

THE HISTORY PROJECT: RESEARCH REPORT

On 26 December 1964, Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov, a lifelong oil worker turned high-level Soviet bureaucrat, delivered a report to top policymakers in Moscow. Summarizing the recent completion of the first oil pipeline network linking Russian oilfields with Eastern Bloc refineries, he tactfully set the terms of a forthcoming debate about the amount of fossil fuel it would carry over the next six years. “The construction of the aforementioned pipelines took place with close cooperation between [the five countries involved],” he wrote, “was based on selfless mutual aid, and represents one of the clearest manifestations of the principles of the international socialist division of labor.” East Germany produced the medium-capacity pumps; Czechoslovakia, large-diameter valves; Poland, medium-diameter pipes; and Hungary, telematic communications systems. Moreover, all of this work was organized under the technical supervision of the Soviet Union. “Therefore, the country-participants in the project gave the entire assembly the name ‘*Druzhiba*’[,]” the veteran oilman explained — or the Russian word for “friendship.”¹ More than a political flourish, the name, he implied, reflected productive socialist economic integration on a continental scale.

My research into the conception, planning, and construction of the *Druzhiba* oil pipeline network — the largest in the world — explores the extent to which Baibakov’s claims were true. It asks first how exactly did Communist Party leaders divide “international socialist labor” among their countries to complete the massive infrastructure project, and second, whether their decisions ultimately influenced the development of a variety of distinct political economies in Europe’s socialist sphere. With support from the History Project and Institute for New Economic Thinking, I sought answers to these questions in Russia and the Czech Republic over roughly ten weeks between April and June 2017. Focusing primarily on the records of the state-owned

enterprises that built and operated *Druzhba*, I visited a total of six repositories in four cities.

These included the Russian State Library (RGB) and the Archive of Foreign Politics (AVP RF) in Moscow, the National Archives and National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (NA RT and NM RT) in Kazan, the National Library of the Czech Republic (NK CZ) in Prague, as well as the Moravian Provincial Archive (MZA) in Brno. In each, I found material that will allow me to contribute a necessary historical perspective to ongoing debates about varieties of capitalism in post-communist Europe today.

I worked in Moscow for four days, from 10 through 14 April, and split my time almost evenly between the RGB and AVP RF. In the former, I copied several bodies of literature that I had identified weeks earlier at the conclusion of a yearlong Fulbright-Hays Fellowship. First among these was three books on the history of the Soviet oil industry written by Sergei Levovich Kniazev, a top Communist Party official who organized the exploitation of the giant petroleum deposit that supplied *Druzhba* with oil during its first decades of operation, *Romashkino*.² In the latter, I worked with the records of the Soviet diplomatic missions to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany, specifically those pertaining to the oil trade.³ These included declassified briefings on domestic and international developments that Soviet diplomats had compiled from local newspapers and trade journals. Taken together, these sources not only shed light on the relationship between large energy infrastructure projects and the “international socialist division of labor,” but also on how that division reflected structural differences in the political economies such infrastructure united.

At end of my stay in Moscow, I travelled 500 miles east to Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Russian region where *Druzhba* begins. There, I worked in the records of three enterprises that played key roles in the pipeline’s history: *Tatneftegazrazvedka*, *Tatneft*,

and *Tatnefteprovodstroi*. Those of the first and second were preserved in NA RT, and those of the third in NM RT. *Tatneftegazrazvedka* was the geological survey trust that discovered *Romashkino* in July 1948. Almost a decade later, it was incorporated into *Tatneft*, the extraction enterprise created in 1950 specifically to manage the field's development. *Tatnefteprovodstroi*, meanwhile, built *Druzhba*'s head section in 1962. This fed oil from *Romashkino* into the system's large trunkline that began some 300 kilometers to the southeast. In NA RT, I worked with official records that illuminated enterprise operations, such as annual reports, meeting minutes, and central plans.⁴ In NM RT, however, I worked with photo albums created by employees that offered glimpses into everyday life on the firm's shop floors and construction sites. All of these materials, which I gathered over the month of May, provided insights into *Druzhba*'s origins in the early 1960s.

