

RUSSIAN PERCEPTIONS OF AUSTRALIA, 1788-1919

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This thesis is my own original work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to be 'A' and 'S'.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	vi
List of tables	vii
List of illustrations	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
 PART I	 12
CHAPTER 1	
PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN NAVAL VISITORS (1807-1835)	13
Introduction	13
The land	21
The colony	25
The people	35
Colonists	35
Aborigines	41
Conclusion	53
 CHAPTER 2	
THE IMAGE OF AUSTRALIA IN RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS BEFORE 1851	58
 PART II	 73
CHAPTER 3	
PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN VISITORS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	74
Introduction	74
The land	83
Economic structure	87
Industry	88
Agriculture	91
Conditions of the working class	95
The economic crisis of the 1890s	97
Population	99
Parliament and politics	102

Deportation and prison	105
Society	109
Colonization principles and general features	109
Sense of place and national consciousness	117
Social behaviour	122
Family life and women's emancipation	130
State and private institutions and their role in Australian society	132
Recreations and sport	134
Food and meals	136
Cities	137
Education and culture	145
Aborigines	150
Conclusion	153
 CHAPTER 4	
RUSSIAN CONSULS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN-AUSTRALIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS	157
 CHAPTER 5	
THE EVOLUTION OF THE IMAGE OF AUSTRALIA IN RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS (1851-1900)	170
 PART III	192
 CHAPTER 6	
PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN TRAVELLERS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY	193
Introduction	193
The land	199
Country and society	201
Aborigines	219
 CHAPTER 7	
RUSSIAN EMIGRES AND THE EVOLUTION OF THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF AUSTRALIA	224
Russian emigres: the demography of ethnic origin	224
Early Russian settlers and Australia	236
Convicts, deserters and vagabonds	236
The first Russian immigrants	239
Adventure seekers and romantic democrats	242

Russian emigration from 1910 to 1919	247
Social background and perceptions of Australia before emigration	247
Political refugees and their choice of Australia	255
Perceptions of Australia on arrival	259
Patterns of employment, conditions of work and their influence on Russian perceptions	261
Proposed Russian colony in the Northern Territory and Russian impressions of the land and people	268
Australian society in the perceptions of Russian immigrants	278
The Bolshevik Artem's Marxist perceptions of Australian conditions	285
The influence of radical perceptions of Australia on Russian emigre community	288
Australian attitudes towards the Russians from 1910 to 1914	296
World War I, the Russian revolutions and changes in attitudes and perceptions	299
CHAPTER 8	
IMAGES OF AUSTRALIA IN RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS (1901-1919)	308
CONCLUSION	338
BIBLIOGRAPHY	348

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is devoted to the study of Russian perceptions of Australia in a historical perspective. In exploring novel themes, the study introduces a considerable number of new Russian sources and Russian sources previously unknown to English speaking scholars. This thesis also is the first attempt to make a comprehensive study over a long period of perceptions of Australia and Australians by another nation. As the study envelopes nearly a century and a half it has been divided into three parts: the first discusses perceptions since the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth centuries, the second is devoted to the second half of the nineteenth century, and the third to the first two decades of the twentieth century. My supposition that visitors, immigrants and arm-chair writers would have different images of Australia led me to subdivide the material into chapters depending upon the way different commentators acquired their knowledge. Within the chapters, where appropriate, the material is organized according to themes. The chapter devoted to the Russian emigres includes substantive statistical and historical background because these data, being important for the understanding of emigres' perceptions, have not been exploited by other scholars.

The main method that I employ in the research is a concrete-historical and composite approach which enables me, after discussing each Russian description of Australia in the context of the time of its creation, its origin, intended audience etc., to move from particular perceptions to generalizations. A central point that I emphasize throughout the thesis is the influence of the social and cultural background of the Russians on the images created. What makes the Russians' perceptions so intriguing is that the Russians came to Australia more innocent of English language images than others, and their homeland went through greater upheavals. The Russia from which the observers came and the Australia that was being observed both changed dramatically over the 150 years. The perceptions, too, changed but not in direct conformity with the observed reality. Expectations, the previous experience of the observer and the audience addressed were always influencing perceptions.

I argue the importance of the study of perceptions for modern historical research, particularly the importance of their influence on relations between the two countries and on Russian history. I hope that this thesis will stimulate comparative studies of the image of Australia created by different nations.

LIST OF TABLES

1. Russian Items Published about Naval Visits of 1807-1835	17
2. Items Published in 'Core' Periodicals up to 1851	58
3. Thematic Distribution of Items Published, 1801-1850	60
4. Russian Naval Visits, 1853-1894	74
5. Australian Trade with Russia, 1885-1900	167
6. Items Published in 'Core' Periodicals, 1851-1900	170
7. Thematic Distribution of Items Published, 1851-1900	172
8. Thematic Complexes of Items Published, Percentages, 1801-1900	172
9. Thematic Distribution of Economic Items Published, 1851-1900	186
10. Immigrants from the Russian Empire in Australia, 1871-1921	227
11. Territorial and Ethnic Origin of Immigrants from the Russian Empire, 1901 and 1921	228
12. Males from Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia (non-Jews) Naturalized in Australia after 1904	229
13. Religious Congregations of Immigrants from the Russian Empire, 1911	230
14. Estimates of the Proportion of Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians among All Immigrants from the Russian Empire, 1901-1921	232
15. Arrivals and Departures from Russia, 1904-1921	232
16. Place of Settlement of Ethnic Russians in Australia, Percentages, 1907-1947	234
17. Items Published in 'Core' Periodicals, 1901-1917	308
18. Thematic Distribution of Items Published, 1901-1919	309
19. Thematic Complexes of Items Published, Percentages, 1801-1919	310
20. Australian Trade with Russia, 1901-1919	331

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Following page
1. Faddei Bellingshausen [From <i>The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen</i>]	15
2. Mikhail Lazarev [From <i>The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen</i>]	15
3. Dmitrii Zavalishin [From D. Zavalishin, <i>Zapiski dekabrista (Notes of a Decembrist)</i> , St. Petersburg, 1910]	15
4. Ivan Simonov [From <i>Plavaniia shliupov 'Vostok' i 'Mirnyi' (A voyage on the sloops Vostok and Mirnyi)</i> , Moscow, 1949]	15
5. Leontii Hagemeister [From Govor & Massov, eds, <i>Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii</i>]	15
6. Evgenii Berens [From Govor & Massov, eds, <i>Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii</i>]	15
7. Pavel Mikhailov. View of the Town of Sydney at Port Jackson. 1820 [From <i>The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen</i>]	50
8. Pavel Mikhailov. Natives of New Holland. 1820 [From <i>The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen</i>]	50
9. Pavel Mikhailov. Bungaree. 1820 [From <i>The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen</i>]	50
10. Charles Rodius. King Bungaree. 1832 [National Library of Australia]	50
11. Andrei Popov [From Govor & Massov, eds, <i>Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii</i>]	78
12. Aleksandr Linden [From Govor & Massov, eds, <i>Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii</i>]	78
13. Vsevolod Rudnev [From Govor & Massov, eds, <i>Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii</i>]	78
14. Avramii Aslanbegov [From Govor & Massov, eds, <i>Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii</i>]	78
15. Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich [From <i>Russkii voennyi flot (The Russian Navy)</i> , St. Petersburg, 1904]	78

16. Fedor Avelan
[From *Russkii voennyi flot (The Russian Navy)*, St. Petersburg, 1904] 78
17. Sophia Vitkovskaia
[From Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*] 78
18. Rynda's brass band
[Central Naval Museum, St. Petersburg] 78
19. Aleksandr Iashchenko
[From Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie po Avstralii*] 195
20. Konstantin Balmont
[From Balmont, *Stikhotvoreniia (Poems)*, Leningrad, 1969] 195
21. Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay
[From Miklukho-Maklai, *Sobranie sochinenii (Collection of works)*, vol. 4] 241
22. Evlampia Holtze (née Mezintseva)
[From W.J. Ruediger, *The Holtze Saga*] 241
23. Nicolas Illin
[Courtesy of the Illins-Hoolihans family] 270
24. Leandro Illin
[Courtesy of the Illins-Hoolihans family] 270
25. Artem
[From *Tovarishch Artem (Comrade Artem)*, Kharkov, 1982] 285
26. Viktor Kurnatovskii
[From I. Guro, *Kon' moi bezhit (My Galloping Horse)*, Moscow, 1987] 285

INTRODUCTION

Theme

The subject of my study is Russian ethnic perceptions of Australia and Australians before the October revolution. Ethnic perceptions, i.e. the perceptions that one nation has of another nation, are interesting not only for theoretical purposes, particularly as aspects of a nation's mentality.¹ They also play an important role in relations between peoples and states, and may exert a great influence on events - from the trivial to the consequential - and thus are of potential significance for historical research. At the same time, ethnic perceptions are components of international contact, and those varying perceptions appeal to and affect a wide audience, as they provide the most fascinating and easily digestible material.

Australia, with the development of a national identity and the recognition of the importance of multiculturalism in its history, is experiencing an increasing interest in the perceptions of other nations about it.² Russian perceptions of Australia, particularly those of pre-revolutionary Russia, remain largely unknown to Australians. This is due mainly to the language barrier and to the inaccessibility of many Russian sources. The Russian perceptions may be of special interest because of the ambivalent nature of the Russian mentality, which combines features common among Europeans with a specific Russian attitude.³ This makes Russian images of Australia more distinct than, say, those held by

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- 1 By mentality, I mean the general system of ideas, feelings and world outlook of a society.
 - 2 This interest was reflected in the conference 'Outside Images of Australia' held in Perth in 1992, papers from which were published as *Australia in the World: Perceptions and Possibilities*, Perth, 1993. Russian perceptions of Australia were beyond the scope of this conference. The main books published in this field are the following: *Australia and European Imagination: Papers from a conference held at the Humanities Research Centre, Monograph no. 1*, Canberra, 1982; S. Martin, *A New Land. European Perceptions of Australia, 1788-1850*, Sydney, 1993; G.D.W. Goodwin, *The Image of Australia: British Perception of the Australian Economy from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, Durham, 1974; A. Corkhill, *Antipodean Encounters: Australia and the German Literary Imagination, 1754-1918*, German-Australian Studies, vol. 2, Bern, 1990; S.L. Thompson, *Australia through Italian Eyes: a Study of Settlers Returning from Australia to Italy*, Melbourne, N.Y., 1980; P.G. Edwards, *Australia through American Eyes, 1935-1945: Observations by American Diplomats*, St.Lucia, 1979; R. Harjono, *White Tribe of Asia: an Indonesian View of Australia*, 2nd ed., South Yarra, 1994; S. Suzuki, *Australia through Japanese Eyes*, Osaka, 1988.
 - 3 The peculiarities of Russian mentality were determined by geographical, historical and cultural factors such as vast land area, multinational composition of the population, constant strong Asian influence, colonial experience, serfdom, autocracy, the lower standard of living of the majority of the population and Orthodox religion. A combination of these factors leads to the fact that in some cases specifically Russian components of mentality overshadow general European components to a degree more significant than in other European nations.

the Americans or the French. The sharp differences between the Russian and the Australian mentality themselves give grounds to suppose that Russians might notice features of Australia that did not attract the attention of Australians. The fact that Russians in general hardly perceived Australia as an enemy, potential threat, or rival, leads me to believe that their view might be more unbiased than that of some other European nations. At the same time, it is likely that they did not perceive Australia to be a backyard of Britain, as inhabitants of the mother country could have done.

The democratic changes in Russia since 1985, and its return to a market economy, give hope for an increase in economic, social and cultural contact between Russia and Australia in the future. Mutual perceptions inevitably will play an important part in this process. They emerge not spontaneously, but have developed over more than two hundred years. The study of these perceptions is useful in understanding the origins and peculiarities of modern perceptions. While we will never be able to have perceptions free of prejudice, we will be much more able to assess those perceptions if we understand their origins.

The Russian perceptions that will be discussed here certainly are not the perceptions of the general Russian population. The majority - the working classes - were illiterate⁴ and lacked the opportunity to read any writings about Australia, or to record any perceptions of the country that they might have formed on the basis of the tales of such Russian visitors as lower deck seamen. Still, as time went on, the composition of those groups of Russians who formed and recorded their perceptions about Australia did not remain static. While, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, they were mainly naval officers, educated gentry and officials, in the following decades they were joined by *raznochintsy*,⁵ businessmen, professionals, young people and finally, from the last decades of the century, by more advanced members of the working class.

4 According to Jeffrey Brooks' research 'Literacy rates rose from 21 percent of the population of the Russian Empire in 1897 ... to an estimated 40 percent on the eve of World War I'. By that time literacy among some social groups, such as males from industrialized provinces of central Russia and youngsters, was not less than 70 percent. Literacy among peasants was the lowest - nearly 25 percent in the 1910s. See J. Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read. Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*, Princeton, 1985, p. 4.

5 Intellectuals not belonging to the gentry.

Methodology

The study of perceptions that one nation has of another is a relatively new field of research which developed after the Second World War. This field emerges at the convergence of such social sciences as history, social anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy and literary (especially comparative) studies. Some scholars have called this interdisciplinary approach **imaginological (or imagological)**, referring to the interpretation of mental images - in this case ethnic images. The specialist in each of the above branches approaches this subject from his or her own position, and develops some aspects of the issue more thoroughly than others.

In studying Russian perceptions of Australia I take a **concrete-historical and composite approach**. That is, I intend to study

- the forming and functioning of the images in their dynamics over a long period;
- differences in perceptions according to their origins (i.e. perceptions based on personal visits, the immigrant experience, research, general reading);
- differences in the perceptions held by various strata of Russian society (aristocracy, officials, intelligentsia, wide readers, young people, workers and peasants);
- specific images according to their intended audience (i.e. differences in images addressed to the educated, general and newly literate reader, as well as the peculiarities of the images used in propaganda and political struggle).

This approach enables each relevant piece of Russian writing to be attributed to a specific place in the general framework, to be based in a historical period, and for its origin and intended audience to be considered. In the chapters devoted to the image of Australia created by the Russian publications I will also use statistical analysis.

During recent decades scholars have created a detailed hierarchy of ethnic perceptions which can be defined as follows: prejudices, stereotypes, immediate perceptions (images) and considered ideas.⁶ In this study I will use these categories where appropriate, although Russian perceptions of the young Australian nation, unlike

6 N.A. Erofeev, *Tumannyi Al'bion. Angliia i anglichane glazami russkikh, 1825-1853* [Foggy Albion. England and the English through Russian Eyes, 1825-1853], Moscow, 1982, pp. 7-10; S. Marandon, *Image de France dans l'Angleterre victorienne, 1848-1900*, Paris, 1968, p. 462.

Russian perceptions of European nations, often were not distinguished by such diversity. Moreover, Russians were frequently reluctant to make generalizations in their early writings about Australia and did not clearly formulate their perceptions, concentrating instead on descriptions of particular events, institutions or experiences. In such cases I have attempted, in analysing their writings, to interpret what their perceptions might have been, and what were the undeclared prejudices, stereotypes and pre-conceptions that led them to notice and record particular details. My interpretations are based on the Russians' writings themselves, as well as an understanding of the Russian mentality and conditions and a knowledge of Australian history.

Ethnic perceptions have a dual character: they provide information about the nation which is described, and about the people who create and disseminate them. The relevance of the ethnic perceptions to reality remains a disputable question. Some scholars are inclined to consider the content of these perceptions to be nothing more than myth.⁷ I support the position of those who believe that ethnic images are based in reality, though transformed to a degree by the mentality of the nation which creates them.⁸ I also consider that the 'mythical' part of the image is no less important than its real part, as it is not simply fantasy but is influenced by the ethnic, historical, social and intellectual background of the creators of this image. The study of the image can lead to a better understanding of the mental and spiritual life of the society which produced it.

Aims

My research has a number of aims. Along with the most general questions - what Russians knew about Australia and Australians and how adequate was their reflection of Australian reality - I intend examining more specific features of Russian perceptions, attempting to distinguish the cases when they perceive Australia as Europeans, and when they exhibit in their perceptions specifically Russian attitudes. In other words, I try to distinguish between perceptions affected by the time of the encounter, and those affected by the cultural and ethnic background of the observers. I also attempt to examine the influence of the images of Australia on Russian history, and the significance of these

7 R. Rémond, *Les Etats Unis devant l'opinion française, 1815-1822*, Paris, 1967, p. 2; P. Réboul, *Myth anglais dans la littérature française ...*, Lille, 1962, p. 5.

8 Marandon, *Image de France*, pp. 675-676; Erofeev, *Tumannyi Al'bion*, pp. 17-22.

images in the self-identification of the Russians; and to explore the role of perceptions in official and unofficial relations between Russia and Australia. In addition, because Russian writings on Australia are little-known and inaccessible to Australians, I aim to discuss some new information and insights that the Russian sources on Australia provide, and appraise some Russian texts as sources for Australian history. In these cases I overstep the boundaries of the exploration of perceptions.

The phenomenon of Australian self-identification leads me to pay particular attention to Russians' understanding of the emergence of specific Australian features, and their perception of the people of Australia as a new nation distinct from the British. I attempt to analyse these at the level of both images and language.

The theme of the 'Russian scares' in Australia throughout the nineteenth century is beyond the scope of my thesis as it deals mainly with Australian perceptions of Russia. The analysis of the role which perceptions could play in these scares needs special research: the abundant facts about the scares can be found in a number of studies by Australian and Russian scholars.⁹

Chronological divisions

I group the material in three main sections, according to three periods with significance for both Russia and Australia.

1. The end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century.
2. The second half of the nineteenth century.
3. The beginning of the twentieth century.

In the chapter devoted to perceptions by Russian immigrants, I extend the period to 1919, as between 1914 and 1920 these perceptions underwent the most dramatic change and to cut them at the moment of the October revolution of 1917 would be too formalistic.

9 See, for instance, V. Fitzhardinge, 'Russian naval visitors to Australia, 1862-1888', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 52, part 2, 1966, pp. 129-158; C. Lack, *Russian Ambitions in the Pacific. Australian War Scares of the Nineteenth Century*, Brisbane, 1968; A.Ia. Massov, 'Vizit dobroï voli ili sekretnaia missiia? (Prebyvanie v Avstralii eskadry kontr-admirala A.B. Aslanbegova v 1881-1882 godakh)' [Visit of goodwill or a secret mission? (Visit of rear-admiral A.B. Aslanbegov's Squadron to Australia in 1881-1882)], in *Gangut*, issue 5, St. Petersburg, 1993, pp. 70-76.

I exclude the Soviet period not only for reasons of space but also because Russian perceptions before the revolution are more 'ethnically Russian' than subsequent 'Soviet' perceptions, which to a considerable extent were determined from above for ideological reasons. Now many Russians are attempting to liberate themselves from the Soviet legacy, and probably will return to the traditional Russian perceptions of Australia formed before the October revolution, updated according to the new era.

Sources

In addressing these aims, I plan to use the following groups of sources:

- published and archival;
- official (official reports of visitors, diplomatic correspondence, parliamentary debates) and private (travel journals, memoirs, letters);
- primary (writings of the visitors) and secondary (other writings of contemporaries, reflecting ethnic perceptions not formed by direct contact).

In some cases I will refer to non-traditional historical sources such as fiction, drawings and anthropological collections.

I believe that it will also be productive to compare in some cases my own perceptions, as a Russian, with those of early Russian visitors; although a full-scale comparative study of this type is yet to be undertaken.

Most of the published sources used here were listed in my Russian *Bibliography of Australia (1710-1983)* and *Bibliography of Australia (1984-1988)*. Parts of these bibliographies, covering Russian naval expeditions, travel accounts and history, were translated into English and published in Australia by Thomas Poole, John McNair and Lyndall Morgan as *Russian Sources on Australia, 1788-1990*. The Australian version of the bibliography, in the above areas, is the most complete as I included there a number of new entries and expanded annotations.¹⁰ The number of published primary sources

10 E.V. Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii (1710-1983)* [*Bibliography of Australia (1710-1983)*], Moscow, 1985, 380 pp., (5,925 entries); E.V. Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii (1984-1988)* [*Bibliography of Australia (1984-1988)*], Moscow, 1989, 142 pp., (1,046 entries); *Russian Sources on Australia, 1788-1990*, *Accessing the Past*, no. 3, compiled and edited by T. Poole, J. McNair and L. Morgan, Brisbane, The University of Queensland, 1993, 140 pp., (1,118 entries). History of my work over the *Bibliography* see in R. McCaskie, E. Govor, 'A Russian Bibliography of Australia (Description and genesis of the *Bibliografiia Avstralii*)', *Reference Australia*, no. 7, 1991, pp. 8-19.

(writings of naval visitors, travellers and emigres) is over one hundred, while the secondary sources (pre-revolutionary Russian publications) number over 1,600.¹¹

The available sources have different values for my research. While concentrating mainly on published sources, I intend to use only those archival materials which either influenced public perception or reflected it. Official documents, providing generally reliable information, usually have few remarks that could be considered to be perceptions. Travel journals and travel notes are the most promising sources, as they are usually permeated with perceptions. The thematic pre-revolutionary Russian publications by armchair writers, although not always containing material which can be considered as perceptions, are valuable sources for statistical analysis, thus providing an indication of which Australian themes were of interest to Russians. Certainly, in using each source, it is important to take into consideration its reliability, form, the date and purpose of its creation, the audience to which it was addressed, and the limitations imposed by Russian and Soviet censorship.¹² Where necessary, I will give these details about the particular sources. Thus, the number of available sources and their quality allows me to elucidate my theme comprehensively.

Historiography

There is no relevant research which examines the problem of Russian perceptions of Australia in a comprehensive and subtle manner. Nevertheless there are several valuable studies by Russian and Western scholars which explore different aspects of

11 In some footnotes I will not give a complete description of the secondary sources but provide only the numbers of their descriptions in the Russian or Australian versions of my bibliographies. I will do this to save space in cases where the reference is intended to show the number of publications rather than to discuss a particular book or article.

12 The main preoccupation of censorship in Russia was always the political sympathies of the authors. The information that came from more democratic Western countries was often regarded with suspicion. Especially strict were the censorship demands for the so-called 'literature for the common reader'. Under these circumstances, Russian readers developed an ability to read between the lines. Censorship rules and practice in Russia changed several times during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In respect of censorship, the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) was especially harsh, particularly during the years after the suppression of the Decembrist uprising in 1825 and the European revolutions of 1848. The reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) brought a gradual liberalization of the censorship rules, and the abolition of prepublication censorship for some editions. In 1905 prepublication censorship was abolished for all editions. N.A. Engel'gardt, *Ocherk istorii russkoi tsenzury v svyazi s razvitiem pechati (1703-1903)* [History of Russian Censorship in Connection with the Development of the Press (1703-1903)], St. Petersburg, 1904; Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, pp. 110-111, 299-311. Soviet censorship had a significant effect on primary and secondary sources concerning Russian pre-revolutionary emigres to Australia, aiming to create negative images.

Russian-Australian contacts through source analysis concentrating on particular historical, nautical and scientific issues. Perceptions as such are usually beyond the scope of these studies, but they provide abundant facts on selected topics and indicate a broader historical perspective.

In the study of Russian-Australian contacts the pioneering role belongs to the historian, book collector and bibliographer Constantin Hotimsky, an Australian scholar of Russian descent. His enthusiastic booklet *Russians in Australia*, written in the mid-1950s in isolation from many sources published in Russia, is far from complete and has a number of mistakes, but it always reminds me of how important it is for a Russian, estranged in Australia from his motherland, to know the history of his compatriots here.¹³ An Australian historian, Verity Fitzhardinge, prepared a thesis in the early 1960s titled *Russian-Australian Relations in the Nineteenth Century*. Two chapters discuss the response of the Australian press to the Crimean war and fears of the Russian threat, while two other chapters are devoted to Russian naval visits to Australia from 1807 to 1888. The chapters about naval visits were published as separate articles in the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, and remain an important source on the history of Russian visits for non-Russian-speaking scholars. For the 1960s it was brilliant research, though now it is obvious that her list of Russian naval visits of the second half of the nineteenth century had essential gaps, as only some of the Russian published sources were available to her.¹⁴

A new page in the study of the history of Russian naval visits of the first half of the nineteenth century was opened in the 1970s by a Canadian historian, Glynn Barratt. He not only undertook thorough research of the Western archival and published sources, but was the first Western scholar to introduce to the English-speaking world the resources

13 C. Hotimsky, *Russkie v Avstralii [The Russians in Australia]*, Melbourne, 1957, 33 pp.; C.M. Hotimsky, 'Russians in Australia', in *Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 7, Sydney, 1958, pp. 526-528. It is curious that till recently in the main Soviet libraries Hotimsky's book was locked away from ordinary scholars in special secret departments, and in one library this volume of the encyclopaedia was removed from the general reference room.

14 H.V. Fitzhardinge, *Russian-Australian Relations in the Nineteenth Century*, A thesis, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1964; V. Fitzhardinge, 'Russian ships in Australian waters, 1807-1835', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 51, part 2, 1965, pp. 113-147; Fitzhardinge, 'Russian naval visitors to Australia'. H.V. and V. Fitzhardinge are the same person who sometimes signed articles by the second name.

of Soviet archives. His book *The Russians at Port Jackson, 1814-1820* concentrates mainly on Russian data about Aborigines, while his latest volume, *The Russians and Australia*, sums up his research on the Russian visits to Australia up to 1835.¹⁵

Soviet scholars, while conducting research into the history of Russian naval expeditions in general, until recently were uninterested in the Russians' visits to Australia itself. In the 1980s Aleksandr Massov, a historian from St. Petersburg Naval University, began to study the writings of the Russian naval visitors about Australia as a historical source. Some of his articles about Russian visitors were published in Russia. He has discovered considerable archival material, and has recently successfully defended his doctoral thesis *The Establishment and Development of Russian-Australian Relations, 1807-1901*.¹⁶ He was very generous in providing me with some of his archival findings, which were still unpublished.

Among recent publications is a book by the Moscow historian Artem Rudnitskii, *Another Life and Far Shore ... Russians in Australian History*. This book, based mainly on printed sources, gives beautiful depictions of the most interesting aspects of Russian-Australian contacts. At the same time the author's judgements are sometimes determined by Soviet ideological requirements.¹⁷ Russian and Australian scholars explore different aspects of Russian-Australian contacts in the anthology *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, edited by Brisbane historians John McNair and Thomas Poole.¹⁸ I will refer to particular articles in the relevant parts of the thesis.

My interest in Australia emerged when I was thirteen and lived in Russia; it was a way to escape from the grim reality surrounding me. The dream of coming to Australia

15 G.R. Barratt, *The Russians at Port Jackson, 1814-1820*, Canberra, 1981, 114 pp.; G.R. Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*, Russia and the South Pacific, 1696-1840, vol. 1, Vancouver, 1988, 338 pp.

16 A.Ia. Massov, *Stanovlenie i razvitie russko-avstraliiskikh svyazei (1807-1901 gg.). Avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk [The Establishment and Development of Russian-Australian Relations, (1807-1901). Dissertation abstract for the degree of Doctor of Historical Studies]*, St. Petersburg, 1995. Bibliography of Massov's publications, see *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos. 1-31, 1-89 to 1-99, 3-561, 3-562. Recently he published the first part of his thesis as a book A.Ia. Massov, *Andreevskii flag pod luzhnym krestom. (Iz istorii russko-avstraliiskikh svyazei pervoi treti XIX veka) [St. Andrew's Flag under the Southern Cross. (Toward a History of Russian-Australian Contacts from the First Third of the Nineteenth Century)]*, St. Petersburg, 1995, 127 pp.

17 A.Iu. Rudnitskii, *Drugaia zhizn' i bereg dal'nii ... Russkie v avstraliiskoi istorii [Another Life and A Far Shore ... Russians in Australian History]*, Moscow, 1991.

18 J. McNair & T. Poole, eds, *Russia and the Fifth Continent. Aspects of Russian-Australian Relations*, St. Lucia, 1992, 292 pp.

one day at all costs became the motive driving all my studies for many years. After compiling *Bibliography of Australia* I concentrated on the history of Russian-Australian contacts. Since 1980 I have published over a dozen of articles about early Russian writings on Australia and the South Pacific.¹⁹ In 1990, while working in the Institute of Oriental Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences, I worked with Massov in preparing and editing the considerable volume *Russian Sailors and Travellers in Australia*. This collection consists of texts by the Russian visitors (many of them previously unpublished), our essays about each expedition or visitor, and an introduction, 'Australia of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the writings of Russian naval visitors and travellers'. In 1993, thanks to the financial support of the Australian embassy in Moscow, the book was published in Russian.²⁰ All our efforts to publish the English version of it in Australia have so far been unsuccessful.

I will refer to other authors and publications on particular subjects (such as Russian consuls or emigres on Australia) in the appropriate chapters of the thesis. I considered it reasonable not to provide a detailed background to some parts of my thesis, where the relevant facts are readily available in English-language publications. For instance, I provide only general characteristics of the Russian visitors of the early decades of the nineteenth century, as further biographical facts can be found in three books by Barratt. Similarly, I do not say much about Miklouho-Maclay's explorations in the South Pacific, as biographies have been written by E.M. Webster and other scholars. On the other hand, I consider it necessary to provide as much biographical detail as possible, often from Russian archival sources, about less well-known Russian naval visitors and travellers of the later decades.

The novelty of the theme of the thesis

I believe that my intention to study Russian perceptions of Australia comprehensively and over a long period, as well as the specific perceptions of different social strata of Russian society, is the most productive approach to the subject. I realize

19 Bibliography of my writings on Russian-Australian contacts and perceptions, see *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 1-52, 1-53, 3-437, 3-438, 3-439, 3-440, 3-441.

20 E.V. Govor & A.Ia. Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii [Russian Sailors and Travellers in Australia]*, Moscow, 1993, 302 pp. In this book Massov dealt mainly with naval visitors and I with individual travellers and experts.

the difficulty of this task. There is no other research which studies the perceptions of another nation about Australia in similar comprehensive form and which could be a model and a source of comparison for my research. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the lack of tradition in perceptions of the embryonic Australian nation makes the analysis of the early Russians' writings especially difficult, as they do not provide readily formulated judgements and images. In spite of these difficulties, I hope that the research will stimulate further comprehensive studies of the image of Australia in other cultures and will lead to comparative study of these images. At this stage, the comparison of Russian images of Australia with images held by other nations is beyond the scope of my thesis, although I will remark on this subject where information is available.

As the thesis is based predominantly on Russian language sources, I provide English translations of the titles of Russian writings. In transliteration of the Russian words and proper names I use the system of the Library of Congress, except where in English the name has a tradition of different transliteration.²¹ Quotations from the Russian texts are either mine or, where available, are based on the translations done by Barratt, Hotimsky, Frank Debenham, Fitzhardinge and Poole. I express my gratitude to all of them. As, in some cases, I have changed expressions in the translations of the above authors to get closer to the original text, I have decided not to attribute each particular quotation to the translator.

21 For instance, in the text I use the form Miklouho-Maclay instead of Miklukho-Maklai, or tsar Nicholas I instead of Nikolai I.

PART I

CHAPTER 1

PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN NAVAL VISITORS (1807-1835)

Introduction

The arrival of the Russian ship *Neva* in Port Jackson in June 1807¹ opened the first stage of direct contacts between Russia and Australia and the forming of original Russian perceptions of the new continent.

Fifteen visits by thirteen Russian vessels to Sydney took place in the years 1807, 1814, 1820, 1822, 1825, 1829, 1832 and 1835, while two vessels visited Hobart in 1823; and after that there were no visits until 1853. They were either ships carrying goods and supplies bound for the colonies of the Russian-American Company, or navy vessels on exploratory expeditions. Each stayed in Australia for about three to four weeks. Their lower deck crews numbered in total nearly one thousand, while officers, scientists and others numbered about 130. Average figures for a ship are 66 and 9 respectively. Even if we reduce the total figures of visitors, remembering that for some of them it was the second or even the third visit to Australia, we have to concede that there was a substantial number of visitors for the time and these could produce a significant impact on the perceptions of Australia held in Russia.

If we wish to give a collective portrait of upper deck crews we must emphasize that all the officers belonged to the Russian nobility, and as a rule they were well educated. Most of them graduated from the Naval Cadet Corps, which happened to be one of the few educational institutions in Russia where English was taught. The officers usually knew some European languages, and on each ship at least several of them had a good command of English and could serve as the interpreters for the rest of the crew in communications with the shore in Britain and Australia. Naval officers, as well as Russian nobility in general, were acquainted with European culture and can be considered as the most Westernized section of Russian society at the time. The naval officers, more

¹ The facts and biographical details for this chapter are taken mainly from Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*; Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*; G. Barratt, *The Russian Navy and Australia to 1825. The Days Before Suspicion*, Melbourne, 1979, 118 pp.

than Russian nobility on the whole, were aware of Britain as the Russian ships bound for the Pacific usually called at Portsmouth and the officers spent some time in London. Some of the Russian officers (among them Leontii A. Hagemeister, Semen Ia. Unkovskii, and Mikhail P. Lazarev) had served on British warships at the beginning of the nineteenth century. All the above mentioned characteristics applied in greater degree to Baltic Germans whose number among the officers was relatively high, although men of Russian origin were predominant. Russianized Baltic Germans combined European and Russian culture. The most brilliant among them were Hagemeister, Faddei F. Bellingshausen, and Fedor I. Shtein (Stein).² The officers as a rule were in their twenties and thirties and sometimes even younger.

Naturalists and surgeons were also on board and played an important role in studying and describing distant lands. While naturalists were appointed mainly to the specifically scientific expeditions (an especially strong team of them was on the four Russian naval vessels of discovery that visited Australia in 1820), on other expeditions their role was played by surgeons, who were often capable of making valuable anthropological, geographical and geological observations. In some cases keen observers were also found among the well-educated passengers on the ships and those employed as interpreters and clerks.³

Although there may have been some cases of patronage in appointing members of expeditions, in general the officers appear to have been chosen for their real abilities and knowledge. Many of them later became prominent figures in the naval, administrative, political and scientific life of Russia. Comradeship was strong among the officers. In 1826 Dmitrii I. Zavalishin, midshipman on the *Kreiser*, who took part in the Decembrist movement, was interrogated on suspicion of high treason and espionage during the voyage. Not one of his crew members called to the court for questioning made any

2 Baltic Germans' often Russified their original names, thus Ludwig Karl von Hagemeister was known in Russia as Leontii A(n)drianovich Gagemeister, Fabian Gottlieb Bellingshausen as Faddei Faddeevich Bellinsgauzen. I will refer to them using the variant of their name accepted by other Western scholars. Usually they use the German variant of their surname.

3 For instance, an interpreter Akhilles Pavlovich Shabel'skii aboard the *Apollon* knew English, French and Latin. Together with Aleksandr Pushkin he had received an excellent education at the famous *lycée* of Tsarskoe Selo. He presented the French version of his travel notes to the Russian poet.

compromising deposition against him, although they were expected to and they did not share the ideas of Decembrists⁴ (ills 1-6). The lower deck crews on Russian vessels were similarly regarded as exceptionally efficient and reliable. Zavalishin mentioned that 400 members of the *Kreiser* and the *Ladoga* crews were selected from more than 20,000 candidates on service in Kronstadt. As a rule the seamen were under thirty-five, of good health, skilled in two different trades and often literate.⁵

The reasons for, and routine of, most of the visits were usually the same. Russian vessels that called in to Sydney or Hobart after three months rough passage from Brazil had run out of fresh water and food, and quite often the men on board exhibited the first symptoms of scurvy; often, too, the rigging had broken. They were met by the pilot at the entrance of Port Jackson, and on approaching the town exchanged salutes and dropped anchor either in the eastern part of Sydney Cove or in Neutral Bay. They were also given a place on the shore for an observatory, a hospital and for repairing and washing. In 1814 it was Benelong Point, but later they usually occupied Kirribilli Point, known in the 1820s as 'Russian point'.⁶ Some of the crew and officers set up their tents on shore and spent most of their time there. On the northern shore of Sydney Harbour they also found wood for repairs, prepared charcoal and provided themselves with water.

Ship captains and senior officers usually visited Government House and public buildings in the city, accepted invitations for dinners and travelled to Parramatta. Some of them, and especially the naturalists, made trips to the more remote parts of the colony. Boris Christa emphasizes that because each Russian

ship or squadron always had at least one officer who had been 'down under' on the previous occasion ... they could build up and maintain a network of good and useful connections with individual officers, tradesmen or providers in Australia.

4 E.V. Govor, "'Avstraliia i Polineziia" - zabytyi ocherk dekabristsa D.I. Zavalishina' ['Australia and Polynesia' - a forgotten essay by the Decembrist D.I. Zavalishin], in *Konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii*, Moscow, 1989, pp. 25-26.

5 D. Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia: Iz vospominanii byvshego moriaka' [Australia and Polynesia: from the reminiscences of a former sailor], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 88; Aleksei P. Lazarev, *Zapiski o plavanii voennogo shliupa 'Blagonamerennogo'...* [Notes on the Voyage of the Sloop-of-War Blagonamerennyi...], Moscow, 1950, p. 25; *Russkie otkrytiia v Antarktike v 1819-1820-1821 godakh* [Russian Discoveries in the Antarctic in 1819-1820-1821], Moscow, 1951, p. 21-22.

6 E. Govor, 'Na mysu Russkikh: Iz istorii ekspeditsii 1820 goda' [On the Russian Point: Towards the history of expeditions of 1820], *Avstraliada*, Sydney, no. 5, 1995, pp. 1-6.



III. 1. Faddei Beltingshausen



III. 2. Mikhail Lazarev



III. 3. Dmitrii Zavalishin



III. 4. Ivan Simonov



III. 5. Leontii Hagemeister



III. 6. Evgenii Berens

Barratt defines three main kinds of British living in Australia with whom Russians had social dealings at these early years: 'Governor's people, friends, relations, and supporters; other officers and prosperous free settlers ...; and merchants and their agents'.⁷ I may add that all Russian captains and senior officers met with the Governor and some of them established contacts with local explorers, naturalists, clergymen and with women. Most of them had personal contact with Aborigines.

The lower deck crew also had some contact with the shore. Aleksei Rossiiskii mentioned that in 1814 half the crew went ashore each day, and Bellingshausen in 1820 preferred to let the crew visit the northern shore because he thought that it was 'better for them to wander about the woods than to be exposed to temptations, only damaging to their health, by visiting the town'. But for some of them contacts were wider than Bellingshausen suspected: in spite of all precautions some members of the crew left Port Jackson with venereal infection. One should not, however, overestimate the scope of the contacts of lower deck crew with the shore. In the only known diary of a seaman, Egor Kiselev devoted to the second visit to New Holland in 1820 just a few lines describing different kinds of refitting work and did not offer any impressions of Sydney and its inhabitants.⁸

Assessing the Russians' impressions, we shall bear in mind that many officers and especially the captains and naturalists in the expeditions were acquainted with the available literature about the countries they planned to visit. As a rule ships' libraries had books on sea voyages in Western and Russian languages dealing with Australia as well. Careful observations were not just a result of curiosity but were a direct duty for many Russian naval visitors as most of the expeditions on their departure received from the Admiralty Board instructions to observe and keep records on all subjects of interest during their journey. Recommendations usually were given in the most general form:

7 B. Christa, 'Great Bear and Southern Cross: the Russian presence in Australia', in McNair & Poole, eds, *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, p. 83; Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*, p. 114.

8 A. Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia 'Suvorova' v Novoi Gollandii' [On sojourn of the *Suvorov* in New Holland], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 29; T. Bellingshausen, *The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821*, trans. from Russian by F. Debenham, vol. 1, London, 1944, pp. 165, 193. (Initial T. stands here for Thaddeus, which is another confusing variant of Bellingshausen's first name Fabian or Faddei); E. Kiselev, 'Pamiatnik ...' [Diary ...], in *Russkie otkrytiia v Antarktike*, p. 185.

[to describe] works of art and nature, trade, and all rare and interesting sights that you see; [or] to pass over in silence nothing new, useful, or curious ..., this applying ... in the broadest sense and to such matters as might widen any area of human knowledge.

