not possible to quickly fix its problems. By the end of 1909, it became clear that the SPTA's debts not only had not decreased, but had actually grown. The total debt for all loans already amounted to more than 600,000 rubles, which was a huge sum for the agency. The main creditors remained the Special Chancellery for the Credit Part of the Ministry of Finance (1/3 of the debt) and the Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (approximately 2/3 of the debt)²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁵ Journal of the meeting of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency of August 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1155. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

²⁰⁶ Ibid. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

²⁰⁷ Certificate of debts of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. December 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1311. L. 17. (*in Russian*)

By the beginning of 1909, SPTA had 302 subscriptions to political telegrams²⁰⁸. However, commercial ones were more than twice as popular at that time, there were 736 such subscriptions. It is worth noting that records were kept of where the subscription was issued, at the Board in St. Petersburg or at regional branches. As it turned out, 349 subscribers issued a contract at the Board, and 387 at regional branches, they were divided almost equally²⁰⁹.

The State Duma, which knew about the 1908 audit, became interested in the activities and finances of the SPTA. The deputies sought to save money and believed that the agency had too many benefits and pointed out its financial problems. On December 9, 1908, at a meeting of the Duma Budget Commission, a discussion was held on the issue: «On the provision by the Minister of Finance of considerations on a more precise definition of the relationship of the St. Petersburg Agency to the Ministry of Finance». The deputies once again expressed their opinion that the SPTA was not working economically and effectively enough²¹⁰.

In turn, the head of the Ministry of Finance, V.N. Kokovtsov, who spoke on this issue on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, absolutely disagreed with the deputies. Convincing them of the correctness of his position, he referred to the experience of other countries. As the main example, the Minister of Finance cited the British telegraph agency «Reuters». As V.N. Kokovtsov noted, «Reuters» has significant benefits in the British Empire, which helped it expand and become one of the main telegraph agencies in the world. He gave an example with a commission for transferring money abroad, which is extremely important for the operation of a large telegraph agency. For «Reuters», such a service in Britain cost 8 times less than for SPTA in Russia. Therefore, V.N. Kokovtsov proposed increasing the benefits for SPTA, but this idea did not find support among the

²⁰⁸ Information on subscribers to political telegrams. January 1, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1311. L. 64. (*in Russian*)

²⁰⁹ Ibid. L. 64. (*in Russian*)

²¹⁰ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to S.I. Timashev. December 1908 // RSHA. F. 23. Inv. 1. D. 6. L. 61. (*in Russian*)

deputies at that meeting. The Minister of Finance also noted that the exchange of information with other countries with the help of telegraph agencies is necessary for the state²¹¹.

Then the leader of the cadets P.N. Milyukov came forward with a counter-proposal. He expressed his opinion, which was that a private agency would work more effectively than a state agency and would not cause losses to the treasury. As an example of a successful private telegraph agency P.N. Milyukov cited the «Associated Press» from the USA. V.N. Kokovtsov did not agree with P.N. Milyukov and cited as a counter-example the private RTA, which eventually closed down²¹². However, the Minister of Finance did not emphasize that SPTA beat RTA in the competitive struggle largely thanks to state assistance.

By 1909, the MFA's influence on SPTA had increased thanks to Foreign Minister A.P. Izvolsky. He understood the agency's importance and actively assisted it. For example, the minister gave SPTA employees special permits that allowed them to attend certain diplomatic events, and correspondents became able to access MFA connections. In turn, V.N. Kokovtsov, the head of the ministry that created SPTA, did not actively oppose the strengthening of the influence of another ministry. In 1909, the Foreign Minister proposed to the Council of Ministers to legally secure the MFA's status as the SPTA's curator abroad. The Council of Ministers agreed with this proposal and decided that the MFA would manage SPTA's activities in other countries²¹³. According to the new regulation, the hiring and firing of correspondents in other countries had to be agreed upon by the director of the SPTA with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who would approve or reject the decision of the SPTA.

However, A.P. Izvolsky's plans to further strengthen the MFA's influence on SPTA were not fulfilled. At the same time, he suffered a grave diplomatic defeat

²¹¹ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to S.I. Timashev. December 1908 // RSHA. F. 23. Inv. 1. D. 6. L. 61. (*in Russian*)

²¹² Ibid. L. 61. (*in Russian*)

²¹³ Izvolsky A.P. Memories. M.: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya, 1989. P. 114. (*in Russian*)

during the Bosnian crisis of 1908-1909 and lost his reputation, while the Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs P.A. Stolypin became personally interested in the agency's issues. According to V.N. Kokovtsov, the Prime Minister regularly used the news that SPTA transmitted to the Council of Ministers (however, he began to receive special secret telegrams only in March 1909, as has already been said). Moreover, V.N. Kokovtsov often personally transmitted especially important information from agency representatives to P.A. Stolypin. But in early 1907, the Prime Minister criticized the work of SPTA for reports on the level of support for parties participating in the elections to the Second Duma. He noted that the data from agency representatives often and significantly differed from the data transmitted by the MFA employees. P.A. Stolypin trusted the employees of his department more and therefore often criticized the work of the telegraph agency representatives. The Prime Minister even proposed to fire the director of the SPTA, A.A. Girs. However, V.N. Kokovtsov was able to temporarily defend him. As a result, after the elections to the II Duma, it turned out that the data on the level of support for parties from the SPTA were much closer to the truth than the data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. P.A. Stolypin was convinced of the usefulness of the agency for the state, and the incident was exhausted²¹⁴. Probably, this incident showed the Prime Minister the usefulness of the agency and eventually led him to the idea of reforming and subordinating the SPTA directly to the Council of Ministers.

By the end of 1909, P.A. Stolypin began reforming the SPTA. The development of the draft of the new «Regulations on the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency» began on September 23, 1909, and on December 22 it was submitted for approval to the Council of Ministers. According to the draft, SPTA was transferred from the control of the Ministry of Finance (with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs) to the jurisdiction of the

²¹⁴ Kokovtsov V.N. From my past. Memories. 1903-1919. In two books. Book one. M.: Nauka, 1992. Pp. 213-214. (*in Russian*)

Council of Ministers. This step was explained by the agency's broad capabilities for collecting information that was needed by all ministries, especially the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Moreover, all ministries were already using the data provided by SPTA. Therefore, it was decided to legally approve this. The new «Regulation» also legally formalized the relationship of the telegraph agency with other ministries, which were to provide assistance to it if necessary. In turn, the agency was obliged to provide the necessary information to the ministries, the state controller, and the Main Directorate of Land Management and Agriculture. In addition, an expansion of the staff of the Central Office of SPTA was approved in order to improve the efficiency of work²¹⁵.

On December 31, 1909, Emperor Nicholas II approved the new «Regulations on the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency». On the same day, A. A. Girs, a former employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was replaced as director by O. I. Lamkert, an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and a former censor. According to the Regulations, the SPTA was divided into two independent departments: Commercial and Political. Both departments conducted separate office work, but they had a common estimate of income and expenses. The Political Department was larger and included branches in other cities, private correspondents and the Central Office in St. Petersburg. In turn, the Central Office consisted of several departments. The Editorial Section dealt with management and editing issues. The Central Office also included two special branches of the SPTA at the State Duma and the State Council²¹⁶.

The updated Council supervised all the work of the SPTA. It included the managing director, the second director and the head of the Commercial Department. Both directors were approved by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The head of the Commercial Department was appointed by the Minister

²¹⁵ Special Journals of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Empire. 1909–1917. 1909. Pp. 517-519. (*in Russian*)

²¹⁶ Letter from V.I. Timiryazev to A.A. Gelfer. 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 217-218. (*in Russian*)

of Finance, but only after the approval of the candidate by the Minister of Trade and Industry. The affairs of the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» of the Ministry of Finance were also transferred to the Commercial Department. The Commercial Department received a certain autonomy and remained within the sphere of influence of the Ministry of Finance. The procedure for approving correspondents in other countries was also formalized; they were approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The powers of the managing director were significantly increased, and the other two members of the agency Council were to deal with business issues²¹⁷.

The period from 1906 to 1910 became a turning point for SPTA. On the one hand, the agency continued to develop, its turnover increased, new types of subscriptions for clients were created. On the other hand, the previous financial model of SPTA ceased to be effective, and the agency faced a deficit of funds and, as a result, an increase in debt. But, despite this, SPTA demonstrated its capabilities and potential, remaining the main telegraph agency of Russia. Therefore, at first the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to transfer SPTA under its influence²¹⁷, and in 1909 SPTA was transferred from the structure of the Ministry of Finance to the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers.

²¹⁷ Letter from V.I. Timiryazev to A.A. Gelfer. 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 217-218. (*in Russian*)

2.2. Branch of the SPTA under the State Duma

Under the pressure of the revolutionary events of 1905 and the large-scale demand of society for democratization, in the summer of 1905 a decision was made to create a parliament in Russia - the State Duma of the Russian Empire. After working on various projects, on August 6, 1905, a manifesto was issued on the creation of the State Duma, which would have advisory functions. But the intensification of unrest and strikes in the country led to the fact that the future Duma received legislative functions. According to the manifesto of October 17, 1905, «no law could take effect without the approval of the State Duma». Already in December 1905, elections were held for the first convocation of the Duma. On April 27, 1906, the State Duma began its work, thus beginning the history of parliamentarism in Russia.

In turn, the SPTA was not going to give up such a valuable information market to competitors and decided to create a special Department under the State Duma. This was a separate structure within the agency, which was supposed to receive and transmit information from the Duma. The employees of the department worked directly in the Tauride Palace, where the parliament was located.

However, until November 1907, the Department did not have the opportunity to demonstrate its work in a sufficiently long-term perspective, because the first two convocations of the Duma did not work for long. The Duma of the 1st convocation existed for 72 days (April-July 1906), and the Duma of the 2nd convocation – 102 days (February-June 1907). They were both dissolved due to a conflict with the central authorities. But the Duma of the 3rd convocation worked for the entire allotted term from November 1907 to July 1912.

When creating the Department under the Duma, the leadership of the SPTA noted that the appearance of the first parliament in Russia would generate enormous interest in society and demand for news from the Duma. The department was created to meet this demand. Some St. Petersburg newspapers also participated in its organization, agreeing to help finance the work of the Department in

exchange for information from correspondents. For this purpose, a new type of subscription for newspapers was created, which included more detailed news from the Duma. There, correspondents worked with fresh stenographic reports and forwarded them. As noted by the leadership of the SPTA, during the work of the first two convocations, the model of targeted financing from some newspapers allowed the agency not to suffer losses in the Duma direction and to increase its demand²¹⁸.

During the work of the Duma of the 3rd convocation, the SPTA Department under the Duma finally formed its working methods and tasks ²¹⁹. During plenary sessions, the Department's staff did the following: 1) issued stenographic reports of sessions for newspapers in St. Petersburg and Moscow; 2) sent brief reports of sessions to newspapers in other cities; 3) sent brief reports of committee sessions and the decisions they made; 4) transmitted the most important news to foreign newspapers through the channels of an international consortium of agencies; 5) sent by telegraph or by mail recordings of speeches by individual deputies to newspapers in the regions where they were elected to the Duma; separate agreements were drawn up for this purpose; 6) edited stenographic reports for distribution (after 1907). The SPTA Department at the Duma also created its own stenographic reports of open sessions. This was done by the agency's stenographers who worked in the Duma. However, in the fall of 1908, during the reorganization of the SPTA and the reduction of expenses, the stenographic division was disbanded. It was decided to purchase stenographic records from the Stenographic Department of the Duma.

For many years, the head of the Department at the Duma was the assistant to the managing director of the SPTA, A.A. Gelfer. In 1912, he was replaced by A.D. Korotnev, since A.A. Gelfer had too many responsibilities, since in the position of

²¹⁸ Note from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

²¹⁹ Ibid. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

assistant to the managing director he was engaged in correspondence with correspondents, of which there were more and more.

During the years of the III Duma, 6 duty editors, stenographers and various employees (copyists, messengers) worked in the Department. The editor of telegrams for Russian newspapers was Y.V. Aleksandrovsky, the editor of telegrams for the foreign press was R.O. Budberg. Both of them and the employees of the telegram department were present in the Duma on the days of general meetings. On the days of commission meetings, Y.V. Aleksandrovsky and part of the telegram department worked. In 1908-1909, senior editors A.D. Korotnev, V.Y. Krichevsky, A.M. Lovyagin. The editors of the newsletters were E.G. Brinkman, Y.B. Brookson, G.E. Kalin, A.N. Karasik, V.F. Meyen, M.S. Model, L.H. Pikhnevich, A.A. Polyansky, N.V. Sorin and P.Y. Stebnitsky²²⁰.

The State Duma was a very important and valuable market for information for the press, and here the SPTA Department had to compete for news with all the major newspapers in Russia and foreign news agencies. By the beginning of the work of the Duma of the 3rd convocation, up to 150 correspondents were accredited there. All major newspapers in Russia had their own journalists in the Duma. Representatives in the Duma were from the St. Petersburg «Birzhevye Vedomosti», «Kolokol», «Novoye Vremya», «Rech», «Rossiya», «Russkoye Znamya», «Russkoye Invalid», «Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti», «Sovremennoye Slovo», and «Torgovopromyshlennaya Gazeta». Journalists from the Moscow newspapers «Golos Moskvy», «Moskovskie Vedomosti», «Russkie Vedomosti», and «Russkoye Slovo» were also accredited. The St. Petersburg newspaper «Rech» and the Moscow newspaper «Russkoe Slovo» had the record for the number of correspondents in the Duma (5 journalists each). The newspapers

²²⁰ List of employees of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency working in the State Duma. September 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 215. (*in Russian*)

«Kievskaya Mysl» and «Odesskie Novosti» had their own representatives in the Duma; they were hired local journalists²²¹.

Also working in the Duma were representatives of foreign news agencies and the press, who were either sent from their countries or were hired Russian citizens. Employees of the German agency Wolf, the British Reuters, the Austrian «Korrespondenz-Bureau», and the American «Associated Press» were accredited to the Duma. In addition, there were correspondents of foreign newspapers in the Duma: «Echo de Paris» from Paris, «Times» and «Daily Telegraph» from London, «Vossische Zeitung» from Berlin, and «Kölnische Zeitung» from Cologne. Journalists from the Russian-language newspapers of Austria-Hungary «Galichanin» and «Prikkarpatskaya Rus» were also present²²².

Journalists working under the Duma joined the organized Society of Journalists. Its chairman was an employee of the editorial board of periodicals of the Ministry of Finance M.M. Fedorov, the deputy was A.A. Pilenko from the newspaper «Novoye Vremya». The Society also had its own secretary, treasurer and 6 more members of the Board²²³.

The SPTA Department at the Duma had to work in conditions of intense competition. At the same time, representatives of the majority of the press had a particularly negative attitude towards competitors from the SPTA. In their articles, they often criticized the state agency for delays and various minor mistakes. However, in conditions of competition, the SPTA Department at the Duma gained valuable experience, noticed successful initiatives of other journalists and, thus, improved its work.

The work of the Department at the Duma was always especially emphasized by the SPTA management. For example, on June 9, 1912, in a message to the head of the Department A.D. Korotnev, the director of the agency O.I. Lamkert noted

²²¹ State Duma III convocation. Session 2. Handbook. Issue 1. SPb: Gostipografia, 1910.

Pp. 160-169. (*in Russian*)

²²² Ibid. Pp. 163-165. (*in Russian*)

²²³ Ibid. Pp. 166-167. (*in Russian*)

the merits of the employees. O.I. Lamkert wrote: «The work of the Department of the agency at the State Duma during the last session of the State Duma ending today required special efforts of the personnel of the Department. With a feeling of deep satisfaction, I must testify that the activities of the department you are in charge of were not accompanied by any shortcomings or shortcomings and therefore deserve full approval. On behalf of the S.-PA, I undertake to express to you and the entire staff of the Department my sincere gratitude for your and his fruitful and zealous work, of which I ask that you inform the entire staff of the Department»²²⁴.

In October 1907, the managing director of the SPTA, A.A. Girs, analyzed the activities of the SPTA Department under the Duma in a note to the Minister of Finance, V.N. Kokovtsov. In it, the director also proposed a plan for changes in the Department under the Duma in order to increase the efficiency of its work. A.A. Girs especially emphasized that the SPTA should act, first of all, quickly in order to compete with representatives of newspapers and other agencies. The director noted that from the point of view of psychology, the first impression of the news consumer is the most important, and therefore the agency should strive to convey the news to the consumer first²²⁵.

A.A. Girs pointed out the harmfulness of the practice of delaying the transfer of information for additional editing. Despite the fact that this way the information became more accurate, the speed of its transfer, in the opinion of the director, suffered too much from this practice. A.A. Girs noted that all this leads to the loss of clients and authority of SPTA²²⁶.

As an example of how the current situation can be corrected, A.A. Girs pointed to the policy of the US authorities, which were able to facilitate the work

²²⁴ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.D. Korotnev. June 9, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 130. (*in Russian*)

²²⁵ Note from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

²²⁶ *Ibid.* L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

of telegraph agencies. The authorities sent programmatic speeches, government declarations and other similar materials to telegraph agencies in advance under a special subscription. When the material was officially released, the agencies immediately began distributing it. For example, this was the case with the programmatic speech of US President Theodore Roosevelt in Congress, the text of which SPTA received a week before the speech itself. Thanks to this, the agency managed to make a correct translation of the speech into Russian and, after receiving the news that T. Roosevelt's speech in Congress took place, promptly distributed it to newspapers²²⁷.

A.A. Girs pointed out another positive aspect of this innovation for the authorities, the possibility of controlling in advance the speeches of deputies that contain criticism of the regime. In this way, it was possible to soften them. In this form, according to the director, they would not be able to cause too much resonance. As A.A. Girs pointed out, the practice of sending texts of speeches and documents in advance would help both SPTA and the authorities²²⁸.

In addition, A.A. Girs noted another problem for the work of the SPTA in the Duma – bureaucratic barriers to the publication of information from closed sessions. According to the «State Duma Institution», excerpts from reports on closed sessions could be published in the press if either the Chairman of the Duma or one of the ministers gave permission for this, depending on the topic of the session. However, this rule did not actually work and harmed the SPTA. The reasons for this were individual deputies and the private press. Deputies participating in closed sessions, usually from opposition factions, promptly reported what was happening at the sessions to correspondents of private publications. It often happened that such information was partially or completely untrue, but appeared in the press quickly and misled the public. In turn, the SPTA

²²⁷ Note from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

²²⁸ Ibid. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

always coordinated the texts of its reports with the Duma leadership and was late in this peculiar race with private publications. The SPTA's reports on closed sessions were published in official newspapers: «Novoye Vremya», «Pravitelstvenny Vestnik», «Rossiya», but later than the deputies' stories – in private newspapers²²⁹.

To remedy the situation, A.A. Girs proposed a set of measures. First, to transmit declarations, programmatic and prepared speeches of government representatives in the Duma to the agency in advance. Second, to give the right to the managing director of SPTA and one of the editors to attend closed sessions of the Duma in order to quickly publish short reports on the results of these sessions approved by the Duma. Third, to establish the obligation of government representatives speaking in the Duma without a prepared speech to immediately review and approve or make edits to the transcript of the speech compiled by SPTA employees²³⁰.

V.N. Kokovtsov approved the proposals of A.A. Girs and forwarded them to Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin on October 24, 1907²³¹. In turn, P.A. Stolypin also agreed with the initiative of the SPTA director. However, he drew attention to the fact that the right of the SPTA representatives to attend closed meetings must be approved by the Chairman of the State Duma²³².

Then on November 7, 1907, V.N. Kokovtsov sent a letter to the then Chairman of the Duma N.A. Khomyakov. The Minister of Finance noted in it that the SPTA was doing very important work, was engaged in impartial (unlike party or other private newspapers) informing the population about events in the Duma. V.N. Kokovtsov also recalled that distorted or deliberately false news about the

²²⁹ Note from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

²³⁰ Ibid. L. 160-161. (*in Russian*)

²³¹ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to P.A. Stolypin. October 24, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 52-54. (*in Russian*)

²³² Letter from P.A. Stolypin to V.N. Kokovtsov. October 29, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 67. (*in Russian*)

Duma was periodically disseminated in the press. Pointing to the need to reduce the amount of such news, the Minister of Finance suggested that the Chairman of the Duma grant permission for the presence of representatives of the SPTA (the managing director, the head of the Department under the Duma or the editor on duty) at closed sessions of the Duma²³³.

N.A. Khomyakov responded only on November 22, 1907. In his letter, the Chairman of the Duma reported that he had familiarized himself with the proposal and, in accordance with the «State Duma Institution», submitted it for discussion to the Duma Conference. However, the Conference rejected the proposal to grant access to SPTA representatives to closed sessions of the Duma. It justified its decision by the fact that the circle of persons to whom access was granted had already been established by law. N.A. Khomyakov noted that allowing SPTA representatives could cause discontent both in the Duma and in the press. However, he added that after some time he might try to approve the proposed plan again²³⁴.

Soon N.A. Khomyakov and the managing director of the SPTA A.A. Girs reached a compromise agreement on closed sessions of the Duma and their coverage in the agency's bulletins. Now the SPTA Department at the Duma could compile short reports on closed sessions in agreement with the chairman of the Duma. Representatives of the agency were not allowed to attend closed sessions, but they were promptly given access to the secret transcripts of such sessions to prepare reports. One editor was chosen to work with the transcripts of closed sessions, whose candidacy was approved by both the director of the SPTA and the Duma. Permission to attend would be issued only in 1912.

As the transcripts of closed sessions were published, the editor of the agency wrote a draft of a short report (retelling) about them. After that, the draft report was

²³³ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to N.A. Khomyakov. November 7, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 75. (*in Russian*)

²³⁴ Letter from N.A. Khomyakov to V.N. Kokovtsov. November 22, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 77. (*in Russian*)

sent to the managing director, who passed it on either to the chairman of the Duma or to the minister who was present at the closed session. In turn, the chairman or minister approved the project (in rare cases, sent it back for revision). After that, the report was copied and handed over to representatives of the Russian and foreign press and sent by telegraph to the editorial offices of provincial newspapers²³⁵. This method of working with reports on secret meetings by the SPTA existed until February 1909.

On February 23, 1909, the first part of a short report on a closed meeting of the Duma to discuss the allocation of funds for the needs of the Baltic Fleet was included in the SPTA bulletins. At approximately 10:30 a.m., the information was passed on to representatives of the press. At this time, the second part of the report of 9 pages was created, which was immediately submitted to the Minister of War A.F. Rediger for approval. But the head of the 1st department of the Chancellery of the State Duma, Y.V. Glinka, violated the procedure and handed over to the Minister of War not the prepared report, but the full transcript. As a result, A.F. Rediger was forced to personally shorten the text to the size of the report, which took about 2 hours. This led to the fact that the SPTA did not have time to pass on the information to the newspapers that were subscribed to it. In turn, Y.V. Glinka forwarded the report of the meeting to several newspapers, with which, as it turned out, he was in collusion. That day, the head of the 1st department of the Duma Chancellery responded to the SPTA employees, according to them, that he acted on the instructions of the chairman N.A. Khomyakov²³⁶.

On February 24, 1909, the head of the Department under the Duma, A.A. Gelfer, reported to the director, A.A. Girs, in a report on the events that had taken place. A.A. Gelfer found out that the report had been received by the newspapers «Birzhevye Vedomosti», «Golos Pravdy», «Novoye Vremya» and «Sankt-

²³⁵ Report by A.A. Gelfer. February 24, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 141. (*in Russian*)

²³⁶ Ibid. 141. (*in Russian*)

Peterburgskie Vedomosti» with the help of Y.V. Glinka. At the same time, SPTA did not receive the report at the right time and was unable to send it to its affiliated newspapers in time. In turn, these newspapers learned that several of their competitors had received valuable information, but they had not²³⁷. All of them, including the foreign press, were extremely dissatisfied with the fact that the SPTA Department at the Duma had failed to fulfill its responsibilities.

Then A.A. Girs immediately forwarded A.A. Gelfer's note to the Chairman of the Duma N.A. Khomyakov along with his letter. A.A. Girs stated that due to the incident on February 23, the SPTA was unable to transmit information about the closed session of the Duma in time. That is, to fulfill its obligations to Russian newspapers and the consortium of foreign telegraph agencies with which there is a special agreement. The director especially noted that due to the actions of Y.V. Glinka, about 300 newspapers from Russia and about 35,000 newspapers from all over the world, connected with the SPTA through the consortium of telegraph agencies, suffered. A.A. Girs stated that responsibility for this delay fell on the SPTA. The director indicated that after the Duma violated the contract, the agency would not pay it for stenographic reports, but would recreate its own stenographic bureau²³⁸. The conflict over the events of February 23 turned out to be connected with another decision of the Duma. It began to transmit transcripts of open sessions not only to the SPTA, but also to the Press Bureau for a smaller sum²³⁹.

However, N.A. Khomyakov did not go to meet the SPTA and apologize, which is probably what A.A. Girs wanted. The Chairman of the Duma in a response letter dated March 10, 1909, stated that the Duma Conference on March 4 considered the complaint of the SPTA regarding the incident of February 23. However, the Conference sided with the head of the 1st Department of the Duma

²³⁷ Report by A.A. Gelfer. February 24, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 141. (*in Russian*)

²³⁸ Letter from A.A. Girs to N.A. Khomyakov. February 24, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 139. (*in Russian*)

²³⁹ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to A.P. Izvolsky. March 6, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 163. (*in Russian*)

Chancellery, Y.V. Glinka, and decided that he had done everything according to the rules. It also agreed to terminate the contract with the SPTA for issuing stenographic reports and issued a new permit for the creation of its own stenographic bureau in the Duma²⁴⁰. Information about the conflict between the Duma leadership and the SPTA also appeared in the press.

After the contract for stenographic records was terminated, A.A. Girs analyzed the impact of the publication of stenographic reports on the SPTA. As it turned out, the interest of clients in these reports during the work of the Duma of the 3rd convocation was constantly falling compared to the times of the Duma of the 1st and 2nd convocations. The newspapers that worked with the SPTA de facto stopped using the sent stenographic records of the meetings. The newspaper employees themselves made retellings of the stenographic records, which were eventually published. At the same time, the number of subscribers to the SPTA bulletins with stenographic records fell, which led to the fact that the publication of such bulletins for St. Petersburg subscribers even turned out to be unprofitable. At the same time, subscribers from other cities retained a greater interest in the stenographic records from the Duma. A.A. Girs linked this trend with the general fatigue of society from overly detailed news about politics and the stabilization of the socio-political life of the country²⁴¹. Readers got used to the Duma, which was new to Russia, and were less interested in it.

The Duma also dealt a serious blow to the sales of SPTA subscriptions with stenographic reports, when, starting in 1909, it began to transmit stenographic reports of open sessions for a lower fee not only to SPTA, but also to virtually anyone who wanted them through the Press Bureau. Because of this, those newspapers that had subscribed to SPTA bulletins from the Duma and paid for them found themselves in an equal position with newspapers that did not pay. This

²⁴⁰ Letter from N.A. Khomyakov to A.A. Girs. March 10, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 150. (*in Russian*)

²⁴¹ Notification from SPTA. April 1, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 145. (*in Russian*)

could not help but cause discontent and an outflow of customers. As a result, the SPTA management decided to refuse to publish full stenographic reports of Duma sessions. On April 1, 1909, the agency sent out a notice to its clients stating that it would no longer publish full stenographic reports. SPTA explained this by the fact that the costs of creating, editing and printing full reports did not pay off, and the newspapers themselves did not print the reports in full anyway. Therefore, the agency decided to publish abridged reports from April 1, 1909, which would be created based on the records of the Duma's own stenographic department²⁴².

Finance Minister V.N. Kokovtsov accepted the initiative of the SPTA management and informed the heads of ministries and departments about it. He noted that the agency made the right decision, because its main task is to quickly transmit information. According to V.N. Kokovtsov, the refusal to publish large verbatim reports will help speed up the work of the SPTA²⁴³.

However, the agency did not completely refuse to publish voluminous materials. SPTA continued to publish full transcripts of speeches by ministers and other government officials, if it was considered necessary. Therefore, V.N. Kokovtsov separately reminded other ministers that SPTA had not stopped publishing speeches, and ministers had to monitor the transfer of transcripts with their speeches themselves. According to this procedure, transcripts approved by ministers were first transferred to the head of the ministerial pavilion of the State Duma, the official for special assignments under the Minister of Internal Affairs L.K. Kumanin. And he, in turn, transferred the papers to the SPTA branch under the Duma²⁴⁴. This order remained in place until 1917, when the State Duma of the Russian Empire was closed, and its branch also ceased to exist.

²⁴² Notification from SPTA. April 1, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 145. (*in Russian*)

²⁴³ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to A.P. Izvolsky. March 6, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1076. L. 163. (*in Russian*)

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* L. 163. (*in Russian*)

The special SPTA Department under the State Duma of the Russian Empire, created in May 1906, was intended by its management to provide the agency with free access to the valuable information market. However, in the Duma, the Department had to compete with both major Russian newspapers and foreign telegraph agencies. At the same time, the Department suffered from censorship restrictions, special rules for working in the Duma, and the need to hurry when transmitting information. As a result, by 1909, its activities became unprofitable, which led to staff reductions, but the Department itself continued to operate until the closure of the Duma in 1917.

2.3. Development of the network of SPTA correspondents in 1906-1910

In the first years of its activity, the SPTA created rules for the work of correspondents practically by trial and error. Clear instructions appeared only in early 1908, after experienced correspondents A.I. Markov from Berlin and P.N. Apostol from Paris were called to St. Petersburg. The latter helped to draw up general instructions, using their experience. At first, A.I. Markov took part in creating the instructions, then P.N. The Paris correspondent recounted the results of his work in a letter to A.A. Gelfer: «Based on daily observation of the work of the agency in compiling newspaper bulletins and circulars, studying the archives and then talking with employees, I have come to understand the basis for the activities of the Paris correspondent in independently servicing the St. Petersburg agency and observing the activities of «Havas». These general principles fully coincide with the draft instructions drawn up in connection with the business trip to St. Petersburg of A.I. Markov and only in some parts should be changed in accordance with the requirements of the Paris service»²⁴⁵.

Also in those years, the practice of using Russian journalists working abroad to obtain information developed. It originated under the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky. Journalists, being specialists in the field of international relations and domestic policy of other countries, were engaged in intelligence activities under the guise of their professional activities. In turn, the diplomatic corps tried not to interfere in the internal affairs of the host country, so as not to cause a diplomatic conflict.

In 1908, SPTA twice helped the diplomatic service of Russia thanks to the work of its correspondent in Berlin A.I. Markov. During his work, he managed to build connections in the press and financial and economic circles and even gain the trust of representatives of the highest circles. On June 9-10, 1908, a meeting between Nicholas II and the King of Great Britain Edward VII took place in Reval

²⁴⁵ Letter from P.N. Apostol to A.A. Gelfer. 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 996. L. 35. (*in Russian*)

Bay. Despite the fact that no important treaties were concluded or loud statements were made, Germany treated it with fear as a confirmation of the rapprochement between Russia and Britain²⁴⁶. The Russian and German press has begun to build up alarm about a possible military clash between these countries²⁴⁷.

Then on July 1, 1908, the German Foreign Ministry invited A. I. Markov for a meeting. There he was asked to convey a confidential message to Russia. Since the Russian ambassador was not in Berlin at the time, the German authorities decided to entrust the information to a correspondent whose friends in financial circles vouched for him. First, the German Foreign Ministry asked to publish a refutation of the article in the «Novoye Vremya» newspaper about German Emperor Wilhelm II sending a letter to Nicholas II with an important statement on foreign policy issues. Second, German officials explained that it was a formal letter regarding the fact that a meeting between the two emperors was not planned for the time being. Third, A. I. Markov was asked to convey that German diplomatic workers in Russia were monitoring publications in the Russian press directed against Germany. The correspondent immediately passed on the information received from German officials to the Russian Foreign Ministry²⁴⁸.

And in October 1908, A.I. Markov became a participant in the events surrounding the so-called Bosnian crisis. The origins of this event in international politics at the beginning of the 20th century come from the revised results of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. By decision of the Berlin Congress in 1878, Austria-Hungary received permission to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina without the consent of the Ottoman Empire, which owned these territories. This situation remained until 1908, when Austria-Hungary, during a political crisis in the Ottoman Empire, decided to legitimize the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

²⁴⁶ Sazonov S.D. Memories. Minsk: Harvest, 2002. Pp. 16-17. (*in Russian*)

²⁴⁷ Letter from A.I. Markov to A.A. Gelfer. July 1, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 936. L. 148-149. (*in Russian*)

²⁴⁸ Ibid. L. 148-149. (*in Russian*)

and officially annex them. But to do this, it was necessary to achieve the consent or neutrality of Russia, which had its own long-standing interests in the Balkans.

The head of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs A. Ehrenthal came up with and played out a diplomatic combination. First, he invited the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia A.P. Izvolsky to a meeting in Buchlau Castle on September 15, 1908, and during the negotiations he achieved the conclusion of an agreement on Russia's consent to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in exchange for Austria-Hungary's promise not to object to the opening of the Black Sea straits for the Russian navy. However, the agreement was not legally formalized. In turn, the leadership of Austria-Hungary, having received Russia's consent, announced the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on October 6, 1908, without warning. De facto deceived A.P. Izvolsky was able to agree with Great Britain, France, Italy and Serbia on joint pressure on Austria-Hungary to force it to abandon the annexation²⁴⁹.

