



NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Antonina Sharova

**RUSSIA AND GREAT BRITAIN IN
THE HISTORIAN'S FATE:
ALEXANDER SAVIN**

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM

WORKING PAPERS

SERIES: HUMANITIES
WP BRP 20/HUM/2013

*Antonina Sharova*¹

**RUSSIA AND GREAT BRITAIN IN THE HISTORIAN'S FATE:
ALEXANDER SAVIN**²

This article examines the biography of the historian Alexander Nikolaevich Savin (1873-1923), a specialist in English agrarian history of the 16th and 17th centuries. Based on archival sources, the published and unpublished writings of the historian, reminiscences about him, his diaries and his correspondence, this article focuses on the significance of two countries—Great Britain and Russia—for his personal and intellectual life.

JEL Classification: Z.

Keywords: A. N. Savin, historian, agrarian history, Unwin, Maitland, Moscow University

¹ National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia); Department of History; associate professor, asharova@hse.ru

² This study was carried out within “The National Research University Higher School of Economics’ Academic Fund Program in 2012-2013, research grant No. 11-01-0116”

Introduction

Alexander Nikolaevich Savin (1873-1923) is one of the undeservedly forgotten names in Russian national historiography. He died when the situation in Soviet Russia was not at all easy for the academic community. The rapidly changing structure of management in academic studies, the increasing ideological pressure and tendentiousness in historical research writings, and serious political transformations in the 1920s and 1930s gradually led to the fact that the works and the name of Alexander Savin seemed not relevant to the socialist state. However, no one will deny that this has been the fate of many historians of the “pre-revolutionary” academic world, historians who could not adjust their social and political activities or scientific views being to the new Soviet historical studies and the life of the Soviet state as a whole. In this respect, the fate of A. N. Savin’s heritage was even “lucky”. Colleagues and students who knew him well, even the Director of the Institute of the Red Professors M. N. Pokrovsky, resisted mentioning the political preferences of the historian, his sympathy to the Cadets and participation in Cadet propaganda. None of the articles after 1923 devoted to the memory of the historian contained anything “political.” Moreover, the impression was made that he had been almost a reclusive scientist, deeply immersed in the medieval archival sources, who’d never given public lectures or published in the Cadet press articles criticizing the Bolsheviki or some of the theory of Marx. For a variety of reasons, A. N. Savin was perceived before the 1940s to be a historian of the older generation, someone who had been relatively “close” to the Soviet historical science and somehow followed the Marxist theory. One must give credit to the corporate ethics of the historians, his colleagues and students, who tried to preserve for the present day the majority of his works and to develop his ideas about English agrarian history of the modern and pre-modern times. As for the life of Alexander Savin or his political ideas, they have been mostly forgotten. His private documents and correspondence were destroyed after his wife died, and the only way it is possible to reconstruct his life is to examine the different archival materials, works and diaries of the historian. Some of the results of this research are presented in this paper.

Great Britain in the life and works of A. N. Savin

As repeatedly pointed out in the national historiography, for Russian intellectuals the constant interest in Great Britain and its history has never been a simply abstract interest but usually very closely related to the political issues and social development of the day. The debates between the so-called “Westerners” (zapadniki) and “Slavophiles” (slavianofili), most intense during the 1840s and 1850's, had greatly intensified and pushed this interest. Every word, fact or

idea that had been more or less connected to the agrarian question seemed to be of vital importance in 19th-century Russia.

It happened with Alexander Savin that he was encountered England long before he decided to become a professional historian. The Kondrovskaya paper mill, where his father Nicholay Savvitch worked as a medical assistant, had been bought in 1853 by the British entrepreneur W. Govard¹. British paper industries in Russia flourished.

A. Savin started to study the English language at the university, which he entered in 1891. Indeed, in Russia in the late 19th century, learning English was not popular: it was usually taught at home by hiring teachers or by taking special university courses. So, for example, a delegation of Russians who visited England in 1910 to study local experiences and learn from the British cooperative institutions asked their hospitable hosts find them interpreters to speak German or French, as they did not know English to speak it². In 1912, at a meeting with the British Parliament delegation to Moscow University, A. N. Savin was seriously bothered by the fact that very few of the Russian professors and students there could understand and speak English. It was difficult to organize in the universities seminars for the students in English history, and English medieval history as well (even of studying Magna Carta), since most of them, easily coping with the reading of French or German sources and literature, could not do the same with literature written in English.