Advice on appropriate behaviour towards inhabitants was also not forgotten in these instructions. For example among the recommendations to Bellingshausen was the remark:

When you are in foreign countries or amongst natives, deal kindly with all and observe every courtesy and politeness, instilling the same into the minds of your subordinates.⁹

The amount of writing produced by the early Russian naval visitors was considerable. Along with the official reports by the commanders most of the officers and even some sailors kept diaries and wrote letters, though few have survived.¹⁰ Reviews of published and archival sources on this subject have been produced by Massov and Barratt, and there are a number of publications devoted to separate expeditions. In this chapter therefore, after a brief general analysis of the sources, I will concentrate on the perceptions conveyed in these writings. My present statistical calculations of Russian items published are as follows:

Table 1
Russian Items Published about Naval Visits of 1807-1835

	Period of Publication			
	1820-1850	1851-1917	1918-1994*	Total
Primary sources	23	11	14	48
Secondary sources	3	2	32	37

* Earlier items reprinted in this period are not taken into account in these sections.

We also possess a number of unpublished reports from Russian archives and though they did not play a role in the forming of Russian perceptions of Australia in the nineteenth century because they lacked a public readership, they represent valuable individual perceptions of travellers. In some cases perceptions were expressed more freely in unpublished works than in texts prepared for publication. Among these archival

9 *Sobranie instruksii, dannykh v raznoe vremia komandiram russkikh sudov, pri otpravlenii v dal'nee plavanie* [A Collection of Instructions Given at Various Times to Captains of Russian Vessels upon Departure on Distant Voyages], St. Petersburg, 1853, pp. 10-11, 34, 36, 68-69; M.P. Lazarev. *Dokumenty* [M.P. Lazarev. Documents], vol. 1, Moscow, 1952, p. 235; Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*, p. 94; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol.1, (instructions), p. 21.

10 The detailed bibliography of publications of the participants of Russian naval expeditions see in *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 1-1 to 1-149.

materials the most interesting are the following: the letter of Hagemeister (visit on the *Neva* in 1807); memoirs and statistical data of Mikhail N. Vasil'ev (*Otkrytie*, 1820); and journal of Nikolai D. Shishmarev (*Blagonamerennyi*, 1820).¹¹ The number of manuscripts still unknown to researchers (and perhaps lost forever) is definitely quite large. That is indicated by the fact that in the last few years I have managed to find in the Russian pre-revolutionary publications a number of forgotten accounts, including such valuable writings as those by Ivan M. Simonov, Shtein and Zavalishin.¹²

Certainly the writings of the Russian visitors are interesting for my research in varying degrees as not all publications had equal influence on the forming of public perceptions of Australia. It is possible to single out five main groups of Russian writings on Australia produced by those on the early naval expeditions.

1. Official reports and letters by captains to the Admiralty or the Board of the Russian-American Company (six published and one unpublished). It is likely that most of them are known to researchers already. They are not numerous, their circulation was very restricted, their subjects involve mostly hydrographic and commercial issues, the personal attitudes of their authors to the facts was usually restricted by official requirements and in general they represent only a supplementary source of information for this study. The most valuable source in this group is the letter of Hagemeister, because it is the only Russian source on the first visit to Sydney of the *Neva* in 1807.¹³

2. Accounts, memoirs, diaries. These are the most numerous (twenty-six published and a number unpublished). Though some of them are brief and have features

11 These materials were found in archives and introduced by Barratt and Massov. The valuable journals of Karl Gillesem (*Blagonamerennyi*), Fedor G. Vishnevskii (*Kreiser*, 1823) and some other Russian officers were lost and scholars know only the table of contents of some of them.

12 I.M. Simonov, 'Vypiska iz pis'ma, poluchennogo ... M.L. Magnitskim, ot ... Simonova iz Sidneia ot 23 apreliia 1820 goda' [Extract from a letter received by ... Magnitskii, from ... Simonov writing from Sydney on 23 April, 1820], *Kazanskii vestnik*, part 2, book 7, 1821, pp. 170-172; F. Shtein, 'Mineralogicheskie zamechaniia, proizvedennye v Iuzhnom Valise, na puti k Sinim goram' [Mineralogical observations made in South Wales, on the way to the Blue Mountains], *Trudy Mineralogicheskogo obshchestva v Sankt-Peterburge*, part 1, 1830, pp. 442-461; Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia'; D.I. Zavalishin, 'Admiral graf Evfimii Vasil'evich Putiatin: Vospominaniia byvshego sosluzhivtsa i nachal'nika' [Admiral Count Evfimii Vasil'evich Putiatin: Memories of a former colleague and commanding officer], *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 29, 30 October 1883.

13 L.A. Hagemeister, 'Pis'mo v pravlenie Rossiisko-amerikanskoi kompanii o plavanii korablia "Neva" iz Port-Dzheksona ot 12 iunია 1807 g.' [Letter to the Board of the Russian-American Company about the voyage of the ship *Neva* writing from Port Jackson on 12 June, 1807], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 16-17.

characteristic of the first group, most authors offer detailed descriptions and personal reactions. For Russian readers they were the main source for perceptions of Australia. The time, form and place of publication along with the personality of the author were the essential factors affecting the scope of their influence. Among these publications there were five books with substantial sections on the Australian part of a voyage (by Simonov, Bellingshausen, Shabel'skii (in French), Andrei P. Lazarev and Vasilii S. Zavoiko).¹⁴ The rest were mostly publications either in journals or in newspapers, some of them discovered and published only in the twentieth century. Further details on these publications as well as on archival sources will be given where appropriate below.

3. Unofficial letters by the participants of expeditions. Only a few of these (by Simonov, Nikolai A. Galkin, Pavel P. Nakhimov, Mikhail K. Kiukhel'beker) are known to researchers. It is reasonable to suppose that virtually all participants wrote letters to their relatives and friends. They could be a valuable source of information, but unfortunately most of these letters have not survived.

4. Geographical, geological and astronomical accounts by naturalists (Simonov, Shtein, Petr Ogievskii), as well as meteorological and hydrographic data collected by officers. There are nine accounts of this type, and for our study they play only an auxiliary role.

5. Drawings made by the artists who visited Australia aboard Russian ships. The paintings of Pavel N. Mikhailov (*Vostok*, 1820) are the best known among them, while those by Emel'ian M. Korneev (*Otkrytie*, 1820) have still not been found in the Russian archives and we possess only a list of them. Analysis of the preferred themes of these drawings can also help in understanding Russian perceptions.

In this study I propose to use all the above mentioned kinds of publications, irrespective of the time of their appearance, as well as the archival sources. But it is important to note which of these publications could have had a serious immediate influence on their contemporaries. In what follows all expeditions are listed and I note those about which publications were made in the nineteenth century which might be

¹⁴ *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 1-125, 1-33, 1-118, 1-75, 1-148.

thought to have influenced pre-revolutionary readers' perceptions of Australia.

Neva, 1807. No special publications.

Suvorov, 1814. The first publication in a popular magazine by navigator Rossiiskii in 1820, with a version published in a children's magazine in 1831.

Otkrytie, 1820. A report by Captain Vasil'ev was published in 1823 in a naval journal with restricted circulation.

Blagonamerennyi, 1820. Mineralogical report of Shtein was published in 1830 in a specialized journal.

Vostok, 1820. A number of items published by the astronomer and naturalist of the expedition, Simonov, of a general and astronomical nature: 1821 - two articles in a journal published in the provincial town of Kazan; 1822 - account was published in Kazan in book form; 1824 - extracts from his letters in a popular capital magazine; 1829 - another letter in a Kazan magazine; 1854 - an extract of a huge manuscript devoted to the voyage was published in St. Petersburg as a book. A detailed account by Captain Bellingshausen was published in St. Petersburg in 1831 in two volumes with a separate edition of charts and drawings.

Mirnyi, 1820. The memoirs of Pavel M. Novosil'skii were published in a literary magazine in 1853 and also in book form.

Apollon, 1822. An account by Shabel'skii was published in 1826 in a popular magazine in Russian and as a book in French.

Riurik, 1822. An account by Captain Efim A. Klochkov was published in 1826 in a popular magazine.

Kreiser, 1823. An official report by captain M. Lazarev was published in 1824 in a specialized journal. The Memoirs of Zavalishin were published in 1877, 1883, 1884, 1906 in a popular magazine, a newspaper and as a chapter in his book.

Ladoga, 1823. An account by captain Andrei Lazarev was published in 1826 in a specialized journal and his book with the detailed description of the voyage was published in 1832.

Elena, 1825. No special publications.

Elena, 1829. No special publications.

Krotkii, 1829. The memoirs of midshipman Evgenii A. Berens were published in 1903 in a naval journal.

Amerika, 1832. No special publications.

Amerika, 1835. A book by Zavoiko was published in 1840 with a brief section on Australia.

Thus we can see that not all the expeditions received equal representation in contemporary Russian publications. Though Russian visits to Australia began in 1807, there were no items published before 1820. During the 1820s and the early 1830s original Russian accounts were numerous, especially as a result of the visit of the scientific expeditions on the *Vostok* and the *Mirnyi* in 1820. Obviously the 1820s and the early 1830s were the time of the most intensive formation of Russian perceptions of Australia based on the results of the expeditions of 1814-1823. When in 1849 Gillesem at last managed to publish his memoirs of the voyage on the *Blagonamerennyi* in a popular magazine he omitted the Australian part considering it 'a too well known place'.¹⁵

The land

The main reasons for the Russian naval presence in Australia were the need for fresh water and food, to make repairs, and to make observations of social, economic and scientific interest. I am tempted to add a further reason - a purely psychological one - an almost physical thirst of seamen to rejoin with land and other people, to exchange the endless and unvarying skyline surrounding them for months for the normal changing pictures of land and nature. 'Only mariners can understand the joy that one feels at the sight of the shore after a long voyage', Unkovskii wrote.¹⁶ In the case of Russian visits to Australia that feeling was especially strong because of the long, harsh voyages in cold southern latitudes. That thirst for land emotionally coloured the Russians' encounters with Australia and contributed to the subsequent euphoric perception of it.

'Land in sight! - Land in sight!' - the officer of the watch suddenly called out.

15 *Otechestvennye zapiski*, vol. 66, part 8, 1849, p. 213.

16 S. Unkovskii, 'Iz "Istinnykh zapisok moei zhizni"' [From 'True memoirs of my life'], in *M.P. Lazarev. Dokumenty*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1952, p. 22.

Something boyish awoke in everybody's soul, 'and joy was expressed in every face'.¹⁷ A little white house standing on the desert shore at the edge of bush; a lonely night fire kindled on the cliff by the nomadic native inhabitants; the frame of a wrecked ship on the rocks: each of these jottings by the new arrivals was like a short poem breaking out from dull detailed reports filled with endless enumerations of latitudes, longitudes and wind directions. Bellingshausen in his account depicted graphically this atmosphere of expectation that seized all the crew at the sight 'of the high hills of New South Wales' and closely linked the mood of his crew members with the conditions of nature.¹⁸ He recollected the voyage in Antarctic latitudes:

In those dark, harsh climes it seems as if men's hearts grow cold in sympathy with the surroundings, men become gloomy, depressed, harsh and to a certain extent indifferent to everything, but with a clear sky, the beneficent influence of the reviving sunshine, and the various beauties of nature to gaze upon, man rejoices in her gifts and values them to the full.¹⁹

That is why we should not be surprised that all Russian seamen invariably referred to Australian land as 'desired', 'beloved', 'alluring', 'charming', 'attractive' or as 'the kingdom of the eternal spring', even 'Paradise'.²⁰

This generalized pre-perception of Australia as a desired Southland was gradually enriched by experience. If we read the memoirs of Russian mariners according to the chronology of the visits, we see that at first Australia is regarded only as a shore of a tropical island, but little by little the bounds of the Russian vision expand towards the Blue Mountains and beyond. Nevertheless, their early writings give the impression that the Russians did not yet realize the enormous size and natural diversity of the Australian continent and that their perception was based on a Sydney-centric model, which, indeed, was similar to that of most of the colony's inhabitants of that time. In Rossiiskii's description of Benelong Point (1814), we find a typical example of an early romantic enjoyment of Australia's land and nature, which was not concerned with individual detail

17 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 158.

18 On his expedition this mood was intensified by the Easter festival, which happened at that time, for in the Russian view of the world Easter carries the extremely significant connotations of purification, of spiritual unity with the world, of expectation of coming joys.

19 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 1, pp. 159, 160.

20 Expressions from memoirs of Unkovskii, Rossiiskii, Novosil'skii, A. Lazarev, Simonov.

but basked in the glory of the whole:

On one side, seaciffs rose in ledges, washed by waves that broke and foamed over the rocks beneath; on the other side stretched flowery dales, shaded by sweet-smelling groves, whence came the most delightful birdsong.²¹

Gradually this perception changed from a romantic to a realistic one, as the vision of nature became more detailed. Instead of Rossiiskii's 'sweet-smelling groves' Bellingshausen and Shtein in 1820 gave descriptions of vegetation zones as well as individual spices, and Shabel'skii discovered in 1822 that 'Nature has endowed the flowers of New Holland with rich colours but has deprived them of aromatic scent'. Zavalishin (1823) was interested in Tasmanian nature not because of its Southern luxuriance but because of its uniqueness.²² 'Delightful birdsong' (1814) changed to 'piping' and 'shrill screams' (1820) and 'lacking the gift of sweet voice' (1822),²³ while in 1829 Berens remarks that 'the quantity of birds in the neighbourhood of Port Jackson has drastically decreased'.²⁴ It is interesting to note that Russians in their descriptions of Australian nature sometimes drew analogies with realities well-known to them. For example, they remarked that the muzzle and size of a kangaroo reminded them of a 'borzoi' (the Russian wolfhound), and its meat tasted like venison.²⁵

Russians as people living in a land with such severe and prolonged winters invariably enjoyed the climate of Sydney and especially Tasmania, even though the time of their visits coincided with Australian autumn, winter and early spring, with their rainy and windy periods. They refer to the climate as 'fair', 'truly splendid', 'healthy', 'temperate and pleasant', 'the most pleasant'.²⁶ Probably surgeon Ogievskii reached the

21 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 24.

22 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 345, 348; Shtein, 'Mineralogicheskie zamechaniia', pp. 447-448; A. Shabel'skii, 'Prebyvanie g. Shabel'skogo v Novoi Gollandii' [Mr Shabel'skii's sojourn in New Holland], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 70; D. Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziiia', p. 91.

23 Expressions of Rossiiskii, Shtein, Bellingshausen, Shabel'skii.

24 E. Berens, 'Zapiski michmana E.A. Berensa, vedennye v krugosvetnom plavanii na shliupe "Krotkii" v 1828-1830 godakh' [Notes taken by midshipman E.A. Berens during a voyage round the world on the sloop *Krotkii*, 1828-1830], *Morskoi sbornik*, no. 2, 1903, p. 54.

25 M. Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski o snariazhenii ekspeditsii i plavanii ee do Porta Zhakson' [Notes on provisioning the expedition and the voyage to Port Jackson], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 40; I.M. Simonov, 'Shliupy "Vostok" i "Mirnyi"' [The Sloops *Vostok* and *Mirnyi*], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 57.

26 Expressions of Unkovskii, A. Lazarev, Bellingshausen, Ogievskii, M. Lazarev, V. Zavoiko.

most extreme conclusion in this respect, considering that the Tasmanian exiles should 'thank their stars' for finding themselves in the land with such 'beneficial' climate, 'where the most ailing, afflicted by hardly curable diseases, are relieved and completely recover'. As against this over enthusiastic vision, a number of memoirs reveal the real Australia with its 'insupportable summer heat', 'hot winds', 'tremendous thunder storms', 'torrential rains', droughts and floods.²⁷

Nevertheless at this period Australian nature still was not apprehended by Russians as hostile to human beings, as it was by many people who lived in Australia. Russians rather noticed a harmony between man and nature.

We ... met everywhere a splendid nature beautified by the hands of thinking man. Everywhere one could see European taste and industry in alliance with almost tropical climate,

was their impression about the surroundings of Parramatta.²⁸

The sight of Australia's starry sky also fitted well with the early romantic Russian vision of Australia. It awoke poetic yearnings in the soul of a young astronomer of the expedition of 1820, Simonov, attracting him not as a subject of scientific investigation but by some irrational essence. He even entitled one of his books devoted to this voyage *Nights*. Here is an example of his recollections of the Australian nights:

Surrounded by the woods ... I would frequently sit up until morning, beneath the Southern sky, in the tranquillity of the night, watching the luminaries. Rays of Sirius, Canopus, Achernar and the brilliant constellation of Crux [the Southern Cross] brightly flared up before me; the pale light of Magellanic Clouds played strikingly The silver sickle of the moon was already rolling down the dark blue vault; centenary *Banksia* were casting lengthy shadows on their green surrounds. A soft, cool breeze fingered their leaves²⁹

At the same time after a few days of initial enthusiasm, the Russians, it seems, began to miss the humble charm of their northern homes:

Yet however impressive this glorious flourishing nature, the excessively sultry climate, the heat of the sun and the very scent of the flowers awoke in us a preference for a cool spring evening in our own land, with its birch and lime groves and their barely perceptible perfumes.³⁰

27 P. Ogievskii cited by An.P. Lazarev, 'Plavanie vokrug sveta na shliupe "Ladoga" v 1822, 1823 i 1824 godakh' [A voyage around the world on the sloop *Ladoga* in the years 1822-1824], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 85; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 351-352.

28 Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 55.

29 Simonov, 'Shliupy', pp. 61, 63.

30 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 186.

The colony

The impression made on Russian visitors by the inhabitants of the colony was as strong as that produced by its land. In the first third of the nineteenth century for people in the United Kingdom, and probably for other Europeans, Botany Bay and Van Diemen's Land were synonyms for disgrace, dishonour and hell.³¹ Pride in the colony came to its inhabitants and the British much later. But if we consider the Russians' accounts, we observe another attitude; critical remarks could be provoked only by particular events, while any general appraisal of the colony's achievements was almost invariably approving or even rhapsodic. In support of this view, many Russian judgements may be cited:

This settlement is still in its initial state, though a surprising amount has indeed been done already (1807). It is hard to believe that any other town during twenty-six years could reach a better state [than Sydney] (1814). We could say that South Wales (sic) is prospering from day to day (1820). Agriculture and trade are flourishing here, and ships with local products set out for China, the East and the West Indies (1820). Remarkable success of the English colonies of New Holland (1822). Victuals are abundant and very cheap, ... in short, I even do not know what a man may lack here. This country is endowed by God with everything (1835).³²

Similarly the prospects for the future, with minor reservations, were considered to be most favourable:

In time this country will produce an abundance of grain and everything else necessary for life (1807). In time New Holland will become one of the wealthiest English colonies (1814). New Holland ... will become, like the United States, a great state (1820).³³

I shall try in the following section to elucidate the reasons for such favourable

31 See for example K.S. Inglis, *The Australian Colonists. An Exploration of Social History, 1788-1870*, Melbourne, 1974. J.B. Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies*, Sydney, 1983, chapter 'The shame of Botany Bay'.

32 Hagemeister, 'Pis'mo', p. 17; Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 29; M. Vasil'ev, 'Zamechaniia kapitan-leitenanta Vasil'eva o Novoi Iuzhnoi Valisskoi zemle' [Lieutenant-Commander Vasil'ev's observations about New South Wales], *Zapiski izdavaemye Gosudarstvennym admiralteiskim departamentom*, part 5, 1823, p. 224; I. Simonov, 'Izvestie o puteshestvii kapitana Bellingsgauzena ...' [Report on the Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen ...], *Severnyi arkhiv*, part 12, no. 19, 1824, p. 29; Shabel'skii, 'Prebyvanie', p. 68; [V.S. Zavoiko], *Vpechatleniia moriaka vo vremia dvukh puteshestvii krugom sveta* [A Seaman's Impressions during Two Voyages around the World], part 1, St. Petersburg, 1840, p. 58.

33 Hagemeister, 'Pis'mo', p. 17; S. Unkovskii, 'Istinnye zapiski moei zhizni' [True memoirs of my life], *Izvestiia Vsesoiuznogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 76, no. 2-3, 1944, p. 102; Simonov, 'Izvestie', pp. 30-31.

perceptions. Obviously, we cannot explain them, as in the case of the Russians' vision of nature, only by euphoria after a long voyage or by the contrast with a northern land.

Russian visitors were extremely interested in the economic development of the young English colony. We find comments on it in most of their accounts. They were indeed witnesses of a miracle: the land considered hostile and barren by the first navigators was turning into a wealthy agricultural region. There were three reasons for including the economy of the colony in the scope of Russian interests. Firstly, the men of each voyage necessarily established economic contacts with representatives of the colony for the satisfaction of their own immediate needs: purchase of provisions and rigging, repairing and refitting of the ships. Secondly, collecting data on the state of colony and its economy was the direct responsibility of the participants of voyages and especially its captains and commissaries. Thirdly, this colony was interesting to them because of possible prospects for Russian-Australian trade, and above all as a potential market for Russian goods. We will not discuss in detail Russian accounts of the economic development of Australia as they do not have much of a peculiarly 'Russian' approach as understood in this study. Data gathered by Russians was based on their own observations (not long enough for profound economic analysis) and, in a number of cases, on information received from the administration of the colony. Especially liberal in this respect was Governor Lachlan Macquarie. In 1820 the captains of two Russian expeditions Vasil'ev (*Otkrytie*) and Bellingshausen (*Vostok*) got from him detailed accounts of the state of the colony. Bellingshausen published this data in his book in 1831 and in that way the information became known to a wide Russian readership.³⁴

In general Russians, although pointing out some shortcomings of the young colony (high and unstable prices, and an inability to support itself), were inclined to emphasize its achievements and its potential for future development because of its advantageous situation (proximity to East Indies, China and India), fertility of soils, and favourable conditions for grazing cattle the whole year round.

³⁴ By contrast, demographic and economic-statistical data brought to Russia by Vasil'ev and entitled 'Information provided by Governor of New South Wales Major-General Macquarie', remained forgotten in the Naval archive for about 170 years and has only recently been discovered by Massov.

Hagemeister was the first to draw attention to the potential of Russian-Australian trade. In his letter to the Board of the Russian-American company (1807) he wrote:

Perhaps the Company might draw advantage from a speculative trade with this part of the world. All our own products fetch high prices here and from hence it would be possible to carry a timber known as she-oak, an excellent redwood used in furniture.³⁵

Participants of the Russian voyage in 1814, Rossiiskii and Unkovskii, also noted that Australia could provide a ready market for such Russian products as sail-cloth, Flemish linen, heavy canvas, hemp rope, and iron. There are grounds to suppose that Australian settlers from their side saw the advantages of such mutual trade. In 1829 during the visit of the *Elena* the *Australian* wrote:

A profitable provision-trade, we are disposed to consider, might be established between us and St. Peter and St. Paul [Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii] ... from eight to ten weeks sail from here, and on nearly the same section of longitude ... and would surely be no more out of the way than China or the coasts of Chile.³⁶

The growth of infant towns was one of the most obvious achievements of the Australian colonists. Many Russians left descriptions of Sydney, Parramatta and Hobart. The main characteristics of Sydney, which they captured in prose, remain typical of Australian towns to this day. In 1820 Bellingshausen wrote:

There are some public and private buildings which would not discredit any city in Europe. As the town covers a wide area, the traveller might easily conclude at first sight that the number of inhabitants was very much greater than it actually is. As a matter of fact the population does not exceed 11,000. The houses are for the most part of one storey and each has a garden. The purchase prices and the rents are very high.³⁷

Mentioning that Sydney was not built on any general plan, they emphasized the role of Macquarie in its arrangement. Building other towns to a plan invariably provoked the Russians' approval. They enjoyed the straight, wide, clean and neat streets, beautiful public buildings, 'comparable with the finest in England'.³⁸ Shabel'skii, however, was puzzled that the Governor built splendid stables for his horses while 'the main house of worship ... is most insignificant',³⁹ but he believed that 'this is soon to be remedied, for

35 Hagemeister, 'Pis'mo', p. 17.

36 *Australian*, 8 April 1829.

37 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 349.

38 Unkovskii, 'Istinnye zapiski', p. 98.

39 He meant St. James' Church, opened in 1822.

a new church of greater architectural beauty is in the process of construction'.⁴⁰

The Russians described in detail the Governor's residences both in Parramatta and in Sydney. Of the Sydney Government House they mentioned that it was built in Italian style 'of soft stone, and all its fittings have that neatness which is natural to the Englishman'. The house was surrounded by a large green meadow and orchard, and there were soldiers on guard by the house. Simonov left interesting descriptions of interiors of the residence:

The reception-room is painted *al fresco* on themes of the tales of Scheherazade; in the dining room there are paintings of the rarities of this land All this is painted very skilfully by a convict.⁴¹

The Russians' favourable attitude to the public buildings can be explained not by the real splendour of these buildings but by the surprise to see such a splendour here, in a remote infant colony. Probably the proximity of the natural grandeur of Port Jackson contributed to this fascination as well.

Their enthusiasm towards private buildings in Sydney and Parramatta had, I believe, different roots. The distinctions between Russia and Australia were striking. Firstly, all the Russians mentioned that private houses were built of stone. Secondly, they emphasized the privacy of dwellings: 'One seldom finds two families here living in one house, each of them has a house of its own, however small'. Thirdly, practically all Russians, when writing about towns, admired the fact that every house was surrounded by 'a tastefully cultivated garden' and front gardens were decorated with flowers and fruit trees. They approved as well the fact that even small houses were 'all built to a plan and with some taste' and admired their cleanliness and neatness.⁴²

If we try to understand why Russians so persistently emphasized the same features of Australian settlements, a number of interesting conclusions follow. Russians at the

40 Shabel'skii, 'Prebyvanie', p. 71.

41 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 29; Aleksei Lazarev, *Zapiski*, p. 150; I. Simonov, 'Pis'mo k *' [A Letter to *], *Kazanskii vestnik*, part 25, book 1, 1829, pp. 55-56.

42 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', pp. 29-30; Unkovskii, 'Istinnye zapiski', p. 99. Contrary to these enthusiastic Russian perceptions Max Kelly's research proves that 'the majority of Sydney had never been well housed ... before gold' and wooden two-room shacks predominated. M. Kelly, 'Nineteenth century Sydney "Beautiful certainly; not bountiful"', in J. Davidson, ed., *The Sydney-Melbourne Book*, Sydney a.o., 1986, p. 44.

time of their arrival were acquainted not only with Russian towns but continental or British ones as well, where usually their ships called *en route*. The appearance of an Australian town was extremely different from the Russians' previous experience. In Russia only the wealthiest townspeople could afford to have a stone house. Ordinary residents, hired workers and servants at that time both in Western European and in Russian large towns lived in housing of high density, having only a flat or room for a family. In Russian rural settlements, it was normal for an extended three generation household (about 10-15 persons) to be living in a 1-2 room house. Strong, high fences dominated the appearance of Russian towns. The idea of a front garden, devoted to the 'unpractical' use of flower-beds was in its infancy. It is enough to recollect the troubles and orders of Gogol's mayor, frightened by the arrival of the government inspector, to imagine an ordinary Russian town at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

And get rid of that rotten fence by the shoemaker's. Set up a boundary mark, so it looks like we have a project planned. The more we tear down, the better for us. It shows the mayor is doing something. Oh my God! I forgot, there's enough garbage dumped around that fence to load up forty carts. What a cesspool this town is! Put up anything, from a monument to a fence, and they litter it with their trash. Where the hell do they get it all from!⁴³

Social contrasts in English cities are also well-known.

Arriving in Australia, Russians very likely felt, though they did not formulate it clearly, that here the ideal of the English way of life was realized to a higher degree than in Britain itself and that the reasons for this phenomenon lay in the absence of a highly stratified society. Zavalishin was probably the first who tried to get to the root of all these attractive features. He made the connection between the Australian approach to colonization in general and the appearance of new towns. He described the following episode from his visit to Tasmania in 1823 as an 'instructive' example of the reasons for successful colonization. When sent to inspect a party of sailors collecting firewood and preparing charcoal forty kilometres up the Derwent from Hobart, Zavalishin became lost. Apprehensively he asked the way from a man he met on the empty river bank, suspecting that he was a runaway convict. But the man turned out to be the first resident of a newly

⁴³ N. Gogol, *The Theater of Nikolay Gogol. Plays and Selected Writings*, Chicago & London, 1980, p. 66. The play was finished in 1836.

founded township, which Zavalishin had not noticed. The colonial authorities had ordered that there should be a town here, the settler told him; they had planned the site, divided it into holdings, and laid out the streets and squares. The settler had started work on his plot by putting up a stone fence. 'Well, it seems to me that this is not our way,' Zavalishin concluded.⁴⁴

Comparison of the Russian and Australian approaches to colonization could easily become a theme for separate research. Here I shall remark only that the Russian visitors in these early years caught the characteristic features of the developing Australian approach to colonization, so different from the Russian experience:

a) Settlements, especially after the spontaneous growth of Sydney, were to be orderly and carefully planned. In Russia, in the colonizing of Siberia and other regions, spontaneity dominated for a long time;

b) In and around Sydney, householders and farmers took care of their properties in a manner that showed a sense of responsibility, of permanent, personal proprietorship, unfamiliar to Russian eyes. For Russians, on the contrary, the more usual attitude was that of provisionality, which had its roots in the lack of rights of peasants and residents;

c) In Australia and in Britain the dominant attitude seemed to be that of individualism, the conventional English principle 'my house is my castle', while in the consciousness of Russians, the kinship or communal principle dominated.

Penal servitude and deportation and especially colonization of new territories by means of these institutions have played an extremely important role in the history of Russia up to current times. At the end of this process a new phenomenon appeared, in which penal settlements came to replicate the structure of the society which produced them, while, with the expansion of the system of penal settlements, the society itself began to reproduce the penal settlement in its mentality and structure and to live according to its laws.⁴⁵ This was seen in Australia for only sixty or seventy years but even so this phenomenon left its mark on the country's subsequent history.

44 Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia', p. 95.

45 V. Kabo. 'Structure of Soviet concentration camp and archetypes of consciousness', *Canberra Anthropology*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1991, pp. 75-81.

In this study we will refer more than once to Russo-Australian parallels in this field, to the Russian perceptions of these Australian institutions. The general conclusion of the Russians was unanimous:

Every person deported for crime lives better here than the common people in England. Under strict guard, having no need for anything, he has become a good and useful citizen. Only a few, on the expiration of their term of exile, decide to return to the homeland. On the contrary, each wants to end his life at the place where he has found prosperity and sweet tranquillity⁴⁶ (1814).

It would be erroneous to consider these people as unhappy, sentenced to carry a yoke placed upon them, or perishing from starvation They are undoubtedly much happier in the Cumberland county than they would have been in their native land (1822).

The lot of these exiles is not completely such as to consider them wretched (1823).⁴⁷

What were these conclusions based upon? First of all Russians had an abstract perception of the transported: they were 'criminals', 'scoundrels', 'turbid scum', 'the most worthless part of people'.⁴⁸ Russians did not write about and were hardly interested either in the roots of their crimes, or in the social origins of these 'criminals'. Secondly, the facts about the conditions of transportation as well as the requirements for public labour on arrival, as the Russians understood them, looked very favourable, if not completely ideal.

For instance, the captain of the *Diana*, Vasilii M. Golovnin, while in South Africa visited the British ship *Speake* transporting female convicts to Australia. His impression was that 'they enjoyed a lot of freedom'. The Russians described the conditions of those deported to Australia in very touching detail: 'striking neatness and complete order' in the convict barracks; separate sleeping places with bedding for everybody; dress 'coarse and unsightly' but 'very durable', and adequate food rations. They mentioned that this ration

46 A similar view - 'Hardly any of [released convicts] return to Europe' - was shared by Bellingshausen in 1820 (vol. 2, p. 324). Modern scholars, though considering that 'the number of prisoners who left is ... impossible to establish with any accuracy', provide 'a number of opinions by those on the spot which suggest that many convicts departed from New South Wales', see L.L. Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, Melbourne, 1965, pp. 112-113. Probably hearing the variety of opinions the Russians tended to record those which supported their general favourable perception of the conditions of convicts and ex-convicts.

47 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 30; Shabel'skii, 'Prebyvanie', pp. 71-72; Lazarev, 'Plavanie vokrug sveta', p. 81.

48 Expressions of Shishmarev, Novosil'skii, Shabel'skii.

included one pound of meat a day for each, sugar, and white bread in abundance. 'We tried their soup and it was cooked very tastily', Simonov testified. All that and especially the remarks of Bellingshausen - 'The women are given tea' and 'they have no corporal punishment' - sound like strong arguments in favour of the humanity of the local authorities, and, as Golovnin put it, 'the philanthropic and compassionate care of the British government to alleviate the excruciating lot of the criminals' was evident.⁴⁹

These arguments would sound convincing if the Australian situation were compared to the conditions of imprisonment in Russian jails. Even free ordinary citizens in Russia could afford meat, sugar, and white bread only on feast days; Russian lower classes considered tea a luxury in the first half of the nineteenth century. Corporal punishment of women serfs was also quite usual in Russia until emancipation in 1861.

The peculiarity of the Russians' view was that it was limited to the convict barracks and the factory.⁵⁰ They did not visit settlements with a hard regime, like Norfolk Island, or farmers who employed convicts, and they could not and did not even try to understand what happened in reality behind the outward well-being of barracks. We cannot find in their accounts any explanation as to why convicts escaped from this 'prosperous' life and ran away, dooming themselves to almost certain death, or why 'the names of penal settlements became things of horror in colonial and homeland folklore'. Nor did the Russians notice either the cruelty and brutality of the transport system, or that its main purpose was the intimidation of potential criminals in Britain. Certainly, the idea that some contemporaries might perceive the system as 'white slavery'⁵¹ was alien to the Russian mind.

49 V.M. Golovnin, 'Gruz angliiskogo transportnogo sudna' [The cargo of an English transport vessel], *Syn Otechestva*, part 31, no. 30, 1816, pp. 129-131; Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 52; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 325-328; Vasil'ev, 'Zamechaniia', p. 226; Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', p. 39; Shabel'skii, 'Prebyvanie', pp. 71-72. The Russians were correct to access highly the food rations: in some cases convicts received better food than, for instance, ex-convict farmers, although this was due to the tradition and convicts struggle for their ration rather than to 'compassionate care' of the authorities. See Hirst, *Convict Society*, pp. 47-50.

50 The barracks at Hyde Park were completed in 1819 and Female Penitentiary or Factory at Parramatta in 1821. These institutions deprived inmates of shorter working hours, relative freedom in selection of accommodation and spending 'own time' in exchange for increased food rations and free barrack lodgings. (See Hirst, *Convict Society*, pp. 17-19, 41-42). The Russians noticed only the positive side of this change, i.e. good food rations, ignoring the rest.

51 Inglis, *The Australian colonists*, pp. 8-9. Hirst, *Convict Society*, pp. 21-22 and following.

On the contrary, they saw only the humane side of Australian deportation. They emphasized that the main goal of colonial administration was not only the isolation of criminals, but their reform. That is why the Russians gave special attention to the pre-term release (through the system of tickets-of-leave) of convicts showing meritorious behaviour to engage in a trade, the paternal support of released convicts by the administration, and the allocation to them of land and full citizen's rights. Hagemeister as early as 1807 remarked that the work of the released convicts was so well-paid that many of them made a fortune. In 1822 the future Decembrist Kiukhel'beker in a private letter stressed that ex-convicts had become respectable and honest citizens. Bellingshausen, who made the most detailed description of the transportation system, was inclined to blame all its shortcomings on the felonious nature of the criminals themselves, only casually remarking that released convicts could not always imitate the voluntary settlers 'for lack of the necessary means'. Andrei Lazarev was convinced that the authorities were too liberal to the convicts while many criminals 'abuse these good deeds and are ungrateful'. He told the story of an elderly Byelorussian John Potaskie whom he met in Hobart in 1823. After completing his term of imprisonment Potaskie was convicted of stealing and put in jail again. 'These are the fruits of liberty for a debauched man', concluded Lazarev.⁵²

Bellingshausen was the only one who wrote about the inefficiency of convict labour, but even he thought the explanation was that 'overseers are convicts themselves and naturally turn a blind eye to leisurely work'.⁵³ The fact that public opinion in Australia was opposed to further transportation of convicts, was mentioned only by

52 Hagemeister, 'Pis'mo', p. 17; Kiukhel'beker is quoted in Massov, *Andreevskii flag*, p. 98; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 324; Lazarev, 'Plavanie vokrug sveta', p. 81. The Russians' favourable perception of the conditions of convicts in Australia in some degree was similar to the favourable attitude of some British and French commentators who often said that the convicts were better off than the lower classes in England. Modern Australian scholar J.B. Hirst came to a similar conclusion: 'For many convicts the colony certainly did provide a better living than they had been used to' (Hirst, *Convict Society*, p. 138; see also F.G. Clarke, *The Land of Contraries. British Attitudes to the Australian Colonies, 1828-1855*, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 2-5). The peculiarity of the Russians' attitude was that they never were critical, unlike British and French commentators. See for comparison C.D.W. Goodwin, *The Image of Australia. British Perceptions of the Australian Economy from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, Durham, 1974, pp. 11-15; C. Forster, *Prison or Deportation: 'Botany Bay' and the French Penal Debate 1814-32*, Part 1, The Australian National University, Working Papers in Economic History, No. 136, Canberra, 1990, 36 pp.

53 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 327.

Zavalishin. However he wrote his memoirs after 1870, when he himself, after participation in the Decembrist movement, had spent almost 30 years in penal servitude and exile in Siberia. Recollecting their visit in 1823 to Governor William Sorell, whose house was the centre of Hobart's upper society, Zavalishin wrote: 'the conversation was ... extremely interesting, especially to me, as I was already involved in the development of Siberia as a place of exile.' Russians were told that the penal colony was holding back the development of agriculture as the free settlers were afraid to establish farms far from Hobart.⁵⁴

All Russians mentioned the benefit of the arrival of the free settlers to the colonies' economies.⁵⁵ They emphasized the role of the government in the organization of emigration and the support of new settlers. Probably the Australian model of colonization seemed more attractive to Russians than their own migration to Siberia which had been unplanned and not administered by the government at that time.

Even the absolute power of the Governor did not evoke the Russians' censure. In 1820 Bellingshausen wrote:

He has almost unlimited powers, much wider than those of the King of Great Britain. It seems to me the welfare of the colony, inhabited by the kind of people who are sent out to New South Wales, makes it necessary for the head of the administration to possess unlimited powers.

The fact that 'Macquarie not only does not abuse [his power], but has constantly given proof of humanity and wisdom', seemed to the Russians quite sufficient guarantee of the prosperity of the society.⁵⁶ Even the future revolutionary Zavalishin accepted and approved of this state of affairs. He implicitly contrasted Russia's unreasonable bureaucracy to Australia's reasonable authorities and did not see the necessity for democracy and self-government. These in fact were the features that were soon to become salient in the Australian colonies. After visiting Tasmania in 1823 he wrote:

Now I understand the success of the colonization and development of those parts, where the authority neither stifles nor exploits, but protects and co-operates, where people work sensibly, ... where education and culture can live alongside the

54 Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia', pp. 89-90.

55 Zavalishin, for instance, claimed that one of the main advantages of Tasmania over New South Wales was that from the very start there were free immigrants alongside the convicts in Tasmania.

56 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 339-340.

roughest and heaviest work.⁵⁷

The Russians' favourable opinions were encouraged by the delicacy of their situation. After they had been shown much kindness by the Governor and his supporters, the Russians felt that they had no right to use any other sources of information except the official ones. For instance, if they mentioned conflicts between Bligh and Johnston, Macquarie and Marsden or Bigge, it was done in the most superficial way.

The people

Colonists

The inhabitants of New South Wales and Tasmania were also of interest to Russians. Two extremes met in this case: the Aborigines, the first 'wild tribe' whom Russians encountered on their voyages, and the English, whom Russians considered as an embodiment of Western civilization, having a well-formed image of them. The general Russians' impression of the colonists was the most favourable: 'a perfect society of cultured people'.⁵⁸

One purpose of this study is to discover when Russians began to see the white inhabitants of the Australian colonies not as English or British but as 'Australians', or at least began to notice in their way of life and behaviour some features which in Russian eyes were not characteristic of the English. Certainly, in approaching the field of ethnic perceptions, stereotypes and prejudices, we must accept that proper sociological research into such phenomena has been possible only in our time with modern statistical methods, and therefore any materials of the nineteenth century allow one to reach only partial and tentative conclusions. In this context, the several dozens of Russian mariners' accounts devoted to Australia acquire scholarly interest, and it is worth considering whether they reveal any coherent patterns.

