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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Rabbot, B. S. (Boris Semenovich), 1930-2011
Title:	Boris Rabbot Papers
ID:	9558917
ID:	BA#0538
Date [inclusive]:	1930-2012
Physical Description:	5.42 linear feet 13 document boxes, 1 oversize folder
Language of the Material:	Russian , English .
Abstract:	The Boris Rabbot Papers consist of the writings, lectures, notes, correspondence, personal documents, post-doctoral dissertation, photographs, research and reference materials related to the professional activities of Boris Rabbot—one of the first Soviet sociologists employed at the pioneering Institute for Concrete Social Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (IKSI) and an influential intellectual who tried to introduce a policy of liberalization within the Soviet system in the mid-1960s - early 1970s. The collection reflects Rabbot's professional life both in the USSR and USA. The collection gives an unprecedented insider's view into the workings of the Politburo and also traces the early development of a previously banned social science discipline, sociology, in the Soviet Union.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Boris Rabbot Papers; Box and Folder; Bakhmeteff Archive, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Boris Semenovich Rabbot was born on September 18, 1930 in the city of Kostroma, Russia, USSR and moved to Moscow at an early age. In 1948, Rabbot was admitted to Moscow State University's Department of Philosophy, where he studied until 1953. From 1954 to 1956 he was a graduate student at Moscow State University's Department of History of Western European Philosophy and Sociology. From 1958 to 1959 he worked as the managing editor of the journal *V pomoshch' lektoru* of the *Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo Znanie* (All-Union Knowledge Society) and, from 1959 to 1965, department head and traveling correspondent for the magazine *Nauka i religiia* (Science and Religion). From 1965 (official appointment 1967), he held the position of Executive Secretary and Chief Researcher of the Sector for Social Sciences of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, led by Academician Aleksei Rumiantsev. In the years 1969-1972, he served as Head of the Sector for Experimental Research of the recently founded Institute for Concrete Social Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (IKSI), led by Rumiantsev.

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Biographical / Historical

Following the anti-Soviet protests in Prague of 1968 and demonstrations of support for them—some from IKSI researchers, as documented in the archive—the Brezhnev regime cracked down on détente and IKSI was disbanded. Rabbot, whose 1970 post-doctoral dissertation raised controversy by dealing with the Soviet experiment from a sociological standpoint and was banned from defense, had to curtail his intellectual work and hence worked as senior scientific researcher at the N. I. Vavilov Institute of the History of Natural Science and Technology.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1976, Rabbot gained legal entry to the United States as a Jewish refugee, having applied for his exit visa two years previously. Joined by his wife, he settled in New York City and, after a separation, got married for a second time, to Lynn Visson. Visson's father, a Russian émigré to France and then the United States, had been the director of exhibitions at the Wildenstein Galleries in New York (see Vladimir Visson Papers at the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian & East European Culture at Columbia University).

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Biographical / Historical

Upon immigrating to the United States (1976) Rabbot's activities changed to those of a freelance consultant, independent scholar and lecturer of Russian. He also worked on several unpublished manuscripts that straddled academics and politics, including a translation of his dissertation on the "Problems of the Experiment in Social Research" and popular analyses of Brezhnev-era Soviet politics and society. The most important of these were an unpublished manuscript on the private lives of the Politburo members and a series of lectures on the consequences of the American approach to détente. Rabbot's controversial position was that the Carter Administration's tactics of forcing the human rights issue by passing the Jackson-Vanick Amendment backfired by bringing hard-liners to the fore in the Politburo. Boris Rabbot died on February 3, 2011.

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Description

The bulk of the collection comprises Boris Rabbot's professional writings, documents and publications related to his academic work both in the Soviet Union and in the United States. There are also some personal documents, biographical materials, photographs, lectures and interviews.

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Description

Boris Rabbot served as a ghostwriter to Rumiantsev, authoring opinions on Soviet economic and political liberalization anonymously or in his supervisor's name; he also occasionally wrote speeches for Brezhnev. The collection contains several of these ghostwritten pieces.

