Diplomats’ Wives and the Foreign Ministry in Late Imperial Russia, in Four Portraits

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ABSTRACT
The infrequent publications about women’s agency in European diplomacy have concerned themselves with either the early modern age or the post-World War I period, but women remain virtually absent from the diplomatic history of the long nineteenth century. To determine their place in the European political world of this period, this article examines the experiences of four Russian diplomats’ wives. The biographical approach reveals contradictions in patriarchal discourse: it required a diplomat’s wife to be worthy of her role as a representative of the Russian Empire, yet effectively dismissed her from politics. From this another contradiction ensued: as a diplomat’s wife played no political role, the ministry turned a blind eye if her actions challenged traditional social and gender norms, even when such actions led to the neglect of her duties as her husband’s helpmeet.

KEYWORDS: diplomats’ wives, divorce, gender, Imperial Foreign Ministry, marriage, “old diplomacy”, Russian Empire

It is still a question whether . . . Princess Lieven could today have made for herself a position such as the one she enjoyed in London and in Paris. Society was different then . . .

—Count Paul Vassili, Behind the Veil at the Russian Court (1913)

In the past two decades, gender historians searching for women’s contributions to European international relations have only discovered them at the two chronological extremes of diplomatic history: in the early modern period, when women occasionally intervened in interstate politics (usually as a relative of a male ruler), and in the post-World War I era, when women were first admitted as diplomats into foreign ministries. The eighteenth century produced only two women who, in the eyes of their biographers, qualified as diplomatic agents: Mme. de Stael (1766–1817) and Lady
Emma Hamilton (1765–1815); the nineteenth boasts only one: the Russian Princess Darya Lieven (1784–1857), who combined the status, political acumen, and personality that enabled her for decades to triumph over patriarchy in diplomacy and to be considered by many of her contemporaries a better diplomat than her husband, the ambassador. But Lieven stands alone at the end of an era: in 1913 Catherine Radziwill, writing under the alias “Count Paul Vassili” concluded that no other woman could have emulated Princess Lieven in the late nineteenth century.

Indeed, starting with the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), the birth of a professional diplomatic community in the modern sense (with career diplomats in permanent missions), the growing institutionalization of the Imperial Russian bureaucracy gradually curtailed amateurs’ agency in the political sphere. Thus, the only category of women that remained in the proximity of international politics were diplomats’ spouses. As “incorporated wives,” to use K. Reynolds’s term, they had specific functions and were expected to conform to certain criteria set by the Foreign Ministry.

This article sets the Russian Imperial Foreign Ministry’s stated expectations regarding diplomats’ wives against the experiences of four women in the historical landscape of great power diplomacy. It focuses on the last forty years of the Russian Empire, because female diplomats appeared after the Great War. The four women considered here lived at the end of the line in more than one sense: the final decades of the “old diplomacy” and the looming eclipse of Imperial Russia, when Russian women en masse ceased to be their husbands’ helpmeets and joined the working classes.

This article draws on the personal and official correspondence of diplomats and their wives, as well as their memoirs and a novel written by one of the women. The letters reproduce historically specific stereotypes, and memoirs published by two imperial diplomats’ daughters when they were over fifty review the gender and social stereotypes that prevailed before 1914. Non-Russian primary sources provide context, since the diplomatic corps functioned by the same conventions everywhere. The sources’ gender-specific content provides a new lens for examining the old diplomacy and reveals the personal strategies that women used within the social sphere to underpin or undermine gender boundaries.

**Theory and Practice in the Lives of Diplomatic Wives**

In the so-called “old diplomacy” of the long nineteenth century, political interactions frequently took place in the context of social life and thus were shaped by its conventions. One such convention required married men to appear in society accompanied by their wives, so embassy ladies occupied an important place in the European diplomatic corps, assuming certain clearly defined functions as “vehicles of the Empire.” Diplomats’ political tasks—explaining and defending their government’s policies, preparing the ground for initiatives, negotiating and reducing friction—were difficult without creating an attractive and imposing image of their nation. They needed to establish friendly relations with local officials and society, and their public image—and that of their family—advanced or hindered their professional task.
Russian diplomats could not get married without ministerial authorization; to obtain it they provided information about the family, social, and financial status of their brides that went into the men’s service files after the marriage had been authorized. The three main criteria for a diplomat’s wife—family, class, and fortune—indicated the ministry’s expectations of a female imperial agent.

A pedigree was essential to be accepted into the hierarchical aristocratic society, and Nicholas II’s foreign minister Sergey Sazonov (1910–1916) denied several diplomats the authorization to marry because of their fiancées’ unsuitable social background. For example, in 1911 Sazonov’s chief of the cabinet wrote to a colleague at the Berlin embassy: “you asked for Meck . . . but since a few days ago he does not fill your requirements, as he married a typist from the II Department and she will never do for an embassy lady.” Nor did a gentlewoman always fill the requirements. As a veteran diplomat suggested: “we have Baron Rosen, an excellent, intelligent, experienced ambassador.” And immediately he pointed out his weak spot: his wife “is dull and frumpish, while in Vienna now we need to … make friends with society.” In contrast, the greatest asset of Aleksandr Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London (1902–1916), appeared to be his and his wife’s ability to fit perfectly into London high society.

A diplomat’s wife’s nationality did not matter until Europe split into two opposing blocs in the last decade of the nineteenth century; besides, after marriage women automatically assumed their husbands’ nationality. If his fiancée was a foreign subject, a diplomat simply had to add her signed promissory note to dispose of foreign real estate in her possession to the other papers he submitted. Later, intensifying political rivalries in Europe made foreign wives inconvenient for diplomats, but men who spent most of their adult lives abroad often found wives in the countries where they were posted. It was an unwritten rule in European chancelleries, however, that a diplomat could not marry a woman from a country to which he was accredited, a diplomat married to a foreigner would not normally be posted to his wife’s homeland, where her circle’s influence might become an obstacle to his professional tasks, or to any country where the Russian Empire and his wife’s homeland had rival interests. A Russian diplomat who married an Austro-Hungarian subject, for example, was transferred from Belgrade to Morocco.