So, as the Russians perceived it, who were the masters of the new colony? The Russians invariably referred to the Australian colonists as 'the English'. On the one hand

57 D. Zavalishin, 'Krugosvetnoe plavanie fregata "Kreiser" v 1822-1825 godakh ...' [The frigate *Kreiser's* voyage round the world during the years 1822-1825 ...], *Drevniaia i novaia Rossiia*, no. 9, 1877, p. 45.

58 Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 47; Simonov, 'Vypiska', p. 171.

they did not refer them as Australians (or New Hollanders)⁵⁹, and on the other hand they hardly noticed ethnic differences among them: that the British consisted of the English, Irish and Scots, while for the inhabitants of the colony themselves these ethnic distinctions were very important. Among all the Russian texts we can find only a few remarks about the presence of non-Englishmen among the colonists. Vasil'ev noted in his manuscript, describing a dinner at Sir John Jamison's on Saint Patrick's day, that 'he is an Irishman, and in Ireland this saint is much revered'. Bellingshausen, who deliberately gathered materials on all aspects of colonial life, touched upon this subject in connection with the confessional situation:

Although almost half of the population in New South Wales are Roman Catholics, the established form of religion is Protestant. Catholic priests are not permitted to celebrate mass, and in consequence the Irishmen bring up their children themselves in the faith of their fathers.

He said this much, but we will not find any further comment or criticism of this state of affairs in his account.⁶⁰

Is it possible to speak about Russian attempts to formulate an 'ethnic stereotype' when writing about Australia's inhabitants at this period? There is a very valuable related investigation by the Russian historian Nikolai Erofeev *Foggy Albion. England and the English through Russian Eyes (1825-1853)*. Putting the conclusions of this study alongside the Russian accounts of Australia we have to admit that the latter offer virtually no sign of an intention to give a generalized image of the 'Australians' comparable with Russian descriptions of the Englishmen collected by Erofeev. This could be explained by a number of factors. Russian descriptions of Australia were usually done in the style of a diary with an abundance of concrete facts and events, while the Russian visitors to England often attempted to generalize and to create a broad portrait of the nation and spoke about the English in general. In addition, the exotic new world in which Russians found themselves in Australia provided such a large field for observations that probably the necessity to create a generalized image of the inhabitants fell by the wayside. In

⁵⁹ In one case, in 1820, Simonov's writings exhibit more specific definition: 'It was pleasant to see the attachment of the New Holland English to [the Russian Czar]'. In this context 'New Holland English' are still part of the English inhabiting particular territory, rather than an ethnic term. Simonov, 'Pis'mo', p. 55.

⁶⁰ Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', pp. 39-40; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 343.

contrast with their perception of other European nations they had no preconceived ideas about the people in Australia.

Russian statements about Australian colonists that can be considered as ethnic images and stereotypes form in total not more than one page and were made by just four persons: Rossiiskii, Aleksei Lazarev, Vasil'ev and Zavalishin. None of the other mariners left any account of overall characterization. Erofeev in his book gave a summary of the most typical features of the English as seen by the Russians in the second quarter of the nineteenth century: practicality, enterprise and energy, neatness, intellect, seriousness, unfriendliness, conservatism, moral virtues (including nobleness, philanthropy, fairness, devotion) and vices (notably trickery, passion for gambling games, drunkenness).⁶¹ From the features thought characteristic of the English the Russians noticed among Australian colonists the following: 'love of fights of every sort' and horse races; neatness, 'which is natural to the Englishman'; and haughtiness. Some also observed what they thought was a characteristic ostentation. For example Rossiiskii wrote about the dinner held in honour of the Russian mariners: 'it seems they did not spare anything purely in order to make a brilliant display in the way so natural for the proud Englishmen'.⁶² Rossiiskii was the only visitor who considered pride to be the main reason for the brilliant dinners given by the local inhabitants for the Russians. All the other mariners spoke about sincere hospitality. Zavalishin frankly objected to the established stereotype of the English:

Literally the whole colony turned out; we were shown not only marks of respect and favour, but an unusual esteem that was in contrast to the coldness and hauteur we had grown to expect from the British.⁶³

Indeed, hospitality, the feature that is absent in the summary of Erofeev, was mentioned by all Russian mariners visiting Australia. The extremely warm reception of the Russians in Australia during the first three decades of the nineteenth century was caused by such factors as the alliance in the international arena, neighbourhood in the

61 Erofeev, *Tumannyi Al'bion*, pp. 244-245.

62 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 24; Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', p. 39; Aleksei Lazarev, *Zapiski*, p. 150.

63 Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia', p. 88.

Pacific, Australians' indifference to domestic conditions in distant Russia, their provincialism, and the exotic features in the image of Russians.⁶⁴

There are a number of Russian descriptions of dinners and receptions in Australia. Table etiquette is an important ethnic characteristic and behind the superficial banality of the subject, one can discover matters of importance. Here are some extracts from a loquacious description of such a dinner made by Vasil'ev:

At the table guests are placed among the hosts to be dined and entertained The host and other officers ask their guests which dish each of them wants The person near whom one or another dish stands cuts and serves it The host proposes to fill wine-glasses with the wine that each desires If there is a pastor at the table, he says a grace, if there is no pastor the host does the same I have noticed that when the fruits were served and toasts were given there was not one servant near the table.

Shishmarev sums up the impressions of such dinners more laconically: 'I liked the English order at the table and especially that it is up to you to eat and drink'. One more characteristic fact is worthy of mention: midshipman Zavalishin, young and unused to wine, was afraid that he would not be able to bear numerous toasts at the dinner in the honour of Russians in Hobart. He told his neighbour at the table, pastor Robert Knopwood, about this trouble. Zavalishin's desire not to drink was taken into account by the hosts extremely tactfully: two decanters filled with water coloured by preserve appeared before him, and he could raise his glass as confidently as the others.⁶⁵

Questions of food and table etiquette provoked many Russian comments. They varied from heart-felt recollections about Mrs Macquarie, who as if by chance started a conversation with Russians about their eating habits, in order to make food to their taste, to stereotypically funny assertions, which, however, also emphasized the intention of Australian colonists to entertain their overseas guests in the best possible way:

The soup, ... I suppose, was served especially for Russians because Englishmen do not eat it during dinner They do not use napkins during dinner and wipe themselves with the table-cloth, though when we were present at the table napkins

64 I discussed in detail the reception of the Russians in an unpublished article 'Australian perceptions of Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century'.

65 Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', pp. 38-39 (In this quote I used some sentences from the archival original which were omitted in the published version: M. Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski o snariazhenii ekspeditsii i plavanii ee do Porta Zhakson' [Notes on provisioning the expedition and the voyage to Port Jackson], in TsGAVMF, fond 213, op. 1, d. 102); N.D. Shishmarev, 'Zhurnal' (Journal), in TsGAVMF, fond 203, op. 1, d. 730b, f. 28; Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia', p. 93.

were always provided.⁶⁶

Summing up, the peculiarities of colonial table etiquette were seen as democratic and attentive to the needs and comfort of each person. Russian interest in it was obviously not by chance. On the one hand 'Australian' etiquette undoubtedly differed from Russian, with its noisy fuss of numerous servants, its ceremoniousness, the urging of guests to try one or another dish and the compulsion to drink. On the other hand, Russians, while considering that they participated at an *English* dinner, emphasize precisely the features least typical of the latter: the absence of servants, self-service at the table, and democracy. That becomes especially obvious if we add that the dinners described by the Russians were held at the highest level of colonial standards with participation of the Governor and the highest society. Probably a dinner at such a level in England itself would have been held more pompously and ceremoniously.

The manners reigning at balls and described by Simonov also provoked some interesting reflections. Local partners of the lady who caught Simonov's fancy not only let him have their turn for dances they had previously booked, but heroically danced in turn with another, who looked like 'a real kangaroo'. 'We cannot let her stay all the evening without partners,' was the restrained answer Simonov received when he expressed surprise at this.⁶⁷ Thus the local settlers' generosity at the evening parties depicted in Australian literature of the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries had been noticed by the Russians at the very outset of Australian history.

Russians remarked on other features of the everyday life of Australian colonists and some of them still remain in Russian consciousness as characteristic of this nation. Here is, for example, a description of the service at an inn in Parramatta made by Novosil'skii in 1820:

Each of us had a neat well-furnished room, bed-clothes shone with whiteness. When you need something you just pull a string - a comely young maid-servant will appear and ask you with a smile: 'Did you ring, sir? What can I do for you? All will be done in no time'.⁶⁸

66 Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', pp. 38-39.

67 Simonov, 'Shliupy', pp. 61-62.

68 P.M. Novosil'skii, 'Tuzhnyi polius: Iz zapisok byvshego morskogo ofitsera' [The South Pole: From

Perhaps such a scene will seem quite natural for the Australian reader, but for the Russian, someone serving with a smile seems unusual even now. It suffices to point out that for a number of years my colleagues in the department of South Pacific Studies in the USSR (Russian) Academy of Sciences, after visiting Australia, when asked about their strongest impressions, invariably began with, 'They smile!'

There were other peculiarities of colonial life which did not escape Russian notice. Such an ordinary event as a visit to the house of a blacksmith who had completed M. Lazarev's order aroused in Zavalishin an unexpected interest: 'We have seen things so strange for our notions that we will never regret this visit'. What could provoke such a reaction? Once again an occurrence quite natural in Western society: the blacksmith was a dirty-looking fellow only when in his smithy. On leaving it he washed himself, changed his clothes and became 'a real gentleman'. During eight years of marriage his wife had never seen him in his working clothes. A neat house, well-dressed family, perfect coffee and especially a good library of English classics greatly impressed the Russian visitors. Really, it was 'not the Russian way'! Zavalishin also found it quite extraordinary that the citizens of Hobart unanimously regarded the clergyman, the doctor and the police chief as their main household friends. In Zavalishin's view it was hard to imagine a more bizarre notion for a Russian than that the police chief could be a household friend.⁶⁹

Even at that early period the Russians had noticed the tendency for democratic features to appear in the way of life and behaviour of the Australian colonists.

At the same time the Russians tried to detect specifically 'Australian' features in the appearance of the colonial citizens. It is hard to say how far their opinions were independent and relevant to the reality. Anyway even at the beginning of the nineteenth century they preremptorily affirmed:

Local inhabitants ... are born more beautiful than in Europe; it is possible to distinguish from the first glance who was brought here from those who was born here, especially among women, whose complexion here is more tender Women are very fertile.

the notes of a former naval officer], *Panteon*, no. 9, 1853, p. 67.

69 Zavalishin, 'Krugosvetnoe plavanie', p. 45; Zavalishin, 'Avstraliia i Polineziia', pp. 94-96.

They also mentioned the healthy appearance of the children born in the colony.⁷⁰

Aborigines

The contribution of Russian naval visitors to the description of Aborigines as well as the collections of artefacts gathered by them, have attracted the attention of anthropologists since the 1960s.⁷¹ In the present study I propose to limit the subject to the Russian perception of the Aborigines as a whole, to their original observations of life and behaviour of some individuals and social groups, and to their appraisal of Anglo-Aboriginal relations.

I have mentioned already that most of the participants in the Russian naval expeditions of the first third of the nineteenth century had established contact with the Australian Aborigines. The intensity of these contacts as well as the quantity of the Russians' writings depended on a number of factors, e.g. their personal interests, place of anchorage and residence, frequency of their visits to the shore, time of the expedition. We shall also bear in mind that not all their documents have survived. *A priori* one can suppose that the materials of the earliest expedition on the *Neva* in 1807 would be the most valuable, but unfortunately no data remains concerning their contacts, except the fact that they obtained some Aboriginal artefacts. The most extensive and numerous surviving materials were collected by the participants of the expeditions in 1814 (*Suvorov*) and 1820 (*Otkrytie, Blagonamerennyi, Vostok, Mirnyi*), who had a lot of personal contact with the Aborigines of both the southern and the northern shores of Port Jackson. The writings of the mariners of the subsequent Russian expeditions had as a rule only derivative facts, which Russians got from the colonists, and their personal contacts with

70 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 31; Berens, 'Zapiski', p. 57. In general these Russian remarks correspond to other observations. See Hirst, *Convict Society*, p. 193.

71 In Russia the studies were done by N.A. Butinov, V.R. Kabo and T.K. Shafranovskaia from the department of Australia and Oceania of the Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Canadian historian Barratt devoted his book *The Russians at Port Jackson 1814-1820* to this theme. Here he published his English translations of a number of extracts from Russian texts dealing with the Aborigines. He also analyzed such aspects of their life as food gathering and preparation, clothing and ornamentation, shelter and protection, the size of Aboriginal groups, and Anglo-Aboriginal relations. I have discussed some of the Russian evidence in the paper 'The forgotten Russian sources on the ethnography of the Australian Aborigines' presented at the fifteenth conference on Australia and Oceania in Moscow (1984).

the Aborigines were limited to those whom they met in Sydney or Parramatta.

Russian perception of Aboriginal society as a whole was determined by the belief common among Europeans at this time that these natives belonged to the earliest stage of human culture. The Russians had rather wide and relevant experience as a basis for such a conviction. They were acquainted to some extent with the culture of the Siberian peoples, the African slaves of Brazil, the islanders of the South Pacific and the Indians of North-West America. Such elements of the culture of these peoples as the Russian visitors could observe undoubtedly testified that those societies were relatively more developed than that of the Australian Aborigines. The travellers were unable to penetrate the depths of the spiritual culture and social organization of the peoples they met, including the Australian Aborigines. Their perceptions bore the stamp of Eurocentric views and corresponded to those of their time.

Almost all Russian mariners, when writing about the Australian Aborigines, invariably focused their attention on the following issues:

1. Peculiarities of the appearance of the Aborigines.
2. Lack of traditional clothing and reluctance to wear those of the Europeans.

3. Nomadic life and lack of dwellings. The frequency with which this was mentioned suggests that the Russians considered the availability of dwellings to be one of the main tests of the level of cultural development. Thus, many of them repeated with extravagant persistence that they had heard that the Aborigines constructed bark huts, and expressed regret that they themselves managed to see only wind-break brushwood fences around the fire. The idea that the dwelling was an integral part of human settlement reached its apotheosis in Mikhailov's drawing *Natives of New Holland* (1820, ill. 8). Depicting Bungaree's group,⁷² in whose camp on the North shore of Port Jackson the Russians had seen nothing but wind-break fences, Mikhailov nevertheless chose as the dominant element of the picture the stick-and-grass hut. It is obvious that he used not his personal observations but someone's description or drawing, as the hut is

72 Russians usually spelled his name as Boongaree. Bungaree belonged to the Kuring-gai group.

disproportionately large in comparison with the human figures near it.⁷³

4. Belief that central power is one of the main elements of any human society, and incomprehension that societies can be structured by quite different institutions. The result of this was an inability to grasp the true social structure of Aboriginal society and an exaggerated interest in 'chiefs' and 'kings'. One may easily notice all the above set of stereotypes in the simple staccato diary of seaman E. Kiselev (1820):

Natives live like beasts in the woods on cones and fish. There's a king too; he has a sign on his chest, given by the English king. And our captain gave him a hussar's greatcoat and a bronze medal.⁷⁴

5. Belief that the Aborigines were careless and lazy. Russians were unshakably convinced that their (or more generally, the European) way of life, with everyday hard toil and subsequent reaping the fruits of labour, with accumulation of material wealth, was the only one worthy of a human being. They were still not ready to accept the worth of a culture with a quite different scale of values, with another vital philosophy. Captain Vasil'ev expressed this attitude in a most blatant way:

I think that the main [reason] is that the natives do not like toil; it can't be that they, seeing the European mode of life, did not understand that it is better than theirs.⁷⁵

Thus, even from this brief description, it is obvious that the Russians' judgement of Aboriginal society as a whole reflected more the scale of values of their own society than that of the Aboriginal. Judgements of the Russians, as well as other travellers, were based on generalized pre-conceptions and did not transcend the ethnocentric stereotypes of that time usual for other European societies including the British.

It is more interesting to turn to another aspect of Russian writings - to the descriptions of their direct personal contacts with the Aborigines. Such personal evidence, when the traveller makes only a sketch of the events without attempting to put the facts into a preconstructed scheme or to give only a general description, can now be considered as a valuable source for social-economic reconstruction of Aboriginal society. Russians' diaries and memoirs have hardly been used for this purpose but they offer

73 Barratt mentioned this discrepancy in his book *The Russians at Port Jackson*, p. 76.

74 Kiselev, 'Pamiatnik', p. 182.

75 Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', p. 42.

important data for such an analysis, especially as they deal with the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Port Jackson region. This group was the first to come into contact with Whites and, although being described by some colonists, can still be considered as one of the less known groups, because it was extinct long before the appearance of social anthropologists. In the following pages I shall explore the relevance of this early Russian data for the task of reconstructing Aboriginal society.

The earliest relevant contact described by Russians took place in 1814 during the *Suvorov's* visit. Some of her officers witnessed an important social event in the life of the Aborigines of the South shore of Port Jackson - a crowded gathering for the settlement of a conflict, which ended in a bloody fight. There are two independent descriptions of this battle made by Russian witnesses Rossiiskii and Unkovskii. As there are few reports by English or other writers of similar fights in the Port Jackson region, the Russian evidence is extremely important. What they saw was a preplanned ritualized settlement of a conflict. Unkovskii gave the exact place where it was held: 'behind the new hospitals in the place known as Hyde Park.' The Russians' description provides evidence that this was a traditional territory for intergroup gatherings and rituals, including, as in the present case, rites of settlement of intergroup conflicts. If my supposition is correct, it reveals the importance of this part of present Sydney in the social life of the Aborigines of the southern shore. Rossiiskii gave the number of participants in the fight: initially 50 and later on about 100. Unkovskii noted that two parties of fighters formed a circle of one *verst* (3 500 feet) in circumference.

Though there were many White onlookers, the large number of Aboriginal participants and the bloody ferocity of the fight (emphasized by both Russians) show that the gathering was not provoked by the Whites but had a traditional cause. The following remark of Unkovskii also confirms that in 1814 such fights were still common. He wrote that the Aborigines in Englishmen's service 'have to be present at fights of their fellows and precisely fulfil every native practice; the master of such a servant never prevents him from going to a slaughter'.⁷⁶ Thus, at that time the strength of traditional ties and

76 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', pp. 24-25; Unkovskii, 'Istinnye zapiski', p. 100.

obligations in the Aboriginal society was still very strong. The Russian witnesses did not discuss the age and gender structure of the fighters, but if there were women among the participants, this fact would probably have been mentioned in their diaries. That is why, supposing that only male warriors took part in the fight (approximately 50 on each side), we can estimate that their groups were several times larger in number - some 150-200 persons each. Probably the participants in the fight belonged either to two different tribes (bands) or to two parts of one tribe.⁷⁷ Taking into consideration the traditionally low level of conflict inside Australian tribes, the first assumption seems more reasonable.

Russian accounts of their meetings with different groups of Aborigines also yield valuable data for the reconstruction of social-economic relations in Aboriginal society during this transitional period. For example in 1814 Rossiiskii described a group of Aborigines consisting of four men and one woman, who gathered mussels and roasted them on a fire on Benelong's Point. Some hours later, at Rossiiskii's request two of them with two other Aborigines visited the *Suvorov* to barter their artefacts. Rossiiskii gave the following description of their appearance: 'These natives were almost-all fairly young. In build, they were tall and lean'. We can suppose that all of them belonged to one community and in the case described composed a task force.⁷⁸

More often Russians mentioned meetings with families of Aborigines. In 1814 Unkovskii wrote:

[I] have often seen the families of these natives, ... [they] usually light a fire somewhere leeward near a stone or large tree and spend the night there. During the day they wander whenever they want.

In 1820 Vasil'ev mentioned a few families who performed a corroboree at the Russians' request.⁷⁹

The memoirs of Simonov, who lived in a tent on Kirribilli Point in 1820, reflect

77 By the time of the European invasion the south shore of Port Jackson was inhabited by Cadigal and Wangal bands belonging to Eora language group. Although by 1814, as a result of the rapid reduction of the Aboriginal population, a considerable social reorganization of bands took place. See J.L. Kohen & R. Lampert, 'Hunters and fishers in the Sydney region', in D.J. Mulvaney & J.P. White, eds, *Australians to 1788*, Fairfax, 1987, pp. 343-345, 351.

78 A task force is a group of Aborigines engaged in one definite task, for example hunting, fishing, ritual, war or on a trading expedition.

79 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 27; Unkovskii, 'Istinnye zapiski', pp. 100-101; Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', p. 42.

more about Aboriginal social structure. He testified that there were at least two groups of Aborigines using the same part of the northern shore. He first described an encounter with the Aborigine Burra Burra, whom the Russians met not far from their camp on Kirribilli Point. Burra Burra said that his people 'live in different places, i.e. wherever they take it into their heads' and showed a place in the forest, not far from the shore, where on the ground 'some tree branches had been spread in a circle, and in the centre of this circle one could see the remains of a fire, which had earlier been laid there'. In another version of his memoirs Simonov wrote: 'To our query as to his place of residence he indicated the whole extent of the wood beyond'. Burra Burra proposed that the Russians put their tent near his own camp, but they refused. On the sea shore Burra Burra was joined

by a great number of natives, men and women; the women went off to fish, but the men remained with us, they fashioned various fishing implements with small iron axes, and smoothed them down with glass Shortly after this crowd, one more family of natives came up.

They were led by the 55 years old Bungaree, 'chief of the Broken Bay Tribe'. Later on he,

accompanied only by his family, continued to wander in our vicinity; all the rest [i.e. Burra Burra's group] soon ... moved away into the wood. However they appeared near us from time to time.⁸⁰

There is another piece of evidence on the social organization of the Aborigines collected by Bellingshausen and Simonov which probably was provided to them by local residents:

All live in communities of 25, 50, 60 or even more, each with its own name. In one, called Burra Burra, there were last year [i.e. 1819] reckoned to be as many as 120 people.

The New Hollanders wander the country in communities of which even the most numerous does not contain more than 150 souls. Each community has its own elder, nor does one in the least depend upon others.⁸¹

It is possible to make the following reconstruction on the basis of these data. The 'great number of natives', who joined Burra Burra on the sea shore, could be a core of the community (band) who owned the northern shore of Port Jackson. Bungaree's family

80 Simonov, 'Pis'mo', p. 48-52; Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 48.

81 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 330; Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 61.

is most probably an extended family, perhaps a foraging group, that was wandering at the time separately from the community's core. Bellingshausen mentioned that, during Bungaree's first visit to the *Vostok*, he had been accompanied by his wife Matora, daughter and son. Bungaree, pointing to his companions, said: 'These are my people'. Then, pointing to the whole north shore: 'This is my land'.⁸² Mikhailov's drawing *Natives of New Holland* (ill. 8) presumably depicts this family. The group consists of four men and four women and reproduces correctly in general the structure of gender and age usual for an extended family or a foraging group. (It lacks only younger children and babies). It is most likely that Burra Burra's community belonged to the Cammeraigal group which inhabited the northern shore near Neutral Bay. The Cammeraigal were a part of the larger Kuring-gai linguistic group, who inhabited the territory between Port Jackson and Broken Bay and to which belonged Bungaree.⁸³

Taken as a whole Russian accounts of the first third of the nineteenth century are helpful in reconstructing the traditional social structure of the Aborigines of Eastern Australia. This evidently included the following main components: community, community's core, foraging group, task force and extended family.⁸⁴ The account of the fight in Hyde Park also suggests the existence of larger social organizations than a community i.e. a so-called tribe.

When the Russians attributed psychological and personality characteristics to the Aborigines, they were more subjective. For example, Shishmarev, who was not much interested in the Aborigines, gave this appraisal of their appearance: 'One day we saw them lying on the mussels near the sand-bar, in this case they greatly resembled monkeys'. His words were echoed by Novosil'skii: 'The features of their countenance are repulsive'. Rossiiskii tried to add some insight into moods and motives: 'The old men have gloomy faces and seem to be sad. Almost all their traits suggest something

82 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 163.

83 Kohen & R. Lampert, 'Hunters and fishers', p. 345; I. Howie-Willis, 'Bungaree', in D. Horton, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, vol. 1, Canberra, 1994, p. 164.

84 The classification of the social institutions presented here was elaborated by Kabo using Australian and comparative material. See V. Kabo, *Pervobytnaia dozemel'del'cheskaia obshchina [The Primeval Pre-agricultural Community]*, Moscow, 1986. Other anthropologists currently offer alternative terminology in reconstructing early Aboriginal society.

suspicious, cruel, and cunning.' Aleksei Lazarev noticed some difference between the appearance and the actual nature of the Aborigines:

They ... would seem to diverge in their customs more than any other natives from human kind itself However, they are not malicious, though their faces indicate the opposite.

Only Bellingshausen and Simonov, who were interested in Aboriginal life more than the others, gave impartial descriptions of their appearance. The latter even anticipated the later anthropological theory about the genetic propinquity of the Aborigines of Australia and of India.⁸⁵

The initial negative appraisal that was provoked by the general appearance of Aborigines changed to a more objective and positive perception when the Russians discussed Aboriginal abilities. Thus, Unkovskii and Rossiiskii, who witnessed the fight in 1814, mentioned that the Aborigines threw their spears with extreme accuracy and that 'natives can protect themselves from flying spears, with their shields or simply by dodging, with extraordinary skill'. These abilities as well as the Aborigines' keen sight and hearing were also mentioned by Berens in 1829. He noticed their aptitude for 'imitativeness' of European behaviour. Simonov more than once wrote that the Aborigines, even when drunk, never bothered the Europeans, and he himself, unarmed, visited their noisy night gatherings without fear. 'All the natives living on the shores of Port Jackson are kind and mild', he concluded.⁸⁶

The Russian visitors became especially sympathetic when they turned from general descriptions to individuals. Thus, although Simonov sometimes referred to the Aborigines as half-demons, he portrayed Burra Burra in a quite different light. The Aborigine trustfully and amicably met the visitors, 'praised the beauties of his native land', invited them to put their tents nearby with his group's encampment. Simonov seems to have been impressed with the conformity of Burra Burra's way of life to the natural conditions. Noticing, for example, that Simonov was thirsty, Burra Burra

⁸⁵ Shishmarev, 'Zhurnal', f. 31; Novosil'skii, 'Iuzhnyi polius', p. 69; Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 27; Aleksei Lazarev, *Zapiski*, p. 153; Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 60.

⁸⁶ Unkovskii, 'Istinye zapiski', p. 100; Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 25; Berens, 'Zapiski', p. 56; Simonov, 'Pis'mo', p. 54.

'immediately found a kind of little bark trough, ran to the brook and brought ... fresh spring water'.⁸⁷

With the same sympathy Simonov and other naval visitors described Bungaree, 'The Chief of Broken Bay Tribe'.

His proud step and bearing indicated an important personage The man's black hair curled in rings, *à la* Titus. Around his forehead was a band made of laces decorated with red ochre.

It is characteristic of the Russians that they were especially attracted by Aboriginal deeds that fitted European patterns of behaviour and morality. For example, some members of the 1820 expedition described in full detail the following magnanimous action of Bungaree. He not only rescued a runaway convict from a hostile tribe, but

carried him to Sydney on his own shoulders, feeding him on roots. It took three days. As a reward for saving the man, Bungaree asked for nothing but a pardon for the fugitive.

'He has often endangered his life in his efforts to keep the peace within his tribe', Bellingshausen added.⁸⁸ Certainly such behaviour suited perfectly the image of 'the noble savage'. The Russians could understand apparent minor concerns of the Aborigines such as Burra Burra's desire to be depicted by Mikhailov 'in full dress', which meant to add to his portrait a little stick passed through the cartilage of his nose. They could understand the longing of an Aborigine, taken away to England, for his native land and people, or the aspiration of the Aborigines to get an extra bottle of rum during barter. But Russians were invariably puzzled by Aboriginal unwillingness to accept worn clothing when bartering. Travellers were perplexed by the behaviour of Bungaree, who abandoned the house and orchard given to him by the governor and returned to a wandering life in the open air.

The feeling that the Aborigines were guided in their deeds by quite a different mentality was expressed especially clearly in Rossiiskii's memoirs. He described his meeting with five Aborigines on Benelong's Point in 1814. Initially he could understand their behaviour because it fitted his pre-conceived pattern of natives' conduct. He recounted in detail how the Aborigines examined his astronomical instruments with

87 Simonov, 'Pis'mo', p. 49.

88 Simonov, 'Shliupy', pp. 50, 59; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 338.

extreme astonishment and curiosity, behaving like real investigators, trying to discover their purpose; they studied what was inside the artificial horizon filled with mercury and managed to stop the watch by thrusting a twig between the wheels. But the subsequent behaviour of the Aborigines obviously made Rossiiskii feel that he was dealing with people of a completely different outlook. Becoming irritated, Rossiiskii tried to send them away, and

the natives, after remaining a few minutes longer, laughed loudly and went off. Having parted from us, they next proceeded to lay a fire and gather mussels on the shore. When they had roasted these on the fire they began to eat and said hardly a word for an hour. Then they started to talk among themselves, softly at first, but then extremely noisily.⁸⁹

Simonov expressed similar bewilderment more poetically. Depicting two dances, one a ball in Sydney in honour of the Russian visitors, and the other an Aboriginal corroboree not far from his tent on Kirribilli point, he concluded in a melancholy tone:

I ... walked up on the cliff by which our tents were standing. I looked now at the distant lights of the town of Sydney, now at the woods, where I had lately seen the darkness of half-demons and their wild amusements. The same plants and flowers beautified the earth, there and here Yet it seemed to me that the mouth of the little Parramatta River separated two quite distant planets⁹⁰

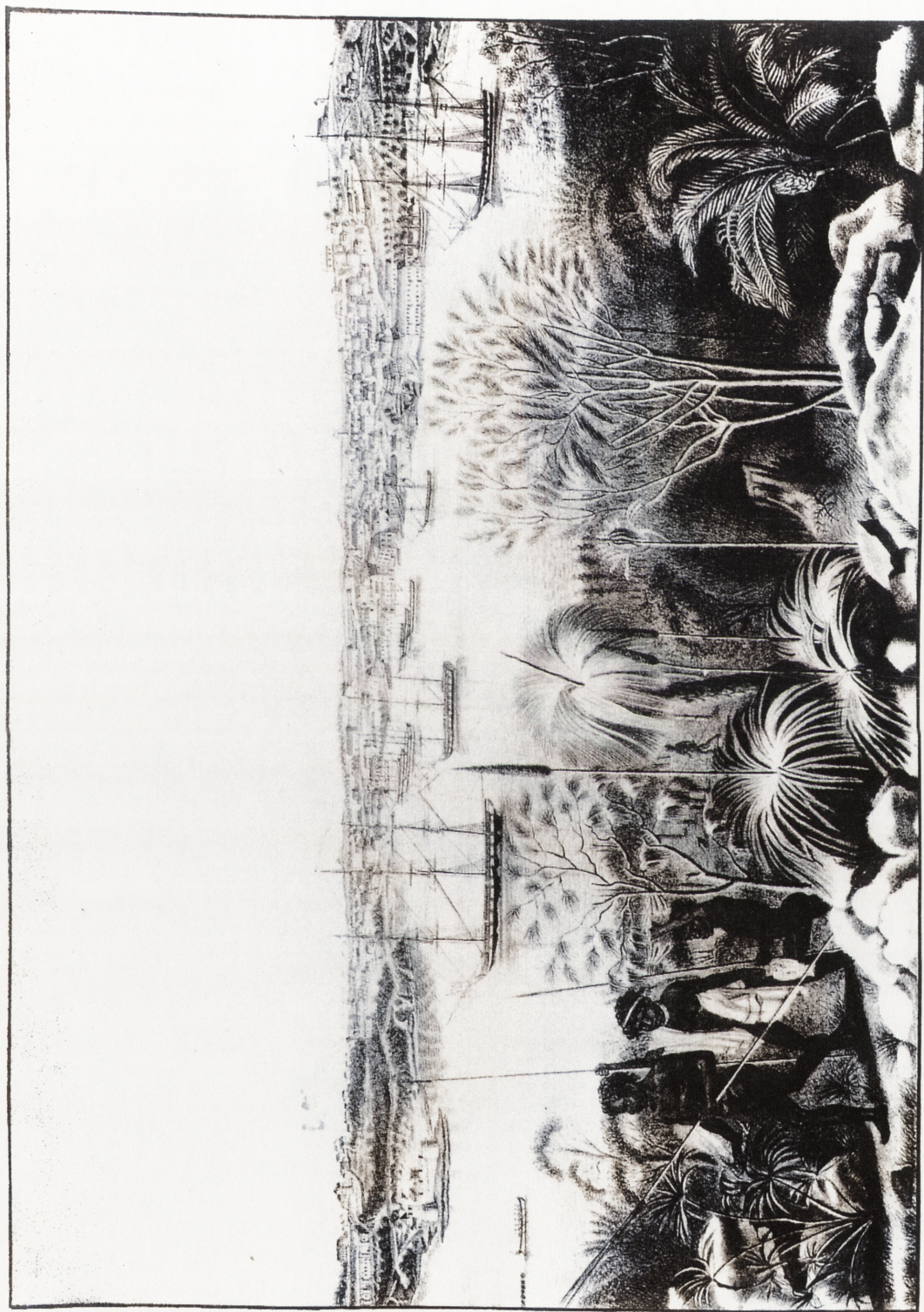
Supplementary evidence on Russian perceptions of the Aborigines can be obtained from drawings by the artists accompanying the expeditions, as well as from the artefacts brought by the mariners to Russia. The artist Mikhailov aboard the *Vostok* (1820) depicted Aborigines in three group drawings: *View from the northern side of the Town of Sydney at Port Jackson*, *View of the Town of Sydney in Port Jackson* (ill. 7) and *Natives of New Holland*, and in a number of portraits.⁹¹ The drawings made by his counterpart aboard the *Otkrytie* (1820) Korneev are lost and only a list of them remains. It shows that he included the Aborigines in such drawings as *Nocturnal Gathering of New Hollanders* and *Kangaroo Dance*⁹² and made sketches of their clothing, weaponry

89 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii korablia', p. 26.

90 Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 64.

91 The drawing *View from the northern side of the Town of Sydney at Port Jackson* was first published in T. McCormick a.o., *First Views of Australia, 1788-1825. A History of Early Sydney*, Chippendale, 1987, p. 214. Mikhailov's other drawings are often used to illustrate books devoted the Russian Pacific voyages.

92 Vasil'ev described this corroboree in his 'Zapiski', p. 42.



III. 7. Pavel Mikhailov. View of the Town of Sydney at Port Jackson. 1820.



III. 8. Pavel Mikhailov. Natives of New Holland. 1820.



III. 9. Pavel Mikhailov. Bungaree. 1820.



III. 10. Charles Rodius. King Bungaree. 1832

and ornaments.⁹³

Mikhailov pictured three key moments, from his point of view, of Aboriginal life - fishing, returning from fishing and cooking fish on the fire. He also depicted the two basic social units: a task force and an extended family. The other artist, Korneev, was evidently more impressed by such an exotic aspect of Aboriginal life as a night corroboree. Although in Mikhailov's drawing *The Natives of New Holland* (ill. 8) the arranging of the figures and their postures have a deliberate character, it seems that the artist also unconsciously recorded the way Aborigines themselves structure space. He depicted the main archetypes of the Aboriginal microcosm - a concentric circle and semicircle: in the centre of the space there is a fire, which is surrounded by a semicircle of sitting Aborigines, and all this group is framed by an enormously large entrance into the semi-spherical hut. It is well known now that circle and semi-circle, as graphic elements designating socium or inhabited space, are widely used by Aboriginal artists themselves.

There is another peculiarity of Mikhailov's perception. Russian naval visitors were inclined, as we have seen, to consider Aboriginal appearance as unattractive and even repulsive. But the portraits of the Aborigines made by Mikhailov are distinguished by a romantic-heroic idealization of their appearance, by the profound dignity of their mien, posture and step. The perceptiveness of his attitude is clearly seen if we compare portraits of Bungaree made by Mikhailov and by local artists (ills 9-10). Although there are no memoirs by Mikhailov concerning his visit to Australia, his drawings give grounds to suppose that he managed, probably more profoundly than other visitors, to penetrate into the inner world of the Australian Aborigines.

Artefacts were gathered by the participants in all Russian expeditions from 1807.⁹⁴ Although not all of them survive, the lists of these collections (spears, clubs,

93 See Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*, pp. 105-106; G. Barratt, 'Russian artists in the area of Sydney 1820: Emel'ian M. Korneev and Pavel N. Mikhailov', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 2, 1991, pp. 27-39.

94 The less known first Russian expedition on the *Neva* in 1807 collected in Australia 'Arrows [i.e. spears] without notches for games - two, for fighting - four; for fishing - one. Straight round clubs for fighting - two, slanting, flat [probably boomerangs] - one. Shields - two'. Unfortunately the destiny of this collection remains unknown. See A.Ia. Massov, 'Pervoe poseshchenie russkimi Avstraliiskogo kontinenta' [The first Russian visit to the Australian continent], *Izvestiia Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 125, issue 1, 1993, pp. 73-74.

boomerangs, shields etc.) illustrate the Euro- and androcentric orientations of the Russian collectors, as they were interested exclusively in artefacts belonging to Aboriginal men as warriors and hunters. Indifference toward other types of utensils, spiritual and women's objects, was typical of all European collectors at this time.

The last point I would like to consider here is the Russians' attitude to relations between Europeans and Aborigines. Practically none of the Russians ignored this theme. Some of their relevant materials have been reviewed by Barratt,⁹⁵ and I will confine myself mainly to evaluative comments made by the Russian visitors. One can find in their diaries and memoirs a diversity of opinions - from an utter incomprehension of the causes of the failure of attempts by the colonial administration to turn the Aborigines to the European way of life, to indirect or overt censure of the colonists' behaviour. Often the Russians' Eurocentric approach, mentioned above, prevented them from perceiving the real reasons for contradictions and conflicts, or giving an unbiased appraisal of the events they witnessed. In this respect the issue of land ownership and the attempts of the colonial administration to involve the Aborigines in the European economy are extremely significant. The authors often unintentionally contradict themselves. This is especially characteristic of Bellingshausen's thorough account. Take, for example, the following typical passage:

The Governor had made plans ... to establish a native village near the other [lake],⁹⁶ to give land to cultivate to the natives, to build houses for them and to transform their miserable wandering life into a useful and settled existence. I imagine that this is as yet impossible, as a similar attempt was made with the natives of Broken Bay,⁹⁷ but they soon grew weary of work and now once more lead a nomadic life on the other side of Sydney. It is incomparably easier for them to catch fish by spear or hook, and exchange them in the town for alcohol and tobacco, than to till the soil and then wait patiently for months to reap their harvest.⁹⁸

We can find in this passage all the features of a profound misunderstanding of Aboriginal society. Bellingshausen was *a priori* of the firm belief that all the land in Australia belonged to the Crown and the Governor, and the latter was free 'to give it to the

95 Barratt, *The Russians at Port Jackson*, p. 71-73.

96 He means evidently the newly found Lake George.

97 The family of Bungaree and some other families were given houses and land for further cultivation, and Bungaree was entitled 'Chief of Broken Bay Tribe'.

98 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 347.

natives', free to drive off the land one Aboriginal group and settle another one or the British colonists on it, free to nominate a chief of such an artificial group regardless of the real social hierarchy, as probably happened in Bungaree's case. The powers and actions of the Governor, while apparently providing justice to Aborigines, gave them nothing compatible with their own social organization and sense of belonging to a particular place. Yet here Bellingshausen was not always consistent as some pages before he had asserted:

The natives remember very well their former independence. Some expressed their claims to certain places, asserting that they belonged to their ancestors. It is easy to understand that they are not indifferent to having been expelled from their own favourite localities. Despite all the compensation offered to them, a spark of vengeance still smoulders in their hearts.⁹⁹

One can feel here an abyss of incomprehension: even when Bellingshausen wrote about the Aboriginal notions of their land-ownership, he did so mainly in perplexity and without any thought of censuring the colonists who had deprived the natives of their land.

