

## [New Digitized Collections: WWII-era love letters and Soviet mass media 1899-1945](#)

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The Blavatnik Archive Foundation (BAF) is pleased to announce that two new collections comprising over 1,000 total items are fully digitized and accessible online at <http://www.blavatnikarchive.org/collections>.

### **KANTSEDIKAS FAMILY LETTERS COLLECTION**

<https://www.blavatnikarchive.org/collection/kantsedikas-letters>

Generously donated to the Archive by art historian Aleksandr Kantsedikas, the Kantsedikas Family collection includes 665 wartime letters between his parents, Elisheva and Solomon Kantsedikas. Available in the original Russian with English translations, the letters capture a young couple deeply in love, struggling with the perils of war at the front and at home, their separation, and the horrors of the Holocaust, and striving to face these hardships with determination and patriotism.

On love and longing:

- [MISC095.165](#). December 11, 1943. "I think of you always and everywhere, and the feeling of love, of inner warmth, fills me as soon as your bright image appears before my eyes. . . . You are the only person I am connected to in body and soul, connected for the rest of my life, and I know for certain that nothing but death will drive us apart. I know that we will be happy, very happy enjoying our souls and bodies (after all, we, sinful humans, partake in physical pleasures). . . . I will say it directly: it's very hard for me to be without a woman, but I know for certain that nothing in the world will make me compromise my principles."

On wartime civilian life:

- [MISC095.598](#). June 24, 1944. "Serezha, yesterday something upsetting happened—I lost all my bread ration stamps for the rest of the month. It's all because I was in a rush. I had lots of work and wanted to deal with the 'household matters' as quickly as possible. You can imagine how I felt."

On the Holocaust:

- [MISC095.263](#). March 30, 1944. "I recently visited one little town. The residents describe horrific atrocities of the German scum. There used to be many Jews living there, and the Germans shot them all, and buried some of them alive. The earth was moving in that spot afterward. I heard the same about Vilnius. They say that the last one taken to be shot was a teacher named Kalmanovich."

On determination:

- [MISC095.052](#). September 4, 1942. "It's clear that we must win, and we will win whatever it takes. The enemy will be stopped. . . . Every soldier and political worker of the Red Army should act this way, and the enemy will not pass."

## ROWLEY SOVIET EPHEMERA COLLECTION

<http://www.blavatnikarchive.org/collection/rowley>

The Rowley Soviet Ephemera Collection, curated by Professor Alison Rowley, explores aspects of early Soviet history that are reflected in mass media, with a special emphasis on the shifting representations of women and cultural symbols of power and society. The collection spans the period from 1899 through the end of World War II and comprises 470 items, including 247 stamps, 49 periodicals, 46 postcards, 39 photographs, 30 sheet music pieces, and a number of newspapers, posters, books, booklets, and documents.

Of special interest are visually rich Soviet magazines, including [Zhenskii Zhurnal](#) (Women's Magazine), [Rabotnitsa i Krest'ianka](#) (The Female Worker and Peasant), and [Fizkul'tura i Sport](#) (Fitness and Sport), which reflect the changing role of women in Soviet society from 1927 through the late 1940s.

Some of the collection's materials promote immediate technological and economic concerns, like the rapid industrialization of the 1920s-1940s ([Pesni Sovetskikh Zheleznodorozhnikov](#) (Songs of the Soviet Train Workers)) or reinvestment into the Soviet economy ([lottery tickets](#)).

Others focus on social and lifestyle matters: Magazines like [Bezbozhnik](#) (Without a God) served to reinforce the belief in the one-and-only Soviet state. Stamps connected the Soviet worker to [distant frontiers](#), and presented an image of a strong and resilient [Soviet citizen](#) to the Western world.

As diverse as it is visually stunning, this collection offers an incredible window into the idealized state that never quite caught up to its ambitions.

The Blavatnik Archive ([www.blavatnikarchive.org](http://www.blavatnikarchive.org)) is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to preserving and disseminating materials that contribute to the study of 20th-century Jewish and world history, with a special emphasis on World War I, World War II, and Soviet Russia. The Archive was founded in 2005 by the American industrialist and philanthropist [Len Blavatnik](#) to reflect his commitment to cultural heritage and expand his support for primary-source-based scholarship and education. Primarily through its metadata-rich, item-based website, the Archive shares its holdings as widely as possible for research, education, and public enrichment. Currently, the Archive comprises over 113,000 items across 17

collections, including video testimonies, postcards, photographs, posters, drawings, illustrations, diaries, letters, state-issued documents, leaflets, periodicals, and books. **To always be in the loop, join our newsletter mailing list [here](#)**