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Description

Rabbot's writings in the United States include a number of texts about the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Politburo. Some of these were published as newspaper articles—most notably, "A Letter to Brezhnev," *The New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 6, 1977, which challenged the hardline course that Soviet leadership had taken—while others remain in the collection as unpublished manuscripts.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in four series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. dsc added EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2018-09-01 2018-12-10 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no access restrictions.

Accrual

Additional materials are expected.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2012-2013-M017: Source of acquisition--Lynn Visson. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--7/21/2012.

Processing Information

Summer 2018: Collection-level record describing unprocessed material made public as part of the Hidden Collections initiative.

Processing Information

Papers processed 12/10/2018 by Katherine Tsan, Queens College, CUNY (under supervision of Katia Davidenko)

Processing Information

Finding aid written 12/10/2018 by Katherine Tsan, Queens College, (under supervision of Katia Davidenko)

Processing Information

August-December 2018: The collection was fully processed. Materials were rehoused into archival-quality folders and boxes. Original folders were preserved when possible. Some folders were discarded due to poor condition but metadata was preserved. Three folders were sent to conservation due to mold suspicion. Preservation photocopies of newspaper clippings were made. Brittle materials were placed in mylars and enclosures.

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Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Russian Americans -- 20th century
- Russians -- United States
- Sociology -- Soviet Union -- History
- Emigration and immigration -- United States -- Russians -- 20th century
- Rabbot, B. S. (Boris Semenovich), 1930-2011
- Brezhnev, Leonid Il'ich, 1906-1982
- Rumian̄tsev, A. M. (Aleksēi Matveevich)
- Tvardovskii, A. (Aleksandr), 1910-1971
- Visson, Lynn
- Akademiā nauk SSSR
- Institut filosofii (Akademiā nauk SSSR)
- Institut konkretnykh soṣial'nykh issledovaniĭ AN SSSR

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1976-1990

Scope and Contents

The series consists of Rabbot's professional and personal correspondence with various people and organizations and includes letters of recommendation and support. Correspondence includes various related materials, such as proposals and clippings.

Title/Description	Instances	
Professional correspondence with organizations, 1976-1990		
Scope and Contents		
(comprises correspondence with various organizations, including publishers, universities, magazines, etc. Organized in alphabetical order. Some correspondence with organizations is part of other series.)		
A-F, 1976-1990	box 1	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
(typed and handwritten letters, to and from the American Council of Learned Societies, B'Nai B'Rith, Centre d'Etudes de Politique Etrangere, Columbia University, Federation of American Scientists and the Ford Foundation. Also contains a list of addresses.)		
G-W, 1976-1980	box 1	folder 2

Scope and Contents

(typed letters, to and from the German Mashall Fund of the United States, Harvard University, Houghton Mifflin, International Research and Exchanges Board, the Kennan Institute, *The New York Times*, Outlook, Praeger Publishers, Queens College, The Rand Corporation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Simon & Schuster, The Swedish Embassy, The University of Lund, Voice of America and Westview Press.)

Letters in support of Rabbot's immigration to the USA, 1976 box 1 folder 3

Scope and Contents

(letters of support and recommendations. Arranged chronologically)

Personal correspondence, 1970s-1983 box 1 folder 4

Scope and Contents

(letter to Igor Birman; letters from George Fischer and unidentified (Colette)).

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Series II: Professional Activity, 1960-1998**Scope and Contents**

This series is arranged in three subseries: Subseries II.1: Professional Activity in the USSR, Subseries II.2: Professional Activity in USA and Subseries II.3: Post-Doctoral Dissertation "Problemy Eksperimenta v Sotsial'nom Razvitii." Comprises materials related to Rabbot's work in various organizations and his independent scholarly projects, his published and unpublished works, including articles, monographs, talks. Also included are notes, drafts, documents, interviews, and various publications.