A further example is provided by the comments of a number of Russian travellers who visited the Parramatta institution which provided a basic education for Aboriginal girls. Noting the unwillingness of the Aborigines to place their children in this institution, the Russians offered different reasons for it. Simonov considered that it was

because children, once they have received a little education and have grown accustomed to European notions, grow ashamed of their previous ignorance and of the wild customs of their tribe.

Bellingshausen saw the reasons in 'habits of freedom and the nomadic life' of the Aborigines or in their dread that 'the children would be forced to do heavy labour'.¹⁰⁰ It is significant that none of the Russians thought that children were an integral part of traditional Aboriginal society and it was doomed to extinction without them. At the same time we should do justice to those Russians who, although finding nothing attractive in the traditional way of life of the Aborigines, did not doubt their capacity to reach higher standards of culture through education. Novosil'skii and Bellingshausen wrote:

New Holland natives are considered through their ignorance below all other peoples of the world, yet their children made progress in schools equally with Europeans.

The results have proved that the natives of New Holland are capable of being

99 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 337.

100 Simonov, 'Shliupy', p. 56; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 184, vol. 2, p. 338.

educated, notwithstanding the fact that many European armchair professors declared them to be utterly devoid of intelligence.¹⁰¹

The Russians averred that the Aborigines had taken over from the convicts and colonists all the worst - alcoholism, 'imprecations, oaths and curses of the English rabble'. Bellingshausen disapproved the exploitation when

the proprietors of the taverns for the greater part hire natives to wash out the brandy casks. The first wash has of course a considerable flavour of the brandy, and this, which they call 'bull', is given to them in payment for their work Although this has been prohibited, the tavern proprietors find it a very convenient way of paying for native labour.¹⁰²

Noting that the Aboriginal 'dislike of the English has almost entirely vanished', Bellingshausen emphasized that 'the Europeans themselves often [have been] the cause of quarrels'. The Russian visitors, when telling about the tragic resistance of Tasmanian Aborigines to the European invasion, blamed the latter, who started the perpetual hostilities when a friendly group of Tasmanians was fired on with grapeshot by the first settlers. Andrei Lazarev, who visited Tasmania in 1823, also wrote about this episode. The most tragic picture was given by Berens, who wrote after a visit to Australia in 1829:

I was told by one of the officers, who served in Van Diemen's Land in a detachment, about the means they use to move the native inhabitants off the colony. Usually such a detachment sets out to the bush, as if to hunt game; on seeing the natives, they surround them and kill without any regret.

Finally, Vasilii S. Zavoiko, who visited Sydney on the *Amerika* in 1835, discovered that there 'Native New Hollanders, it seems, disappeared completely. Since the settlement began, they gradually died out of the misuse of alcohol'.¹⁰³

Conclusion

The writings of the Russian naval visitors were distinguished by a number of characteristics. Some of them may be considered as valuable historical documents giving scholars forgotten facts of Australian history. For instance, diary entries devoted to Aborigines, in which the Russians reported their own particular observations rather than merely restating general impressions conveyed to them by other observers, may be

101 Novosil'skii, 'Iuzhnyi polius', p. 67; Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 338.

102 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 329, 335.

103 Bellingshausen, *The Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 331, 335; Lazarev, 'Plavanie vokrug sveta', p. 79; Berens, 'Zapiski', pp. 55-56; Zavoiko, *Vpechatleniia*, p. 60.

valuable today to scholars reconstructing the details of Aboriginal society. Furthermore, analysis of the Russian visitors' perceptions can suggest what in their early images of Australia was typical for an average educated European and what was determined by specifically Russian ethnic and cultural background.

The early perception of many Europeans and Australian settlers was that of a land and nature odd, unique, topsy-turvy and harsh. The Russians' perception surprisingly differed from that stereotypical image. The Russians' initial impression was that of a desired wild tropical paradise. This peculiarity can be explained on the one hand by the ethnic origin of the observers - Russians, northern dwellers, were not satiated with warmth and rich vegetation as, say, Italians or French were. On the other hand, it is significant that these Russians arrived in Australia not as European settlers who had to live on this land, but as short-term visitors. Moreover, Australia for them was the first stop on the way to the South Pacific and that is why they perceived the land as a part of the stereotyped image of the South Pacific rather than as part of a vast continent with predominantly harsh conditions. But even when this romantic image was gradually replaced by the realistic one it still remained extremely enthusiastic due to the novelty of the Australian land and its flora and fauna for the observers.

Summing up the peculiarities of the Russian perceptions of the social and economic development of the Australian colonies, it seems clear that their sympathies had their roots not only in the real achievements of the colonies but in the shortcomings of the political and social-economic situation in Russia itself. Against such a background even life in a penal colony at the world's end could seem a paradise. The Russian visitors can be considered in some sense as a mirror of the state of the public mind of the educated strata in Russian society at that time. Although in their published accounts the Russians had to express loyal feelings to the Tsar, at heart they most likely condemned the worst excesses of the Tsarist autocracy, local arbitrariness and serfdom. Their critical attitude was still moderate; their ideals were just forming under the influence of the ideas of the French Revolution, European law and the Enlightenment. Whether they wanted it to or not, an echo of these views sounded in their evaluation of the Australian reality.

The Russian image of Australian colonists was not simply that of English people

living outside Britain. Although the visitors did refer to them as the English, probably because of the absence of another specific name, they began to distinguish some particular features of the new nation. Firstly, their writings almost completely lack stereotypes inevitably present in Russian descriptions of the English who lived in Britain. Secondly, although mixing predominantly with the highest levels of Australian colonial society, the Russians had occasional contacts with the broader public and in all cases they noticed more democratic, less formalized types of behaviour and self-respect. At the same time their perceptions of the colonists were as a rule determined by their own Russian background and experience. All the naval visitors, excluding Zavalishin who wrote his memoirs in the 1870s and 1880s, did not compare their observations of the behaviour of the colonists with the behaviour of Russians. Still the features that drew their attention were exactly those features which distinguished Australian society from Russian, for instance, self-respect in lower classes, and the absence of rigid stratification in society.

In their perceptions of Aborigines the Russians were not unanimous, and it seems to me that the concluding section on the expeditions of 1820 Barratt is too flat in his assertion:

One would wish to end by commenting that Bellingshausen's final judgement of the North Shore Aborigines was kindly; but unfortunately it was not. Quite to the contrary: it was with minimal regret that he departed from an ugly, noisy, lying, thieving people Enlightened seamen though they were by any standards, Bellingshausen, Lazarev, and Simonov were in the last analysis too Eurocentric to appreciate the skills, knowledge, or beauty of New Hollanders at home.¹⁰⁴

While acknowledging the Eurocentrism inherent to these Russian visitors, their disapproval of much in the Aboriginal life style and behaviour and their inability to grasp the full purpose and significance of such behaviour, I consider that it is also important to stress their profound interest in the traditional way of life of the Aborigines and their means of adaptation to European society.

Being keen and unbiased observers, aiming to collect data and honestly describe all they saw, the mariners not only managed to give the Russian reader diverse and reliable facts, but described as well a number of perfectly remembered images of the Aborigines

¹⁰⁴ Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*, pp. 162-163.

and scenes of their life. In their accurate depiction of the state of Anglo-Aboriginal relations they showed, deliberately or not, that the European invasion had brought the Aborigines a number of disadvantages - diseases, alcoholism, exploitation, loss of land and natural resources and, in the end, destruction of their traditional society. Even if contemporary Russian naval visitors could hardly be expected to give a proper evaluation of the facts they described, the Russian democratic writers in the following years, under the influence of the visitors' observations, made its judgements much more definitely, and this I discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMAGE OF AUSTRALIA IN RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS BEFORE 1851

In the previous chapter we have seen the peculiarities of the image of Australia that Russian voyagers had formed. But it is obvious that this image was not characteristic of Russian literate society as a whole. Only a few of these Russian visitors published their writings soon after their return to Russia; most materials were published years later and some remained in archives. For Russian society as a whole the printed word in the broad meaning of the word was the main source in forming the Russian perceptions of Australia. By the printed word I mean all the diversity of writings devoted to Australia: books, articles and notes dealing with the history, geography, economics and way of life of its new and indigenous inhabitants. Along with serious literature I will survey fiction, popular and educational literature.

What place did Australia occupy in these Russian publications? In a bibliographical search through most of the Russian periodicals and books of the time I have discovered the following pattern. Between 1710 and 1850 245 items devoted to Australia were published (24 before 1801 and 221 in the first half of the nineteenth century). Initially the number of items published was small - on average one a year in 1779-1800 and two a year in 1801-1820. In the following decades this increased to average six a year, reaching ten to fourteen a year toward the end of the 1840s. These were mainly translated articles in periodicals and sections of books. There were still almost no Russian books devoted completely to Australia in this period. Certain periodicals wrote about Australia more often. My calculations give the following figures for the 'core' periodicals.

Table 2
Items Published in 'Core' Periodicals up to 1851

Title	Years	No. of Items
1. Journals of opinion		
<i>Library for reading</i>	1834-1850	10
<i>Notes of the Fatherland</i>	1839-1850	14
<i>The Muscovite</i>	1842-1850	7
<i>The Contemporary</i>	1848-1850	3

2. Journals specializing in geography and travel	<i>Historical, Statistical and Geographical Journal</i>	1803-1830	25
	<i>Son of the Fatherland</i>	1815-1850	33
	<i>Northern Archive</i>	1822-1828	11
	<i>Proceedings of the Imperial Russian Geographical society</i>	1848-1849	5
3. Special journals	<i>Journal of the Ministry of Education</i>	1835-1850	13
4. Newspapers*			
	<i>Russian Invalid</i>	1818-1850	11
	<i>The Northern Bee</i>	1828-1850	15

*Newspaper statistics are not comprehensive; probably the number of items published was higher.

In view of the popularity of these periodicals a literate person reading one or two periodicals ordinarily saw at least one or two articles about Australia a year.¹

It is characteristic of this period that most publications on Australia were based on foreign sources. These were translations, compilations, expositions, but it would be incorrect to refer to them as purely English, French or German images of Australia. The situation was more complicated and, after close analysis, there is a case for considering even these publications as creations of Russian history. Russian influence was apparent. Firstly, periodical editors, journalists or translators chose material from the foreign writings for translation and publication and at this primary stage there were some specifically Russian preferences in topics, political sympathies, genres and language of the originals. Also, in many cases the published article was not an exact translation but a creative composite of a number of foreign articles and books. The publishing practice of the time allowed editors to be very liberal with the sources, without proper references to them. Writers were free to abridge according to their own tastes. The Russian contribution consisted also of inserting commentaries and footnotes into the text. And finally, these publications may be considered a part of Russian history because they were read by Russian readers within the context of the Russian journals that published them. Original Russian publications dealing with Australia also appeared at this time, although they were small in number.

1 The circulation of the periodicals in general was rather low - several hundred copies. The most popular were the *Library for Reading* (*Biblioteka dlia chteniia*) and the *Notes of the Fatherland* (*Otechestvennye zapiski*) which had a few thousands subscribers. The most popular newspaper was *The Northern Bee* (*Severnaia pchela*) with circulation up to seven thousand. Engel'gardt, *Ocherk istorii russkoi tsenzury*, pp.160-161; D. Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform, 1801-1881*, London & New York, 1992, pp. 156-157.

While Russian readers probably read less about Australia than their West European neighbours, it is also likely that their reading covered a rather comprehensive range of subjects. Whereas in the eighteenth century Russian writings about Australia dealt predominantly with discovery, exploration and history, in the first half of the nineteenth century their distribution became more diverse:

Table 3
Thematic Distribution of Items Published, 1801-1850

Theme	No. of Items
General	5
Geography	31
Exploration and travel	64
Russian naval expeditions	26
Anthropology	9
History	64
Economics	14
Fiction	8
Total	221

The earliest Russian knowledge of Australia can be traced to the times of Peter the Great.² Nevertheless the early mysterious image of *Terra Australis Incognita* which emerged among Europeans under the influence of such writings as William Dampier's *Voyages*, Daniel Defoe's *A New Voyage Round the World* or Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* reached Russians only much later. *Gulliver's Travels* which had some references to Van Diemen's Land and New Holland was translated from French into Russian by Erofei Korzhavin only in 1772-73.³

The Russians' real awareness of Australia - as well as that of most other Europeans - took place only after the discoveries of James Cook. Despite the distance between Russia and England, the first Russian publication about Australia came surprisingly quickly. In 1772 the *Calendar or Geographical Almanac for Year 1773* published a detailed article 'New geographical discoveries made by the English ship

2 The first Russian manual of geography published in 1710 said about Australia: 'only small parts of its shores [are known], Christians did not advance there much fearing perdition as they do not know the language or because of extreme remoteness'. *Geografiia ili kratkoe zemnago kruga opisanie [Geography or Short Description of the Globe]*, Moscow, 1710, p. 102. For detailed description of the book see Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 534.

3 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 5780. (The second edition was published in 1780, the third edition in 1820). The detailed discussion of the early British perceptions see in R. Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise. Changing Literary Perceptions of Australia*, Sydney, 1984 (chapter 'A Diminishing Paradise: An Image of *Terra Australis* prior to 1770').

Endeavour during her voyage round the world in 1769, 1770 and 1771'. The article was compiled from a letter of Joseph Banks to the Paris Academy of Sciences and extracts from his *A Journal of a Voyage Round the World*, published anonymously in London in 1771. The publication included an engraved and coloured 'Map of the Southern Part of the World' made by N. Zubkov, representing Cook's discoveries in Australia.⁴ This article was followed by some other reviews of travels of Abel Tasman and Cook based on foreign sources.⁵ During 1786-1805 Russian readers received a number of books - both Cook's own diaries and descriptions of his travels prepared and published by H. Zimmerman, A.F. Prevost d'Exiles, A. Kippis, J.H. Campe. These were translations from the English, French and German.⁶

Material on Cook's voyages, in spite of the fact that the texts translated were not always chosen felicitously from the scientific point of view and usually reached Russian readers in two stage or even three stage translations, were significant in disseminating knowledge about New Holland and Van Diemen's Land in Russia in early years. They were the main (though not the only) source for creating the image of Australia and its native inhabitants at that time. In this early period we cannot yet speak of a specifically Russian perception of Australia, but the fact of rather prompt translation testifies that in Russia there was a keen interest in the exploration and discovery of the Pacific and Australia. The publication of accounts of Cook's experiences in different editions, re-issues of some of them as well as a version of his travels published especially for the young, suggests that at the turn of the eighteenth century any curious literate Russian could easily obtain adequate information about Australia. At that time material on Cook's voyages was also a significant source of data for Russian geography textbooks and manuals which played an important role in disseminating information about Australia. The first detailed description of New Holland was published in the school textbook *Universal Earth Description* by the Russians I.F. Gakman and I.F. Iakovkin in 1795.

4 *Kalendar' ili mesiatseslov geograficheskii na 1773 god*, [1772], pp. 29-72.

5 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 993, 994, 995.

6 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 996-998, 1000-1002, 1005. For the detailed history of these publications see C.M. Hotimsky, 'A Bibliography of Captain James Cook in Russian 1772-1810', *Biblionews and Australian Notes and Queries*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1971, pp. 3-12; T. Armstrong, 'Cook's Reputation in Russia', in R. Fisher and H. Johnston, eds, *Captain James Cook and His Times*, Canberra, 1979, pp. 121-128; Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*, pp. 7-24.

Unfortunately later manuals continued to concentrate on Cook's period without referring to new geographical discoveries and accounts of the progress of the colony.⁷

In 1806 the first solely Russian scientific investigation devoted to Tasmania appeared. This was a pioneering study 'The discoveries of Tasman' by Ivan F. Kruzenshtern, the head of the first Russian circumnavigation expedition (1803-1806).⁸ Using all sources available to him Kruzenshtern painstakingly followed the route of the Dutch navigator and precisely verified data on the Tasmanian coastline. There were also some published scientific works of the Russian naturalist Aleksandr Sevast'ianov in the *Technological Journal (Tekhnologicheskii zhurnal)* devoted to unique Australian animals.⁹

From the beginning of the nineteenth century geographical and travel literature became diverse and more numerous; it covered all the main expeditions to and in Australia. The Russian periodicals wrote about British, European and American explorers of Australian coasts and inner regions: George Vancouver, Matthew Flinders, George Bass, Nicolas Baudin, François Péron, John Turnbull, James Grant, William Lawson, John Oxley, Phillip King, Louis Freycinet, Jacques Arago, Jules Dumont d'Urville, William Wentworth, Charles Sturt, George Grey, Thomas Mitchell, Charles Wilkes, Paul Strzelecki, Edmund Kennedy and Ludwig Leichhardt. In most cases these were translations from the original texts of these travellers which gave a complete geographical description of the newly discovered regions. Keeping in mind that there were also special publications on Australian geography and natural history, for example about unique fauna or mineral discoveries, the literate Russian could read an abundant variety of material. Compared to writings of the Russian naval visitors, this geographical and travel literature - not being restricted to the region of Sydney or Hobart - was far more diverse, giving pictures of conditions in many different regions of Australia.

There were even translations of specialist scientific articles. For example in 1809 Flinders' article, 'Observations on the sea barometer, made during the exploration of the

7 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 536-547.

8 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 1006.

9 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 802-807.

shores of New Holland and New South Wales in 1801, 1802, 1803', was published in Russian.¹⁰ Another translation of scientific value is an anonymous letter about new discoveries in New Holland published in the popular journal *Son of the Fatherland* (*Syn Otechestva*). Analyzing the facts and dates mentioned in this letter I came to the conclusion that this is a letter written on 1 July 1815 by a relative of John Macarthur, probably Hector Macarthur, describing George Evans' expedition beyond the Blue Mountains in 1815. Evidently the letter was sent to John Macarthur in Europe. In Geneva an acquaintance of John Macarthur's made extracts from the letter and sent them to someone in St. Petersburg who gave these extracts to the *Son of the Fatherland*. In 1816 it was published there, followed by some information about John Macarthur and his trip to Europe.¹¹

Special publications devoted to the way of life of the Australian Aborigines were not numerous, but a curious reader could easily obtain material about native inhabitants from the travel descriptions of Peron, Arago, Dumont d'Urville, Grey, Mitchell, Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet. Publications about Australian 'Robinson Crusoes' - Thomas Pamphlet, John Finnegan and William Buckley - had an impact on Russian readers, too, giving them first-hand descriptions of the Aboriginal way of life.¹²

The earliest original Russian image of Aborigines goes back to 1793 when Aleksandr Strugovshchikov, a translator of the First Fleeter John Hunter's account, fancied in a footnote what would befall an Australian Aborigine if he found himself in St. Petersburg:

He would consider people wearing striped clothes as similar to himself [because of Aboriginal custom of ornamenting their body. - E.G.]; our stone houses would seem to him as mountains with caves; coaches as moving hills; and perhaps pies, *kalatches* and *kulebiakas* [kinds of Russian pies. -E.G.] as roots growing on the banks of Neva.¹³

10 *Zapiski izdavaemye Gosudarstvennym admiralteiskim departamentom*, part 2, 1809, pp. 297-345.

11 'Otkrytiia na Novoi Gollandii (Perechen' pis'ma iz Londona)' [Discoveries in New Holland (A letter from London)], *Syn Otechestva*, part 30, no. 20, 1816, pp. 35-37. The surname of the addressee in the Russian publication was erroneously spelled as Makartner. My attempt to find the original of the letter in the Macarthur papers in the Mitchell Library was unsuccessful. M.H. Ellis, *John Macarthur*, Sydney, 1955 does not mention this letter.

12 'Novyi Robinson' [New Robinson], *Syn Otechestva*, part 177, 1836, pp. 53-54; See also Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1482, 2836.

13 *Russian Sources on Australia*, no. 3-452, p. 45.

As we see, the strangeness of the Aborigines provoked in the Russian mind mostly surprise and irony at that time.

In the nineteenth century a sympathetic view of Aborigines became characteristic of the Russian publications. In general both the Russian and the European writers of the day referred to Aborigines as 'pitiful' people on the lowest stage of human culture. It is obvious that this image was Eurocentric, although it would be unjust to consider these writings as completely simplistic. In some cases the way of life of the Aborigines was depicted accurately and even such interesting phenomena of Aboriginal spiritual culture as their rock paintings and their worship of the snake living at the bottom of the pool were discussed.¹⁴

One of the constant themes in the Russian publications from the second quarter of the nineteenth century was the cruel attitude of the Australian colonists towards the Aborigines, and Russian sympathies were as a rule on the side of the latter. In 1829 *Son of the Fatherland* informed its readers about advertisements in Australian newspapers of the necessity to poison Aborigines. 'Who could imagine that in an English colony they could resort to such a hellish measure', the journal asked. *Northern Bee* in 1829 published the account by Henry Widowson, an agricultural agent in Van Diemen's Land, who said that the colonists there purposely provoked the natives' aggression and sometimes shot at them just to satisfy their inclinations to brutality. *Picturesque review (Zhivopisnoe obozrenie)* in 1837 referred to Oxley arguing that Aborigines forced out by Europeans could not occupy the territory of the neighbouring tribe. *Muscovite (Moskvitianin)* in 1843 wrote that settlers corrupted Aborigines, treated them as brutes, addicted them to alcohol, deprived them of their last means of existence and finally, exterminated them. The Aborigines 'possess worthy qualities that are not always inherent in those who enslaved them: they love their mothers, children and freedom!' *Son of the Fatherland* wrote in 1847:

Since the conquering of Mexico and Peru there has been no event more monstrous than the extermination of the natives of Van Diemen's Land. In order to excuse

¹⁴ 'Uchenye puteshestviia' [Scientific travels], *Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, part 21, no. 1, section 7, 1839, p. 19; 'Avstraliia' [Australia], *Syn Otechestva*, vol. 2, no. 4, section 5, 1847, p. 46.

themselves from any pangs of conscience, English colonists [then] began to preach that the savages were not people and that one could treat them as brutes.¹⁵

At the same time one could find in the Russian periodicals the opposite point of view. *Russian Invalid* (*Russkii invalid*) in 1848 in an anonymous article attributed Aboriginal extinction to their way of life, since they killed and ate their children and in this way exterminated themselves. The author justified the European seizure of land on the grounds that there was ample land for Aborigines, who traditionally never had permanent settlements.¹⁶ But publications holding such positions were rare and a critical attitude towards the colonists' atrocities towards the Aborigines prevailed.

At this time attitudes towards the extinction of the Australian Aborigines were not always consistent with the generally accepted ideological position of each of the Russian periodicals. Thus, the publication excusing European abuses of Australia's land and indigenous peoples appeared simultaneously in the reactionary *Russian Invalid* and the progressive and popular *The Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*), while articles condemning the British colonists' atrocities were published in the reactionary journals *Northern Bee* and *Son of the Fatherland*.

The question of conflict between Aborigines and Europeans in far away Australia was not an abstract one in Russian society. Sympathy for the weak, for the 'small man' is traditional in Russian humanist culture. Russians experienced similar collisions while colonizing the newly gained frontier regions of the Russian Empire such as Siberia. Between Australian Aborigines and minorities of the Russian Empire there were remarkable differences in their level of development, and in their ability to adapt themselves to the conquerors' culture. At the moment of the Russians' invasion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Siberian peoples were at different stages of socio-economic development. Some of them already showed signs of early class stratification and were engaged in agriculture and cattle-breeding (such as the Yakuts and Siberian Tartars), while others (such as the Evenks, Chukchi, Nivkh) lived in clans and tribes and were engaged in hunting, fishing and reindeer herding. In comparison with the Australian and

15 *Syn Otechestva*, part 125, vol. 3, no. 18, 1829, pp. 247-248; *Severnaia pchela*, no. 127-131, 1829; 'Novyi Iuzhnyi Valis' [New South Wales], *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, vol. 3, no. 42, 1837-38, p. 331; 'Obshchii obzor Okeanii' [General description of Oceania], *Moskvitianin*, no. 4, 1843, p. 554; 'Avstraliia', *Syn Otechestva*, p. 49.

16 'Zhiteli Avstralii' [The inhabitants of Australia], *Russkii invalid*, nos 263, 275, 1848.

Tasmanian Aborigines all Siberian peoples had a more complex material culture; most of them led a settled or semi-settled way of life. The Russian colonization of Siberia was gradual and over a long period, having its origins in the sixteenth century. It had two main patterns: the first, fur merchants and traders who followed the invasion of state armed detachments, and the second, advancing peasant agricultural settlements. Neither group aimed at the depopulation of Siberia and the land question was not as burning as in the sheep-grazing Australian colonies. In general Siberian colonization had a more assimilating and tolerant nature than that in Australia. Russian peasants and traders were more receptive than the British settlers in Australia to living closely with the Aboriginal peoples and mixing with them personally and culturally. As a result the immediate effect of Siberian colonization was less destructive and did not lead to such catastrophic consequences as in Australia.

In the first half of the nineteenth century educated Russian society censured serfdom in Russia, the oppression of Orthodox Greeks and Slavs in Turkey and even sympathized with individual heroic leaders among the conquered peoples of the frontier of the Russian Empire.¹⁷ At the same time Russian opinion still was not ready to consider the Russian colonization of the Caucasus and Siberia as evil, harmful for the native population or as an act of invasion and as theft of property. The morality of Russian actions there did not yet provoke doubts in Russian society, which only condemned individual cruelties and abuses. Thus, the Russian writers had no trouble in censuring the British colonization of Australia, while condoning the Russian colonization of the Caucasus and Siberia. The motives of the editors, who had chosen especially critical articles for publication in their journals, are quite clear: it is always easier and safer to criticize other people than your own.

Another focus of the Russian publications which particularly appealed to the Russian public was the settlement of the Australian continent by Europeans and the way of life of settlers and exiles. After the arrival of the First Fleet, Russian readers could

17 For example Russian society regarded as a hero Shamil, the leader of the resistance of the North Caucasian mountaineers against the tsarist colonialists. These themes may be found in Mikhail Lermontov's works *A Hero of Our Time* (1840) and *Ashik-Kerib*. Later on this tradition was continued by Leo Tolstoy in his novella *Hadji-Murad* (1904).

acquaint themselves surprisingly quickly with the observations of Watkin Tench, John Hunter, Philip Gidley King and Arthur Phillip or read notes of David Collins about 'The difficulty of reforming criminals'.¹⁸ In 1803 George Barrington's work *A Voyage to Botany Bay, with a Description of the Country, Manners, Customs, Religion of the Natives* ... was translated into Russian by prince Aleksei Golitsyn.¹⁹ Another publication testifies that knowledge of Australia in the beginning of the nineteenth century could reach a remote Russian province. It was a book compiled by a provincial functionary, Semeon Zubkov, *Brief Historical Survey of Discovery of Islands ... Constituting the Fifth Part of the World* ... (Kursk, 1804).²⁰ The book was based on different Western sources and not only dealt with the discovery and geographical description of Australia and the South Pacific, but gave brief information about the doings of Phillip and Tench in Port Jackson.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century very popular were dynamic narratives about the foundation of new colonies and settlements on Westernport, on the Bass Strait islands and in Western Australia.²¹ The brilliant, fascinating narrative 'Australian settlers' by Thomas McCombie from his *Australian Sketches* stands out as a vivid view of the Australian outback. It introduced to the Russian reader 'damper' and Australian tea, techniques of milking wild cows and constructing a bark hut. McCombie was one of the first to paint a number of memorable types of inhabitants of the Australian bush and especially the portrait of 'the remote settler'.²² Deportation was also described in the Russian writings mainly from the 'entertaining' point of view: conditions of transportation of the criminals by ships, the extremely hard conditions of life for especially dangerous criminals in Moreton Bay or on Norfolk Island, or the fate of fugitive convicts. But deportation in its routine aspects as a method of colonizing still did not attract the attention of the Russian writers.²³ This contrasts with the profound interest in deportation as an institution exhibited by the Russian naval visitors.

18 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-3, 3-452, 3-715.

19 Barrington's travel account ran into four editions in Russian during 1803-1816. *Russian Sources on Australia*, no. 3-357.

20 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 1004.

21 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-17, 3-22, 3-29, 3-31, 3-32, 3-45, 3-47, 3-48, 3-434, 3-741.

22 Mak-Kombi, 'Avstraliiskie poselentsy (Iz ocherkov Avstralii)' [Australian settlers (from Australian sketches)], *Moskvitianin*, part 4, 1847, pp. 83-95.

23 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-42, 3-43, 3-47, 3-51, 3-721, 3-741.

Questions of political, economic and cultural development remained almost entirely outside the interest of the Russian publications. The editor of the influential journal *Moscow Telegraph* (*Moskovskii telegraf*), Nikolai Polevoi, lamented in 1831 that the article by the French geographer J. Blosseville 'Historical survey of the fifth part of the world', which Polevoi published in his journal, limited itself to the history of the geographical exploration of Australia and the South Pacific and

did not show Russian readers the wealth of statistical [i.e. economic], historical, naturalist and other data which descriptions of Australia have enriched Europe with in recent times. Russian statisticians, geographers and historians, who still reprint only what was known in Cook's times, are missing out on all of this.²⁴

Bellingshausen's book, published in the same year, to which I have referred many times in the chapter about Russian naval visits, stands out against this background for its breadth and valuable data about the economic state and political institutions of the colonies.

In the following decades the situation somewhat improved, although certainly it would be too early to speak about a comprehensive picture of Australia. Nevertheless information was not scanty. Russian readers could acquaint themselves with extracts from the writings of different men of Australian history such as the first governor of the colony Arthur Phillip; clergyman Samuel Marsden; missionary Thomas Kendall; clergyman, politician and historian John Dunmore Lang; explorer and politician William Wentworth; judge Barron Field; agent to the Van Diemen's Land Agricultural establishment Henry Widowson; naval surgeon and pastoralist Thomas Wilson; writer Richard Howitt and journalist and politician Thomas McCombie.

At the end of the 1840s the Russian writers began to speak about the Australian economic miracle and the rapid development of the Australian colonies. This image of a young dynamic society was especially apparent in the articles devoted to Sydney and Melbourne. They stressed the European appearance of the cities, the existence of beautiful public buildings, the cosmopolitan nature of the street crowd. As early as 1838 the *Picturesque review* in an article devoted to the fiftieth anniversary of Sydney, wrote:

²⁴ [J. Blosseville], 'Istoricheskoe obozrenie piatoi chasti sveta' [Historical survey of the fifth part of the world], *Moskovskii telegraf*, vol. 41, no. 17, 1831, p. 114. Polevoi published in 1837 his translation of travels of Dumont d'Urville, who gave a detailed account of his visit to Australia.

Do not think, however, that Sydney with its mixed population appears to be something half-savage. This is a regular, beautiful city where there are whole streets consisting of two and three storey buildings; a city where European comforts prevail.

The journal predicted a 'brilliant future' for this young British colony. The *Son of the Fatherland* in 1847 believed that Australian colonists submitted rather impatiently to the yoke of British rule and eventually they would achieve independence the same as the United States of North America and remarked that Australia and the United States had a lot of features in common. A year later the same journal even affirmed that 'the Australian colonies have developed much faster than the old English colonies in America'. The *Muscovite* in 1850, summing up the achievements of the first half of the nineteenth century, wrote that Australian cities were

not ailing, stunted, pale, hothouse, too-quickly-ripened plants, but on the contrary, were full of health Many European cities boasting monuments and trade cannot be compared with them.²⁵

Another field of writing which shaped Russia's image of Australia was fiction. My bibliographical research has shown that the Russian reader was acquainted very early with fiction devoted to Australia. I have mentioned already the numerous reprints of George Barrington's book *A Voyage to Botany Bay* in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was followed by others. In 1835 *Literary Supplements to Russian Invalid* (*Literaturnye pribavleniia k Russkomu invalidu*) published a short story 'Convicts and settlers, or the state of the Old and New World'. It was signed by 'T.', probably the mark of the Russian translator-publicist Wilhelm Thilo (or Tillo). All my attempts to find the original source of this short story have been futile, which is unfortunate because this work is valuable as one of the earliest literary works about Tasmania. Artistically it described the adventures of the Castle family who left Britain and set off to settle in Van Diemen's Land. Among the characters there are convicts, bushrangers, farmers and Aborigines. The story ends happily and advises new settlers to come to the new country.²⁶

25 'Fort Makari i Sidneiskaia bukhta, v Port-Dzhaksone' [Fort Macquarie and Sydney Cove, in Port Jackson], *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, vol. 4, no. 12, 1838-39, pp. 90-91; 'Avstraliia', *Syn Otechestva*, p. 54; 'Angliia' [Britain], *Syn Otechestva*, no. 9, section 2, 1848, p. 32; 'Avstraliia' [Australia], *Moskvitianin*, part 1, no. 2, section 2, 1850, p. 5.

26 'Ssylochnye i pereselentsy, ili sostoianie starogo i novogo sveta' [Convicts and settlers, or the state of the Old and New World], *Russkii invalid, Literaturnye pribavleniia*, nos 85-87, 1835.

The author of another anonymous novel, *Tales of the Colonies of Van Diemen's Land*, which appeared in *The Contemporary* in 1850,²⁷ can be identified as Charles Rowcroft.²⁸ Doubtless this classic work popularising settler experience alone did more for disseminating a knowledge about Australia than a hundred dry articles. In the 1840s some Charles Dickens novels where the plot was connected with Australia were translated into Russian, while the novel *The Caxtons: A Family Picture* (1849) by Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1850 was published simultaneously by the *Muscovite*, *Notes of the Fatherland* and as a separate edition.²⁹

Thus the Russian publications of the first half of the nineteenth century drew information about Australia from the European sources (mainly French, German, English and sometimes even Australian). At this stage it would be an exaggeration to speak about a specifically Russian view of Australia; rather it reflected the general European view. At the same time the selection of materials from the point of view of subject, genre and attitude towards an Australian reality allows one to speak about a number of characteristic features of the Russian image of Australia at that time.

From the point of view of subject-matter, there was a predominance of geographical-historical material over socio-political and economic. But there were still no separate categories such as 'popular' or 'serious' literature or separate target groups at which this literature was specifically aimed. Most of the publications were oriented towards the average, literate, inquisitive reader who wanted to learn more of the world's news and geographical discoveries and was reading more for relaxation and entertainment than for profound insight and comparison. This determined the genre of publications: travel, essays of an encyclopaedic nature, notes about the latest events, reviews of new Western publications and, certainly, fiction. This in turn resulted in a consolidation of Australia's image as a country full of adventures, natural contrasts and mystery, where

27 [C. Rowcroft], 'Rasskazy o koloniiakh Vandimenovoi zemli' [Tales of the Colonies of Van Diemen's Land], *Sovremennik*, vols 21-23, nos 5-10, 1850.

28 As early as 1843, the *Notes of the Fatherland* published an enthusiastic review of the London edition of this work: [Review of] *Tales of the Colonies, or the Adventures of an Emigrant, Otechestvennye zapiski*, vol. 30, no. 9 section 7, 1843, pp. 6-9.

29 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 5783, 5785, 5786. Dickens' novels which were translated into Russian in these years are *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *David Copperfield*.

settlers overcame difficulties, where everything was upside down. It was a country with the following stereotypical set of inhabitants:

- The pitiful savage doomed to extinction by an inexorably approaching European civilization; the savage who could be either noble or brutal;
- The courageous explorer of the new lands for whom a tragic death often awaits;
- The unwanted exile, in whose image the traits of villain often prevail;
- The settler, who by dint of hard toil masters the Australian bush and whose toil surely will be returned a hundredfold; possibly somewhat eccentric, but steadfast.

We can see that this set of types almost completely lacks women, townspeople, soldiers, merchants, politicians, clergymen and many other people who played an important role in Australian colonial life.

And finally, the attitude of the Russian press towards Australian reality was invariably benevolent in spite of ups and downs in Russian-British relations. Only such extremes as atrocities by settlers towards Aborigines were condemned. The theme of the successful colonization of Australia was more and more often discussed by the Russians after the 1820s. At this time the writers saw the reasons for this success in the natural conditions and geographical situation of Australia rather than in any specific qualities of the British colonists.

Thus, the Russian armchair writers provided its reader with an image of the country and its people which, though a bit simplified, for the most part was reliable. For ordinary readers, this was stirring material which often impelled them to read further. The materials of the Russian naval visitors and the Russian writers complemented each other. An ordinary reader could scarcely believe in the existence of this mysterious remote country, while the Russian mariners' writings made its existence an established fact. Although their reports often could not match the diversity of facts supplied by the European publications, they discussed those subjects most relevant to Russian educated society. At the same time the Russian writers, by showing a glimpse of the newly-settled continent, prepared a fertile soil for the more detailed and specifically 'Russian' vision of New Holland, provided by the Russian naval visitors.

* * *

In general the Russian image of Australia had many similarities with those of other European nations of the corresponding period. At the same time it often was less developed and sophisticated than that of some other European nations, and especially the English, or lagged behind the image developed by other Europeans. Some features of the Russian image advanced to the forefront while others were relegated to the background. For instance, the set of British images of Australia prior to 1850 discussed by Ross Gibson in *The Diminishing Paradise*³⁰ was characteristic of the Russian visitors and armchair writers too, but for Russians the image of Paradise prevailed. The especially favourable Russian perceptions were increased by the fact that the early hard period of colonial life (prior to 1800)³¹ was known to Russians in less detail and thus no tradition of negative attitudes was created. At the same time the zeal to record all possible data about the new land usual to the First Fleeters and their followers was exhibited by the Russian naval visitors only after 1807, i.e. much later. Similarly, the European utopian paradisiac vision of the South Pacific and particularly Australia typical of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had not been fully developed in Russia before the early nineteenth century. Thus by the 1820s Australia emerged before the Russian reader as an amazing combination of an early romantic Paradise (based on images and expectations) and a terrestrial Paradise (based on the real economic and social achievements) in which the negative features were mostly ignored while the description was done in the documentary style usual for European travellers of the late eighteenth century.

30 See chapter 'Another Terrestrial Paradise (1800-1835)' in Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise*, pp. 57-84.

31 Described by Gibson as 'Silence, Sin and Suffering (1770-1800)'.

PART II

CHAPTER 3

PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN VISITORS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This chapter will survey the ships that visited Australia and the writings by Russian visitors about Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Then the chapter will analyze these writings thematically, focussing especially on Russian perceptions of Australian society.

Introduction

In the second half of the nineteenth century the range of Russian visitors to Australia widened considerably. Along with sailors, Russian travellers - tourists, scholars and experts - began to visit. The parameters of these visits also widened, stretching from Sydney to Albany, from Adelaide to Darwin, from Hobart to Thursday Island, from turbulent cities of half a million to infant settlements with a few streets, from sheep stations to gold mines, from parliamentary sessions to drovers' roadside fires.

During the second half of the century Australia was visited by fourteen Russian naval ships which called, as a rule, at a number of ports:

Table 4
Russian Naval Visits, 1853-1894

Ship	Captain	Year	Ports Visited
<i>Dvina</i>	P.N. Bessarabskii	1853	Sydney
<i>Svetlana</i>	I.I. Butakov	1862	Melbourne
<i>Bogatyr</i>	K.G. Skryplev	1863	Melbourne, Sydney
<i>Boiarin</i>	V.F. Serkov	1870	Adelaide, Hobart, Sydney
<i>Gaidamak</i>	M.E. Koltovskii	1871	Melbourne
<i>Izumrud</i>	M.N. Kumani	1872	Melbourne, Sydney
<i>Afrika</i>	E.I. Alekseev	1881-1882	Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide, Albany
<i>Vestnik</i>	F.K. Avelan	1881-1882	Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide
<i>Plastun</i> ¹	P.A. Polianskii	1881-1882	Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide
<i>Vestnik</i>	V.I. Lang	1886	Albany, Melbourne, Launceston
<i>Rynda</i>	F.K. Avelan	1888	Newcastle, Sydney
<i>Naездnik</i>	S.A. Zarin	1888-1889	Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney
<i>Razboinik</i>	P.P. Ukhtomskii	1893	Exmouth Gulf on the south-western coast, Darwin
<i>Kreiser</i>	N.I. Nebogatov	1894	Melbourne, Sydney

¹ I want to draw attention of Australian scholars to the correct spelling of the name of this ship. Hotimsky and Fitzhardinge erroneously named the ship *Platon* and this mistake has been repeated in the writings of other scholars.

