

Notes and Comments

A Russian Diplomat in China: The Papers of Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann at McGill

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Introduction

Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann (1873-1941) worked as a diplomat for the Russian Imperial government in various cities in China from 1898 until diplomatic relations were severed in 1920. He remained in China for some years, working for the Russian and British Concessions helping to resettle Russians passing through China as a result of White Russian immigration.

The archive consists of personal and official documents and photographs dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is supplemented by a collection of rare books and newspapers published in Russian and English largely in China.

Until now, this archive has not been the subject of any scholarly study. The material it contains provides a unique view of the life and times of the Russian community in China during a turbulent period of history through the eyes of a Russian diplomat and his family. Official reports and personal letters reflect detailed descriptions of many historical events. In addition, a small collection of material relates to the affairs of Mikhail Skriabin, Vice-Governor of Lublin, father of Petr Tiedemann's wife, Adelaida Mikhailovna.

The archive of Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann was donated to the Department of Russian and Slavic Studies in the late 1970's by his son Dmitrii Petrovich Tiedemann. The Department deposited the collection with the Libraries in May, 1995, at which time it was organized and catalogued by visiting archivist Alexander Berdnikov. Before his death in 1941, Petr Tiedemann himself began generally to organize his papers. Professor Berdnikov has preserved and refined the original order of the documents which now fill forty boxes. A catalogue of the material is under preparation. It will soon be made available for study in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Libraries.

Concise Biography

Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann was born on the 14th of October 1842 in Kazan, Russia to a noble family of German Lutheran heritage. His father, Genrikh Ottonovich Tiedemann (1839-1889), was made a nobleman and held the rank of Full State Councillor. His mother, Tat'iana Petrovna, nee Savel'eva, (?-1877) was from a Russian Orthodox family, the daughter of a doctor. Besides Petr they had six other children: Ekaterina (born 1868), Anna (born 1870), Maks (1875-1917), Boris (born 1879), Tat'iana (born 1881), and Vadim (1888-1926).

Petr graduated from the Third Classical Gymnasium and then from the Department of Oriental Languages of the University of Saint Petersburg in 1894. From 1895, he served in the diplomatic service at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from 1896-1898 as a student stagiaire with the Imperial Russian Diplomatic Mission in Peking. From 1898 through 1899 he was in charge of the Russian Consulate in Foochow; from 1900 through 1901 he was a secretary and translator with the Diplomatic office in Port Arthur under the Director of the Kwantun Region, Adjutant General

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E. A. Alekseev; from 1902 through 1905 he served as Vice Consul in Chefoo; from 1906 through 1907 as Consul in Mukden; from 1907 through 1908 as a civil servant with the Diplomatic office in Khabarovsk under the Governor General of Priamur; from 1908 through 1910 as Russian Consul in Hong Kong; from 1911 through 1913 as Consul in Niuchjan; from 1914 as Consul and from 1915 through 1920 as Consul General in Tientsin on the staff of the Russian Imperial Diplomatic Mission. From 1921 through 1934 he was Municipal Consul of the Russian Concession in Tientsin and from 1934-1937 a servant of the Municipal Consul of the British Concession in Han'kou. In 1934 he received permission from the British authorities for temporary residency in England. In 1937 he moved to Montreal, Canada where his son Dmitrii (born 1906) lived. Petr Genrikhovich was married to Adelaida Mikhailovna Skriabin (??-1925). She was from a Russian Orthodox background, the daughter of Full State Councillor M.D. Skriabin who served his last years as Vice Governor of Lublin. He died in 1907. Besides their son Dmitrii, Petr and Adelaida had two daughters: Tat'iana (born 1903) and Anna (born 1905).

Petr Genrikhovich died in Montreal on 25 June, 1941. A memorial service was held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul at noon on 26 June. The resting place of his ashes is unknown.

Itemized List of Selected Documents

Code K-5/1 Category IF (Iconographic Fond)

- File 1: photographs - 17 (of which 3 are on documents);
- File 2: drawings - 11 (of which 1 is on a document);
- File 3: postcards and postal envelopes - 36;
- File 4: works of Chinese applied art - 3;
- File 5: photographs clipped from newspapers - 3;
- File 6: Miscellaneous - 11 documents.