However, A. Savin studied languages easily his talent and perseverance had been apparent since his high-school days. He graduated from high school with a gold medal, and the younger generations of Kaluga schoolboys long heard the legend of this extraordinary student. Already in 1898, John Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" was published being translated from English by A.N.Savin³. This edition displayed not only the linguistic ability of the interpreter, but his interest in philosophy as well, which he retained all his life. While still a student, A. N. Savin participated in an academic research group in which a famous philosopher Sergej N. Trubetskoy (1862—1905) played a prominent role.

Interest in English history didn't capture A. N. Savin immediately. Most likely, the major role in determining his scientific interests was played by the personality of one of his teachers the outstanding Russian medievalist P. G. Vinogradov (1854-1925). This Russian scholar is largely a symbolic figure for the historiography of English medieval history. He can be called

¹ See the memorial book of the Kaluga region in 1881. (Pamyatnaya knizka Kaluzskoj gubernii na 1881. Kaluga, 1881. S. 110-112)

² Novichenko I.Ju. Izuchenie anglijskoj kooperacii v Rossii (vtoraja polovina XIX – nachalo XX vv)// Otechestvannoje anglovedenije XIX – pervij chetverti XX vv. Sbornik statej. Serija "Istorik I obschestvo". M.: IVI RAN, 2012. S.130-131

³ A. N. Savin's translation was used as the basis for the publication of works of Locke even recently. In both cases, the publishers changed the translation of the book by John Locke, to make it closer to the English title. See *Locke J. Izbrannije filosofskije proizvedenija*. M., 1960. T.1 (publication by M.I.Itkin); *Locke J. Sochinenija v 3h t. T.1. Opit o chelovecheskom razumenii*. M.: Misl, 1985 (Publication by E.S.Lagutin).

one of the discoverers of the English manor and the specific agrarian life of the medieval English village, as well as the senior fellow for Frederic William Maitland¹ (1850 – 1906) classic of English medieval studies and of English legal history. For Russian historiography and history Paul G. Vinogradov is also a significant figure because of his activities in the social and political life of the day. In Savin's life P. Vinogradov was not just a teacher. Savin was deeply influenced by his points of view and his attitudes to the current politics for many years. The agrarian history of medieval England, enthusiastically studied by historian P. G. Vinogradov, seemed to the young scholar A. N. Savin to be not only the subject of his teacher's interest, but also a way to be in tune with the times. Russian intellectuals looked for answers to the questions of Russian reality in the history of Western Europe. British history was fertile ground for this: it showed an early type of capitalist development, the problem of which was so urgent to Russia. On the other hand, a significant number of medieval and early modern sources suitable for statistical analysis were available in English libraries and archives. With the help of the new methods of statistics and the methodology of examining and interpreting its results it was possible to analyze the dynamics of pre-industrial agrarian culture and to find some specific roots of the modern English economy and social structure. A. N. Savin selected for his research the dynamic era of the 16th century, the epoch of the English Reformation that had such a large influence over the political and economic development of the country. The studies of the historian of the agrarian history of England became a distinct phenomenon: he meticulously examined and reviewed «Valor Ecclesiasticus» (1535) and charters counting revenues of monasteries and those who received (and under what conditions) those confiscated lands in the epoch of dissolution. The problem of the land rights of peasants in the process of enclosure made the historian begin a study of legal theory concerning the copyhold and land ownership. As a result of those studies² he clearly showed that violently depriving peasants of their land could be the result of using the common law not an example of a violation of the law. Savin's studies showed how the evolution of the copyhold³ took regular content and the significance of this process for modern English society and its economic transformation.