Subseries II.1: Professional Activity in the USSR, 1960-1974**Scope and Contents**

Includes materials related to Rabbot's work at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Contains his published and unpublished writings, reports, subject files, internal documents of the Academy of Sciences, and reference materials. Also contains publications that document the birth and development of the field of sociology in the Soviet Union. Rabbot's post-doctoral dissertation is a separate subseries (Subseries II.3: Post-Doctoral Dissertation "Problemy Eksperimenta v Sotsial'nom Issledovanii").

Title/Description**Instances**

Work at the Academy of Sciences, 1965-1974

Scope and Contents

(reports and papers that Rabbot wrote for Rumiantsev as well as various reports and articles by other authors that Rabbot kept for his work,

including the Academy of Sciences' internal publications and documents)

Writings for Rumiantsev, 1960s-1970s

Scope and Contents

(work that Rabbot did during his tenure as Aleksei Rumiantsev's Personal Secretary at the Academy of Sciences. The manuscripts signed with Rumiantsev's name were actually ghostwritten by Rabbot)

"Sotsial'nyi prognoz, ego tseli i vozmozhnosti", undated	box 1	folder 5
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Various short manuscripts on Soviet social sciences and economics, undated	box 1	folder 6
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Various short manuscripts on Soviet social problems and planning, 1960s	box 1	folder 7
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Scope and Contents

(observations from 1968 trip to U.S. universities)

Reports for Rumiantsev, 1960s-1970s, undated

Scope and Contents

(reports, reference materials and notes prepared for Rumiantsev)

Czechoslovakia (letters and reports), 1968	box 1	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

(regarding the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia)

On various subjects, 1967-1970, undated	box 2	folder 1-3
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Scope and Contents

(history, social and political sciences, education, philosophy, economics, agriculture, semiotics and linguistics)

Subject files, 1967-1974

Scope and Contents

(documents, notes and reference materials on various subjects)

M. Gefter case, 1970	box 2	folder 4
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Scope and Contents

(about the writings of Gefter, Grunt, Drabkin, Kremer and others accused of being anti-Marxist)

A. M. Nekrich case, 1967	box 2	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

(regarding Nekrich's work "1941. 22 iunia")

A. Tvardovskii's letter to L. I. Brezhnev, 1970	box 2	folder 6
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Scope and Contents

(typescript copy of Tvardovskii's letter to Brezhnev regarding Tvardovskii's poem "Po pravu pamiatii")

Rabbot's letter and report to L. I. Brezhnev, 1973	box 2	folder 7
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On management of science, 1974	box 2	folder 8
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Internal documents and publications of the Academy of Sciences, 1967-1972

Meeting transcript, 1967	box 3	folder 1
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Reports to the Party Central Committee, 1970, undated	box 3	folder 2
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Institutes' reports, 1968	box 3	folder 3-4
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Rumiantsev correspondence and reports, 1968-1970	box 3	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

(arranged in chronological order)

Internal restricted publications, 1967-1972	box 3	folder 6-10
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Scope and Contents

(various publications on sociology, economics, politics and propaganda, including reports, extended abstracts of dissertations and speeches, articles, etc. Most publications are internal to IKSI, the Institute for Concrete Social Studies. Arranged chronologically)