Some Rare Photographs (from File 1):

- 1 - Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann and Konstantin Vladimirovich Snegirev (an ophthalmologist from Moscow);
- 2 - Mother and brothers of Adelaida Mikhailovna Tiedemann (nee Skriabina), near a Russian church in Riga (photograph on a postcard; also contains the text of a letter by M.D. Skriabin, Vice-Governor of Lublin and Full State Councillor); inscription: "[To] A.M. Tiedemann, Port Arthur, c/o General Bazilevskii";
- 5 - P.G. Tiedemann, Consul General A.N. Timchenko-Ostroverkhov and others (all inscriptions on this photograph were made by Dmitrii Tiedemann);
- 10 - P.G. Tiedemann (in his sixtieth year) with some members of the Chefoo Club, China, 1932;
- 11 - Feofil Iosifovich Girtman, railroad engineer, known for the construction of the southern portion of the East China Railroad from In'kou (Niuchjan) to Port Arthur; photo taken in 1901;
- 12 - Dmitrii Petrovich Tiedemann wearing a Russian Scout uniform; a form with the Provisional Government letterhead, with seals of the Consulate in Dalian and the text of his personal identification of 9 May 1923 for the move from China to America; and the letter from his father (28 March 1934) and a poem by his grandfather Genrikh Tiedemann, dated 1889;
- 15 - Photograph of the family of Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann: his wife Adelaida Mikhailovna and children

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Adelaida Mikhailovna and Petr Genrikhovich around the time of their marriage on the 6th October, 1902.
(Photo: O.F. German)

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Tatiana, Anna and Dmitrii, on the passport of 14 April 1920, issued by the Russian Consulate in Tientsin for a trip to Harbin (with translations into Chinese and English); also here is a later letter to Dmitrii of 22 March 1934;

17 - Petr Prokudin, with a gift inscription of 24 November 1923; mailed to China from Seattle, U.S.A.

Code K-5/2 Category ROD (Rare Official Document)

- 1 - Notice of the funeral service in the Kresto-Vozdvizhenskii Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Lublin for Vice-Governor and Full State Councillor Mikhail Dmitrievich Skriabin (the father of Adelaida Mikhailovna Tiedemann), held on 15 May 1907;
- 2 - Text of an Imperial Manifesto of the Russian Emperor Nicholas II on his abdication (a clipping from the newspaper *Kharbinskii Vestnik* signed by the editor P. Tishchenko); from a letter by Uspenskii of 4 March 1917;
- 3 - "The list of persons who offered their greetings in the Naval Assembly [of Port Arthur] on the Day of Holy Easter, 9 April 1900", among them Vice Admiral E.I. Alekseev, Rear Admiral M.G. Veselago, Count V.I. Golovin, Prince A.A. Dolgorukov, Hieromonk Innokentii (later Metropolitan and Head of the Russian Church Mission in China), Count A.G. Kankrin, Baron A.K. Kaul'bars, Prince D.P. Maksutov, Major General I.K. MacDonald, Rear Admiral O.V. Stark, Major General A.M. Stessel, Baron B.A. von Taube, Baron G.N. von Taube, P.G. Tiedemann and others; also a mess list of 14 Russian naval ships and a list of women;
- 4 - The original Certificate issued to P.G. Tiedemann authorizing the holder "to search for and develop gold deposits in the Kwantun Region and the neighbouring islands, based on Order... number 36 of 1 June 1901...", sealed and personally signed by the Chief Officer and Adjutant General Ev. Alekseev (issued on 10 July 1901, registration number 164);
- 5 - A copy of a telegram from the Council of Elders of the Russian Colony in Tientsin to the Russian Foreign Minister of 19 May 1917 with a request to remove Consul Tiedemann. Here is an excerpt from the text: "...A Russian clerk Kovalev, who decorated public buildings with red banners for Easter, was fired by Tiedemann under a petty formalistic pretext. In addition, he demonstratively refused to pay the bill for the red banners, amounting to no more than nine rubles."
- 6 - Original manuscript of *Review of the Negotiations Between Russia and Japan Aimed at Concluding a Treaty on Trade and Navigation*, 30 pp.
- 7 - *Collected Laws and Decrees of the Government [of Russia] Published by the Ruling Senate*, issue 154 of 3 July 1914, 16 pp.; part 1 reproduces "The Bill on Establishing New Departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Their Personnel...". Paragraph 3 in Chapter 1 reads: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs keeps... the State Seal which, according to the Main Laws of the Empire, is applied to [all] state acts as proof of their final approval by the Highest Imperial Authority...". Paragraph 4: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is composed of: 1 - the Minister; 2- two Deputy Ministers; 3 - central departments; and 4 - foreign departments. Paragraph 5: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also includes... 3 - diplomatic officials attached to the Irkutsk and Amur Governors General" (the latter is important for compiling a new biography of Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann);
- 8 - Text of Decrees: No. 1 of 30 January and no. 2 of 1 March, 1922 for the Semirechensk Cossack Army, signed by its Army Ataman and Major General of the General Staff Ionov: "...Thrown together with a handful