Thereby, England became part of the historian's life, at first as a subject of scientific interest. Meanwhile, the history of that period became a field for serious ideological battles. The historian had to identify for himself what ideas and approaches to follow: Are the views of Karl Marx on the origins of primary accumulation based on objective historical approach? Should he follow the academic strategies of M. M. Kovalevskij and be free to make broad generalizations

¹ Cantor N.F. *Inventing the Middle ages: the lives, works and ideas of the great medievalists of the twentieth century*. New York, 1991. P.54-55; Milson S.F.C. Maitland // *The Cambridge Law Journal*. 2001. vol.60. p. 266

² Savin A.N. *Anglijskaya derevnja v epokhu Tudorov*. M., 1903; Savin A.N. *Anglijskaya sekularizacija*. M., 1906

³ Vinokurova M.V. *Mir anglijskogo manora (po zemelnim opisjam Lancashire i Wiltshire vtoroj polovini XVI- nachala XVII veka)*. M., 2004. S. 262-345

or the methods of F. Maitland and P. G. Vinogradov and plunge into meticulous statistical calculations and analysis of the sources, deliberately limiting oneself to make general conclusions? Alexander Savin chose the latter option. Subsequently, the historian would often be blamed for the first -- to be sympathetic to Marxism; later, in the 1940s and 1950^s, he would be blamed for following the ideas of economic materialism. Neither the first nor the second charge is legitimate. In the writings of Karl Marx, A. Savin saw above all a "big social and philosophical interest, since the theory of historical materialism and the class struggle found a very clear expression in them," although a "purely academic" value of information that "Capital" can give to anyone about the history of the 15th and 16th centuries was small¹. As for F. Maitland, for the young historian he was the main authority and the teacher in the academic field² (along with P. G. Vinogradov). A. N. Savin began a working relationship with F. Maitland and visited him in England³.

In the collection of A. N. Savin's papers in the archive one can find a great number of documents on English agrarian history, transcribed by Savin from the archives in England. It is possible to see and analyze the details of his methods of writing agrarian history, assessing the scale of the historian's scrupulous work⁴.

In 1900, A. N. Savin was dispatched for the first time on a research trip to Great Britain to work in the archives and libraries. The result of this hard work became his master's thesis on the "English village in Tudor England" (1903). That first trip brought him a different experience—direct acquaintance with the country and the people, with British political and social life. Alexander Savin came to London when the British Empire was involved in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), so the discussions of British imperialism and imperial politics were in the air. It was also near the end of the so-called "Victorian era," with the increasing influence of the trade unions, and socialist ideology had become popular among the workers and the middle class. One of the political groups, following socialist ideology, attracted the special attention of the young Russian historian. He saw the Fabian Society as the "club of people enlightened, progressive and balanced." Being a student A. N. Savin played no active part in public life and kept his distance from all kinds of political speeches and protests or demonstrations. But there were a lot of progressive-minded young people among his close friends and family members. Later, many of them became prominent Cadet Movement leaders (S. A. Kotlyarevsky), and Savin's younger brother was expelled from the university for taking

¹ Savin A.N. Socialnaja istorija Anglii XV i XVI vv. V njvoj istoriografii// Zurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveschenia. 1901. T. 332. Ch. 2. S. 318

² Ibid. S.342; Savin wrote about works by F.Maitland also an article «Anglijskij jurist v roli istorika» (Zurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveschenia. 1900. T. 332. Ch.1. S. 210-232; Ch.2. S. 419-443)

³ NIOR RGB (Russian state library, Manuscript collection). F. 263. K.30. D.10

⁴ Numerous notebooks with daily summaries of archival and library materials were carefully dated by A. N. Savin and represent more than 20 manuscripts, each of them consisting from 60 to 150 lists // NIOR RGB. F.263.K. 5-9

