

Oksana Zakharova¹

The Regulatory Framework of the Soviet Diplomatic Protocol. History of Formation

1. Introduction

The concept of “diplomacy” combines the foreign policy activities of state leaders and supreme authorities. At various stages of the development of society, the methods and means of diplomacy changed, which, both in the past and at present, use various forms of visual communication technologies that have been developed by man since ancient times and continue to be created at present.

The non-verbal language of communication (sign language, costume, heraldry (emblems, banners, flags) in ceremonial culture serves not only for self-identification and personal identification, but primarily for the identification of society.

Ceremonial is the highest level of organizational behavioral model built on the rules of etiquette.

The next organizational model of human behavior in society is a protocol, that is, a set of certain norms, traditions and conventions adopted in domestic politics and international relations.

The novelty of the study is that the author considers the diplomatic legal culture as a component of the image of the state, in which ideology

¹ Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Independent Researcher, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2143-7020>, mikepriluki@gmail.com.

influenced all aspects of society, including the rules of communication between a Soviet citizen and foreign partners.

The relevance of the work is determined both by insufficient knowledge of the problem and by the fact that the study of regulatory acts of the Soviet protocol expands our ideas about the internal and foreign policies of the USSR, about the history of international relations of the 20th century.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the evolution of the Soviet protocol as an instrument of the state's foreign policy, and to reveal its role in shaping the image of the USSR, based on an analysis of regulatory documents.

2. The Soviet protocol in the 20–30s of the XX century. Formation and development

In the Russian Empire, as well as in other imperial states, court etiquette strictly regulated the palace life. It was determined in advance who accompanies the monarch, how the highest exits, audience ceremonies, balls, dinners are held.

The grammar of secular ceremonies was developed in the Department of Ceremonial Affairs, annexed in 1858 to the Ministry of the Imperial Court. The work of the Department took place in two directions. The first was the organization of relations with the Diplomatic Corps. The second was in the organization of ceremonial court celebrations².

The Ministry of the Imperial Court ceased to exist after the February Revolution of 1917 and the abdication of Nicholas II from the throne. Issues of the protocol were transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the October 1917 coup.

Ideology could not but influence the protocol. Diplomatic ranks were abolished, ambassadors and envoys were replaced by “diplomatic representatives.”

All issues of protocol standards in relations with foreign representatives were concentrated in the Secretariat of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.

² Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire (CCL RE-2). V. XXXIII. № 33978.

After the October Revolution and the Civil War codified protocol practice collapsed.

In 1922 a separate Protocol unit (protocol subdivision) was created, transformed on November 12, 1923 into the Protocol department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (PCFA) of the USSR.

After the capital was transferred to Moscow, by the end of 1921, 15 official diplomatic missions were accredited in the city.

The protocol service of the PCFA (subsequently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) since the 1920s was headed by:

- 1922–1934 – Florinsky Dmitry Timofeevich
- 1935–1941 – Barkov Vladimir Nikolaevich
- 1941–1950 – Molochkov Fedor Fedorovich
- 1950–1953 – Kulazhenkov Anatoly Georgievich
- 1953–1954 – Zhukov Dmitry Alexandrovich
- 1954–1955 – Kiselev Evgeny Dmitrievich
- 1955–1969 – Molochkov Fedor Fedorovich
- 1969–1973 – Kolokolov Boris Leonidovich
- 1973–1986 – Nikiforov Dmitry Semenovich³
- 1986–1994 – Chernyshev Vladimir Ivanovich
- 1995–1998 – Borisov Alexander Filippovich.

The staff of the Protocol Department numbered five people (head, deputy head, referent, secretary, correspondent). Subsequently the staff increased to 12 persons.

People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs G.V. Chicherin and D.T. Florinsky were looking for ways to "reconcile" European protocol diplomatic norms with the norms of Soviet ideology.

In 1923 D.T. Florinsky approved the "Brief instruction on the observance of the rules of etiquette adopted in bourgeois society"⁴, which contains the main ideological principle of the Soviet protocol – representatives of the workers and peasants government, observing the "necessary minimum that cannot be reached below" should not become slaves to "alien to us in spirit etiquette", which they are obliged to follow in view of the current political situation, but at the same time, obeying

³ Lyadov P.F. History of the Russian Protocol. M., 2004. p. 161–162.