These Russian naval vessels of the Pacific Ocean detachment usually visited Australia either on the way to the Far East or back to the Baltic Sea and sometimes during special training cruises to acquaint officers with the new ports. As earlier, the collection of various data about Australian ports was the duty of Russian naval officers. This was the usual practice of the time and had nothing to do with spying and collecting intelligence data in the modern meaning of the word. To collect information the officers used official sources and personal observations of the places shown to them by their hosts. Especially detailed were the Russians' descriptions of the ports that they visited for the first time, though the quality of the reports depended considerably upon the personality and interests of captains and officers. Thus, in 1863 the Russians made interesting descriptions of Melbourne, of Hobart in 1870, of Newcastle in 1888, of Exmouth Gulf and Darwin in 1893. On the last visit, prince Pavel P. Ukhtomskii, captain of the *Razboinik*, dispatched the following to the Naval Ministry:

I gave each officer special programs to collect ... statistical and trade data It was desirable that this port, which has an indubitable future, should be studied more thoroughly ... I have the honour to report with satisfaction that all the officers, from junior to senior, zealously fulfilled the commission and that is why the data was collected on all areas, not only about Port Darwin but the whole Northern Territory.²

The expansion of railways considerably increased the Russian naval officers' opportunities to explore the inner regions of the Australian colonies. Incidentally, the colonial governments gave them free train passes and sometimes put special carriages and even trains at their disposal. The Russian officers travelled from Melbourne to Bendigo and Ballarat, from Sydney to Bathurst, from Launceston to Hobart, and from Brisbane to the Darling Downs.

The writings produced by the participants in these expeditions fall into the following categories:

1. Official reports by the captains or rear-admirals serving on the ships. Most of these reports were published in the *Naval Collection (Morskoi sbornik)*, the main Russian naval journal. The originals as well as some unpublished reports are kept in the Central

2 P.P. Ukhtomskii, 'Raport komandira kreisera II ranga "Razboinik" ot 17 apreliia 1893 g.' [Report of the commanding officer of the cruiser class 2 *Razboinik*, 17 April, 1893], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 198-199.

State Archive of the Navy in St. Petersburg. In spite of the fact that these were official reports, their contents, size and style were greatly determined by the personality of the author and the circumstances of the visit. For my study the most important of these reports are those whose authors gave their own appraisal of the facts: reports by Andrei A. Popov in 1863; Avramii B. Aslanbegov in 1882; Vladimir I. Lang in 1886; Fedor K. Avelan in 1888; Ukhtomskii in 1893 and Nikolai I. Nebogatov in 1894.

2. Essays and memoirs by the officers participating in the expeditions. This, the most numerous group, is a very valuable source for research. Most of these essays were published during or soon after the voyages, while some officers published their recollections or diaries many years after the voyage (Ilia A. Boratynskii, Vsevolod F. Rudnev, Fedor Timofeevskii).

3. Reports by ship's doctors. Along with narrow professional information these reports in many cases had facts of a general nature. They were published mainly in the *Medical Supplements to the Naval Collection* (*Meditsinskie pribavleniia k Morskomu sborniku*).

4. A small number of short stories (fictional but based on real events) which vividly conveyed the Russians' impressions of Australia.

5. Reports in Australian newspapers which included the Russian officers' opinions. These must be used with prudence, as they do not always reflect what the Russians in fact thought.

In sum, nearly fifty writings of the Russian naval visitors of the second half of the nineteenth century were published. In Australia some writings of the Russian naval visitors were introduced to the English speaking reader by Verity Fitzhardinge.³ Unlike material from the early Russian expeditions, these materials were not reprinted and studied in the USSR until recently, when Massov began to evaluate them as potential historical sources and sources for the history of Russian-Australian relations.⁴ My article

3 Fitzhardinge, 'Russian naval visitors to Australia'.

4 A.Ia. Massov 'Russkie dorevoliutsionnye publikatsii o prebyvanii korablei russkogo flota v Avstralii v XIX - nachale XX veka kak istochnik po istorii piatogo kontinenta' [Prerevolutionary Russian publications on visits by ships of the Russian fleet to Australia in the 19th and early 20th centuries as a source for studying the history of the fifth continent], in *Problemy istorii Avstralii i Okeanii*, Irkutsk, 1990, pp. 4-26; Massov, *Stanovlenie i razvitie russko-avstraliiskikh svyazei (1807-1901 gg.)*.

'Tasmania through Russian eyes (nineteenth and early twentieth centuries)' explored Russian visitors' writings about Tasmania.⁵ Finally, as I mentioned in the 'Introduction' to the thesis, in 1993 Massov and I edited in Russian a book of little known texts, *Russian Sailors and Travellers in Australia*.

Some of the Russian visitors left particularly vivid portraits of Australia. These visitors are not so well known as the earlier ones and so their biographies have had to be pieced together mainly from archival sources. The following sample of biographical sketches gives an idea of the sorts of people who visited Australia at this time.⁶

Admiral Andrei Aleksandrovich Popov (ill. 11) in 1862-1864 commanded the Russian Pacific squadron. The corvette *Bogatyr*, which flew the admiral's flag in 1863, on his orders visited Melbourne, Sydney and New Caledonia. Popov, a talented naval figure who distinguished himself in the Crimean war, was later transformed into the hero of the novels *Around the World on the 'Korshun'* and *The Restless Admiral* by Russian writer Konstantin Staniukovich. In the Admiral's personality his fatherly concern and kindness towards his subordinates was hidden under the outward severity and exactingness of an old sea-dog that at times inspired fear in them. Boundlessly devoted to his cause, having broad interests and politically progressive for his time,⁷ the Admiral always encouraged inquisitiveness, zeal and naval skills in his officers. After 1870 Popov found his calling in the sphere of ship-building and became one of the creators of the Russian steam-powered steel-plated fleet.

Popov himself not only wrote reports full of original observations about the visit to Australia, but inspired two of his officers - Pavel Sergeevich Mukhanov and Aleksandr Mikhailovich Linden - to compile detailed essays. Midshipman Mukhanov for several years served as a flag-officer under Popov, who considered him 'an outstanding officer in his abilities and education'. Mukhanov became so deeply involved in his new commission that he actually wrote a book: *Australia. Description of the Voyage to*

5 *Tasmanian Historical Research Association. Papers and Proceedings*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1990, pp. 150-164.

6 The facts for the sketches are chiefly taken from the book Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki* which is mainly based on archival sources.

7 The Russian squadron under his command visited San-Francisco in 1862 and manifested Russian support to the Northerners' struggle for abolition.

Australia with an Historical Essay, which was not, however, published. A chapter from this manuscript was published only recently, when Massov discovered it in the manuscript collection of the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.⁸ Mukhanov's essay 'Sydney' was more successful: it was published in the *Naval Collection* at the time of the voyage and after one hundred years was translated into English by Fitzhardinge.⁹ Mukhanov's style was simple, sincere, vivid and sometimes literary. The young officer did not serve in the navy for long. After his resignation he became involved in introducing progressive agricultural methods on his estate.

His colleague captain-lieutenant Aleksandr Linden (ill. 12), a Baltic German by birth, in his 'Notes on Australia' was more reserved, although his essay abounds with original observations and appraisals. A perfect professional naval officer, he was completely trusted by his superiors. By the turn of the century he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-general and was a member of the Supreme Naval Court.

Aleksandr's younger brother Vil'gel'm (Wilhelm) followed in his brother's footsteps not only in his choice of a naval career but in his penchant for detailed travel accounts. As a lieutenant on the *Boiarin* in 1870 he visited Adelaide, Hobart and Sydney. During the voyage he published correspondence from these ports in the *Kronstadt Herald* (*Kronshtadtskii Vestnik*) - an important Russian naval newspaper - and the *Naval Collection*; in 1871 one of the popular Russian journals, the *Herald of Europe* (*Vestnik Evropy*), published his essay 'In the Pacific Ocean' that had a detailed description of Tasmania. Both brothers' writings are distinguished by thoroughness, interest in history and an intermittent irony in their descriptions of local society. Vil'gel'm finished his naval career as lieutenant-general in 1907.

Rear-Admiral Avramii Bogdanovich Aslanbegov (ill. 14), commander of the Russian naval detachment in the Pacific, visited Australia in 1881-1882 on the cruiser *Afrika* in the Russian squadron. As with Popov, the Crimean war was an important step in Aslanbegov's professional career. He knew several foreign languages, was a brilliant orator and often wrote for the press. He fulfilled his mission as commander of the

8 Fond 608, op. 1, d. 3031.

9 P.S. Mukhanov, 'Sydney', Translated by V. Fitzhardinge, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 51, part 4, 1965, pp. 296-316.



III. 11. Andrei Popov



III. 12. Aleksandr Linden



Ил. 13. Всеволод Руднев



Ил. 14. Аврамий Асланбегов



III. 15. Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich



III. 16. Fedor Avelan



Ill. 17. Sophia Vitkovskaia



Ill. 18. *Rynda's* brass band

detachment with dignity, seeing himself as the messenger of a great power. It is characteristic of him that he insisted on fulfilling all the formalities of protocol during the visit. His first Australian report was published in the *Naval Collection*, while his subsequent reports and statements in connection with the anti-Russian campaign in a Melbourne newspaper the *Age* remained in the Central State Naval Archives and were published only in 1992 in Govor and Massov *Russian Sailors*.

In the same squadron there was a young midshipman, with a jovial and inquiring nature, Vsevolod Fedorovich Rudnev (ill. 13). He found his glory much later in the Russo-Japanese war. The crew of the cruiser *Variag*, under the command of Rear-Admiral Rudnev, rather than surrender to the Japanese, sank their ship. The heroic loss of the *Variag* became the symbol of the staunchness and spirit of the Russian forces, betrayed by their corrupt government. Rudnev was the last to leave the sinking ship and, fortunately, he survived. After the war he published a book, based on his diary, about his round-the-world voyage on the *Afrika*. Another young officer of the *Afrika* - Fedor Timofeevskii - published some of his memoirs in 1901. As with Rudnev's writings, they are filled with the romance of youth.

Captain Fedor Karlovich Avelan (ill. 16) visited Australia with the Russian navy three times: in 1871 as lieutenant aboard the *Gaidamak*; in 1881-1882 as captain (class 2) of the clipper *Vestnik*; and in 1888 as captain of the corvette *Rynda* which also carried the Russian Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich (ill. 15) on board. Avelan's immediate superior Rear-Admiral Aslanbegov referred to him as a perfect commander and of good character. He spoke English and French remarkably well; his imposing figure always attracted attention and, as contemporaries wrote, he was 'of commanding presence and "every inch a man"'.¹⁰ Avelan was notable for his diplomatic abilities and powers of observation. His official reports to the Naval ministry were long and full of interesting details that make them a very valuable historical source.

To conclude these biographical sketches I will mention two more captains. Prince Pavel Petrovich Ukhtomskii brought the *Razboinik* to Darwin and the north-west in 1893, while the *Kreiser*, under the command of Nikolai Ivanovich Nebogatov, visited

10 *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 21 January 1888, p. 6.

Melbourne and Sydney in 1894. Their Australian reports are detailed and accurate. Unfortunately their careers crashed during the Russo-Japanese war. Ukhtomskii, who participated in the defence of Port-Arthur (1904-1905) as junior flag-officer of the Pacific squadron, turned out to be a very poor military commander, while Nebogatov during the famous Tsushima battle (May 1905) surrendered the Russian ships to the Japanese. He was sentenced to death, but later pardoned.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Australia was also visited by a variety of other Russian travellers. It is impossible to collect any statistical data about these travellers, but it is likely that at this time their number was not great. I have ascertained the names only of those who left some evidence of their travels in the press. In 1870-1871 the Russian pianist Olga Duboin, presented a series of performances in Australia. According to the contemporary press her performances were warmly welcomed by Australian audiences. Unfortunately she did not leave any recollections about the tour and now her name is completely forgotten.

In 1878 the Russian traveller, anthropologist and naturalist Nikolai Nikolaevich Miklouho-Maclay (ill. 21) came to Australia. For ten years Australia became a second home for him and the base for his travels in the region. Australia was constantly mentioned in his articles and letters. Unfortunately, it is most likely that his diaries for the Australian period did not survive.

In 1881-1882 Australia was visited by the Russian traveller, indeed a 'professional' traveller, Eduard Romanovich Tsimmerman. He wrote, in my opinion, the best description of travels in Australia in pre-revolutionary Russian literature. Now his name is almost forgotten, although he was quite an outstanding personality. His early years were full of severe trials and gave little indication of success in later life. He was descended from a Russianized artisan family of modest means who migrated from Revel. In order to receive an education at Moscow University he had to earn his living giving lessons. The turning point in his life was in 1857 when he travelled to Northern America and Venezuela on the invitation of his former pupil Prince Mikhail Khilkov, the future Minister of Communication and member of the State Council. Russian journals began to publish Tsimmerman's essays. Soon new travels and new publications followed. Thus

this modest and staid man with an inquisitive and sharp mind took the trouble to acquaint the Russian reader with the life of foreign countries.

Tsimmerman wrote his travel notes in the traditional nineteenth century manner. He not only gave his immediate impressions but tried to provide the reader with a great deal of information on each issue, using for that purpose different auxiliary sources. His writings were distinguished by another peculiarity as well. An admirer of Western civilization, he was interested in the dynamics of human society when, expanding to new territories, traditional modes of life were transformed under new geographical and historical circumstances. In short, he wanted to feel the pulse of history.

During the round-the-world journey which Tsimmerman embarked on in his sixties, he was attracted mainly by the young lands - Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii. In Australia the traveller spent nearly three months (November 1881 - January 1882) visiting not only the cities - Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney - but extensively travelling in the Australian outback, as far as it was possible with the means of transport of the time. His Australian travel notes were published during 1882-1883 in the popular and progressive magazine *Notes of the Fatherland* and thus became available to a wide readership. This series of his essays can be considered as an original Russian encyclopaedia of Australian life.¹¹

The memoirs of 25 years old Sophia (Sofiia) Vasil'evna Vitkovskaia (ill. 17), who visited Australia in 1896 together with her brother, a military jurist Konstantin Vitkovskii, seem a direct antithesis of those of Tsimmerman. Vitkovskaia and her brother spent nearly a month in Australia visiting Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Thursday Island and Darwin. Sophia considered herself among those tourists who set off 'for their personal pleasure, without a definite aim, plan and preparation'.¹² This seems an overly modest evaluation, as she not only gained pleasure from her travels, but managed to write about them a voluminous book whose yellowed pages even today, nearly a hundred years later, make fascinating reading.

11 E.R. Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii i Okeanii' [Travels in Australia and Oceania], *Otechestvennye zapiski*, nos 8, 9, 12, 1882, nos. 7-9, 1883. (Details see *Russian Sources on Australia*, no 2-183).

12 S.V. Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli: Putevye vospominaniia* [Around the World: Travel Reminiscences], St. Petersburg, 1915, p. XI.

Sophia grew up in the well-off, cultured family of a military engineer in St. Petersburg. Graduating brilliantly from a selective girls' school she was a person of broad culture. Sophia had a good command of English, German and French. Along with music she was fond of sculpture, painting and theatre. She combined the spontaneity of youth with a mature ability to have her own opinion about everything. Her book was based on the letters she wrote to her relatives during the round-the-world voyage. It was prepared for publication after her early, tragic death. The book *Around the globe* (*Krugom zemli*), still full of the spirit of the last serene years of the nineteenth century, was finally published in 1915 on the eve of the coming revolutionary upheavals. Sophia wrote in the foreword:

If something can compensate for the lack of thoroughness and the other drawbacks of my memoirs, perhaps it is their frankness and truthfulness: I described only and exactly what I saw with my own eyes.¹³

The descriptions of this young traveller have a magic ability to carry us back to the past epoch; they let us sense its charm, see the everyday events of life which often were not noticed by her contemporaries.

Finally I will mention two other valuable articles published in the *Kronstadt Herald* at the beginning of 1871. These articles are obviously written by a Russian living in Adelaide who previously had travelled in the Russian Far East. They are anonymous; the first is signed 'D.', the second - 'T.G.' The structure, style and language of the articles give grounds for supposing that they are written by the same person, well-to-do, admitted to the highest society and, it seems, rather critical of colonial life. A clue to identifying him could be the fact that, according to his writings, he was one of the earliest visitors to Darwin (before April 1871).

These are our main sources. All their authors belong to Russia's educated society. They might be described broadly as liberal intelligentsia. All of them were well acquainted with the social and cultural life of Russia, and most of them were well acquainted with life in other countries. That makes their perceptions of Australia a reliable source for the reconstruction of a broad spectrum of opinion of cultured Russians. Let us discover now how they perceived the Australian land, the colonies and the people.

¹³ Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. XI.

The land

The image of a 'desirable tropical Paradise' and a 'kingdom of eternal spring' which, as we have seen, was characteristic of the Russian perception of Australia earlier in the nineteenth century changed dramatically later in the century. Some Russian visitors were still, as before, moved when they saw the Australian shore looming on the horizon. On board the *Rynda* in 1888, Captain Avelan and Mikhail S. Putiatin, who had been to Australia previously, had so often told the crew about Australia 'that they had awakened the curiosity of all on board, who rushed on deck when Australian land was first seen.'¹⁴ The same feeling reigned on the *Bavaria* which brought Sophia Vitkovskaia to Australia:

One can easily imagine what excitement was provoked among the passengers by the words 'Land in sight!' Everyone rushed to the deck and eagerly peered at the horizon; in the hazy distance a grey strip was barely visible. This was the *Australian shore!*

But Tsimmerman's first sight of Australia was much more reserved: 'On the thirteenth day ... we saw from the deck at last Western Australia's sandy shores'.¹⁵ The same dry tone is usual in the writings of many naval officers, particularly the reports of Russian commanders who, describing their approach to the Australian shore had, it seems, only one concern: the necessity to raise steam and explain later to the Naval Ministry why so much coal was used!

Among all Russians whose writings from this period are available, only Sophia and especially her brother Konstantin Vitkovskii had a rhapsodic perception of Australia as a 'desirable country' before their arrival there. Sophia wrote about Konstantin, an inveterate traveller, that he 'had travelled all over Russia and the West, [and] had acquainted himself with the East. Australia had occupied his thoughts for a long time'. She herself admitted, 'I do not know why, but to the last moment I could not believe that one day I would reach Australia'.¹⁶

But in general it is apparent that a new generation of travellers had come to

¹⁴ *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 20 January, 1888, p. 8.

¹⁵ Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 180-181; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1882, p. 330.

¹⁶ Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 175, 1, 186.

Australia; they came from a world well equipped with telegraph and steam-boats, from a world with new perceptions of distances where travels had become more and more routine, predictable and humdrum.

The changing perceptions of Australia's vastness, once Russian visitors were no longer limited to the Port Jackson region but could visit different parts of the colonies, including trips to inner regions, radically changed their image of Australian nature. Gone forever were Rossiiskii's 'sweet-smelling groves'; they were replaced by rather pedestrian and alien gum-tree forests. The Russian travellers did not appreciate the special and specific beauty of the Australian bush and native vegetation. On the contrary, they use every negative epithet possible to describe the Australian landscape.

How cheerless eucalypts look; it makes no difference that they stand one by one or merge into the forests. Light-brown bark peels off and shreds hang as if dirty rags surround the bare trunk,

Tsimmerman lamented. His descriptions of the Australian countryside were constantly dominated by 'gloomy', 'joyless' eucalyptus forests 'inspiring despondency in the soul' and 'sombre' greenish-ashy casuarinas. The grass too looked 'rather scanty and somehow rough, dim'. Rudnev echoed his thoughts:

Along the slopes of the mountains grows sparse grass, rough and colourless On the whole, the vegetation is scanty, not giving to the scenery the usual charm.

Aslanbegov, after visiting Hobart, had similar impressions: 'Tasmania ... cannot boast a rich vegetation; on the contrary, nature is gloomy, sad'. Vitkovskaia records a similar feeling:

I do not know trees more mournful than eucalypts The shreds [of bark] hanging from the trunk impart the most pitiful, beggarly appearance Such a forest is transparent, gives little shade, is mournful and very ugly.

Further on she mentions again 'the cheerless landscape', 'pitiful, dry' grass, 'monotonous and melancholy forest'.¹⁷

Many Europeans, including Charles Darwin, found the Australian landscape

17 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 108; E.R. Tsimmerman, *Puteshestvie vokrug sveta [Round the World Journey]*, St. Petersburg 1886, p. 60; V.F. Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie kreisera 'Afrika' v 1880-1883 godakh [The Cruiser Afrika's Voyage Around the World from 1880 to 1883]*, St. Petersburg, 1909, p. 116; A.B. Aslanbegov, 'Raport komanduiushchego otriadom sudov v Tikhom okeane ot 11 iunია 1882 g.' [Report of the Commander of the Pacific Ocean Detachment, 11 June 1882], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 176; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 245.

strange and dull compared to the stereotypical European countryside. But it seems that the Russians felt especially strongly the contrast between the common image of Russian forest or meadow (and all the chain of cultural and folklore associations provoked by it) and Australian vegetation. In the Russian consciousness the forest is associated either with bright, sparkling, sunlit patches of birch and pine groves or with the shady, rich, dark verdure of leafy oak-wood or fir-wood. A forest glade or a meadow with high, soft grass and aromatic flowers scattered through it belongs to this same system of Russian images of home. Under the influence of these associations Tsimmerman wrote that the Australian 'meadow does not gladden the eye as does our bright-green velvety sward'.¹⁸

The Russians were quite reserved when appraising Australian natural beauties.

The environs look wild and in some places very picturesque. Not notable for a wealth of vegetation, all the same the ... Blue Mountains provide a beautiful panorama,

that was all that V. Linden and Rudnev found it necessary to mention about their trips to the Blue Mountains.¹⁹ Probably Australian nature was not sufficient to evoke the romantic image of the 'wild' which Russian travellers expected to see in Australia. This phenomenon might explain a seeming contradiction in Vitkovskaia's writings:

What a difference for a traveller to be in a country where nature is not subjugated by man, but man, powerless before its might, is subjugated by nature It is pleasant to look at unfettered nature and to see something new and unwonted, completely opposite to the pictures seen since childhood.

This is what she declared at the beginning of the journey. But travelling to the Blue Mountains she seems to carry with her the whole load of her traditional European sympathies, enjoying a cultivated landscape rather than wild nature:

Through the window of the carriage we at first admired the meadows, fields, farms and settlements, but soon they were replaced by the sad verdure on the slopes of the hills. Everything around became monotonous and rather cheerless.

And further:

The path was nice; it twisted among thick vegetation, where man's hand has contributed to the monotonousness of eucalypts bright verdure of other trees and bushes.

Only in Darwin, 'after a long series of prosaic-humdrum impressions' she at last enjoyed

18 Tsimmerman, *Puteshestvie vokrug sveta*, p. 60.

19 V.M. Linden, 'Iz pis'ma leitenanta Lindena s korveta "Boiarin"' [From Lieutenant Linden's letter written on the corvette *Boiarin*], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 111, no. 12, *morskaia khronika*, 1870, p. 14; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 99.

'the poetry of the tropics' feeling herself 'free in the freeness of nature'.²⁰

Both Tsimmerman and Vitkovskaia occasionally even resorted to mockery:

In a country poor in striking natural wonders they use ... any bit of protruding hill, any small waterfall or any other phenomenon as an excuse for travelling.

Katoomba's [tourist] sights were insignificant, if we want to avoid the word pathetic. Waterfalls, tiny to the point of absurdity, dozens of which happen on any brook, could provoke the admiration only of the Australians themselves, because it was their own, native; in our country no one would dare to advertise such 'wonders'.²¹

Comparing the Russian travellers' scepticism with my own impressions of the same places a hundred years later I have to admit that I, like perhaps many other modern visitors, was fascinated by the nature of non-tropical Australia at first glance. Perhaps it is because since the last century Australian culture (folklore, poetry, fiction, painting, anthropology, history) has become associated with Australian scenery, which turns it into a cultural phenomenon, thus allowing the viewer to see it as having a certain value in itself, not less attractive and interesting than tropical nature or European woods.

To do justice to the Russian travellers, I have to mention that they, though not yet perceiving the subtle beauty of Australian scenery, made a number of thorough descriptions of the natural 'wonders' recognized at that time: Vitkovskaia described the Jenolan caves, Tsimmerman, the environs of Launceston and Hobart.

Miklouho-Maclay and Tsimmerman also acquainted the Russian reader with the 'rabbit' and 'sparrow' problems. Tsimmerman came to an unfavourable and accurate conclusion:

native animals the same as vegetation are being fatally supplanted by the species of the Old World as European civilization penetrates into inner regions.²²

The Australian climate which merited the Russians' positive appraisals in the beginning of the nineteenth century, was no longer regarded with unreserved favour. The ship *Svetlana*'s doctor Dmitrii V. Mertsalov described, for example, the heatwave in Melbourne in 1862:

The dust raised by strong gusts of wind painfully burns the face; it is difficult to

20 Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 189, 242, 288, 285.

21 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, pp. 349-350; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 262.

22 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 7, 1883, p. 81.

breath, the head becomes hard and it seems that the skin feels the heat of the open stove.

The *Rynda's* doctor, Pavel A. Burtsev, described a similar heatwave in Newcastle.²³ Vitkovskaia on the contrary depicted the severe cold that she experienced during her trip to the Jenolan caves. Miklouho-Maclay complained about low temperatures in Sydney, too. Nevertheless, the opinion that the Australian climate was healthy predominated, at least among the ships' doctors.

In contrast to the poetic way in which Simonov wrote about the stars in Australia's sky, they provoked Vitkovskaia's scepticism:

The four main stars of the Southern Cross form an irregular quadrangle and only the imagination can help one to recognize a cross in it; its size is small The picture of the southern sky in comparison with ours seemed to me in general poor in bright stars.²⁴

The cultural background of the Russian visitors and the power of stereotypes, prevented them from seeing the peculiar beauty of Australian nature. By the second half of the nineteenth century their previous interest in Australian land and nature was replaced by an interest in quite different issues: the economic, political and social life of the young colonies, the reasons for the successful or unsuccessful functioning of society and what light the Australian experience might shed on Russian reality.

Economic structure

In the previous section we saw the enthusiastic appraisal by the early Russian visitors of the young colony's first steps in the 1810s and 1820s and their predictions for a brilliant future. Now, a few decades later, a new generation of Russians came to Australia and discovered virtually a different country, a country that in some respects had developed exactly along the predicted path and even outperformed the boldest prognoses, while in other respects it faced problems which hardly anyone could have foreseen at the beginning of the century. The analyses of the state of the Australian economy were no longer unanimous; often they were rather critical and had a wider temporal and spatial

23 D.V. Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi meditsinskii zhurnal, vedennyi na ... fregate "Svetlana"' [Ship's medical journal kept on ... frigate *Svetlana*], *Meditsinskie pribavleniia k Morskому sborniku*, Issue 5, 1865, pp. 182-183; P.A. Burtsev, 'N'iukastl' [Newcastle], *Meditsinskie pribavleniia k Morskому sborniku*, no. 11, 1888, p. 370.

24 Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 174.

scope than before.

The Russian naval visitors in the second half of the nineteenth century, continuing the traditional calls to Sydney and Hobart, also discovered four new colonies - Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland as well as the Northern Territory, and noticed a substantial variety in their economic systems. V. Linden in 1870 expressed the most general, striking impression in the following way: the colonies 'are growing rich and are developing. The flourishing cities have grown up out of a desert'.²⁵ Describing in detail the economic achievements of the colonies, the Russians in some cases tried to get at the root of their progress, to discover the reasons for their economic development.

The Russians' attention was primarily drawn to Australian agriculture and mining, at least in part because Russia too had experienced growth in these fields and had established its position on the world markets. The Australian colonies could provide an interesting field of study for the Russian visitors.

Industry

The Russians were especially impressed by Victoria. Here the effect of gold was important for them and they described the effect of its discovery in two ways. On the one hand T.G. in 1871 was sure that

gold can be the most powerful lever in the issue of colonization. Agriculture can be established later by itself If not for gold, Victoria would never have reached its present flourishing state, and [now] agriculture is flourishing here too.

On the other hand a gold rush was seen as a temporary phenomenon destabilizing the economy while the future of the country was seen as belonging to agriculture.

Vitkovskaia expressed that sentiment in 1896:

The gold-fields cannot enrich the country; they create millionaires but ruin many others at the same time. Here, at any rate, the gold attracts an undesirable element: fortune-seekers of different races.²⁶

The Russians were extremely interested in and praised highly the technical aspect of the

25 V.M. Linden, 'Gobart-taun, ostrov Tasmaniiia, 27 maia 1870 g. (Korrespondentsiia "Kronshtadtskogo vestnika")' [Hobart-Town on the island of Tasmania, 27 May 1870 (From a *Kronshtadtskii vestnik* correspondent)], *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 26 August 1870.

26 T.G., 'Port Darvin - severnaia oblast' Avstralii (Korrespondentsiia "Kronshtadtskogo vestnika")' [Port Darwin - the northern region of Australia (From a *Kronshtadtskii vestnik* correspondent)], *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 28 April 1871, p. 189; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 216.

gold-mining industry in Australia, understandably, since like their own country it was a major gold-producer. When Tsimmerman and the officers from the ships anchoring at Melbourne visited the gold-fields in Ballarat and Bendigo, they left a number of descriptions of the operation of the machinery used in mines. Moreover, from the 1880s there were special visits by Russian mining engineers to explore the state of Australian gold-mining industry. I will survey this issue in the chapter 'Russian consuls'.

The Russian officers were interested in the coal-mining industry as well, because in the epoch of steam-boats coal was a strategic material. As early as 1862 Ivan I. Butakov, the commander of the *Svetlana*, reported to the Naval Ministry that Newcastle 'coal is of high quality though a little bit inferior to the English, but still it is cheaper than in China'.²⁷ The *Rynda*'s visit to Newcastle in 1888 under the command of Avelan was due to a considerable extent to strategic considerations, including an interest in coal-mining there. The *Newcastle Morning Herald* wrote about the profound interest shown by Russian officers during their visit to the Lambton coal mine and especially the 'great attention' of the Grand Duke Aleksandr, who participated in this voyage and appeared 'to be the most keen observer of all around him'.²⁸ It is characteristic that later on the Russian Naval Ministry singled out Avelan's description of Newcastle and its coal mining and made copies of it for the commanders of Russian naval ships.

Reports and essays by the first Russian visitors to Victoria in the early 1860s on the *Svetlana* and *Bogatyr* created an image of a society not only dynamic and rich but employing advanced technology as well. Butakov, Popov, A. Linden and Karl Timrot wrote about modern equipment in gold-mining, about Melbourne's port equipped with steam cranes, about the system of good highways and railways that began straight from the piers and mines, and about achievements in postal and telegraphic communications. Popov was impressed with the size of a ship-repairing yard in Melbourne. He was surprised to discover that though the present covered slips and docks 'completely satisfied the needs of the visiting vessels, [the colonists] were about to begin to construct

27 I.I. Butakov, 'Raport komandira fregata "Svetlana", kapitana 2-go ranga Butakova. Mel'burn, 10 ianvaria 1862 g.' [A report from the commanding officer of the frigate *Svetlana*, Captain (Class 2) Butakov. Melbourne, 10 January 1862], *Morskoï sbornik*, vol. 58, no. 4, section 2, 1862, p. 181.

28 *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 23 January 1888, p. 6.

some new monstrous dock'. Popov appreciated the technical novelty of the project: 'With my European notions, I never could have imagined that it was possible to build such huge covered slips without piers'.²⁹

Ship's doctor Timrot, as early as 1863 stated: 'Mills and factories are flourishing and their products have begun to compete in quality and price with products imported from England'. Probably in the early 1860s such an enthusiastic impression of the economic situation in Victoria was determined by the infancy of this colony, where the archetypical opposition 'desert - settlement' was especially obvious. V. Linden in 1870 was more realistic, noting that 'there are almost no factories in Tasmania, while in the other colonies, for example in South Australia and Victoria, they are being established already'.³⁰

Discussing the state of the manufacturing industry the Russian visitors noted the colonists' attitude towards the goods imported from England. Tsimmerman in 1881 wrote that in Victoria different strata of the population, including workers, supported the protectionist policy and reconciled themselves to higher costs of imported goods as they hoped that this would favour the development of a local manufacturing industry and consequently an increase in workers' wages. He especially stressed the emotional aspect of the protectionist policy and considered that the colonists' love of their motherland, Great Britain, yielded in that case to 'native patriotism'. He mentioned that in the shops he often saw inscriptions over some goods 'Colonial makes', 'Our own makes'³¹ and the customers preferred to buy these goods, although they were not cheaper than imported ones. It is not surprising that such patriotism amazed the Russian traveller since in Russia at that time it often happened the other way round: tradesmen tried to pass off Russian goods as foreign wares.

Vitkovskaia noticed in New South Wales, which supported a free trade policy, a

29 A.A. Popov, 'Iz vlechenie iz raportov nachal'nika eskadry Tikhogo okeana ... kontr-admirala Popova' [Extract from the reports of the Officer in command of the Pacific Ocean squadron ... Rear-Admiral Popov], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 68, no. 9, official part, 1863, pp. 37-38.

30 K. Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii na korvete "Bogatyr"' [About the overseas voyage of the corvette *Bogatyr*], in *Obzor zagranichnykh plavanii sudov russkogo voennogo flota s 1850 po 1868 god*, vol. 3, St.Petersburg, 1872, p. 712; V.M. Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane (Iz krugosvetnogo plavaniia "Boiarina")' [In the Pacific Ocean (From the *Boiarin's* voyage round the world)], *Vestnik Evropy*, vol. 4, no. 7, 1871, p. 137.

31 This is the English that appeared in Tsimmerman's text.

complete reversal:

In ready-made clothes and foot-wear shops advertisements that the goods were imported from London kept leaping to the eye I saw in the shoe shop window a pair of boots or shoes displayed separately, in the middle with the proud inscription 'Just arrived from London' And what are these goods? Everything that does not find a ready buyer is dumped on the colonies.

Vitkovskaia believed that this was a deliberate policy of Britain, which did not want the manufacturing industry of the colonies to be developed as this would lead to their self-sufficiency and independence from the Britain.³² Why was there such a contradiction in observations? Most likely both tendencies - pride in home manufacture and prestige of imported makes - coexisted, as they do now, while the observer, due to his or her sympathies, wrote in the memoirs only about one of them. While both Russian travellers shared critical attitudes towards England, Tsimmerman was more disposed than Vitkovskaia to see signs of the Australians' attitudes of independence.

Agriculture

In spite of mining achievements, Australia in essence remained a primary producing country and this theme was constantly discussed in Russian writings. Already in the early 1860s the Russian voyagers mentioned that Victoria not only satisfied its needs in agricultural products but was even exporting them. They stressed that the main wealth of the colonies came from wool production, which in contrast to gold-mining brought a stable income. Victoria and particularly Melbourne, with its abundance of agricultural production, made the most favourable impression on the Russians. This was reflected in the reports of ships' doctors who gathered information about which ports found the most favour among the crew and were the best for the purchase of food. After the visit of the first Russian naval ship to Melbourne in 1862, Mertsalov, the ship's doctor of the *Svetlana*, reported:

There are only a few places in the Orient and even in Europe where [the needs of the visiting vessels] would be satisfied as well [as in Melbourne] As for the meat, perhaps only England can compete with Melbourne.³³

32 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 465, no. 8, 1883, p. 384; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 216.

33 The similar description of Melbourne as a perfect place for revitalizing the crew due to the abundance of agricultural products was in a summary doctors' report, 'Medico-topographical and hygiene notes about foreign ports' of 1887. Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 185; *Meditzinskie pribavleniia k*

Not only the ships' doctors but ordinary seamen were interested in Australian cattle-breeding, as many of these seamen were recruited to the navy from rural settlements. Journalist V. Markov witnessed and described the following lively scene: on the quay in Kronstadt a circle of listeners gathered around a seaman from the recently returned *Svetlana* who told them:

In Australia ... as for beef it is awfully good, because the cattle enjoy spaciousness: the interior of the island is the awfulest desert with the most excellent grass We took there oxen on the *Svetlana*; and we cut from an ox twenty eight poods³⁴ of beef.

The seaman had fibbed a little: the captain Butakov had shown in his report the weight of the skinned oxen to be 17-20 poods.³⁵ Nevertheless this seaman's tale is interesting because we know little about the perceptions of Australia held by members of the working classes. Probably the image of a spacious land favourable for cattle-breeding was the most likely one that the peasants could create out of the accounts of their fellow countrymen retired from the Navy. Perhaps these seamen's accounts even contributed to the desire among workers and peasants to migrate to Australia that was rather common in Russian society at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Because of the shortness of their visits and predominantly urban pastimes, the naval officers could not make a precise analysis of the state of Australian agriculture, its peculiarities and the problems confronting it. With rare exceptions their appraisals were superficial and enthusiastic. It is significant that T.G., who probably lived in Adelaide for some time, by no means shared their enthusiasm. He wrote in 1871:

South Australia ... exists by agriculture and sheep-breeding, and it is, as it seems, the most unfortunate among the Australian colonies, which at the present time ... does not know what to do with its wheat and leisurely feeds pigs with it (do not laugh - it is true!).

He believed that, as mentioned above, only a strong stimulus like gold-mining could generate economic development. Meanwhile the ship's doctor Gavriil I. Bogoslovskii

Morskemu sborniku, no. 2, 1887, p. 127.

34 Pood - 16.38 kg.

35 V. Markov, 'Morskie vpechatleniia' [Seafaring impressions], *Illustratsiia*, vol. 11, no. 252, 1863, p. 27; I.I. Butakov, 'Raport komandira fregata "Svetlana", kapitana 2-go ranga Butakova. Spitgedskii reit, 4 maia 1862 goda' [A report from the commanding officer of the frigate *Svetlana*, Captain (Class 2) Butakov. Spithead anchorage, 4 May, 1862], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 59, no. 6, section 2, 1862, p. 245.

wrote about South Australia in 1882 exactly the opposite: 'This is the most fruitful and productive colony'.³⁶

A perceptive comment about agriculture in the antipodes did occasionally surface. One of the naval officers, V. Linden, made some accurate observations during his visit to Tasmania on the *Boiarin* in 1870. He wrote that Tasmania, being predominantly an agricultural colony, in contrast to Melbourne, Sydney and even Queensland, 'did not represent tireless, feverish activity'. The reasons for this he saw in the colony's history, particularly the effects of convict transportation. He considered that the system of transportation and the associated government subsidies had given birth to a mood of dependence in the young colony, rather than a sturdy self-reliance on its own resources, and that cheap convict labour had nurtured an inefficient, immoral and predatory management of agriculture that paid no attention to the exhaustion of the soil and did not seek to introduce agricultural machinery and progressive methods of soil cultivation.³⁷

Tsimmerman's observations in 1881 were similar to Linden's:

We nowhere met any new settlements such as usually appear in a new country, generally along the railway lines On the contrary we often saw decrepit and ruined buildings, farms deserted by their owners, who had found it unprofitable to work the land with labour that had to be paid.

He considered the future of Tasmania rather hopeless.

A place of splendid natural beauty ... now ekes out a sleepy unproductive existence like a ruined plantation owner deprived of his slaves, -

was his unsympathetic verdict.³⁸

For many years Tsimmerman had been interested in the organization of agriculture, land ownership and land tenure. He knew well the life and problems of the Russian village, having spent his childhood going from one land-owner's country estate to another, where his father - a saddler - filled orders. Later on he himself worked at a

36 T.G., 'Port Darwin' [sic], p. 189; G.I. Bogoslovskii, 'Sanitarnyi i mediko-topograficheskii obzor zagranichnogo plavaniia vintovogo klipera "Vestnik"...' [A medical and medico-topographical review of the overseas voyage of the screw clipper *Vestnik*...], *Meditsinskie pribavleniia k Morskому sborniku*, no. 6, 1886, p. 457. T.G.'s impressions of the vulnerability of the South Australian economy are confirmed by later economic studies. E. Dunsdorfs proved that in this 'major wheat-growing colony of the period ... the cyclically declining yield initiated corresponding trade cycles with consequently deepening depressions'. See E. Dunsdorfs, *The Australian Wheat-Growing Industry, 1788-1948*, Melbourne, 1956, p. 186, see also pp. 173-174, 183-184.