part in a student riot. That is why it was new and interesting for Savin to observe the possibility of open public debates on the issues of politics, economics and culture in England. He read with deep interest the works of Sidney Webb and listened to Beatrice Webb's speeches, he liked the sarcastic topics of B. Shaw, and he was impressed by the participation of representatives of the working class in discussions. Not all of the ideas of the Fabians and their activities were approved by the historian: his assessment of and attitude toward British imperialism differed from those of J. Hobson; he did not share the critical attitude of Sidney Webb to the English liberals, and he condemned the belief of some members of the Fabian Society that the English Catholics were ready to "betray" the country¹. However, the opportunity to listen to the Fabian debates allowed A. N. Savin a direct acquaintance of the English socialists as well as of the British way of thinking and their perception of the world. In Russia, he was the first who acquainted the Russian public with some of the important figures in British politics and culture. An essay about the Fabians written by A. N. Savin, was published in a popular periodical "Herald of Europe"² ("Vestnik Evropi") in 1903. The historian wrote of B. Shaw with warmth, noting his witty "dramatic experience" («Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant», «Four plays for puritans»). Indeed, the Russian public at that time didn't know the plays of Shaw. England actually knew him more as a music and theater critic and a speaker in Fabian circles. The success of his plays came gradually from the middle of the 1890s, and finally confirmed in a theater "Court" from 1904. In Russia, the first Shaw play, "Devil's Disciple," was staged in 1906, and its translation in Russian was published in 1908. So for many well-educated Russians, Savin's article was the first time they heard B. Shaw as the name of the playwright.

The author described in detail the content of the debates in the Fabian society to introduce to the Russian audience the "corner of the spiritual life" of modern English society. Among all these debates, a meeting to discuss new ideas of urban planning and architecture especially attracted the attention of the historian. It was the so-called «housing question», the issue of housing for workers, that was a popular problem not only in England at the turn of the century. Savin's article introduced the Russian public to the socialist ideas of the architect R. Unwin (1863-1940), who, along with B. Parker (1867-1947), had been one of the founders of a new type of public building and urban design, later known as "the garden city."³ In 1903 the Garden City Movement was founded in England and began the implementation of those projects (Letchworth). In his essay, A. N. Savin cited a book by R. Unwin⁴ which soon became popular

¹ NIOR RGB. F.263. Op.31. D.1

² Savin Alexander. Fabiantzi: Iz londonskih vpechatlenij // Vestnik Evropi. 1903. T.4. Kn.8. S.637-661

³ About the "garden city" see more in *Howard E. Garden cities of to-morrow*. London, 1902 (translated into Russian in 1911); About the realization of this idea in Russia see *Meerovich M.D. Pozdenije I smertj sovetskogo goroda sada* URL http://www.archi.ru/lib/e_publication_for_print.html?id=1850569462

⁴ *Unwin R., Parker B. The art of building a home: A collection of lectures and illustrations*. L., 1901

among Russian city planners. After 1904, the urban planning philosophy of R. Unwin and R. B. Parker was actively promoted in the pages of Russian architectural periodicals, and in 1913 "Russian society garden-cities" were organized. A. N. Savin supported R. Unwin's philosophy of planning the settlements: the architect was convinced that the people should be involved in this process (democratic planning). The English architects thought that «social coherence could be encouraged through the visual coherence of a place, and a sense of community enhanced by the "aesthetic control" of building materials, housing design and layout»¹. Those ideas fit the democratic convictions of the Russian historian as well as his aesthetic sense. Alexander Savin was also impressed by the attitude of the architect to the question of the cost of new housing for the workers. At the Fabian society meeting, R. Unwin mentioned that if the houses were built too cheap, they "can not be beautiful and comfortable. We must not impair the houses, but try to make the poor be richer, so they can pay the rent for a nice apartment."²

However, A. N. Savin remembered his first English assignment not only because of the Fabian society meetings and intensive work with the manuscripts in archives and libraries. In London, in the Embassy Church on the 25th of April, 1901, Alexander Savin married Eugenia Fabianovna Gnesina³, a famous Russian musician and teacher.

After the first visit to Great Britain, A. N. Savin never gave up his interest in its current policy. Increasingly, during the period of 1909-1917, he published a lot of articles about British affairs: parliamentary elections, the policy of the H. Asquith government, the visit of Anglican bishops to Russia, problems of international relations, and the Russian-English alliance. Not surprisingly, many of the phenomena of political life in Great Britain he compared with the Russian reality, considering that the ongoing social reforms would be able to protect the English from revolutionary upheavals.