⁴ Archive of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation (AFP RF). F. 057. I. 3. F. 101. C. 1. P. 20–25.

bourgeois etiquette do not attach “any meaning to all these ceremonies and try to simplify them”⁵.

In 1924 by a resolution of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, the Guidelines were approved for plenipotentiaries abroad, containing recommendations on protocol issues. The document emphasized that the misunderstandings caused by the refusal of our diplomats to participate in ceremonies of a monarchical nature should be eliminated in advance, explaining that this step is connected with ideology and should not interfere with international relations.

In 1926 a circular was sent to the heads of the departments, in which it was ordered to coordinate all issues relating to communication with diplomatic representatives with the Protocol Department of the PCFA.

The first official regulation of the privileges and immunities of foreign diplomatic representatives is contained in a resolution of August 27, 1926 “On the Procedure for Relations between Government Agencies and Officials of the USSR and Union Republics with Government Agencies and Officials of Foreign States”, as well as a resolution of January 14, 1927 on diplomatic and consular missions in the USSR.

By the mid-1920s, it became obvious that the protocol did not belong to any party, the international protocol was “adopted” by Soviet diplomacy.

Party ideology could not but influence the content of the regulatory documents of the Soviet protocol, but at the same time, the protocol, according to world practice, denied and did not recognize the so-called “leaderism”.

At official diplomatic ceremonies protocol seniority was as follows: Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars, People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, other people’s commissars, Secretary of the Central Executive Committee, Deputy People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, People’s Commissars of the RSFSR, other deputy people’s commissars of the USSR, members of the collegium of people’s commissariats of the USSR, members of the Revolutionary Military Council, deputy people’s commissars of the RSFSR.

⁵ Ibid. P. 20.

Despite the active work of the Protocol Department of the PCFA, it would be too bold to say that by the mid-30s there was a tendency to consolidate the norms of the diplomatic protocol, which apply both to the ceremony of meeting and seeing off foreign delegations, and to the rules of conduct of diplomatic workers themselves, accredited in Moscow.

In this regard, the February 1, 1935 meeting of the Polish charge d'affaires with a representative of the PCFA, who demanded that the Polish diplomat explain the behavior of some members of the diplomatic corps, who were sitting at one of the official events during the "singing of our anthem", was significant⁶.

In response to this the Polish diplomat stated that he believed that "it is not the anthem that is being performed, but a party song sung." The words of the "International", in his opinion, do not have the character of an anthem, but are a song of revolutionary workers calling for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. That is why he considered the anthem a musical performance and in solemn occasions he always stood up. In this situation, it was not about the performance of the anthem when Kalinin appeared in his honor as the head of state, but about the singing of the "International" in honor of Stalin, as the leader of the proletariat.

In response to the arguments of the Polish diplomat the representative of the PCFA noted that his explanations only worsened the situation. The representatives of bourgeois states do not like the words of the "International", just as we do not like the words of many national anthems, especially monarchist ones. But compliance with international courtesy compels our representatives to always stand up or lay bare their heads while performing hymns. What would the Polish authorities say if our Soviet representative in Warsaw, while singing the Polish anthem in honor of Pilsudski, defiantly sat explaining this that Pilsudski is not a formal head of state?

In turn, the diplomat noted that the "protocol ceremonial"⁷ was not developed in the USSR, which would determine when diplomats should stand up, especially since he had heard the singing of the "International"

⁶ AFP RF. F. 057. I. 15. F. 112. C. 2. P. 1.

⁷ AFP RF. F. 057. I. 15. F. 112. C. 2. P. 1.

many times in different languages and everyone understood this was revolutionary song.

The Soviet side continued to insist that in these situations no rules were required, just as it is clear to everyone that when playing the anthem you need to stand up.

Another claim by the PCFA to the Diplomatic corps was the reluctance of diplomats to welcome the Soviet leaders in a standing position. In particular when people in the hall greeted Voroshilov with applause at the opening of the congress, many diplomats stood up, as they personally knew Voroshilov, but when the ovations to strangers began, in particular to Stalin, they did not rise.

As a result of this conversation the PCFA decided not to make representations to the respective embassies (approximately half of the diplomats, including representatives from Germany and Japan, did not stand up to the performance of the International), hoping that they themselves would understand “their incorrect behavior”⁸.

In 1934 D.T. Florinsky was arrested. In 1935 the Protocol Department was headed by V.N. Barkov, who, unlike Florinsky, a diplomat of the classical pre-revolutionary school, came from a peasant family and at 40 was called up for diplomatic service.