At the end of October 1908, A.P. Izvolsky arrived in Germany to meet with the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs V. von Schoen. In turn, the SPTA correspondent in Berlin A.I. Markov was on vacation at that time, from where he was immediately recalled by the management. Assistant Director A.A. Gelfer instructed the correspondent to accompany the minister and carry out his instructions²⁵⁰.

However, Germany directly supported Austria-Hungary in the conflict, which on February 26, 1909 received the consent of the Ottoman Empire to transfer the rights to Bosnia and Herzegovina in exchange for compensation. Russia and Serbia did not recognize this, and the latter began to prepare for war with Austria-Hungary. However, in March 1909, German diplomacy was able to

²⁴⁹ Kaulin K.V. Interaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the press under the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky // *Izv. Sarat. un-ta. Nov. ser. Ser. Istoriya. Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*. 2019. Vol. 19. P. 153. (*in Russian*)

²⁵⁰ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.I. Markov. October 30, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 936. L. 230. (*in Russian*)

convince Russia and Serbia to recognize the annexation, threatening to side with Austria-Hungary if a war for Bosnia and Herzegovina began²⁵¹.

In the spring of 1909, when the Bosnian crisis was in its acute phase and could lead to war at any moment, A.I. Markov was actively working and sending the information he received to the SPTA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs²⁵².

In July 1909, when Nicholas II arrived in the German city of Kiel on the yacht «Standart» to meet with the German Emperor Wilhelm II, A.I. Markov was present in the city. There, A.P. Izvolsky met with A.I. Markov and thanked him for his work during the Bosnian crisis. A.A. Gelfer also sent a letter of gratitude from the SPTA²⁵³. In turn, the Bosnian crisis destroyed the career of A.P. Izvolsky. The press declared him the culprit of Russia's diplomatic defeat, and the negotiations with A. Ehrenthal on Bosnia and Herzegovina, for which the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not have the authority, caused discontent among Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin. In 1909, the Prime Minister de facto imposed his relative and confidant S.D. Sazonov on A.P. Izvolsky for the post of Deputy Minister, and in 1910 S.D. Sazonov replaced A.P. Izvolsky as Minister. A.P. Izvolsky was sent as Ambassador to Paris and held this post until 1917²⁵⁴. The Bosnian crisis also ended the period of the MFA's influence in SPTA. After his diplomatic defeat, A.P. Izvolsky could no longer strengthen his influence in the agency, especially after P.A. Stolypin himself became interested in the affairs of SPTA.

A.I. Markov was also an actual co-author of the instructions for SPTA correspondents. In December 1907, he was specially invited to St. Petersburg. There, by order of the management, he took an impromptu refresher course. In Russia, on the instructions of the assistant director A.A. Gelfer, he communicated

²⁵¹ Kaulin K.V. Interaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the press under the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky // *Izv. Sarat. un-ta. Nov. ser. Ser. Istoriya. Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*. 2019. Vol. 19. P. 154. (*in Russian*)

²⁵² Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.I. Markov. July 21, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 937. L. 87. (*in Russian*)

²⁵³ *Ibid.* L. 87. (*in Russian*)

²⁵⁴ Soloviev Y.Y. *Memories of a diplomat*. M.: Sozkegiz, 1959. P. 215. (*in Russian*)

with local SPTA correspondents and studied their work. A.I. Markov also took part in the work of the Central Office of SPTA, where he processed information and compiled daily bulletins together with other employees. In addition, the correspondent familiarized himself with the work of the office at the State Duma. Thus, he studied the entire process of SPTA activities, and also gained experience and knowledge from other employees. After that, A.I. Markov compiled a report that was accepted by the agency's management.²⁵⁵ In 1908, instructions for SPTA correspondents will be created based on the report. After that, A.I. Markov returned to Berlin and continued his work. As further events will show, training in St. Petersburg was indeed useful for the correspondent. In addition, A.I. Markov's communication with the management helped to create instructions for correspondents in other countries.

But at the same time, A.I. Markov was suspected of having ties to the German secret services, about which an anonymous denunciation was written to the agency's management. There were also rumors that the correspondent was cooperating too closely with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and was conducting his own activities, unknown to the management, in parallel with his work for SPTA. Because of this, A.I. Markov had to give an explanation to the director S.S. Trubachev. The correspondent stated that his cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not go beyond the scope of work on informing the local press about events from Russia by order of the ministry, which was standard practice. The director was satisfied with this answer, and there were no more questions for A.I. Markov²⁵⁶.

The SPTA correspondent in Paris, P.N. Apostol, in turn, encountered difficulties in 1907 because of the Russian embassy. The embassy employees in Paris offered him a deal that was advantageous for them. The correspondent could

²⁵⁵ Letter from the Board of the SPTA to A.I. Markov. December 20, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 346. (*in Russian*)

²⁵⁶ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to A.I. Markov. February 28, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 935. L. 187. (*in Russian*)

not refuse it, because they significantly helped him in collecting information. An oral agreement was concluded. In exchange for information and other cooperation under the agreement, P.N. Apostol compiled reviews of the Paris press for diplomats. The correspondent did this twice a day, because morning and evening newspapers were published in Paris. Then he passed on to the embassy clippings of the most important, in his opinion, articles. This cooperation continued the entire time that P.N. Apostol worked in Paris. In correspondence with him, the director of the SPTA, O.I. Lamkert, reproached the diplomats for de facto using the SPTA employee for their own convenience. At the same time, P.N. The Apostle, judging by his correspondence, was not burdened by such cooperation, because the embassy fully fulfilled its part of the agreement²⁵⁷.

P.N. Apostol also helped the embassy in Paris in matters that required the skills and experience of a journalist. For example, in early July 1907, he helped the embassy formulate the text of a telegram about the visit of the Russian ambassador A.I. Nelidov to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Pichon. The reason for the meeting between the minister and the ambassador was a scandalous article in the newspaper *Novoye Vremya*, directed against France. It was for consultation on issues of working with French newspapers that P.N. Apostol was invited to the Russian embassy, as he noted in correspondence with the leadership of the SPTA²⁵⁸.

But in the end, thanks to close cooperation with the embassy, P.N. Apostol received too many news materials. At the same time, some of these materials could not be published in the press for various reasons. However, P.N. Apostol disciplinedly sent all the news to St. Petersburg. The management of the SPTA

²⁵⁷ Letter from P.N. Apostol to O.I. Lamkert. February 4, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 997. L. 196. (*in Russian*)

²⁵⁸ Letter from P.N. Apostol to the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. July 12, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 995. L. 210. (*in Russian*)

eventually ordered him to limit the volume of information sent in order to save money, and to telegraph only the most important to St. Petersburg²⁵⁹.

In 1907, SPTA lost its correspondent in Vienna, A.G. Fichtenholz, although it had no plans to fire him. The reason for this was an incident during the visit to Vienna of the Russian Foreign Minister A.P. Izvolsky in September 1907. Even before the visit, the assistant director of SPTA A.A. Gelfer sent a letter to A.G. Fichtenholz, in which he indicated that during the minister's stay in Vienna, all telegrams should be submitted to the minister for approval. This was a personal requirement of A.P. Izvolsky. However, during the minister's visit, A.G. Fichtenholz sent a telegram to Russia with the news of the visit. A.P. Izvolsky himself was not informed about this action of the correspondent. Moreover, the telegram stated that the news was received «from high-level, well-informed sources»²⁶⁰.

Failure to comply with the requirement and similar formulations caused sharp discontent among A.P. Izvolsky and SPTA itself. On September 18, the agency's management, represented by A.A. Gelfer, sent a letter to A.G. Fichtengolts with sharp criticism of his actions and accusations that he had harmed SPTA²⁶¹. The correspondent apologized for the error in a reply letter. However, on September 27, A.G. Fichtenholz received a letter informing him that he had been de facto dismissed from his position as a correspondent for SPTA in Vienna. The agency stated that his contract, which was valid until January 1, 1908, would not be extended²⁶².

Also in 1907, A.P. Izvolsky went to Paris. After the incident with A.G. Fichtengolts, the director of the SPTA A.A. Girs strictly warned the local

²⁵⁹ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to P. N. Apostol. January 31, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 997. L. 189. (*in Russian*)

²⁶⁰ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.G. Fichtengolts. September 18, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 928. L. 227. (*in Russian*)

²⁶¹ *Ibid.* L. 227. (*in Russian*)

²⁶² Letter from the Agency Board to A.G. Fichtengolts. September 27, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 928. L. 236. (*in Russian*)

correspondent P.N. Apostol in a letter about his behavior during the minister's visit and provided instructions for the correspondent. Apostol was to meet A.P. Izvolsky and be with him at his request. Also, what was especially noted, the correspondent was to present telegrams with news to the minister for approval. By order of A.A. Girs, P.N. Apostol was to send telegrams to a special address during the visit so that they would arrive personally to the director²⁶³.

A.P. Izvolsky met with P.N. Apostol upon his arrival in Paris. The correspondent carried out all the orders of the minister and constantly reported on his actions to the director of the SPTA at a special address. For example, on October 11, 1907, P.N. Apostol informed A.A. Girs that A.P. Izvolsky had given an interview to two French newspapers, «Echo de Paris» and «Matin». However, he asked not to report this in the format of an ordinary news telegram²⁶⁴. For P.N. Apostol, unlike A.G. Fichtenholz, A.P. Izvolsky's visit was successful, and he retained his position as a correspondent for SPTA in Paris.

From January 1, 1908, after A.G. Fichtenholz was dismissed, and while SPTA was looking for a candidate to replace him, the agency did not have a correspondent in Vienna. As a result, in October 1908, director A.A. Girs came to an agreement with V.P. Svatkovsky, an employee of the «Rus» newspaper. This candidacy raised questions among the ministers supervising the agency, since the «Rus» newspaper was independent, and its employees were considered not entirely reliable. However, A.A. Girs stated that V.P. Svatkovsky had a huge advantage over his competitors for the post of correspondent in Vienna. V.P. Svatkovsky supported the neo-Slavism movement, which sought to achieve independence for the Slavic peoples of Austria-Hungary (Czechs, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs). Thanks to his participation in the movement, he met many prominent figures (writers, journalists, entrepreneurs) representing the Slavic peoples of Austria-Hungary.

²⁶³ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to P.N. Apostol. September 27, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 995. L. 232. (*in Russian*)

²⁶⁴ Letter from P.N. Apostol. October 11, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 995. L. 241. (*in Russian*)

Thus, he already had extensive and reliable connections in this country. In addition, V.P. Svatkovsky could provide valuable services to the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Russian embassy in Vienna could not enter into direct contacts with Slavic figures without causing obvious discontent among the authorities of Austria-Hungary. However, V.P. Svatkovsky could easily act as a liaison between the embassy and the Slavic figures. The embassy also granted him diplomatic immunity. As a result, V.P. Svatkovsky's candidacy was accepted, which A.A. Girs was very pleased with²⁶⁵.

As subsequent events showed, V.P. Svatkovsky lived up to A.A. Girs's expectations and successfully proved himself as a correspondent for SPTA in Vienna. He worked extremely productively and regularly supplied SPTA with news, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with detailed reports. V.P. Svatkovsky's work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained a secret for the public, since he observed secrecy. In those years, the correspondent, unaware of his secret work, was even criticized for not sufficiently studying Slavic issues. For example, the chairman of the Petersburg Slavic Society, General P.D. Parensov, devoted an entire critical article to V.P. Svatkovsky, in which he stated that the correspondent was allegedly biased. The general cited the correspondent's political views as the reason for this, and also pointed to his «dubious reputation». P.D. Parensov also directly accused V.P. Svatkovsky and the ambassador to Vienna, L.P. Urusov is that they do not protect the interests of the Slavs of Austria-Hungary²⁶⁶. However, in reality, V.P. Svatkovsky and L.P. Urusov worked with representatives of the Slavic peoples, but they did it secretly, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the Austro-Hungarian authorities and diplomatic scandals.

However, A.G. Fichtenholz was not the only SPTA correspondent fired in 1907 because of a scandal. A funny story happened to the SPTA correspondent in

²⁶⁵ Letter from A.A. Girs to V.P. Svatkovsky. November 29, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 930. L. 23. (*in Russian*)

²⁶⁶ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.P. Svatkovsky. July 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 930. L. 112. (*in Russian*)

Belgrade K. Khristich in 1907, which cost him his job. In February 1907, Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin himself drew attention to the biased news from Belgrade that SPTA was receiving. The Prime Minister was not satisfied with this quality of information, and he asked the agency director S.S. Trubachev to take action. At the same time, P.A. Stolypin himself made inquiries about the correspondent in Belgrade through the Russian embassy in Belgrade before the director's letter. The Prime Minister indicated in his letter that the correspondent P. Marinkovic is a member of the opposition party and the problem was his inability to put aside his political views while working²⁶⁷.

But in a reply letter, director S.S. Trubachev explained to P.A. Stolypin that an error had occurred at some stage of collecting and transmitting information, or the prime minister had been deliberately misled. Trubachev reported that P. Marinkovich did not work for SPTA, but he had collaborated with the now-closed RTA. In fact, K. Khristich was the SPTA correspondent. Although the curious incident was resolved, the agency's management took into account P.A. Stolypin's dissatisfaction with the quality of the news and, after a few months, refused K. Khristich's services²⁶⁸.

SPTA also had problems with its London correspondent. In 1907, Y. G. Kamensky, who held this position, fell seriously ill. He could no longer work and resigned as a correspondent. In turn, SPTA was unable to find a suitable candidate at that time. In addition, maintaining its own correspondent in London required large expenses from the agency. For several months, the SPTA management worked out various options, but in January 1908, it decided not to hire a correspondent to London to replace Y. G. Kamensky. In return, director A. A. Girs agreed with the British agency «Reuters» that it would supply SPTA with news

²⁶⁷ Letter from P.A. Stolypin to S.S. Trubachev. February 14, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

²⁶⁸ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to P.A. Stolypin. February 17, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 4. (*in Russian*)

from Britain²⁶⁹. This turned out to be much more profitable for the Russian agency compared to maintaining its own correspondent. However, the quality of news from Britain naturally worsened compared to 1905-1907, when news was sent by Y. G. Kamensky. This was later acknowledged even by the management of SPTA²⁷⁰.

During the years when A.A. Girs was the director of SPTA, the agency once again tried to organize the work of its own correspondent in Rome. The advantage for SPTA was that a suitable candidate for the position contacted the agency himself. On April 3, 1907, K. Belin, a correspondent for the newspaper «Pravitelstvennyi Vestnik», published by the Main Directorate for Press Affairs at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, wrote to the agency. He offered his candidacy for the post of SPTA correspondent in Rome²⁷¹. The agency management trusted him and hired him. However, K. Belin worked in Rome for less than a year. The agency considered his methods of work to be erroneous and inappropriate for the tasks. Assistant Director A.A. Gelfer personally pointed out to K. Belin in a letter as early as April 1907 that the messages he sent were too long and contained not factual information, but «reasoning that is absolutely of no interest to us»²⁷². However, K. Belin did not want or could not change his style of work, and in November 1908 he was dismissed from his post as a correspondent in Rome²⁷³. The management of SPTA has again put aside the idea of having its own correspondent in the capital of Italy and returned to receiving information from Italy from the «Stefani» agency.

²⁶⁹ Letter from A.K. Benkendorf to A.A. Girs. January 23, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 924. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

²⁷⁰ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to A. V. Lyarsky. November 27, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1494. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

²⁷¹ Letter from K. Belin to SPA. April 3, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 953. L. 65. (*in Russian*)

²⁷² Letter from A.A. Gelfer to K. Belin. April 28, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 953. L. 65. (*in Russian*)

²⁷³ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to K. Belin. November 6, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 953. L. 87. (*in Russian*)

However, during these same years, the network of SPTA correspondents was successfully expanding in Asian countries. The management paid special attention to Persia, which was in Russia's sphere of interests. By the end of the 19th century, Russia and Persia had become closer, the latter helped Russia during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, diverting some of the Ottoman Empire's forces to itself, without entering the war. But at the same time, Russia competed with England for influence in Persia. Russia invested in Persia, received a number of concessions there for the construction of a road and telegraph network. The new telegraph network allowed SPTA to send correspondents not only to the capital of Persia. As a result, by 1907, SPTA staff correspondents worked in 3 cities of Persia: Tehran, Tabriz and Urmia²⁷⁴.

But even the management noted that there were difficulties with the work of these correspondents. The reason was the requirement to hire a Russian citizen, which sharply narrowed the circle of possible candidates for the post. The agency had to hire those who had minimal knowledge and experience in the profession, as well as those who combined work for SPTA with another. For example, SPTA correspondent in Tavriz A.I. Vartanov also served in the consulate, which is why he was late in sending telegrams. His big mistake was being late in the fall of 1908, during the political crisis in Persia. A.I. Vartanov sent his telegram about the news so late that by that time newspapers in Russia had published notes about it. For this, the correspondent was criticized, but they did not fire him at that time²⁷⁵.

A similar situation occurred with the correspondent in Tehran G.D. Batyushkov, who by the end of 1907 had completely disappointed the management and was fired. At that time, SPTA was helped by the vice-consul E.A. Cherkasov, who proposed A.I. Nazaryants, an employee of the consulate, for this position. The vice-consul noted his reliability and also offered his assistance to the agency.

²⁷⁴ List of correspondents. 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

²⁷⁵ Letter from A.I. Vartanov. November 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 967. L. 95. (*in Russian*)

SPTA had no other choice then, and they accepted A.I. Nazaryants as a correspondent. He became another correspondent, combining work at the consulate and SPTA, like A.I. Vartanov²⁷⁶.

Another important direction in Asia for SPTA was Japan. Although after the Russo-Japanese War the Far East ceased to be the main direction of Russia's foreign policy, interest in Japan and its culture grew in society. The agency sought to satisfy this demand. In 1906, F.A. Pozdeev was appointed SPTA correspondent in Tokyo. He was not a professional journalist, but he had an excellent command of Japanese, knew the customs of Japan, and headed the Institute for the Study of Oriental Languages in Vladivostok. Although F.A. Pozdeev was not a professional employee of a telegraph agency before joining SPTA, he did his job well, according to the opinion of the management²⁷⁷.

However, F.A. Pozdeev's work was complicated by financial problems. When transmitting telegrams from Tokyo to St. Petersburg, the cost of just one word was on average 1 ruble 40 kopecks. Thus, transmitting a large amount of news from Japan was unprofitable for SPTA. In turn, F.A. Pozdeev was burdened by the fact that he could not transmit all the information that he collected. He proposed to his management to conclude a special agreement with the Japanese government, which would reduce the price of transmitting telegrams. The correspondent pointed out that the agencies «Reuters», «Wolf», «Korrespondents-Bureau» and «Stefani» had already done so²⁷⁸. However, the conclusion of such agreements was within the competence of the Council of Ministers, and this issue was resolved much later. In turn, the dissatisfied F.A. Pozdeev resigned from SPTA.

²⁷⁶ Letter from the SPTA Board to A.I. Nazaryants. November 19, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 967. L. 107. (*in Russian*)

²⁷⁷ Report by S.S. Trubachev for P.A. Stolypin. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 8. L. 1-2. (*in Russian*)

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.* L. 1-2. (*in Russian*)

In those years, SPTA had its own correspondent in Beijing, N. Savinsky, who did his job properly. His annual salary was 2,000 rubles²⁷⁹. However, at the end of 1908 N. Savinsky left his post, and until 1911 there was no correspondent in Beijing. However, instead of N. Savinsky, since 1909, the news from China was handled by the correspondent L. V. Goyer, who worked in Shanghai²⁸⁰.

At the end of 1907, the management of the SPTA decided to take up the issue of a correspondent in Constantinople. A. Petropulo was still working there, but the management was not entirely satisfied with him due to the small volumes of information he sent. A. Petropulo's successor was the SPTA employee F.A. Dukhovetsky, who worked in the agency's Central Office. He also had experience working as a correspondent for the SPTA in another country; he was the agency's representative in Sofia. In addition, he was known as a writer, an author of essays on various events (for example, the funeral of Alexander III) and a publicist. F.A. Dukhovetsky received a salary of 7,000 rubles a year, as well as 1,000 rubles as a signing bonus²⁸¹.

Already in the same year, the management noted the excellent work of F.A. Dukhovetsky as a correspondent in Constantinople. There he was able to establish extensive connections, including in the political circles of the Ottoman Empire. This allowed him to receive some news before anyone else. The management of SPTA was pleased, because before the arrival of F.A. Dukhovetsky, almost all news from Constantinople was transmitted by the Austrian «Korrespondenz-Bureau»²⁸². However, the management noted that for now SPTA did not have enough funds for full-fledged competition, because other agencies spent almost

²⁷⁹ Report by S.S. Trubachev for P.A. Stolypin. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 8. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

²⁸⁰ List of SPA's own correspondents, serving it with information from abroad. May 20, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 106. (*in Russian*)

²⁸¹ Letter from A.A. Girs to V.N. Kokovtsov. January 24, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 982. L. 135. (*in Russian*)

²⁸² Die Große Politik der europäischen Kabinette. 1871–1914. Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes. Berlin, 1926. Vol 37. Part 2. P. 874. (*in German*)

twice as much on their correspondents in Constantinople as the Russian agency spent on F.A. Dukhovetsky²⁸³.

On September 21, 1908, after the coup d'etat carried out by the Young Turks, the Turkish journalist Zaur Bey approached the SPTA with a proposal for cooperation. He stated that he was a member of the Young Turk Committee, had very valuable connections in the highest circles of the Ottoman Empire and could provide the agency with important news about the political situation, since he had constant access to the local parliament. Zaur Bey indicated that he had experience working with Russian media, having already collaborated with the newspaper «Golos Moskvyy»²⁸⁴.

What was most important for SPTA was that the Russian embassy confirmed the information about Zaur-Bey and approved his candidacy. Soon, director A.A. Girs signed a contract with Zaur-Bey. The condition was the exclusivity of news from the Turkish journalist, he did not have the right to send telegrams to any other newspapers. Also, the current correspondent F.A. Dukhovetsky became Zaur-Bey's curator, he issued instructions and edited telegrams²⁸⁵.

Thus, at the end of 1908, SPTA had two correspondents in Constantinople. This situation lasted only a few months. The correspondents were not equal in their powers, and F.A. Dukhovetsky was considered to be higher in rank. The ambitious Zaur-Bey did not like this situation. He directly told the agency's board that he would not give telegrams to F.A. Dukhovetsky for editing. Zaur-Bey accused the latter of creating obstacles, since they had become competitors. In turn, the SPTA management took the side of their more experienced correspondent in the conflict. In January 1909, the agency's contract with Zaur-Bey was terminated²⁸⁶.

²⁸³ Report of A.A. Girs to P.A. Stolypin. 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

²⁸⁴ Letter from Zaur-Bey to the SPA Board. September 21, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 982. L. 262. (*in Russian*)

²⁸⁵ Letter from A.A. Girs to Zaur-Bey. October 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 982. L. 263. (*in Russian*)

²⁸⁶ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to Zaur-Bey. January 13, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 983. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

The management decided to allocate the freed-up funds that were planned to be paid to Zaur Bey to F.A. Dukhovetsky. Thus, the total annual salary of the correspondent in Constantinople increased to 14,000 rubles, part of which was spent on the services of a translator and a number of technical issues, such as the purchase of office supplies. In addition, F.A. Dukhovetsky received the official status of a representative of the SPTA in the Balkans. In fact, he became the curator of the entire Balkan direction. His duty in his new status was to visit other SPTA correspondents in Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia and inspect their work. For this, F.A. Dukhovetsky was additionally paid 1,500 rubles a year, and in total he earned more than any of the SPTA correspondents²⁸⁷.

In 1908, expenses for all correspondents in other countries amounted to about 23,000 rubles. By the end of 1909, SPTA had 8 correspondents outside Russia. Also by that time, the once opened correspondent posts in Tokyo and Beijing were closed after F.A. Pozdeev and N. Savinsky left. A.I. Markov worked in Berlin, V.P. Svatkovsky in Vienna, F.A. Dukhovetsky in Constantinople, P.N. Apostol in Paris, A.I. Vartanov in Tabriz, A.R. Baranovsky in Tehran, A.I. Nazaryants in Urmia, and L.V. Goyer in Shanghai²⁸⁸.

Thus, the period 1906-1910 for the network of correspondents of the SPTA was rather ambiguous. On the one hand, at first the network expanded, the methodology of work was finally formalized, and the correspondents themselves not only carried out their work, but also helped the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, the financial problems of the SPTA in the late 1900s led to a reduction in the network of correspondents, and its restoration was impossible without investments and stabilization of the financial situation of the entire agency.

²⁸⁷ Report of A.A. Girs to P.A. Stolypin. 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

²⁸⁸ List of SPA's own correspondents, serving it with information from abroad. May 20, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 106. (*in Russian*)

2.4. Formation of the SPTA branch network in 1906-1910

In 1906-1910, together with the entire SPTA, its branches continued to develop. In those years, a network of SPTA branches was formed, which existed until the First World War. By 1910, the agency had 10 branches operating on the territory of the Russian Empire: in Moscow, Kyiv, Kharkov, Odessa, Revel, Riga, Tiflis, Vilno, Warsaw and Lodz²⁸⁹. At the same time, the demands on their work and especially on their managers increased.

The agency's management paid special attention to the Moscow branch. Its manager I.V. Polyakov had been criticized and involved in scandals in previous years, and the trend continued. In 1906, the SPTA management had complaints about the speed of message transmission and their quality in the Moscow branch. The reason for the inspection was the reaction of the Moscow branch to the assassination attempt on the mayor of Moscow A.A. Reinbot on October 30, 1906, when a bomb was thrown at him. SPTA reported that random witnesses were injured in the incident, and the criminal was shot dead by a policeman on the spot. However, A.A. Reinbot himself informed Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin in a letter that he personally detained the criminal and no one was hurt. P.A. Stolypin compared this information with the news from SPTA and was dissatisfied. Therefore, he turned to the director of SPTA S.S. Trubachev with a demand to pay attention to the reliability and accuracy of the news being transmitted. In turn, the director demanded an explanation from the head of the Moscow branch I.V. Polyakov²⁹⁰.

He explained the error in the news about the assassination attempt on A.A. Reinbot by the high workload of the employees of the Moscow branch of the SPTA. As I.V. Polyakov reported, in October 1906 the Moscow branch issued an average of 29 sheets of bulletins per day, and only two copyists worked on them.

²⁸⁹ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 222. (*in Russian*)

²⁹⁰ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to I.V. Polyakov. October 30, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 37. (*in Russian*)

In addition, the branch had only one typewriter. In order to replace the director, it was planned to hire another employee to edit the messages. Taking advantage of the opportunity, I.V. Polyakov asked the management to buy another typewriter for the Moscow branch and approve the hiring of a new editor. Director S.S. Trubachev supported I.V. Polyakov and approved his request²⁹¹.

It is worth noting that the Moscow branch needed to improve its working equipment and expand its staff against the backdrop of increased income in 1906. That year, its income was 75,905 rubles with expenses of 37,000 rubles, and its net profit was 38,905 rubles²⁹². This was the reason why I.V. Polyakov remained in his position. However, the management of SPTA, before the story with the inaccurate news about the mayor, considered the Moscow branch as a source of profit and did not intend to invest in it. Only after that were the necessary investments made in equipment for it, and another employee was hired.

Another problem of the Moscow branch was the relationship with the local large newspapers. They were subscribed to SPTA telegrams, but also had their own correspondents. For the management of these newspapers, SPTA was one of many sources of information, and they allowed themselves to violate contractual obligations and sometimes did not indicate the source of news, that is, SPTA. In turn, the management of SPTA paid attention to such cases and asked the head of their Moscow branch for an explanation. For example, in May 1907, A.A. Gelfer reported in a letter to I.V. Polyakov that the newspaper «Voice of Moscow» did not indicate SPTA as a source of news. The director of the Moscow branch not only acknowledged the problem with the Voice of Moscow, but also added that the newspapers *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* and *Russkiye Vedomosti* also do not always indicate the source. I.V. Polyakov noted that he had already filed complaints with the editors of the aforementioned newspapers. But they responded that there had

²⁹¹ Letter from the Agency Office to I.V. Polyakov. November 2, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 40. (*in Russian*)

²⁹² Report by I.V. Polyakov. December 22, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 97. (*in Russian*)

been errors in the layout. In a response letter on May 23, 1907, Polyakov asked A.A. Gelfer and the management of the SPTA to point out the newspapers' errors to the editors²⁹³. The management agreed with the opinion of I.V. Polyakov. Moreover, 1907 was even more successful for the Moscow branch of SPTA²⁹⁴.

In addition to his immediate duties as the head of the department, I.V. Polyakov was also involved in analyzing the Moscow market and studying competitors. Despite the fact that RTA closed in 1907, there were still other agencies competing with SPTA. I.V. Polyakov wrote reports on new small telegraph agencies that were entering the Moscow market. For example, on January 19, 1908, A.A. Gelfer in a letter to I.V. Polyakov gave him the task of analyzing the work of the new telegraph agency, «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov»²⁹⁵. The head of the Moscow branch had a great deal of knowledge about the Moscow information market and the ability to quickly make inquiries about the new agency.

I.V. Polyakov completed the task by January 22, when he sent a reply letter with a full report on the agency «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov». The report included all the names of its personnel, the address of the office and the cities in which the new agency worked. I.V. Polyakov reported that the agency «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov» began working in December 1907. It was engaged in sending out bulletins with news for a fee. It was also a subscriber to the SPTA telegrams and paid the Moscow branch 200 rubles a month²⁹⁶.

However, on January 25, 1908, the director of SPTA, A.A. Girs, sent a letter to I.V. Polyakov with sharp criticism. The director drew attention to the fact that the head of the Moscow branch had made a big mistake in the contract with

²⁹³ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to A.A. Gelfer. May 23, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. DC 1092. L. 261-262. (*in Russian*)

²⁹⁴ Report by I.V. Polyakov. December 22, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 97. (*in Russian*)

²⁹⁵ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. January 19, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 104. (*in Russian*)

²⁹⁶ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to the Agency Board. January 22, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 105. (*in Russian*)

«Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov». This telegraph agency paid 200 rubles a month for SPTA telegrams as an ordinary newspaper, but had to pay 1,000 rubles a month as a competing organization. This amount was specially set for other telegraph agencies; it was both a prohibitive price and a way to slow down the development of competitors. In addition, A.A. Girs was also dissatisfied with the fact that Polyakov concluded a contract with «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov» for 200 rubles a month, bypassing the management, which would not have allowed an unfavorable agreement that violated SPTA rules²⁹⁷.

The next day, January 26, 1908, the assistant director A.A. Gelfer sent a letter to I.V. Polyakov on the same topic. He pointed out to the head of the Moscow branch that he had made another mistake in the contract with «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov». The cost of SPTA telegrams in the amount of 1,000 rubles per month was not final; the cost of commercial telegrams was added to it. And «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov» received news from the St. Petersburg Stock Exchange from the Moscow branch of SPTA, and this information had to be paid for separately²⁹⁸.

I.V. Polyakov tried to justify himself and stated that «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov» was a new company that was not a full-fledged competitor of SPTA. However, the management did not accept these explanations and ordered the head of the Moscow branch to conclude a new contract with «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov», now on the terms that SPTA considered fair. But the «Izvestia Byuro Korrespondentov» agency could not pay more than 1,000 rubles a month, and it refused to renew the contract²⁹⁹.

I.V. Polyakov also had another duty related to market analysis. He had to monitor the large Moscow newspapers, their initiatives and other activities.

²⁹⁷ Letter from A.A. Girs to I.V. Polyakov. January 25, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 119. (*in Russian*)

²⁹⁸ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. January 26, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 128. (*in Russian*)

²⁹⁹ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. February 4, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 151. (*in Russian*)

However, the most important thing for the SPTA management was the reflection of the agency's work in the press. According to the instructions of the Board, the head of the Moscow branch had to look through the Moscow newspapers, mark articles and short notes in them that mentioned SPTA. I.V. Polyakov then had to send these clippings to the Central Branch. The agency management was especially interested in critical comments, as well as refutations of the news transmitted to them. The duty to monitor publications in newspapers was officially established in December 1908³⁰⁰.

In addition, in January 1908, the Moscow branch was inspected by employees from the Central Branch of the SPTA. This was part of a comprehensive audit of the entire agency. The commission from the Central Branch reviewed all the work that the Moscow branch was doing. In its report, it noted the good professional training of the personnel, their experience, and the management's ability to organize their work. The inspectors noted that the bulletins with Duma, commercial and political news were carefully checked and promptly printed. In addition, the inspectors studied the financial status of the general cash book, subscriber lists, inventory book and other accounting documents. They confirmed that the net profit for 1907 was almost 40,000 rubles³⁰¹.

Following the inspection, the auditors' comments were minor. They concerned the details of the work process, as well as everyday issues. The management of SPTA sought to optimize the work process and called for placing employees of the Moscow branch as close to the office as possible so that they would not waste a lot of time commuting from work to home. I.V. Polyakov, for example, was asked to abandon plans to move to an apartment that was located at a considerable distance from the office. This was explained by the fact that the

³⁰⁰ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. January 24, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 224. (*in Russian*)

³⁰¹ Report of the SPA Chancellery Manager on the Organization of the Moscow Branch. January 15, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 129. (*in Russian*)

manager must always be in touch with his subordinates, who could personally contact him with questions at any time³⁰².

The management of the SPTA also sought to reduce the expenses of the Moscow branch and proposed to cut some of the staff. According to the plan, some technical employees, such as stenographers, were to leave³⁰³. At the same time, the management did not take into account the high workload of the Moscow branch, which I.V. Polyakov had complained about in previous years. However, summing up the results of the inspection, Director A.A. Girs concluded that the Moscow branch of the agency under the leadership of I.V. Polyakov works «skillfully, energetically and successfully»³⁰⁴.