With the outbreak of World War I, interest in the British Empire increased in Russian society⁴. The old anti-British (anglofobija) mood was quickly replaced by pro-British sympathies. As a well-known specialist in English history, A. N. Savin participated in the organization of the so-called "Society rapprochement with Britain" (Obschestvo sblizenija s Anglijej) established in 1915. It was obvious for the historian, that the task of the society was to preserve the Anglo-Russian alliance *after* World War I. To achieve it would require a great effort, so that the "British and Russian society <...> knew and respect each other and sympathy

¹Beach A., *Tiratsoo N.* The planners and the Public //The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Ed. David Michael Palliser, Peter Clark, Martin Daunt. Vol. III. 1840-1950. Cambridge University Press, 2000. P.528

² *Savin Alexander.* Fabiantzi ... S. 653

³ Zentralnij istoricheskij archiv g. Moskvi (ZIAM). F.418. Op.64.D.366. L.43

⁴ See. *Davidson A.B.* Obraz Britanii v Rossii XIX I XX stoletij // Novaja I novajshaja istorija. 2005. № 10. S. 54-55; *Davidson A.B.* V godi Serdechnogo soglasija: anglo-rossijskije obzchestvenno-politicheskije kontakti nakanune I vo vremja Pervoj mirovoj vojni // Rossija I Britanija. Vip. 5: Na putiah k vsaimoponimaniju. M., 2010. S. 31-54

between two nations would exist and strengthened"¹. In the cooperation between two countries A. Savin saw not only economic benefits but also a good example for Russian politicians in the British interaction with the monarchy and right-wing political parties. Other relevant questions raised by the historian during the war had to do with the changing world of empires, their transformation, relations with the colonies, and more active role of the Islamic world. In March 1915 he gave a public lecture on the "War of Empires and the world of Islam,"² the main provisions of which had been previously discussed with P. G. Vinogradov, who had the experience of visiting the East. The scholars believed that in the near future, at the end of the current confrontation of empires, the world would face other challenges, including confrontation and war between Japan and the USA, the immigration flow from the colonies to the mother country, and a new yet unrecorded factor in world politics, the growing and dynamic Islamic world. Above all, a new question arose about the nature of imperial Russia. For A. Savin, the example of the ideal imperial union and conduct was the British Empire, which held its colonies not only by its military power, but, above all, by the ability to "understand the soul of the people being under the rule (of the British Empire), to adapt to someone else's life."³ This "imperial flair," according to the historian, could prevent conflicts with the previously conquered peoples. A postwar Russia Savin saw in a similar way, with the conservation of the national core and at the same time the provision of some rights for non-Russian peoples. This type of development for the Russian Empire, according to Savin, was the key to the future prosperity of the state, whose motto should be «imperium et libertas»⁴.

After 1917 A. N. Savin tried to maintain his interest in British politics. When the newspapers from Great Britain were no longer available, he looked for the information from the Soviet press, often doubting the reliability of the data. In 1920, he began to plead for a last trip to England. Justifying the need for it, the scholar pointed out several positions. First, he intended to explore the agricultural history of the XVII century and the Parliamentary acts of enclosure in order to "set the course of the transformation of a medieval manor in the modern village." The second task for him, the study of Russian-British relations in the early 19th century, required access to documents from the British archives. Finally, the historian added another argument: "The nature of teaching, especially the contemporary history, is required, that I need to have an accurate understanding of the basic phenomena of the Western European life today."⁵ The

¹ Rech A.N.Savina // Otchet o dejatelnosti Obchestva sbliženija s Anglije: 1 god. M., 1917. S. 38

² Savin A.N. Vojna imperij i mir islama: Publichnaja lekcija. M., 1915

³ Ibid. p. 4

⁴ Ibid. p. 24

⁵ NIOR RGB. F. 263. K.30. D.38. L.1

historian desired to get acquainted with post-war Britain, in order to be able to portray it to the new students in the Soviet university.