Embassy ladies were expected to be sociable and to win friends, two talents that were paramount for any upper-class woman. When the teenage daughter of the Russian minister in Washington had to act as the mission’s hostess in 1898, she thought she was well prepared:

I can discuss politics—or at least listen intelligently. I have knowledge of the vintage of wines. I am learning to recognize excellence in gems. I can make graceful little speeches in Russian, French, German, English, Chinese, and Italian. I have been thoroughly coached in protocol, it holds no terrors for me, and I know the significance of every European title, the lineage of all the great families. I can tell you the size of our army, the number and size of the ships in our fleet, I can recite the history of Russia from the first Rurik.
The above list is a good indication of what the priorities were for an embassy lady: fluency in a lingua franca, French, and an ability for small talk. Speaking poor French at once undermined a woman’s social standing, indicating that she had not come from an aristocratic family, which were usually Francophone. Indeed, most upper-class Russian women spoke fluent French, and many also knew another European language or two. Their problem was often the reverse: they knew little Russian. Command of Russian was an embarrassing problem in the Russian Foreign Ministry, for Russian aristocracy often had limited use for it. Indeed, popular opinion attributed Russian foreign policy failures to the insufficient patriotism of the diplomats, whose cosmopolitan families often did not even speak Russian. Most men at the ministry learned Russian at schools and universities even if it never became their first language, but women, usually brought up by French and English nannies and governesses, hardly knew their native language. The ambassador to Britain, Count Aleksandr Benckendorff, kindly advised his wife on the eve of a difficult discussion with her daughter-in-law: “You should talk to her in French, Russian leaves you at a terrible disadvantage.”

The ambassadress was part of the resplendent picture that an embassy represented; at court functions Russian ambassadresses appeared in traditional Russian court costume and looked “like exotic queens.” It was a convenient solution, like military officers’ uniforms. But the ambassadresses still needed to display new gowns and expensive jewelry at balls, for not dressing as prescribed was considered disrespectful; it could embitter relations between the mission and local society, and reflect poorly on Russia’s prestige. Here a diplomatic wife’s dowry helped. In general terms, a wealthy wife created a springboard for her husband’s social and professional success by allowing him to participate in social life. The more active and ambitious a diplomat, the more personal resources he had to invest. Wealthy ambassadors added their own money to the allowance for decorating and furnishing the state rooms at the embassy; their receptions were particularly resplendent and donations to local charities generous.

In addition, an ambitious diplomat’s wife had to be physically fit and healthy. German Chancellor von Bismarck explained why neither of his preferred candidates could be posted to Russia: “Schulenburg and Kanitz suffer from their wives’ ill health; indeed, for diplomats’ wives both ladies are sickly to an unacceptable degree.”

As the Empire’s “vehicles,” embassy wives assumed specific tasks in foreign capitals. In today’s terms these might be described as “operating within female networks of sociability;” conversing, writing and answering letters, receiving and paying visits, and giving and receiving gifts, in short, behaving like all members of the elite. Women who married diplomats as a rule enjoyed this highly social lifestyle, or at least took it for granted. Still, occasionally some refused to become “incorporated,” such as Princess Praskovia Aleksandrovna Urusova, the wife of the ambassador to France in 1897–1904: “The ambassador’s eccentric wife . . . was away from this fête, as she usually was from Embassy affairs. She lived in the Embassy pretty much her own life . . . She detested society.” The princess was a great heiress, so despite her reputed eccentricity (she spent days wandering in Parisian streets dressed as a man, according to the same source) her wealth helped Lev Urusov maintain the embassy in style. Both the Russian and Austro-Hungarian foreign ministries apparently con-
Biden's his wife’s lifestyle, for Urusov finished his long career as ambassador in the much-coveted Vienna.

When a new ambassador arrived at his posting, his wife was officially presented to the wives of all the heads of legations on their official days. Next, she called on all the members of the diplomatic corps, and from that moment she would regularly issue and receive dozens of invitations, which ensured that she circulated within diplomatic circles. In addition, she had to enter the local grand monde, just as her husband would join the exclusive men’s clubs. This meant even more invitations sent out and received. She was also presented to the local ruler’s consort and would be included in all the invitations issued by the court to the Russian mission. The Russian ambassadress then set her own official day of the week and waited. The popularity of her “at-homes” signaled her husband’s professional success and, to a lesser degree, her talent for making friends.

The ambassadress also attended a certain number of theatre performances and gala concerts to show polite interest in local cultural life and remain in touch with the interests of her acquaintances. She certainly had to be seen at the Russian concerts and performances when touring companies came. Whenever a Russian royal visited, the minister and his wife were to organize excursions and entertainment for them every day of their stay.

The ambassadress hosted the embassy luncheons, informal teas, weekly at-homes, receptions, and dinners. As a rule, the Russian embassy gave ten official dinners a year, in which everybody was to be included and no one could be offended by the wrong seating. This was the ambassadress’s exclusive domain. All this made for a busy life. Even in tiny Montenegro the Russian minister’s wife had many days like this: 1 p.m.—a Te Deum in honor of the Princess of Baden’s birthday; 2 p.m.—court lunch; 3 p.m.—the Russian headmistress of the girls’ institute introduced at the court; 4 p.m.—the Austrian minister’s wife introduced at the court with all the ladies of the diplomatic corps present. Then she came home, but at 7 returned to the court to stay until midnight at a dinner in honor of the Turkish and French ministers.

To maintain the tradition of a legation as a happy family, the ambassador’s wife also needed to befriend the staff. A married ambassador routinely issued a standing invitation to lunch to the bachelor secretaries and attachés. In the capitals with considerable Russian colonies, like Paris or Berlin, the ambassadress organized the Russian Orthodox New Year and Easter celebrations for her countrymen. She also had to organize and chair patriotic charitable drives whenever there was a national calamity in Russia. The one thing that embassy wives of the era were spared were “unpaid labor” duties, like cooking and decorating the embassy for receptions, which is what embassy wives were expected to do in the twentieth century. Vast numbers of domestic servants took care of the household work and embassy maintenance that later fell to the wives of junior diplomats.

In her behavior and actions, an embassy lady had to observe local laws, customs, and regulations meticulously, but at the same time remain a symbol of Russia. She went through “selective adaptation”: to flatter local society she adopted some of its customs and tastes, yet she had to remain Russian to those who visited the embassy and to the embassy staff. When a character in a contemporary French comedy de-
clared: “An ambassadress of France cannot in all decency flirt with a foreign colleague of her husband’s or with a prince of the [local] ruling family,” the audience laughed, but it was essentially true: an ambassadress was expected to demonstrate if not marital faithfulness, then patriotism in all instances.