In 1937 the instruction “On the procedure for registering members of the Diplomatic Corps in the USSR and employees of foreign embassies and missions” was developed at the PCFA, which addressed the issues of registration of diplomats.

During the period of Barkov’s work politeness visits of the heads of diplomatic embassies to the People’s Commissar and members of the PCFA collegium after presentation of credentials were canceled, the tail-coat “left” the Soviet diplomatic routine.

In May 1941 the status of diplomatic representatives of the USSR was brought into line with the international classification and they received the ranks of ambassadors, envoys, and charge d’affaires.

Vladimir Nikolaevich often lingered on negotiations. German colleagues said that after the negotiation process was over, information leakage occurred, Barkov was a “free listener” from the Soviet side. The

⁸ Ibid. P. 4.

People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs did not search for other candidates. In 1941 V.N. Barkov was arrested, he was sentenced to 20 years, rehabilitated in 1958.

3. The first systematization of protocol standards

Without diminishing the merits of the leaders of the Protocol Department, who replaced Florinsky and Barkov, it should be noted that the name of Molochkov occupies a special place in the history of Soviet diplomacy.

F.F. Molochkov headed the Protocol Department from 1941 to 1950, and from 1955 to 1969. Fedor Fedorovich Molochkov, who, fortunately, did not suffer the fate of his predecessors – D.T. Florinsky and V.N. Barkov, – is considered to be a classic of the Soviet protocol, recognized as an authority in the field of European diplomatic ceremonial.

The first systematization of the norms, rules and ceremonial of the reception of foreign delegations and government receptions was held in the second half of the 50s.

In March 1957 in connection with the preparation of events dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a document "The Procedure for holding government receptions in the Kremlin"⁹, which included seven sections that detailed the organization of receptions, the number of their participants, and the organizations that make up the lists to receptions, etc.

The 5th section, devoted to the accommodation of guests during government receptions, in particular, contains a recommendation that the reserved seats for guests should not be unoccupied, indicate in invitation cards for Soviet guests: "Please answer by phone... (phone number of the Office of the Council of Ministers of the USSR)"; for foreign guests: "Please answer by phone... (telephone of the Protocol Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs)"¹⁰.

⁹ AFP RF. F. 057. I. 41. F. 215. C. 15. P. 34–61.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 39.

As you know, in European protocol practice this request is determined by four letters “R.S.V.P.” In this case, in our opinion, this is not so much about protecting the Russian language as about protecting the Soviet protocol from European bourgeois influence.

This period of time can be described as the apotheosis of the pomp of the Soviet protocol, which was largely determined by the so-called “struggle for friends”, that is, for potential allies of the Soviet state.

Several protocol elements appeared in June 1956 in the program of staying in the USSR of Shah of Iran M.R. Pahlavi: meeting at the approaches to Moscow of the guest’s plane by a fighter squadron; escorting a car of a shah by an escort of motorcyclists to his residence in the Kremlin, where for the first time in the history of the Soviet state not the leader of one of the countries of the socialist camp settled, but a crowned person who had unlimited power in his country after the dispersal of the Mejlis.

In August the President of Indonesia Sukarno was awarded the same honors, in honor of him for the first time in 1961 a salute was fired (21 volleys).

N.S. Khrushchev, as well as I.V. Stalin sought, using among other things the language of the protocol, to stun the allies with the economic and military power of the world’s first socialist state. The gastronomic delights of the Kremlin’s receptions, combined with unprecedented gifts (in 1956 I.B. Tito, the first of the leaders of foreign countries, was presented with an airplane) should convince guests of the sustainable development and potential capabilities of the USSR.

As the international relations of the USSR developed, the norms of the protocol of the Soviet state developed in the direction of increased attention to the ceremonial part, while there was still no regulatory document generalizing the rules of the diplomatic protocol.

In April 1959 the Protocol Department sent out a memo to ministries and departments on certain issues of organizing work with foreign delegations coming to the USSR – the first written regulatory act regulating all aspects of the organization of visits of distinguished foreign guests¹¹.

Despite the adopted document the scheme for meeting and seeing off foreign delegations, the content of the visit program still depended

¹¹ Zakharaova O.Y. How the USSR received distinguished guests. M., 2018. P. 464–466.

on which camp, capitalist or socialist, the country belonged to, as far as the USSR was interested in building partnerships with this state.