Russia in the life and works of A.N. Savin

Most clearly A. Savin felt his involvement with the government after he was appointed a lecturer (1903) and then a professor at Moscow University (1907), especially because it happened after the revolution of 1905, when the revolutionary ferment subsided, and the government regained control over higher education, as well as over the minds and souls of the lieges of the empire. The policy of the Ministry of Public Education (under the leadership of A. N. Shvarts and then L. A. Kasso), aimed at limiting the autonomy of the universities, not only instigated the growing conflict between students and professors but also conflicts within the professorial corporation. The mass resignation of professors at Moscow University in 1911 became a serious test for all the progressive-minded scholars, who had to make a difficult decision that could affect their scientific career as well as their private life. What should they do— resign together with the higher university management as an expression of protest against the government politics, or stay at the university, seeking to protect the traditions of its autonomy. For A. N. Savin, the dilemma was complicated by the fact that his closest friends and colleagues were among those who had resigned as well as those who had decided to stay. His colleague from the department D. M. Petrushevsky resigned along with hundreds of professors and senior lecturers of the University of Moscow, but a close friend, S. A. Kotlyarevsky, remained to teach. P. G. Vinogradov resigned from Moscow University for the second time. In A. N. Savin's diary¹ notes written in 1911 one can see that at first the historian was absolutely convinced that he would leave the university with the other staff. Then day after day he moved away from that decision, trying to find an excuse for himself, and hesitant about the consequences of the mass resignation (more than 150 professors and lecturers resigned from the Moscow University in 1911). Very soon he realized that the government was going to replace all the resigned professors with those who had very right-wing political views. Alexander Savin saw that the former rather unified group of progressive professors was divided by this wave of resignations, and those of them who decided to stay came to be seen as traitors by the others as well as by the public opinion. During that difficult period, A. N. Savin tried to prevent the negative effects of mass resignation, at least for his department of world history. He refused to name a candidate to fill the place of his departed colleague (D. M. Petrushevskij), he took an extra class on the history of the Middle Ages, and he tried to do his best to organize the dialog between the two groups of left-wing professors. As a result of his "rebellious" activities, A.Savin

¹ NIOR RGB. F. 263. K.48. D. 1-2.

was considered to be too “left” for the university staff, and as a result of that he did not get the position of full professor when he should have (he became a full professor only in 1914)¹. The majority of the dismissed professors could not return to Moscow University until the February Revolution of 1917.

In those years, A. N. Savin started appearing increasingly in the Cadet press, not only covering the events in England, but also commenting on the situation in Russia. He criticized the Stolypin agrarian reform, because he believed that it could only deepen the social crisis in the country².

The historian was skeptical about the tsarist authorities and government and, like many of his like-minded cadet friends, had a loyal attitude to the February Revolution. However, he quickly became disillusioned because of the policy of the Provisional Government. The changes allowed Moscow University to start the process of bringing back those professors who'd resigned in 1911. But the process was not an easy one: the professors who'd been appointed by the minister after 1911 had to resign. And as it happened before, A. N. Savin took an active part in all the dialogues and discussions between “the remaining” and those who came back. He also participated in the commission which had been organized to have a dialogue with representatives of the young teachers and students (*samoupravlenie*). His active public work (many meetings and discussions were held in A. N. Savin's apartment) led to the fact that in September 1917 he was selected for the post of vice-rector of Moscow University³. Despite the fact that the October Revolution and the subsequent changes in the leadership of higher education did not allow him to take the post for a long time (1917-1918), his colleagues remembered his work at such a difficult time for the university with constant gratitude.

During the first years in the Soviet republic, A. N. Savin experienced all the challenges of the whole academic community—the dismissal of professors, the closure of the faculty, the need to find income, and, together with the whole country, hunger, persecution of the Orthodox Church, and fear for his family's lives. A. N. Savin, like many other historians during the Civil War, got a job in the archive, being for some time the head of a 19th-century department⁴. He became more and more interested in the events of recent history, studied materials on the history of German-Russian and Russian-British relations, and taught a course on British imperialism at the Faculty of Social Sciences at MSU. The historian worked at the Institute of Red Professors and Faculty of Social Sciences (FON) at MSU — they were almost the only institutions in which

¹ See *Sharova A.V.* Alexander Nikolaevich Savin: neizvestnaja ziznj izvestnogo istorika // *Odissej. Chelovek v istorii*. M., 2012. S.212-243; *Sharova A.V.* Universitetskoje soobchestvo I vlastj v nachale XX veka (Po materialam dnevnikovih zapisej A.N.Savina) // *Vestnik RGGU. Serija «Istoricheskiye nauki. Vseobchaja istorija»*. M., 2010. № 18. S. 270-288

² *Savin A.N.* Russkie razrushiteli obschiny I anglijskie ogorazivateli // *Moscovskij ezenedelnik*. 1909. № 2. S.38

³ *ZIAM*. F. 418. Op. 95. D.811

⁴ *NIOR RGB*. F.263. K. 30. D.37 L.1

a professor of history who was forced to hide his former Cadet views could find employment to provide his family. His real attitude to the new Soviet life and power broke through in the poems that A. N. Savin wrote now only for his family. However, even in this complicated situation he was able to stay true to his principles—do not write and do not speak of what he might be ashamed of. Alexander Savin taught the young generation of party historians, urging them by his own example, that a scholar can stay objective in any situation.