I began the final leg of my travels in early June, when I left Russia for the Czech Republic to collect further information on those origins. Unpublished archival documents I discovered in Moscow in summer 2016 reveal that Soviet leaders first conceived of *Druzhba* in 1957 to meet the rapidly-growing energy needs of Czechoslovakia in particular.⁵ I therefore spent several days in the NK CR in Prague copying journalistic accounts of *Druzhba*'s construction, Czech-language literature on the "international socialist division of labor," and materials produced by the Slovnaft oil refinery.⁶ Still a going concern today, Slovnaft, located in Bratislava, was built atop a nationalized private enterprise called Apollo in the late 1950s, and later became one of *Druzhba*'s largest nodes. After completing work in Prague, I travelled briefly to Brno by train to study Apollo more closely through records preserved in the MZA. These included files on the company's nationalization in the late 1940s along with reports on the firm's performance during its earliest years as a state-owned enterprise. Combined with the

material above, these sources will enable me to craft a rich and textured narrative in my dissertation.

Although I completed my research only recently, I have already drawn some preliminary conclusions from the material gathered. Chief among them concern the structural evolution of the Soviet oil firm. Since the Cold War, scholars of Soviet economic history have claimed that the country's command system remained structurally unchanged after the 1930s. British economist Philip Hanson perhaps summarized the argument best: "The basic institutions of the Soviet economic system took shape in the First Five-Year Plan (1928/29-1932)," Hanson wrote in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy* (2003). "Subsequent modifications were numerous, but not substantial. Basically, the whole economy was run like a single giant corporation — USSR, Inc."⁷ But while Hanson's argument is true of the institutions at the top of Soviet administrative pyramids, it does not, I now believe, pertain to those at the bottom, or what the Soviets actually called enterprises. Indeed, Soviet oil firms took on an entirely new form in 1954/1955, when reforms separated managers and operators into distinct departments. Moreover, they adopted their final form only in 1970, when the majority of the USSR's largest firms also began extracting natural gas. Such changes, I contend, have important implications for our understanding of Soviet planning and economic development more generally.

Over the short term, specifically from 25-27 August, I plan to present these and similar findings at an international conference hosted by the Center for Urban History in Lviv, Ukraine titled "The Ins and Outs of Socialism: Visions and Experiences of Urban Change in the Second World." Over the medium term, my colleague at Kazan Federal University in Russia, Professor R. A. Tsiunchuk, and I plan to coauthor an article on the early-twentieth-century origins of the oil industry in Russia's Volga-Ural Region. Lastly, over the long term, I intend to defend my

dissertation and, if circumstances permit, later publish a revised version as a book. To that end, I have already completed a broad outline of a manuscript that I plan to expand into six individual chapter outlines over the next three months. I then intend to draft the first three chapters by this December, and the last three by May 2018. Support from the History Project and Institute of New Economic Thinking, then, has not only enabled me to complete dissertation research, but also to set a research agenda over the coming year that likely includes interventions in debates on European energy policy, comparative political economy, and Russian economic development.

¹ Russian State Archive of the Economy, fond 279, opis #####, delo ##### (hereafter RGAE, f., op., d.).

² See for example S. L. Kniazev, *Neft Tatarii: Stranitsa istorii* (Kazan: Kazanskoe khizhnoe izd., 1981).

³ See for example AVP RF fonds 77 and 742.

⁴ See for example NA RT fonds R-7245, R-7246, and R-7225.

⁵ RGAE, f. 4372, op. #####, d. #####

⁶ See for example, Jan Tůma and Alice Marešová, *Magistrály družby* (Prague: NPL, 1963).

⁷ Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR from 1945* (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2003), 9.