Restrictions on a diplomatic wife’s existence, like privileges, carried over from her husband’s position. She could not belong to associations, or meet individuals who were not welcome at the embassy. In all her dealings with the world outside the diplomatic mission she had to follow or seek the ambassador’s instructions. After 1914, ambassadresses were discouraged from forming friendships with anyone outside the embassy, including other embassy wives, as this could cause envy and lead to accusations of unfair practices. This was not the case in the late nineteenth century, when diplomats often had relatives in all European countries; diplomatic staff and their families belonged in the same peer society, often with preexisting family and friendly ties.

Still, the sheer number of people that an ambassadress met and diplomats’ frequent transfers ruled out close friendship, hence the definition in the jocular Diplomat’s Alphabet of the time: “Friends—ships that pass in the night,” “Colleagues—a matter of place and time only.” A diplomat’s daughter explained:

Diplomats are like gypsies; every four or five years they are back on the road. They have no stable home, no permanent connections, no constant friends, only friends they acquire for a short time and then lose, without being allowed to feel too much regret.

Diplomatic wives spent most of their lives away from their families and friends, sometimes in unhealthy climates. Posts in out-of-the-way places like Montevideo, Uruguay, offered few opportunities for promotion; once a diplomat got there, he might be forgotten by his chiefs for years, for Russia had no interests there. So diplomats did their best to be transferred to posts nearer Russia and at the center of international politics. If a man was reluctant to press his case, or had already been rebuffed, an energetic wife might raise the issue with his superiors, relying on personal connections. For example, Natalya Peterson wrote to the chief of the cabinet, a friend of her brother’s:

When I spoke to you of London and Paris I meant precisely these two posts because they are always much solicited and only go to the special favorites . . . Among the posts in the East, I would consider it fortunate if we could get Cairo because it is so well paid . . . As for Iswolsky’s “diplomatic” criteria I certainly bow to them but I believe that they are in an absolute contradiction with the other universal criterion (The right man in the right place). I assure you that my husband would be much more useful as a minister resident than at a small German court.

Diplomats’ daughters stayed at their mothers’ sides until they married, but sons were sent to Russia when they reached school age. When finally the ambassador retired, the couple returned to Russia, often to find that they had become strangers in their native country and, to some extent, in their family. Only a woman’s expensive and exhaust-
ing shuttling between her husband’s post and Russia—another wifely duty—and intensive correspondence could slow the inevitable estrangement.

In 1914, an American journalist asserted that diplomats’ wives led “a full, rich and varied life, actively combining the social and intellectual elements,” knew “the great affairs, the humor and the humors of the great,” and could “fit in everywhere and yet . . . be always oneself.”34 The obligations of a diplomatic marriage and the restrictions under which a diplomat’s wife functioned severely curtailed her chances of “being oneself.” Regarding “the great affairs,” few diplomats’ wives knew them. Those who had a good writing hand and knew Russian well enough sometimes helped their husbands by making clean copies of their reports,35 although there is no evidence that wives wrote or copied confidential communications. As for gathering information through their social contacts, three topics were taboo for a diplomatic wife: current politics, the local royal family, and gossip.36

In the 1840s, Maria Kalergis, a celebrated beauty and amateur pianist of European fame, was known to pass political information on to her uncle, the Russian Chancellor Karl Nesselrode, and so “was classed, like Princess Lieven, in the highest category of informants, albeit without the excuse of being an ambassadress.”37 This phrase implies several things: gathering information in order to pass it on was a disreputable occupation; an ambassadress’s status was not a very good excuse; and even Lieven was considered only an informant, not a political player, therefore undeserving of the respect that professional diplomats enjoyed. Self-esteem thus limited women’s active participation in their husbands’ tasks in the only role that the patriarchal narrative conceded to them: information gathering. When a successful ambassadress was rewarded with a reputation of “a real grande dame by birth, by upbringing and by courteous manners,”38 the compliment absolutely excluded information gathering.

The four women presented here married five Russian diplomats (one woman was married twice) with the Foreign Ministry’s blessing because they met its requirements. Two cases show a successful adherence to the gender and social norms of the time, while the other two illustrate intentional and unintentional undermining of expectations, because the women remained their own “undiplomatic” selves, but with no noticeable impact on their husbands’ careers.

1. A Feminine Woman

I begin with a minister’s wife: Margarita (more frequently, Marguerite, as she spent her life in Francophone circles) Karlovna Iswolsky, neé Toll (1862–1942) was a Russian diplomat’s child, and hers was a classic nineteenth-century marriage. The young diplomat Aleksandr Iswolsky (1856–1919), told by his doctor that unless he stopped sowing his wild oats he would die young, decided to put his life in order. On an official business trip to Copenhagen, Count Toll, the Russian minister, invited him to dinner. Iswolsky met the minister’s daughter and proposed two days later. Iswolsky was not wealthy, but he was marked for a brilliant career so, with her parents’ approval, the pretty Marguerite “accepted him as her inevitable destiny.”39 Marguerite was not a rich heiress either, but she brought to the marriage her family’s connections with the
Romanovs, an impeccable knowledge of protocol and etiquette, and “the forced serenity and the reserve she maintained, even in the most trying or dramatic moments.”

“Lovely, gracious” is what her acquaintances called her again and again. Her daughter later wrote: “her resignation . . . , her strict dedication to her family duties, her patience and self-control, all were useful factors of her successful marriage which sailed through many rough seas.” The “rough seas” must have been Iswolsky’s career ups and downs, his temper, notorious womanizing, and debts.

Marguerite allowed her husband to make the decisions for the family and household. Diplomatic families often traveled with their chefs and butlers, but footmen and maids were hired locally. In most families, the woman took care of these details, but Aleksandr Iswolsky did not trust his wife with these tasks. He also hired the governesses for his children and chose the school for his son. In 1910, relieved of his duties as minister and appointed Russian ambassador to France, “he went to Paris ahead of us, to prepare our new home.” His daughter thought that Iswolsky’s habit of controlling everything made his wife absolutely helpless and naïve about the surrounding world. This certainly freed her from any suspicion of having been “instrumental” in her husband’s career, except as a stepping stone.