Despite successfully passing the audit, the Moscow branch had other difficulties at the beginning of 1908. As noted above, the popularity of SPTA telegrams among Moscow newspapers was due to the presence of news from the Duma. However, an analysis of the Moscow press conducted by I.V. Polyakov at the beginning of February 1908 showed that the newspapers published only a small part of the materials that SPTA transmitted to them. Some newspapers («Golos Moskvy», «Moskovsky Listok», «Ranneye Utro», «Rul», «Russkie Vedomosti») published only 25% of the materials. I.V. Polyakov attributed this to the fact that the agency's messages were too long, and proposed to reduce them³⁰⁵.

At the same time, the smoldering conflict with Moscow newspapers over the indication of the source of news continued. In early 1908, A.A. Gelfer again drew I.V. Polyakov's attention to the fact that Moscow newspapers did not indicate SPTA as the source of news. The assistant director noted the newspapers «Russkoye Slovo» and «Golos Moskvy» as examples. They indicated that their

³⁰² Report of the SPA Chancellery Manager on the Organization of the Moscow Branch. January 15, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 1092. L. 130. (*in Russian*)

³⁰³ Ibid. L. 132. (*in Russian*)

³⁰⁴ Letter from A.A. Girs to I.V. Polyakov. January 18, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 102. (*in Russian*)

³⁰⁵ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to the Agency Board. February 11, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 153. (*in Russian*)

correspondents were the sources of the transcripts of speeches by Duma deputies. This was a lie. A.A. Gelfer noted that he suspected these newspapers of appropriating SPTA materials. I.V. Polyakov had to explain the situation with these newspapers. The head of the Moscow branch pointed out that «Russkoye Slovo» did indeed have its own correspondents, and this publication most likely obtained news itself. However, I.V. Polyakov had doubts about «Golos Moskvyy»³⁰⁶.

Another problem for the Moscow branch was the decline in interest in the stenographic reports of the Duma sessions, which the SPTA branch supplied to the Moscow press. As noted earlier, the transmission of stenographic reports to Moscow required significant expenses, but the costs were recouped. However, in 1908, some Moscow newspapers stopped printing them in their entirety and limited themselves to the excerpts that were interesting to them. Moreover, some newspapers began to refuse to receive stenographic reports, and took Duma news from other sources. When the SPTA Board proposed establishing a minimum volume (1,000 lines) for published excerpts from the stenographic reports of the Duma, the newspapers «Golos Moskvyy», «Russkie Vedomosti» and «Russkoe Slovo» jointly opposed this and threatened to break the contract³⁰⁷.

Then, in March 1908, the agency's management suggested that the head of the Moscow branch, I.V. Polyakov, himself propose ideas for solving the problem of publishing stenographic reports. According to I.V. Polyakov's plan, only those speeches from the Duma that the agency considered interesting were to be transmitted to Moscow. Along with reducing the volume of information, it was

³⁰⁶ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to the Agency Board. February 27, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 161. (*in Russian*)

³⁰⁷ Letter from I.V. Polyakov to the Agency Board. March 28, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 169. (*in Russian*)

proposed to reduce the time spent on telephone communication, which required significant expenses. I.V. Polyakov's ideas were accepted by the management³⁰⁸.

However, soon after the forced changes in the work of the Moscow branch, it was attacked with criticism by the newspapers that had previously forced the agency to take these steps. For example, on May 31, 1908, the newspaper «Russkie Vedomosti» published a note criticizing the Moscow branch for practically refusing to deliver stenographic reports of the Duma sessions to the Moscow newspapers. Meanwhile, «Russkie Vedomosti» itself made little use of these reports. Also on May 31, 1908, the newspaper «Russkoe Slovo» published an article with the same critical message towards SPTA as «Russkie Vedomosti». At the same time, «Russkoe Slovo» was dissatisfied with a specific case when the bulletins with news about the Duma session on May 27, 1908 did not include the speech of the Minister of the Navy I.M. Dikov. I.V. Polyakov informed the agency about the newspapers' dissatisfaction. The management responded to him that in the case of I.M. Dikov's speech there was a mistake on the part of the Duma branch³⁰⁹.

At the same time as interest in the SPTA news about events in the Duma fell, demand for financial and economic news increased. At the beginning of 1908, I.V. Polyakov noted in his report that interest in news about world markets for coal, wool and fish had grown³¹⁰. This was due to the growth of the economy and the opening of new companies.

In 1909, the management of the SPTA no longer tolerated the mistakes of the Moscow branch, despite the regular growth of its income. As a result, the assistant director A.A. Gelfer in a letter to I.V. Polyakov on March 4, 1909, pointed out to him the mistakes of the entrusted department and criticized it. The

³⁰⁸ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. April 3, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 170. (*in Russian*)

³⁰⁹ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. June 5, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 189. (*in Russian*)

³¹⁰ Report of the SPTA Chancellery Manager on the Organization of the Moscow Branch. January 15, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 1092. L. 132. (*in Russian*)

main reason for the dissatisfaction of the SPTA management was the delays in work. Clients from Moscow complained that the bulletins were arriving late. And by 1909, such cases were already happening regularly. A.A. Gelfer also indicated as a striking example the incident with the news about the Russian-Turkish negotiations on the issue of Bulgarian independence that forced him to write to I.V. Polyakov. On March 2, 1909, at 19:00, the news about the negotiations was sent from the Central Branch of the SPTA to the Moscow branch. But on March 3, at 11 o'clock, the message still had not reached the editorial offices of the Moscow newspapers that worked with SPTA. However, at the same time, the news of the negotiations had already reached those editorial offices that used other news sources. This was a significant blow to the reputation of the telegraph agency, which could lead to the loss of contracts. Also, the management of SPTA was unhappy with the fact that the bulletins of the Moscow branch constantly contained typos, and the names of foreigners were distorted. As a result, A.A. Gelfer demanded from I.V. Polyakov a report on the work of the branch, as well as an action plan to correct the situation with delays and typos.³¹¹

In a reply letter, I.V. Polyakov stated that the problem with typos in texts was caused by a reduction in the number of telegraph operators in the Moscow department. In the story with the Russian-Turkish protocol, the head of the department blamed the Moscow newspapers, with which he had a long-standing conflict. However, the management did not take I.V. Polyakov's side this time. A.A. Gelfer pointed out to him in the next letter: «The issue is not at all in the number of personnel in the department, but in the quality of its work. It is necessary to improve the quality of work, that is, a more careful and conscientious attitude to work on the part of employees»³¹². Thus, the SPTA leadership again suggested that the Moscow branch solve the problems on its own.

³¹¹ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. March 4, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 247-249. (*in Russian*)

³¹² Letter from A.A. Gelfer to I.V. Polyakov. March 10, 1909 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 266. (*in Russian*)

In those years, another regional branch of the SPTA was created, this time in Vilno. It opened on March 15, 1906, although its creation had been underway since January 28, 1906. It was personally handled by the assistant director, A.A. Gelfer. When searching for candidates for the post of head, he took into account the politicization of the intelligentsia in Vilno. A.A. Gelfer also knew about the unsuccessful experience of the RTA, whose Vilno correspondent Torzon turned out to be a member of the Jewish organization «Bund» and used the RTA as a platform for expressing his views. At the beginning of 1906, the SPTA proposed the candidacy of Y.M. Sheskin for the post of head of the branch in Vilno. Y.M. Sheskin was the editor of the newspaper «Novaya Zarya». However, he quickly aroused the suspicions of A.A. Gelfer. He considered the candidate's views too left-wing, and him too independent for an employee of the state telegraph agency. Despite the fact that Y.M. Sheskin personally contacted A. A. Gelfer and assured him of his reliability, the SPTA representative rejected this candidacy. The second candidate was the official Beletsky, but he was not going to leave his main job for the SPTA, which was a necessary condition for the head of the department. Beletsky was recommended by the local correspondent of the agency V. A. Chuminov, who was not considered as the head of the department³¹³.

As a result, the Agency Board decided not to look for a head of the new branch in Vilnius, but sent S.T. Divin there, who had previously headed the telegraph department at the Central Branch of the SPTA in St. Petersburg. He began working from the moment the Vilnius branch opened, on March 15, 1906. In addition to S.T. Divin, his assistant, a clerk, and two messengers worked in the branch. At first, the branch had 21 subscribers: 7 newspapers, 13 companies, and one private individual. They paid a total of 12,060 rubles a year for news. There was also feedback, and local newspapers asked the branch to make adjustments to

³¹³ Letter from A.A. Gelfer. January 14, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

the subject matter of the news. For example, they wanted more news from neighboring regions³¹⁴.

In 1907, the work procedure of the SPTA branches was changed. In June 1907, the Board informed the head of the branch in Vilno, S. T. Divin, that, according to the new rules, all telegrams of the branch had to be reviewed by an independent correspondent of the branch, A. Kon. According to the plan, this was supposed to reduce the likelihood of repeating the same messages, since before this, A. Kon and the branch actually worked in parallel and sometimes repeated themselves. S. T. Divin immediately expressed doubts about the advisability of the leadership's initiative, but was forced to comply³¹⁵.

As it turned out, S. T. Divin was right. After the introduction of the new rule, the work of the Vilnius office slowed down significantly. Since the correspondent A. Kon, doing his job, regularly left the office, it was difficult to quickly contact him to coordinate news. It was also impossible to quickly contact him when he was at home, because he did not have a phone³¹⁶. A. Kon had to find time in his schedule to visit the branch to coordinate news. Excessive bureaucratization of the work, despite the good intention, eventually led to constant delays in sending telegrams. Because of this, the Vilnius branch of SPTA began to completely lose the competition to all other correspondents working in Vilnius, because they did not have to coordinate news once again.

In turn, S. T. Divin made an attempt to convince the management of SPTA and informed them in a letter about the problems that had arisen. However, the Board in a reply letter reported that it would not cancel its own decisions. As an attempt to rectify the situation, SPTA financed the installation of a telephone in A. Kon's apartment to make the process of coordinating news with the branch a little

³¹⁴ Letter from S. T. Divin to the SPTA Board. March 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 10. (*in Russian*)

³¹⁵ Letter from S. T. Divin to the SPTA Board. June 16, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 47. (*in Russian*)

³¹⁶ *Ibid.* L. 47. (*in Russian*)

faster and more convenient. However, all this led to an outflow of subscribers from the Vilnius branch of SPTA³¹⁷.

At the same time, the management probably understood that S. T. Divin was not to blame for the decline in the number of subscribers. In October 1907, he was transferred to Kyiv to head the department in that city. A.A. Gelfer in a letter to S.T. Divin called this a promotion for him³¹⁸.

S.K. Penyevsky became the acting head of the Vilno branch. In his report to the agency management, he reported on the difficult situation of the branch, which by October 1907 did not have as many subscribers as it could have. S.K. Penyevsky reproached S.T. Divin in absentia for not actively attracting subscribers. S.K. Penyevsky himself, during his short tenure as head of the Vilno branch, did indeed find several new subscribers for SPTA and returned a number of old ones³¹⁹.

However, at the same time, S.K. Penyevsky managed to enter into a conflict with the editor of the department, Shtempel, who had worked under S.T. Divin. S.K. Penyevsky proposed to fire him, considering him insufficiently diligent. However, already in November 1907, S.K. Penyevsky was recalled to St. Petersburg after he had improved the affairs of the department. The position of the head was taken by A.A. Belikov³²⁰. He headed the Vilnius branch for several more years, where there were no significant changes. However, it never recovered from the initiative to check the news in June 1907. In 1910, the Vilnius correspondent A.

³¹⁷ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to S.T. Divin. June 21, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 48. (*in Russian*)

³¹⁸ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to S.T. Divin. October 27, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 49. (*in Russian*)

³¹⁹ Letter from S.K. Penevsky to A.A. Gelfer. November 6, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 70. L. 102. (*in Russian*)

³²⁰ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to S.K. Penevsky. November 19, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 52. (*in Russian*)

Kon noted in a letter to A. A. Gelfer that the local branch of the SPTA had few subscribers, and the local authorities were lenient towards it³²¹.

In 1906, the agency's management was able to address the issue of the situation with the Warsaw branch, which was poorly managed by S.A. Kempner. Director S.S. Trubachev, being dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of reports from the Warsaw branch, sent an inspector to Warsaw. He was an official of special assignments of the Ministry of Finance A.V. Shpiganovich. In Warsaw, he found out all the details about the work of the branch under S.A. Kempner. He learned that the accounting was extremely poor, no one was supervising the correspondents, and the director was abusing his position and saving on the branch so much that he did not even have his own premises. A.V. Shpiganovich presented a report to the SPTA Board, which in the summer of 1906 fired S.A. Kempner from his post as branch manager³²².

The task of recreating the Warsaw branch was entrusted to A. V. Shpiganovich himself. He proposed organizing it following the example of the branches in Moscow, Kyiv, and Odessa. First, to find its own premises in the city center for the branch. Second, the new director should have a good knowledge of Warsaw and the local press, but should not combine work at SPTA with other professional or commercial activities. Third, the director should pay attention to correspondents and personally check the telegrams that were sent to the Central Branch. A. V. Shpiganovich found a suitable candidate for the position of branch director, it was T. B. Shemplinsky. Before joining SPTA, he was the editor of the newspaper «Pzeglad spoldzielczy» (Cooperative Review), collaborated with the banking house V. Sukhodolsky and Company, and also had valuable contacts in

³²¹ Letter from A.N. Kon A.A. Gelfer. May 19, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 57. (*in Russian*)

³²² Audit report of the Warsaw branch. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 13. (*in Russian*)

Warsaw stock exchange circles. A. V. Shpiganovich also found an assistant for T. B. Shemplinsky, former ensign B. G. Perzhinsky³²³.

T. B. Shemplinsky began work on June 3, 1906. Director S. S. Trubachev set him the following tasks: to improve the work of the Warsaw branch, as well as to increase the number of subscribers. Under him, the branch moved to its own premises, and its work was reorganized. At the same time, correspondents N. A. Blumenthal, N. F. Akaemov and K. Olkhovich remained in their positions. But now they had less creative freedom than under S. A. Kempner, the new director T. B. Shemplinsky regularly gave them instructions³²⁴. However, the three correspondents still tried to act at their own discretion and did not always listen to T.B. Shemplinsky. He even criticized them for this in letters to the management in 1907³²⁵. However, N.A. Blumenthal, N.F. Akaemov and K. Olkhovich did their job well, and it was difficult to find a full-fledged replacement for them.

The measures taken to organize and systematize the work improved the quality and quantity of news. However, at first this did not lead to an increase in the number of subscribers, which was what the SPTA management had hoped for. Warsaw newspapers, which hoped to gain their own benefit, soon entered into negotiations with the updated department. The newspaper «Varshavsky Kurier» offered to buy out the exclusive right to receive news about the Duma elections from SPTA for a large sum. The newspaper «Gonets» also wanted to agree that telegrams with news would go from correspondents directly to its editorial office, without being processed in the department. In addition, Polish newspapers complained that the SPTA bulletins contained a lot of news on topics that were of

³²³ Audit report of the Warsaw branch. 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 13. (*in Russian*)

³²⁴ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to T.B. Shemplinsky. June 3, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 18. (*in Russian*)

³²⁵ Letter from T.B. Shemplinsky to the Agency Board. February 10, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 65. (*in Russian*)

no interest to the Polish public. T.B. Shemplinsky reported this to the Central Department of SPTA³²⁶.

In a reply letter, director S.S. Trubachev categorically forbade T.B. Shemplinsky to make deals with newspapers. He pointed out that SPTA should not grant certain publications a monopoly on news on a certain topic. This is not specified in the charter, but the agency carefully adhered to this rule. S.S. Trubachev also stated that the agency would not change the procedure for sending telegrams for the sake of the Gonets newspaper. As the director noted, sending telegrams directly to newspapers would be unprofitable for SPTA itself, which sends telegrams from its branches at preferential rates. However, S.S. Trubachev listened to the proposal to change the subject matter of the news bulletins. The director ordered that a new circular be drawn up with news topics in the bulletins specifically for the Kingdom of Poland. Thus, now Polish newspapers received more news from Poland itself and less secondary news from other regions of Russia from SPTA³²⁷.

After an unsuccessful experience with the head of the Warsaw branch, S.A. Kempner, the SPTA management began to monitor the work of its branches more closely. Already in November 1907, a new inspection headed by M. Cramp arrived in Warsaw to check the work of the branch, which had been headed by T.B. Shemplinsky since June 3, 1906. As the inspectors noted, in less than a year and a half, T.B. Shemplinsky managed to achieve significant results. If in the spring of 1906, the SPTA representatives were extremely dissatisfied with the work of the Warsaw branch, then in November 1907, the branch made a positive impression on them. The employees worked in a separate room, and the office work was

³²⁶ Letter from T.B. Shemplinsky to the Agency Board. August 11, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

³²⁷ Letter from S.S. Trubachev to T.B. Shemplinsky. August 20, 1906 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 45. (*in Russian*)

conducted according to all the rules. In addition, the inspectors praised the head and the personnel³²⁸.

The inspection also visited the editorial offices of Warsaw newspapers to survey the quality of work of the local SPTA branch. The newspaper representatives spoke positively about the cooperation. However, there were several complaints that news from the SPTA branch was arriving late to the newspapers³²⁹. However, the problem of delays was encountered by most of the agency's branches.

In addition, several newspapers complained about the work of correspondent N. F. Akaemov, who also served as secretary to the chief of police. They noted his pronounced bias in covering events. There were also complaints about two other correspondents, N. A. Blumenthal and K. Olkhovich. Polish newspapers did not like that their materials contained too much crime news (as did N. F. Akaemov). The newspapers asked that SPTA broadcast news on other topics, especially about the economic and social life of the Kingdom of Poland. Despite these complaints, the agency's management was satisfied with the results of the inspection, and T. B. Shemplinsky continued to work in his position³³⁰.

In 1906, as a result of an internal investigation, the head of the Kiev branch was replaced. Z.V. Polyakov, who held this position, was caught in financial abuses during the investigation. Among the heads of the SPTA branches, there were dishonest employees, with whom the Board, for various reasons, put up while a replacement candidate was being sought (for example, the head of the Warsaw branch, S. A. Kempner). However, the scale of Z. V. Polyakov's abuses turned out

³²⁸ M. Crampon's report on the trip to inspect the SPTA branches in Warsaw and Lodz. November 16, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1071. L. 76. (*in Russian*)

³²⁹ Ibid. L. 77. (*in Russian*)

³³⁰ Ibid. L. 76. (*in Russian*)

to be too great, and there were candidates for replacement in Kyiv approved by the SPTA. Therefore, in the summer of 1906, he was dismissed from his position³³¹.

The next head of the Kiev branch was S.A. Belyavsky. However, his work did not satisfy the management either, and in the autumn of 1907 he was fired. In October 1907, the new head was S.T. Divin, an experienced employee of the SPTA, who had previously created a branch in Vilno³³². He was considered a reliable employee, which was important for the Board after the scandal with Z.V. Polyakov. However, in Kyiv, S.T. Divin failed to find enough new subscribers for the department, which naturally caused discontent among the agency's management³³³.

Therefore, in early 1908, the SPTA Board decided to send S.K. Penyevsky, an employee of the Moscow branch, to the Kiev branch to conduct an investigation. He had already proven himself as a «crisis manager» when he temporarily headed the branch in Vilno in October-November 1907 and improved its affairs.

The Board was not happy with the way S.T. Divin managed the Kiev branch, but did not want to fire him. Therefore, it sent S.K. Penyevsky to help S.T. Divin. The Agency Board believed that the Kiev branch could find even more subscribers. S.K. Penyevsky took up this issue upon his arrival in Kyiv. His trip was timed to coincide with a large fair during which entrepreneurs from the southern regions of Russia gathered in Kyiv. S.K. Penyevsky actively took up the matter and found several significant subscribers for the SPTA. For example, these were the South Russian Industrial Bank and the All-Russian Society of Sugar Manufacturers. At the same time, S. T. Divin and other employees of the department were able to expand the list of topics covered by the agency. This made it possible to offer

³³¹ Letters from A.A. Gelfer to Z.V. Polyakov. July 1906 // RSHA F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1081. L. 99. (*in Russian*)

³³² Letter from A.A. Gelfer to S.T. Divin. October 27, 1907 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1072. L. 49. (*in Russian*)

³³³ Report by S.K. Penevsky on the results of the trip to the South of Russia. April 7, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 166. (*in Russian*)

clients another, more expensive type of subscription. S. K. Penyevsky's activities in Kyiv were highly praised by the management, and S. T. Divin continued to manage the department³³⁴.

However, S.K. Penyevsky soon had to come to Odessa. TTA also had a branch in this city. For several years it was headed by Y.S. Balaban, who also worked with the newspaper «Novosti». The period of this leader's work was marked by a number of scandals. In 1906, several local newspapers went on strike and refused to pay for SPTA telegrams. They believed that the subscription price was too high for them, and because of such expenses they could not afford to support their own correspondents³³⁵. At the same time, the newspapers could not refuse to work with the agency, otherwise they would lose the necessary materials for publication. Then the conflict was resolved.

However, in 1908, a bigger scandal occurred. On February 14, 1908, the editorial board of the newspaper «Odessky Vestnik» contacted the SPTA Board. It reported that the Odessa branch of the agency was constantly late in transmitting news to the newspapers, but the same news appeared much earlier in «Novosti». The head of the branch collaborated with this newspaper and, using his official position, helped it. Evidence was attached to the letter. The SPTA Board recognized this as an unacceptable violation of the agency's rules and abuse of office. Soon, Y.S. Balaban was dismissed from his position³³⁶.

The Board appointed S.K. Penyevsky, who had repeatedly acted as a «crisis manager», as the acting head of the Odessa branch. Arriving in Odessa, he studied the situation and reported that the local branch had seen a drop in the number of subscribers in recent years. According to S.K. Penyevsky, this was due to the fact that the city had lost its status as a major transit center, and part of the cargo flows went through the ports of Nikolaev and Kherson. The new head believed that it

³³⁴ Report by S.K. Penevsky on the results of the trip to the South of Russia. April 7, 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 163. (*in Russian*)

³³⁵ Ibid. L. 164. (*in Russian*)

³³⁶ Ibid. L. 165. (*in Russian*)

would be unlikely to increase the SPTA audience in the conditions of the local economic crisis. Therefore, in Odessa, he was engaged in retaining previous subscribers and returning those who had stopped subscribing when the branch was headed by Y.S. Penyevsky was able to find clients who subscribed to telegrams about sugar or bread trade, and also convinced several Odessa banks to subscribe to SPTA telegrams. The acting head of the branch was also looking for candidates for the position of permanent head. However, he was unable to find suitable candidates in Odessa. Then in May 1908 S.K. Penevsky was recalled to St. Petersburg, and N.A. Osetrov, who had previously worked in the Moscow branch, was appointed head of the SPTA branch in Odessa³³⁷.

In turn, S.K. Penyevsky's career in SPTA did not work out, despite the fulfillment of several important assignments from the management. Formally, he continued to work in the Moscow branch and by the summer of 1909 he had finally fallen out with his immediate supervisor I.V. Polyakov. As a result, in July 1909, S.K. Penyevsky was fired from SPTA. In the letter of dismissal, A.A. Gelfer indicated to S.K. Penyevsky that he had become too carried away by other matters and did not fulfill his immediate duties at his main place of work, the Moscow branch of SPTA³³⁸.

In 1906-1910, the agency took into account its previous mistakes, reduced the independence of the departments and increased the reporting of their managers, which allowed for greater efficiency. The order of their work was also approved. During this period, the network of SPTA departments was finally formed, which would operate until the agency was closed.

³³⁷ Letters from the Board of Directors to N.A. Osetrov. May 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1092. L. 175-176. (*in Russian*)

³³⁸ Letters from A.A. Gelfer to S.K. Penevsky. July 1908 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 22-28. (*in Russian*)

Chapter 3. SPTA in 1910-1914: organization and functioning

3.1. SPTA management mechanisms in 1910-1914

On December 31, 1909, as already noted, a new «Regulation on the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency» was approved, which changed its structure and management powers. On January 1, 1910, O. I. Lamkert, who had served for many years in the Main Directorate for Printing Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and dealt with censorship issues there, began working as the director of the SPTA. He began his career in the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1890, worked in the censorship committees of Moscow and Odessa, then was an inspector of printing houses and the St. Petersburg post office. Since 1904, O. I. Lamkert, on behalf of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was engaged in checking telegrams that the SPTA transmitted to other countries. Thus, he was well acquainted with the working methods of the telegraph agency. O. I. Lamkert was sent to the SPTA on the personal order of P. A. Stolypin. The prime minister probably further strengthened his influence in the agency by appointing an experienced employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which he also headed, as its director³³⁹.

One of the main tasks for O. I. Lamkert was to stabilize the agency's financial position and obtain a positive balance of income and expenses. At first, he tried to cope with the efforts of SPTA itself. Since 1910, the agency introduced a new subscription system. Now the subscription cost was not fixed, but was calculated separately for each newspaper. The cost depended on the format, budget and distribution of the newspaper. Accordingly, now even small newspapers could afford to subscribe to SPTA telegrams. All this led to both an increase in the number of clients and an increase in income³⁴⁰.

But in order to strengthen the agency's financial position, O. I. Lamkert decided to use state assistance. In January 1911, the director appealed to the

³³⁹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to the Council of Ministers. January 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 69. (*in Russian*)

³⁴⁰ Draft estimate of income and expenditure of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency for 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 130. (*in Russian*)

government with a request to further reduce the preferential tariff for the transmission of telegrams for the agency. In a letter to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, he cited as an example the policy of other countries (Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary and the United States) in relation to telegraph agencies. In these countries, telegrams intended for publication in the press were paid for at a discount of 75% of the standard price. O. I. Lamkert noted that thanks to such discounts, the telegraph agencies of Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary and the United States were thriving, did not face a budget deficit and regularly supplied the population and the press with news³⁴¹.

O. I. Lamkert also emphasized the importance of the international direction of the SPTA work and called it extremely popular among subscribers, but expensive to maintain. He pointed out that now individual newspapers can maintain their own correspondents in other countries, and in the conditions of competition with newspapers, the telegraph agency must make even more efforts and resources to quickly receive and forward information in order to retain its clients. O. I. Lamkert noted that at the moment the reduced rate for sending telegrams for SPTA applies only to telegrams from St. Petersburg. Therefore, he proposed to extend the rate to all SPTA telegrams³⁴². O.I. Lamkert's project was accepted by the Council of Ministers.

Thanks to all these measures, the financial situation of SPTA improved in 1911. It was subscriptions that provided the growth in income. Subscription income for 1911 amounted to 405,500 rubles, which was almost 52,000 rubles, or 15%, more than the income for 1910. The trend continued, and the draft budget for 1912 directly stated that the growth in the number of clients exceeded expectations. According to the plan, the elections to the State Duma of the 4th convocation were to spur interest in politics in the country and add subscribers to the agency. The

³⁴¹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to the Council of Ministers. January 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 69. (*in Russian*)

³⁴² Ibid. L. 69. (*in Russian*)

management also planned to further expand the network of correspondents and believed that such investments would definitely pay off³⁴³.

But the leadership's expectations regarding the 1912 elections and the surge of interest in politics turned out to be overstated, there was no increase in subscriptions, and the budget report for 1912 showed a budget deficit of 26,894 rubles³⁴⁴. 1912 also turned out to be difficult for SPTA due to force majeure. That year, two major wars broke out at once: the Italo-Turkish War in Libya and the First Balkan War between the coalition of Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire. The agency took on their coverage, and such intensity caused a sharp increase in telegraph costs.

However, the 1913 budget report already showed a net profit for SPTA in the amount of 47,703 rubles. However, this amount immediately went to cover the deficit for 1912, which amounted to 26,894 rubles, as indicated earlier. As was highlighted in the report, «the financial situation of the agency can be considered quite secure, provided that there is a further, extremely cautious increase in expenses within the limits dictated only by absolute necessity»³⁴⁵.

However, in order to save money, in 1910, the SPTA underwent cuts and reorganization of its divisions. For example, the staff of the Department under the Duma was reduced. The senior editors were now G.E. Kalin, A.D. Korotnev, A.M. Lovyagin. However, some of the other editors were fired. The former editor of telegrams for Russian newspapers, Y.V. Aleksandrovsky, was transferred to the position of political chronicler. Also, the head of the SPTA Department under the

³⁴³ Draft estimate of income and expenditure of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency for 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 130. (*in Russian*)

³⁴⁴ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to K.M. Ketov, January 25, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 954. L. 69. (*in Russian*)

³⁴⁵ Report on the implementation of the budget of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency for 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 183. (*in Russian*)

State Council, A.V. Shpiganovich, was transferred to the Department under the State Duma³⁴⁶.

Instead of the reduced staff of the SPTA Department at the Duma, it was planned to use employees of another state structure. Some of the agency's tasks were transferred to the Information Bureau at the Main Directorate for Press Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. According to the new plan, the Information Bureau was to cover the work of the State Duma, create bulletins with news about this and send them out. Thus, it took on the duties of the SPTA in the Duma. In turn, the agency in the Duma retained duty correspondents who could also collect and send news. SPTA paid for the work of the Information Bureau in the Duma, which became its counterparty. For 1 year of work, the agency paid the bureau 14,300 rubles³⁴⁷.

At the same time, SPTA continued to transmit news from the Duma to the Russian and foreign press. After transferring some of its functions to the Information Bureau, the agency sent special letters to newspaper editors explaining the new situation. The management of SPTA stated that it would continue to send subscribers short reports on Duma sessions, which would reflect the speeches of the deputies who spoke. Individual, especially significant speeches would be transmitted partially in detail. Clients would also continue to receive full programmatic speeches by government representatives and resolutions of the general meeting of the Duma. All of this was included in the subscription for 75 rubles per month (900 rubles per year)³⁴⁸.

As experience has shown, the initiative to involve the Information Bureau in the work of the Duma turned out to be rather unsuccessful. Two parallel and duplicating divisions of the SPTA now worked in the Duma. The employees of the

³⁴⁶ List of employees of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency working in the State Duma. September 23, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 17-18. (*in Russian*)

³⁴⁷ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to G.E. Kalin. 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 34. (*in Russian*)

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.* L. 34. (*in Russian*)

Information Bureau, as a purely state and bureaucratic structure, strove for the accuracy of information at the expense of speed. They also collected all possible information about the Duma sessions, regardless of its demand among newspapers and the public. For the SPTA employees working with the private newspaper business, the main task was the speed of information processing and the promptness of its sending to clients. The agency employees had to present the essence of events in 1000-2000 words. Then the SPTA tried to send a short report to the newspapers subscribed to it without delay, so that they had time to include the information in the upcoming issue.

As a result, it turned out that the Duma Branch could not actually use the materials of the Information Bureau that were not ready for transmission to the newspapers. Because of this, the employees of the Duma Branch themselves had to shorten the reports of the Information Bureau³⁴⁹. Thus, the bureau worked in vain. And the SPTA received additional and actually senseless expenses, because it simultaneously supported both its previous staff of the Department and the Information Bureau in the Duma.

In the summer of 1910, when considering the draft budget for 1911, the SPTA Council declared that paying for the services of the Information Bureau in the Duma did not make sense. As noted, the agency did not have a significant net profit, and it itself needed those 14,300 rubles that went to the Information Bureau³⁵⁰.

The SPTA Council passed its decision to A. V. Belgard, the head of the Main Administration for Press Affairs, which included the Information Bureau. And in August 1910, a meeting was held with the participation of N. D. Griboyedov, the head of the bureau. He accepted the opinion of the SPTA Council,

³⁴⁹ Glinka Y.V. *Eleven years in the State Duma. 1906-1917. Diary and memoirs.* - M.: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2001. P. 78. (*in Russian*)

³⁵⁰ Draft SPTA estimate for 1911. 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 23. (*in Russian*)

but stated that if funding ceased, the bureau's employees would stop preparing stenographic reports³⁵¹.

In October 1910, the situation with the SPTA and the Information Bureau was brought to the attention of Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin. He agreed with the proposal of the SPTA Council and ordered that the Information Bureau be relieved of the work of collecting stenographic reports in the Duma. In turn, all responsibilities for informing the population about events in the Duma were returned to the SPTA. At the same time, P.A. Stolypin ordered that the agency receive stenographic records of the meetings of the State Council. From January 1, 1911, the agreement between the SPTA and the Information Bureau officially ceased to be in effect³⁵².

Thus, the initiative for joint work of the SPTA and the Information Bureau in the Duma and for delegation of powers was unsuccessful, and as a result the previous order of work of the Department under the Duma was returned. After the reorganization of 1910, the personnel of the Department remained practically unchanged until its closure together with the Duma on February 25, 1917. The senior editors, and most of the editors, and the political chronicler Y. V. Aleksandrovsky continued to work in their posts.

In turn, the private press continued to regularly criticize the SPTA Department under the Duma. One of the striking examples was the scandal of 1911. On April 12, 1911, the St. Petersburg right-monarchist newspaper «Zemshchina» published an article in its regular column Duma Life entitled «The Amazing Machinations of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency». In this note, the SPTA was accused of concealing information («keeping silent about the truth») about a closed session of the Duma on March 30, 1911, at which a request was

³⁵¹ Minutes of the meeting with the participation of the head of the Information Bureau at the Main Directorate for Press Affairs. August 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 36. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

³⁵² Letter from P.A. Stolypin to O.I. Lamkert. 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 51. (*in Russian*)

made to investigate the reasons for the shortage of recruits among non-Orthodox citizens of the Russian Empire³⁵³.