37 Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', pp. 137-138.

38 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, pp. 356, 367, 368.

wealthy manor as a tutor. Some years before his voyage to Australia he studied the history and contemporary state of agriculture in the United States. It was his focus of interest in Australia as well. He made a number of trips to the interior of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales to see for himself how the land question was managed there. He was the first Russian to make a precise depiction of the antagonism between squatters and selectors in Australia. Tsimmerman was aware of the fundamental distinctions between Australian and American squatters. The American squatter, according to Tsimmerman, was 'in some way a nomadic ploughman', 'a real pioneer of agriculture', 'a democrat in the broadest sense of the word', while the Australian squatter 'was only a person possessing sufficient capital'. 'In this young country, where the hereditary aristocracy has not yet formed' they 'perform the role of real aristocrats'.

Tsimmerman wrote about the Australian squatters' expansion at the expense of the development of small agricultural production. It is obvious that all his sympathies were on the side of selectors. He acquainted the Russian reader with government measures aimed to protect the selectors from both 'land-sharks' and land speculators. This was a problem in Russia as well, as there the land question, the conflicting interests of large and small land ownership, was a burning one, and the Australian experience could have a practical importance.

While visiting the Australian outback Tsimmerman observed the Australian farmers' life in its true colours, saw all the hardships which fell to their lot. He witnessed the pioneers cutting down the pristine gum-tree forests while living with their families in huts and even in tents. Near Tanunda, in South Australia, he came across a more long standing settlement of farmers which reminded him of a Ukrainian village. But even here the farmers could hardly 'make ends meet year to year and even that was owing to some domestic craft'. Nevertheless he shared the farmers' optimism: as soon as they pay off the debt for their plots

they will know neither taxes, nor conscription, nor any constraints which burdened them in the distant motherland, and cultivating their field they are always sure that the fruits of their hard labour completely and inalienably remain in their own hands.³⁹

39 It is most likely that Tsimmerman came across a village founded by Silesian Germans many of whom were of Wendish extraction and whose villages followed the historical patterns of this

Tsimmerman described as well the lonely life of shepherds whom he met on the sheep-stations. He believed that squatters recruited them from the poorest groups in Europe, and later on their stations arranged their affairs in such a way that the shepherds could never pay back the debts and found themselves forever attached to the station⁴⁰ until finally they ran completely wild and grew dull.

When I met the shepherds it was hard to make out whether they were satisfied with their situation or not. It seemed to me that their apathy reached such a degree that they themselves were unable to give the answer.

Tsimmerman met swagmen and drovers as well. His general conclusion was pessimistic. In Australia, as distinct from America,

it is more difficult for the non-propertied class to make a fortune: here only the capitalists, who can afford to buy a large sheep-station, become rich.⁴¹

Russian travellers, though assessing the quality of Australian wines in a range between 'not so bad' and 'pretty bad', as early as 1862 predicted great success for the industry. Popov in 1863 noted a characteristic feature of the colonists:

here everybody drinks the local wine; even at big dinner-parties ... this wine is served exclusively, and one can see as [the hosts] try to read the astonishment on their guests' faces

when the guests have learnt that it is a local wine. Indeed, the Russians were favourably impressed that in such a way 'native patriotism' helped to encourage a whole branch of agriculture.⁴²

Conditions of the working class

Some Russian visitors examined as closely as they could the workers' standard of living in the Australian colonies. The dominant impression in these writings was that the workers lived very well. V. Linden in 1870 was the first to survey this issue. He mentioned that in Tasmania, whose economy he believed was in stagnation, workers nevertheless earned three times as much as in England, while they consumed twice as

Slavonic minority in Eastern Germany.

40 This was probably untrue, and is a harsh comment on the independent bush worker.

41 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 93; no. 12, 1882, pp. 451-454, 458-459, no. 7, 1883, pp. 91, 107-111.

42 Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 182; Popov, 'Iz vlechenie', p. 39; Aslanbegov, 'Raport', p. 178; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, p. 372; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 209.

many luxury goods (for example, tea, sugar, meat) as their British counterparts.⁴³ Timofeevskii in 1882 wrote that due to the high wages 'working people are strangers to any strikes and unpleasantnesses'. He noticed 'the quiet and cheerful faces' of the inhabitants of the working class suburbs in Melbourne.

Tsimmerman in the same year discussed the workers' situation in more detail. He noted that 'in Australia working people got used to living better, more comfortably' which was apparent in their housing, clothes and food. At the same time workers were able to save more than in England. The absence of strikes he attributed to a shortage of labour which enabled workers to earn high wages without striking. Telling Russian readers about miners' rights to an eight-hour working day, Tsimmerman mentioned that workers could enjoy leisure time for cultural activity even in the new mining districts. 'The working class in Europe can indeed envy miners in these parts', he concluded. At the same time he was probably inclined to see the cause of the existing situation only in a favourable conjuncture; in fact the essence of the matter - workers' bondage to employers - continued to oppress workers. He wrote with deep pessimism:

the present labour system in Australia is anti-democratic, the same as in England itself. Here labour depends completely on capital, concentrated in the hands of individual persons.

He contrasted this system with America, with its trade-union struggle, cooperatives and workers' shares in profits.⁴⁴

Though Tsimmerman and other visitors did not directly compare the conditions of the working class in Australia and Russia, this comparison, one not favourable to Russia, can often be read between the lines. The Russian press attempted to make open and direct comparisons only at the beginning of the twentieth century when Australia was used as an example of progressive socio-economic legislation and that will be discussed in the following chapters.

43 While Australians would not have thought of tea, sugar and meat as 'luxury' goods, many Russian workers certainly did.

44 Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 137; [F. Timofeevskii], 'Mel'burn (Iz vospominanii)' [Melbourne (From reminiscences)], *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 22 April 1901, p. 2; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 7, 1883, pp. 85-88; Tsimmerman, *Puteshestvie vokrug sveta*, p. 58.

The economic crisis of the 1890s

Thus the Russian view on the state of the Australian economy was by no means consistent or totally optimistic. A picture of stagnation and economic crisis emerged in the correspondences of D. and T.G. about South Australia and the Northern Territory (1871) and in essays about Tasmania by V. Linden (1870) and Tsimmerman (1881). This theme began to sound more insistently in captains' reports in the early 1890s, when the Russians observed the economic crisis and its consequences. In 1893 and 1894 Ukhtomskii and Nebogatov saw a similar picture at the top and bottom ends of Australia - in Darwin and Melbourne. The Russians were struck by the stagnation there, by the contrast between the immensity of planned projects and the paucity of population; and in Darwin the crisis was aggravated by racial prejudices.

In 1893 in Darwin they witnessed a ridiculous situation. Perfect, wide, well-lighted city-streets had no houses and led nowhere (and Vitkovskaia found the same situation later in 1896). The railway between Darwin and Palmerston appeared to be, 'as many other things built on money from the metropolis, a grandiose but at the same time useless construction'. The trains ran only twice a week. Near the railway sixteen newly-built, perfect detached houses for railway employees stood empty because the main employees on the railway were Chinese, who were not allowed to live in them. The town was scarcely alive: the Russian visitors could hardly find food supplies; banks were 'on the edge of closing' and the Russians did not manage to get any money. Trade had stopped as well, as the territory produced almost nothing. Even gold-mining almost ceased due to the lack of capital and workers. Ukhtomskii considered the reasons for this situation to be both racial and economic: the Europeans in order to avert a wage-cut prevented Chinese immigration in spite of the fact that the Chinese were the best workers in this hot climate.

The Russians observed a similar picture of economic stagnation in Melbourne in 1894. According to the captain of the *Kreiser* Nebogatov in a city that seemed to have been built for at least 1.5 million inhabitants there were less than half a million.

The majority of the houses are empty, markets and shops are not occupied, each quarter of an hour railway engines transport empty carriages back and forth

The situation was aggravated by the migration of some of the population to the gold-mines in Western Australia, by the fall in share prices and bankruptcies. Nebogatov considered that the causes of the crisis were in the activity of share speculators from England and America.⁴⁵ Two years later Vitkovskaia still observed the numerous houses in Melbourne 'to let', which to her opinion gave the streets a desolate appearance.⁴⁶

In one sense therefore, the Russian visitors perceived the Australian colonies as dynamic, rich and highly technological; and the colonies' achievements appeared even greater because of the 'desert/civilization' contrast constructed by the Russians. This image perfectly fitted Russian expectations and persuasions: the new untainted land deserved a new society free from all the vices of the Old World, and because of that was capable of a successful economic development similar to America's. But the Russians also noticed a number of negative features, especially those that were determined by the legacy of the Old World, including its social contradictions.

Among the Russian travellers Tsimmerman probably was the only one who attempted to make predictions about Australia's economic future. The contrast between the turbulent life of the seaports and gold-mining towns and the sleepy, scarcely populated outback persuaded him that Australia's future promised very little. This was because of the bareness of the soil, the predominance of large-scale sheep-breeding in rural areas and the preponderance of urban dwellers over rural. As both sheep-breeding and urban industry were based on large amounts of capital, 'in this new country capital is destined to have a great domination over labour', Tsimmerman concluded. He perceived the Australian colonies as a paradise for capitalists rather than for farmers and workers.⁴⁷

45 Nebogatov, probably, exaggerated a bit, still he has caught the main features of the depression years in Melbourne, see G. Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, Carlton, 1978, pp. 14-15 and *passim*.

46 Ukhtomskii, 'Raport ... 17 apreliia 1893 g.', pp. 199-200; N.I. Nebogatov, 'Raport komandira kreisera II ranga 'Kreiser' ot 8 apreliia 1894 g.' [Report of the commanding officer of the class II cruiser *Kreiser*, 8 April, 1894], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, p. 201; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 195. Several years later, in 1905, when a Byelorussian traveller Ivan F. Sinitskii being aboard the ship gave a brief description of Melbourne he had impression of it as a 'deserted' city with nearly empty electrical trams rushing along the wide streets. I.F. Sinitskii, *Novaia Zelandiia - Evropa. Putevye vpechatleniia*. [New Zealand - Europe. Travel Impressions], n.p., n.d., p. 37. About the author see A. Dridzo, 'Puteshestvennik iz Smorgoni' [A traveller from Smorgon], *Neman*, no. 4, 1984, pp. 172-174.

47 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1883, p. 239.

Now we can see that he was partly wrong in his prognoses. His pessimism was connected with his extreme enthusiasm for America. The Australian economy of the second half of the nineteenth century paled in comparison to America's; certainly it had great potential for further development, but for an outside observer that was hard to discover.

Population

The population of the colonies was one of the keys to the rapid development of the Australian economy and deficiencies in population growth were perceived as the cause of many economic problems. At the same time the problems of immigration acquired a political aspect. The Russian visitors were unable to comprehend these issues in all their complexity. As a consequence their observations were usually very general, but still they managed to notice some interesting features.

In the early 1860s many Russians mentioned the significant influx of immigrants as a result of the gold rush. A. Linden stressed that 'the English, once settled here, and now very seldomly and reluctantly indeed return to the native shores of their Albion'. This was the result of the colonies' 'marvellous climate, ... absence of endemic diseases, gratification of tilling the soil and any work whatsoever'. The Russians noticed the irregularity of the influx of immigrants to the different colonies due to the discovery of the gold and other reasons. V. Linden in 1870 described with enthusiasm the system of land allocation that was employed by the Tasmanian government in order to stimulate an influx of free settlers.⁴⁸

Tsimmerman, the only Russian who published original observations and conclusions on Australian demography, noticed in South Australia the significant preponderance of urban over rural inhabitants: 'In hardly any other country can one meet such a disproportionate relationship between the urban and rural population'. He explained this by noting that 'the town [of Adelaide] was founded before the arrival of real colonists, i.e. the agricultural population'. Later he discovered a more general reason:

48 A.M. Linden, 'Zametki ob Avstralii (Iz zapisok o plavanii v 1863 g.)' [Observations about Australia (From notes about voyage in 1863)], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 71, no. 4, section 3, 1864, p. 191; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 136.

the scarcity of good soil in the interior and 'the very limited number of the places there suitable for agriculture'. Reflecting on the prospects for migration to Australia, Tsimmerman considered America as more attractive for the poor and hungry than Australia. One of the main reasons was political: while in America 'the democratic form of government prevailed', in Australia the power was in the hands of local landlords - squatters. Squatters needed only hired labourers, shepherds for their stations, and naturally it was not to their benefit to encourage the immigration of small farmers and factory workers who 'did not receive such advantageous conditions for acquiring plots of land in Australia as in America'. Squatters were supported in their opposition to immigration by workers who feared competition and a fall in wages.⁴⁹

The Russian visitors also noticed ethnic changes in the composition of the colonies' population. As early as 1863 Timrot wrote that while Melbourne was composed mostly of people from England, Ireland and Scotland, one also could meet there representatives of all nations including north Americans and Chinese. V. Linden in 1870 and Tsimmerman in 1881 noted the beneficial role of German colonists and stressed their virtues such as diligence, tenacity, the ability to manage with few resources, and soberness. Vitkovskaia in 1896, describing a street crowd in Melbourne, mentioned that 'one could meet the most diverse faces there, but Jewish faces appeared very very often'. On Thursday Island she noticed a motley population: Europeans, Indians, Chinese and Japanese.⁵⁰

The Russians did not pass over in silence the Chinese question and the 'White Australia' policy. Tsimmerman, with all his love of democracy, regarded Chinese immigration without great enthusiasm and shared the Australians' apprehensions that Chinese immigration might contribute to a fall in workers' wages. He considered that in Australia 'the Chinese ... will never become the real settlers'. Their main aim is, while depriving themselves of comfort, to save a modest capital, return to their motherland and

49 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 98; no. 9, 1883, p. 239; no. 7, 1883, p. 88; no. 8, 1883, pp. 370-371.

50 Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii', p. 710; Linden, 'Gobart-taun'; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 136; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 93; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 192, 276.

begin a *rentier* life.⁵¹

Miklouho-Maclay belongs to a small number of Europeans who condemned racial intolerance towards the Chinese. In his essay 'To Australia for a few days' written in 1887, he mentioned that relations between the whites, especially workers, and the Chinese had worsened in the last years so that violence had become commonplace. Even 'in broad daylight the life of a Chinese person cannot be considered completely out of danger'. He censured 'the complete impunity of the Europeans', describing a case when Sydney larrikins killed a harmless Chinese hawker on the street and were acquitted by the jury. He wrote that if Europeans in China had experienced the oppression and dangers which befell the Chinese in Australia, 'all European newspapers ... would be flowing with reports about outrageous events, appeals and demands to stop the present scandalous situation'. Miklouho-Maclay concluded from conversations with some of his working class acquaintances that new injustices towards Chinese were only a matter of time and the complete cessation of Chinese immigration to Australia was on the agenda.⁵²

The consequences of this policy became obvious to the Russians in Darwin in the 1890s. The captain of the *Razboinik*, Ukhtomskii, reported that of Darwin's 1 500 inhabitants, Europeans constituted only one third and occupied administrative positions. The rest were mainly Chinese - 'the only workers in the area'; commerce, market-gardening, trades and railway work were in their hands. As a result of restrictions on their entry 'the region is suffering a lot, and work has stopped'. Vitkovskaia in 1896 heard from the Government Administrator Charles Dashwood about fears caused by Japanese migration and the measures taken to stop the influx of 'yellow' competitors to European workers. Vitkovskaia commented:

Wage reductions could only be desirable, I was unpleasantly struck by the extremely contemptuous attitude of our host towards the 'yellow races', precisely as if they were not people but animals They [the English] adopted a peculiar formula: *it is not acceptable* to consider non-English as people.⁵³

Thus the Russian visitors noticed the complexity of the socio-economic situation

51 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 7, 1883, pp. 86, 89, 102.

52 N.N. Miklouho-Maclay, 'Na neskol'ko dnei v Avstraliiu' [To Australia for a few days], *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, pp. 619-622.

53 Ukhtomskii, 'Raport ... 17 apreliia 1893 g.', pp. 199-200; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 282.

in the colonies. On the one hand their governments assisted small farmers and free settlers; on the other hand local squatters and workers had joined in opposition to others benefiting from this process. At the same time the Russians became aware of xenophobia and the racism of the colonists, and especially fear of the 'yellow peril'. The Russians considered that they had a right to criticize the English for these faults, probably believing that their own society was free of them.

Parliament and politics

Several Russians visited colonial parliaments, especially in Victoria, and some left notes about it. It might seem that the Russians, coming from an autocratic country which received its first parliament only in 1905, would be interested in the parliamentary experience of the Australian colonies. Oddly enough, in most reports there is a scarcely concealed irony. V. Linden in 1870 mentioned that 'the form of government ... is a copy of the English constitution'. A. Linden in 1863 characterized the Legislative Council of Victoria as 'a funny imitation of the London House of Lords', while Tsimmerman was bewildered by the colonials' adherence to English customs:

I was quite surprised to see that both [members of the upper house] and the Chairman appeared in black frock coats and powdered wigs, as is usual in England itself. The colonists transfer to the new soil all ancient, archaic customs, pouring, so to say, old wine into new wine-skins. This medieval masquerade somehow does not suit this young developing colony.⁵⁴

The Russians were also sceptical about the issues discussed in the parliaments and relations between parliamentarians. Tsimmerman wrote that

a fan of political debate will find very little of interest in the local parliament It is occupied almost exclusively with local, domestic, economic colonial affairs,

addressing questions which in Europe would be in the municipal sphere. Hearing, for example, about the heated debates in the South Australian parliament on the 'sparrow question' (whether or not to exterminate numerous sparrows) and seeing schoolboys who for a small reward destroyed their nests, Tsimmerman smirked:

How not to envy the public whose news of the day is restricted to such sparrow questions and a country where the concerns of fathers are intertwined with the 'fun'

⁵⁴ Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 135; Linden, 'Zametki', p. 178; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, pp. 485-486.

of young school children!⁵⁵

A. Linden, who compiled a review of the history of New South Wales in 1863, analyzed the rule of each governor from the point of view of the limits to his authority and the strengthening of colonial self-government. It seems that in general he sympathized with the democratic trend and only specific features, such as the atmosphere of colonial parliaments, provoked his criticism.⁵⁶ From the tone of his description of a session of the Legislative Council in Victoria in 1863 one feels that he saw the oratory of the speakers with all its innuendos, significant allusions and jabs at the opponents as a 'masquerade' too. Linden's acquaintance, William Hull, gave a speech about defence and after the session explained to Linden with satisfaction that his proposal to leave the detailed discussion of the question '*to another place*' was done purposely and meant the lower house. 'But why the old gentleman did not use its actual name, I have since been quite at a loss to understand', Linden wrote.⁵⁷ While visiting the parliamentary bar, Linden discovered that parliamentarians, while acerbic and sarcastic to one another during debates, turned into good friends over brandy.⁵⁸

The Russians' scepticism towards colonial parliaments might have a number of causes. First, this reaction was provoked by the 'Englishness' and archaism of parliamentary traditions in the Australian context. Second, the specific features of parliamentary behaviour ridiculed by A. Linden were contrary to Russian notions of directness and the Russian noblemen's idea of honour and fair play. Third, the Russians were quite unaccustomed to the rather disorderly practice of freedom of expression. For instance, T.G. in 1871, recounting an argument over where to locate the capital of the Northern Territory, made a telling conclusion:

Freedom gives a right to all and everyone to express their opinions. Sometimes they argue about things about which they have not the slightest idea, and the side wins which can out-shout the other.

The same scepticism was present in the report of the *Rynda's* captain Avelan who in 1888 participated in a ministerial dinner in connection with centennial celebrations:

55 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 486, no. 9, 1882, p. 109.

56 Linden, 'Zametki', pp. 192-197.

57 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 177. I have to mention that Fitzhardinge in her article 'Russian naval visitors to Australia, 1862-1888' (p. 136) set forth this episode incorrectly.

58 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 178.

The dinner, prolonged past midnight, looked more like a parliamentary debate The theme of the speeches revolved mainly around the idea of combining or federation of the customs income [among the colonies], and *certainly* [my Italics - E.G.] one part was for this idea, while another against.⁵⁹

As for the questions of who had power in parliament and to what degree it was independent from England, the Russian visitors differed. A. Linden considered that the Governor, representing Britain's interests, tried not to interfere into colonial home affairs. Tsimmerman also wrote that the colonies 'in all aspects are governed quite independently'. At the same time speaking about New South Wales he mentioned that the form of government there was not democratic but rather aristocratic, as 'the Governor is not elected by local residents, but is appointed from Britain, often even against the wishes of the local population'. Moreover, due to the peculiarities of the parliamentary elections, 'squatters - local landlords - enjoy here even broader privileges than in neighbouring Victoria'. Miklouho-Maclay in 1887 wrote that all the oratory of the colonial conference that took place in London 'could in no way bind the colonial governments' and stressed a new tendency: workers acquired a significant influence upon colonial parliaments.⁶⁰ Probably the contradictions noticeable in the Russians' opinions about the alignment of political forces can be explained by the complexity of power dynamics in the colonies.

As they developed during the nineteenth century the important issues of federation and the colonies' separation from England were discussed by the Russian visitors. A. Linden in 1863 was convinced that Australian colonists 'did not show the slightest aspiration for independence and secession', but Mukhanov in the same year discovered that as early as in the time of the Crimean war there was a strong opposition party led by John Dunmore Lang which wanted independence from Britain. V. Linden was probably the first to acquaint the Russian reader with the problems of the proposed economic unification of the Australian colonies. 'A trade federation might lead to a subsequent political federation', he wrote in 1871. Tsimmerman in 1882 mentioned that the tie

59 T.G., 'Port Darwin', p. 188; F.K. Avelan, 'Korvet "Rynda": Izvlechenie iz raporta komandira kapitana 1-go ranga Avelana. 4 fevralia 1888 g.' [The corvette *Rynda*: Extracts from the report of the commanding officer, Captain (Class 2) Avelan. 4 February 1888], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 226, no. 7, official part, 1888, p. 5. Avelan, as it seems, did not perceive the 'nation building process' and the linked flowering of democracy.

60 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 176; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 486; Miklouho-Maclay, 'Na neskol'ko dnei', p. 619.

between the colonies and England 'has weakened' and predicted that there was only one step from a customs union and federation which could well lead towards complete independence from Britain. If there were a slowing down of this process it would be because the colonists 'with all their heart and soul have a fondness for their common mother, Great Britain'. Miklouho-Maclay in 1887 mentioned that the aspiration for immediate independence

was popular only in the extreme democratic camp; more judicious people, who constitute for the present the great majority, consider the Australian colonies' secession from Britain still inopportune, though at the same time they are persuaded that it is inevitable.⁶¹

The Russians were unanimous in condemning Australian policies towards the people of the South Pacific such as attempts at colonial annexations and 'black-birding'. Butakov wrote in 1862 about the war in New Zealand that the Maori were forced to submit, recognizing the right of the strong. V. Linden in 1870 referred to 'black-birding' as a 'shameful trade in poor natives' while Tsimmerman in 1882 saw it as 'embryonic slavery in a new form'. Miklouho-Maclay was not only a critic but a real fighter against enslaving the islanders. More than once, during his voyages in the Pacific, he witnessed the methods employed by traders to capture islanders. In his letters to commodore Wilson he gave a detailed, documented account of a number of traders' crimes. This aspect of Miklouho-Maclay's activity has been discussed by contemporary Russian scholars.⁶²

Deportation and prison

During the second half of the nineteenth century, when the memory of convict transportation was still fresh, the Russian visitors often mentioned it, consciously or unconsciously comparing it with the Russian experience. Tsimmerman discovered that in the English mind Botany Bay was associated with 'the same horrifying notions as Siberia for Russians'. The Russian traveller, though disapproving of a social system which produced criminals, saw the positive sides of deportation to Australia, and especially to

61 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 178; Mukhanov, 'Sydney', p. 309; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 138; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, pp. 381-382; Miklouho-Maclay, 'Na neskol'ko dnei', p. 622.

62 Butakov, 'Raport ... 10 ianvaria 1862 g.', p. 181; Linden, 'Iz pis'ma', p. 11; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 7, 1883, p. 87; *Rasy i narody [Races and Peoples]*, issue 11, Moscow, 1981, pp. 228-247.

New South Wales, as here 'the majority of convicts ... due to a different set of social conditions found legal means to achieve prosperity'. He stressed that it was their toil that created the colonies' wealth. At the same time, after witnessing the legacy of the epoch of deportation in Tasmania, he lost his optimism and concluded that Tasmanian society was indebted for its present condition not to 'the persistent industry ... of the free settlers', but to the virtually unlimited use of 'the fruits of crime', the almost slave-like exploitation of convict toil. He also remarked on the special harshness of the administration there, which forced the 'convicts into new crimes, so that they might receive death sentences and that way end intolerable brutality'.⁶³

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the treatment of convicts in the colonies had provoked an almost rhapsodic response among the Russians. But what was their appraisal of this institution half a century later? By this time the number of convicts had diminished considerably, limited only to the keeping of local criminals.

A. Linden in 1863 and Tsimmerman in 1881 visited Pentridge Gaol in Melbourne which they described in full detail. Their recollections show that they perceived the prison as an institution brought to perfection and whose aim was not only punishment but the improvement of a person as well, without wounding his self-respect. First, they paid attention to prisoners' living conditions. Describing single cells Tsimmerman remarked: 'Everything was adjusted in a way to make it convenient for a prisoner'. Incidentally, both Tsimmerman and Linden noticed the availability of a toilet in each cell.⁶⁴ Linden, after visiting the cells enthused: 'Everything looks so tidy and comfortable that under other conditions, [I] would not mind settling in such a cell'. Tsimmerman got interested in prisoners' food:

Grub, to do it justice, is fairly hearty, and many of the prisoners, once out of prison, hardly eat such nourishing food. There was plenty of white bread, which was followed by soup, beef, baked potatoes.

For the majority of Russians white bread and meat were by no means everyday food.

The system of stages that was practised in Pentridge and some other gaols, under which the worst prisoners first were kept for a year or even longer in complete isolation,

⁶³ Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 485; no. 8, 1883, pp. 354, 367, 379.

⁶⁴ In Russian prisons instead of a W.C. there often was the notorious *parasha*, a covered bucket carried out once a day by prisoners on duty; and the *parasha* survived up to the end of the twentieth century.

and later on were transferred to more liberal stages, was approved by the Russians as well. They praised the idea that the prisoners did not spend their time in inactivity but were engaged in different kinds of tasks (Tsimmerman described them as 'easy' ones).

The Russians also noticed that prisoners' self-respect was not destroyed. 'There is no corporal punishment at all in Pentridge gaol', - Linden wrote.⁶⁵ Tsimmerman commented on what he thought was another humane characteristic of the system:

Criminals here are transported in covered carriages, and one never has to see criminals in chains, who are conveyed along the streets under guard. Townspeople are saved from such an extremely revolting sight, insulting not only to criminals themselves but most of all to town folk innocent of any crime.

In this passage he indirectly condemned the Russian practice: chained prisoners in shackles walking all the way from Central Russia to Siberia were a usual sight in the streets of Russian towns. Both Tsimmerman and D., who wrote about South Australian prisons in 1871, stressed that 'here all are equal and the previous position in the society is not taken into consideration'. In contrast, Russian prisoners were treated according to their class background.

Opposing Russian prisons to the Australian model, Linden recollected Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead* and referred to Russian prisons as 'clubs of mutual debauchery' where the majority of inmates 'completed their moral degradation'. Watching the behaviour of the superintendent who was conducting Linden through Pentridge, he noticed that

in his treatment of the prisoners there was a well-considered tact. It was obvious that this is a person who set before himself a special program of action and fulfilled it with patience and firmness, a person who was permitted to occupy this position not only in order to give him an income, but because ... of his personal virtues.

Linden was well aware that in Russia such positions often were used as a 'feeding-trough' for talentless functionaries preoccupied only with their personal well-being, rather than the correction of criminals.

Tsimmerman's assessments were less sanguine. He obviously shared the opinion of his companion the Russian consul James Damyon who, watching the reception of a newly arrived party of inmates, said: 'someone may intentionally commit a crime only to

⁶⁵ Linden was not completely correct in his statement. Corporal punishment was used occasionally but infrequently in Australian gaols. He obviously was inclined to believe only positive facts concerning the gaol.

get into the prison where he is received and maintained as in an hotel'. After their suspicions were confirmed by a warder, who said that indeed some criminals tried to get there for winter only, Tsimmerman suddenly concluded that 'the prison not only does not correct, but serves to encourage repetition of crimes'. He then heaped criticism upon the English who 'boast of their prisons' and do not wish to notice that their existence is 'an inevitable consequence of unhealthy social conditions'. However, realizing that he was demanding the impossible, Tsimmerman changed his tune and admitted that Pentridge gaol was 'an ideal model quite worthy of imitation'.⁶⁶

Still, in general in the second half of the nineteenth century the Russians were much less enthusiastic about the Australian penitentiary system than in earlier decades and saw a number of negative features. In 1870 V. Linden, visiting Hobart prison, noticed that prison cells were damp and unheated and that prisoners were used for hard work such as road building and quarrying.⁶⁷ Especially critical were the Vitkovskies who visited Darwin prison in 1896. Konstantin, a military judge, was very interested in such an institution. The only inmates in the prison were Aborigines. Sophia wrote:

There were no whites in the prison, but I believe that they are never ever imprisoned here either due to their small number or in order to protect their dignity among the dark-skinned.

Even though her statement is quite emotional, she caught precisely the atmosphere of relations between Europeans and Aborigines. The Vitkovskies were strongly impressed by a spectacle in the bare prison yard inside burning hot walls, where, under a fierce sun the shackled and chained Aborigines, wet with sweat, were sawing up a tree trunk. 'I involuntarily lowered my eyes, so hard was it to look at the wretches', Sophia recollected. Konstantin, 'shocked by the senselessness of the prisoners' toil', asked Dashwood, the Government Administrator who accompanied them, if they were taught any crafts as prisoners were in Europe and Russia. The answer was 'no', from fear of reducing wages.⁶⁸ It is most likely that the Vitkovskies did not see a typical situation in

66 Linden, 'Zametki', pp. 181-184; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, pp. 482-485; D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia. Adelaida (Korrespondentsiia "Kronshtadtskogo vestnika")' [South Australia. Adelaide (From a *Kronshtadtskii vestnik* correspondent)], *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 28 March, 1871, p. 144.

67 Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 125.

68 Thus, as we can see, there were positive changes in Russian prisons in three decades after A. Linden's criticism. Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 288-289.

the Australian penitentiary system, as in this case the prisoners were Aborigines.

Prisoners' conditions and the penitentiary system in general were burning issues for Russia as well. The thoughts of the Russian visitors, when they described Australian prisons, constantly returned to the situation in their motherland. In many cases the comparison was not in favour of Russia. Typically, the Russians paid attention not only to the material side of the convicts' treatment but to their moral improvement as well; what especially impressed the Russian visitors was that convicts in Australia retained their self-respect. At the same time the Russians' appraisal of convicts' treatment was less rhapsodic and more nuanced than in the beginning of the century. This more cautious approach reflected the intensification of liberal and democratic trends in Russia after the reforms of the 1860s.

Society

Colonization principles and general features

Several historical essays written by the Russian visitors on the basis of their own observations, literary sources and tales of the local settlers provide an opportunity to retrace which features in the history of Australian colonization and the functioning of society pleased the Russians and which provoked criticism.

The Russians did not wholly approve the colonization of Australia as they did in the early decades of the century. Now they could clearly distinguish between different models, and the colonies which based colonization on the Wakefield system provoked the Russians' criticism. Tsimmerman in 1881 wrote about unsuccessful 'paper' colonization in Western and South Australia. In his account of early Western Australia he sneers at English manners and methods:

With the resoluteness natural to the English ... the settlers equipped themselves for the far voyage in the way the English are fond of, transferring to the new land all their customs and worldly habits They fitted themselves out as if for a picnic.

Western Australian colonization was characterized 'by the distribution of large plots of land among those who have nothing to do with landownership'. Tsimmerman considered this 'a most unsuccessful and the least expedient' method, remarking that it was sometimes employed in Russia as well. When he observed colonization in South

Australia, he compared it with the American model. Firstly he believed that in America the system was democratic: 'only those who cultivate the land have the right to own it'. In contrast the Wakefield system applied in South Australia, Tsimmerman thought, was created 'to please the prosperous class' and was aristocratic or bourgeois. Secondly, he opposed 'the spirit' of the American and the South Australian societies: while the American Puritans burnt their boats and began a life of work in accordance with their persuasions, no one migrated to South Australia because of dire straits or persecution, 'no one thought to break off the ties with the motherland'; migration was 'a matter of pure speculation in pursuit of profits'.⁶⁹

In 1871 T.G., living in Adelaide, discussed the process of colonization of the Northern Territory. The general tone of his article suggests that he censured the method of 'paper', or speculative, colonization.

They set all the bells a-ringing about the Northern Territory This is a question of vital importance in Australia. No wonder. They spent money and contracted debts. But how to pay for it?

After a visit to Port Darwin he singled out the main problem: 'Who will work?' believing that they will have 'to invest much more than one hundred thousand pounds in order to derive any benefit from this country'. His forecast proved to be accurate. Finally, he drew a parallel with the colonization of the Russian Far East which he obviously knew well:

Though we Russians are not such good colonizers, ... our methods or at least our intentions - the law - in the Amur region colonization were much better than the methods of the 'first-class' English colonizers in the Australian colonies.⁷⁰

But the tone of the Russian writings changed completely when they discussed Victoria. The first Russian contact took place in 1862-1863 when the Russian ships *Svetlana* and *Bogatyr* visited Melbourne. The tone of their reports was similar to the rosy views of Sydney at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Now, however, the Russians tried to be more analytical. Admiral Popov confessed in 1863 that two weeks in Melbourne were not enough and they could profitably have spent two or three more there

⁶⁹ Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1882, pp. 333-335; no. 9, 1882, pp. 90-93.

⁷⁰ T.G., 'Port Darwin', pp. 188-189. T.G.'s criticism of this early and failed land boom was quite accurate (see, for instance, A. Powell, *Far Country. A Short History of the Northern Territory*, Carlton, 1988, pp. 74-84). He, characteristically, was inclined to blame the nature of 'the English' in general rather than consider the economic theory behind these land speculations.

studying the causes of the success of the colony. 'A young society full of exuberant life' did not seem chaotic to the Russians, on the contrary, they saw it as a system functioning according to definite laws. Mukhanov stressed that

in the colony a beneficial and quite natural upheaval is taking place: the first feverish ... enthusiasm yields to a reasonable and solid civil structure.

New comers flooded the colony in pursuit of gold

accustomed themselves to the new country, bound themselves with it by immovable property and family and submitted to the new order they themselves created for mutual benefit.

And, summing up the results of this process, Mukhanov stated: 'A society has been created'.

The Russians stressed the positive role played by the government in this process. Popov considered that 'the fabulous success' achieved by the Australian colonies could be explained by the governmental system. He wrote about 'the government's thoughtfulness in facilitating development' and admired 'the judicious way of developing this land'.⁷¹ One of the *Svetlana's* officers in a letter of 1862 mentioned the advantages of following the British tradition in the mode of government: 'under the English laws everything goes properly, not as in California'.

At the same time the Russians tried to catch the inner characteristics of the society itself which made successful development possible. As at the beginning of the century they noted the sense of responsibility, of permanent personal proprietorship inherent in colonists. Popov considered Australian cities, especially Melbourne, different from other new settlements in the Pacific region, where people went in hope of getting rich quickly and returning home at the first possible moment, while in Melbourne colonists were there to establish 'a Fatherland of their own'. A Russian officer stressed in 1862 that in Victoria 'nothing is done haphazardly; all is done systematically and according to the very newest plans'. His incredible statement, 'Mining towns are inferior in nothing to the most elegant places in Europe', probably can be explained by the fact, amazing to the Russian visitors, that even embryonic towns gave their citizens not only a roof over their heads, but a range of institutions conducive to 'a healthful, active, useful and pleasant life'.

71 This almost literally coincides with Zavalishin's observations forty years before Popov (see pp. 34-35).

Popov gave an example: 'Melbourne has existed no more than twenty years and already the bare ground which it occupies is covered with gardens and parks'. 'Any comparison [with Russia] in this respect is extremely disadvantageous', since in Russia private persons in the cities were totally indifferent about planting trees and shrubs. The visitors also noticed that the colonists adopted all the latest achievements of civilization: 'Everything that is new exists here'.

The Russians discussed other reasons for the successful functioning of society in Victoria. In 1862 the *Svetlana's* doctor Mertsalov observed: 'Time is capital, and here it is the first prerequisite of life, while labour is the primary virtue of a man'. The personification of society's respect for labour and working class self-respect was the blacksmith who the day before forged bolts and hooks for the *Bogatyr* and later on, according to Mukhanov, appeared on the corvette 'in a frock-coat and clean shirt, without any traces of soot on his face'. Here we have an almost exact repetition of the scene of a blacksmith described by Zavalishin forty years before.⁷² Probably this is not merely coincidence and reflects the specific concerns of the Russian mentality and the use of Aesopian language to point out the positive features of non-Russian life and to attract attention to the drawbacks of Russian society while not mentioning them directly. To the same group of subconscious or disguised types of opposition belongs the energetic fulfilment of anything planned, termed by Popov: 'not engaging in empty words'.⁷³

Thus, with the exception of A. Linden's scepticism towards parliament, the image of Australian (or rather Victorian) society that the Russians held after 1862 and 1863 was positive. Evidently this was the last period of enthusiastic attitudes as subsequent writings of the Russian visitors were much more reserved and often in complete contrast to the enthusiasm displayed in the early 1860s. Let us follow this evolution.

Miklouho-Maclay after living in Sydney for several months in 1879 noted such features as: patriotism, 'the great ambition of the Australians not to be in any way inferior

72 See page 40. Plagiarism from the either side in this case is completely out of the question as Mukhanov's words are from his unpublished manuscript of 1860s, while Zavalishin published his memoirs in 1870s - 1880s.

73 Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 184; 'Pis'mo s fregata *Svetlana*' [A letter from the frigate *Svetlana*], *Kronshadtskii vestnik*, 18 March 1862, p. 84; Popov, 'Iz vlechenie', pp. 35-39; P.S. Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia' [Australia], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 115, 119.

in anything to any other country' which combined with 'quite a long gap between words and deeds' (the latter evidently contradicts Popov's opinion). In Miklouho-Maclay's letter of 1878 one can hear a distinctly cranky tone towards the Australians:

I like the people here very little Fortunately my scientific research ... spares me from a close acquaintance with the honourable 'Australians' To borrow [money] from these 'democrats'(!) I surely do not want.⁷⁴

It is worth noting that in Australian history Miklouho-Maclay is known as Baron Maclay, whereas he, although a Russian nobleman, never held this title. At the same time he never really objected when in Australia a tradition grew to address to him in this way. Mimi Sentinella, a member of the Miklouho-Maclay Society in Australia, has explained this in the following way. If he had not used this title, he, as a Russian, otherwise would have provoked suspicion and would not have been accepted in the highest circles of Australian society where he mingled. This explanation seems quite reasonable. At any rate, for Miklouho-Maclay it was not the title itself that mattered, but the recognition by society of the fact of his nobility. It is understandable in view of his belief in the undemocratic nature of Australian society, or at least of the circle of Sydneysiders with whom he associated.

The participants in the voyage of the Russian squadron in 1881-1882 left only a few general appraisals of Australian society. Rudnev, for example, was inclined to see democracy not only in Melbourne, which he referred to as 'a carefree city free of restrictive rules', but in Adelaide as well, where the Russians had a curious experience. Strolling along the streets, they stopped at a butcher shop and suddenly realized that the person wearing the apron of a butcher looked like one of the government ministers who had visited their squadron. The butcher understood the Russians' amazement and explained with dignity, 'Here we are all equal: in parliament - ministers, but in town - shopkeepers'.⁷⁵

Among Russian visitors Tsimmerman, for whom society and its principles were a special interest, made the most detailed analysis of the social life of the Australian

⁷⁴ N.N. Miklouho-Maclay, 'Prebyvanie v Sidnee' [Sojourn in Sydney], *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, p. 438; N.N. Miklouho-Maclay, '[Letter to Olga Miklouho-Maclay, 29 October 1878]', *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 4, Moscow-Leningrad, 1953, pp. 172, 174.