Iswolsky owed his ministerial post indirectly to his marriage. Under Nicholas II (1894–1917), the Russian minister in Copenhagen was always appointed according to the wishes of the emperor’s mother, a Danish princess by birth, who used the Russian legation’s services during her annual holidays in Denmark. Iswolsky’s mother-in-law was on excellent terms with the dowager and had him appointed to Copenhagen. In 1905, on his mother’s recommendation, Nicholas II made Iswolsky the foreign minister. Prior to that he had been the envoy to the Vatican, Tokyo, Belgrade, Munich, and Copenhagen, where his wife accompanied him as she had accompanied her parents in Germany and Denmark before her marriage. In fact, the only thing Russian about Marguerite Iswolsky was her passport. A Baltic German and Lutheran, she grew up in Europe; French and German were her first and second languages, with only a smattering of Russian. Her husband’s successor at the Foreign Ministry, S. D. Sazonov (1910–1916), remarked bitterly: “It is an unseemly and unnatural situation when a Russian ambassadress . . . speaks Russian like our darling Margarita Karlovna.” But in the eyes of the Foreign Ministry, poor Russian skills mattered less than “good looks, poise and elegance, and also a certain worldliness which served . . . [young women] well when they became diplomats’ wives.”

Marguerite’s peacekeeping talent was often useful because Iswolsky made enemies easily. Helene Iswolsky noted: “my mother did a great deal to smooth tensions inside and outside of the Ministry. She was unaware of the deeper causes of these tensions, but was prompted by her womanly intuition.” The “deeper causes” were likely Iswolsky’s pro-Anglo-French Entente course and his Western-style liberalism. No one knew his wife’s political views or even if she had any. Her only reference to political events in her correspondence was in 1913, when she expressed hope that the Balkan War would not upset her family’s summer plans. This innocence made her an ideal hostess and guest.

Like others in Russia, Marguerite relied on her connections to advance the careers of her relatives and friends, and interceded with her husband on their behalf, but
with scant success, as she was not a manipulator. Marguerite’s activities in Paris exemplified her role as a diplomat’s wife. She accompanied her husband to the country estates of Parisian financiers and presided over charitable concerts in the embassy garden. She earned only praise from her Parisian acquaintances. “Marguerite is wildly popular in Paris, she is much more liked than her husband. Really, she is charming and she tries very hard,” wrote one English grande dame.\(^4\)\(^9\) Even an embassy secretary wrote, somewhat surprised: “On Easter eve we had a large reception for the Russians. I must admit that both . . . [Iswolsky] and Marguerite were above reproach. . . . Attentive to everyone, including the poor and the badly dressed.”\(^5\)\(^0\) Besides dinners and country visits Marguerite established a charitable society to aid unemployed Jewish garment workers from Russian Poland and Ukraine. She raised funds through bazaars, appeals, and concerts. Luckily, she was in Paris during the great years of the *Ballets Russes*, which gave benefit performances at the embassy. During the War she presided over the committee that organized the Russian Hospital in Bordeaux.\(^5\)\(^1\) She remained ignorant of all financial and legal difficulties that the Iswolsky family faced following the revolution of 1917 and the ambassador’s dismissal. They became exiles, lost all income, and after selling Marguerite’s jewelry and her husband’s large library, they rented a small house in Biarritz.\(^5\)\(^2\) A French acquaintance wrote that Mme Iswolsky was “an adorable woman who bore the vicissitudes of fortune with a rare spiritual refinement.”\(^5\)\(^3\) She was friendly, excelled at organizing dinners, dressed elegantly, and never mentioned serious matters. She never stepped out of the conventional idea of aristocratic femininity—passive, submissive, and focused on human relations.

2. An Ideal Wife

 Countess Sofia Petrovna Benckendorff, née Shuvalova (1857–1928), was the wife of the Russian ambassador to Britain Aleksandr Benckendorff (1849–1916). Her family’s long involvement in Russian state affairs and their blood ties to various European noble families made the young Sofia a fitting wife for a statesman; besides, she was—unusually for a Russian diplomat’s wife—quite politicized. She and her siblings jointly owned platinum and gold mines in the Urals. It was a constant source of concern for the absentee Benckendorffs, but also allowed them to lead a full social life in Vienna and later in London. Like her husband, Sofia was brought up in Switzerland and France, so this Francophone couple had an instinctive insight into the mentality of European social and political elites and the codes that governed their daily lives, a considerable advantage for a diplomat.

 Count Benckendorff believed, like his contemporaries, that a man’s duty was to shield women and children from all contact with sordid, frightening, or sad reality. But his wife became his confidante. As Benckendorff wrote to her early on: “you are a perfect little wife who can share everything with her husband, even his concerns, because you understand them, and you give good advice. It is your misfortune, but my great luck.”\(^5\)\(^4\) The Benckendorffs read the same political treatises and newspaper articles and discussed the events in their letters. The countess enjoyed serious talks with British statesmen at state dinners, attended the sittings of the British parliament, and
read the Blue Books. When the first Russian Duma was inaugurated, the countess and her daughter attended the sessions in Saint Petersburg. Her letters to Benckendorff overflow with political news supplemented by press cuttings. Her political views, like her husband’s, were liberal and she felt more at ease among British statesmen than among her Russian relatives and friends. She recorded hers and her husband’s observations of contemporary events, presumably as sources for a memoir. These notes testify to her interest in politics, but she remained strictly an observer.

When required, Sofi a appeared at Windsor court functions wearing her famous pearls, but sometimes pleaded bad health to skip them; nevertheless, she always found time for her private friendships. A Russian diplomat recalled: “Whenever Countess Benckendorff heard people speak about the cleverness of some young statesman or writer, she wanted to meet him. Thanks to that the Churchills, Hilaire Belloc, H.G. Wells, Lady Ottoline Morrell, and the composer Ethel Smyth were frequent guests at the Russian embassy.”

Other than as hostess, Sofi a Petrovna remained uninvolved in the embassy’s affairs, although she watched out for her husband’s interests. In 1906, while in Petersburg, she protested on his behalf against the Foreign Ministry’s plan to transfer some of the Benckendorffs’ favorite staff from London and threatened that unless her husband had the people he wanted, he would resign. It worked, perhaps because the deputy foreign minister was her childhood friend.

During World War I, the countess fundraised for Russian subjects stranded in Europe. Her husband died of the Spanish flu in late 1916, and two months later revolution swept away the Russian Empire. After her husband’s death she became the sole leaseholder of Chesham House and refused to surrender the residence and embassy archives to the new Soviet ambassador. The former Russian embassy remained the center of the Russian exile community in London until her lease ran out.

Married to a man who admired her political acumen and common sense, on friendly terms with several British and French politicians and literary figures, Sofi a had one of those female voices and opinions described by Alexa von Winning that “played an important part in the building of esteem and credit” for the men of her family and intimate circle. She could safely overstep gender boundaries when she...
wished to, for example, arguing about politics with Russian or British statesmen or following the activity of exiled Russian revolutionaries in London. In Russia it was privilege that protected her; in England her position as an aristocratic foreigner allowed her to ignore certain dominant British cultural norms. But she used her privileged status cautiously and never challenged social norms to a degree that would affect her reputation or her husband’s prestige.