4. Case O.V. Penkovsky and the development of the Soviet Protocol

Despite the political sympathies of the Kremlin leaders, the Soviet protocol as well as the European one as a whole, continued to develop towards greater democratization. But in the early 60s there were events that showed that the exchange of information at diplomatic receptions is not always mutually beneficial for all participants in communication.

In October 1962 in Moscow the State Security Committee (SSC) arrested a senior officer of the General Intelligence Department (GID) of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defense O.V. Penkovsky and his associate in Moscow, Greville Wynn, collaborated with SIS MI6. Wynn was sentenced to a long prison term (later exchanging him for a Soviet secret service agent), and Penkovsky was sentenced to shooting down.

The Penkovsky trial could not but affect the development of the Soviet diplomatic protocol.

In 1963 a document (no name) was presented to the Central Committee of the CPSU under the heading "Top Secret", which analyzed the practice of inviting Soviet citizens to receptions at embassies and other foreign missions in Moscow¹².

The draft resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on "Measures to streamline visits by Soviet citizens to receptions arranged by embassies and other foreign missions in Moscow, as well as receptions arranged by the Soviet side"¹³, attached to the document, explains the reason for the creation of the document, "as the process in the case of the traitor of the Motherland Penkovsky showed, foreign intelligence uses diplomatic receptions to conduct intelligence work, <...>. The presence of some Soviet citizens at receptions is not caused by any business necessity, and is sometimes harmful to the interests of the USSR"¹⁴.

¹² AFP RF. F. 057. I. 47. F. 235. C. 8. P. 35–39.

¹³ Ibid. P. 40–42.

¹⁴ Ibid. P. 40.

In order to regulate visits by Soviet citizens to receptions held by embassies and other foreign missions in Moscow, the CPSU Central Committee, in particular, decided to “oblige heads of central institutions and organizations, as well as union republics and cities, to invite to the receptions for foreign delegations strictly necessary number of persons form the Soviet side”¹⁵.

Simultaneously with the Resolution an “Oral statement of the Protocol Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to representatives of embassies in Moscow at the adviser level”¹⁶ was developed, in which it was noted that the Penkovsky case had provoked the anger and sincere indignation of Soviet citizens who stated that “they do not want to attend receptions at which they could meet <...> actions <...> that were offensive in nature and affecting the civil dignity and sense of patriotism of Soviet people”¹⁷. Accordingly the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the statement said, cannot but take this position into account, the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks the embassies to strictly follow the procedure for sending invitations to receptions, which should be sent through the Protocol Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (to heads of central institutions) and through the corresponding Soviet institutions and organizations (to other officials). Invitations should be sent no later than 7–10 days before the reception on the occasion of national holidays, etc., and 3–4 days before the reception with the participation of a small number of Soviet guests¹⁸.

The interaction of intelligence services and diplomatic missions can be traced throughout the history of international relations, which did not impede the development of the diplomatic protocol in the direction of greater democratization. The history of the Soviet protocol was no exception.

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 42.

¹⁶ AFP RF. F. 057. I. 47. F. 235. C. 8. P. 43–45.

¹⁷ Ibid. P. 44.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 45.

5. The diplomatic protocol of the USSR in the 70s of the XX century

In the first half of the 70s there was still no single approach to the preparation and conduct of foreign visits to the USSR. It was difficult to explain to the leaders of foreign states by what principle the meeting plan was drawn up. Why is one head of the delegation welcomed by 200 working people of the capital, and the other by 1000, how can one explain the presence of three types of troops in the guard of honor in one case, and one type in the other, when friendship meetings are held, etc. The answer to these and other questions that arise during the preparation and conduct of foreign visits is contained in the "Basic Provisions of Protocol Practice in the USSR", compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and approved on January 8, 1976 in the CPSU Central Committee.

Compared with the provisions of protocol practice in force at that time it was envisaged to reduce the number of members of the Politburo participating in protocol events, to exclude from the program of the visit an official visit to the theater; 350–400 people meet the first secretary of the Central Committee of the party of the socialist country, 250–300 people meet the president and the head of the government of the socialist country, 200 people meet the head of state and government of the non-socialist country. Protocol events should be carried out with the participation of a limited number of Soviet officials and with minimal financial costs¹⁹.

In the early 70–80s the activities of the employees of the Protocol Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as in previous years, were still highly appreciated by foreign guests.