Director O. I. Lamkert did not ignore these attacks and sent a letter to «Zemshchina». In it, the director stated that SPTA had not hidden anything. He reported that the agency had not participated in the creation of the report on the said meeting on March 30. In addition, SPTA employees were not present at it. O. I. Lamkert noted that the report that had excited «Zemshchina» was handled by the Duma itself, which had provided SPTA papers late and with the signature of Duma employee Y. V. Glinka³⁵⁴.

O.I. Lamkert also managed to obtain a very important permit for the Department under the Duma. In 1912, the employees of the SPTA received permission to attend closed sessions of the Duma³⁵⁵. To do this, Lamkert secured the support of the Minister of War V.A. Sukhomlinov. On March 28, 1912, he approached the Chairman of the Duma M.V. Rodzianko with a request to grant permission for the employees of the Department under the Duma to attend a closed meeting where a bill from the Ministry of War was being discussed. Lamkert indicated that he already had the consent of the Minister of War. M.V. Rodzianko complied with the request and granted permission. Soon, the right to attend was also obtained for closed meetings to discuss bills submitted by the Naval Ministry. After this, other permits were issued³⁵⁶. As a result, SPTA employees were allowed to attend any closed meetings, if the relevant ministers did not object to it.

It is also worth noting that after the death of P.A. Stolypin on September 5, 1911, the new prime minister was the Minister of Finance V.N. Kokovtsov, who supervised SPTA until 1910, while it was part of the Ministry of Finance. Thus,

³⁵³ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to the editorial board of the newspaper «Zemshchina». April 12, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 62. (*in Russian*)

³⁵⁴ Ibid. L. 62. (*in Russian*)

³⁵⁵ Reports of L.K. Kumanin from the Ministerial Pavilion of the State Duma, December 1911 - February 1917. // Voprosy istorii. - 2000. - №2. - P. 19. (*in Russian*)

³⁵⁶ Letter from M.V. Rodzianko to the SPA Board. March 30, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1077. L. 59-61. (*in Russian*)

the prime minister (that is, the direct supervisor of the agency director) was the one who knew the agency well and was interested in its success.

SPTA also continued to work with its partners in the consortium of telegraph agencies. However, the management of the Russian state agency often did not trust foreign partners. It was especially suspicious of the Austrian agency «Korrespondenz-Bureau». The management believed that «Korrespondenz-Bureau» was preventing the transmission of telegrams from Russia and deliberately distorting the information in them. Moreover, Austria-Hungary was already an unfriendly country for Russia.

The relationship between SPTA and the «Korrespondenz-Bureau» became strained by the beginning of 1910. When the Tsar of Bulgaria Ferdinand arrived in St. Petersburg on a visit, it was decided to use this event to test the reliability of the Austrian agency. The Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky agreed on the operation with SPTA³⁵⁷. Following the visit, the MFA staff created an official report on this event. This news was sent to Constantinople to the SPTA employee F.A. Dukhovetsky via the «Korrespondenz-Bureau» channels, as stipulated in the agreement. At the same time, the same news and instructions were transmitted to F.A. Dukhovetsky via another communication channel. The correspondent was to compare the publications of the news in Turkish newspapers with the original news and thus find out whether the «Korrespondenz-Bureau» was distorting the information. As it turned out, there were indeed distortions of the news in the newspapers. For example, the visit of the Tsar of Bulgaria to Russia was interpreted in Austrian newspapers as support for Russia's claims in the Balkans. Moreover, the ambitious Ferdinand laid claim to strengthening Bulgaria's influence in the Balkans and to part of the lands of the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, he would become one of the founders of the Balkan Union, directed against the Ottoman Empire. In the end, the suspicions of the SPTA management regarding the unscrupulous actions of the Austrian agency were confirmed, but it had no

³⁵⁷ Soloviev Y.Y. *Memories of a diplomat*. M.: Sozkgiz, 1959. P. 215. (*in Russian*)

means of influencing the «Korrespondenz-Bureau». Therefore, it was decided to transmit news to Europe through the Austrian agency as rarely as possible³⁵⁸.

Just as the great powers divided spheres of influence in the world, the same division was carried out by large telegraph agencies. Thus, Russia had long considered northern Persia to be its zone of influence, and the SPTA was striving for the same. However, Germany began to lay claim to influence in the neighboring regions of the Ottoman Empire, planning to build the Berlin-Baghdad railway there. In the same 1911, in parallel with the negotiations between Russia and Germany on the division of influence in Asia, negotiations were conducted between the SPTA and the German telegraph agency «Wolf» on the same region. They lasted longer and were completed only by December 1911. On December 1, 1911, director O.I. Lamkert in a report to Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov said that the negotiations had been successful and Persia would be declared a de facto zone of influence of the SPTA in a short time. According to the plan, the agency's employees would work in Persia and transmit news from there to other telegraph agencies and foreign newspapers³⁵⁹. In addition, China and Japan became the SPTA's sphere of influence. SPTA employees worked there and the news telegrams they sent were published in the world's largest newspapers. But it is worth noting that in those years, interest in the Far East in Europe was not so great, and these telegrams were published infrequently³⁶⁰. However, these events became another important milestone for the establishment of SPTA as a truly global telegraph agency.

In 1912, a conflict occurred between SPTA and the French telegraph agency «Havas», another member of the consortium of agencies. Unlike the conflict with the «Korrespondenz-Bureau», these disagreements were exclusively about work.

³⁵⁸ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to F.A. Dukhovetsky. February 24, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 983. L. 128. (*in Russian*)

³⁵⁹ Report of O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. December 1, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 237-238. (*in Russian*)

³⁶⁰ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. June 17, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 90. (*in Russian*)

In early 1912, a meeting of the SPTA Council was held on the issue of working with «Havas». The management familiarized itself with the reports on this issue and agreed with the opinion of the employees that the telegrams from the French telegraph agency were of low quality, too large, uninformative, and also arrived in St. Petersburg too late. But, in turn, the management noted the high-quality work of the SPTA correspondent in Paris P.N. Apostol³⁶¹.

Based on the current situation, the Council of the SPTA decided to stop using the telegrams of the «Havas» agency. And the responsibility for delivering all news from France was assigned to P.N. Apostol, who was to collect information and send it directly to St. Petersburg. The increased workload was compensated by an additional payment to P.N. Apostol in the amount of 1,200 rubles for 1912³⁶². In addition to the costs of the correspondent, SPTA was also forced to spend more on sending news from Paris. But as the management considered, the quality and promptness of the information were worth stopping the use of the «Havas» telegrams and increasing expenses.

However, in the same 1912, Russia and France became even closer and their alliance was strengthened. By 1912, the Russian authorities decided to begin large-scale railway construction and for this it was necessary to obtain a large loan in France. V.N. Kokovtsov discussed its terms with the French government, which in June 1912 approved a large-scale loan for the construction of railways. At the same time, according to the French plan, the new railways were to be built mainly near the western border of Russia, so that they could be used in the event of a war with Germany. In order to discuss in detail and agree on the construction scheme, a visit of a delegation of high-ranking French politicians to St. Petersburg was planned³⁶³.

³⁶¹ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to A. N. Apostol. January 10, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 997. L. 288. (*in Russian*)

³⁶² Ibid. L. 288. (*in Russian*)

³⁶³ Poincaré R. In the service of France. Memories of 9 years. M.: Gosudarstvennoye sotsialno-ekonomicheskoye izdatelstvo, 1936. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

In view of these events, the «Havas» agency decided to meet the SPTA halfway and resolve the conflict. On June 10, 1912, almost a month and a half before Raymond Poincaré's visit, the French agency approached the Russian with a project to expand their cooperation. «Havas» expected to systematically receive news from the SPTA about events in Russia. The French agency noted the growing interest in Russia in France and, in particular, in the rapidly rising price of Russian securities in financial circles³⁶⁴. It planned to satisfy this demand with news about Russia and especially its economy.

The management of «Havas» compiled a list of topics on which it expected to receive news from SPTA. In the letter, they were divided into three thematic blocks. First, financial issues, which included news about the budget, government loans, and the State Bank. Second, general economic issues, which included information about the construction of railways, industry, harvesting, and mining. Third, news about politics and public life in Russia. The management of «Havas» noted that at first they did not plan to take general news, but business circles convinced them, since any events in public and political life can affect the economy and stock prices³⁶⁵.

SPTA supported the proposal of the «Havas» agency, after which SPTA assistant director A.A. Gelfer reported this to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance V.N. Kokovtsov. However, A.A. Gelfer noted that at the moment the Russian agency does not have the ability to fully satisfy the request for economic news. The assistant director explained this by the fact that SPTA did not have enough materials on economic issues, since the agency had long been engaged in general news, and economic issues had faded into the background for it³⁶⁶.

³⁶⁴ Letter from the Board of Havas to the Board of SPTA. 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 17. (*in Russian*)

³⁶⁵ Ibid. L. 17. (*in Russian*)

³⁶⁶ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to E.S. Karatygin. July 4, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 38-39. (*in Russian*)

However, these materials were in the possession of the Editorial Board of the periodicals of the Ministry of Finance, in particular, the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» of the Ministry of Finance was engaged in them. A.A. Gelfer asked V.N. Kokovtsov to ensure the transmission of economic news from the Editorial Board of the periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. The Minister of Finance went to meet the SPTA and informed the head of the Editorial Board E.S. Karatygin of the order to transmit the news to the telegraph agency, and also to increase the scale of news collection³⁶⁷.

However, this entailed the expansion of the Editorial Board and additional expenses for SPTA as a customer. Then V.N. Kokovtsov personally ordered that SPTA be allocated 585 rubles per month from a special fund to pay for the Editorial Board services. According to the calculations, the editor-translator into French received 200 rubles, two employees who collected news received 150 rubles, and the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» received 100 rubles. The remaining 135 rubles went to pay for telegrams with news³⁶⁸.

From July 28 to August 3, 1912, the French President Raymond Poincaré visited Russia. His goal was to discuss new loans, including a large railway loan, as well as to strengthen the military alliance between the countries³⁶⁹. All contacts and negotiations with the French delegation were strictly regulated and hidden from the attention of the press (even from the SPTA), which knew nothing about their content³⁷⁰.

First, R. Poincaré met with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs S.D. Sazonov and discussed with him the situation in the Balkans, where in the winter of 1911-1912 the formation of the Balkan Union, which included Serbia,

³⁶⁷ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to E.S. Karatygin. July 4, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 38-39. (*in Russian*)

³⁶⁸ Letter from V.N. Kokovtsov to A.A. Gelfer. July 7, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 108-109. (*in Russian*)

³⁶⁹ Kokovtsov V.N. From my past. Memories. 1903-1919. In two books. Book two. M.: Nauka, 1992. P. 86. (*in Russian*)

³⁷⁰ Birzhevyye vedomosti. №13068. 31.07.12. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria to protect their interests after the Bosnian crisis of 1908, was coming to an end³⁷¹.

On August 2, R. Poincaré, having returned to St. Petersburg from Moscow, visited V. N. Kokovtsov for a substantive conversation about the economic and military-political relations between Russia and France. Their meeting was devoted mainly to the issue of railways in the context of preparations for a possible war with Germany. V. N. Kokovtsov himself considered the close attention of the French side to the railways of Russia as a chance to obtain additional loans from France, and he succeeded, because in 1913 Russia received the necessary loan from France³⁷².

At the same time, R. Poincaré's visit also influenced SPTA, because authorized representatives of the telegraph agency «Havas», including the famous journalist A. Ponion, came to Russia with the French president. Representatives of the French agency held talks with SPTA on further cooperation. They also familiarized themselves with the news program that SPTA now received from the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. In turn, SPTA also benefited from the agreement. Now in Russia only the state agency directly received telegrams from «Havas». Representatives of the French agency were satisfied with the conditions, and the agreement was concluded³⁷³.

After its signing, O. I. Lamkert noted in a report to V. N. Kokovtsov that the great interest of «Havas» in news from Russia opened up even greater prospects for SPTA. The director believed that through the French agency, news about the Russian economy approved by the authorities would be distributed further across Europe, and this would be beneficial for Russia. O. I. Lamkert noted that interest in Russia continued to grow. He suggested that the program for transmitting economic news to the «Havas» agency would have to be expanded in the future. In

³⁷¹ Sazonov S.D. Memories. Minsk: Harvest, 2002. P. 43. (*in Russian*)

³⁷² Kokovtsov V.N. From my past. Memories. 1903-1919. Book two. P. 86. (*in Russian*)

³⁷³ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. August 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 101. (*in Russian*)

addition, O. I. Lamkert ordered that more news from the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance be transmitted to SPTA representatives in the economic centers of Europe, so that the agency representatives could distribute it in financial circles and thereby provide additional advertising for SPTA itself³⁷⁴.

The desire of the SPTA management to save money in 1912 affected foreign areas of activity. For this purpose, Director O. I. Lamkert conducted preliminary negotiations in the format of correspondence on reducing the tariff for sending messages with telegraph agencies of Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, as well as with the telegraph office in Vienna. Having concluded such agreements, it was possible to send information to the Balkan countries directly, bypassing the Austrian «Korrespondenz-Bureau». SPTA had conflicts with the latter, and relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary in those years were rather hostile. Telegraph offices of four cities gave preliminary consent, the agreement had to be concluded in person. O. I. Lamkert reported this to the Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Council of Ministers V. N. Kokovtsov in May 1912, who approved the trip³⁷⁵.

In addition, the plans of O. I. Lamkert interested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because the Balkans were the most important direction of Russia's foreign policy. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs A. A. Neratov contacted O. I. Lamkert and ordered that his trip be financed from the special secret fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs³⁷⁶.

O. I. Lamkert's trip to the Balkan countries took place in the spring of 1912. The first stop on the trip was Bucharest. In the capital of Romania, O. I. Lamkert held talks with Katarji, director of the Romanian Telegraph Agency. As a result, an agreement was concluded between the SPTA and the Romanian Telegraph Agency on a new tariff and direct transmission of news. The Romanian agency also

³⁷⁴ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. August 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 108-109. (*in Russian*)

³⁷⁵ Report by O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. May 1, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

³⁷⁶ Ibid. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

acquired the right to transmit some of the political news received from the SPTA to the German agency Wolf and the Austrian agency «Korrespondenz-Bureau». The Romanian Telegraph Agency received news on politics, as well as on the economy and socio-political life of Bessarabia, which was traditionally in the sphere of Romania's interests³⁷⁷.

O. I. Lamkert's next stop was Sofia. A direct agreement was already in effect with the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, and now the issue was about expanding and changing it. However, at the same time, plans were underway to open a branch of the SPTA in Sofia, where the agency had a representative, N. N. Surin. This was categorically disliked by the director of the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, J. Herbst, who saw the branch as competitors, as well as an indicator of mistrust in his agency, which had been a partner of the SPTA for many years. Despite these disagreements, a new agreement between the Russian and Bulgarian state telegraph agencies was drawn up. It was basically similar to the agreement between the SPTA and the Romanian Telegraph Agency and also included a provision on direct telegraph communication without intermediaries. Thanks to this, the cost of sending messages would be reduced by almost 33%. In addition, the sending process was accelerated. As O. I. noted in his report, Lamkert, he was going to be received personally by the Prime Minister of Bulgaria I. Geshov, who was supposed to ratify the treaty, but for reasons beyond the control of the director of SPTA, the meeting fell through. But O. I. Lamkert managed to meet with the Minister of Public Education of Bulgaria S. Bobchev, who promised that the ratification of the treaty would take place³⁷⁸.

Then O. I. Lamkert arrived in Belgrade, where he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia N. Pasic and the director of the Serbian telegraph agency «Press Bureau» D. Stefanovic. The main topic of the negotiations was the creation

³⁷⁷ Report by O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. May 1, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

³⁷⁸ Ibid. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

of a direct telegraph line between Russia and Serbia. Since the relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia were hostile, Serbia was forced to transmit information via the telegraph network bypassing Austria-Hungary. This led to an increase in the delivery time of telegrams, and with the increase in the route, the chance of a technical failure in the transmission process increased, which was recorded by the «Press Bureau». To solve this problem, the Serbian side developed a project to build a direct telegraph line from Belgrade to Bulgarian Varna, from where it was easier to deliver telegrams to Russia. In parallel with the visit of O.I. Lamkert to Belgrade and the conclusion of an agreement between SPTA and the Press Bureau, an agreement was concluded between Serbia and Bulgaria for the construction of this telegraph line³⁷⁹.

The next destination of O.I. Lamkert's business trip was Budapest, where the director met with the local press and the Russian Consul General M. G. Priklonsky, who proposed a number of initiatives. In a personal conversation, M.G. Priklonsky stated that there was interest in Russia and news from it in Hungary. The consul offered the assistance of his employees in disseminating news from Russia in the local press. In turn, O.I. Lamkert positively assessed the initiative and proposed not to give additional workload directly to SPTA, but to use the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance. According to the plan of the SPTA director, the Editorial Board of Periodicals was to send news materials by mail to M.G. Priklonsky, who would pass them on to the Hungarian press through his employees³⁸⁰.

The initiative of M.G. Priklonsky and the plan of O.I. Lamkert were highly appreciated in St. Petersburg. Already on July 4, 1912, the assistant director of the SPTA A.A. Gelfer sent to the head of the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance E.S. Karatygin a set of documents, including the proposal of

³⁷⁹ Report by O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. May 1, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

³⁸⁰ Ibid. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

M.G. Priklonsky and accompanying notes of O.I. Lamkert and Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov. After this, the Editorial Board of Periodicals began to send the consul in Hungary by mail collections of economic news for a certain period³⁸¹.

From Budapest, O. I. Lamkert arrived in Vienna, the last planned destination of his business trip. There, the director met with the representative of the SPTA V. P. Svatkovsky and held negotiations with representatives of the Austrian telegraph agency «Korrespondenz-Bureau». O.I. Lamkert managed to come to an agreement with them and conclude a new contract, which reduced the cost of sending messages for the parties³⁸².

O. I. Lamkert himself noted in his report that he managed to achieve the goal of his mission³⁸³. As a result, new and more favorable agreements were signed with the Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Romanian telegraph agencies. An agreement important for Serbia was also concluded on the construction of a telegraph line, which, if implemented, would have provided this country with information independence, and SPTA would have given greater authority. Thanks to the consul in Hungary M.G. Priklonsky and the efforts of O.I. Lamkert as an intermediary, a new direction for sending news from Russia was opened.

In 1913, the agreement between SPTA and the French agency «Havas» for the transmission of financial and economic news from Russia continued to operate. However, to fulfill the agreement, SPTA continued to need additional financing. In April 1913, O. I. Lamkert approached V. N. Kokovtsov with a request to maintain the payments of the Ministry of Finance for the financing of this program. The director reported on its implementation and wrote about the reaction to it in France: «From the correspondence that the agency constantly conducted on this issue with its representative in Paris, who was also in the service of the Parisian agency of the

³⁸¹ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to E.S. Karatygin. July 4, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 38-39. (*in Russian*)

³⁸² Letter from L.F. Davydov to A.A. Gelfer. August 22, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 103. (*in Russian*)

³⁸³ Report by O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. May 1, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 276. (*in Russian*)

Ministry of Finance, it has now become clear that the French industrial and stock exchange circles are in great need of regular information about the facts of Russian economic life»³⁸⁴.

O. I. Lamkert noted that two news collectors and one editor-translator continue to work on supplying the «Havas» agency with financial and economic news. They compiled news bulletins that were sent to France, as well as to individual representatives of SPTA in other countries. The latter, in turn, tried to place the news in the local press. The director also noted that these representatives also helped to disseminate the news³⁸⁵.

In addition, O. I. Lamkert analyzed the reaction to the economic news broadcast in France and proposed adjusting the list of news topics. According to the director's proposal, SPTA should continue to broadcast news related to the State Bank and the Savings Bank, other government expenditures, mineral extraction and harvesting. As O. I. Lamkert noted, there was demand for all of this. However, he proposed expanding the list of topics and at the same time broadcasting news about the largest industrial enterprises, about joint-stock companies and dividends, about loan issues, about private banks, and also broadcasting prices for products that Russia exported³⁸⁶.

O. I. Lamkert also justified the need to spend money on an editor-translator instead of a regular editor by the special demand for news from Russia in France. France had long been an ally of Russia, and the two countries were closely connected to each other in the financial and economic sphere³⁸⁷. This objectively aroused the interest of the financial circles of each country in news from the allied country. O. I. Lamkert reported that thanks to the program of transmitting financial

³⁸⁴ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. April 27, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 18. (*in Russian*)

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.* L. 18. (*in Russian*)

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.* L. 19. (*in Russian*)

³⁸⁷ International Relations in the Age of Imperialism. Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Government. 1878-1917. Series Two. Volume 20. Part 1. Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo politicheskoy literatury, 1939. Pp. 235-236. (*in Russian*)

and economic news from Russia, representatives of the SPTA managed to establish many contacts in France with representatives of large businesses, as well as with the local press³⁸⁸. As a result, V.N. Kokovtsov supported O.I. Lamkert and extended the financing program.

However, SPTA had complaints about the actions of the French agency. A striking example was the case in March 1913. Then the newspaper «Novoye Vremya» published a telegram from the agency «Havas», which spoke about the departure of the fleet of Austria-Hungary from the harbors. This was prohibited by the agreement on the exclusive transfer of news from «Havas» to SPTA³⁸⁹. The telegram was especially scandalous due to its time context. It happened during the First Balkan War between a coalition of Balkan states, the Balkan Union (Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria), and the Ottoman Empire, and at that time it was uncertain whether Austria-Hungary would enter the war.

Also, the management of SPTA was extremely unhappy that «Novoye Vremya» had received an important telegram bypassing it. In order to clarify all the circumstances, a letter was sent to the «Havas» agency on March 9, 1913, and special instructions were given to P.N. Apostol, the SPTA representative in Paris, who worked with «Havas» on a regular basis. The management instructed him to find out whether the agreement on the exclusive transmission of news to Russia was being systematically violated by «Havas»³⁹⁰.

P.N. Apostol conducted an investigation and reported the results in a reply letter on March 13, 1913. The correspondent noted that up to that point there had been no such incidents, and the «Havas» agency had complied with the agreement on exclusive news transmission. In turn, the employees of the French agency interviewed by P.N. Apostol also denied everything. The correspondent studied the

³⁸⁸ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. April 27, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 20. (*in Russian*)

³⁸⁹ Letter from G.E. Kalin P.N. to P.N. Apostol. March 9, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 997. L. 467. (*in Russian*)

³⁹⁰ Ibid. L. 467. (*in Russian*)

telegram from «Novoye Vremya» and stated that its style differed significantly from the official «Havas» telegrams. P.N. Apostol put forward two versions of what had happened. The first version is the actions of an employee of the French newspaper, who received news from «Havas». The second version is a leak of information during its transmission by telegraph. As P.N. Apostol reported, the telegraph employees were suspected of selling the information coming through them, but there was no clear evidence. According to the SPTA correspondent, «Novoye Vremya» received the news either through a press employee or through a telegraph employee, and the «Havas» agency itself was not guilty of violating the agreement³⁹¹.

Also in 1913, the director of SPTA O. I. Lamkert met with the management of the world's largest telegraph agencies, members of the consortium, to discuss the terms of cooperation between them and resolve existing disagreements. O. I. Lamkert held negotiations with the management of the Wolf agency in Berlin, with the management of the «Havas» agency in Paris, and with the management of the Reuters agency in London. The main topic of the negotiations was reducing the commission that SPTA paid to the consortium of telegraph agencies for transmitting news.

As O. I. Lamkert reported in his report to V. N. Kokovtsov in June 1913, he managed to achieve the goals of the negotiations in Berlin and Paris. The heads of the «Wolf» and «Havas» agencies were completely satisfied with their work with SPTA, considered the Russian agency a reliable partner and planned to continue and develop cooperation with it³⁹².

However, the negotiations with the British agency «Reuters» were not as successful. The reason for «Reuters»' claims against SPTA was the latter's failures in the Far East. The British agency criticized the Russian agency for its initiative to

³⁹¹ Letter from P.N. Apostol to O.I. Lamkert. March 13, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 997. L. 469. (*in Russian*)

³⁹² Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. June 17, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 90. (*in Russian*)

find subscribers in China and Japan. As it turned out, only a few Chinese and Japanese newspapers could pay for the subscription. As a result, the initiative did not bring the expected profit. But at the same time, «Reuters» was willing to continue cooperation. It also confirmed SPTA's special right to transmit news cables to Tokyo, Beijing and Shanghai³⁹³.

As a result of the trip, as O. I. Lamkert particularly noted, the consortium of telegraph agencies de facto recognized Persia, Japan and China as the sphere of influence of the SPTA. The director stated that by that time the Russian agency had become the main supplier of news from these countries to European newspapers³⁹⁴.

However, SPTA had to wait for the final adoption of the new commission agreement. It was agreed upon in its final form by the end of July 1913, and was signed by the agencies «Wolf», «Havas» and «Reuters» on August 1. Under the new agreement, the commission was reduced by 10,000 marks, which was approximately 5,000 rubles³⁹⁵.

The agreement was finally formalized in November 1913, when the director of the «Wolf» agency, G. Mantler, came to St. Petersburg. In addition, G. Mantler visited the main office of SPTA in St. Petersburg and the branch in Moscow. Then, in December 1913, the authorized representative of the «Havas» agency, G. Truve, visited St. Petersburg and SPTA. He met with O. I. Lamkert and Prime Minister V. N. Kokovtsov to discuss the prospects for joint work between SPTA and «Havas»³⁹⁶.

O. I. Lamkert began updating and improving the equipment and infrastructure of the agency, which had not changed since its foundation. In addition, the director expanded the scope of work of SPTA, transforming it from a

³⁹³ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. June 17, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 90. (*in Russian*)

³⁹⁴ Ibid. L. 91. (*in Russian*)

³⁹⁵ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. August 9, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 107. (*in Russian*)

³⁹⁶ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. December 14, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 133. (*in Russian*)

telegraph agency into a full-fledged news agency. Moreover, he attracted investments for this. O. I. Lamkert suggested that St. Petersburg clients report news directly by telephone. Thus, the quality and speed of information supply increased. The funds raised were planned to be used to install new telephone wires from SPTA to the editorial offices and offices of clients. This program began in 1910, and by December 1910, SPTA had found 45 clients who agreed to pay for new telephone wires. The total fee for their maintenance was 3,200 rubles per year. However, the agency did not receive the entire amount; part of it was transferred to the city telegraph network administration, which was directly involved in servicing the wires³⁹⁷. Despite the small profit, it was a success for SPTA, subscribers were interested in improving the infrastructure and, more importantly, were willing to invest in it themselves.

The growth of the agency's income allowed them to think about a major upgrade of the main equipment in the Central Office in St. Petersburg. Preparations for the work began as early as January 1911. It was decided to buy a switchboard for the current, a switch, receiving devices, printing devices, a noise suppressor, and batteries. In addition, the management was going to upgrade even the employees' desks. All the complex technical equipment was purchased in Germany from the «Siemens & Halske» company. The SPTA correspondent in Berlin, A. I. Markov, helped with the purchase. Moreover, thanks to A. I. Markov, German companies learned about the agency's plans, and several immediately volunteered to receive the large contract. The correspondent held a small tender and chose the «Siemens & Halske» company as the most reliable and having presented a favorable offer. This decision was approved by O. I. Lamkert, and the purchased equipment was sent to St. Petersburg³⁹⁸.

³⁹⁷ Circular for subscribers of SPTA. December 15, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477.

L. 1. (*in Russian*)

³⁹⁸ Estimate for the construction of a central telegraph station with a note from the director of the SPTA. January 17, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

The work began directly from the agency's central telegraph station at 15 Pochtamtskaya Street. A switchboard for the current, 17 receiving devices, a battery, a lightning rod on the roof and other auxiliary equipment were installed immediately. The cost was 4,547 rubles, of which 3,500 rubles was the switchboard³⁹⁹.

The equipment upgrade was completed by the summer of 1911. Now one telegraph message could be transmitted simultaneously over several lines, rather than waiting in line. This was a great help to the commercial department, which sent out identical telegrams about stock quotes and prices for various goods. Then the agency offered subscribers a new tariff plan. For an additional fee to the regular subscription price (for the installation and maintenance of telephone wires), the client would receive messages by telephone, which was much faster⁴⁰⁰. First of all, this was needed by newspapers and banks, for which the speed of receiving information was critical.

At SPTA, this issue was handled by the commercial department. One of the first to contact it was the «St. Petersburg International Commercial Bank», which began using the new tariff. Its additional fee for faster news delivery was 50 rubles per year⁴⁰¹.

The newspapers also chose the new tariff. They even asked the management of the SPTA to speed up the installation of new telephone wires to them. By the end of 1911, the wires were installed directly in the newspaper editorial offices⁴⁰².

During the second half of 1911, newspapers positively assessed the agency's new tariff and the speed of information transfer to them. Therefore, some of them were willing to pay SPTA even more. For example, in February 1912, the editorial

³⁹⁹ Estimate for the construction of a central telegraph station with a note from the director of the SPTA. January 17, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰⁰ Circular from the commercial department of SPTA. June 6, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰¹ Letter from the office of the St. Petersburg International Commercial Bank to the commercial department of the SPTA. June 22, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰² Certificate from SPTA. November 11, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 29. (*in Russian*)

board of the newspaper «Evening Time» agreed with the agency to install a second telephone of a new model in its editorial office. With two devices, the newspaper planned to receive, process and use twice as much information. But as it turned out, the size of the premises in the editorial office did not allow for placing two devices side by side, and the newspaper would have to pay extra for wiring and a new device in the second room. Even this was agreed to by the newspaper «Evening Time». As a result, the subscription fee for it was 100 rubles, as for two clients with one telegraph device each⁴⁰³.

The agency made a profit from the new tariff and invested it in new equipment to expand its new network. For this purpose, 8 more devices were purchased and installed at the central telegraph station in March 1912⁴⁰⁴. All this allowed more clients to be connected to the network and the new tariff, and soon the improved infrastructure came in handy.

In the summer of 1912, a number of banks began to actively show interest in the new tariff, having studied the experience of newspapers for a year. The second wave of connections to the new tariff was started by the Volzhsko-Kamsky Commercial Bank. Only after it did other banks begin to connect. Banks paid 50 rubles per year for the increased speed of message delivery, as did newspapers. At the same time, there was a special offer only for banks. It was designed to attract new banks, which were not so willing to connect to the new tariff. According to the special offer, the cost of a 2-year subscription to the new tariff for banks was 85 rubles instead of 100⁴⁰⁵.

By December 1912, all these measures allowed 14 banks to be attracted to the new tariff. The tariff enjoyed considerable popularity and had no analogues. Therefore, the agency's management decided to raise the cost of a subscription to

⁴⁰³ Letter from the SPTA office to the editorial board of the newspaper «Evening Time». February 13, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 38. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰⁴ Invoice from K.M. Sokolov. February 13, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 49. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰⁵ Letter from the SPTA office to the board of the Volga-Kama Commercial Bank. 01.08.1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 140. (*in Russian*)

the new tariff by 2 times, to 100 rubles per year⁴⁰⁶. However, clients were willing to pay even such amounts.

SPTA also earned money with the help of updated telegraph networks in more unusual ways. A SPTA mechanic, for a fee, serviced and repaired telephone sets installed at clients' homes. For example, in September 1913, he moved a set in the building of the «Azov-Don Commercial Bank» during renovations. The bank paid SPTA 35 rubles for this service, but 12 rubles of this amount were transferred to the St. Petersburg city telegraph network for moving the wire⁴⁰⁷. Thus, the agency earned an additional 23 rubles.

Also, the management of SPTA introduced measures to support its employees. Under O. I. Lamkert, additional measures were taken for the social protection of the agency's employees. For this purpose, in January 1912, the Savings Bank of SPTA Employees was created. Employees could make contributions to this bank, where the money was kept. After leaving at their own request, employees received the accumulated amount. Also, the heirs of a deceased SPTA employee received money from the bank immediately after his death. At first, only 102 employees became depositors in the savings bank, while the bank was serviced by 17 people⁴⁰⁸. The reason for this was the financial situation of the employees. Not all of them, especially family people, could afford to put aside part of their salary in the cash register. In addition, the employees had a certain distrust of the savings bank, and they took their entire salary for themselves at once.

However, in the end, the savings bank mechanism started working. True, the recipients of the money encountered bureaucratic difficulties. Especially when receiving an inheritance. As an example, we can cite the story of the widow of the manager of the Tiflis branch K.I. Kalantarov. The manager died on May 29, 1914,

⁴⁰⁶ List of subscribers of the commercial department of the SPTA for group transmission of bulletins. December 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 171. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰⁷ Letter from the SPTA office to the economic department of the Azov-Don Commercial Bank. March 27, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1477. L. 236. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁰⁸ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. May 8, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 202. (*in Russian*)

while remaining an active employee of the SPTA. His widow E.V. Kalantarova was unable to get the Tiflis branch to pay her and her four children the inheritance due to her, the amount that was in the savings bank account of her husband. Then, on September 3, 1914, she sent a letter to the Board of the agency, where she told about her situation. In addition, E.V. Kalantarova had expected to receive her late husband's salary for 29 days of work in May, which now remains in the agency's accounting department⁴⁰⁹.

