

# Guide to the Alexander Ivanovitch Petrunkevitch Papers

MS 394



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan and Laurie R. Cohen

June 1987

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
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beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 394

**CREATOR:** Petrunkevitch, Alexander, 1875-1964

**TITLE:** Alexander Ivanovitch Petrunkevitch papers

**DATES:** 1886-1964

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.5 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers consist primarily of Alexander Petrunkevitch's personal correspondence and contain numerous letters from his father Ivan Il'ich Petrunkevitch and stepmother Anastasia Petrunkevitch. These letters include discussions of the Russian political climate (1900-1919) and focus on Ivan Petrunkevitch's work with the Constitutional Democratic (Kadety) Party. Other correspondents include officials of Russian-American societies. The papers also encompass Alexander Petrunkevitch's writings on the Russian Revolution, his poetry, journals, photographs, and other personal memorabilia.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0394>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0394>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Papers in part purchased from the family in 1965 and in part transferred from the Yale Biology Department, 1979; gift of Edward Opton, 2002.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Alexander Ivanovitch Petrunkevitch Papers (MS 394). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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### Existence and Location of Copies

Correspondence of Ivan and Alexander Petrunkevitch is also available on microfilm (1 reel, 35mm.) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM70.

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## Biographical / Historical

Alexander Petrunkevitch was born in Pliski, Russia in 1875 and taught at the University of Moscow before immigrating to Germany to escape political persecution. He earned a Ph.D. at the University of Freiburg in 1901. Petrunkevitch taught biology at Harvard University and the University of Indiana before joining the Yale University faculty in 1910. He was known for his research on spiders. He died in New Haven, Connecticut on March 10, 1964.

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## Scope and Contents

The Alexander Ivanovitch Petrunkevitch Papers consist of correspondence, writings, personal memorabilia, and photographs which relate to Petrunkevitch's family and his interests in Russia, particularly the Russian revolution. The papers contain numerous letters from Petrunkevitch's father Ivan Il'ich Petrunkevitch and his stepmother Anastasia Petrunkevitch which focus on their years in exile in Crimea and, after the 1905 revolution, the work of the Constitutional Democratic Party. The papers contain no materials on Alexander Petrunkevitch's teaching career or his research on arachnids.

The papers are arranged in three series: I. CORRESPONDENCE, 1886-1963 II. WRITINGS, 1917-1963 III. PERSONAL PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, 1894-1964

Series I, CORRESPONDENCE, contains Petrunkevitch's correspondence with family members and with Russian friends and associates. Most of the letters are in Russian, with lesser quantities in English and German. The letters in the "General" folders are arranged in chronological order; the bulk of the material dates from 1919 to 1924. Petrunkevitch's commitment to furthering American-Russian cooperation is

reflected in his letters as president of the Russian Collegiate Institute beginning in 1917 and as a member of the Inter-Racial Council beginning in 1919. Correspondence with August Weismann, Petrunkevitch's mentor at the University of Freiburg, is in folder 38.

The bulk of the series, however, is composed of Petrunkevitch's letters from his father and stepmother Ivan Il'ich and Anastasia Petrunkevitch. The letters commence when Alexander Petrunkevitch leaves home as a young student in 1886. By 1899 when Petrunkevitch was studying in Germany there are monthly letters. Ivan Petrunkevitch's lengthy letters from Tver concern his involvement in the Zemski Sobor, while his stepmother, who signs herself Nastia, writes of family matters. Letters from 1904 to 1911 are written from Crimea and contain observations of Tatar life and customs. Though Ivan Petrunkevitch was elected as a delegate from Crimea to the first Duma in 1905, there are few contemporary letters to document this period. Letters from 1919 on, however, when Ivan Petrunkevitch was engaged in writing his memoirs, contain extensive reflections on the 1905 Revolution, the Constitutional Democratic Party, and the political climate through 1918. Following the Bolshevik Revolution the Petrunkevitchs fled Russia and eventually settled in Prague (1924). Letters from Prague reflect Ivan Petrunkevitch's interest in the democratic experiment of T.G. Masaryk's government.

Series II, WRITINGS, consists of Alexander Petrunkevitch's addresses, articles, book reviews, and poetry. Most of Petrunkevitch's articles concern Russia, particularly the political climate before, during, and after the October Revolution. Petrunkevitch's Russian poetry is in the romantic tradition and narrates tales of tragic love.

Petrunkevitch's personal papers and photographs comprise Series III. The series includes memorabilia such as family history, certificates, awards, and diplomas and files which document Petrunkevitch's interests in Russian organizations in America. Petrunkevitch's journals contain personal reflections as well as additional examples of his poetry. Petrunkevitch published some of these Russian poems under his pseudonym A. Jon-Ruban in Leipzig in 1900. Photographs of Petrunkevitch, his family, friends, and the Russian countryside are in folders 75-79 and 85-87. The photograph album for 1903 (folder 75) contains pictures taken on Petrunkevitch's return visit to Pliski with his American wife.