3. An Aged Lioness

Just as the best wife for a military officer is an officer’s daughter, a diplomat’s daughter was the best bet for a diplomat, because she was familiar with the world they would inhabit. Brides from other spheres of life presented more of a gamble that both partners might lose. Aleksandra Pavlovna Hartwig (von Viesen in her first marriage), neé Kartsova (1863–1944), came from a well-known military family; her father became a national hero during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. The Kartzov women were also strong-willed and energetic: an aunt of Aleksandra Kartzova headed the first Russian unit of nurses in the besieged Sevastopol during the Crimean War of 1853–1855.

It was a second marriage for her and her husband. The childless Aleksandra married Nikolai Genrikhovich Hartwig (1857–1914) after her first husband, an officer, died. Hartwig was also a widower, with a small daughter. The son of an army doctor, he was described by contemporaries as extremely unpleasant, but also bright and talented. A Pan-Slavist, Hartwig had fought as a volunteer in the Balkan Wars of 1876–1878 and later, with dogged determination, made his way to the top in the snobbish Foreign Ministry. He believed that Russia’s interests in Persia and the Balkans were incompatible with those of its British and French allies.63

Hartwig was the director of the Asiatic department under Foreign Minister V. N. Lamsdorff (1901–1906) and his chief adviser. In 1906, when Iswolsky replaced Lamsdorff, Hartwig was posted to Persia as minister with instructions to implement a new course: collaboration with Britain while maintaining Russia’s predominant position in the north of the country. On the way to Tehran, Aleksandra Hartwig telegraphed her thanks to the ministry for the excellent travel arrangements they made for her.64 She was less delighted with what she found in Tehran: waiting for months for broken things to be repaired, drinking “rotten water with...
insects,” and sharing the company of the financial agent’s wife, who was, to Madame Hartwig’s mind, “a disgrace to Russia.”

Hartwig’s instructions to cooperate with the British collided with Russia’s immediate interests as he saw them; tensions between the two legations grew to the point that Hartwig was summoned to Saint Petersburg for explanations. His wife and daughter remained in Tehran. At the end of 1908, Aleksandra telegraphed the ministry: “happy new year request information about husband three weeks without news have grounds for concern Hartwig.” At the time, the situation in Persia was very unstable. The newly arrived secretary, Evgueni Sablin, temporarily in charge of the legation, attempted to avert two imminent dangers: civil war in Persia and the collapse of Anglo-Russian cooperation. Persian constitutionalists hated the Russian legation for encouraging the shah to dismiss the parliament; the shah was mortified because his champion Hartwig had been called away.

By March 1909 Sablin had somewhat improved the relations with the British, the Persian nationalists, and the shah. But, he wrote bitterly, “everything is paralyzed by the presence of Aleksandra Pavlovna.” She did not like Tehran, but neither did she wish her husband to be defeated, and his transfer would mean that. She found the attitude of the Foreign Minister Iswolsky and the British toward her husband callous and ungrateful, writing sarcastically to Savinsky: “Other foreigners here are telling me that les anglais à Londres remuent ciel et terre à ce que mon mari ne revienne plus en Perse [the English in London are doing their utmost to prevent my husband’s return in Persia]. May God help them in their efforts.” The “other foreigners” kept bringing incendiary information to the short-tempered Mme Hartwig, hoping to undermine the recent Anglo-Russian rapprochement.

Alexandra Pavlovna complained to Savinsky, expecting that her version of events would reach the Minister and buttress her husband’s position. She never once mentioned her husband’s replacement, Sablin, apparently having no idea that he was reporting to Savinsky that his cooperation with the British came up against Aleksandra Pavlovna’s activity: Hartwig had supported the shah in his struggle against the opposition. Everyone knew that Hartwig had gone to Saint Petersburg to gain support for this policy. As long as Mme Hartwig stayed in Persia, the shah was hopeful. As Sablin described it, “the drowning shah is clutching at Aleksandra Pavlovna. Her presence here means that her husband will return.” Besides, he added, against her husband’s instructions Aleksandra Pavlovna made friends at the German and Austro-Hungarian legations, and now she was telling them that the political situation in Russia was very fraught and that after his misfired attempt to settle the Eastern question to Russia’s advantage in 1908, Iswolsky only thought of exchanging his minister’s post for an embassy. Then Russia’s policy in Persia would change. Sablin concluded with barely controlled anger: “Aleksandra Pavlovna is a dear lady. But she ought not to interfere with politics.” Hartwig lost his fight and was recalled from Persia in mid-1909. After Aleksandra Pavlovna finally left Tehran, Sablin wrote, “there were two chiefs here—myself and Aleksandra Pavlovna Hartwig. I improved our relations with the British, but Aleksandra Pavlovna waged war against me.”
On her sister’s estate in Russia, Mme Hartwig was enjoying “a life without duties” when she learned from a newspaper about her husband’s posting to Belgrade and wrote to Savinsky:

No one asks me, but I will tell you that for me this posting is a disaster, although I am not sure about my husband . . . But as I am rather philosophical about the ebb and flow of my life this disagreeable posting does not concern me too much.  

In Belgrade, Aleksandra Pavlovna’s husband took the line of supporting the Serbian government in their defiance of Austria-Hungary, which further set the Triple Alliance against Serbia and Serbia’s protector, Russia. Hartwig, who had volunteered in the 1876–1877 Serbo-Turkish War and had been awarded a Serbian order of military merit, was a favorite with the Belgrade government, and during the London peace conferences of 1913 Serbia’s unyielding attitude was blamed on his advice. The British government pressed Russia to transfer Hartwig from Serbia or at least temporarily remove him from there, but to no avail.

Aleksandra Pavlovna faced new difficulties in Belgrade. The previous minister’s wife, whether for political reasons or out of weakness (as Aleksandra Pavlovna believed), had given the teenage Serbian royal princes free run of the Russian legation. The boys got used to breaking knives and wineglasses during meals and thought nothing of rifling through the desk drawers in her room. Aleksandra Pavlovna undertook to discipline them and they were insulted. To make matters worse, in her drawing room the princes met members of the Austrian-Hungarian legation and treated them rudely. The Austrians retaliated. Aleksandra Pavlovna reprimanded both parties and angered everybody. She described it to Savinsky with a certain gloomy satisfaction, adding: “And all the while, not a word, not a piece of advice, no guidance from my commander. It is always like that with us.”