Reference materials: various publications, 1960-1969, undated

<i>Izvestiia</i> internal publications (readers surveys and report on work of Press sociology group), 1967-1968	box 4	folder 1
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<i>Nauka i religiia</i> selected articles, 1960-1962, undated	box 4	folder 2
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<i>Pravda</i> internal publications (readers surveys), 1968-1969, undated	box 4	folder 3
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<i>Trud</i> reports (readers surveys), undated	box 4	folder 4
Published articles, 1960-1970	box 4	folder 5
Scope and Contents		
(arranged alphabetically. Rabbot's articles published in <i>Voprosy filosofii</i> and <i>Nauka i religiia</i>)		
"Eksperimental'nye metody v sotsial'nom poznanii" ((with related correspondence)		
"Istoriia sittsevogo tsarstva"		
"Palochka Shamesa, ili ravvin na Golgofe"		
"Parizhskaia kommuna i tserkov"		
"Spor ne tol'ko o pamiatnikakh"		
Subseries II.2: Professional Activity in USA, 1977-1998		
Scope and Contents		
Includes Rabbot's published articles in the United States; manuscripts mostly related to his unpublished book on the Politburo called <i>Upstairs in Moscow</i> ; drafts and notes; materials pertaining to Rabbot's teaching and consulting activity, including his talks, lectures, and seminars. Also contains interviews, correspondence regarding employment opportunities and some professional letters related to various projects.		
Title/Description	Instances	
Writings: Published works, 1977-1979		
Scope and Contents		
(Rabbot's published newspaper articles with related materials. Arranged in alphabetical order)		
"Détente: The struggle within the Kremlin", 1977	box 4	folder 6
Scope and Contents		
(original article published in <i>The Washington Post</i> , Russian translation, reviews, related correspondence with Columbia University, Harvard University, Bryn Mawr, Queens College and RFE/RL, related materials)		
"Letter to Brezhnev", 1977	box 4	folder 7
Scope and Contents		
(original publication, drafts, related correspondence. This article, which Rabbot has been primarily known for in the United States, was translated into English by Lynn Visson (pseud. Michel Petrov) and published in <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> , Nov. 6, 1977. Included are articles responding to the "Letter"		

and correspondence with the David Library of the American Revolution regarding the "Letter to Brezhnev." Unsent letter and report addressed to Brezhnev, written in 1973-1974 in the Soviet Union see: Subseries II.1: Professional Activity in the USSR-- Box 2, Folder 7)

"One View of Why Podgorny Was Ousted", 1977	box 4	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

(original article published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, related correspondence and notes)

"Perceptions: Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union", 1979	box 4	folder 9
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Scope and Contents

(report for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with related correspondence)

Writings: Unpublished works, 1977-1981, undated

Scope and Contents

(Rabbot's writings on the USSR elite, mostly chapters for his future books)

"American Sovietology and Soviet Americanology", 1977	box 4	folder 10
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"Crisis of Soviet Détente: An Inside View", undated	box 4	folder 11
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"Family", 1970s	box 4	folder 12
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"Family, Sex and Friendship", 1970s	box 4	folder 13
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"Fertile Turtle: Soviet Social and Economic Experiments, 1965-1979", 1970s	box 4	folder 14
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Scope and Contents

(translated into English by Lynn Visson (pseud. Michel Petrov); includes unnumbered draft pages)

"Food and Clothing", 1970s	box 5	folder 1
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"Historical Lesson in the Fun-House", 1970s	box 5	folder 2
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Scope and Contents

(typescripts in Russian and in English, with related correspondence)

"Housing", 1978	box 5	folder 3
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Scope and Contents

(original folder had the inscription: "pp. 16-23 Andropov's house; pp. 26-28 Rumiantsev)

apartment." Includes letter from publisher, Harper & Row, dated 1978. Original folder was disposed due to its condition)

"How Soviets Understand American Politics and Americans Understand Soviet Policy", undated Scope and Contents (two typescripts designated as material for a future book)	box 5	folder 4
"How They Live and Relax", 1970s	box 5	folder 5
"Human Amendments to Foreign Policy", 1970s Scope and Contents (handwritten notes in Russian; typescript in English)	box 5	folder 6
"Ideology and Political Reform", undated	box 5	folder 7
"Man in a Case? In Memory of Alexei Kosygin", 1981 Scope and Contents (two manuscripts in English with related correspondence)	box 5	folder 8
"Medicine", 1970s	box 5	folder 9-10
"Modern Soviet Social Experiments, 1965-1976", 1978 Scope and Contents (book proposal and drafts of bibliography)	box 5	folder 11
"Nomenklatura", 1970s Scope and Contents (IN CONSERVATION)	box 5	folder 12-14
"Offices", 1970s Scope and Contents (English typescript, drafts in Russian)	box 6	folder 1
["Recreation"], undated Scope and Contents (original folder had the inscription: "p. 64 the story of Rabbot's movie premiere, p. 4 Rumiantsev in a movie, p.7 Rumiantsev's speech, pp. 13-14)	box 6	folder 2