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## Arrangement

Arranged in three series: I. Correspondence, 1886-1963. II. Writings, 1917-1963. III. Personal Papers and Photographs, 1894-1964.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1886-1963

General correspondence (folders 1-14) is arranged in chronological order. The remainder of the series is organized in alphabetical order by correspondents' names.

b. 1, f. 1-14	General	1901-1963
b. 1, f. 15-21	Petrunkevitch, I. I	1886-1920
b. 2, f. 22-31	Petrunkevitch, I. I.	1921-1928
b. 2, f. 32-36	Petrunkevitch, Anastasia (Nastia)	1888-1932
b. 2, f. 37	Petrunkevitch family and friends	1893-1932
b. 2, f. 38	Weismann, August	1899-1914
b. 2, f. 39	Fragments	undated

**Series II: Writings, 1917-1963***0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

This series is arranged alphabetically by record type. Articles are in alphabetical order by title. Untitled short manuscripts are organized by subject.

b. 3, f. 40-41	Addresses and memoranda	1917-1948
	Articles	
b. 3, f. 42	"Americanization and Peace" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 43	"August Weismann: Personal Reminiscences" English	1963
b. 3, f. 44	"Influences of Russian Political Parties, The" English	[ca. 1918]
b. 3, f. 45	"Political Crisis in Russia" English	1917
b. 3, f. 46	"Role of the Intellectuals in the Liberating Movements in Russia" English	undated
b. 3, f. 47-48	"Russia and the Baltic States" English	1923-1924
b. 3, f. 49	"Russia Before the War" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 50	"Russia Recovering" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 51	"Russian Revolution, The" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 52	"Sketches From Russian Life" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 53	"Truth About Rasputin, The" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 54	"Universities in the United States" English	Undated
b. 3, f. 55	Bolshevism	undated
b. 3, f. 56	Book reviews	undated
b. 3, f. 57-59	Poetry See also: <a href="#">box 4, folders 63-67</a>	1917; 1945; undated
b. 3, f. 60	Russia and change	undated

**Series III: Personal papers and photographs, 1894-1964**

This series is arranged in alphabetical order by subject and record type.

b. 4, f. 61	Clippings	1917, 1922, undated
b. 4, f. 62	Family genealogy	Undated
b. 4, f. 63-67	Journals	1894 - [irca 1924]
b. 4, f. 68-69	Jubilee in honor of A. I. Petrunkevitch	1932
b. 5, f. 70	<i>Manual Slavonic Personalities</i>	1940
	Memorabilia	
b. 5, f. 71	Awards, certificates, and diplomas See also: <a href="#">box 7, folder 90</a>	1894-1906
b. 5, f. 72	Honorarium See also: <a href="#">box 7, folder 88</a>	1944
b. 5, f. 73	Miscellaneous	1918-1964
b. 5, f. 74	Novikov, M.M. <i>Ot Moskvyy do Niu-Iorka</i> ( <i>From Moscow to New York</i> )	1952
b. 5, f. 75	Photograph album	1903
b. 6, f. 76-77	Photograph albums	Undated
b. 6, f. 78-79	Photographs See also: <a href="#">box 7, folder 89</a> See also: <a href="#">box 7, folders 85-87</a>	1895-1919
b. 6, f. 80	Poetry	undated
b. 6, f. 81	Russian Collegiate Institute	undated
b. 6, f. 82	Russian committees	undated
b. 6, f. 83	Russian Orthodox Church	1922-1927
b. 6, f. 84	Svidetelstvo (Lineage)	1894
	Oversize	
b. 7, f. 85-87	Photographs	1895
b. 7, f. 88	Honorarium	1944
b. 7, f. 89	Photographs	undated
b. 7, f. 90	Awards, certificates, and diplomas	1901; 1906; 1927



## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Exiles

### Geographic Names

Europe -- Description and travel

Krymskai͡a oblast' (Ukraine) -- Social life and customs

Prague (Czech Republic) -- Politics and government

Russia -- History -- Nicholas II, 1894-1917

Russia -- Politics and government -- 1894-1917

### Genres / Formats

Photoprints

### Occupations

Arachnologists

Poets

Zoologists

### Names

Petrunkevitch, Alexander, 1875-1964

Petrunkevitch, Anastasia

Petrunkevitch, Ivan Il'ich, 1843-1928

### Corporate Bodies

Konstitutsionno-demokraticheskai͡a parti͡a

Russian Collegiate Institute (New York, N.Y.)