So, in 1972, at the end of the visit to the USSR of the Assistant of the President of the United States for National Security H. Kissinger, a message was received from the US Embassy addressed to the head of the US Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs G.M. Kornienko, in which it was reported that, in the opinion of the American side, all visits of H. Kissinger "were very well provided." Protocol and other events

¹⁹ AFP RF. F. 057. I. 60. F. 260. C. 1. P. 44.

at the airport, transport services, accommodation at the residence on the Lenin Hills, as well as security measures were organized in the best way. "We highly appreciate your concern for the crew of the plane that visited the ballet, the circus and the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy," the message said²⁰. The American side asked to convey thanks to all the visiting staff who showed "the highest degree of hospitality and cooperation"²¹.

Conclusions

The employees of the Protocol Department sought to create balanced programs that meet the goals and nature of the visit, but, throughout Soviet history, the work of the Protocol Department, including the legislative activities of its employees, depended directly on the decisions of the party and government.

The social and political system left its mark on protocol norms, while the protocol was conservative and should exist outside of politics.

In 1961 the work of the UN commissions and committees on the codification of embassy law ended with the adoption of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

As an actor in world politics the Soviet Union could not but accept the main provisions of this Convention. Ignoring the international norms of the protocol is a denial of equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the state, and as a result, loss of reputation in the eyes of the world community.

References

Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire. V. XXXIII. № 33978. Conversation of the Polish charge d'affaires with a representative of the PCFA. 1935. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 15. F. 112. C. 2. P. 1-4.
Florinsky D.T. A brief instruction on the observance of the rules of eti-

²⁰ AFP RF. F. 057. I. 78. F. 623. C. 14. P. 53.

²¹ Ibid.

quette accepted in bourgeois society. 1923. Moscow. Archive of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation. (AFP RF). F. 057. I. 3. F. 101. C. 1. P. 20–25.

Lyadov P.F. History of the Russian Protocol. M., 2004. P. 161–162.

Measures to streamline visits by Soviet citizens to receptions arranged by embassies and other foreign missions in Moscow, as well as receptions arranged by the Soviet side. 1963. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 47. F. 235. C. 8. P. 40–42.

Message from the US Embassy to the Head of the US Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs G.M. Kornienko. 1972. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 78. F. 623. C. 14. P. 53.

Oral statement of the Protocol Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to representatives of embassies in Moscow at the adviser level. 1963. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 47. F. 235. C. 8. P. 43–45.

The main provisions of protocol practice in the USSR. 1976. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 60. F. 260. C. 1. P. 44.

The practice of inviting Soviet citizens to receptions at embassies and other foreign missions in Moscow. 1963. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 47. F. 235. C. 8. P. 35–39.

The procedure for holding government receptions in the Kremlin. 1957. Moscow. AFP RF. F. 057. I. 41. F. 215. C. 15. P. 34–61.

Zakharova O.Y. How the USSR received distinguished guests. M., 2018. P. 464–466.

Summary

The concept of “diplomacy” combines the foreign policy activities of state leaders and supreme authorities. At various stages of the development of society the methods and means of diplomacy changed.

In the Middle Ages the protocol is the rules of paperwork and archiving. Subsequently ceremonial issues began to be attributed to the diplomatic protocol.

Currently the diplomatic protocol is a set of generally accepted norms, traditions and conventions that are observed in international communication.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the evolution of the Soviet protocol as an instrument of the state’s foreign policy based on the analysis of regulatory documents.

The novelty of the study lies in the fact that the author considers the diplomatic legal culture as a component of the image of the state, in which ideology influenced all aspects of society, including the rules of communication between a Soviet citizen and foreign partners.

It was revealed that the employees of the Protocol Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (PCFA), and primarily its head D.T. Florinsky (repressed in 1934) and V.N. Barkov (repressed in 1941, rehabilitated in 1958), were able to "reconcile", as evidenced by regulatory documents, the European diplomatic protocol with the norms of Soviet ideology. Through its work the Protocol Department tried to destroy the idea of the USSR as an "empire of evil"; it was part of the positive image of the USSR, like the Bolshoi Theater, Soviet sports and Russian literature.

As an actor in world politics the Soviet Union could not but accept the main provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Ignoring the international norms of the protocol is a denial of equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the state, and as a result, loss of reputation in the eyes of the world community.

Keywords: foreign policy, diplomacy, state image, ideology, diplomatic receptions, foreign visits