O. I. Lamkert was ready to meet them halfway, but he needed solid legal evidence of the marriage of E. V. Kalantarova and K. I. Kalantarov. For this, the widow appealed to the Tiflis court, where almost a month later she received a verdict that she and her children were the heirs of K. I. Kalantarov. In addition, the court ruled to pay the remaining salary and money from the savings bank to the heirs⁴¹⁰.

Having received the letter with the verdict, O. I. Lamkert the next day ordered that all funds due to E. V. Kalantarov be paid: salary for 29 days of May, as well as 217 rubles that K. I. Kalantarov had saved in the savings bank⁴¹¹.

A similar case occurred in May 1915 after the death of the Central Department employee A.P. Langovogo. But then the agency management quickly approved the issuance of the remaining salary for the month not worked to the heirs, as well as funds from the savings bank⁴¹². Probably, in this case, the authorized managers personally met with the heirs, saw their documents, and no questions were raised.

1913 was an extremely successful year for SPTA with a record turnover of funds. The agency's expenses amounted to 721,793 rubles, and its income was

⁴⁰⁹ Letter from E.V. Kalantarova to the Board of the PTA. September 3, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1643. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹⁰ A copy of the cursive verdict of the Tiflis District Court. September 23, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1643. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹¹ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to E. V. Kalantarova. September 24, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1643. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹² Certificate of the PTA. May 13, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1643. L. 20. (*in Russian*)

769,469 rubles. Thus, the net profit was 47,676 rubles. Subscribers brought in the most income, but state subsidies were also included in the income⁴¹³.

Also by 1913, the renewal of the telegraph network of the SPTA in Russia was completed. A system of many nodes was created, which united several cities. In the center of each node there was a new telegraph device, which worked much faster than the old analogues. New devices were installed in Moscow, Orel, Tambov, Kiev, Rostov-on-Don, Tiflis, Kharkov, Odessa, Irkutsk, Smolensk, Vitebsk, Samara, Kazan, Revel, Helsinki, Arkhangelsk, Saratov, Ufa, Omsk, Minsk, Riga, Nizhny Novgorod, Warsaw, Lodz, Rybinsk, Chelyabinsk, Vologda, Veliky Novgorod, Tver, Pskov, Perm, Luga and Tikhvin⁴¹⁴.

Despite the improvement of the employees' skills, the acquired experience and the improvement of the material and technical base, SPTA sometimes made mistakes that resulted in scandals and discussions in the press. The latter, with undisguised pleasure, criticized the work of SPTA even for minor reasons. For example, in 1913, the monarchist newspaper «Russkoe Znamya» actively scolded the agency for including speeches by RSDLP deputies in the verbatim reports of Duma sessions. According to «Russkoe Znamya», SPTA thus helps to propagate the ideas of socialists⁴¹⁵.

There were also significant errors that the agency could not prevent. In December 1913, a scandal erupted in the press over telegrams from the SPTA with news about the trial of local revolutionaries in Budapest. As it turned out later, there were factual errors in the news transmitted by the agency. Most likely, the culprit was the Austro-Hungarian agency «Korrespondenz-Bureau», which transmitted the SPTA news in this form. However, the newspaper «Novoe Vremya» still accused the Russian state agency of forgery between the lines⁴¹⁶. In

⁴¹³ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. May 16, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 51-55. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. L. 51-55. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹⁵ Russkoye znamya. 30.04.13. №95. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹⁶ Novoye vremya. 19.12.13. №13556. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

addition, the private press has traditionally been dissatisfied with the fact that SPTA correspondents have priority in transmitting information via telegraph and therefore are constantly ahead of their correspondents⁴¹⁷. However, private newspapers could not influence this in any way, since the priority right for the state agency was enshrined in law.

On January 31, 1914, Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov, who participated in the creation and development of the SPTA, and also constantly took part in its life, was dismissed. V.N. Kokovtsov regularly contacted the agency until his resignation. For example, in January 1914, the Prime Minister was given behind-the-scenes information about negotiations in Paris between large European banks from the SPTA correspondent in Paris, P.N. Apostol⁴¹⁸. V.N. Kokovtsov was replaced as Prime Minister by I.L. Goremykin, who would later also be in touch with SPTA, but not as often as his predecessor⁴¹⁹.

In July 1914, O. I. Lamkert regularly reported to I. L. Goremykin about his business trip to London to discuss new projects with the Reuters agency. The director of SPTA proposed a plan to the British agency for developing communications with East Asia. Reuters was interested in news from Japan, and SPTA developed a project to create a direct telegraph line between Tokyo and London. Since it was to pass through Russian territory, SPTA would receive more income for the passage of telegrams. However, to do this, it was necessary to achieve the establishment of a preferential tariff in Russia for telegrams from East Asia⁴²⁰. But this project was closed down because the First World War began at the same time.

⁴¹⁷ Rech. 01.07.14. №176. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹⁸ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. January 16, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 156. (*in Russian*)

⁴¹⁹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. February 5, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 171. (*in Russian*)

⁴²⁰ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. July 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 221-223. (*in Russian*)

The activities of director O. I. Lamkert in 1910-1914 can be called extremely successful. He managed not only to achieve the goal set before him in the form of stabilizing the financial situation of SPTA. Under his leadership, thanks to his decisions, the agency both increased the number of clients and began to receive profit, which was successfully invested. However, the successful period of SPTA's work was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War.

3.2. Expansion of the network of SPTA correspondents in 1910-1914

By 1911, the SPTA Board decided to invest the available free funds in developing a correspondent network around the world. This process began very actively, and in 1911, the SPTA already had correspondents in 21 cities around the world (compared to 8 in 1909). The agency acquired representatives in cities that were new to it, and they also returned to those places where correspondents had already been several years earlier⁴²¹.

A. A. Richter began work in London, I. G. Mamulov in Belgrade, A. N. Kleigels in Bucharest, V. B. Yarin in Cairo, I. L. Grinevitsky in Lvov, A. V. Spitsyn in Mukden (Shenyang), Y. Y. Brandt in Beijing, N. N. Surin in Sofia, G. T. Nazarov in Tokyo, I. A. Dobrolovski in Hankou, G. A. Sofoklov in Harbin, N. I. Mukhin in Cetinje, and V. I. Nadarov in Yantsyzifu⁴²².

In addition, SPTA correspondents had their own agents in other cities. These agents worked under their command and supplied them with information. Thus, even more cities were included in the SPTA network. In Austria-Hungary, agents worked in Budapest, Zagreb, Krakow, Poznan, Prague, Sarajevo, Trieste and Chernivtsi. In Turkey – in Salonika and Uskub (under the leadership of F.A. Dukhovetsky). At the same time, the Austro-Hungarian cities were divided between the correspondent in Constantinople F.A. Dukhovetsky and the correspondent in Vienna V.P. Svatkovsky. F.A. Dukhovetsky had agents in Zagreb and Sarajevo. In turn, V.P. Svatkovsky had agents in the remaining cities of Austria-Hungary⁴²³.

In Persia, agents worked in Seistan, Barfrush and Hamadan. In China, in Zhangjiakou and Chifu. There was also an agent in Seoul, which belonged to Japan. In northern China, the network of agents worked under the direction of the

⁴²¹ List of SPA's own correspondents, serving it with information from abroad. May 20, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 106. (*in Russian*)

⁴²² Ibid. L. 106. (*in Russian*)

⁴²³ List of agents of SPA's own correspondents in 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 154. (*in Russian*)

correspondent in Harbin, G.A. Sofoklov⁴²⁴. In the future, such a network allowed SPTA to become the main supplier of news from China among all wire services.

Thus, SPTA acquired a developed network of correspondents in the east and southeast of Europe, Persia and the Far East. This dense network of cities with employees of the telegraph agency was located along the borders of Russia from west to east. They worked in countries that were of interest to the public in Russia, for example, in the Balkans. Apparently, SPTA considered it unnecessary for itself to invest in expanding the network further from the borders, for example, in Western Europe. Investments in opening correspondent posts in the future brought SPTA more subscriptions and, as a result, even more profit.

Investments also went to improving the working conditions of correspondents, and this ultimately improved the quality and quantity of information that they supplied to the agency⁴²⁵. In addition, the expansion of the correspondent network strengthened the reputation of SPTA in the world as a truly large agency, which also increased the number of subscribers.

SPTA's foreign correspondents also provided indispensable assistance in foreign policy matters, as was the case in 1911 before the signing of the Potsdam Agreement. In July 1911, negotiations were underway between the Russian and German empires on the division of spheres of influence in the Middle East and, in particular, in Persia. The negotiations were prompted by Germany's plans to build a Berlin-Baghdad railway, which worried Russia and England with their traditional interests in the Middle East⁴²⁶. In the end, Germany managed to reach an agreement with Russia on the latter's non-interference in the railway issue. Russia agreed to this in exchange for recognizing northern Persia as its zone of interest⁴²⁷.

⁴²⁴ List of SPA's own correspondents, serving it with information from abroad. May 20, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 106. (*in Russian*)

⁴²⁵ Draft estimate of income and expenses of SPA for 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 129. (*in Russian*)

⁴²⁶ Bethmann-Hollweg T. Thoughts on War. M.; L.: Gos. izd-vo, 1925. P. 51. (*in Russian*)

⁴²⁷ Letter from A.I. Markov to A.A. Gelfer. July 12, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 940. L. 14. (*in Russian*)

In July 1911, the SPTA correspondent in Berlin, A. I. Markov, learned that several telegrams from the British agency «Reuters», which were going through Germany to Russia, with information about Britain's reaction to the negotiations, were specifically stopped by the German side. The latter was going to destroy information that was potentially harmful to them. However, A. I. Markov, with the help of his connections, managed to see these telegrams. Then he passed their contents on to St. Petersburg. As the assistant director of the SPTA, A. A. Gelfer, later noted, the information obtained by A. I. Markov turned out to be very valuable. The SPTA management conveyed gratitude to A. I. Markov, and his work was especially noted in the general report on the agency's work⁴²⁸.

Also on April 26, 1912, the SPTA correspondent in Berlin A.I. Markov attended a reception hosted by the Chancellor of the German Empire T. Bethmann-Hollweg. There, the Chancellor and the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs A. Kiderlen-Wächter paid attention to the correspondent. They told him that Germany was very pleased with the speech of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs S.D. Sazonov in the Duma. T. Bethmann-Hollweg also spoke positively of the Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov⁴²⁹. It is worth noting that the German chancellor actually has a good relationship with this Russian prime minister⁴³⁰.

However, at that moment the German side deliberately expressed its opinion confidentially. As A.I. Markov noted in his report, he immediately understood that the German side really wanted only the Russian Foreign Ministry to know about the statements of the Chancellor and the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The correspondent immediately passed on the report on the meeting and conversation

⁴²⁸ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.I. Markov. July 15, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 940. L. 15. (*in Russian*)

⁴²⁹ Report by A.I. Markov. April 29, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 941. L. 58. (*in Russian*)

⁴³⁰ Letter from T. Bethmann-Hollweg to V.N. Kokovtsov // RSHA. F. 966. Inv. 1. D. 28. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

to the Foreign Ministry, after which he received a letter of gratitude from diplomat Y.A. Nelidov⁴³¹.

But such cooperation was not always successful. There were also failures. Thus, in May 1910, A. I. Markov found himself at the center of a scandal that affected both the SPTA and the diplomatic departments of Russia. At that time, the newspaper «Novoye Vremya» published news about a trial in Germany regarding the Russian steamship «Anhalt», which had been arrested in a smuggling case. In turn, A. I. Markov, who had the same news, was late in sending it. When the issue of «Novoye Vremya» with this news appeared, the SPTA client newspapers expressed their dissatisfaction. Then the agency's management demanded that A. I. Markov explain his delay. The correspondent replied that he was prevented by the embassy, which demanded that he conceal information about the scandalous case of the steamship «Anhalt» for Russia⁴³².

Having learned the reasons for what had happened, the SPTA leadership supported A. I. Markov. In a letter to the correspondent, Director O. I. Lamkert noted that he had acted correctly, and SPTA supported him. O. I. Lamkert warned A. I. Markov that in future similar situations he should act just as carefully and not enter into conflicts with the embassy. But at the same time, the director did not follow the lead of the Berlin diplomatic workers and offered the correspondent a code. It was to be used for telegrams with information, the transfer of which to SPTA was not approved by the embassy. Such telegrams were to begin with the word «Primaveto», and the agency would treat their publication carefully so as not to expose the correspondent who sent them to risk⁴³³.

In the summer of 1912, A. I. Markov was given additional responsibilities. Assistant Director A. A. Gelfer informed him that the SPTA correspondent in

⁴³¹ Letter from Y.A. Nelidov to A.I. Markov. May 2, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 941. L. 68. (*in Russian*)

⁴³² Letter from A.I. Markov to O.I. Lamkert. April 29, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 938. L. 204. (*in Russian*)

⁴³³ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to A.I. Markov. May 1, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 938. L. 212. (*in Russian*)

Athens had resigned, but the agency was unable to hire a replacement. Therefore, work with news from Greece was assigned to A. I. Markov. His new responsibility was to receive information from Greece from the Berlin branch of the «Wolf» agency⁴³⁴.

In 1914, A.I. Markov was awarded the Order of St. Stanislav, 2nd degree, for his conscientious work over 8 years. The Russian Ambassador to Berlin, S.N. Sverbeev, wrote about A.I. Markov when he nominated him for the award: «Having held this position since 1905, Markov has always been distinguished by his conscientious and attentive attitude to his work. Always up-to-date and keeping an eye on both external events and the internal life of Germany, Markov is also a valuable informant for the imperial embassy»⁴³⁵. This was a significant recognition of the services to the state of both the foreign correspondent and SPTA.

In 1913, a discussion flared up around the correspondent in Paris P.N. Apostol and all the work of SPTA in the French direction. Its organizer was the Russian ambassador in Paris since 1910 and former Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky. On April 4, 1913, he sent a telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he expressed his dissatisfaction with the work of SPTA. A.P. Izvolsky cited as an example the story of the news about the naval parade in Russia, which was delivered to Paris by the «Reuters», and not SPTA. The ambassador stated that after several incidents with telegrams from Russia, Reuters was not trustworthy, and the Russian state telegraph agency should transmit information directly⁴³⁶.

This proposal was reported to the director of SPTA O. I. Lamkert, who explained to Prime Minister V. N. Kokovtsov why A. P. Izvolsky's proposal would even be harmful to the agency. The director reported that SPTA sent only

⁴³⁴ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.I. Markov. June 9, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 941. L. 84. (*in Russian*)

⁴³⁵ Letter from S.N. Sverbeev to A.A. Neratov. June 29, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 942. L. 152. (*in Russian*)

⁴³⁶ Telegram of the Ambassador in Paris A.P. Izvolsky to the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. April 4, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 260. (*in Russian*)

particularly important information directly to Paris, and there were two objective reasons for using «Reuters» channels. The first was cost: sending telegrams to Paris via «Reuters» was cheaper than sending them independently. The second was speed: sending telegrams via «Reuters» was faster than sending them directly to Paris. O. I. Lamkert concluded that as the director of SPTA, he did not agree with A. P. Izvolsky's unprofitable project. In turn, V. N. Kokovtsov took O. I. Lamkert's side and stated that he would not consider any further comments from the ambassador regarding the agency's work⁴³⁷.

In 1910, the management of SPTA criticized the correspondent in Vienna V.P. Svatkovsky. They expressed complaints about the news topics that he transmitted to St. Petersburg. According to the director O.I. Lamkert, V.P. Svatkovsky limited himself to political events, while the agency also needed news from other spheres of life in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The director believed that the correspondent should pay attention to smaller events such as incidents⁴³⁸.

There were also complaints about the format of V.P. Svatkovsky's reports. In July 1910, the correspondent received a refusal to increase the format of the news transmitted personally from the assistant director A.A. Gelfer. He indicated that correspondents should not include personal assessments of the news in their reports, as well as their own reasoning. A.A. Gelfer stated that the agency's goal was to transmit objective facts. He gave the following metaphor: «Our job is to take pictures, and let the newspapers criticize»⁴³⁹.

But already in 1912 V.P. Svatkovsky's journalistic talent was in demand. In August 1912, O.I. Lamkert offered him, in addition to his regular work, to write articles about the economy, industry and finances of Russia for a fee. As the director noted, these articles must necessarily be written in a positive tone and

⁴³⁷ Report of O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. April 10, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

⁴³⁸ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. P. Svatkovsky. October 16, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 929. L. 90. (*in Russian*)

⁴³⁹ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to V.P. Svatkovsky. July 24, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 67. (*in Russian*)

advertise Russia in other countries in order to attract investment. O.I. Lamkert promised to help with the distribution of these articles in different countries through the SPTA channels. In turn, in Austria-Hungary V.P. Svatkovsky could personally dispose of his articles and, if possible, receive profit from their sale to newspapers. However, the condition was the absence of any references to SPTA, V.P. Svatkovsky had to act as an independent author⁴⁴⁰.

In early 1913, the London Conference on the results of the First Balkan War was held. Its most important topics were the status of the Scutari fortress, which Montenegro laid claim to, and the issue of Serbia's access to the Adriatic Sea. In turn, Austria-Hungary was actively trying to prevent the strengthening of Serbia and Montenegro. In the midst of the conference, on February 3, 1913, the Austrian newspaper «Neues Wiener Tagesblatt» published an article claiming that Russia and Austria-Hungary had managed to reach an agreement and resolve their differences, and that the Balkan countries were preparing to demobilize their armies. The source of the information was a telegram from SPTA from V.P. Svatkovsky, sent on February 2. When V.P. Svatkovsky learned of this article, he contacted SPTA and reported that he had not sent such a telegram. The correspondent realized that the agency, on its own initiative, attributed his authorship to the telegram, which had to be published on the orders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴⁴¹.

In a reply letter, Director O. I. Lamkert confirmed that the telegram was part of a diplomatic game and was attributed to V. P. Svatkovsky. The Director stated that in such cases, SPTA would warn the correspondent that they were going to attribute the authorship of a special telegram to him⁴⁴².

⁴⁴⁰ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.P. Svatkovsky. August 28, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 930. L. 59. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁴¹ Letter from V.P. Svatkovsky to O.I. Lamkert. February 7, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 930. L. 127. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁴² Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.P. Svatkovsky. February 11, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 930. L. 129. (*in Russian*)

In January 1914, the Minister of Internal Affairs N.A. Maklakov received a letter from a Russian citizen and journalist L. Voronin, who lived in Austria-Hungary. Voronin accused V.P. Svatkovsky of poor work and betrayal of Russia's interests. The journalist offered himself for the post of correspondent in Vienna, citing his extensive connections in various circles of Austria-Hungary as an advantage. N.A. Maklakov took L. Voronin's letter seriously and passed it on to the director of the SPTA O.I. Lamkert. In a letter to Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov, he spoke extremely negatively of the journalist. As O.I. Lamkert noted, L. Voronin had been trying to take V.P. Svatkovsky's place for several years and published articles against him in newspapers in Russia and Austria-Hungary. In Russian newspapers, the journalist accused the correspondent of betraying Russia's interests abroad. In the Austro-Hungarian newspapers, Voronin pointed out the errors in V.P. Svatkovsky's work. However, these accusations turned out to be false. As O.I. Lamkert pointed out, L. Voronin's articles were recognized as slanderous, and the newspapers were forced to refute this information⁴⁴³.

The director of SPTA took the side of his correspondent entirely. In addition, O. I. Lamkert accused L. Voronin of working for the secret services of Austria-Hungary. The director noted that this journalist had developed close relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary, which recommended him for work in one of the Austrian newspapers. According to O. I. Lamkert, the secret services of Austria-Hungary tried to introduce L. Voronin into SPTA, and this could not be allowed. As a result, the discussion reached Prime Minister V. N. Kokovtsov, who decided to reject L. Voronin and leave V. P. Svatkovsky in the post of correspondent in Vienna⁴⁴⁴.

The improved financial situation of the SPTA allowed it to restore the position of correspondent in London in 1911. Since 1907 there had been no SPTA

⁴⁴³ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V. N. Kokovtsov. January 7, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 152. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. L. 152. (*in Russian*)

employee there, and the agency received information from Britain from the «Reuters» agency. The management of the SPTA acknowledged that the quality of this news was not always high⁴⁴⁵. In addition, the information was presented by «Reuters» from a British perspective, which was difficult for the Russian state telegraph agency to accept.

In order to get the news it needed, SPTA hired A.A. Richter as a correspondent in London in 1911. A.A. Richter had proven himself to management while holding the post of manager of the SPTA office in Reval. However, as soon as the correspondent started working, the agency management was informed that he had committed «unseemly acts» in his previous position. After an internal investigation confirmed the allegations, A.A. Richter was removed from his post⁴⁴⁶.

The next correspondent of SPTA in London was chosen by the management as A. V. Lyarsky (pseudonym of A. V. Vonlyarlyarsky), who worked in the Central Office of the agency. A. V. Lyarsky began his work in the capital of Britain on January 1, 1912. The management trusted him and considered him a reliable candidate for responsible work. However, by the spring of 1912, the management was completely disappointed in A. V. Lyarsky and, after a number of mistakes, fired him from the post of correspondent. The letter in which the correspondent was informed of his dismissal stated that he had failed to cope with the duties of the foreign correspondent of SPTA. The director of the agency O. I. Lamkert directly pointed out to A. V. Lyarsky his mistakes in the letter. The correspondent did not process or analyze the news from the British press, but transmitted it unchanged. This included news of an anti-Russian nature, which caused extreme discontent in O. I. Lamkert. In his last letter to the correspondent, the director stated: «You always transmit newspaper articles without a proper

⁴⁴⁵ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to A. V. Lyarsky. November 27, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1494. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁴⁶ Report of O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. November 7, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 166. (*in Russian*)

critical assessment of these articles. You telegraph from the newspapers everything where the word Russia is mentioned, completely forgetting about the Russian point of view and the interests of Russian readers. The agency cannot give space in its bulletins to the views of the English press against Russia and its government»⁴⁴⁷.

For several more months, the SPTA did not have a correspondent in London. Then, at the beginning of 1913, the SPTA leadership decided to transfer its correspondent in Constantinople, F.A. Dukhovetsky, to London⁴⁴⁸. He was an extremely experienced employee who, according to the management's plan, was supposed to break the series of failures with correspondents in London.

F.A. Dukhovetsky's place in the capital of the Ottoman Empire was taken by an experienced correspondent V.G. Yanchevetsky (also known as Vasily Yan), who worked in Russia. He lived in Constantinople and had extensive connections there. However, his debut at his new job was unsuccessful. V.G. Yanchevetsky began working during the First Balkan War, in which the Ottoman Empire participated. A correspondent in a country at war was required to provide a large amount of news, and at first V.G. Yanchevetsky checked the information less, which is why he made mistakes⁴⁴⁹. As it turned out, he was also let down by the connections through which he received news. For some time, the correspondent's mistakes remained an internal matter for the agency that trusted its employee.

However, in October 1913, V.G. Yanchevetsky's actions caused a scandal. In 1913, he reported several times that the Ottoman Empire was closing the Black Sea straits due to the war. This news turned out to be false. The issue of passage through the Black Sea straits had always been extremely important for Russia, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew attention to the news. The ministry was outraged by V.G. Yanchevetsky's mistakes, which could have caused an

⁴⁴⁷ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to A. V. Lyarsky. May 10, 1912 // RSHA F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1494. L. 27. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁴⁸ Letter from V.G. Yanchevetsky to O.I. Lamkert. October 14, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 984. L. 247. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.* L. 247. (*in Russian*)

international crisis, and demanded the correspondent's dismissal. However, the Russian ambassador M.N. Girs vouched for V.G. Yanchevetsky, explaining the correspondent's mistakes by his inexperience and asking to keep him in his position. M.N. Girs also pointed out that V.G. Yanchevetsky had shown himself to be excellent in January 1913 during Enver Bey's coup. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed with the ambassador and withdrew its claims against V.G. Yanchevetsky, who remained a correspondent and never made such mistakes again⁴⁵⁰. In addition, V.G. Yanchevetsky was actively involved in establishing relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople. For this purpose, in March 1914, he created the public organization «Russian-Turkish Committee», which existed until October 1914⁴⁵¹

In 1911, the Italo-Turkish War began, and interest in news from Italy grew sharply in Russia. The director of SPTA, O. I. Lamkert, informed the Russian consul in Italy, G. P. Zabello, that the agency was beginning to search for a new correspondent in Rome. The director said that the amount of news about Italy from the «Stefani» agency no longer satisfied SPTA, because the demand for it had grown. O. I. Lamkert also noted that «Stefani» was transmitting information about the Italo-Turkish War from the point of view of Italy, while SPTA needed neutral news⁴⁵².

The problem for the Russian agency all these years was the fact that it was practically impossible to find a candidate for the post of correspondent in Rome who would meet two conditions. The first was to be a citizen of Russia. The second was to be well-connected with the financial, economic or political circles of Italy and have connections there. In those years, there were no people who

⁴⁵⁰ Letter from V.G. Yanchevetsky to O.I. Lamkert. October 20, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 984. L. 248. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵¹ Prosvetov I.V. Ten Lives of Vasily Yan: White Guard Who Was Awarded by Stalin. M.: Centrpoligraf, 2017. P. 87. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵² Letter from O.I. Lamkert to G.P. Zabello. October 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 954. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

simultaneously met these conditions and were ready to work for SPTA as a correspondent.

However, at the beginning of 1912, K. M. Ketov responded to the vacancy of SPTA. He had lived in Italy for several years and worked for the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» and the «Finance Bulletin of the Ministry of Finance». The head of the Editorial Board of Periodicals of the Ministry of Finance, E.S. Karatygin, gave a positive review of his employee and recommended him. In turn, the consul G. P. Zabello also approved the candidacy of K. M. Ketov, although he pointed out that he did not yet have sufficiently wide connections in Italy. The consul also had doubts about the future correspondent's political views. G.P. Zabello considered K.M. Ketov a hidden socialist⁴⁵³. As future events showed, the consul was right, and the SPTA correspondent K. M. Ketov was not who he claimed to be.

Despite G. P. Zabello's doubts, the SPTA had no other options in 1912, and the agency accepted K. M. Ketov into service at the beginning of 1912. He served on probation for several months and worked as an informant for the agency. He was paid 5 rubles for each telegram received by the SPTA. K. M. Ketov's work was recognized by the management as successful, and in May 1912 he was officially accepted to the position of the agency's correspondent in Rome. His salary was initially 1,200 rubles a year, then increased to 1,800 rubles⁴⁵⁴.

However, already in 1913, SPTA decided to liquidate the correspondent's position in Rome again. At that time, the agency needed to reduce costs and was going to save on the Italian correspondent. K. M. Ketov was shocked and asked the SPTA management not to fire him; he left the newspaper «Vestnik Finansov» for the sake of working for the agency. In order to stay, the correspondent himself offered to reduce his salary. As a result, the management accepted this offer and

⁴⁵³ Letter from G.P. Zabello to O.I. Lamkert. January 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 954. L. 11. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵⁴ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to K.M. Ketov. February 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 954. L. 32. (*in Russian*)

left K. M. Ketov in the position of correspondent, reducing his salary again to 1,200 rubles per year. In 1913, K. M. Ketov showed good results. At the beginning of 1914, when SPTA improved its financial situation, K. M. Ketov's salary was increased to 2,400 rubles per year⁴⁵⁵.

In the autumn of 1912, the First Balkan War began between a coalition of Balkan countries and the Ottoman Empire. On the day the outbreak of war was announced, an urgent meeting of the SPTA Council was held. It was decided to send special correspondents to Serbia, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, which were participants in the war. Sending correspondents to the warring countries was an important step in terms of the prestige of SPTA, since larger agencies had already done the same. The management also hoped that prompt delivery of news from the front would increase the number of subscribers.

As Director O. I. Lamkert indicated in a report to Prime Minister V.N. Kokovtsov, the new correspondents were to deal exclusively with news of military operations. They were also to help those SPTA employees who were already working in Serbia, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire: I. G. Mamulov in Belgrade, N. N. Surin in Sofia, F. A. Dukhovetsky in Constantinople. It was important to provide the agency with news from each side of the conflict. O. I. Lamkert justified the need to increase the staff and, accordingly, the costs for it by the great interest of the Russian public in the affairs of the Balkan countries⁴⁵⁶.

In turn, V.N. Kokovtsov approved O.I. Lamkert's plan, and he began to implement it. According to the order of the SPTA Board, war correspondents were sent to the armies of the Ottoman Empire, Montenegro, Serbia and Bulgaria by October 7, 1912. Representatives in the Serbian and Bulgarian armies were assigned a salary of 750 rubles per month, as well as 1,800 rubles as a lifting

⁴⁵⁵ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to K.M. Ketov. January 30, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 954. L. 116. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵⁶ Report by O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. October 7, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 135. (*in Russian*)

allowance. At the same time, the salary of a correspondent in the army of the Ottoman Empire was only 500 rubles per month⁴⁵⁷.

SPTA also made temporary changes among its foreign correspondents. The agency's representative in Sofia, N. N. Surin, was sent to the Bulgarian army, and he was temporarily replaced by a replacement. For this work, in addition to his regular salary, Surin received 25 rubles per day. Also, the correspondent in Cetinje, Montenegro, F. Wimmer, was sent to the army of Montenegro. He was entitled to additional payments of 10 rubles for each day of work in the army⁴⁵⁸.

At the same time, V.N. Kokovtsov, having approved the SPTA project, did not allocate additional funding to it. Therefore, the agency was forced to raise subscription prices. In addition, SPTA introduced a new type of subscription, which included several telegrams a day with news about the progress of the First Balkan War. This type of subscription turned out to be very popular. As O.I. Lamkert reported in his report, not only newspapers, but also clubs, associations, enterprises, institutions and individuals subscribed to war news. The demand turned out to be greater than SPTA expected. According to the director's report, immediately after the launch of the new subscription format, 11 newspapers from St. Petersburg and 49 newspapers from other cities subscribed to it⁴⁵⁹.

Special military correspondent in the Bulgarian army A.I. Stoykin received his own instructions from the management. According to them, he had to convey objective facts, not allow biased judgments, and not delay messages. The management also asked to convey various details of the military life of the Bulgarian army, because this was very interesting to the public. According to the new rules, A.I. Stoykin could send two types of telegrams. The first type was the shortest telegrams about a certain important event that the correspondent learned about. The second type was a detailed account of the event with all the details.

⁴⁵⁷ Report by O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. October 7, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 10. L. 135. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. L. 138. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. L. 138. (*in Russian*)

Inaccuracies in the first type of telegrams were more likely to be allowed, these were preliminary news. Telegrams of the second type had to be verified and double-checked. The management also specifically noted that A.I. Stoykin had to work promptly, because in Bulgaria there were correspondents of Russian newspapers competing with him⁴⁶⁰.

In 1910, after failures with previous correspondents in Tehran, SPTA hired A.R. Baranovsky for this position, whom it initially trusted. However, already in February 1910, he made a mistake by sending a telegram with news about the political crisis in Persia too late. As it turned out, he was late by a day, because the newspaper «Russkoye Slovo» published the news about the crisis the day before SPTA received the telegram. Director O.I. Lamkert continued to trust A.R. Baranovsky, he personally warned him in a letter about the need to act faster and not be late in sending the news⁴⁶¹.

But in May 1910, A.R. Baranovsky was late again, for which he was criticized by the assistant director A.A. Gelfer. History repeated itself in August 1910, when Baranovsky's telegram in St. Petersburg was preceded by a day by news in the newspaper «Rech»⁴⁶².

In January 1911, A.R. Baranovsky was late sending the news that the murderers of the Persian Finance Minister had been detained. The SPTA leadership did not forgive this delay and fired the correspondent. M.M. Girs, who also served as a translator at the embassy, was hired to replace A.R. Baranovsky. His excellent knowledge of Persian helped him in his work, but he, like A.R. Baranovsky, was regularly late sending news telegrams⁴⁶³. Already in April 1911, O. I. Lamkert openly admitted his disappointment with the work of the new

⁴⁶⁰ Instructions to A.I. Stoikin. October 28, 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1491. L. 21. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶¹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to A.R. Baranovsky. February 23, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 967. L. 203. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶² Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.R. Baranovsky. May 17, 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 967. L. 216. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶³ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to M.M. Girsu. May 13, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 967. L. 284. (*in Russian*)

correspondent in correspondence with Y. A. Nelidov, head of the Printing Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and noted that M. M. Girs was regularly late⁴⁶⁴.

By December 1911, M.M. Girs had completely lost the trust of the management and was fired. In turn, the management of the SPTA understood that it needed to completely change its strategy in the Persian direction. At the meeting on December 11, 1911, a decision was made to make a large investment in the Persian direction, which was important for Russia's foreign policy. The management planned to spend a significant amount on a professional correspondent who would not combine work for the SPTA with other activities. L.F. Bogdanovich was chosen as the new correspondent. He knew Persia well, had been there, but in 1911 he taught Persian in St. Petersburg. He also had little experience in working with the media, and the SPTA was taking a risk again. L.F. Bogdanovich was promised a large salary: 6,000 rubles a year and 1,500 rubles as a signing bonus upon arrival in Tehran⁴⁶⁵.

However, the new correspondent L. F. Bogdanovich, even when he was only occupied with SPTA issues and received a large salary, was unable to show himself much better than all the previous ones. Probably, the lack of experience in his specialty had an effect. He also failed to establish successful interaction with the embassy, which a year later began to feud with the correspondent. In 1913, the Russian embassy in Tehran stated in its letter that L. F. Bogdanovich was de facto not working, and that telegrams for SPTA were being compiled by embassy employees. At the same time, the embassy proposed to return the correspondent M. M. Girs to his place⁴⁶⁶.