Taganka, pp. 48-49 meeting w. Tikhonov". Original folder was disposed due to its condition)

"Soviet-American Exchanges", 1970s Scope and Contents (typescript versions, notes, drafts)	box 6	folder 3
"Soviet Domestic Reaction to Kissinger's Détente Policy", 1977 Scope and Contents (typescript of the article with related correspondence)	box 6	folder 4
"Soviet Leaders", undated Scope and Contents (typescripts with handwritten notes)	box 6	folder 5
"Soviet Science and Social Policy", 1970s Scope and Contents (typescripts in English, notes in Russian)	box 6	folder 6
"Unorthodox Leninism and Heretical Maoism", 1970s Scope and Contents (typescript in English; Russian version titled "Pochemu ne Lenin, a Mao Dze-Dun?")	box 6	folder 7
"Upstairs in Moscow", undated Scope and Contents (book proposal, chapter outline, biography note, notes in Russian)	box 6	folder 8
Notes and Drafts, 1970s Scope and Contents (notes and drafts in Russian and English for various Rabbot's writings. Mostly drafts and notes for future books and books in progress on Soviet leadership)		
Family in the USSR, 1970s	box 6	folder 9
Franklyn Griffiths' "Ideological Development and Foreign Policy", 1978	box 6	folder 10
Soviet foreign relations, 1970s	box 6	folder 11
Soviet leaders, 1970s	box 6	folder 12

Scope and Contents

(in Russian and English. Subjects and figures discussed: Brezhnev, Kirilenko, Kosygin's views on the reunification of Germany)

Various subjects, 1970s	box 6	folder 13-16
Notebooks, undated [1970s]		
General questions	box 7	folder 1-9
General questions	box 8	folder 1-7
Cars	box 8	folder 8
Money	box 8	folder 9
Nomenklatura	box 9	folder 1
[Party leaders]	box 9	folder 2
Passes and portraits	box 9	folder 3
Portraits [of the party leaders]	box 9	folder 4
Science and politics	box 9	folder 5
Telephones	box 9	folder 6
Western dissidents' about détente	box 9	folder 7
Teaching, Talks, Lectures, Consulting, 1977-1998		
Talks, lectures, seminars, 1977, undated		
Talk at the State Department, Washington, DC, 1977	box 9	folder 8
Twentieth-Century Fund Task talk on exchange programs, 1977	box 9	folder 9
Scope and Contents		
(drafts, correspondence and reference materials)		
Various talks, lectures, and seminars, 1977, undated	box 9	folder 10-11
Scope and Contents		
(includes announcements and invitations, with some accompanying correspondence and biographical info)		
Poster for Rabbot's lecture "The Soviet foreign policy mind: psychological portraits of Soviet leaders," Amherst, 1977	box BA OS 14	

Scope and Contents

(oversize poster stored in oversize flat box)

Teaching, 1977-1991		
American Council of Learned Societies annual meeting, 1977	box 10	folder 1
Columbia University: course descriptions and faculty schedules, 1986-91	box 10	folder 2
Middlebury College: Appointment letter, 1978	box 10	folder 3
Consulting: Report for Prudential and Americo Corporations, 1997-1998	box 10	folder 4
Correspondence regarding employment opportunities, 1977-1983	box 10	folder 5
Fellowship and grant applications, 1976-1977	box 10	folder 6
Financial records, 1976-1978	box 10	folder 7
Interviews and TV and radio broadcasts, 1977-1980		
On sociology and Soviet science, 1977	box 10	folder 8
Scope and Contents (interviewed by Harriet Leibowitz, Linda Lubrano, and Nina Toren)		
Television and radio interview and broadcast transcripts, 1978, undated	box 10	folder 9
Interview with Thane Gustaffson, New York, [1979-1980]	box 10	folder 10

Subseries II.3: Post-Doctoral Dissertation "Problemy Eksperimenta v Sotsial'nom Issledovanii", 1969-1978

Scope and Contents

Rabbot wrote his post-doctoral dissertation in the Soviet Union in 1969-1970. It was published by the Academy of Sciences in 1970 before being banned. In the United States he translated the work into English in preparation for a book publication, but it was never published. The files contain typescripts in Russian and English with holograph notes in Russian.