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of Semirechensk Cossacks to a faraway land, living in an accidental yet difficult exile...I am with you with all my heart, and in my thoughts I share your fate and your destiny... Our great country has been reduced to a savage desert. Amidst the ruins of burned-down Russia, alarmed Soviet wise men are sounding a retreat, and their actions betray attempts to return to capitalism...Bolshevism...is dying the death it bears in itself...Enough of our brothers' blood... of firing squads... of executions and new graves..., of widows and orphans...Russian people, come to your senses!";

- 9 - Filled-out form for the "Classification of the Number of Refugees Without Specific Occupations" (the document bears no date, signature, or any mention of the geographical area where it was compiled), includes 336 persons classified by profession, gender, religion, and family status;
- 10 - "Announcement" by the Russian Imperial Consulate General in Shanghai of 7 February 1905, signed by Consul General Kleimenov, concerning the creation of special commissions to review the cases of "Russian citizens arriving from Port Arthur and Japan...",
- 11 - original manuscript by P.G. Tiedemann, containing his comments on the Portsmouth Treaty between Russia and Japan, 21 pp.;
- 12 - comments on the Russo-Japanese Trade Treaty, an article clipped from the newspaper *Novoe Vremia* (St.Petersburg) of 13 September 19??;
- 13 - a clipping from an unknown publication satirizing Soviet life in the 1920s, entitled "The Battle Song of a Bolshevik". It mocks absurd documents issued by Revolutionary Military Councils, such as that given to Comrade Evdokimov by the Tagil Military Commissar: "...the bearer is authorized to acquire a young lady. And nobody... should resist him...";
- 14 - full text of the "Proposed Consular Judicial Code" of 1919, "manuscript copyright", Shanghai, Russian Book Publishers, 91 pp.; reproduces 566 articles, two appendices, and "personnel Lists of Russian Consular Court Chambers in Constantinople, Peking and Teheran; Consular Courts in Jerusalem, Constantinople, Meshed, Tabriz, Teheran, Rasht, Harbin, Urge, and Kashgar".

Code K-5/3 Category RD (Rare Document)

- 1 - original personal letter from the Russian Ambassador to China Prince N. Kudashev to P.G. Tiedemann of 30 June (Old Style) 1920;
- 2 - original personal letter from General Dm. L. Khorvat to P.G. Tiedemann of 31 December 1921, from Peking; the letter praises the *Commercial and Industrial Business Directory* published by Tiedemann;
- 3 - original personal letter from Prince Meshcherskii of 12 August 1905 from Peking; the letter informs us that P. Tiedemann was awarded the Order of St. Stanislaw of the 3rd degree;
- 4 - official letter from E.K. Nozhkin, military correspondent for the newspapers *Novosti* and *Novyi Krai* of 9 October 1904 from Port Arthur to Chefoo, addressed to Vice Consul P.G. Tiedemann;
- 5 - original personal letter from A. Bel'chenko (formerly Consul General) of 17 January 1922 from Han'kou;
- 6 - original personal letter from K. Annenkov of 18 October 1923;