For many students A. Savin became an excellent teacher, although his lectures were not easy to listen to, but they showed the course of thinking of the historian, and that is why they were useful. His published lecture courses on the history of the 16th century had been written in expressive language, with vivid and memorable characteristics. Those students who participated in his seminars in Moscow University, Moscow Higher Women's Courses, or the Institute of Red Professors were given the opportunity not only to discuss the proposed topic and to write their papers, but also to see how scrupulously and conscientiously the scholar analyzed their imperfect works¹. Moreover, the historian continued to take care of his students after they finished their education: to help them with a job, to support them in difficult times, and to continue his interest in the results of their research (E.A.Kosminsky, S.V.Fryazinov, S.D.Skazkin, V.M.Lavrovsky²).

In the early 1920's A.N. Savin produced two interesting works: the collections of his sources on the history of the English Revolution of 1649 and on the German Reformation. But those materials were not destined to see the light; after lying in the pre-print version prior to 1929, they were rejected³: a “great turn” affected the study of history. The publication of anthologies of texts in the original languages was irrelevant for the new Soviet science: for better censorship and correct interpretation, the foreign texts should be translated and edited. However, A. N. Savin’s books on the history of the English Revolution, the French Revolution, of the times of Louis XIV continued to be reprinted in the 1920s and the 1930s. Undoubtedly, the credit for this belongs to his student E. A. Kosminskij, who tried to preserve the works of his teacher for the new generations of historians. In December 1943 the meeting of the Department of History and Philosophy of the USSR was devoted to the memory of A. N. Savin⁴. It happened only in the mid-1940s, when the Soviet Union underwent another political campaign against bourgeois ideology, that the writings of the historian were found among the works “alien” to Soviet historical science. The works of A. N. Savin, where so much had been written about the social structure of the English countryside, about the methods by which the holders had been

¹ Among the manuscripts of A. N. Savin in RSL one can see, in particular, his review of papers of the students from the Moscow Higher Women's Courses on the history of the French Revolution / Ibid. F.263.K.25 D. 1-3

² On the personal qualities A. N. Savin some of his students and colleagues wrote in the papers devoted to him. See. Pamiati Alexandra Nikolaevicha Savina. 1873-1923: Sbornik statej. M., 1926

³ NIOR RGB. F. 263. K.28.D.1, K.29.D.1

⁴ *Skazkin S.D.* Alexander Nikolajevich Savin//Istoricheskij zurnal. 1944. № 7-8. S. 39-42

deprived of land in the times of enclosure, about the revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, were declared an example of "bourgeois objectivism." None of those labels could detract from the dignity of the work by this Russian historian, but his disciples were forced to remove the name of the teacher from the dedications in their books¹. Praising the work of historians of the Russian agricultural school also did not fit the appropriate ideological framework and became the subject of criticism. But today, when the Soviet state itself and its ideology have become the subject of study by historians, we can reconstruct the full history of Russian and Soviet historiography, which wouldn't be complete without a mention of the life and the works of Alexander Nikolaevich Savin.

¹ It was about the book by V.M.Lavrovskij (who'd been one of Savin's students) "Očerki po istorii anglijskogo manora v XVI-XVII vv", which was revised in accordance with the new requirements. During the discussion in the sector of Medieval History, Institute of History, it was not recommended for printing. The dedication of the book to the memory of Savin played its role too./ Archiv RAN (Archive of the Russian Academy of sciences . F.1676. Op.1. D.220. L.1

Antonina V. Sharova

National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia); Department of
History; associate professor
asharova@hse.ru

**Any opinions or claims contained in this Working Paper do not necessarily
reflect the views of HSE.**