⁷⁵ Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, pp. 107, 115.

colonies. He concentrated on South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, giving different appraisals of each. It is obvious from his travel notes that before his arrival in Australia he was aware of two opposite types of Anglo-Celtic society: the old-fashioned, conservative, undemocratic society of England; and the young, democratic society of America. American society, which he knew very well, he regarded highly, while the English he regarded on the whole negatively. These were the models against which he measured the Australian colonies.

In Adelaide, where his real acquaintance with Australia took place, he was surprised by the 'Englishness' of the city and of its inhabitants' way of life. He seems rather disappointed that, because the English 'nearly completely brought their mother country from one hemisphere to another', Adelaide had become quiet and 'provincial, with pretensions to being an aristocratic city' of 'good old England'. He was struck by its citizens' 'egoistical attachment to the motherland and zealous loyalty to the Queen ... which were exhibited at every suitable and unsuitable moment'. At the same time he noticed a specifically Australian feature of social stratification: 'Aristocracy is the name here for the rich of all types, regardless of the means of gaining wealth'.

He gained quite a different impression of Melbourne society which, he said, was characterized by democracy, simplicity, freedom, 'personal self-confidence and wide-ranging enterprise without any pretensions'. The reasons for this phenomenon he found in the significant influx of newcomers from America to the gold mines⁷⁶ and in the way the area was colonized. Melbourne was built not by 'paper speculators' making a fortune on land resales 'but by stronger people, who in their lifetime had worked in gold-fields and came to know the drovers' restless life'. After looking closely at the crowd in the streets, Tsimmerman noticed that the hands of elderly men were toil-hardened, covered with calloused skin. 'Even among the fashionable aristocracy one seldom meets fine gentlemen', he concluded. His opinion has much in common with Mertsalov's observation twenty years before that 'labour is the primary virtue of a man'. In Melbourne and in the gold-mining towns of Ballarat and Bendigo, Tsimmerman admired

⁷⁶ Tsimmerman's overestimation of this factor reveals his belief that everything positive was introduced from the United States rather than from England.

the energy and enterprise of the population - an attractive feature which almost inevitably was an essential element of the Russian perception of the English and American character. He considered in general that the English were well known for their 'gift of colonization, by never being daunted by obstacles, and by setting down deep roots' wherever they went.

But in Tasmania he did not discover such features. While the Tasmanians had preserved English piety and methods of housekeeping, they had not mastered English enterprise and energy. Tasmania was a place for people 'who renounced worldly vanity and craved salvation of their souls', 'aiming to live ... as average' *rentiers*.

For the Russian visitors Sydney and Melbourne always called forth comparisons. As early as 1863 the *Bogatyr's* doctor Timrot described Sydney society as less of a mixture of classes and more respectable than Melbourne's. Tsimmerman agreed: 'One meets here [in Sydney] real aristocrats but in Melbourne only squatters and cattle-breeders'. 'The fashionable stratum here', Tsimmerman said, 'is more strictly segregated from the rabble than anywhere else in Australia'. Watching the Sydney crowd on Boxing Day he compared it with America, where, in his opinion, the rich tend not to avoid the masses and, due to the constant 'close contact of social layers, the common people's morals and manners improve' and social origin is hardly noticeable. On the contrary, despite their smart clothes, the common people of Sydney struck him with their 'uncouth, though not ill-meaning, rudeness'. Neither did he spare the local aristocrats, who were 'distinguished by stiffness, the haughty formalism of the nouveau-riche provincial, rather than refinement of manners'.

Tsimmerman's judgements about colonial society are quite categorical: modelled on England, a society whose drawbacks and contrasts were aggravated by provinciality. But at the same time, the new land with its influx of a new, energetic and industrious population did not exclude the opportunity that this society would follow the more progressive American way. After all New South Wales had been settled by 'the outcasts of European society' who had created 'a healthy civilized system which in many respects is not inferior to its European prototype'.⁷⁷

77 Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii', p. 716; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882,

Although Vitkovskaia did not aspire, as she said herself, to any generalizations, even here we can find a few general comments amidst the rich detail. She obviously sympathized with the more democratic, 'non-English' features. For example, she mentioned that Australians, in contrast to the inhabitants of England, judged people according to their personal merits, rather than the social status of their ancestors. With sympathy she mentioned that 'there were no beggars at all on the streets', a picture completely atypical both for Russia and England, and that lame and blind people earned their daily bread as hawkers.⁷⁸

Thus Russian appraisals varied according to different Australian colonies. The methods of colonization in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory provoked a negative reaction because of their speculative nature. This negativism was reinforced by the fact that the English, known for their abilities as colonists, seemed incapable of adapting to the new conditions of the country. At the same time the colonization of Victoria and, to some degree, New South Wales was praised by the Russians because they believed that it was based on the real labour of individuals. Such distinctions, obviously rather biased and superficial, nevertheless reflect the sympathies of the Russian liberal intelligentsia and attempts to provide an instructive example for Russia itself through the Australian experience.

The national stereotype of the English was interpreted by the Russians in accordance with the nature of colonization. In some cases they put to the forefront the negative features of this stereotype such as passion for profits, conservatism and class arrogance. In other cases, as in Victoria, they put to the forefront such positive features as industry, enterprise, respect for labour and democracy. Probably this set of stereotypical positive features was selected not by chance: these images of the English in Australia were constructed in the Russian mind in contrast with the ethnic stereotype of their own nation.

This keen interest in the principles of colonization and economic development was quite natural for the Russian visitors at a time when Russia itself was in the process of

pp. 87-90, 97; no. 12, 1882, pp. 466, 471-472, no. 8, 1883, pp. 360, 376, 384; no. 9, 1883, pp. 233-234, 240.

78 Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 205, 223.

colonizing Siberia and the Far East, industrializing Southern Russia and experiencing rapid urbanization. It is significant that the colonization principles, the fundamental features of Australian society, provoked special Russian enthusiasm in the early 1860s when Russian society itself was involved in a virtual avalanche of reforms - peasant, judicial, military and local government. It was not by chance that the Russians stressed the role of the government in the direction of the colonization process, the sense of responsibility by a permanent proprietor and society's respect for the working man.

Such was the Russians' appraisal of the principles of colonization and the most general principles of stratification and the functioning of Australian society. Let us see now what was the perception by Russians of Australia as a society made distinctive by specific ethnic or national features, i. e. as a society of Australians.

Sense of place and national consciousness

The peculiarities of a people's outward appearance and their dress are the features which usually attract a traveller's attention first. These features are among the first to constitute a national image. For the Russian visitors this was the first step in conceiving and constructing the Australian people as a specific nation. In the first instance their attention was drawn to local women. In Melbourne A. Linden in 1863 noticed the beautiful, pretty and healthy faces of the 'Australian English' ladies. V. Linden in 1870 ascribed the fresh complexion and beauty of the Tasmanian colonists to the climate. D. was the only exception among these enthusiastic appraisals, considering a year later that the South Australian climate had 'a destructive effect on the fair sex'. Sophia and Konstantin Vitkovskies did justice to the beauty of Australian women: 'one often meets pretty young faces, which you involuntarily turn back to look at'. Konstantin put it in a nutshell: 'there are only two good things in this country: cream and women'. Sophia singled out the differences of Australian women in comparison with the English, depicting their faces as having 'a delicate, rather pale complexion, big grey eyes with long eye-lashes; especially pretty little noses: straight, thin and refined'. She also admired the luxuriance of Australian women's hair. Tsimmerman while in Melbourne paid attention to the men:

What a healthy, tall, big-boned people you meet here at every step. Many elderly gentlemen are distinguished by long, mainly blond beards, which go down the chest ... like a whisk.

The peculiarities of 'Australian' dress also were described by the Russians. A. Linden was the first to notice the 'luxuriousness of ladies' dress'. He attributed the refinement of their costumes to 'the comparatively high living standard of the masses'. Tsimmerman noted that not only ladies of high society were dressed 'fashionably ... although too motley colourfully and intricately', but that even the dress of working class men and women was distinguished by 'foppery' and 'smartness'. Vitkovskaia mentioned the colourfulness of townspeople's dress too. In the Russians' remarks on the colonial style of dress there is a hint of the superiority of Europeans towards, as Tsimmerman put it, 'the nouveau-riche provincials'.

Vitkovskaia, who knew English well, was the first Russian traveller who recorded a peculiar style of Australian pronunciation: 'They articulate "thank you" quite originally, with a strong accent on "you" and with a slightly questioning tone'.⁷⁹

The Russians, besides fashion and speech, were interested in ethnic and national self-consciousness, sense of place, social behaviour and social institutions. In this respect the evolving Russian ethnic definition of the Australian people is very interesting. Russian visitors continued to call the colonists of Australia 'the English', but now this ethnic label expressed not only ethnicity, but they attached particular meaning and associations to it. When it was necessary to stress that it was the local colonial population that they referred to, the Russians looked for new terms. In 1863 while Popov used just 'local inhabitants' and Timrot 'settlers', A. Linden already spoke of 'the Australian English'. Mukhanov, along with 'colonists', 'Sydneyiders' and 'Melbournites', wrote about 'the Australians'. This last term he used to refer to society in general from a historical point of view. At the same time the local citizens with whom he had personal contact he still preferred to call the English.⁸⁰

In 1870 Boratynskii from the *Boiarin* referred to Tasmanian inhabitants as

79 Linden, 'Zametki', pp. 188-189; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 124; D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 145; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, pp. 471-472, no. 9, 1883, pp. 233-234; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 187, 194, 237, 240.

80 Popov, 'Iz vlechenie', p. 37; Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii', p. 711; Linden, 'Zametki', p. 189; Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', pp. 117, 118, 121; Mukhanov, 'Sydney', pp. 308, 309, 311.

'English' or 'Hobart citizens', while his fellow-traveller V. Linden went further in composing a new word 'Hobarters' (which sounds very natural in Russian), but he still was not ready to speak about 'Tasmanians' in general, using this word only as an adjective: 'Tasmanian acquaintances'. Their companion Aleksandr E. Konkevich, was more audacious, easily handling such words as 'Tasmans' and 'Antipode-Australian'.⁸¹

In 1871 L., a correspondent of the *Kronstadt Herald*, quite naturally used the term 'Australians' in opposition to 'Europeans'.⁸² Miklouho-Maclay in 1878 soon after his arrival to Australia used the word 'Australians' in a rather ironic sense: 'honourable "Australians"'; in 1879 he again referred with some sarcasm to the patriotism and ambitions of the 'Australians', while in 1887 'Australians' was already used in his speech as an ethnic label in opposition to Englishmen, as well as simply meaning local residents.⁸³

In Tsimmerman's essays of 1881-1882 there was a diversity of definitions, determined both by context and the author's personal attitudes. The first time he used the word 'Australians' it was when speaking about Australian Aborigines; but he never used it in this way again and referred later to Aborigines as 'natives', 'savages', 'Negroes' and 'blacks'. He used the word 'Australians' in his essay more frequently as he travelled from South Australia (via Victoria) to Sydney. Speaking about the residents of Western and South Australia he did not use the word 'Australians' at all, residents of Victoria he named 'Australians' three times and those of New South Wales seven times. Initially he used terms such as 'migrants', 'colonists', 'settlers' (and the Russian synonyms), and in specific contexts - 'bushmen', 'squatters', 'farmers', 'Melbournites', etc. Describing his visit to Tasmania he quite naturally turned to 'Tasmanians', and it seems that he rather used it to mean 'inhabitants of the island of Tasmania' not putting into it any ethnic or other specific meaning as in the word 'Australians'. He never referred to them as

81 I.A. Boratynskii, *Plavanie korveta 'Boiarin' (Otryvki iz dnevnika morskogo ofitsera)* [*The Corvette Boiarin's Voyage (Extracts from the Diary of a Naval Officer)*], Moscow, 1886, p. 13; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', pp. 127, 130; [A. Konkevich], 'V kapkane' [Trapped], in A. Belomor, *Iz zapisnoi knizhki moriaka*, St. Petersburg, 1901, pp. 354, 355.

82 L., 'S klipera "Almaz"' [From the clipper *Almaz*], *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 1 September 1871, p. 396.

83 Miklouho-Maclay, 'Prebyvanie v Sidnee', p. 438; Miklouho-Maclay, 'Na neskol'ko dnei', pp. 618, 622; Miklouho-Maclay, 'Letter to Olga', p. 172.

'Australians'.

When speaking about Victoria and New South Wales he used the term 'Australians': on the international level to oppose Australia and England and their inhabitants when discussing economic, political and defence issues; on the colonial level to discuss their specific local problems which were not directly connected with England, for example the Chinese question, apprehensions of excessive immigration, and fear of Russians; on the ethnic level, he was the first Russian to use the word 'Australians' while discussing a newly formed national consciousness and behaviour, for example, when he spoke about their enterprise, patriotism, and preservation of spiritual connections with England.

At the same time he more than once called the Australian people 'the English'. He had a tendency to use this word in the context of the ethnic stereotypes and mainly negative ones. He never referred to his individual local acquaintances as 'Australians'.

We can trace this dichotomy even more clearly in Vitkovskaia's writings in 1896. Without any hesitation she used 'the Australians' as the only possible ethnic label equivalent to 'the Russians' and 'the French'. She usually referred to the residents of south-east Australia as 'Australians' if she discussed something especially positive in their behaviour and appearance. But as soon as it was something negative she invariably made them 'English'. However her opposition 'Australian' - 'English' is not always consistent. Describing her visit to a local Sydney resident she spoke about customs 'in the English home', but after the visit concluded that 'Australians were very nice and cordial people'.⁸⁴

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century in the Russians' consciousness the process of perceiving the Australian people as a specific nationality on the macro level in general had been completed, while on the micro level it was still in the process of formation.

Among the Russian visitors Tsimmerman was the only one who specifically discussed the self-consciousness of the Australian colonists. He believed that 'the young, native born generation, which would name Australia as their home, still had no time to ...

84 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', passim; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, passim.

grow up here'. Until now most of them had considered England as their home. He stated that they 'had not yet regenerated within the context of local conditions' into a new nationality as in America.⁸⁵ At the same time the Russians' writings give indirect evidence about the development of the Australians' national consciousness. Miklouho-Maclay, Tsimmerman and Vitkovskaia noticed that, together with loyalty to England, Australians (and in such context they used just this word) felt a 'native' patriotism.⁸⁶

Local patriotism and evolving national consciousness also manifested themselves in the rivalry between Australian cities. Russian visitors noticed the rivalry between Melbourne and Sydney as early as 1863. Konkevich in 1870 half-jokingly, half-seriously, attributed the warm attitude of the Tasmanian press to the *Boiarin* to the fact that

they were at daggers drawn with the South Australian papers. As the Adelaide papers have abused us, both the Hobart papers elevated us to the level of sailor-heroes, for having suffered such rudeness.

Tsimmerman in 1882 noted that the aspirations of rival towns to 'surpass each other' in everything often led to needless expense for them. Admiral Aslanbegov, too, experienced the ambitious rivalry of two nearby small towns, Glenelg and Port Adelaide. The authorities of both tried to persuade him that their port was the best for the Russian squadron's anchorage. Obligated as an official to pay compliments in his public speeches to both parties, Aslanbegov reported confidentially to the Naval ministry that

The intrigue between these two ports is conveyed in every word, but in fairness one can only say that one port was worse than the other.

Tsimmerman was surprised to discover separatism even on a local level. For instance he had the impression that the citizens of Deniliquin would rather form their own independent colony than agree to be transferred from the jurisdiction of New South Wales to Victoria - despite transport and economic connections with the latter.⁸⁷ Thus, while the Russians could accept the colonists' patriotic feelings at a national level, 'local' patriotism called forth their scorn.

85 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 90; no. 8, 1883, p. 381.

86 I have discussed some of its aspects in the section 'Economics' and 'Politics'.

87 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 192; Konkevich, 'V kapkane', p. 355; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 90, no. 12, 1882, p. 481, no. 7, 1883, pp. 107-108; no. 8, 1883, pp. 381-382; Aslanbegov, 'Raport', p. 179; *South Australian Register*, 3 March 1882.

The construction of an image of Australians as a specific nationality in the Russians' mind paralleled the formation of a national consciousness among the Australian people. At the same time the Russians made a distinction between the English and the Australians without much regard to birthplace, as was typical of the Australian people themselves, especially in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁸⁸ For the Russians the fact of permanent residence in the colonies served as a criterion of nationality and a colonist's life accorded with, or varied from, the Russian stereotype of the 'English'.

Social behaviour

The Russian writings provide ample material for the historian to reconstruct which traits in 'Australian' social behaviour especially arrested the Russians' attention, provoking their approval or disapproval.

Tsimmerman, an expert in sociological portraits, made a number of fascinating descriptions of patterns of city life on week-days, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. With curiosity he watched the changing composition and density of the crowds on the different streets of Australian towns, on different days of the week and at different times of the day.⁸⁹ He noticed an oddity of city life:

Here only a few remain at home: everyone in the morning hurries out into the streets - either on business or for pleasure. That is why one seldom finds anybody at home.

Thus, one of his first impressions of Australian life style was its extroversion surprisingly unlike the Russians' image of English introversion ('my home is my castle').

Tsimmerman noticed that

street life ... offers a lot of different entertainments and comforts easily available to all classes, which for the most part impart a democratic atmosphere to the city.

He wrote this about Melbourne, but he observed the same environment in other cities as well. He was especially amazed at the transformation of a city on Saturday evening when pavements and roadways were crowded with working-people and shops, theatres,

⁸⁸ K. Inglis, 'The Term "Australian"'; D. Walker, 'Concept of "the Australian"', in *The Australian People*, North Ryde, 1988, pp. 54-55, 864-868.

⁸⁹ The proper sociological side of his observations is beyond the scope of my study. I can only address the interested reader to Tsimmerman's valuable observations ('Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 97-100, no. 12, 1882, pp. 474-475) and express regret that they are not translated into English.

concert halls, restaurants and bars - open till late - shone with bright lights. Such a Saturday 'evening of democracy' once again contradicted the Russian stereotype of English society.⁹⁰ Thus Tsimmerman was struck by the openness, social democracy and gregariousness of Australian urban culture.

The Russians also discussed features which perhaps were not specifically 'Australian'. However when speaking about these features the Russians did not refer to the 'English' and moreover sometimes even named the 'Australians', which gives grounds for supposing that the Russian visitors consciously or unconsciously ascribed them to the developing nationality of the Australians.

For example, the Russians noticed *Melbournites'* respect for alien customs: during their visits to the *Bogatyr* 'not one [of the visitors] had to be reminded to take off a hat when the ensign was being lowered', Mukhanov commented, though certainly this was behaviour usual for Europeans in general. The Russians more than once wrote about the honesty of the locals, both at an individual and institutional level. Mukhanov in 1863 mentioned the honesty of the crowd of thousands who visited the *Bogatyr* when she was opened to the public; despite unlocked cabins and little supervision the Russians 'could not complain about even the slightest breach of trust'. He emphasized that they were 'Melbourne citizens'. The Vitkovskies in 1896 received back their cane from the 'Lost Property' room of the railway station with absolute amazement and consequently mentioned the '*Australians*' honesty'. Tsimmerman noticed that on the railway, passengers did not receive any receipt for stored luggage and got it back simply by pointing to it. 'But in spite of this absence of control I have not heard that any passengers' luggage has disappeared'. A similar 'trustful system predominated in hotels' where 'none of the guests locked their doors. Moreover, most of the time they left the doors wide open'. Tsimmerman contrasted this system to the European one when the

90 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 97-100, no. 12, 1882, p. 474.

guests leaving the hotel locked the door and left the key with the concierge.⁹¹

Another feature noticed by the Russians was the self-respect of 'Australians' irrespective of occupation. For the Russians the contrast with their own situation was all too strong, as Tsimmerman pointed out:

For us, spoilt by Russian servants' usual willingness to fulfil our orders at any time, the most distinguishing feature of [Australian] home life is the extremely rare appearance of servants. Everything here is done within a limited time ... and no one takes it into their head to order [servants] about on account of some trifle. Generally, the masters' attitude towards them is such that it does not insult human dignity.

However Russian officers from the *Afrika* who looked forward with delight to dinner at Sydney's best hotel on Sunday did not share Tsimmerman's placid view: they discovered that

Sydney is subjected to a strict rule not to cook dishes on Sundays, as servants prefer not to work then (to our mind it is useless to give them leave each Sunday), while the masters have to be content with some cold dishes and tinned food.

With the subservience of Russian servants in mind, Vitkovskaia noticed that in contrast Australian hotel servants acted 'without officious courtesy but cordially'.⁹² On one occasion the Vitkovskies were travelling in a train. Konstantin got into a conversation with a labourer sitting next to them. When parting, the man gave his hand both to Konstantin and to Sophia. Sophia's tone suggests that she and her brother were surprised by such liberties. But it is obvious that the labourer did not suspect that these upper class visitors had *condescended* to speak with him and behaved as an equal to them quite naturally.⁹³ Vitkovskaia noticed that even children had self-respect. When a porter began to shame a group of young ruffians for the noise they made near the hotel, their

91 Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 120; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 197; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 444. Although contemporary Australian society in some ways abandoned the old 'trust system' I believe this mentality is still very strong and after two years of life in Australia my psychology of a person who grew up in Russia in the system of a priori *mistrust* was strongly influenced by it. I discovered it when I took my friend who just came from Russia to a supermarket having some goods from another shop in my bag. In a panic he stopped me: 'How will you prove that they are not stolen?' I assured him that no one would suspect me *because* I did not steal them. I was right: the cashier did not even pay attention to my bag.

92 It is characteristic of the Russians that they noticed and recorded only the rosy side of the servants' position, while their contemporaries in Australia had more realistic perception of the difficulties of servants' life in Australia. See, for instance, Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, p. 202.

93 Possibly, moreover, the labourer, on his side, noticing the Vitkovskies' accents and 'odd' dress may have congratulated himself on being considerate to strangers and out of ethnocentrism *condescended* to them himself.

ragamuffin-leader 'instead of running away at full speed, came forward to listen to all the reproaches, and after that slowly retired with all his band'.⁹⁴ Such evidence confirms Mertsalov's statement of 1862, mentioned above, that 'labour is the primary virtue of a man'. Undoubtedly this self-respect attained by ordinary people was unusual to the Russian eye and that is why it constantly attracted their attention.

Vitkovskaia, chary of praise, often mentioned the prevailing orderliness of public behaviour. Speaking about this quality she once again refers to those who showed such restraint as 'Australians'. As for private and public cleanliness, which seem to be closely tied with order, the Russians had contradictory opinions. They noticed the cleanliness and neatness of private dwellings, but criticized the dirt and dust in the city streets and in parks. Tsimmerman, after visiting the city markets in Melbourne and Sydney, extrapolated from these examples on the way of life of 'the English' who, in distinction from the French, 'cannot at all keep their markets clean and neat'. At the same time, while walking in Bendigo's city environs he came across a slaughter-house 'which was kept in great cleanliness'. He admitted that he had not been able to recognize it 'by the smell, which in Russia makes it easy to recognize since it contaminates the air for a considerable distance around'.⁹⁵

Other features of the colonists' social behaviour interested the Russians not because of the contrasts with their own society, but because of the contrasts with English society. The first in this series of contrasts was that between openness and reserve. 'Australians are very nice and cordial people.... This acquaintance has shaken considerably the unfavourable opinion I had formed about the English', Vitkovskaia concluded after a visit to a local family. The Vitkovskies many times enjoyed the disinterested help of the locals, while the reports of the Russian naval visitors agreed whole-heartedly on the warmth of Australian hospitality.

Another contrast they constructed was that of ease and stiffness. The Russians observed both of these qualities at balls, parties, dinners, receptions and obviously

94 Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 105-106; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 98; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 232, 236-237, 248.

95 Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 197, 214; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 475, no. 8, 1883, p. 375, no. 7, 1883, p. 104.

preferred the first. Mukhanov in 1863 and Timofeevskii in 1882 mentioned the 'unfeigned', 'sincere' merriment, 'animated and natural' behaviour reigning at parties. V. Linden, on the contrary, describing a dinner-party given by the Governor of Tasmania in 1870, complained that 'tension, the English stiffness' prevailed there. 'If such a pastime is adopted in all fashionable English societies it is far from being merry', he concluded. Rudnev in 1882 witnessed the struggle of both these tendencies at a dinner given for the Russians by Henry D'Esterre Taylor, Victorian banker and federationist:

the dinner went along sedately; before the dinner the host read grace and all spoke quietly, but at last during dessert one of us said something about apple pie, and suddenly all the table burst out laughing, all stiffness disappeared and the dinner was finished very merrily.

Tsimmerman, after visiting a mass feast in the honour of the birthday of the Prince of Wales in the small town of Kapunda (South Australia) concluded:

Hardly the hero of the festivities himself in Europe possessed by political adversities spent this day so merrily and light-heartedly as his loyal subjects in the Southern hemisphere.⁹⁶

The Russians paid special attention to this aspect of social behaviour due to the stereotype that they had in mind already of English stiffness. The observer lingered on evidence which either confirmed or refuted it. The Russian visitors felt that Australian society in this respect was more easy-going and relaxed than the English (or at least their stereotype of the English).

Informality and formality; absence of prohibitions and passion for prohibitions were other opposites noticed by the Russians. They disapproved of formality. The first time they met it was in 1863 at a party at Government House in Sydney given by the wife of Governor Young. The guests only cheered up after several dances when 'suddenly everyone madly rushed' towards the doors. One of the guests explained to the puzzled Russian officers what had happened:

this was not a ball but merely *Lady Young at home*, in other words, because it had been determined beforehand that the hall should be emptied at such-and-such an hour, then, in spite of the merry mood of the guests and their desire to have a dance, it was quite impossible to break the pre-set program That is the sort of absolute worship of strict formalism which they reach.

⁹⁶ Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 213; Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 121; Timofeevskii, 'Mel'burn'; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', pp. 126-127; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 106; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 458.

Tsimmerman laughed at this kind of 'institutionized formalism', which, for instance, prohibited smoking at public places when people sitting inside the smoking carriage

could freely send puffs of smoke towards the platform where smoking was prohibited. It does not matter for the English, only the observance of rules is important.

In the cities he met numerous prohibitions and importunate recommendations at every step: 'Keep on the path'. In a public lavatory he even discovered written on a cast iron plaque the recommendation: 'Please adjust your dress before leaving'. 'In this respect one should be very cautious; otherwise, I am afraid, one might be caught committing something prohibited', Tsimmerman wrote ironically. At the end of his Australian journey he summed up: 'Here at every step - there are warnings' adding that American society in this respect was freer.

Not all Russians considered Australian society so formalized and prohibitive. Rudnev in 1882 wrote about Melbourne as 'a carefree city free of restrictive rules', while Vitkovskaia noticed that in Australian botanical gardens it was not only not prohibited to walk on the grass, but the practice was even encouraged as all the benches were situated in the middle of the lawns.⁹⁷

But concerning one thing the Russians were unanimous: they condemned Pharisaism, bigotry and formalism when they wrote about the church and especially the observance of the Sabbath. 'The public pretends to be very religious', D. wrote about Adelaide society in 1871, adding that women 'under the cover of religious zeal' used visits to church 'to pick to pieces the dresses of their acquaintances'. Even Tsimmerman, who came from gold-cupolaed Moscow famous for its forty times forty churches, was surprised at the abundance of churches in Adelaide. However, he stressed that the churches 'are hardly half filled with worshippers', while the Tasmanians' celebrated piety reminded him

of those devout persons, who, after committing in their early years grave crimes and exhausting their forces, go to the monastery in order to expiate their bygone sins.

⁹⁷ Linden, 'Zametki', p. 201; Mukhanov, 'Sydney', p. 300; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 104, no. 12, 1882, pp. 487-488, no. 9, 1883, pp. 229-230; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 221-222.

Under sins he obviously counted the colonists' extermination of the Tasmanian Aborigines, which he would have seen as contradictory to Christian doctrine. Tsimmerman himself by no means approved the 'religious fanaticism' displayed by a missionary acquaintance who claimed that although they had not saved the natives from the extinction 'they had saved the souls of those whom they had managed to convert to the faith'.

In contrast to Russia with its policy of one state religion and persecution of religious sects Tsimmerman sympathized with the religious liberty and the government's non-interference in the church affairs of the colonies and the abundance of sects there. Vitkovskaia, on the contrary, could not accept even this. Describing a street performance of the Salvation Army she commented:

It was somehow very strange to see this bigotry with its slogans, all these people imagining that they had found the true faith among the numerous faiths of unbelieving England.

The Vitkovskies were deeply insulted by popularized religion, for example by frivolous advertisements based on religious subjects. They were especially shocked by a charity concert in a Methodist church. Instead of dignified religious compositions, as they had expected, a brass band and amateur entertainers regaled the public with a vulgar concert, while the audience expressed its approval by clapping and tapping. The indignant Vitkovskies left after the first part followed by astonished looks. Vitkovskaia wrote with disappointment: 'The progressive English have greatly sunk in my estimation'.

I believe the problem here oversteps the borders of a particular case and has its roots in the deep differences of religious cultures. Vitkovskaia, in distinction from the Lutheran Tsimmerman, was devout Orthodox and her reaction to Australian realities can be considered typical for a Russian of that time. In Orthodoxy the outward appearance of the church, religious decoration and ceremonial rites are of the utmost importance. An Orthodox church has no other functions beside purely religious ones. A Protestant church stresses sermons rather than decoration and ceremony, its functions are more socialized

and often penetrate into all aspects of public life.⁹⁸

It seems that Vitkovskaia could not understand another religious culture. She was perplexed by the interior of the Methodist church:

There was nothing inside ... that could excite veneration; on the bare walls only ragged cardboard posters were hanging with maxims from the Holy Writ, printed with stylized colourful letters.

Tsimmerman also observed after visiting Adelaide that the architecture of many churches there, in contrast to those in Moscow, was little different from ordinary houses, while 'the jarring, cheerless sound' of the local bells was too poor to compare with the music of Moscow bells.

On the evening of Holy Saturday before Easter Vitkovskaia happened to be on the boisterous Sydney streets with their open shops and theatres, motley placards and crowds of people. She was surprised at such an ordinary scene on the eve of Easter:

nothing looked like Lent and nothing looked like a holiday either There was no religious feeling; everything was dominated only by earthly inclinations.

Again she measured Australian reality with a Russian measuring stick: in Russia Holy Saturday is the time of the Lenten fast, 'the solemn, quiet, Holy night', of complete submission of the profane to the sacred which was not usual for Australia.

At the same time the complete submission of the profane to the sacred on Sundays, elevated in Australia to a public institution, the Russians found quite unusual. That is why all the clever attempts of the Australians to overcome the inconveniences caused by the strict observance of Sunday easily fitted with the widespread Russian belief in the Pharisaism, bigotry and formalism of English society. Tsimmerman described the tricks to which country hotels and restaurants resorted in order to sell food on Sundays to townspeople who came there to have a break. Vitkovskaia arriving at the Jenolan caves on Sunday was disappointed to find out that they were closed, but when the group of visitors gathered a pound over the usual fee, the guide without hesitation opened the

⁹⁸ I can add from my experience that in a difficult period of my life I visited two churches in Australia - Orthodox and Protestant. In the Orthodox church I arrived, stood through the service, and left. All was as usual. In the Protestant church I was surprised to see women in shorts, who during the service, along with religious songs, sang an Aboriginal song, and then enjoyed tea - all this behaviour was unthinkable in an Orthodox church. However here I was noticed at once, the minister asked me about my life (not even asking about my religion) and told about life in Russia in his sermon. Some time later we received things, which we needed very much, gathered for us by the parishioners.

caves and conducted an excursion. Vitkovskaia's fellow-travellers aboard the ship on Sunday had stopped all games and 'lay down to read. True, they read not the Bible but novels'; nevertheless the letter of the law was observed and the passengers looked at Konstantin who played draughts with a Frenchman 'half with horror, half with envy'. Her conclusion was simple 'The English revere Sunday hypocritically'.⁹⁹

The power of stereotypes was especially obvious when the Russians discussed social behaviour. Reflecting on Australians' behaviour they proceeded from a stereotype of English society which existed in their minds, and this stereotype certainly was not always based on an informed judgement of contemporary England. This section perfectly reveals that the Russians tended to ascribe all the negative features of colonial society to 'the English', and its positive features (for example openness, democratic behaviour, hospitality, honesty, self-respect) to 'Australians'. Despite some oversimplifications, the Russians - to give them their due - did manage to notice early exactly those features which still remain the most attractive of Australian society.

Russian judgements about Australian colonial society at the same time reflected the values of Russian culture. This manifested itself especially well in the sphere of religion and the church. Some features of colonial social behaviour, for example the considerate attitudes towards servants, drew the Russians' attention because they contrasted so vividly with the faults of their own society.

Family life and women's emancipation

The Russians were aware of the English notion of 'the home' as one's castle. The family life that they observed in Australia they compared to this model and noted especially those facts which either supported or contradicted this model. Among the Russians only D., who lived in Adelaide, painted a negative picture of Australian family life:

Life in Adelaide is dull and does not have much variety. The 'unfair' sex spends time in brothels and offices, while the fair sex gads about the shops, ruining their husbands buying dresses and nursing children in cosy and comfortable cottages

⁹⁹ D., 'Tuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 145; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 100-102; no. 8, 1883, pp. 355, 359, 360, 362, no. 9, 1883, pp. 225-226, 232; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 215, 221, 240-241, 248, 263-264, 280.

Brawls between husband and wife, meeting a disgracefully drunk woman in the streets ... are everyday pictures of colonial life. Children from the early years are left to their own devices.

He also wrote about widespread pre-marital sex and moral laxity in the colonies. All these drawbacks reminded D. of 'the ugliness' of Russian life, especially in the Far East. Unfortunately we know very little about D. to understand the reasons for his negativism.

A rosier view was more typical. Proceeding from the well-known stereotype of English thriftiness, the Russians attributed many positive features to family life. Mukhanov in 1863 visited two 'worthy' families, of the Commandant of Cockatoo island and a customs officer from Botany Bay, whose life seemed to him extremely happy and harmonious. 'Time honestly devoted to work, independence and a loving family' were the main components of these 'respectable homes'. Timofeevskii believed that the material well-being of people

was reflected in the model order of family life. Quarrels and confusions may happen as an exception, and the family hearth is surrounded by a halo of accord and friendship.

He admired the cleanliness and order 'reigning in small comfortable cottages', in unpretentious tastefully-decorated sitting-rooms, where 'on the table, covered with a clean embroidered table-cloth there is always a Gospel and a vase with fresh flowers'. Tsimmerman also mentioned 'a peaceful spirit natural to the strict English thrift' and observed that 'The mistress of the house is in command of everything in the house, while the husband comes home only to have a rest'. Vitkovskaia in 1896 noticed an attractive peculiarity, the almost maternal care and tenderness of fathers towards their children. She was also struck by the abundance of children in many families.¹⁰⁰

The Russians mentioned unusual - for them - features in the lifestyle of the women. V. Linden in 1870 commented that in hotels there were always pretty girls serving behind the bar:

The goal is reached, bar-rooms are seldom empty, although certainly such an application of women's beauty to the practical purposes of life one hardly can describe as strictly moral.

Vitkovskaia was amazed to see that girls served in restaurants and sold train tickets. The

100 D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 144; Mukhanov, 'Sydney', pp. 299, 311; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 106, no. 8, 1883, p. 360; Timofeevskii, 'Mel'burn'; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 226.

Svetlana's ship doctor Mertsalov had his own approach to the theme. He explained the unusual fact that the ship left Australia without a single case of venereal disease by the expensiveness and intelligence of Melbourne prostitutes 'none of whom will agree to have intercourse with a man without a preliminary careful examination of his genitals'. D. commented that one sees 'the latest Paris fashions' on Adelaide courtesans first.¹⁰¹

Thus the Russians noticed the first signs of women's emancipation only through their reflections on increasing moral freedom.

State and private institutions and their role in Australian society

Let us look at how the peculiarities of public life and social behaviour were reflected in the Russians' descriptions of institutions that attracted their attention.

One such institution, rather unusual for the Russians, was the club. Soon after their arrival the Russian officers as a rule received invitations to a city's clubs. Mukhanov, who visited a Melbourne club in 1863, described 'all the conveniences' which the club provided, including the availability of a good French kitchen and wines. Miklouho-Maclay, who became a member of the Australian Club in Sydney in 1878, wrote 'Clubs are a perfect thing in England, Australia etc. It is a pity that in Russia this *useful* establishment remains ... in embryo'. But in general, it seems, the Russians underrated the important social role of clubs in the life of colonial society. The situation in which the Russian squadron found itself in 1882 is a good example. To their complaint that they had not received enough private hospitality the *Argus* explained that this was because of the Russians' reaction towards the first offers of hospitality proffered by Melbourne residents. When Admiral Aslanbegov and his officers 'were made honorary members of the leading clubs', they failed to answer promptly the preliminary invitations, not realizing that the clubs were the principal places where they could make acquaintance with townsmen and only after that enjoy their private hospitalities.¹⁰² In this case the underestimation by the Russians of the nature of such an important English institution as

101 Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 124; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 194, 217; Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 185; D., 'Tuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 145.

102 Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 121; Miklouho-Maclay, '[Letters]', p. 164; *Argus*, 25 February 1882, p. 10.

the club caused misunderstanding and influenced mutual perceptions.

At the other end of the institutional scale, the Russians also left some descriptions of the charity establishments, hospitals and prisons that they had visited. I have discussed their perception of prisons above. Their attitude towards charity establishments and hospitals was rather critical. For example V. Linden described the squalid condition of the Invalid Depot at Brickfields in Tasmania, while doctor Bogoslovskii said that Sydney's St. Vincent's hospital 'provided only enough sustenance to patients to keep them from starving to death and evidently cured patients with fasting and prayers'. But the Russians were also impressed by the advanced technology which they saw at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the lunatic asylum in Sydney and the lunatic asylum in New Norfolk, Tasmania. Along with the technical innovations the Russians were attracted by the informal style and green gardens there, and by the freedom and work available to the patients. They stressed the support from the local authorities and donations that in many cases allowed patients to be kept free of charge. After visiting a number of institutions Tsimmerman reflected:

Prisons, hospitals, mental homes - institutions devoted to the elimination of physical diseases and moral deficiencies - here receive greater attention than educational institutions aiming at the development of the healthy, normal members of society. This shows the enthusiasm of the English for philanthropic endeavours.¹⁰³

In Russian liberal circles the word 'philanthropy' had a partly negative meaning as Russian educated society disapproved of philanthropy as a mere sop rather than a proper solution to social problems.

The Russians wrote positively about the effectiveness of the Australian police. 'The police of the colony of Victoria are held in universal and deserved respect', Mukhanov noted in 1863. What could be more telling than the contrast between 'the complete security' of the Australian gold-fields and California's 'everyday bloody dramas'? Tsimmerman in 1881 described the Adelaide police as unobtrusive but helpful. A traveller from Russia would have found this scene unfamiliar, since in Russia a

¹⁰³ Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', pp. 125-126; Bogoslovskii, 'Sanitarnyi', p. 452; M. Smirnov, 'Sanitarnyi i mediko-topograficheskii obzor zagranichnogo plavaniia vintovogo klipera "Plastun" v 1880-1883 godakh' [A medical and medico-topographical review of the screw clipper *Plastun's* overseas voyage from 1880-1883], *Meditsinskie pribavleniia k Morskому sborniku*, no. 10, 1884, pp. 27-28; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, pp. 365-366.

policeman was a dominant feature of a city street. At the same time the fact that the Australian police used paid informants was sharply condemned by Tsimmerman. He was indignant, for example, to read in a public lavatory a notice signed by a member of the town council: 'Twenty shillings reward for information and conviction of any person found depositing excreta in this urinal'. In his opinion such denunciations 'serve as a clear indication of the extreme moral depravity and roughness of the population'. Doubtless this was his way of showing his disapproval of a similar practice in Russia.¹⁰⁴

Thus the role of these state and private institutions in Australian society often received a varied and rather superficial appraisal. In the case of the clubs, they did not understand their social importance; in the case of hospitals, lunatic asylums and charity establishments, they branded such efforts as a result of a stereotyped passion for philanthropy; in the case of the Australian police's use of denunciations, the Russians took a specific issue and generalized it to show the moral depravity of society. Russian visitors noticed, however, the effectiveness and humanity of these institutions and especially their respect for human beings. Probably the Russians were attracted by these positive features in contrast to their own comparable institutions which often could not boast such benefits.