⁴⁶⁴ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to Y.A. Nelidov. April 29, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 24. L. 82. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶⁵ Report of O.I. Lamkert to V.N. Kokovtsov. November 11, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 237. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶⁶ Telegram from the Manager of the Consulate General in Tehran. I.I. Stritter. May 21, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 968. L. 11. (*in Russian*)

The management of the SPTA did not follow the lead of the embassy and return M.M. Girs, but it was clear to them that a correspondent who was in conflict with the Russian diplomatic mission would be useless. Therefore, in June 1913, L.F. Bogdanovich was fired. An employee of the Russian embassy in Tehran, R.A. Lisovsky, was urgently hired to replace the correspondent. It was planned that he would perform the duties until the agency found a more suitable candidate⁴⁶⁷.

The search ended only in February 1914, when Baron K.K. Taube accepted the post of SPTA correspondent in Tehran. He worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, knew Persia well and had the necessary skills for a telegraph agency correspondent. K.K. Taube was assigned a salary of 6,000 rubles per year. He also received 1,000 rubles as a lifting allowance upon arrival in Tehran⁴⁶⁸.

When F.A. Pozdeyev left his post as a correspondent for SPTA in Tokyo at the end of 1908, it was not easy for the agency to find a replacement for him. Only at the beginning of 1910 did a suitable candidate emerge. An employee of the newspaper «Novoye Vremya», A.A. Berezovsky, was planning to go to Japan for some time on assignment from his reaction. In order to earn even more and establish valuable connections, he contacted SPTA and offered his services as a correspondent in Tokyo. However, «Novoye Vremya» soon cancelled A.A. Berezovsky's assignment, and SPTA was not prepared to compensate him for his travel expenses, so their cooperation did not take place⁴⁶⁹.

Only in October 1911, a new candidate appeared, proposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was G. T. Nazarov, an experienced employee of telegraph agencies. In addition, G. T. Nazarov was a TTA correspondent in Japan until 1904 and the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War, he had invaluable experience for SPTA. In addition, he knew the Japanese language perfectly, as well as the culture

⁴⁶⁷ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to R.A. Lisovsky. June 4, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 968. L. 13. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶⁸ Letter from the Board to K.K. Taube. February 6, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 968. L. 173. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁶⁹ Report of O.I. Lamkert to P.A. Stolypin. 1910 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 49. (*in Russian*)

and life of Japan. In 1911, G. T. Nazarov agreed to return to Japan, this time as a correspondent for SPTA. For his work in Tokyo, G. T. Nazarov received 6,000 rubles per year, and the agency also compensated him for the large costs of moving to Japan and allocated a relocation allowance. However, the condition for the correspondent was a ban on his cooperation with newspapers from Russia. As the management noted in 1912, G. T. Nazarov lived up to all expectations. The work of the correspondent in Tokyo was also highly valued because his news telegrams were received by foreign agencies of other countries that did not have their own correspondents in Japan⁴⁷⁰.

In 1911, J. J. Brandt became a correspondent for the SPTA in Beijing. During his work, he was noted for covering the activities of the so-called Chinese Consortium of European banks, which was engaged in lending to the Chinese government. In 1913, he sent news about the reaction of the Chinese government and the country's population to the conclusion of the so-called Chinese loan on April 26, 1913, by the government of Yuan Shikai with the aim of eliminating the consequences of the Xinhai Revolution of 1912 and the political crisis that followed it⁴⁷¹.

The most important part of the work of SPTA correspondents was checking the authenticity of the information they sent to Russia. For example, the correspondent in Rome K. M. Ketov wrote in his report to the agency that the process of checking news took him a lot of time. He regularly discussed the collected information with embassy staff to decide whether to send the news that seemed questionable to him⁴⁷².

⁴⁷⁰ Draft estimate of income and expenditure of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency for 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 9. L. 129. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁷¹ International Relations in the Age of Imperialism. Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Government. 1878-1917. Series Two. Volume 19. Part 2. Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo politicheskoy literatury, 1939. Pp. 192-193, 209-211. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁷² Letter from K. M. Ketov to O. I. Lamkert. January 2, 1913 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 945. L. 67-68. (*in Russian*)

By 1912, a special system for marking the reliability of news had been created in the SPTA. The word «Prima» began news that was considered to be the most reliable. These were messages that diplomatic workers had approved. The word «Secunda» began news from local sources, messages of medium reliability according to the SPTA classification. The word «Tertia» began news whose reliability was not confirmed by the embassy, and it did not give clear approval for its forwarding⁴⁷³.

As was the case with the entire SPTA, the period from 1910 to 1914 was successful for the network of correspondents around the world. Thanks to the profits, the agency not only restored the closed correspondent posts, but also created new ones. The expansion of the network of correspondents, as noted earlier, also had a positive effect on the prestige and interest in SPTA around the world. As a result, it attracted new clients and strengthened the position of SPTA in negotiations with other agencies.

⁴⁷³ Circular letter for correspondents. 1912 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1494. L. 3-4. (*in Russian*)

Chapter 4. PTA during the First World War and the revolutionary crises of 1917

4.1. The First World War and the activities of the SPTA (PTA) in July 1914 - February 1917

On July 15, 1914, following an ultimatum, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on the Kingdom of Serbia. In response, on July 17, 1914, the Russian Empire began a general mobilization, preparing for war with Austria-Hungary and its ally Germany. After that, on July 19 (new style), the German Empire declared war on Russia. By July 22, England and France had entered the war. World War I had begun.

Until 1914, SPTA's turnover and income were constantly growing. The agency had a network of its own correspondents in Europe and Asia. SPTA also had branches in Moscow, Kiev, Riga, Warsaw, Odessa, Tiflis, Lodz, Reval and Kharkov. New equipment was purchased for work. At the beginning of World War I, most of the SPTA employees were not mobilized; they were considered civil servants and valuable specialists. Both the managers and ordinary journalists avoided mobilization. However, SPTA still did not remain without losses⁴⁷⁴. In July 1914, four agency employees who had not received a deferment were mobilized. They were united by the fact that they were engaged in physical labor and were not considered valuable and irreplaceable workers. The following were mobilized: watchman A.S. Smirnov, courier K.D. Proskurov, guard Y.I. Myasnikov, cyclist I.A. Demidov⁴⁷⁵.

In turn, the SPTA management supported its mobilized employees, they retained their salaries for service. Moreover, the called-up family employees received full salaries, since they had families to support. Single employees received half the salary. A separate order also assigned special one-time payments

⁴⁷⁴ Morev E.A. St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency at the Beginning of the First World War // *Klio*. 2023. №11 (203). Pp. 80-86. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁷⁵ List of SPTA employees called up for service. July 29, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. I. 1. D. 1620. L. 13. (*in Russian*)

to the mobilized. For example, the guard A.S. Smirnov received an additional 25 rubles⁴⁷⁶. In addition, on July 18, 1914, two official vehicles belonging to the SPTA were requisitioned for the benefit of the army⁴⁷⁷.

The agency's management followed all the authorities' instructions regarding mobilization, but at the same time tried to help its employees. For example, in January 1915, through the efforts of director O. I. Lamkert, the mobilized agency employee A. N. Gorlin, a valuable technical specialist, was returned from the army⁴⁷⁸.

However, not all SPTA employees decided to take advantage of the deferments from mobilization. Some went to the front as volunteers. For example, this is what correspondent S.A. Otsup did. As a volunteer, he joined the automobile company⁴⁷⁹. However, at the front, S.A. Otsup took advantage of his new position, since he was in the army and could personally receive news from the front. He continued to work at SPTA and transmit information, and his salary was received by his family. Then S.A. Otsup was transferred by the military command to staff work and became a liaison between the agency and the army command until October 1917⁴⁸⁰.

The remaining SPTA employees in the first days of the war were faced with a huge flow of news that they could not process and send to newspapers and other countries. On the second day of the war, July 20, Director O. I. Lamkert mobilized all of the agency's human resources for work. By his order, he even called in those employees who were on vacation at the time⁴⁸¹. The work of all the agency's

⁴⁷⁶ SPA certificate. July 19, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1620. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁷⁷ Letter from the Chancellery of the Council of Ministers to O. I. Lamkert. July 18, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1620. L. 14. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁷⁸ Letter from the Chancellery of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to O. I. Lamkert. January 17, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1212. L. 196. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁷⁹ Letter from S.A. Kukol-Yasnopolsky to I.N. Lodyzhensky. January 25, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1212. L. 198. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸⁰ Letter from M.I. Zankevich to the director of the SPA. March 15, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 9. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸¹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to V.A. Bukharova. August 1, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1212. L. 130. (*in Russian*)

branches was also intensified, and the working day was extended. Some correspondents were sent closer to the front to be near the battlefields and to receive and transmit news as quickly as possible. New employees were temporarily hired to take their places in the cities to prevent the agency's work from slowing down. The branches in Warsaw, Lodz and Revel, which were the first to collect, process and transmit news from the front, received additional funding in the amount of 150 rubles per month⁴⁸².

In turn, special correspondents of the SPTA in neutral or friendly countries continued their work, only its volume increased. However, the agency also had correspondents in the capitals of Germany and Austria-Hungary, A.I. Markov and V.P. Svatkovsky, respectively. Their freedom was under threat. V.P. Svatkovsky left Vienna as soon as Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia. The correspondent knew that the secret services of Austria-Hungary had claims against him because of his long-term contacts with opposition forces. V.P. Svatkovsky had to leave with a minimum of things, he left all his property in Vienna and was ruined. The correspondent first went to Rome, and then to Switzerland, where he stayed in Bern. The agency additionally gave him 500 rubles as a relocation allowance⁴⁸³. V.P. Svatkovsky still had connections and informants in Austria-Hungary, he continued to fulfill his duties as a correspondent, but now from Switzerland, supplying SPTA with news from Austria-Hungary.

The correspondent in Berlin, A. I. Markov, also had to leave the country where he worked in a hurry. Moreover, in correspondence with the agency several days before the war, he reported that he was preparing to escape from Germany at any moment. Unlike V. P. Svatkovsky, A. I. Markov managed to take some of his money and things, and his material damage was less. After A. I. Markov's departure, Russian citizens in Germany began to be detained, and thus the

⁴⁸² Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. August 21, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1159. L. 187-189. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸³ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. July 29, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1159. L. 183-185. (*in Russian*)

correspondent avoided arrest⁴⁸⁴.

A.I. Markov stopped in Copenhagen, where the SPTA correspondent P. N. Ostroumov was already there. The former Berlin correspondent was appointed by order of the director as the head of P.N. Ostroumov. In Copenhagen, A.I. Markov received, processed and forwarded to SPTA news from German newspapers that were distributed in Denmark⁴⁸⁵.

However, in January 1915, A. I. Markov moved to Sweden, to Stockholm, and continued working from there. In 1915, Markov was one of three correspondents specially assigned by the leadership (along with P. N. Apostol in Paris and P. N. Ostroumov in Copenhagen), who dealt with military news from France, England and Germany. At that time, A. I. Markov received 500 rubles a month, the most in this trio⁴⁸⁶.

On October 16, 1914, before the Ottoman Empire entered the war against Russia, SPTA correspondent V.G. Yanchevetsky left Constantinople with his family. After that, he stopped in Romania and continued his work from there, now supplying the agency with Romanian news⁴⁸⁷.

The war did not only affect correspondents working in countries hostile to Russia. Editor A. V. Shpiganovich, an experienced PTA employee who worked under the Duma and the State Council, owned a house in the Kingdom of Poland, not far from the border between Russia and Germany. He was there at the very beginning of the war and was forced to leave with his family, and his property was destroyed. O. I. Lamkert ordered that A. V. Shpiganovich be given an additional 500 rubles as support⁴⁸⁸.

⁴⁸⁴ Letter from A.A. Gelfer to A.I. Markov. September 13, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1620. L. 91. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. L. 91. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸⁶ Demand for remuneration of foreign correspondents. December 1, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1622. L. 23. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸⁷ Report of O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. October 20, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 256. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. L. 256. (*in Russian*)

On August 24, 1914, Director O. I. Lamkert noted in a report to Prime Minister I. L. Goremykin that SPTA was coping with its responsibilities in the first month under war conditions. According to the director, due to the increased amount of news, it became more difficult for the current employees to work. However, the agency managed to save additional money due to the collapse of the consortium of telegraph agencies that united the largest agencies in the world. The German agency Wolf and the Austrian Correspondence Bureau left it, and agencies from England and France, friendly to Russia, remained. Before the war, SPTA, as part of the consortium, paid Wolf 45,000 marks each year for the transmission of information.⁴⁸⁹ Now these funds were freed up and could be spent on the needs of the SPTA.

In August 1914, due to the growth of anti-German sentiment in society and at the request of the authorities, St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd. The name of the state telegraph agency of Russia included the former name of the capital, so the question of renaming the agency arose. From September 1, 1914, the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency, by order of the Council of Ministers, was renamed the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (hereinafter – PTA)⁴⁹⁰.

In September 1914, the PTA budget for the following year, 1915, was drawn up. It was planned to spend 749,601 rubles in 1915 and receive exactly the same amount. These were approximately the same amounts as before the war. The note to the budget stated that all planned expenses and income were based on statistics from previous years, and it was not possible to calculate the exact volume of the agency's turnover in war conditions. The PTA also feared that by the end of the following year there might be an overspending of funds, and the agency would have to take out loans⁴⁹¹.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. August 24, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 227. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹⁰ SPTA certificate. August 1, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1620. L. 76. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹¹ Lamkert's note on the PTA estimate for 1915. September 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1414. L. 26-30. (*in Russian*)

In his report to Prime Minister I.L. Goremykin, Director O.I. Lamkert reported that after the start of the war there had been a sharp increase in the number of subscriptions to the agency's telegrams, and this had increased its profits. The PTA management also expected an increase in the number of subscriptions in Russia's allies England and France, which clearly needed news from the Eastern Front of World War I. However, at the same time, the number of subscriptions to the commercial department's telegrams had sharply decreased. Because of this, its employees were often left idle, and they began to be transferred to other departments. The workload of correspondents had also sharply increased, and O.I. Lamkert planned to increase their salaries⁴⁹².

The workload of the PTA was so great that O. I. Lamkert himself used all legal methods to free employees from other duties. For example, in October 1914, the director personally negotiated with the manager of the affairs of the Council of Ministers I. N. Lodyzhensky that the editor A. M. Lovyagin be freed from the duties of a juror. O. I. Lamkert wrote that the agency did not have enough employees because «half of the editors were at the theater of military operations»⁴⁹³.

With Russia's entry into World War I, military censorship was introduced in the country. Special military censorship commissions were created at district headquarters. They were supposed to censor correspondence and also check local periodicals. PTA employees who worked in Russia and actively received and transmitted messages were constantly checked by employees of military censorship commissions in the field as part of these measures⁴⁹⁴. Director O. I. Lamkert knew about this. In order to help agency employees in conflicts with commissions and other situations related to censorship issues, O. I. Lamkert himself joined the

⁴⁹² Report of O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. September 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 229. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹³ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to I. N. Lodyzhensky. October 2, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1212. L. 145. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹⁴ Morev E.A. St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency at the Beginning of the First World War // Klio. 2023. №11 (203). Pp. 80-86. (*in Russian*)

Petrograd military censorship commission. Thanks to his experience and reputation, he was immediately approved as a censor on September 11, 1914⁴⁹⁵.

In addition, O. I. Lamkert ordered that agency employees be warned separately that, under censorship, they must be careful when transmitting information. In the circular, the management advised correspondents to carefully formulate their reports so that there would be no claims against them from the censorship authorities. It was separately indicated to frontline correspondents that they must check sources from areas recently occupied by the army⁴⁹⁶.

However, already at the end of October, after almost 3 months of war, it became finally clear to the PTA management that the military censorship commissions were significantly interfering with the agency's work. Director O. I. Lamkert directly asked in a report to Prime Minister I. L. Goremykin on October 20, 1914 to solve this problem. The director cited as examples many cases of conflicts between PTA employees and military censors in different cities of Russia. Moreover, these examples took up most of the written report⁴⁹⁷.

As it turned out, the censors even blocked messages from the headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Individual messages were allowed through by the censors at the transmission point, but at the receiving point, other censors blocked them. In his report to the Prime Minister, O. I. Lamkert particularly noted the work of the military censorship commissions in Dvina, Odessa and Libau, which constantly interfered with the work of PTA correspondents. Censors often acted arbitrarily. For example, in Mogilev, for an unknown reason, the military censorship commission prohibited writing about the death in battle of the famous pilot P. N. Nesterov. O. I. Lamkert pointed out that the censors were violating the law and the emperor's order when they interfered with the work of the PTA, a

⁴⁹⁵ Letter of the Military Censorship Commission to O. I. Lamkert. 11.09.1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1206. L. 164. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹⁶ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. September 15, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1159. L. 199. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹⁷ Report of O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. October 20, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 261-268. (*in Russian*)

government agency. The director noted that the military censors were not professionals, but simple employees who did not understand their work and prohibited even messages from other government agencies. O. I. Lamkert asked that measures be taken⁴⁹⁸. At the same time, the director of the PTA sent a report on the abuses of the censors to the general and chief of the General Staff N.N. Yanushkevich⁴⁹⁹.

The PTA correspondent A.A. Korotnev, who was sent to Galicia in September 1914 after Lvov and Galich had already been captured, also suffered from military censorship. He worked near the front line, collecting and transmitting information. A.A. Korotnev witnessed how the Russian army repelled the Austro-Hungarian offensive at Rava-Ruska and subsequently besieged Przemysl. However, for unknown reasons, A.A. Korotnev eventually had a conflict with the local military censorship commission and the army command. After this, he was effectively not allowed to transmit messages; the censorship stopped allowing them. On this matter, the director O.I. Lamkert contacted the manager of the affairs of the Council of Ministers I.N. Lodyzhensky, but he was unable to do anything, and A.A. Korotnev was recalled⁵⁰⁰.

PTA correspondents had to cover events very carefully under censorship so that the reports would not be blocked by censors. For this, the agency was often criticized in the press. The newspaper «Russkoe Znamya» believed that PTA tried to hide various scandalous events inside the country, for example, a mass brawl in Kyiv due to a political dispute⁵⁰¹. In turn, the newspaper Russkie Vedomosti criticized the agency for not transmitting news from the front to the capital quickly

⁴⁹⁸ Report of O.I. Lamkert to I.L. Goremykin. October 20, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 261-268. (*in Russian*)

⁴⁹⁹ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to N. N. Yanushkevich. November 3, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 281. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰⁰ Letter from I.N. Lodyzhensky to O.I. Lamkert. November 7, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 11. L. 298. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰¹ Russkoe znamya. 04.03.1915. №64. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

enough and, accordingly, to the press⁵⁰².

In November 1914, a separate contract between the PTA and the MFA for the transfer of information came into effect. After the start of the war, some of the channels for receiving information that the MFA used were lost. And the PTA, in turn, was able to obtain valuable information through a network of correspondents and their informants. V. Y. Van der Fleet, director of the first department of the MFA, regularly contacted director O. I. Lamkert regarding this contract. In October and November, the PTA received 18,750 rubles from the MFA as a reward for information from neutral countries⁵⁰³. The PTA also received special orders for information from the MFA. For example, in February 1915, news from those Balkan countries that had not yet entered the war was especially important for the MFA. For this information, the PTA received 15,000 rubles⁵⁰⁴. The contract was valid until October 1917.

The PTA also received a separate contract with the War Ministry for prompt provision of news to them. Several correspondents were assigned for this task, who were called military agents. M.N. Leontyev, Quartermaster General of the General Staff, contacted the PTA on these issues from the War Ministry. For providing news to the War Ministry, the PTA received sums of 10,000-20,000 rubles every month until October 1917⁵⁰⁵.

In November 1914, the PTA received an unexpected profit when the newspaper resumed work in Lvov, which was occupied by Russian troops. They had subscribed to PTA telegrams from the very beginning. But at the same time, the agency faced financial problems. That same November, the agency's correspondents in other countries approached the management with requests to

⁵⁰² Russkie vedomosti. 14.08.1914. №219. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰³ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to V.Y. Van der Fleet. November 18, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1620. L. 163. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰⁴ Letter from V.Y. Van der Fleet to O. I. Lamkert. February 24, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1621. L. 7. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰⁵ Letter from M.N. Leontyev to O.I. Lamkert. May 18, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1621. L. 56. (*in Russian*)

increase their salaries or pay them in the currency of the country where each correspondent was staying⁵⁰⁶. By that time, the ruble had fallen against other currencies, and correspondents who were paid in rubles were actually receiving less.

Since October 1914, battles had been fought around the city of Lodz, where the PTA branch under the leadership of S.A. Kontsevich was located. In November 1914, the German army launched an offensive on the city with superior forces, hoping to encircle the Russian troops located nearby. However, the Russian army managed to repel the attack, and in the battles that took place during November 1914, the German troops suffered higher losses. In particular, 4 generals were killed. However, the pressure from the German army was too strong, and on December 6, 1914, Lodz was abandoned by Russian troops. The branch employees were evacuated in advance, and the branch in Lodz was closed. However, the agency's management did not intend to write it off forever. The branch in Lodz appeared in the PTA documents among the others, but dashes were put in the columns with indicators. In the event that Russia had succeeded in recapturing Lodz, the branch would have been reopened. The same applied to the branches in Warsaw and Riga, which would be temporarily closed in 1915 and 1917 respectively for the same reason as the branch in Lodz. In turn, S.A. Kontsevich moved to Warsaw, where his brother P.A. Kontsevich headed the local branch of the PTA, and received an additional salary increase of 75 rubles⁵⁰⁷.

By 1915, the second year of World War I, the PTA retained its significance, personnel, and virtually all of its branches and correspondents. By 1915, 159 employees worked in the Central Branch of the PTA in Petrograd. The main category included the managing director, the director authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the secretary with an assistant, senior editors, editors, copyists,

⁵⁰⁶ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. November 13, 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1159. L. 209. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰⁷ Certificate of the PTA on payment to S.A. Kontsevich. March 16, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1621. L. 24. (*in Russian*)

duty officers, compilers of newspaper reviews, chroniclers, information department employees, the office manager, an accountant with an assistant, clerks, telephone operators, telegraph operators, employees of the post and telegraph department, employees of the stock exchange, and employees of the Duma. The auxiliary category included printers, watchmen, couriers, drivers, a motor mechanic, cyclists, a laundress, a doorman, a janitor, and other servants. The Central Branch of the PTA also had its own doctor and legal adviser⁵⁰⁸.

The largest of the regional branches, in Moscow, employed 31 people. These included a manager, duty editors, an accountant, stenographers, copyists, a dispatcher, a telephone operator, guards and messengers, and a janitor.

The total salary of the Moscow branch employees per year was 22,332 rubles (with the head of the branch, I.V. Polyakov, receiving 5,400 rubles per year). Also, 2,400 rubles was the annual office rent, plus 1,560 rubles were other expenses. The total salary of the Kiev branch employees (headed by S.T. Divin) was 7,860 rubles per year. In Riga (F.I. Mettus) - 8,324 rubles. In Warsaw (P.A. Kontsevich) - 6,588 rubles. In Odessa (N.A. Osetrov) - 5,928 rubles. In Tiflis (A.I. Kalantarov) - 6,120 rubles. In Revel (G.E. Keller) – 3492 rubles. In the Kharkov branch (G.L. Okulich-Kazarin), which dealt only with commercial telegrams, the salary amounted to 540 rubles. In the branch in Lodz (S.A. Kontsevich), which was closed in December 1914, the salary amounted to 5076 rubles for the year⁵⁰⁹.

At the end of 1914, Assistant Director A.A. Gelfer wrote a report on the activities of the PTA as part of internal events in honor of the agency's anniversary. Copies of the report were sent out, including to those people who participated in the creation of the agency and helped it. For example, former prime ministers S.Y. Witte and V.N. Kokovtsov received copies. The report also included statistics on the personnel of the PTA.

⁵⁰⁸ List of employees of the central department of the PTA. September 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1414. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁰⁹ List of employees of regional branches of the PTA. September 1914 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1414. L. 8-12. (*in Russian*)

According to the report, at the end of 1914 - beginning of 1915, 881 correspondents worked for the PTA (this number was constantly changing). Of these, 402 people were permanent correspondents, and 479 were temporary. In his report, A.A. Gelfer also examined the social composition of the correspondents. It was as follows. Chancellery ranks - 94 people. Employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs – 134. Tax inspectors – 45. Excise inspectors – 44. Other employees of the Ministry of Finance – 19. Employees of local institutions – 32. Zemstvo employees – 129. Landowners – 7. Representatives of the «commercial and industrial class» – 78. Private employees – 67. Newspaper workers – 86. Attorneys – 65. Others – 72. Also, 2 Duma deputies and 7 women worked as correspondents⁵¹⁰.

At the beginning of 1915, the PTA had special correspondents on the Anglo-German front, in France, Serbia, Cairo, Salonika, Athens, Cetinje, Paris, London, Rome, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Bucharest, Zurich, Isfahan, Tabriz, Tehran, Urmia, Enzeli, Macau, Beijing, Hankou, Chifoo, Shanghai and Tokyo.

In Petrograd, 29 newspapers subscribed to PTA telegrams. Eleven banks and 25 private individuals also subscribed. The PTA also sent out news in French. Eleven private individuals subscribed to these telegrams. These were mainly employees of the embassies of various countries located in Petrograd⁵¹¹.

In April 1915, the PTA was able to take important measures for its personnel. Director O. I. Lamkert managed to obtain additional funding from the state, which was used to pay bonuses to agency employees who worked overtime. The bonus was paid for each day of overtime. The size of the bonus for each employee was calculated depending on his current salary. Bonuses ranged from 15

⁵¹⁰ Report of A.A. Gelfer on the activities of the Agency for 1914-1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 223. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹¹ Report of A.A. Gelfer on the activities of the Agency for 1904-1914. 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 226. (*in Russian*)

rubles 50 kopecks to 54 rubles 25 kopecks. In total, 110 PTA employees began to receive a salary increase⁵¹².

In addition, another salary increase was received by 11 particularly important employees of the SPA, who worked directly with war news in the Central Department. The main workload fell on them, because a lot of information came from the front. This list included 6 editors, 2 telegraph operators, a motor mechanic, a printer and even a guard⁵¹³.

In July 1915, an unusual situation occurred for the PTA. Since 1913, F.A. Dukhovetsky had been the agency's special correspondent in London. Unlike P.N. Apostol, who worked in the capital of another country allied to Russia – France, F.A. Dukhovetsky was not considered as important an employee and did not receive a salary increase. But he did not send as much news to Russia as P.N. Apostol. However, he was still in good standing. In parallel with his work at the PTA, F.A. Dukhovetsky published his articles in the press. For example, his large article about public life in London was published in the newspaper «Pravitelstvenniy vestnik» on April 16, 1915⁵¹⁴.

However, at the end of June 1915, F.A. Dukhovetsky fell seriously ill and was unable to perform his duties for some time. The agency management did not want to look for a new employee, especially since it had already had difficulty finding a suitable candidate in the person of F.A. Dukhovetsky. Then the director O.I. Lamkert made an unusual decision. The correspondent's wife, K.D. Dukhovetskaya, knew his work methods. O.I. Lamkert offered her a temporary contract until her husband recovered. K.D. Dukhovetskaya agreed to this and became an official correspondent of the PTA with a salary of 150 rubles per month⁵¹⁵. By the way, in 1915, only 7 women out of almost 900 correspondents

⁵¹² Letter from O.I. Lamkert to the PTA Council. April 23, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1640. L. 205. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹³ Claims statement. December 31, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1622. L. 31. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹⁴ Pravitelstvenniy vestnik. 16.04.1915. №111. P. 4. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹⁵ PTA Certificate. July 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1621. L. 90. (*in Russian*)

worked at the PTA, and they were temporary employees. As it turned out, K.D. Dukhovetskaya coped with her duties with dignity and resigned in October 1915, when her husband recovered and was able to return to work⁵¹⁶.

In May 1915, German troops broke through the front in the Gorlice area, concentrating and introducing superior forces into battle in this area. The German army developed its success, captured Przemysl and Lvov and reached the rear of a significant group of Russian troops, which in June was forced to retreat from Galicia. In July, German troops, taking advantage of the demoralization of the enemy, began the second stage of the offensive. The Russian army was unable to withstand this onslaught and retreated again. Large territories were abandoned, including the capital of the Kingdom of Poland, Warsaw, where there was a PTA branch headed by P.A. Kontsevich. The employees were evacuated long before July 22, when Warsaw was occupied by German troops. The PTA branch in Warsaw ceased to exist, and its former employees were provided financial assistance by the agency's management. And after the third stage of the German offensive, which took place in August, on September 3, Russian troops were forced to leave Vilnius. As was the case with the SPTA offices in Warsaw and Lodz, the employees were evacuated to other Russian cities in advance. The agency provided jobs for most of them⁵¹⁷.

For example, the former head of the Warsaw branch, P.A. Kontsevich, moved to Petrograd and took the position of editor in the Central Branch. The former head of the Lodz branch, S.A. Kontsevich, who worked in the same Warsaw branch, moved to Moscow, where he took a job in the local branch of the PTA as an editor⁵¹⁸.

⁵¹⁶ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to K.D. Dukhovetskaya. October 7, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 925. L. 474. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹⁷ Letter from O. I. Lamkert to P. A. Kontsevich. August 4, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1621. L. 117. (*in Russian*)

⁵¹⁸ Certificate of the PTA on payment to I.V. Polyakov. September 25, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1621. L. 135. (*in Russian*)

Despite the many difficulties of 1915 and the loss of yet another branch, the PTA leadership had big plans for the further development of the organization. The Russian state agency managed to conclude a lucrative contract with Chinese and Japanese English-language newspapers to send them news about the military operations. However, at that time, the PTA Central Office did not have a free employee who spoke English well enough to translate the news from Russian into English. Therefore, in November 1915, the PTA hired G. Talbot, an immigrant from Great Britain. He was tasked with translating telegrams with the most important news about the military operations into English. The telegrams were then sent in English to the PTA offices in Shanghai, Beijing and Tokyo. There they were received by local English-language newspapers⁵¹⁹.

However, other PTA plans were too ambitious. For example, in March 1915, on instructions from the management, the London (and former Constantinople) correspondent F.A. Dukhovetsky drew up an estimate for the future PTA branch in Constantinople. The management believed that Russia would be able to annex the capital of the Ottoman Empire after winning the war. And the agency planned to open its branch there⁵²⁰.

1916 began for the PTA with a change of director. On February 12, 1916, after 6 years in this position, O. I. Lamkert asked the new prime minister B. V. Sturmer for his resignation, which was accepted on February 14. Probably, the reason for this was the fatigue and health of O. I. Lamkert, who subsequently transferred to work in the Commission for the development of regulations on the establishment of supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs over cinematography, where the workload was much less. But in his new position he

⁵¹⁹ PTA certificate about G. Talbot // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1622. L. 19. (*in Russian*)

⁵²⁰ Draft estimate for the PTA branch in Constantinople. March 19, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 925. L. 458-466. (*in Russian*)

received much less than the 8,000 rubles a year that he was paid at the PTA⁵²¹. O.I. Lamkert was replaced by I.Y. Gurlyand.

At the beginning of the First World War, the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency (renamed Petrograd) faced many difficult challenges (mobilization, increased news flow, the actual closure of branches in cities abandoned by the Russian army). However, the PTA coped with them, the management managed to stabilize the financial situation and the work of the agency.

⁵²¹ Letter from O.I. Lamkert to B.V. Sturmer. 12.02.1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1206. L. 282. (*in Russian*)

4.2. The February Revolution and the fate of the PTA during the political cataclysms of 1917

As indicated, I.Y. Gurlyand was appointed to the post of director of the PTA on February 16, 1916. He began both as a teacher-lawyer and as a journalist, published stories, feuilletons, publicistic and literary articles, was briefly acquainted with A. P. Chekhov, who gave him advice on literary craft. In 1901, I.Y. Gurlyand began working with the Yaroslavl governor B.V. Shturmer, at first he was the author of his speeches and editor of documents, and then became a full-fledged adviser. When in 1904 B. V. Shturmer received the post of director of the general affairs department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, I.Y. Gurlyand followed him to St. Petersburg and, under his patronage, became an official for special assignments at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, thus entering government service at the age of 36. The Ministry of Internal Affairs noticed the talents and experience of I.Y. Gurlyand in journalism, and in 1905 he became an editor at the newspaper «Rossiya», which was financed by the government. In 1906 I.Y. Gurlyand met P.A. Stolypin, the new Minister of Internal Affairs, who soon also took the post of Prime Minister. Soon I.Y. Gurlyand became one of the main associates and confidants of P.A. Stolypin, who in 1907 instructed him to head the newspaper «Rossiya»⁵²².

I.Y. Gurlyand not only successfully worked in this post, but also continued his creative work. Under his own name, he continued to publish literary and historical works, under pseudonyms - pamphlets against opposition parties and by order of P.A. Stolypin. In 1911, after the death of his patron P.A. Stolypin, I.Y. Gurlyand decided to leave the government service, but remained at the newspaper «Rossiya». In 1915, he returned to service in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which coincided with the upcoming rise of another of his patrons, B.V. Stürmer. In early 1916, when B.V. Stürmer became prime minister, I.Y. Gurlyand took the

⁵²² Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency under Director I.Y. Gurlyand in 1916–1917 // Nauka. Obschestvo. Oborona. 2023. Vol. 11, №4(37). Pp. 47-52. (*in Russian*)

post of director of the Printing Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Soon after, after the resignation of O.I. Lamkert, the post of director of the PTA became vacant. I.Y. Gurlyand, who had extensive experience in managing a newspaper, became the prime minister's best candidate for this position. The press of that time suspected, not without reason, that it was Prime Minister B.V. Stürmer who ensured the appointment of I.Y. Gurlyand as director of the PTA⁵²³.