During the Balkan War of 1912, Aleksandra Pavlovna threw herself into collecting donations, organizing Russian volunteer nurses, and visiting Serbian hospitals. She became known as “Serbia’s mother,” a title that probably affected her husband’s eligibility for several other Balkan posts. In the winter of 1911–1912, a big reshuffle in the foreign service led Hartwig to hope for a transfer to the much-coveted Constantinople embassy, but he remained stationed in Belgrade. Mme Hartwig confided in Savinsky: “I am very sad that we did not go to Constantinople . . . My husband has taken it quite philosophically, even surprisingly so.”

The Hartwigs seemingly led two separate existences under the same roof. Aleksandra Pavlovna spent summers with her nephew’s family at the seaside, while her husband went to a German spa with his daughter for a heart treatment. Her references to her husband’s deteriorating health sound cold: “Much as he is putting on a cheerful face his health has collapsed. Of course, it is possible he will live 10–15 years longer, but it is also possible the next stroke will kill him.” Hartwig died just two years later. During the Sarajevo crisis of July 1914, the Austrian press spread a rumor that he had orchestrated the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Hartwig drove to
the Austro-Hungarian legation to protest and to persuade the minister to work with him in reducing the tensions between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. There he collapsed during the conversation.\textsuperscript{77} His widow remained in Serbia and worked at the Nish hospital with the nurses unit that she had organized two years earlier. Aleksandra Hartwig was, as her husband’s colleague wrote, “an aged lioness, but with all her fangs intact.”\textsuperscript{78} It seems she saw herself not as her husband’s helpmeet but as an independent figure. This worked against her husband’s reputation in the diplomatic corps because she did not understand where socializing ended and politics began. In Tehran, she revealed to foreign diplomats an existing rift in the direction of Russian diplomacy; in Belgrade, Austrian and Serbian visitors quarreled in her drawing room and instead of pacifying them, she quarreled with both. Her reputation as a tactless and indiscreet woman, confirmed by her own letters to the chief of the minister’s chancery, may have been one of the factors that prevented her husband from becoming the ambassador to Constantinople.

4. The Enchantress

Aleksandra Adamovna Kolemina, née Countess Hutten-Czapska (1851–1941), belonged to an ancient family with Baltic, Austrian, and Russian roots, and “a smattering of Polish ancestry.”\textsuperscript{79} In 1869 she married a Russian diplomat, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Kolemin (or Kolemine) (1844–1894). Their only son was born in 1874 in Switzerland, where Kolemin was a secretary of the Russian legation. The marriage was apparently stormy. Mme Kolemina later described herself as “so enchanting that it seems no one can resist her,” while her husband was gloomy and “jealous as a tiger”:\textsuperscript{80} “wherever his position obliged him to appear accompanied by the ambassadress, there he found fuel for this terrible mania.”\textsuperscript{81} As evidence she included in her later novel the story of a man whom her husband killed in a duel, mistakenly believing that she was having an affair with him.

After a brief period in Sweden, in 1882 Kolemin was posted to the Great Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt as chargé d’affaires. Here his wife “disregarded the etiquette of her position so far that she was frequently seen sitting after a play at a small table in some well-lit café, laughing and chatting with young men and students.”\textsuperscript{82} Soon she was also seen going on long rides in the countryside with the widowed Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse, and society became convinced that they were having an affair. One day, Kolemin met Aleksandra Adamovna returning from a date with the grand duke and (if her novel is to be believed) whipped her across the face; she locked herself in her room and let it be known that she was having a brain fever. The grand duke at once asked Saint Petersburg to recall the diplomat.\textsuperscript{83} Kolemin left, and his wife moved from the Russian legation to a house provided by the grand duke and informed the Russian Foreign Ministry and Kolemin in two separate letters of her intention to be divorced on account of cruel treatment.\textsuperscript{84} By March 1884 Mme Kolemina was free and a month later the grand duke married her morganatically. At that moment, the grand duke’s late wife’s mother, Queen Victoria, and their relatives in the German imperial family happened to be in Darmstadt. When they learned the news they went into such
a storm of indignation that the grand duke almost at once sent his bride out of Hesse. In July he had the marriage annulled despite Aleksandra Adamovna’s resistance. All she got from him was a rent and a Hessian title of nobility.

Aleksandra Adamovna remained in Europe and attempted to retaliate by setting worldwide public opinion against those who had caused her second divorce. Between May and December 1884, newspapers published fact and fiction about her, the grand duke, and Kolemin, derived from the numerous interviews she granted. A German-language brochure, *Frau Kolemine* (Mrs. Kolemine), published in Leipzig and based on an extensive interview with Aleksandra Adamovna, described her as intelligent, sweet, gracious, and beautiful, although, as a Russian reviewer acidly noted, “none of this transpires from the book.”

In 1885 and 1886, Aleksandra Adamovna published in Paris under the pseudonym “Ary Ecilaw” two novels à clef. *Roland* was about a child disowned by his royal father and cruelly separated from his angelical mother. *Le Roi de Thessalie* (The King of Thessaly) narrated the story of Kolemina’s two marriages and divorces. While *Roland* left many readers in doubt about the veracity of its plot, the second novel, set in an imaginary German kingdom, seemed an accurate record of the Darmstadt episode, with the actors easily identifiable: Queen Victoria—the Empress of Hindustan; Grand Duke Louis IV—the King of Thessaly; Kolemin—Prince de Mineleko. Mme Kolemina herself was Princess de Mineleko, a nineteen-year-old innocent victim of the intrigues and base passions of the mighty of this world. She made the heroine much younger than herself, presumably because for a woman of thirty she behaved too foolishly.