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- 7 - typewritten copy of an article from the evening newspaper *Rupor* of 4 March 1922, issue 157 (published in Harbin since 1912);
- 8 - typewritten literary work "A Song of Hatred Toward England", 5 pp. (author unknown);
- 9 - several personal invitations from Vice Admiral E. Alekseev, Chief Administrator of the Kwantun Region (the first is dated 14 March 1900);
- 10 - personal letter from M.D. Skriabin, Vice-Governor of Lublin, of 1 May 1906;
- 11 - part of the original letter from relatives in the USSR (Leningrad) of 8 November 1926 and 6 May 1929 (diary notes, author unknown);
- 12 - typewritten copies of official bulletins on the action on the Western Front (World War I), June-July 1916, 5 pp.;
- 13 - nine original personal letters from General A. Ionov, 1922;
- 14 - original official letter from General N.V. Nikonov, No.1 of 20 March 1923; the letter mentions the power of attorney given by Lieutenant General Grigorii Mikhailovich Semenov, Ataman of the Transbaikalian Cossack Army (registered in the Russian Consulate General in Nagasaki as No.14 on 9 March 1923). It aims at recovering from Citizen P.S. Nakhabov the amount of \$138,000 and appeals to P.G. Tiedemann to facilitate the case;
- 15 - original personal letter from General B.P. Vasil'ev of the 25 July 1922 with a request for help in finding employment;
- 16 - original letter of reference for General K.V. Lovtsov, of 10 October 1922 from Mukden;
- 17 - personal letter from an unknown person dated 13 November 1923 from Shanghai telling of the upcoming 25th anniversary of Andrei Terent'evich Bel'chenko's service at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- 18 - typewritten lyrics to the song "March of Siberian Troops" (author unknown);
- 19 - typewritten Agreement between the Russian Consulate and Citizen S.M. Viazigin on a 10-year lease of government land belonging to the Russian Concession in Tientsin;
- 20 - original handwritten revolutionary appeal (or a flyer) "On the Meeting at the St. Petersburg University", of 2 February 1902;
- 21 - text of the revolutionary appeal "Comrades!" with demands for political freedom, published by the "Radicals' Credit Union", signed by "a group of St. Petersburg University students";
- 22 - text of the revolutionary appeal "To Society", published by the Radicals' Credit Union, 3 February 1902;
- 23 - resolution of a student meeting at the Kiev University held on 24 January 1902 published by the Radicals' Credit Union, St. Petersburg, 3 February 1902; contains demands of autonomy for all institutions of higher learning in Russia.

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Code K-5/4 Category DP (Diplomatic Correspondence)

- 1 - report by Consul General P.G. Tiedemann to the First Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, numbered 660 of 16 August 1919; mentions the fact that at the time, he was Doyen of the Consular Corps;
- 2 - copy of a letter to the Russo-Chinese Bank branch director in Hong Kong, numbered 13, of 13 January 1910, on a letterhead of the Russian Imperial Consulate, 3 pp.;
- 3 - two copies of a letter to the Chief Director of the Russo-Chinese bank in Shanghai, numbered 14, of 13 January 1910, 3 pp.;
- 4 - copy of a report to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London; No.27 of 29 January 1910, from Hong Kong, signed by Consul Tiedemann, 4 pp.;
- 5 - report to the Russian Imperial Mission on Peking from Hong Kong, No.32 of 4 February 1910, 13 pp. (copy); contains important information concerning the military riot in Canton on 28-31 January, mentions the new Viceroy Iuan-su-shun, names of the Chinese peoples Hakka and Punti from Kwang-si Province, reports on the emergence of a new clandestine society "of the Small Knife" in Canton and of the persecution of those belonging to it by the Chinese authorities;
- 6 - report by the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking (copy) from Hong Kong, No.41 of 4 March 1910, 4 pp.; mentions the steamer Cleveland which sailed around the world for the Hamburg-American Line Society, as well as flyers issued by the Canton Society to Protect Chinese Borders on the subject of Macao borders;
- 7 - report to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London, No. 42 of 6 March 1910 and to the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No. 43 of the same date, 11 pp.; reports on the stone-laying ceremony at the future university building site in Hong Kong on 3/16 March in the presence of 2000 guests; construction was funded by the stockbroker Hormasji Mody, a Parsee; also mentions T'ao tai Wei Han, head of the delegation representing the Viceroys of Lian-guan and Lian-jian and the Colony's Governor Sir Frederick Lugard;
- 8 - report to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London, No.49 of 15/28 March, 5 pp. on the opium market conditions, speculations, and monopolies; mentions that the opium trade was particularly important as one of the main revenue producers for the colony.
- 9 - copy of a letter to the Volunteer Fleet Agency in Vladivostok, No.44 of 25 February 1909, on the establishment of a regular postal and passenger steamship line between Shanghai and Dalian, which changed some of the postal routings between Hong Kong and Europe via Manchuria and Siberia; also contains the Consul's request for statistical data on the Volunteer Fleet cargo, postal and passenger traffic on all Far Eastern lines;
- 10 - report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs First Department, No.51 of 4 March 1901, 3 pp.; on the transfer of Vice-Consular duties in Chefoo to Collegiate Assessor Kristi in September 1905;
- 11 - copy of the report by the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No.75 of 6 April 1909, 3 pp., on the cargo traffic on the steamer line between Hong Kong and Haiphong and on the Chinese skill in protecting their economic interests by exploiting the competition among Europeans;
- 12 - copy of a letter to General V.E. Flug, No.117 of 13 May 1909, 4 pp.; requests information on the status of foreign consular representatives in Vladivostok;