I.Y. Gurlyand began his work with a reform of the PTA management structure, which was initiated and approved by the Council of Ministers on February 18, 1916. Now the agency was managed by the Council, and decisions were to be made collegially. I.Y. Gurlyand began to be called the managing director, remaining the head⁵²⁴. The position of Chairman of the PTA Council was also established. In April, it was filled by I.N. Lodyzhensky, the manager of the affairs of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Empire. Since I.N. Lodyzhensky was busy at his main place of work, I.Y. Gurlyand actually managed the PTA⁵²⁵.

The new director actively continued to reform the agency. Probably due to personal disagreements, on February 23, 1916, by his order, I. Y. Gurlyand removed A. A. Gelfer from the post of his assistant (de jure from the post of director) and transferred him to the agency's department in the Duma. A. A. Gelfer was a very experienced employee, he could be called a veteran of the PTA. He worked for the «Trade and Telegraph Newspaper» back in the 1890s, then continued to work at SPA and was an assistant to the agency's directors since 1907. In place of assistant I.Y. Gurlyand appointed S. A. Fedotov to the assistant's place⁵²⁶. However, after several months of work, in June 1916, I.Y. Gurlyand

⁵²³ Russkoe slovo. 02.09.16. №242. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵²⁴ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. February 18, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1160. L. 104. (*in Russian*)

⁵²⁵ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. April 8, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1160. L. 115. (*in Russian*)

⁵²⁶ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to A. A. Gelfer. February 23, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 238. (*in Russian*)

became disillusioned with S. A. Fedotov and returned A. A. Gelfer to the post of his assistant⁵²⁷.

I.Y. Gurlyand actively delved into the financial issues of the PTA and tried to obtain new subsidies for the agency from the state. Even by 1916, the issue of salaries for foreign correspondents, who wanted to receive them in local currency, had not been fully resolved. I.Y. Gurlyand regularly addressed the Minister of Finance P.L. Bark on this issue, who in response promised to solve this problem⁵²⁸.

I.Y. Gurlyand also managed to achieve the adoption of an order favorable to the PTA. The Ministry of Finance agreed to pay the agency's expenses for transmitting telegrams to France⁵²⁹. This was very important for the PTA, because not only the permanent correspondent in Paris P.N. Apostol worked in France, but also correspondents on the front line. In addition, it was at that time that the bloody, months-long Battle of Verdun was taking place in France, the progress of which was also monitored in Russia.

In addition, I.Y. Gurlyand was actively engaged in checking the financial statements of the entire agency and its branches in search of abuses. The audit found that the PTA veteran and head of the Moscow branch since 1903 I.V. Polyakov constantly inflated the price of sending telegrams in the reporting documentation. But in fact, he used his connections at the Moscow telegraph station and paid less for sending. By the way, the agency regularly had complaints about the head of the Moscow branch back in the 1900s. In 1916, I.V. Polyakov failed to justify himself, and on June 4, 1916, he was dismissed from his post. S.A. Kontsevich was appointed the new head of the Moscow branch. He headed the

⁵²⁷ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to A. A. Gelfer. June 4, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 239. (*in Russian*)

⁵²⁸ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to P.L. Bark. April 7, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 19. L. 8. (*in Russian*)

⁵²⁹ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to P.L. Bark. May 3, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 19. L. 46. (*in Russian*)

local branch of the PTA until the end of 1914 and the fall of Lodz, and then worked as an editor in the Moscow branch⁵³⁰.

However, I. Y. Gurlyand himself also took advantage of his official position, but to help the pro-government press. In 1916, the Minsk governor A. G. Chernyavsky decided to create a new pro-government newspaper in Minsk, «Nash Vestnik», which was initially to be published using funds from the provincial budget. But A. G. Chernyavsky managed to agree with I.Y. Gurlyand that the PTA would transmit news to «Nash Vestnik» for free for the first few months, when all other newspapers were buying subscriptions to telegrams. In turn, I. Y. Gurlyand was probably proud that he had helped open another newspaper and kept among his personal documents a note from «Nash Vestnik» with words of gratitude to the PTA⁵³¹.

In August 1916, the PTA budget for 1917 was drawn up. It was planned that the agency would spend 1,325,200 rubles and earn the same amount. The growth in turnover in rubles compared to previous years was due to high inflation in Russia. The main source of income for the PTA were provincial newspapers that subscribed to news telegrams. It was planned that in 1917 the agency would receive 423,000 rubles from them⁵³².

It is worth noting that the Commercial Department of the PTA, which the previous management, represented by O.I. Lamkert, planned to close and transferred employees from there, continued to operate. In 1916, the Commercial Department sent out telegrams about the cost of shares, bread, sugar, copper, flax, butter, and cotton. The telegrams about the cost of cotton had the most subscribers, and the department earned 6,724 rubles a year on them. Telegrams about the cost of bread earned 3,982 rubles a year, and telegrams about the prices of other goods earned less than 1,000 rubles a year. Also, the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper»

⁵³⁰ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to A. A. Gelfer. June 4, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 239. (*in Russian*)

⁵³¹ Nash Vestnik. 19.06.16. №1. P. 1. (*in Russian*)

⁵³² PTA estimate for 1917. August 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1415. L. 46. (*in Russian*)

paid the PTA 14,790 rubles for telegrams about prices in 1916. In total, the Commercial Department earned 65,000 rubles in 1916⁵³³.

Also, the PTA did not abandon ambitious plans for its development after a possible victory in the war. In the autumn of 1916, the telegraph agencies «Reuters» (Britain) and «Havas» (France) discussed with the PTA plans for dividing the world telegraph market, from which after the victory it was planned to completely remove the German agency «Wolf» and the Austrian «Korrespondenz Bureau». The British and French agencies, by right of being stronger, planned to take European countries into their spheres of influence. In turn, the PTA planned to receive the US information market as its sphere of influence⁵³⁴.

In December 1916, a scandal erupted around SPTA and its correspondent in Rome, K. M. Ketov. It was discovered by chance that there had been no journalist Konstantin Mikhailovich Ketov before 1905. Then the SPTA staff made further inquiries and found out that Ketov's real name was Ivan Andreevich Kleinert. Moreover, he was a convicted criminal. As it turned out, I. A. Kleinert was born in 1880 in Saratov and was a Russian German. In the early 1900s, he joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party and was associated with those of its members who were suspected of political murders. In addition, he was involved in the technical equipment of the Socialist Revolutionaries and, in particular, in matters of information exchange between revolutionaries. In April 1902, I. A. Kleinert was arrested, spent a year and a half in prison, and then sentenced to 8 years of exile in the Yakutsk province. However, in 1905, soon after arriving there, I.A. Kleinert escaped and hid in Saratov. There he made himself a new passport and was able to leave Russia under the name of Konstantin Mikhailovich Ketov. Then K.M. Ketov moved to Rome, where he began working as a journalist and led a law-abiding life. He did not arouse suspicion either from the local authorities or from the Russian

⁵³³ Report from the PTA commercial department. December 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1654. L. 23. (*in Russian*)

⁵³⁴ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. October 7, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1160. L. 127. (*in Russian*)

embassy, and eventually the «Trade and Industrial Newspaper» offered him cooperation. Finally, in 1911, K.M. Ketov became an official correspondent for SPTA⁵³⁵.

When the truth about K. M. Ketov was revealed, an investigation began at the agency. However, in the midst of World War I, it dragged on, and the agency's management did not want to fire an experienced correspondent with the prospect of not finding a new employee to replace him. In March 1917, after the February Revolution, the correspondent officially confirmed the information about his past. The Provisional Government no longer had any claims against him. In the PTA records, he began to appear as «K. M. Ketov (Kleinert)». At the same time, he headed the local committee for assistance to political emigrants from Russia⁵³⁶. At the end of October 1917, when the PTA ceased its work, K. M. Ketov moved to the Russian-language newspaper «La Russia», where he worked as a journalist and editor. In the 1930s, he worked on his memoirs, which were apparently never published in full. K. M. Ketov survived the Mussolini regime in Italy and World War II and died in Rome in 1948⁵³⁷.

The end of 1916 was associated with scandals for I. Y. Gurlyand. The press constantly linked his presence at the head of the PTA with the patronage of Prime Minister B. V. Sturmer. And the press accused B.V. Sturmer of collaborating with G. E. Rasputin, which also harmed I. Y. Gurlyand⁵³⁸. The campaign against B.V. Sturmer was so large-scale that on November 10, 1916, he was dismissed from the post of Prime Minister. I.Y. Gurlyand remained the director of the PTA, and the press temporarily reduced its attention to him⁵³⁹.

⁵³⁵ Telegram to A.A. Neratov. December 7, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 28. L. 114. (*in Russian*)

⁵³⁶ Letter from S.S. Raetsky to the Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs. July 25, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 45. (*in Russian*)

⁵³⁷ Russkaya mysl. 19.03.1948. № 49. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁵³⁸ Russkoe slovo. 02.09.16. №242. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵³⁹ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency under Director I.Y. Gurlyand in 1916–1917 // Nauka. Obschestvo. Oborona. 2023. Vol. 11, №4(37). Pp. 47-52. (*in Russian*)

But I.Y. Gurlyand's reputation suffered more because of another person. In December 1916, public attention was focused on the criminal case of I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov, a journalist, adventurer and former employee of the Russian secret services. In the 1900s, he was an agent of Russia's influence in Paris, where he worked with the local press, then conducted operations against Japanese intelligence and became a negotiator between the authorities and G. A. Gapon from the end of 1905 until the latter's death in March 1906. But at the same time, I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov actively used his official position to earn money illegally. Having been caught embezzling allocated funds, he was fired in September 1906.

After that, I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov took up commercial activities and, thanks to his connections, became one of the associates of the imperial favorite G. E. Rasputin, whose favor he quickly won. Through G.E. Rasputin he met B.V. Stürmer, through whom he met I.Y. Gurlyand. When B.V. Sturmer became prime minister, I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov tried to use his connections for personal enrichment; he de facto engaged in extortion from banks, threatening to create various problems for them. As a result, in September 1916 he was caught red-handed, having received marked banknotes. The operation was personally supervised by the Minister of Internal Affairs A.N. Khvostov. However, I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov tried to destroy the criminal case, using his connections, he managed to drag out the process. This caused even greater hatred from the press and public opinion. At the same time, on December 17, 1916, G.E. Rasputin was killed. After this, I.Y. Gurlyand began to be mentioned in the press in articles about the progress of the trial of I. F. Manasevich-Manuilov. They said that he actively helped B.V. Shturmer in matters that concerned his patron G. E. Rasputin. The press also accused I. Y. Gurlyand of helping those forces that tried to destroy

the case of I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov, and of participating in the dismissal of the Minister of Internal Affairs A. N. Khvostov⁵⁴⁰.

In turn, I.Y. Gurlyand tried to justify himself in February 1917, at the height of the campaign against him. He even sent a letter to the newspaper «Novoye Vremya», in which he denied his involvement in the circle of friends of I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov from the trade and industrial environment, who were suspected of spying for Germany⁵⁴¹.

However, the press had long been sharply opposed to I.Y. Gurlyand. In mid-February 1917, newspapers began to publish articles about I.Y. Gurlyand being part of the criminal group of I. F. Manasevich-Manuilov, which was engaged in extortion. The director of the PTA himself was allegedly one of the leaders of this group and used his official position to pass secret information between its members. I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov himself, despite attempts to drag out the case, was convicted and sentenced to prison even before the February Revolution⁵⁴². However, the facts of I.Y. Gurlyand's acquaintance with I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov and their communication were confirmed.

The First World War caused a food crisis in Russia. There was a shortage of food in Petrograd. The Petrograd employees of the PTA, including high-ranking ones, also faced this. In the summer of 1916, the agency's employees turned to the management with requests for help in obtaining food. In turn, the PTA management understood the importance of this issue and took up the problem. On August 13, 1916, I.Y. Gurlyand addressed a personal letter to the office of the food organization of the authorized representative for food of the city of Petrograd, which was engaged in the distribution of food products and food security in

⁵⁴⁰ Rech. 20.12.16. №352. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴¹ Novoe vremya. 17.02.17. №14698. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴² Moskovskiye vedomosti. 18.02.17. №40. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

general. The director reported that the agency's employees and their family members needed sugar, which was in short supply in the city at that time⁵⁴³.

The food organization agreed to satisfy I.Y. Gurlyand's request, but asked to send lists of employees in need. The lists were sent by the following letter. They indicated 172 employees and 401 family members, a total of 573 people. According to I.Y. Gurlyand's instructions, the general distribution, as well as the recording of this process in documents, was handled by PTA employee N. I. Krasilshchikov⁵⁴⁴. The PTA was included in the food distribution program, and sugar worth 186 rubles was purchased for the agency's employees at the sugar factory of Y. L. Kenig by prior agreement with the manager. The expenses were compensated by the state. The sugar was then distributed among the employees and their family members. This process was handled by the aforementioned N. I. Krasilshchikov and the watchman F.O. Sitin⁵⁴⁵.

The food crisis continued, and in September 1916 I.Y. Gurlyand turned to the mayor of Petrograd A.N. Obolensky, having not received a positive response to his request from the food organization. The director of the PTA reported that due to the shortage of food, many employees «were in a state of extreme need». I.Y. Gurlyand asked to allocate a batch of butter and flour for them. The mayor accepted the request - flour and butter were allocated from the city reserves⁵⁴⁶.

However, there was still a shortage of food. Then the PTA employees began to self-organize to solve the problem with food. In the fall of 1916, they founded the organization «Society of Consumers Serving in Government Institutions in Petrograd», which also included employees from other institutions. 36 employees from the PTA joined the Society. Among them was the future director of the

⁵⁴³ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to the Office of the Food Organization of the Food Commissioner of the City of Petrograd. August 13, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1636. L. 1. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴⁴ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to the Office of the Food Organization of the Food Commissioner of the City of Petrograd. August 14, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1636. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴⁵ Invoice for the products of the sugar factory of Y. L. Kenig. August 14, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1636. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴⁶ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to A. N. Obolensky. September 7, 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1636. L. 5. (*in Russian*)

agency A.M. Lovyagin.

The Society had its own board, which managed its work. It also had a charter, which formulated the goals of the Society and the rules governing its work. The charter was printed in the PTA printing house. The main goal of the Society was to provide food for its participants and their families. To this end, each member of the Society was obliged to search for scarce food products and buy them out of common funds. The board was responsible for the equal distribution of products⁵⁴⁷.

In January 1917, the PTA reduced its staff due to a lack of income and, as a result, funds to pay salaries. In the Central Office of the PTA in Petrograd alone, 20% of its employees were laid off compared to August 1916. By February 1917, the food situation in Petrograd had worsened even more and affected the PTA. If earlier the agency could provide its canteen with food, then in February 1917 this became impossible, there was no bread. Therefore, on February 23, 1917, I.Y. Gurlyand contacted the office of the food organization of the authorized representative for food of the city of Petrograd with a request to allocate bread for the canteen. The director reported that 120-140 people use the canteen on weekdays. He also pointed out that the agency employees work overtime and perform duties necessary for the state⁵⁴⁸. The chancery did not respond to I.Y. Gurlyand's letter. That same day in Petrograd, workers' marches in honor of Working Women's Day turned into mass riots; one of the reasons for the participants' discontent was precisely the insufficient supply of food to Petrograd.

The army units stationed in the capital (mainly Cossacks) were unable to suppress the popular uprisings, and the Emperor was at headquarters in Mogilev at the time. On February 24, 1917, rallies and strikes in Petrograd continued, with

⁵⁴⁷ Charter of the «Society of Consumers Serving in Government Institutions in Petrograd». 1916 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1636. L. 15-25. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁴⁸ Letter from I.Y. Gurlyand to the Office of the Food Organization of the Food Commissioner of the City of Petrograd. February 23, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1636. L. 26. (*in Russian*)

more and more participants joining them, and clashes with the Cossacks that resulted in casualties. The participants in the uprisings began to actively support not only calls for the transfer of food, but also for the overthrow of the autocracy. On February 27, soldiers and prisoners released from prison joined the rebels, and the city arsenal was plundered. On the same day, the building of the State Duma, the Tauride Palace, was seized along with the deputies who were there. Some of the deputies supported the uprising and created the Provisional Committee of the State Duma.

On February 28, 1917, the rebels peacefully occupied the PTA building, and the agency suspended its work until March 1. On March 1, 1917, the Provisional Committee of the State Duma, with the participation of the Bureau of the Progressive Bloc, the Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party, and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, created the Provisional Government. One of its orders that day was the dismissal of I. Y. Gurlyand from the post of director of the PTA. The reasons were his reputation and the desire of the authorities to investigate his activities. An experienced PTA employee, editor A. V. Lovyagin, was appointed in I. Y. Gurlyand's place⁵⁴⁹. On March 2, 1917, Nicholas II abdicated the throne in favor of his brother Mikhail Alexandrovich, who, in turn, abdicated his rights to the throne in favor of the Provisional Government on March 3.

The new authorities quickly began to examine the case of I.Y. Gurlyand as a member of I.F. Manasevich-Manuilov's group. On March 9, 1917, I.Y. Gurlyand was put on the wanted list. However, he managed to leave Russia for France beforehand. I.Y. Gurlyand had to leave in a hurry and alone, leaving his family in Petrograd. He was also forced to leave his archive, in which information was found that compromised him in the eyes of the new authorities⁵⁵⁰. The former director of the PTA settled in Paris and lived there until his death in 1921.

⁵⁴⁹ Birzhevye vedomosti. 09.03.17. №14975. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

The Provisional Government, which took over Russia, began reforming all government agencies involved in the press and information management in March 1917. It was also planned to reform the PTA. The Provisional Government probably believed that the PTA was not working effectively enough⁵⁵¹. A.M. Lovyagin, who had worked at the agency as an editor for over 10 years (with breaks), was appointed director of the PTA. A.M. Lovyagin was a graduate of the Institute of History and Philology and initially worked as a teacher. He was also the author of various notes and articles in the «Encyclopedic Dictionary» of F.A. Brockhaus and I.A. Efron. Later, in parallel with his work at the telegraph agency, A.M. Lovyagin dealt with bibliography and translated works from Greek, Serbian and Dutch into Russian⁵⁵². In addition, in 1911, A.M. Lovyagin was separately awarded the Order of St. Vladimir for his services by order of the Council of Ministers⁵⁵³.

The new authorities probably believed that an experienced PTA employee would be able to support the agency's work and keep the staff under control during the reform period. On March 8, the Provisional Government created a Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Administration for Press Affairs, headed by D.P. Kapnist. The PTA was transferred to the jurisdiction of the commission⁵⁵⁴.

On March 30, 1917, the only meeting of the PTA Council after the February Revolution took place, which ultimately turned out to be the last. At it, a new chairman of the PTA Council was approved; he was the manager of the Provisional Government and a prominent figure in the Cadet Party (and also the father of the future famous writer V.V. Nabokov). He replaced I.N. Lodyzhensky as chairman,

⁵⁵¹ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency in March-July 1917 // *Istoricheskiy byulleten.* - 2023. Vol. 6, №6. Pp. 90-95. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵² Levin G.L., Teplitskaya A.V., Trofimova N.I. Domestic bibliographers and bibliographers, 1917–2014. M.: Pashkov dom, 2015. P. 322. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵³ Letter from the Chancellery of the Council of Ministers to O. I. Lamkert. December 15, 1911 // RSHA. F. 1276. Inv. 7. D. 289. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵⁴ PTA Circular. April 27, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 4. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

who resigned. V.D. Nabokov, as chairman of the PTA Council, received power over the agency, but did not take part in its affairs. At the meeting on March 30, the results of the February Revolution for the PTA were also consolidated. I.Y. Gurlyand was given a kind of anathema in absentia for «unseemly actions» as director and dismissed without compensation⁵⁵⁵.

In addition, discussions on personnel policy took place, and a decision was made to change the personnel of the PTA, including dismissing those employees whom the new authorities considered unreliable. This policy began in mid-March 1917. At that time, even the long-term assistant to the directors of the PTA, A.A. Gelfer, was dismissed. However, there were no scandals, and A.A. Gelfer was paid 4 months' salary in advance as a thank you for his years of service⁵⁵⁶.

Also at the Council meeting, changes were made to the PTA branches in Russia. N.A. Osetrov, who headed the branch in Odessa, headed the branch in Moscow, which S.A. Kontsevich apparently could not handle. In turn, P.A. Kontsevich, who headed the branch in Warsaw until 1915, became the new head of the branch in Odessa. It was also decided to enter into negotiations with the agencies «Havas» (France) and «Reuters» (Britain), which were distrustful of the updated PTA. It was planned to conclude a new agreement with them⁵⁵⁷.

The PTA reforms also included cost optimization. The Chairman of the Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Administration for Press Affairs expressed his skepticism about the justification for high expenses on correspondents in other countries and the practice of correspondents assigned to one country working from another. This concerned the formal Berlin correspondent A. I. Markov, who actually worked in Stockholm. The new authorities had other complaints about him, and he was even accused of having

⁵⁵⁵ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. March 30, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1160. L. 132-133. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵⁶ Letter from A.M. Lovyagin to the Military Service Administration. March 17, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 72. L. 254. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵⁷ Journal of the meetings of the Council of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. March 30, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1160. L. 132-133. (*in Russian*)

connections with the German secret services. In May 1917, P. O. Shutuyakov, who worked for the newspaper of the Cadet Party and was considered a much more reliable person for the new authorities, was appointed to replace A. I. Markov⁵⁵⁸. It is worth noting that in this case it was not possible to achieve savings, since P.O. Shutuyakov was given the same salary of 500 rubles per month as A.I. Markov had⁵⁵⁹.

But at the same time, A.I. Markov remained an employee of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm (he held this position in parallel since moving to Sweden), he continued to study and transmit to Russia economic and political literature published in Sweden and Germany. In August 1917, A.I. Markov transferred to work at the Ministry of Finance and performed the duties of a financial analyst and translator. In October 1917, he accepted the new government and began to work with it, transmitting information, and then returned to Russia and consulted the «Special Department for Financial Issues Related to the Implementation of the Brest Treaty» of the People's Commissariat of Finance of the RSFSR. But in September 1918, A.I. Markov was arrested by the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission on suspicion of counterrevolutionary activity. He was accused of the fact that in 1916, on the instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire, he was engaged in bribing the local press in Sweden so that it would conduct propaganda for the neutrality of his country in the First World War. In response, A.I. Markov stated that he had never done anything like that, had no access to the MFA funds, and was a simple correspondent. He managed to convince the Cheka of his innocence, and in December 1918 the case against him was dropped. A. I. Markov immediately took advantage of the chance to leave and emigrated to Germany, where he lived for about 10 years. He settled in Königsberg and in 1922 headed the «Economic Institute for Relations with

⁵⁵⁸ Gulkevich K.N. Letters to Olaf Brock. M.: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2017. P. 137. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁵⁹ Demand for remuneration of foreign correspondents. May 1, 1915 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 17. (*in Russian*)

Russia and Eastern European States». At the same time, A. I. Markov managed to restore relations with the Soviet government, and in 1929 he was even able to visit the USSR as part of a delegation and freely return to Germany. A. I. Markov died in Königsberg before 1933⁵⁶⁰.

For approximately the same reasons, the PTA correspondent (formally) in Vienna, V.P. Svatkovsky, was fired; his situation was similar to that of A.I. Markov. After the war began, he could not be in Austria-Hungary and from 1914 he lived in Switzerland. Even outside his official workplace, V.P. Svatkovsky received information from Austria-Hungary, transmitted it to Russia and thus benefited the PTA. For this, he also received a large salary of 12,100 rubles per year (but the salary included office expenses). Like A.I. Markov, V.P. Svatkovsky was fired from the PTA in May 1917. At the same time, the PTA maintained a network of informants in Sofia, Bucharest and Krakow, which V.P. Svatkovsky had founded over the years of his work⁵⁶¹. The former correspondent himself remained to live and work in Switzerland.

In addition, in April 1917, even before the dismissals of A. I. Markov and V. P. Svatkovsky and against the backdrop of talk of layoffs, P. G. Vaskevich, who was a correspondent in Tokyo, left the PTA. The agency had to urgently search for a new correspondent in Japan⁵⁶². The PTA correspondent in Denmark was also replaced; M.A. Andreev was appointed to replace P.N. Ostroumov⁵⁶³.

Numerous changes in the structure of the PTA, the dismissal of old employees and the hiring of new ones eventually led to an imbalance and disruptions in the agency's work. This affected the quality of news reports, which

⁵⁶⁰ Bogomolov I.K. Correspondent of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency A.I. Markov // *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*. 2021. №5. P. 156. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁶¹ Report of S.S. Raetsky to the Ministry of Finance // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 33-35. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁶² Letter from P.G. Vaskevich to A.V. Lovyagin. April 30, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 4. L. 133. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁶³ Letter from A.M. Lovyagin to the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. May 13, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 19. L. 85. (*in Russian*)

caused customer dissatisfaction and scandals. The loudest scandal occurred in March 1917. Then the PTA reported the news that finance professor I.K. Ozerov was fired from the Imperial Moscow University due to his participation in a revolutionary organization. However, I.K. Ozerov himself categorically disagreed with the way the PTA reported his dismissal. The professor contacted the agency through the media. He stated that he was not a member of the organization, and he was fired due to a personal conflict. I.K. Ozerov threatened to sue for slander, and the director of the PTA, A.V. Lovyagin, was to be the defendant. The agency's position was difficult, because it had no evidence of I.K. Ozerov's wrongness, and the process threatened the business reputation of the PTA. The agency then reached a pre-trial agreement with the professor on compensation and an official refutation⁵⁶⁴.

However, by April 1917, PTA managed to stabilize its work after reforms and a change in leadership. The resumption of regular income to the agencies helped a lot in this. Payments from the state under contracts also resumed. In March 1917, the General Staff allocated 6,128 rubles to PTA for the transmission of news that month. But it is worth noting that back in January 1917, the agency received 13,091 rubles from the General Staff for a month of work⁵⁶⁵.

Payments from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have also resumed. The Department of General Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs separately transferred 16,800 rubles to the PTA for sending news telegrams from neutral countries in January, February, March and April⁵⁶⁶.

The PTA was also helped by the explosive growth of subscribers. As after the outbreak of World War I, after the February Revolution and the change of power in society, interest in news grew. Accordingly, the demand for subscriptions

⁵⁶⁴ Den. 26.03.17. №18. P. 4. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁶⁵ Letter from M.I. Zankevich to the director of the SPA. March 15, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 9. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁶⁶ Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to A.M. Lovyagin. April 12, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 11. (*in Russian*)

to news from the PTA grew. In addition, the freedom of the press, enshrined in law on March 3, 1917, led to the opening of many new newspapers that subscribed to PTA telegrams. If on January 1, 1917, the agency had 258 subscribers, then from the beginning of March the number began to grow sharply. The number of subscribers reached its peak on March 17, 1917. As of that day, 556 newspapers, banks, other organizations and individuals had subscribed to PTA telegrams. But when the situation in the country returned to normal, interest in the news began to decline. On May 14, 1917, the PTA had 416 subscribers. At the same time, 14 newspapers and 5 banks subscribed to the telegrams in Petrograd. In Tiflis – 12 newspapers and 24 individuals. In Moscow – 24 newspapers and 10 individuals. In Kyiv – 11 newspapers⁵⁶⁷.

In May 1917, the PTA budget for the following year of 1918 was created. It was planned that the agency's income and expenses would amount to 1,855,154 rubles. It is worth noting that at first the amount indicated was 1,840,500 rubles, which was changed literally at the last moment. According to the budget, 180 employees were to work in the Central Office in Petrograd. This number was more than in 1916, which was more prosperous for the agency. The reason for the increase in staff was the increase in the number of subscribers, which at the same time brought in more profit and made it possible to support new employees. In addition, the PTA planned to maintain its network of correspondents around the world. The agency's employees worked in London, Paris, Tehran, Tevriz, Copenhagen, Rome and Beijing. There were also correspondents who formally worked in Vienna, Constantinople and Berlin, but in fact lived and worked in neighboring countries. In addition, there was no current PTA correspondent in Tokyo at the time, but the agency planned to find a new one for this position⁵⁶⁸.

⁵⁶⁷ List of PTA subscribers. May 16, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 4. L. 84-87. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁶⁸ Explanatory note by A.V. Lovyagin // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1415. L. 65. (*in Russian*)

Also in May 1917, a new charter of the PTA was approved, which consolidated all the changes made after the February Revolution⁵⁶⁹. The Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs explained the need for reforms of the PTA by the fact that the agency had previously presented information in an overly biased manner. The commission claimed that the changes would significantly improve the work of the PTA⁵⁷⁰.

In turn, the new management of the agency itself planned other ways to improve the work. For example, director A.V. Lovyagin considered a project to completely reform the network of correspondents in Russia and other countries. According to the plan, PTA planned to hire even more correspondents than it had before. They were also going to free the correspondents from bureaucratic reporting. But to implement this project, it was necessary to increase the prices for subscriptions⁵⁷¹. A more ambitious and expensive project involving PTA was also being developed. The MFA planned to create a large-scale information network in the Middle East countries based on the agency's network of correspondents. But even by rough estimates, such a project would require at least 75,000 rubles. The MFA could not allocate such funds, and the project was postponed⁵⁷².

Despite some successes, the work of the PTA after the February Revolution was not easy. The workload of the agency employees increased, and they created a committee of the union of employees. Initially, 8 people joined it. L. I. Prokofieva was elected secretary. The goal of the committee was to protect the rights of the PTA employees. In May 1917, the committee of the union of employees sent a collective letter to the Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs, in which they described the situation of the agency employees. In 1917, the PTA stopped issuing additional daily allowances to

⁵⁶⁹ Report by A.V. Lovyagin. May 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 4. L. 46-53. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷⁰ *Birzhevye vedomosti*. 06.06.17. №15170. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷¹ Letter from A.V. Lovyagin to I.V. Hessen. May 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 4. L. 81. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷² Minutes of the meeting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. May 30, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 4. L. 150. (*in Russian*)

employees. This practice was introduced under O. I. Lamkert in 1915, and was abolished due to a lack of funds. The agency employees also complained that the working day after February 1917 began at 8 am and ended at 3 am. There were cases when the Central Office of the PTA worked from 7 am to 5 am. At the same time, there were not enough people to carry out the work; often there was only one editor on duty at the post⁵⁷³.

The PTA also encountered technical difficulties. On May 10, 1917, Deputy Minister of Posts and Telegraphs N.A. Yablonovsky-Snadsky warned A.V. Lovyagin that there were difficulties with the delivery of more than 4,000 circular words per day by telegraph⁵⁷⁴.

As a result, a decision was made to increase the price of a subscription to the PTA news telegrams from June 6, 1917. At that time, the price increased by 20%⁵⁷⁵. However, to ensure the normal operation of the agency and the full payment of salaries to employees, such an increase in income was not enough. The main reason was the high inflation of that period, which made even a 20% increase insignificant. Therefore, already on June 22, 1917, the PTA management announced that the subscription price for clients was already increasing by 2 times⁵⁷⁶.

The relationship between the PTA and the Provisional Government was not easy. The new authorities reformed the agency, but then did not interfere with its work for some time. The Provisional Government even approved the experienced employee A.V. Lovyagin as the head of the PTA⁵⁷⁷. However, in June 1917, the

⁵⁷³ Letter from the Committee of the PTA Employees' Union to the temporary office of the Special Commission for the liquidation of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs. May 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 61. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷⁴ Letter from N.A. Yablonovsky-Snadzsky A.V. Lovyagin. May 10, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 113. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷⁵ Newsletter. June 6, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 152. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷⁶ Telegram from the SPA Board. June 22, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 5. L. 12. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷⁷ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency in March-July 1917 // Istoricheskiy byulleten. - 2023. Vol. 6, №6. P. 93. (*in Russian*)

Provisional Government began discussing a plan for yet another reform of the telegraph agency, which included a large rotation of employees. It was planned to fire some of the employees and hire more reliable people in their place, in the opinion of the authorities. It is worth noting that the Provisional Government warned the director of the PTA A.V. Lovyagin of its plans. In a reply letter, he reported that he was not fully coping with his duties and was ready to resign as director himself. But A.V. Lovyagin also noted that there was no suitable candidate to replace him at the PTA. In addition, he warned the Provisional Government that work in the telegraph agency required special skills, and a sharp rotation of employees and hiring people without experience would lead to disorganization⁵⁷⁸.

In turn, the Provisional Government used the newspaper «Vestnik Vremennogo Pravitelstva» as its own media outlet and public information organ. Before the February Revolution, this was the newspaper «Vestnik Vremennogo Pravitelstva», which performed the same functions for the authorities. As a source of news, «Vestnik Vremennogo Pravitelstva» used PTA telegrams, for which the state paid the agency. But in June 1917, the Provisional Government forced the telegraph agency to give «Vestnik Vremennogo Pravitelstva» a large discount on news telegrams⁵⁷⁹. The PTA also participated in other initiatives of the new authorities. For example, on the instructions of A.G. Khrushchov, the head of the Ministry of Finance, the agency was to include in its news bulletins and, thus, regularly transmit to subscribers advertisements for the state «Freedom Loan»⁵⁸⁰.