The book became a scandalous success and was translated from its original French into several other languages. Today it reads poorly, the only lively parts being those in which Aleksandra Adamovna takes bites out of her heroine’s enemies: the red-faced, short, and fat Queen Victoria and her brutal son-in-law the German Crown Prince Frederic. The cowardly grand duke of Hesse and the sinister husband of the angelical heroine were not spared either. Her representational duties received scant attention in the book apart from a mention of her heroine’s obligatory weekly receptions. Aleksandra Adamovna showed off her knowledge of protocol, writing that after Mineleko had presented his letters of credence to the king, the latter called on the ambassador’s
wife to make her acquaintance, and in a footnote—the only one in the book—it is explained that he did so because he was a widower and there was no queen for the ambassadress to visit. Aleksandra Adamovna knew the power of patronage and personal connections in Russian bureaucracy and did her best to highlight their part in her own misfortunes. According to her, what repeatedly saved the heroine’s nasty husband from being fired by the Foreign Ministry for his outbursts of rage was the shortage of intelligent diplomats to represent Russia abroad, patronage, and—more doubtfully—the emperor’s high opinion of his diplomatic talent. She remarked that the ministry as a rule did not punish diplomats too severely for their misdemeanors, it only transferred them, usually to Asia.87

Aleksandra Adamovna produced two more novels as Ary Ecilaw. One, *Une Altesse Imperiale* (An Imperial Highness), a lurid romance about the Romanovs, went through six editions within ten days of publication. After *Roland* and *Le Roi de Thessalie*, readers assumed that every Ary Ecilaw novel was based on a true story, and this time it was general belief that the scandalous main characters were Elisabeth of Hesse and her husband Grand Duke Serge, a brother of the Russian emperor. In 1888, Kolemina’s drama *L’Officier bleu* (The Officer in Blue) was accepted for production at a popular Parisian theatre. The action took place in the palace of “Grand Duke Boris” in Saint Petersburg and the main character was a secret police officer torn between love for a terrorist and duty toward his sovereign. The play was banned on the eve of its first night for reasons of “haute convenance internationale” (high international expediency), presumably as a courtesy to the Russian embassy.

In 1893 Aleksandra Adamovna married the first secretary of the Russian mission to Portugal, Vasily Romanovich Bacheracht (1851–1916). Soon after, he was posted to Switzerland in the same capacity, and then promoted to minister in Morocco. He returned as minister to Switzerland in 1906 and served there until his death. Aleksandra Adamovna was never mentioned in the press again except as Mme Bacheracht, his duly “incorporated wife” who visited the sultan’s harem in Marrakesh and had gifts sent to his wives afterward.89

Her last book was a short travelogue, *Une Mission à la cour chérifienne* (A Mission to the Sultan’s Court), published in 1901 under a transparent pseudonym, “A. de B.” On the first page the identity of the author was revealed: “When a great power created a diplomatic post in Morocco, its first representative, my husband, by tradition had to visit the Sultan’s court to hand in his letters of credence.”90 Her anonymity was due to an unwritten but strict rule that diplomats (and their spouses) were not to publish anything relating to their service or the countries of their posting until after a considerable period of time, and then only with the permission of the Foreign Minister.

Ambitious and bold, Aleksandra Kolemina/Bacheracht resented being married to a man neither rich nor titled, and risked her first marriage for the sake of a splendid second one. Afterward, giving interviews and publishing novels *à clef* became her lucrative revenge. It should have made her an outcast, but instead she married another Russian diplomat, who obtained the Foreign Ministry’s authorization for his marriage. The ministry welcomed the former Countess Hutten-Czapska back into its fold, forgiving and forgetting her scandalous first marriage that culminated in alleged adultery in Darmstadt, her two divorces, and her libelous novels about the Romanovs.
The issue of Russian diplomats divorcing and marrying divorcees, including former wives of their own colleagues, is intriguing on two counts. Various historians of Russia refer to the Russian Orthodox Church’s strict views on divorce as “a marital order of a rigidity unknown elsewhere in Europe,”91 with a ban on remarriage and a seven-year public penance for the divorced offender.92 Barbara Alpern Engel states that “Russia’s marital law . . . made it extraordinarily difficult for either spouse to escape an unhappy union.”93 Furthermore, a Russian diplomatic historian has noted that divorce initiated by a diplomat affected his career,94 attributing to the Imperial Foreign Ministry a Soviet-style priggishness. These statements are remarkable for bearing no resemblance to what actually happened with Russian diplomats who frequently divorced and remarried—with no consequences for their careers. As Andreas Schönle explains, “[in Russia] power remained on all levels very much a personal affair subject to the vagaries of personal connections and coteries.”95 Nepotism and clientelism allowed the Russian nobility, to which diplomats and their spouses belonged, immunity from canon law and public intervention, so their transgressions were overlooked by society—and, therefore, by the Foreign Ministry. Once diplomats were married, the ministry acted by the prevailing moral code that recognized individuals’ right to control over their private lives, including adultery and divorces.

A diplomat who married a divorced woman made himself ineligible for posting to the courts where divorcees were not received. Nevertheless, the ministry frequently authorized marriages with divorcees. In 1884 Queen Victoria refused to accept as Russian ambassador Baron Rudolf Üxkhull von Gildenbandt (1817–1894) because he was married to a divorcee, but Üxkhull continued in his ambassadorial post in the Kingdom of Italy:96 some European courts tacitly accepted the fact that divorces were a new reality. In other cases, like that of V. Bacheracht and his twice-divorced wife, the diplomat was posted to places where there was no court life: Morocco and Switzerland. Thus, his marriage only somewhat limited his career opportunities.

Conclusions

The four cases discussed in this article confirm Catherine Radziwill’s opinion: by the second half of the nineteenth century, gone were the times when “people well-born and belonging to the upper ten thousand could still pretend to influence, simply by reason of their being within that charmed circle”97; diplomacy moved out of salons into ministerial offices and conference halls, so “ambassadors in skirts” were no longer possible. Because they performed certain social functions, diplomats’ wives remained an element of the diplomatic world as their husbands’ helpmeets, but Russian diplomatic wives’ agency was reduced to appearances at social events and pulling strings in Saint Petersburg on their husbands’ behalf; their incursions into the political sphere were rare and unintended, as in the case of Aleksandra Hartwig. Neither autocratic Russia’s repressive political climate nor the upbringing of elite women predisposed them to be politicized. The only one of the four interested in politics, Sofi a Benckendorff, never did more than observe events and participate in after-dinner discussions of abstract political issues.
As long as diplomats’ wives did not interfere with politics, the ministry was indifferent to their behavior, even if they transgressed social norms. The main object of the ministerial vetting of diplomats’ fiancées was to ensure that their pedigrees and fortunes would support their husbands’ social lives in the countries of their posting. To perform her role well, an embassy wife would be “well-groomed, elegant, belong to a good Russian family, have some connections at the court, know Petersburg society and be able to answer the questions which she will surely be asked.” This ideal, which Marguerite Iswolsky and Sofia Benckendorff embodied, listed the prerequisites that would allow a woman to function as a member of elite society, omitting to mention her character and reputation. Indifferent to the noisy debate in the European media about whether Mme Kolemina was a victim or a brazen sinner, the Russian Foreign Ministry allowed her marry another diplomat because, despite her notoriety, she remained a woman from a good family with connections in Saint Petersburg.