Title/Description	Instances	
In Russian, [1969]-1970		
Preparatory materials: early drafts, notes, research and reference materials	box 10	folder 11-13
Title page, table of contents, introduction	box 11	folder 1
Chapter 1: "Proiskhozhdenie idei i ee realizatsiia"	box 11	folder 2

Chapter 2: "Suschnost' i vidy sotsial'nogo eksperimenta"	box 11	folder 3
Chapter 3: "Mesto i rol' v sotsial'nom poznanii"	box 11	folder 4-5
Chapter 4: "Logiko-protsedurnye osnovy metoda"	box 11	folder 6
Chapter 5: "Eticheskie problemy"	box 11	folder 7
Chapter 6: "Sotsial'nyi eksperiment i sotsial'noe upravlenie"	box 11	folder 8
Chapter 7: "Vozdeistvie na sfery obschestvennogo soznaniia"	box 11	folder 9
Bibliography, introduction, drafts of chapters on Yugoslavia, Cuba and China	box 11	folder 10
Publication of the post-doctoral dissertation "Problemy eksperimenta v sotsial'nom issledovanii", 1970	box 12	folder 1
<p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>(offset publication of the Academy of Sciences)</p>		
<p>English translation, 1976-1978</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>(contains the English translation of Rabbot's post-doctoral dissertation; drafts, and materials related to a future book based on the dissertation)</p>		
Introduction in English and drafts	box 12	folder 2
Chapter 1: "The Economic Crisis and the Origin of the Experiment"	box 12	folder 3
Chapter 2: "The Soviet Experience and the Theory of Experimentation"	box 12	folder 4
Chapter 3: "Soviet Classifications and Concepts"	box 12	folder 5
Chapter 4: "Experiments: Conduct and Findings"	box 12	folder 6-7
Chapter 5: "The Political Effect of Experimentation: Ethical and Legal Problems"	box 12	folder 8
Drafts and notes	box 13	folder 1-2
Footnotes and bibliography	box 13	folder 3
"The Nature and Forms of the Social Experiment": book proposal, 1976-1978,	box 13	folder 4

Scope and Contents

(materials related to the unpublished book based on the dissertation, such as the book proposal, drafts and notes)

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Series III: Personal Documents and Biographical Materials, 1930-2012**Scope and Contents**

This series comprises Boris Rabbot's personal documents and biographical materials, including certificates, IDs, immigration papers, travel documents, passports, CVs, financial and legal documents. There is also a memorial volume published after Rabbot's death that serves as an important source of biographical information for the researcher: Visson, L. and Arkanov, V. *Boris Rabbot: An Unheeded Voice of the 1960s*. Moscow: R. Valent, 2012.

Title/Description	Instances	
Certificates and IDs, 1930-1997	box 13	folder 5
Scope and Contents		
(U.S. passport, birth, marriage and citizenship certificates)		
Educational diplomas, 1948-1972	box 13	folder 6
Professional IDs and employment record, 1959-1974	box 13	folder 7
Immigration and naturalization documents, 1976-1981	box 13	folder 8
Legal documents, 1987	box 13	folder 9
CVs and resumes, 1970s	box 13	folder 10
Unpublished article about Rabbot (with related correspondence), 1978	box 13	folder 11
Memorial volume <i>Boris Rabbot: An Unheeded Voice of the 1960s: Articles, Interviews, Reminiscences / Boris Rabbot: Shestidesiatnik, kotorogo ne uslyshali: Stat'i, Interv'iu, Vospominaniia</i> , 2012	box 13	folder 12
Scope and Contents		
(book about Boris Rabbot compiled by Lynn Visson and Vasili Arkanov published in Moscow in 2012)		

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Series IV: Photographs, 1938-2010

Scope and Contents

This series contains copies of Rabbot's individual and group photographs with family and friends.

Title/Description	Instances	
Photographs, 1938-2010	box 13	folder 13

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