On July 3-5, 1917, mass riots and armed clashes between supporters of the Provisional Government and the RSDLP (b) took place in Petrograd. The staff of the Petrograd branch of the PTA worked actively during those days and processed a lot of news about the clashes. However, some of the news transmitted was

⁵⁷⁸ Letter from A.M. Lovyagin to the Chancellery of the Provisional Government. June 19, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 5. L. 24. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁷⁹ Vestnik Vremennogo pravitelstva. 21.06.17. №85. P. 1. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸⁰ Letter from A.G. Khrushchov to A.M. Lovyagin. July 17, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Op. 1. D. 19. L. 97. (*in Russian*)

inaccurate, for which the PTA was criticized. The newspaper *Russkaya Volya* even accused the agency of outright disinformation due to the content of news telegrams about the mood among the personnel of the Baltic Fleet on July 3-5, 1917⁵⁸¹.

After the end of the clashes in Petrograd and the arrival of A. F. Kerensky to the post of chairman, the Provisional Government decided to strengthen control over the PTA. On July 15, 1917, the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet N. S. Chkheidze informed the agency director A. V. Lovyagin about the authorities' plans to assign a commissar to the PTA. The candidate for this position was Sh. Z. Eliava, who worked for the newspaper *Pravda*, but had little experience in journalism⁵⁸². However, Sh. Z. Eliava refused to move from Vologda, where he lived and worked at the time.

Probably, the sharp increase in the workload and pressure on the PTA, as well as the general tension of the last months, led A. V. Lovyagin to the decision to resign as director of the agency⁵⁸³. On July 17, 1917, he personally submitted to the chancery of the Provisional Government a request to resign from the post of director, retain his position at the PTA and take leave. The authorities accepted A. V. Lovyagin's request on the condition that he remain director until a candidate is found to replace him⁵⁸⁴.

On July 19, 1917, the PTA adopted a new system of news distribution. Three types of subscriptions to telegrams appeared. The first was called «Bulletin» and included the most important news. The second was called «Military Bulletin» and included news from the fronts of the First World War. The third was called «Additional Bulletin» and included various city news (crime news, incidents, cultural life). These types of subscriptions were available to clients from 67 cities in Russia. The PTA divided these cities into 5 categories depending on their

⁵⁸¹ *Russkaya volya*. 15.07.17. №166. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸² Letter from N.S. Chkheidze to A.M. Lovyagin. July 15, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 30. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸³ Morev E.A. Petrograd Telegraph Agency in March-July 1917 // *Istoricheskiy byulleten*. - 2023. Vol. 6, №6. P. 94. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸⁴ *Delo naroda*. 18.07.17. №78. C. 3. (*in Russian*)

population and infrastructure development. Petrograd and Moscow belonged to the 1st category. Accordingly, small provincial cities belonged to the 5th category⁵⁸⁵.

On July 20, 1917, the press learned that S.S. Raetsky would become the new director of the PTA. S.S. Raetsky was a professional journalist, published the newspaper «Karaimskaya Zhizn» and worked for the newspapers «Birzhevye Vedomosti» and «Utro Rossii», where he was an editor from 1916 to 1917. He also headed the Printing Bureau of the Provisional Government. The Provisional Government probably counted on his experience and reliability. While the newspaper «Utro Rossii» welcomed the appointment of its former employee, many other publications reacted negatively to the news. Some newspapers that were negatively disposed towards the authorities stated that S.S. Raetsky was connected with trade and industrial circles, and that the PTA policy would remain the same under his rule. These newspapers believed that the PTA was fixated on negative news, «pictures of devastation», and that the new director was not even going to change anything⁵⁸⁶.

On July 24, 1917, S.S. Raetsky was approved for the position of head of the PTA, A.V. Lovyagin was appointed his assistant⁵⁸⁷. The latter held this post until October 1917. After the October Revolution, A.V. Lovyagin left the PTA to begin a scientific career. He taught at Leningrad State University, was the director of its library, and also wrote a number of works on the history of book publishing and bibliography. A.V. Lovyagin died in 1925⁵⁸⁸.

Having just taken up his post, S.S. Raetsky, by order of the Ministry of Finance, studied the financial and office documentation of the PTA and, based on this data, compiled a report on the agency's work for the previous year. According

⁵⁸⁵ Letter from A.M. Lovyagin to P.I. Merkulov. June 19, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸⁶ Den. 20.07.17. №114. C. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸⁷ Letter of the Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs to S.S. Raetsky. July 24, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁸⁸ Levin G.L., Teplitskaya A.V., Trofimova N.I. Domestic bibliographers and bibliographers, 1917–2014. M.: Pashkov dom, 2015. P. 322. (*in Russian*)

to the director, the PTA's income had been falling throughout 1916, and payments from the state (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Staff) for the agency's work significantly helped it. Due to the falling income, the PTA's management took measures to optimize expenses, which S.S. Raetsky reflected in his report. Based on an analysis of the agency's work in 1916, S.S. Raetsky compiled a new strategy for the PTA. In turn, the Ministry of Finance expected that the war would end successfully for Russia and planned to allocate funds for the plans of the agency's new director. In addition to improving the material and technical base, S.S. Raetsky proposed opening a new PTA branch in the United States, probably in New York. The director pointed out that the United States was a rapidly developing power entering the world arena. Therefore, the Russian state telegraph agency needs its own correspondent who will work with information from the USA⁵⁸⁹. However, this project was not implemented.

Also, S.S. Raetsky conducted an audit of the PTA, its infrastructure and equipment. Judging by the audit, the agency could directly send telegrams only to 28 cities, from which news went further. But at the same time, the PTA directly supplied news to 47 corps, divisions and other units of the army and navy, which were stationed in the specified 28 cities or near them⁵⁹⁰.

Having taken over as director, S.S. Raetsky made several changes in the agency. Under his leadership, the Commercial Department of the PTA was closed. In July 1917, there was no sharp drop in profits compared to the previous month. However, after the events of early July 1917, the department lost some clients. This is probably why the Commercial Department at the Central Department was considered unprofitable in advance and was disbanded. Some employees were fired, some were transferred to other departments. The PTA branches in Moscow, Kyiv, Odessa, Riga, and Kharkov retained their Commercial Departments. They

⁵⁸⁹ Report of S.S. Raetsky to the Ministry of Finance // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 33-35. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹⁰ List of SPA subscribers. July 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 63-67. (*in Russian*)

continued to operate in August 1917, but were also closed by the end of that month⁵⁹¹. As for the Riga branch of the PTA, after the capture of Riga by the German army on August 21, 1917, the branch was disbanded. The employees who had been evacuated in advance mostly moved to Petrograd. However, the PTA managed to maintain a network of correspondents in other countries⁵⁹².

After the July riots, the Provisional Government began to use the PTA more actively as an organ of its propaganda and as a means of calming society and, more importantly at that time, the army and navy. In order to gain the loyalty of the army and navy, the authorities decided to supply them with even more verified news. To this end, in July 1917, the Provisional Government ordered the PTA to supply the army, navy and local Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies with news telegrams free of charge (part of the costs of sending were compensated by the state). It was noted that this was being done to prevent the spread of various rumors that were harmful to order in the armed forces. According to the report of Director S.S. Raetsky, the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in 28 cities, the navies in Revel, Helsingfors and Kronstadt, and 44 army units began to receive telegrams with news free of charge⁵⁹³.

In September 1917, the PTA continued its work in this direction. Director S.S. Raetsky, on the initiative of the Provisional Government, developed a project on the Information Service in the Army. Probably, the authorities could have been prompted to this idea by the speech of L.G. Kornilov and the troops that supported him. According to the plan, individual army units were given the opportunity to transmit information about events to the PTA⁵⁹⁴. In this way, the authorities also

⁵⁹¹ Report from the PTA commercial department. July 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1654. L. 31. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹² Letter from S.S. Raetsky to the Special Commission for the Liquidation of the Main Directorate for Press Affairs. July 25, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 45. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹³ Report by Director S.S. Raetsky. July 8, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1293. L. 1-4. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹⁴ Letter from S.S. Raetsky to A.I. Verkhovsky. September 14, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1293. L. 10-12. (*in Russian*)

hoped to receive another channel of information from the troops in order to track suspicious events and mark disloyal units.

By October 20, 1917, the project of the Information Service was modified, and it became known as the Army Press Bureau. It was to include PTA employees, and the curator would be the Minister of War. It was planned that each army committee would select a correspondent from its ranks who would send news to the Bureau. This correspondent was also supposed to receive the agency's daily reports and read them to other soldiers. However, the army had a negative attitude towards this idea. The soldiers did not trust the PTA. They believed that the agency made too many mistakes, focused on negative news, and «thickened the colors». The army was also unhappy with the fact that the PTA was transmitting only war news to it. The soldiers were interested in news from all over Russia⁵⁹⁵. Ultimately, this project was not implemented due to the change of power on October 25, 1917.

It is likely that the army's opinion of the PTA was influenced by newspapers that continued to regularly criticize the agency's work. For example, the newspaper «Nizhegorodsky Listok» directly accused the PTA of anti-government rhetoric. Journalists stated that the agency's news bulletins about frequent fires in Nizhny Novgorod noted that this had not happened before the February Revolution. From this, the journalists concluded that the PTA was disloyal to the Provisional Government⁵⁹⁶. The agency was also criticized⁵⁹⁷ by the more conservative press, but for other reasons. For example, the newspaper «Utro Rossii» stated that PTA was not respectful enough about the army (i.e., it mentioned its defeats). Also criticized was the fact that PTA covered the events on the Romanian front of the war not with the help of its correspondent, but through French sources⁵⁹⁷. It is worth noting that this criticism was not entirely fair, because at that time the only active correspondent on the Romanian front was the French agency «Havas», which was

⁵⁹⁵ Golos soldata. 20.10.1917. №145. Pp. 1-2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹⁶ Nizhegorodskiy listok. 20.08.17. №140. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹⁷ Utro Rossii. 27.08.17. №208. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

friendly to the PTA. The Russian State Telegraph Agency was saving money when it cooperated with it, and did not maintain its own correspondent.

But even despite helping the authorities in matters related to the army, PTA continued to suffer from military censorship. S.S. Raetsky even held special meetings of the agency's editors, where they discussed ways to avoid conflicts with censors and blocking of messages. For this, it was proposed, among other things, to use special code words⁵⁹⁸.

Also, by order of the Provisional Government, the PTA actively participated in informing the population about the elections to the Constituent Assembly. On September 19, 1917, a government order was published. According to it, the PTA was to regularly inform subscribers about the upcoming elections through its channels, as well as separately inform district commissions and local government bodies about various changes in the voting procedure⁵⁹⁹.

But the agency itself was also interested in news about the elections to the Constituent Assembly. On October 11, 1917, the PTA managed to achieve two important results. The Commission on Affairs on the Elections to the Constituent Assembly admitted the agency's correspondent A.P. Duria to its meeting. On the same day, director S.S. Raetsky agreed that the PTA would receive the transcripts of the meetings of the Provisional Council of the Russian Republic⁶⁰⁰. This allowed the PTA to obtain information of interest to the public. In addition, the Provisional Government in September extended the deferment of mobilization for all agency employees until April 1, 1918, as specialists valuable to the state⁶⁰¹.

In September 1917, after the defeat in the Baltics and the fall of Riga, there was talk throughout the country that the front line could reach Petrograd. The Provisional Government itself understood that, given the unrest in the army, the

⁵⁹⁸ *Utro Rossii*. 31.08.17. №211. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁵⁹⁹ *Vestnik Vremennogo pravitelstva*. 19.09.1917. №156. Pp. 1-4. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰⁰ Letter from S.S. Raetsky to the Chancellery of the Provisional Government. October 11, 1917 // *RSHA*. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1294. L. 21. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰¹ *Russkaya volya*. 08.10.17. №239. P. 2. (*in Russian*)

prospect of the front being destroyed and the German troops approaching Petrograd was real. Therefore, plans began to be prepared for the evacuation of government agencies from the capital.

For the PTA, such a plan was drawn up by September 27, 1917, with the participation of the agency's management. During the evacuation of Petrograd, it was planned that at first not all employees would be transported to Moscow, but only the most valuable ones, those needed for the minimal functioning of the PTA and the performance of the necessary work. According to the plan, 44 specially selected people (management, editors, technical specialists) were to be sent to Moscow first. Employees of the Trade and Industrial Newspaper, from 6 to 10 people, were also to leave with them (the exact number was planned to be appointed when the evacuation was announced). Each evacuated employee could take with them up to 5 poods (approximately 80 kg) of various luggage. They were also allowed to take their families with them. The state paid for the move to Moscow for selected employees. In addition, evacuated employees were to receive a lifting allowance from the agency on the spot in the amount of 40 to 100 rubles⁶⁰².

It was planned to evacuate to Moscow only those who had worked in the PTA for more than 5 years. However, there were exceptions in the form of particularly valuable specialists or, for example, the director S.S. Raetsky, who had worked in the agency for several months. In the event of the evacuation of Petrograd, the branch was planned to be temporarily closed, as were the branches in the captured Lodz, Warsaw and Riga. Since they were going to evacuate 44 employees of the Central Branch, more than 130 employees would remain in Petrograd. They were planned to be laid off (possibly temporarily, until they returned to Petrograd), but they were not going to leave them without support. Employees with 1-5 years of service left in the capital would receive a salary for

⁶⁰² PTA certificate on the issue of PTA evacuation. September 27, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1635. L. 1. (*in Russian*)

the next 2 months. Employees with more than 5 years of service left - for 4 months. Employees with less than 1 year of service would receive nothing⁶⁰³. How this condition would be fulfilled in the event of the occupation of Petrograd by the Germans was not specified in the evacuation plan.

After the evacuation plan was created, its discussion continued. On October 10, 1917, Director S.S. Raetsky indicated in correspondence to V.D. Nabokov that the evacuation of the agency should be joint with the government, because the PTA was its main information organ. In addition, S.S. Raetsky asked that in Moscow the PTA receive premises near the telegraph station for its own use for the convenience of work⁶⁰⁴.

Already on October 12, 1917, the PTA evacuation project was approved and sent to the Specially Authorized Person for the Unloading of Petrograd, who was in charge of the evacuation of the city. In addition, the issue of the placement of the Central Department of the agency was temporarily resolved. It was planned that the Central Department would occupy the premises of the Moscow Department, and the employees of the latter would also participate in the work⁶⁰⁵.

At the same time, the fate of the Central Department equipment was being discussed in the PTA. Some employees and managers suggested selling the equipment immediately in order to get money for it before the probable fall of the city. In addition, a case of theft from the department was recorded. The issue was resolved by S.S. Raetsky, who issued a ban on the sale of equipment from the Central Department, despite the preparations for evacuation and temporary closure⁶⁰⁶.

⁶⁰³ PTA certificate on the issue of PTA evacuation. September 27, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1635. L. 1. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰⁴ Letter from S.S. Raetsky to V.D. Nabokov. October 10, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1219. L. 58-59. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰⁵ Letter from S.S. Raetsky to the Special Representative for the Unloading of Petrograd. October 12, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 136. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰⁶ Order of the Director of the Agency. October 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1219. L. 47. (*in Russian*)

On October 7, 1917, the Department of General Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid the PTA 22,500 rubles for the forwarding of news telegrams from neutral countries for August, September and October⁶⁰⁷. This payment of October 7, 1917, was the last in the history of the PTA. Other income was received unevenly, late or did not arrive at the agency at all.

The plans for the evacuation of the Central Department, their preparation and discussion were known to the PTA employees and caused disorganization of the work. These sentiments were transmitted to correspondents across the country and gradually turned into rumors about the complete closure of the agency. In early October 1917, correspondents working in the southwestern regions of Russia gradually ceased their work: in Nikolaev, Yekaterinoslav and some others. Departments in Odessa and Kyiv slowed down their work, there were not enough employees. The work of the Kyiv department was complicated by the political crisis associated with the creation of the Central Rada. However, the head of the department S. T. Divin, despite everything, transmitted news to Petrograd about the most significant events in Kyiv⁶⁰⁸.

In addition, in October 1917, significant problems began to arise in the Russian telegraph network. As the PTA management was informed, some telegraph lines began to work much worse. As a result, telegrams were delayed or did not reach their addressees at all⁶⁰⁹.

Despite these circumstances, work in the Central Department continued. On October 23, 1917, the PTA paid its employee E.S. Fishtenberg a salary for reading foreign newspapers and compiling short reviews of them⁶¹⁰. This was the last

⁶⁰⁷ Letter from the Chancellery of the Department of General Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Director of the SPA. October 7, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1623. L. 43. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰⁸ Telegram from Altshuler to Blank. October 11, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1219. L. 44. (*in Russian*)

⁶⁰⁹ Telegram from Lebedev to the SPA Board. October 1, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 5. L. 131. (*in Russian*)

⁶¹⁰ Extract on payment of remuneration to E.S. Fikhtengolts. October 23, 1917 // RSHA. F. 1358. Inv. 1. D. 1219. L. 72. (*in Russian*)

payment the agency made to its employees before the events of October 24-25, 1917.

On October 24 (November 6), 1917, open clashes began in Petrograd between the MRC (Military Revolutionary Committee), which was controlled by the Bolsheviks, and the Provisional Government. After the Provisional Government seized the printing house of the Bolshevik newspaper *Rabochy Put*, a meeting of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(b) was held. At it, the party leadership agreed that the Provisional Government was going to defeat the MRC and the Bolsheviks in particular by force. The Central Committee ordered the plan to seize power in Petrograd, which included the seizure of important city institutions. One of the most important was named as the PTA building at 15 Pochtamtskaya Street. It was ordered to be seized first. At the same time, the agency continued its work. For example, one of the last telegrams from the PTA before the Bolsheviks seized it was a message about unrest in Kineshma.

At 17:00, the first detachment of the VRK, consisting of soldiers from the Kexholm Regiment, captured the city telegraph office. Only 4 hours later, at 21:00, did the second detachment enter the PTA building. These were 12 sailors loyal to the Bolsheviks, led by L.N. Stark. His candidacy for the post of commander of this detachment was not accidental. L.N. Stark was an experienced journalist, and after the February Revolution, he headed the Bolshevik newspaper *Volna* in Helsinki. For these services, in 1917 he was appointed commissar of the information agency of the RSDLP(b)⁶¹¹.

The seizure of the PTA buildings was bloodless, the employees had no intention of fighting armed sailors. Control over the most important information dissemination hub passed to the Bolsheviks. L.N. Stark remained in the PTA building and began to lead the employees. Then he began to implement the next part of the Bolshevik plan. L.N. Stark sent a telegram from the PTA building to

⁶¹¹ Ryabinsky K.S. *Revolution 1917. October. Chronicle of events*. M.: Centrpoligraf, 2017. P. 276. (*in Russian*)

Kronstadt with an order to send ships of the Baltic Fleet to Petrograd, on which there were sailors who supported the Bolsheviks. A telegram with code words was also sent to Helsingfors to inform local supporters of the Bolsheviks about the uprising in Petrograd and to request reinforcements. After this, L.N. Stark approved and edited the first telegraph messages about the coup in Russia, which were sent to news agencies in other countries⁶¹².

After the Bolsheviks finally came to power, L.N. Stark remained in charge of the PTA and replaced the former employees of the agency with employees of the RSDLP(b) information agency loyal to the cause of the revolution. In fact, the RSDLP(b) information agency replaced the PTA, taking over all the equipment and infrastructure of the latter⁶¹³. In turn, the previous director of the PTA, S.S. Raetsky, began to cooperate with the new government. After his resignation, he moved to Moscow and worked in the Commission for the Study of the History of the Labor and Trade Union Movement under the Moscow Provincial Council of Trade Unions until his death in 1925 as a result of an accident⁶¹⁴.

The last remaining foreign correspondents of the PTA also lost their jobs on October 25, 1917. One of them was the correspondent in Paris, P.N. Apostol. He was the most experienced foreign correspondent of the PTA, who had worked in one place longer than anyone else, starting in 1904, as soon as this position became available. After October 25, 1917, P.N. Apostol remained in France and continued teaching and writing articles, which he did in parallel with his work at the telegraph agency. P.N. Apostol's hobby was collecting rare books, and by the 1920s he had gathered a circle of people around him, mainly Russian émigrés.

In 1924, they founded the «Society of Friends of the Russian Book». Among its members was, for example, the Russian artist and writer A.N. Benois. It was engaged in the search for and preservation of rare and valuable books in Russian,

⁶¹² Ryabinsky K.S. Revolution 1917. October. Chronicle of events. P. 286. (*in Russian*)

⁶¹³ Certificate of the PTA. November 1917 // SARF. F. R391. Inv. 13. D. 1. L. 2. (*in Russian*)

⁶¹⁴ Vozrozhdenie. 25.08.1925. № 84. P. 3. (*in Russian*)

as well as educational activities. The organization published its own magazine, held public lectures, which were conducted, among others, by P.N. Apostol. The «Society» created a large library, based on the materials from which P.N. Apostol published several scientific works. P.N. Apostol himself was one of the leaders of the «Society» and in 1931 he officially headed it. But in 1942, during the occupation of Paris by German troops, the activities of the «Society» were prohibited by the occupation authorities, and it was dissolved. The library of the «Society» was confiscated and taken to Germany (it is worth noting that these books in 1945 became trophies of the Soviet troops and were eventually transferred to the State Library of the USSR). P.N. Apostol and his wife had Jewish roots, because of which they were arrested in 1942 and died in the Auschwitz concentration camp (according to another version – in the Drancy)⁶¹⁵.

Former SPTA correspondent in Constantinople, and since 1914 - in Romania, V.G. Yanchevetsky in October 1917 categorically did not accept the new government in Russia and literally at the same time joined the organization of Russian officers who commanded the units that fought on the territory of Romania against the armies of Germany and Austria-Hungary. This organization soon helped the Romanian authorities suppress the uprising of individual units of the Russian army in support of the Bolsheviks. At the same time, V.G. Yanchevetsky continued to write articles and collect news, he even opened a new newspaper «Respublikanets». V.G. Yanchevetsky did not stay in Romania, but decided to return to Russia as part of the volunteer corps of M.G. Drozdovsky and fight against the Bolshevik government. In 1918, he arrived in Samara, where he began publishing the newspaper «Vperyod», and then, together with the editorial board, moved to Omsk. By the end of the Civil War, he moved to Tuva.

V.G. Yanchevetsky was unable to leave the country, but thanks to the help of the Tuvan authorities, he received a de facto pardon for his service to the anti-

⁶¹⁵ Telitsyn V.L. P.N. Apostol and the «Society of Friends of the Russian Book in Paris» // *Novyy istoricheskiy vestnik*. 2001. №3. Pp. 67-74. (in Russian)

Bolshevik forces. He then worked as a teacher, economist, agent of the State Bank, and journalist in Tuva, Siberia, and the Uzbek SSR. In 1928, V.G. Yanchevetsky was able to move to Moscow, where he began writing. Under the pseudonym «Vasily Yan», he published many historical novels («Genghis Khan», «Batu», «To the Last Sea», and others), which were very popular. In 1942, V.G. Yanchevetsky received the Stalin Prize in Literature and Arts for his works. He died in 1954⁶¹⁶.

On October 28 (November 10), 1917, «Newspaper of the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government», associated with the Council of People's Commissars, began to be published in Russia. Its first editor was P.A. Krasikov. The main section of the newspaper was «Government Actions», which published decrees, orders, and instructions sent through the PTA. On November 18 (December 1), 1917, a decree of the Council of People's Commissars was issued, according to which the PTA was officially designated the central information organ of the Council of People's Commissars. All local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies were to elect special employees to communicate with the PTA. The duties of these liaisons were to receive telegrams with news from the PTA, and then publish them in local newspapers. All this led to the emergence of new newspapers oriented toward the new government and using PTA telegrams. At the beginning of 1918, there were already 84 newspapers and 753 magazines published by the committees of the RSDLP(b) and local government bodies⁶¹⁷.

In turn, many of the newspapers with which the PTA had collaborated before October 24 (November 6), 1917, did not accept the new government and tried not to work with the updated telegraph agency. On October 26 (November 9), 1917, the Council of People's Commissars adopted the «Decree on the Press», according to which the authorities were given the opportunity to close those newspapers that

⁶¹⁶ Prosvetov I.V. Ten Lives of Vasily Yan: White Guard Who Was Awarded by Stalin. M.: Centrpoligraf, 2017. P. 270. (*in Russian*)

⁶¹⁷ Ryabinsky K.S. Revolution 1917. October. Chronicle of events. P. 550. (*in Russian*)

opposed the Bolsheviks. By the end of 1917, more than 120 newspapers that supported the Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, Trudoviks, Anarchists and other parties were closed. Some of them tried to return to the market and began to be published under different names. For example, the newspaper «Rech» after its closure returned under the name «Nasha Rech», and then changed its name several more times. In response to this, on January 28, 1918, the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Press was created, which investigated the activities of newspapers hostile to the new government. In March-April 1918, the Revolutionary Press Tribunal held trials of these newspapers, which were eventually closed down⁶¹⁸.

In early March 1918, the PTA, following the highest authorities, moved to Moscow, which became the new capital of Russia. The agency was then headed by L.N. Stark⁶¹⁹. On September 17, 1918, by decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the PTA was merged with the Printing Bureau of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The latter had previously worked in parallel with the PTA and transmitted information about government actions to newspapers. The new structure was to become an instrument of the authorities' information policy and was called the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA). L.N. Stark was appointed commissioner (head) of ROSTA, and the responsible head was member of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee L.S. Sosnovsky (it is worth adding that already in April 1919, L.N. Stark and L.S. Sosnovsky left their posts in ROSTA, and the agency was headed by journalist P.M. Kerzhentsev)⁶²⁰. At that moment, the history of the St. Petersburg (Petrograd) Telegraph Agency, which began in 1904, de jure ended. Although de facto it ended on October 25 (November 7), 1917, and the continuity of the updated PTA from the pre-revolutionary one can be considered somewhat controversial.

⁶¹⁸ Kuznetsov I.V. History of Russian Journalism (1917–2000). Study Guide. M.: Flinta, Nauka, 2002. P. 90. (*in Russian*)

⁶¹⁹ Letter from L.N. Stark. February 1918 // SARF. F. R391. Inv. 1. D. 1. L. 3. (*in Russian*)

⁶²⁰ Kuznetsov I.V. History of Russian Journalism (1917–2000). Study Guide. P. 90. (*in Russian*)

Conclusion

The invention of the telegraph in the mid-19th century and the subsequent development of telegraph networks led to a sharp increase in the volume and speed of information transfer. Information (telegraph) agencies began to be created to process and transmit it. The first telegraph agencies in the world were «Havas» (France), «Reuters» (Britain) and «Wolf» (Germany); they divided almost the entire world information market between them. In turn, private telegraph agencies were created in Russia much later, because of this they were unable to restrain the expansion of developed foreign agencies into the Russian market. As a result, the largest Russian agency RTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) became dependent on the Wolf agency. Thus, the German company controlled what news came from Europe to Russia, and what news was sent in the opposite direction. This was a problem for Russia. It had to be solved, but exclusively by means of relatively fair competition, ousting the dependent agency from the market.

At the same time, Russian government agencies did not remain aloof from the development of the telegraph and also began to use it to collect information. The Ministry of Finance was the most active in this, as due to the specific nature of its work it needed to process large volumes of financial information both from Russia and from other countries. By the beginning of the 20th century, the structures of this ministry actually had their own telegraph agency with their own correspondents and employees who were engaged in collecting, processing and sending economic and financial news.

The volume of such work grew, and in 1902, Finance Minister S.Y. Witte officially created a separate Trade and Telegraph Agency (TTA) within the Ministry of Finance. It was supposed to collect news, process it and forward it to clients (newspapers and government agencies) that had purchased a subscription. The creation of TTA had the following goals: 1) Prompt and reliable supply of government agencies with information (which could only be ensured by a special structure); 2) Transmission of news to newspapers in Russia and other countries in

an interpretation favorable to the state; 3) Ensuring information security for Russia through control of the information and news market, where before the creation of TTA the leader was RTA, partially controlled by the German agency «Wolf»; 4) Hiring correspondents who could carry out confidential assignments for Russian government agencies in other countries.

Initially, it was planned that TTA would continue to deal exclusively with economic and financial news. However, by 1904, TTA's sphere of interests also included political and city news, as there was demand for them from customers. The scale of the agency's work continued to grow, and therefore it was decided to transform the Trade and Telegraph Agency (TTA) into the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency (SPTA), which officially dealt with a wide range of news. In addition, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs were allowed to manage the updated agency in exchange for assistance from these ministries to the employees of SPTA.

In the second half of the 1900s, SPTA under directors S.S. Fedorov and A.A. Girs achieved its first successes. A network of its branches was created in the largest cities of Russia, a special branch appeared under the State Duma, special correspondents were hired in other countries. In addition, SPTA displaced RTA and became the largest agency in Russia, thus achieving one of its main goals. Minister of Finance V.N. Kokovtsov and Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolsky played a major role in the affairs of SPTA.

However, the agency's establishment was not without its difficulties. Government agencies had no experience in creating and managing their own telegraph agency, and its management often had to act by trial and error. By the end of the 1900s, work methods for correspondents and departments had already been created, and reporting and audit mechanisms had been formalized. In addition, some issues (especially the hiring of special correspondents) were subject to government requirements, which rather harmed the agency's work. Also, in the second half of the 1900s, SPTA began to have financial problems. The agency was

a state enterprise. It belonged to the state, but it operated on a self-sufficiency principle. However, by the end of the 1900s, expenses exceeded income, which required cost optimization and led to a reduction in the correspondent network in other countries.

Then, in the late 1900s, Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin, who was interested in its prospects, got involved in the agency's affairs. In late 1909, he initiated the transfer of SPTA to the management of the Council of Ministers and the reform of the agency. P.A. Stolypin also ensured an increase in state subsidies to the agency (however, they continued to make up a smaller part of the income). The new director was O.I. Lamkert, who optimized expenses and changed the management structure. The reforms were successful. Under O.I. Lamkert, SPTA's income increased, which allowed investing in the development of infrastructure and a network of correspondents.

In 1914, after the outbreak of World War I, the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency (SPTA) was renamed the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (PTA). Some correspondents began reporting news from the front, and individual employees were mobilized into the active army. Also, due to the army abandoning Lodz and Warsaw, local branches of the agency were closed. Despite the difficulties, the PTA was able to operate stably even during the war. However, the social upheavals of 1917 and frequent changes of directors in 1916-1917 led to an imbalance in the agency's work and financial difficulties. The PTA retained its status and most of its employees under the Provisional Government. However, after the RSDLP (b) came to power on October 25 (November 7), 1917, the PTA was completely reformed and its personnel were replaced. However, all the infrastructure, equipment, and documented experience were transferred to the new agency. The legacy of SPTA (TTA, PTA) in the future served the telegraph agencies of the USSR (ROSTA and TASS).

Thus, the activities of SPTA (TTA, PTA) in 1902-1917 can be called successful. The agency fulfilled all the tasks set before it, although it did not avoid

difficulties. SPTA began to promptly supply information to Russia and transmit it from it, and in the interpretation required by the state. Also, the agency's correspondents were able to carry out confidential assignments, such as A.I. Markov, V.P. Svatkovsky and P.N. Apostol. Finally, SPTA ensured the information independence and security of Russia, displacing agencies associated with other countries. SPTA is an example of a successful state company that worked on the principle of self-sufficiency and was practically independent of state subsidies.

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Application 1

List of heads of regional branches of SPTA

Branch	Head	Years of work
Moscow	I.V. Polyakov	1903-1915
	S.A. Konzevich	1915-1917
Kyiv	I.V. Polyakov	1903
	Z.V. Polyakov	1903-1906
	S.A. Belyavsky	1906-1907
	S.T. Divin	1907-1917
Riga	F.I. Mettus	1903-1905, 1907-1917
	E.B. Vagenheim	1905-1907
Kharkov	G.L. Okulich-Kazarin	1903-1917
Warsaw	S.A. Kempner	1904-1906
	T.B. Shemplinsky	1906-1909
	P.A. Konzevich	1909-1915
Lodz	I.S. Klyuchinsky	1904-1910
	S.A. Konzevich	1910-1914
Odessa	Y.S. Balaban	1905-1908
	N.A. Osetrov	1908-1917
Tiflis	K.I. Kalantarov	1905-1914
	A.I. Kalantarov	1914-1917
Revel	A.A. Rikhter	1905-1911
	G.E. Keller	1911-1917
Vilno	S.T. Divin	1906-1907
	A.A. Belikov	1907-1915

Application 2

Main correspondent posts of SPTA

City	Correspondent	Years of work
Berlin	G.B. Iollos	1904-1905
	A.I. Markov	1906-1917
Paris	P.N. Apostol	1905-1917
Rome	G. Bava	1903-1904
	K. Belin	1907-1908
	K.M. Ketov	1912-1917
Vienna	A.G. Fikhtengolz	1905-1908
	V.P. Svatkovskiy	1908-1917
Belgrad	K. Khristich	1904-1907
	I.G. Mamulov	1911-1917
Constantinople	I.N. Perozio	1904-1905
	A. Petropulo	1905-1907
	F.A. Dukhovetsky	1907-1913
	V.G. Yanchevetsky	1913-1917
London	Y.G. Kamensky	1905-1907
	A.A. Rikhter	1911
	A.V. Lyarsky	1912
	F.A. Dukhovetsky	1913-1915, 1915-1917
	K.D. Dukhovetskaya	1915
Tokyo	F.A. Pozdeev	1906
	G.T. Nazarov	1911-1917
	P.G. Vaskevich	1917
Beijing	N. Savinsky	1906-1908
	Y.Y. Brandt	1911-1917
Shanghai	L.V. Goyer	1906-1917