The fact that the ministry did not pay much attention to women’s behavior after marriage suggests that it was unimportant. Diplomats’ wives might cause conflicts within the mission or within the diplomatic corps; they might have lovers; they might even avoid or refuse to do their part as “incorporated wives,” which was the ministry’s only expectation of them. Even divorce and remarriage within the diplomatic service was accepted: their wives’ behavior made little impact on diplomats’ professional standing, as the political and private spheres were separate and morals belonged strictly in the private sphere. In any case, a man’s domestic arrangements did not concern his colleagues. Complaints would be sent to the ministry only if an embassy wife invaded the political sphere, as Alexandra Hartwig did in Persia.

Thus, the ministry required a diplomat’s wife to be worthy of her role as a representative of the Russian Empire, but dismissed her from politics. Because diplomats’ wives were not political actors the ministry ignored their transgressions. Receptions, balls, and dinners were just a veil over diplomats’ single-minded absorption in political affairs, where, as a British diplomat wrote, power was the first aim, and where women definitely had no place.

◊ About the Author

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Notes


5. Diplomacy is understood here as the routine intercourse of states.


7. Count Paul Vassili [Catherine Radziwill], *Behind the Veil at the Russian Court* (London: Cassel, 1913), 77.


11. In the 1930s and 1940s, Bolshevik feminist Aleksandra Kollontai (1872–1952) represented the Soviet Union in Mexico, Norway, and Sweden.


14. Circular letter No 787, 19 July/1 August 1908. Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii [Archive of the Russian Imperial Foreign Policy] (henceforth AVPRI), f. 184, op. 520, ed. hr. 1245, l. 33.

15. A. A. Savinsky to N. V. van der Vliet, 15/28 June 1911, British Library (henceforth BL), Add 49066.


17. S. D. Sazonov to D. I. Tolstoy, 7/20 August 1904, Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoriicheskii Arkhiv [Russian State Historical Archive] (henceforth RGIA), f. 696, op. 1, d. 508, ll. 3–4ob.


20. M. Bibikov to A. A. Savinsky, 28 July/10 August 1911, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed. hr. 18, ll. 9–11ob.


22. A. K. Benckendorff to S. P. Benckendorff, 21 January 1910, GARF, f. 1126, op.1 ed. hr.153, ll.34–35.

23. The term “ambassadress” refers only to an envoy’s wife, whereas a “diplomat’s wife” refers to the wife of a diplomat of any rank. The distinction is necessary, for their prerogatives and functions sometimes differed.


25. Bismarck to Gorchakov, 7/19 November 1863, AVPRI, f. 138, op. 2, d. 763, ll. 6–10ob.


32. In English in the original.

33. N. Peterson to A. A. Savinsky, 10 November 1909. AVPRI, F. 340, op. 2, d. 763, ll. 95–96ob.


35. V. Khevrolina, *Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2009), 189.


40. Ibid.


42. Iswolsky, *No Time*, 5.

43. Ibid., 65.


45. A. A. Savinsky, “Souvenirs,” AVPRI, f. 340, op. 834, ed.hr. 27, l. 101ob.


47. Ibid., 33.
48. M. A. Taube, Zarnitsy: Vospominani’ia o tragicheskoi sud’be predrevolutsionnoi Rossii (1900–1917) [Summer lightnings: Reminiscences of the tragic fate of Russia before the revolution (1900–1917)] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007), 123.
49. Gladys Ripon to A. A. Savinsky, 19 July 1910, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed.hr. 31, ll. 144–153.
50. V. Argutinsky-Dolgorukov to A. Savinsky, 14/27 April 1911, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 340, ed.hr. 18, ll. 197–198.
51. Iswolsky, No Time, 95.
52. Iswolsky to V. Argutinsky-Dolgorukov, 26/13 July 1917, RGALI, f. 1900, op.1, d. 176, ll. 2–7ob.
55. S. P. Benckendorff to A. K. Benckendorff, 20 February 1908, Bakhmetev Archive, Columbia University, Benckendorff Archive part II (henceforth BAI), Box 22.
56. S. P. Benckendorff to A. K. Benckendorff, 22 February 1907, BAI, Box 22.
57. S. P. Benckendorff to A. K. Benckendorff, 15/28 March 1906, BAI, box 22.
60. S. P. Benckendorff to A. K. Benckendorff, 7/20 April 1906, cited in Marina Soroka, Britain, Russia and the Road to the First World War (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 45–46.
61. Ibid., 282.
63. Irina Rybachonok, Zakat velikoi derzhavy [Sunset of a great power] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2012), 473.
64. A. P. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, n.d. (telegram), AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed. hr. 32, ll. 224–225.
65. A. P. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 2 January 1909, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed.hr. 15, ll.130–131ob.
66. A. P. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 3 January 1909 (telegram), AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed. hr.15, l. 193.
67. E. V. Sablin to A. A. Savinsky, 5 December 1908, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed. hr. 14, ll. 172–177ob.
68. E. V. Sablin to A. A. Savinsky, 14 March 1909, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed. hr. 14, ll. 172–177ob.
69. A. P. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 2 January 1909, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, d.15, ll.130–131ob.
72. A. P. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 18 June 1909, AVPRI, f. 340 op. 706, ed. hr. 15, ll. 134–135ob.
73. A. K. Benckendorff to S. D. Sazonov, 27 March 1913, AVPRI, f. 138, op. 467, ed.hr. 707/756, l. 349.
74. A. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 28 September 1909, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed. hr.15, ll. 126–127ob.
75. A. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 17/30 March 1912, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed.hr. 21, l. 37ob.
76. A. Hartwig to A. A. Savinsky, 28 June/10 July 1910, AVPRI, f. 340, op. 706, ed.hr. 16, ll. 79–80ob.


81. Ibid., 32.


85. *Istoricheskii vestnik* [Historical messenger] 19, no. 3 (1885), 711–712.


90. A. de B. [Aleksandra de Bacheracht], *Une Mission a la Cour Cherifienne: Notes de voyage* [A mission to the sultan’s court: Notes of a voyage] (Geneva: Editeurs Georg et Cie, 1901), 1.


93. Barbara Alpern Engel, “In the Name of the Tsar: Competing Legalities and Marital Conflict in Late Imperial Russia,” *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 1 (2005), 70–96, here 73.