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- 13 - copy of a report by the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No. 191 of 7 September 1909, 16 pp., stating that on 20 August (old style) the Governor of Hong Kong signed a new bill closing opium dens and that the local press was highly critical of this move by the Colony's Legislative Council;
- 14 - reports to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London, No.197 of 18 September 1909, and to the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No.198 of the same date (copies), 10 pp., reporting that Hong Kong introduced new taxes on the sale of alcoholic beverages effective 4/17 September, with tax rates included;
- 15 - report to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London, No.202 of 22 September, 4 pp., stating that the deadline set by the Hong Kong administration for applications for the opium monopoly buyouts had expired. Also predicts no deficit in the Colony's budget for the next several years due to the taxation of trade in alcoholic beverages;
- 16 - report to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London, No.220 of 13 October, 12 pp., on the construction of a new Kowloon-Canton Railroad through the British Colony's territory and on the concession obtained by the Chinese Government in 1898 for these purposes; also on the views of Governor Sir Matthew Nathan (1904) regarding the unification of Hong Kong and Canton;
- 17 - copy of a report by the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No.224 of 19 October 1909, 7 p., on the increase of anti-foreigner activities by the "Self-Rule Society" in Canton (after declarations by several foreign Ambassadors to the Chinese Government); on the strong revival of the anti-Japanese boycott triggered by the Sino-Japanese agreement on the TSian'-dao area and the railroads in Manchuria; and on the meeting of the "Society for the Protection of Chinese Borders" in Canton on 4 October to discuss the border with Macao;
- 18 - copy of a report by the Imperial Russian Mission in Peking, No.231 of 2 November 1909, 4 pp., on the 9th meeting of the Sino-Portuguese Commission on the Borders of the Portuguese Colony of Macao;
- 19 - copy of a report by the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No.233 of 3 November, 4 pp., on the postponement of His Majesty's Birthday celebrations in Hong Kong, which was considered humiliating to all Britons;
- 20 - copy of a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Personnel Department, No.240 of 20 November 1909, 10 pp., on the condition of the office space occupied by the Russian Consulate in Hong Kong (in response to the request No.9057 of 8 October);
- 21 - report to the Russian Imperial Embassy in London, No.179 of 22 December 1908, 7 pp., on the lifting of martial law in Hong Kong, which the Governor had introduced in response to anti-Japanese rioting, and on the deportation of riot leaders from the Colony without trial;
- 22 - copy of *Report of The Russian Imperial Consulate in Hong Kong for 1908*, 26 pp.; analyses information on this British Colony in the following fields: industry, trade, merchant navigation, shipbuilding, the ties of the Consulates with various organizations, preparation and issuance of documents (appeals and complaints from private citizens, deaths, inheritance cases, etc.);
- 23 - copy of *Report on the Current Political and Economic Situation in Canton, in Connection with Desirability to Establish a Full Russian Consulate in This City*, 34 pp.;
- 24 - copy of the telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Amur Governor General in Khabarovsk, of 14 March 1908, "on assigning the diplomatic official Tiedemann to Hong Kong to direct the Consulate";

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- 25 - copy of a telegram from the Amur Governor General to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, of 15 March 1909: "...I have no objections to assigning Tiedemann to Hong Kong, although I sincerely regret the loss of such an excellent and capable official", signed personally by General Unterberger;
- 26 - original letter from the Amur Governor General, No.9302 of 12 November 1908, expressing gratitude to Petr Genrikhovich Tiedemann for his useful service in Khabarovsk;
- 27 - copy of the report by the Russian Imperial Mission in Peking, No. 974 of 23 December 1920, 4 pp. It is one of the last official documents signed by P.G. Tiedemann as Consul General in Tientsin and reports on depositing the Consulate's monetary funds in a branch of the Russo-Asian Bank with a postulation "...that withdrawals can be made only on orders from the legally recognized Government of All Russia" (the letter bears a special marking "Under the Terms of Closure").