Recreations and sport

The Russians often watched the locals during their recreation and entertainment. It is obvious that they were pleasantly surprised with the ease and unaffected merriment reigning at some parties. Their only criticism was that, unlike the Russian style of frequently exchanging partners during some dances, here 'if you began to twirl a partner, then you are stuck with her until the music stops'. But, as Rudnev recollects, the Russian officers overcame this 'drawback' by

persuading the ladies to change their partners during each dance, to which they, due to their inconstancy, agreed easily and the things went swimmingly.¹⁰⁵

Along with this traditional style of entertainment the Russians now noticed that

104 Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 116; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 488.

105 Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 117; Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 121; Timofeevskii, 'Mel'burn'.

peculiarly Australian types of recreation had begun to proliferate: picnics, outings at the sea-side, boating, and even kangaroo hunting. They noticed as well that, while such types of recreation in Russia and in Europe were mainly the privilege of the well-to-do, in Australia, due to its geography and social politics, they became accessible to a large part of the population. Mukhanov described sympathetically the horse races in Ballarat and, it seems, he felt the peculiarity of the Australian races - here it was not only a sporting event but a social one as well.

But generally the colonists' enthusiasm for sport, and especially cricket, provoked a whole range of negative reactions, from irony to contempt. The Russians stereotypically perceived any local people who were engaged in sport as 'the English'. Tsimmerman, watching a group of local men riding bicycles, wrote that

this is something like cricket, boat racing, running competitions - the kind of sport to which the English, like children, give themselves up with great enjoyment.

But even in sport he discovered something specifically 'Australian': after the feast in Kapunda the local newspapers provided a detailed description of the races and cricket match in much the same way 'as important political events and parliamentary sessions are usually described'.

Vitkovskaia was even more sarcastic. Seeing that electric lights illuminated the 'inevitable' Sports Ground in Sydney's Moore Park, she observed that now 'contests may take place at night as well, as if for that important occupation the day is too short'. Leaving Australia she was convinced that: 'Sometimes the Englishmen's passion for sport borders on ... how to put it mildly ... a lack of mental faculties'. Even such natural childish pastime as running barefooted on sand-bars at the sea earned her reproach:

The Englishmen consider this very healthy for children. Maybe for some reason they are not susceptible to rheumatism, but probably from such exercises they stiffen, and acquire their wooden bearing and awkward ways.¹⁰⁶

Reading these lines one can think that they are written not by a young girl but by an old lady. One explanation might be in the power of stereotypes, in the rarity of sport in Russia at that time and in the eternal Russian fear of colds and rheumatism. Vitkovskaia

¹⁰⁶ Mukhanov, 'Sydney', pp. 296-297; Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 118; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, pp. 118-119; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 102, no. 12, 1882, pp. 457-458, 487, no. 9, 1883, pp. 224, 230, 233-235; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 218, 225, 232, 234, 272.

obviously perceived the Australians' casual behaviour on the beach through the eyes of a European who mostly 'sat' at the beach, not really swimming or walking barefoot on the sand.

Food and meals

The Russians continued to note a number of traditional English features in table etiquette: that the beginning of the meal was announced by a bell or gong; that grace was said before the meal; that husband and wife sat at opposite sides of the table; that in households which had servants it was usual for them to approach the table only at the beginning and end of each course. But in contrast to previous years, a note of disapproval has begun to creep into Russian descriptions of Australian table manners.

It seems that excessive formality was the cause. Vitkovskaia wrote, for example, that before lunch, 'although all were assembled, the hostess rang the bell'. Similarly, the Government Administrator of the Northern Territory, Dashwood,

alone, surrounded only by the natives of Port Darwin, could not sit down at the table without wearing his white dinner jacket and sounding the gong.

In Adelaide Tsimmerman noticed how sedately hotel guests behaved at dinner,

from time to time exchanging a few words, though only in a whisper, ... [while] waiters in formal attire and shiny buttons served the dishes in a variety of elaborate containers on silver trays, and all this only to feed you with an ordinary roast beef or mutton and potatoes.

He was also surprised that breakfast, lunch and dinner were served only at specific times, with the result that cafes and restaurants became deserted during other hours of the day. This feature especially struck travellers from Russia where taverns and tea-rooms were full of people from morning to night.

As for the quality of the local cuisine, it was discussed only by Vitkovskaia, who criticized English cooking with its 'pitiful soups', 'leather-like roast beef' and 'leaden puddings'. It is interesting that Vitkovskaia and her brother referred to the only dish that they liked as an 'Australian dish'. This was a pear compote with steamed rice crowned with a 'splendid, thick, quite Russian country cream'.¹⁰⁷ Thus, even in regard to food,

¹⁰⁷ Mukhanov, 'Sydney', p. 305; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', pp. 126-127; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 106; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 88, 106, no. 12, 1882, p. 474; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 194, 209, 211, 234-235, 243, 260, 324.

Russian consciousness began to oppose negative English and positive Australian lifestyles.

In the 1860s and 1870s the Russians constantly remarked on wide-spread drunkenness in the colonies. D. wrote that

For a glass of grog a colonist [in South Australia] is ready to endure fire and water. Even in Mother-Russia I have not seen such addiction to drunkenness as I met among the working class of the colony.

Timrot in 1863 was not so critical, mentioning that although this vice was prominent 'one does not see many drunks or notice the harmful consequences of drunkenness' because of the dry climate and ample animal food in the diet. Nevertheless, even in 'polite society', at receptions in their honour the Russians noticed that alcohol was consumed in tremendous amounts. Rudnev in 1882 wrote that 'before the beginning of every speech each speaker made sure that the glasses were drained and once again filled'.¹⁰⁸

Cities

Australian cities - their character, style and tempo of life - were one of the favourite themes of Russian visitors. In Russia and elsewhere in Europe centuries-old cities were inhabited not by their founders but by their distant descendants; their traditions, geography and physical and emotional structures had acquired an independent, evolving nature. In Australia the situation was quite different, since the Russians visited them at a time when the cities still were inhabited by the society that had created them: 'City with citizens older than it', was how Vitkovskaia spoke of Melbourne and Tsimmerman said the same about Adelaide.

With regard to the colonial capitals, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart, the first question that occupied them was whether they were English cities. The answer obviously could be rather subjective as each Russian had his own image of an English town. Nevertheless about each of these cities one or another Russian traveller declared confidently that 'this is an English city'. Moreover, it seems that 'English' here carries,

¹⁰⁸ Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 184; Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii', p. 716; D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 144; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 105. It is ironical that a hundred years later Australian (and other 'Western') visitors to the USSR constantly complained about this practice as 'Russian'.

consciously or subconsciously, negative meanings. Let us examine the sub-conscious element in V. Linden's description of Hobart. Entering the harbour on the *Boiarin* in 1870 he admired 'country-cottages and farms surrounded by gardens, groves and parti-coloured fields scattered along the slopes of the hills', the city gleaming white far off, and Mount Wellington covered with clouds. After that he gives someone's opinion that Hobart's setting is reminiscent of Geneva. And here his sympathetic tone suddenly changes:

As soon as you step on the shore you are struck with the completely English character of the place. In the city there are no buildings which could pretend to elegant or majestic architecture.

Thus we see indirectly what Linden's opinion of an English city was. Tsimmerman is even more direct: Adelaide 'is as if completely transferred here from some English county'. And in the next phrase he remarks that the 'architecture of the houses, or rather absence of any architecture, ... is brought from England'.

It seems that the Russians were disappointed by the Englishness of Australian cities, but it would be unjust to ascribe this dissatisfaction to Anglophobia alone, although this might have been a factor. To do them justice, the Russians' Anglophobia was not absolute. When they described Melbourne the comparison with London was positive. Mertsalov in 1862 predicted that in a few decades Melbourne would turn into a 'second London', while Tsimmerman in 1882 already asserted that Collins Street and some other main streets were not inferior to streets in London.

The reasons for the Russians' disappointment are probably deeper than simple Anglophobia. Departing for Australia they expected to see there something new and unusual; that is why their disappointment at seeing such ordinary, traditional cities was so strong. It is not by chance that they describe Australian cities as 'quite European'. These moods are well represented by A. Linden in 1863:

On someone who left Europe not long ago [Melbourne] will not make a striking impression; it has neither originality nor that local colour that, it seems, would be so natural to expect in Australia. It is a completely European city.

Similar feelings, but more peevish, are expressed by Vitkovskaia:

Well, we have seen Adelaide and have the right to say that we have visited Australia. But so what? There was nothing special, the city was a city and the

people were people.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the Russian visitors would have thought better, as other Russians did, of American cities which had more distinctive features.

But we would form the wrong idea if we thought that the Russian visitors did not like Australian cities. On the contrary, unrealized expectations to find 'local colour' were compensated by the advantages of finding a modern 'European city' at the world's end. The officers of the Russian Pacific detachment who spent the main part of their service in the Far East, China, Japan and South-Eastern Asia felt this especially strongly. A. Linden, who was disappointed with Melbourne at first, concluded: 'I was very glad that Melbourne for a time made me forget China and reminded me of Europe'. Mertsalov, one of the first Russians to describe Melbourne, had the same feeling in 1862: 'After experiencing such raw impressions [in the ports of the East], in Melbourne I feel as if I am in a completely new world'. Nebogatov remarked thirty years later: 'Melbourne is a completely European city ... even better than the capitals of minor European states'.¹¹⁰

Describing Australian cities the Russians, like many other visitors, were almost unanimous in their admiration of the broad, straight streets of Melbourne, Adelaide and even Darwin, and in their disapproval of the narrow, irregular, crooked, winding streets of Sydney. It was in the streets of Sydney that they noticed dust, mud and slush. Now, of course, the old centre of Sydney, the Rocks and surrounding streets, has become one of the main sightseeing attractions of the city, its soul, but in the nineteenth century these fascinating streets probably seemed too European to excite sympathy. The Russians also were impressed to find that Melbourne, Adelaide and Darwin were not hastily built, but according to a plan that took into account forecast needs, and even the unfinished buildings they perceived as a sign of a great future, although, according to Ukhtomskii and Nebogatov, during the economic crisis of the 1890s this flurry of building proved to have surpassed real needs.

The advanced technology of Australian cities attracted the Russians. As early as 1862 Mertsalov wrote that Melbourne

109 Viitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 188, 200; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 88, 90, no. 12, 1882, p. 478; Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', p. 122; Linden, 'Zametki', p. 170.

110 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 170; Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 181; Nebogatov, 'Raport', p. 201.

contains everything that has been created by civilization and enlightenment: ... railways, electric telegraphs, luxurious gas lighting, a water supply costing millions, and splendid buildings.

In 1896 Collins Street in Melbourne even reminded Vitkovskaia of an American city. Attention to this aspect was not by chance, as Russia was slow to adopt new Western technology which in any case could not easily be included in its already formed city structures.

As for urban landscape, apart from some negative appraisals connected with the Englishness of the architecture, Russian opinion was in general positive, and sometimes even enthusiastic. Tsimmerman admired the fact that townspeople 'did not stint on public buildings'. The Russians' descriptions of Adelaide and Melbourne often emphasized the themes of youth, novelty, freshness, and festivity. D. in 1871 wrote: 'Adelaide is a beautiful city ... it has a festival appearance ... all looks new and smart'. 'White and clean' Adelaide also made 'a merry impression' on Vitkovskaia. She had an even more favourable opinion about Melbourne, which left 'an impression of youth, freshness and strength; there are no old buildings there; all is new, all shines, all is full of life.' Such an impression was supported by the 'extroversion' of city life mentioned above, by the boisterous city streets, and the feverish, tireless movement.¹¹¹

Joining the on-going debate, visiting Russians continued to compare Sydney and Melbourne. They wrote in 1863 that 'Melbourne already belongs to the list of the world's enchanting towns' and 'undoubtedly longs to be the heart, the capital of Australia'. It seemed to the Russians that in every respect Melbourne was superior to Sydney, with its narrow and irregular streets, where 'handsome buildings were flanked by two-storey jerry-built structures',

there were not such excellent theatres, shops, lighting in Sydney as in Melbourne, and Sydney was lacking the inexhaustible, feverish vitality of Melbourne.

They decided that the reasons why, with the establishment of Melbourne, Sydney 'had been noticeably relegated to the background' were that Sydney had been founded 'forcibly', 'by administrative order' and 'it had more reminders of the European way of life, which accorded strangely with the needs of this youthful society, full of

¹¹¹ Mertsalov, 'Korabel'nyi', p. 182; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 188, 192, 200; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 95; D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 144.

exuberance'. Tsimmerman in 1881-1882 contrasted the 'democratic, wide-ranging, original' atmosphere of Melbourne with the 'prematurely aged' city of Sydney. Thus, Sydney - which had 'nothing reminiscent of a young capital about it' - 'fell short' of what the Russians 'had been led to expect'.¹¹²

This opposition between Sydney and Melbourne existed in their perceptions even on a linguistic and sub-conscious level. While comparisons with European (even English) cities in regard to Melbourne usually had a positive connotation, in regard to Sydney European features were viewed negatively. Thus the travellers' expectations that Melbourne would surpass Sydney resulted in contrasting interpretations of the merit of appearing 'European'.

In the Russian image of Sydney we may notice one more interesting polarity. One centre of Sydney was perceived as the city itself (George and Pitt Streets), another was Port Jackson. Such a dichotomy, it seems, did not exist at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, when the small town, spreading from Sydney Cove, was a unified whole on the level of both perception and function. Nor does this dichotomy exist now when the central part of Port Jackson, the Rocks and the central city streets are perceived as the unified centre of a big city. In the second half of the nineteenth century the situation was quite different: the centre of the city - George Street, the Town Hall, the General Post-Office - was removed from Port Jackson and seen as something independent. At that time the Russians perceived Port Jackson not as the nucleus but as the entry gates to the city proper. Port Jackson elicited delight and their highest praise. The sailors compared it to Sebastopol, which they used to consider the best port in the world, but now they had to admit that Port Jackson was better than Sebastopol. Tsimmerman thought it was a 'marvellous bay, surpassing any painting', while Vitkovskaia considered it 'a subject of pride for any true Sydneysider'. Evidently the first question addressed to newcomers was 'not about health or safety on the voyage, but how they liked Port Jackson'.

Occasionally historical events or personal traumas brought forth unusually strong

¹¹² Popov, 'Iz vlechenie', p. 37; Mukhanov, 'Sydney', p. 298; Linden, 'Zametki', p. 191; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, p. 373; J. Davidson, ed., *The Sydney-Melbourne Book*, Sydney a.o., 1986, pp. 3, 4, 47-49, 58.

reactions to Australia's rival cities. Admiral Aslanbegov became the object of an anti-Russian campaign that deeply offended him. Perhaps as a consequence he saw Melbourne in the worst light: Government House seemed to him 'a heavy and ugly building' and its huge hall 'reminded one of a barracks'. 'Mooring in Melbourne's harbour roads [was] very unpleasant'. His general assessment was unsympathetic:

Whether it was because we expected from stories about Melbourne to find it better, more impressive or because we came in the dead season of summer, i. e. in January, it made an impression far from that for which we were prepared.

Nevertheless Aslanbegov, aware of the rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne, in his public speech flattered Melbournites by avowing that he 'considered Melbourne the capital of Australia'.¹¹³ In general, as we have seen above, the Russians' attitude towards the rivalry between Australian cities was quite ironic.

The Russian naval officers and travellers visited not only capital cities but provincial towns. From Melbourne they made trips to Ballarat and Bendigo, from Sydney to Bathurst, from Brisbane to the towns of the Darling Downs. Miklouho-Maclay visited inland Queensland and northern New South Wales. Tsimmerman made special trips by rail and coach to the interior of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. Why, the locals asked with puzzlement, did he want to examine the country towns?

What interest can there possibly be in visiting the newly built towns with their shacks in the middle of empty country where there is not even a reasonable hotel? However, for anyone who wants to acquaint themselves with the region, it is exactly these towns, in different phases of development, which are more curious than any monuments and architectural sightseeing.

Ballarat and Bendigo made the most favourable impression on the Russians. As early as 1863 they were impressed that in Ballarat 'the main street already boasts big stone buildings'. 'The stylish buildings' on Ballarat's main street in Tsimmerman's view were 'almost the equals of similar buildings in Melbourne'. He described Ballarat and Bendigo as 'typical Australian towns' which 'have a face of their own, their own peculiar character that by no means looks like an imitation of anything else'. Thus, 'that Australian originality' which the capital cities lacked, the Russians finally found in the gold-mining

¹¹³ Popov, 'Iz vlechenie', p. 38; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, p. 379; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 202, 205; Aslanbegov, 'Raport', pp. 177, 179; *Age*, 10 February 1882, p. 3.

towns.¹¹⁴

The Russians, and especially Tsimmerman, described a number of small towns of the inner regions and coastal settlements (Bathurst, Deniliquin and Albury in New South Wales, Echuca and Seymour in Victoria, Gawler, Tanunda, Truro, Kapunda and Morgan in South Australia, Albany in Western Australia, Launceston and George Town in Tasmania and also the township on Thursday Island). The immediate and strongest impression was that even very new and small settlements had 'all the necessities for quite a civilized life': a church, school, hotel, bank branch, a few shops, pharmacy, post-office, telegraph, artisan workshops and, as Tsimmerman put it, 'the inevitable', 'inescapable Mechanics' Institute with reading-room and library'. Often such a township had its own newspaper as well.

In the bushland between Echuca and Deniliquin he discovered an infant township which in spite of half-built wooden houses already could boast of 'a hotel, a grocer's shop, the shacks of a bootmaker and a saddler'. Lang in 1886 wrote that George Town, 'consisting of several houses, had a bank and a considerable library'. Vitkovskaia in 1896 mentioned that in spite of the modest size of the township on Thursday Island it had three hotels, one of which was 'much too decent for such a god-forsaken place'.

Like earlier Russian visitors Tsimmerman admired the advantages of building towns according to a plan. Initially it seemed to him that in Morgan, just founded on one bank of the Murray river, 'all the buildings were scattered ... in complete disorder'. But looking more closely he discovered that

the city is laid out very well, its future streets are marked out with posts, and the fronts of all the houses are turned towards the future pavements.

Indeed, he enthused,

due to such a system, new towns are well-proportioned and are distinguished by their straight streets, extraordinary order and model cleanliness.

But country life was not perfect! The quiet, sleepy life of the Australian outback lacked the dynamism of similar American settlements:

Here there is not ... that tireless activity, which one would expect to find in a youthful territory. The residents act as if they have finally settled down and allowed

¹¹⁴ 'Pis'mo s fregata *Svetlana*', p. 85; Mukhanov, 'Avstraliia', p. 114; Linden, 'Zametki', pp. 180-181; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 7, 1883, pp. 92, 93, 100, 101.

themselves a well deserved rest after a long hard life of work They are not obsessed by the American restless urge to move *forward*.

He was ironic as well towards the provincial towns' pretensions 'to imitate the capital in everything and as far as possible to keep up with it'.¹¹⁵

Finally the Russians noticed some distinctive Australian patterns of urban settlement. The Australians tended to follow the English custom of dividing big cities in two parts: a business and trade centre, and suburbs with individual cottages. But even in this pattern the Russians noticed some tendencies specific to Australia. Vitkovskaia mentioned the tendency among Sydneysiders to dwell not in Sydney itself, 'where accommodation is very expensive', but in the suburbs where they could 'enjoy all the pleasures of country life and not in the least lose the comfort of city life'. Tsimmerman considered the decentralization and self-government of Melbourne's suburbs to be desirable. Such an organization of city and suburbs seemed better than that of Russia's capitals, 'which occupied huge territories where both the centre and remote suburbs were under the jurisdiction of the same town council'.

Russian visitors also continued to gaze longingly at the 'smart' and 'merry' Australian cottages surrounded by tidy little gardens which reminded them of the Russian *dacha*.¹¹⁶ In Australia Russians were amazed to discover that the inhabitants of these dachas were workers and tradespeople. Timofeevskii in 1882 contrasted these individual cottages with 'the congested, dirty and unhygienic lodgings' which were packed closely together in large European cities.

At the same time the traditionalism and especially the Englishness of Australian buildings provoked the ire of visitors from Russia. Tsimmerman especially criticized locals for continuing to build in the same fashion as the English did at home - with total disregard to the local warm climate and conditions. Nevertheless by the end of the nineteenth century Russians began to notice some specific features of Australian architecture, for example sun-shielding awnings over foot paths and the use of corrugated

¹¹⁵ Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, pp. 444-445, 449-450, 455, 456, 459-460, no. 7, 1883, pp. 98, 104-107, no. 8, 1883, pp. 351, 369, 371; Tsimmerman, *Puteshestvie vokrug sveta*, p. 44; V.I. Lang, 'Kliper "Vestnik". Vypiska iz opisaniia portov Avstralii, Tasmanii ...' [The clipper *Vestnik*. Extract of the descriptions of the ports of Australia, Tasmania...], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 218, no. 1, section 2, 1887, p. 8; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 278.

¹¹⁶ A *dacha* was a country or summer house and in Russia only the well-off people could afford to have one

iron. The archetypical Australian feature - the veranda - was noticed only by Tsimmerman. He also noticed that whereas Russians usually had their chimney-stove in the middle of the dwelling to conserve heat, Australian houses had their chimney on an outside wall. Russians noticed another English tradition, the rather formal structuring of internal space and the central role of the sitting-room.¹¹⁷

Thus, in distinction to the unreserved enthusiasm of the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Russians' descriptions of Australian cities became more varied and can tell us a lot about their perception of the local society as well. They considered as negative features the absence of 'local colour' and the transplanting to Australian soil of the outmoded traditional features of an English or European city. In contrast, they approved of modern technological achievements and town planning for future needs. They especially admired the fact that even small settlements provided their citizens with all the necessities of civilization - features of which many Russian towns could not boast at that time. It is likely that the Russians kept the modern American city as an ideal image when they analyzed Australian cities.

An analysis of the peculiarities of the Russians' negative judgements in Sydney or Hobart and the 'Englishness' of the settlements in general helps us to comprehend the significant changes in the scale of values in the aesthetic sphere of a modern man. The English or European features that provoked the Russians' criticism are now generally noticed but not denounced by observers, while the American features have ceased to appeal.

Education and culture

The Russian visitors had no special interest in the system of education in the Australian colonies (except, perhaps, Tsimmerman, who when young had been a professional teacher). Nevertheless in their writings they gave a rather interesting appraisal of the level of education in the colonies. The participants in the expedition on the *Bogatyr* in 1863 were, it seems, impressed by public education in the colonies. Timrot

¹¹⁷ Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 212; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 88, no. 7, 1883, pp. 73-74, 101, 110, no. 8, 1883, p. 373-374; Timofeevskii, 'Mel'burn'.

noted that in Victoria and New South Wales 'a lot was already done and even more is planned' for children's education and settlers' instruction. The Russians praised popular education highly, and the large numbers of students, and the high literacy rate. Mukhanov especially stressed that among students 'the numbers are almost equally divided between boys and girls'.

Tsimmerman, nineteen years later, was more definite in his appraisals. With sympathy he wrote about the complete separation between school and church in South Australia and about religious toleration there. That was one of the few features of this colony of which he really approved. On a general level, he praised public education in Australia and the government's support of it, considering that 'the standard of education in the colonies is nearly as high as in England'. But the fact that the colonies retained 'antiquated English methods of teaching, distinguished by extreme formality' provoked his absolute condemnation. His visit to Hobart's High School contributed to this persuasion. Its shabby interior, poor level of instruction, and especially the teaching of Latin (pronounced in the English way!) to enable students to enter English universities, brought Tsimmerman to the conclusion that

no independent system of education has emerged in the young country and the local schools slavishly follow the long out-moded methods of English so-called classical education.

With some disappointment the Russians noticed that Australian universities had replicated the quaint customs of English institutions. A. Linden wrote in 1863 that students at the University of Melbourne 'had already succeeded, imitating ancient English models, in arraying themselves in surplices and rectangular hats'. Mukhanov considered as the main merit of the University of Sydney the rule that

there should be no role for the various religious denominations and that not one clergyman was to be amongst the professors. This liberal ruling has given to Sydney University from the very beginning a direction infinitely better than that which exists at Oxford and Cambridge, those survivors of mediaeval prejudice and outmoded caste distinction.

Tsimmerman also condemned the use of English models in university education, considering that 'the local university education cannot be compared with a European one'. And even Vitkovskaia, who observed the University of Melbourne only from the outside, condemned the same Englishness: 'the university building is built in an archaic style with

the obvious intention of imitating English colleges'.¹¹⁸

Miklouho-Maclay was the first to pay attention to the attitude to science in the Australian colonies. Interviewed by the Ukrainian newspaper *Kievlianin* in 1886, he remarked that

while science was in its infancy in the Australian colonies, scholars are regarded with great respect. The words 'for scientific purposes' can overcome all obstacles.¹¹⁹

The Russians appreciated another peculiarity of cultural life - the accessibility of books and culture for all classes of society, and the importance of books and the press in the colonists' life. Tsimmerman mentioned that the numerous newspapers were 'in this country like daily bread for everyone from bankers to day labourers'. Timrot in 1863 noticed that 'for adult education, in many areas of [Victoria] public lectures are available in the evenings when it is convenient for workers'. Tsimmerman, acquainting Russian readers with the Mechanics Institutes in the Australian outback, described them as an inevitable feature of any Australian settlement 'however young and small', and observed that in the evenings they were filled especially with 'working-people' who read newspapers and various popular publications. Popular literature was abundant in Melbourne and Tsimmerman saw its numerous readers in the Book Arcade (a combination of a book-shop and a reading room) and in the Public Library. The colonies' open libraries and educational opportunities were in stark contrast to England's, where reading and formal education were enjoyed mainly by a privileged elite, Tsimmerman considered.¹²⁰

Vitkovskaia was the first among the Russians to pay attention to the museums and galleries of Melbourne and Sydney, to the formation of an Australian national culture. While she gave the elaborate building of the Melbourne Museum and Art Gallery its due, Vitkovskaia was devastating about the art collection it housed.

118 Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii', pp. 711, 715; Linden, 'Zametki', p. 181; Mukhanov, 'Sydney', pp. 298-299; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, p. 101, no. 7, 1883, p. 84, no. 8, 1883, pp. 363-365, 376; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, p. 199; Govor, 'Tasmania', pp. 158-159.

119 *Kievlianin*, 21 May 1886, p. 2.

120 Timrot, 'O zagranichnom plavanii', p. 711; D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 144; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 9, 1882, pp. 109-110, no. 12, 1882, pp. 445, 450, 475-476, no. 7, 1883, pp. 93, 107; Tsimmerman, *Puteshestvie vokrug sveta*, p. 58.

An elegant round hall was allotted to sculpture. In the centre stands in all its glory a statue of Prince Albert Only a few among the statues and busts overstep the bounds of mediocrity; the former repeat classical themes in the form of awkward Venuses and Dianas, the latter represent carved images of High Persons; Queen Victoria in her youth and at other ages plays the main part here.

She had an even more depressing opinion of the painting collection there. After visiting some museums she had the feeling 'that the young town wanted to say: "We are no worse than the others"'.¹²¹

Vitkovskaia was more appreciative of the Art Gallery of New South Wales despite the fact that its building reminded her of a barn. Here at last Vitkovskaia discovered the paintings of Australian artists. She considered their paintings to be very patriotic as they were almost exclusively devoted to local sights: Sydney bays, sheep shearing, and the Blue Mountains. Vitkovskaia noticed their inclination to impressionism and water-colours. In general she thought that Australian art was just taking its first steps and that the art galleries were still dominated by the paintings of foreign artists (some of whom even had Russian names). But one interesting and progressive feature of Australian cultural life was the system (established in 1894) of travelling exhibitions which journeyed between the art galleries of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.¹²¹

The Russian visitors, especially the officers, were interested in colonial entertainments and especially in theatre and the opera. But they saw these cultural experiments with the eyes of snobbish Europeans who had seen much better in their homeland and who, though appreciating their popularity with the masses, did not fully understand the generous spirit with which Australian audiences welcomed artistic events. In a condescending tone A. Linden wrote in 1863 that the Melbourne public 'was not notable for refined taste and preferred light plays and farces to serious dramatic works'. V. Linden in 1870, after visiting the performance of the local Italian opera in Sydney, observed that Sydneysiders 'were completely delighted', although the prima donna and the tenor 'would not suit even the second roles in Petersburg'. Vitkovskaia was deeply impressed by an organ concert by the Belgian organist Wiegand in the Town Hall at Sydney. But while 'marvellous, tender' *voix celestes* excited in her heart 'a thrill of delight' and 'involuntary tears', the public, to her bewilderment, expressed its emotions

121 Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 198, 200, 230.

in a very peculiar style: 'they applauded little, rather they thumped, and thumped with bitterness their walking-sticks and umbrellas'. Another concert at the Town Hall disappointed the Vitkovskies:

the 'world-renowned', according to the playbill, performers ... had weak voices and sang only so-so It seemed very strange that in a city such as Sydney there was no good orchestra.

Konstantin Vitkovskii, a brilliant musician himself, whether joking or serious, felt sorry that 'he had no cello with him, otherwise he would have given a concert at once to demonstrate how to play'. The Russian sailors had grounds to be proud observing the crowds of listeners attracted by performances given on the shore by the Russian naval brass bands (ill. 18), whose standard of performance, in comparison with that of the Australians, was very high.

It seems that only the Melbourne singer Nellie Stewart won the hearts of the officers from the Russian squadron in 1882. Timofeevskii remembered that many times the Russians attended the opera 'Olivetta' in which she was starring and finally were honoured with the visit of 'charming Nellie' to their ships.¹²²

Thus in the sphere of education and culture the Russians approved of the democratic principles of the Australian educational system and culture, the supportive attitude of the authorities to the education of the working classes and to science. In this respect the Australian colonies differed from Russia with its strict social stratification in the education system and extremely low literacy rate, and even from Britain itself. The Russians' most negative appraisals were provoked by what they saw as blind imitation of English old-fashioned ways in education. But the provincialism of Australian society was also obvious to the Russians in the performing and visual arts, one of the few areas in which they undoubtedly felt superior.

122 Linden, 'Zametki', p. 189; Linden, 'Iz pis'ma', p. 12; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 220, 227; Timofeevskii, 'Mel'burn'. Nellie Stewart (1858-1931) by 1882 had already toured England and the USA and was a rising star of the Melbourne stage. It is interesting that a Melbourne newspaper alleged that the Russian Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich, who visited Melbourne aboard the *Rynda* in 1888, lost his heart to Nellie. In a letter to his mother he wrote: 'They made a mistake, it was not me but [prince] Putiatin, still it is funny'. (State Archive of the Russian Federation, fond 645, op. 1, d. 70, f. 4. This information was kindly provided by Massov). Nellie herself preserved warm memories of her romance with 'a *real*' Russian prince who wanted to marry her: 'I often wonder what would have become of me had I married the prince and gone to Russia. I heard later that he was killed in one of the squadrons during the war. He had never married...' N. Stewart, *My Life's Story*, Sydney, 1923, pp. 64-65, Putiatin's photo opposite p. 62.

Aborigines

The number of encounters by Russian visitors with Australian Aborigines decreased in the second half of the nineteenth century; at the same time the Russians' interest in their tragic fate sharpened. The visitors continued to dwell on their 'pitiful' (*zhalkii*) nature. In the Russian language this word has two shades of meaning - both compassionate and contemptuous. The context of the writings suggests that as a rule when Russians applied this word to Aborigines they felt compassion. This was stimulated partly by the wide-spread persuasion that Aborigines were at the earliest stage of human culture. 'Our Amur Giliaks [Nivkhs] are progressists [sic] in comparison with these wild creatures', T.G. wrote about Northern Territory Aborigines in 1871, stressing their hostility and reluctance to work. Vitkovskaia recorded:

According to the English colonists the natives are completely incapable of being educated, ... Australians are considered even lower than animals.

But she herself could not accept such an appraisal:

I do not know how far this is true; in any case I believe that if the natives did have aspirations and abilities for development, it would not be the English who would channel these aspirations and apply these abilities toward education.

However, Vitkovskaia probably wrote this because of her belief that the English did not consider other people as human beings, rather than out of sympathy for the Aborigines.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the main focus of the Russian visitors was European-Aboriginal relations and the extermination of Aborigines. The Russians seemed to believe that the destruction of 'the pitiful, weak, defenceless race' of the Aborigines in the face of 'the progressive movement of civilization' was inevitable. Mukhanov was the only Russian visitor who thought that the English had a right to claim the land; but he also noticed that the colonists had to take Aboriginal land 'by force' and that 'the banks of the Parramatta became the scene of a bloody drama'. He concluded: 'civilization did not extend to pitiful people [i.e. natives] ... they disappeared from the district'.¹²³

It was more usual for the Russians to condemn the brutality and cruelty of the

¹²³ This text published in Fitzhardinge's translation has some mistakes which change its sense.

English colonizers, in their appropriation of Aboriginal land. V. Linden, after his visit in 1870 to Tasmania, where 'the last of the natives was soon to die', reflected that the Tasmanian Aborigines initially were 'completely harmless' and it was the colonists' atrocities that had provoked their revenge. While the actions of George Augustus Robinson, who managed to ship the remnants of the Tasmanians to Flinders Island, were at that time considered positive, Linden drew attention to their negative side:

Robinson, in describing his exploits, claims that he used only his powers of persuasion on the natives. It was hardly so. It was not persuasion that made the indigenous Tasmanians leave their native forests - it was their hopeless situation. If they had known what awaited them, they would doubtless have chosen to die of hunger like hunted beasts in their dens, rather than to yield to Robinson's persuasions. Their life on Flinders Island was no better than imprisonment.

Ten years later Tsimmerman wrote with the same indignation about the bloody colonization of Tasmania:

One is in doubt as to who were the barbarians - the English administration with its free settlers and convicts or the uncivilized black indigenous peoples. Before the court of history, the latter will certainly be acquitted, not only because of their lack of responsibility, but even more because their actions were in self-defence, protecting themselves and their families and the land they had peacefully occupied for many centuries before the uninvited civilized invaders.

Tsimmerman spared neither 'the nation which has pretensions to represent modern civilization around the globe', nor 'the tender-hearted missionaries, assisted in the final extermination' of the Tasmanians. Tsimmerman found similar atrocities outside Tasmania. Around a campfire near Morgan he conversed with drovers, who told him how they had got rid of importunate natives using poisoned flour. 'All this was told with extreme cynicism, as if it were a matter of poisoning gluttonous rats', Tsimmerman reflected.

He recognized that land ownership was the crux of the European-Aboriginal conflict. Comparing the attitudes towards land of the Aborigines and Russian peasants he was surprised to discover that neither 'had the faintest notion of private ownership; land like air, in their opinion, cannot belong to one person nor be the object of sale and purchase'. He condemned the British government which did not bother to take into consideration the natives' interests and which declared the land as its own property, rather than the colonists who purchased Aboriginal land for a few knives and blankets.

The English brutalities towards the Aborigines horrified even Rudnev, who in his

memoirs rarely discussed serious questions. With unconcealed sarcasm he wrote about the *Afrika's* visit to Albany in 1882:

We were told that the civilized conquerors of Australia, if they need to enlarge their properties, proceed in parties ... to the nearest villages to clear the land in accordance with established custom, which consists in the following:

Members of the expedition descend on the villages, burn them, and without exception shoot the inhabitants, young and old alike. The combination of the agreeable with the useful - a picnic and land clearance.

Here, near Albany, Russian officers from the *Afrika* participated in a kangaroo hunt which probably provided the background for a short story, 'Kangaroo hunt', signed by Al. L-va and published in the popular magazine *Nature and People (Priroda i liudi)* in 1901. It was one of the first Russian stories about Australia in which fact and fiction were interlaced. The heroes of the story, Russian sailors, invited on a kangaroo hunt, witnessed the barbaric massacre of an Aboriginal settlement, perpetrated by their hosts because of their unjust suspicion that the natives had kidnapped one of the hunters. Only after the massacre did it become clear that the wounded hunter had been saved by the Aborigines. The sailors were indignant that their Christian hosts could take 'blood vengeance on an entire savage people' for the sake of one white man. The story-teller concluded:

It is true, that in [Russia] natives have far from a sweet life and in many cases these wretches are doomed to disappearance But still in [Russia] even in the most extreme times no one stooped to 'hunt for two-legged game', as the English say when they talk about chasing the poor savages.

During the 1870s and 1880s Miklouho-Maclay took a number of practical steps to prevent the extermination of the Aborigines of Australia and Oceania. These questions he discussed in a letter to Sir Arthur Gordon, High Commissioner of the Western Pacific. In his comments, published in Russia, Miklouho-Maclay revealed that the colonists of northern Australia in punishment for a stolen horse 'killed as many blacks as they could manage'. He considered as Pharisaism the attempts of the British government to be a just enemy and prevent only excesses. 'Rescue the remnant!', - 'possibly not without intention' was declared too late 'when there was almost nobody to save'. He concluded that his exhortations to spare natives 'for the sake of justice and philanthropy' looked like 'an appeal to sharks not to be so voracious!'.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Mukhanov, 'Sydney', pp. 301, 303; Linden, 'Zametki', p. 175; T.G., 'Port Darwin', pp. 187, 189;

Thus, the extermination of the Aborigines contributed to the creation in the Russian consciousness of a negative image of the English colonizers, an image made more unattractive because the English claimed to represent progress and civilization.

Conclusion

The second half of the nineteenth century introduced a number of new features to the Russian visitors' perception of the Australian colonies. Their vision became more sophisticated: the visitors had turned from isolated observations to generalizations which sometimes were surprisingly accurate in spite of the shortness of their stay in Australia. While portraying life in the Australian colonies, the Russians' writings at the same time reflect the considerable changes in Russia itself: the emancipation of serfs in 1861; reforms in local government, the courts, finance and the military during the 1860s and 1870s; and the impact of the industrial revolution at the end of the century.

When the Russians discussed the Australian economy, they lauded a number of positive features that were lacking in Russia: dynamism, technological progress, and pride in local industry. Voluntarily or not the Russians paid attention to those features of the Australian economy which were relevant for Russia in the period of reforms, for instance, the question of land ownership and relations between labour and capital. The visitors' sympathies were evidently on the side of small-scale producers and the working classes. Already Russian voices began to praise the Australian colonies' policy aimed at improving the conditions of the working classes.

At the same time the peculiarities of the Russians' mentality and the visitors' social and cultural background determined their sceptical and mainly negative attitudes toward Australian parliamentary democracy. Though the visitors themselves were more supporters of democracy than absolutism they were unable to understand the functioning of democracy in Australia. Behind the external forms of democracy they could not see its

Linden, 'V Tikhom okeane', pp. 134-136; Miklouho-Maclay, 'Prebyvanie v Sidnee', pp. 442, 443; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe plavanie*, p. 118; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1882, pp. 331-333, no. 12, 1882, pp. 461-462, 467-469, no. 8, 1883, pp. 351-354, 362-363; Ukhtomskii, 'Raport ... 17 aprelia 1893 g.', p. 200; Vitkovskaia, *Krugom zemli*, pp. 187, 280-281, 284, 285, 289; 'Okhota na kenguru: Rasskaz iz avstraliiskoi zhizni' [The kangaroo hunt: a tale from Australian life], *Priroda i liudi*, nos 50-52, 1901.

essence. The Russians' understanding of the penal system was deeper; here they searched for and found the features which Russia could learn from. It is significant that among the main merits of the Australian system they considered the retention of prisoners' self-respect.

The Russians understood the issue of colonization quite well since Russia itself was a colonial power. The methods used in different Australian colonies were especially interesting for the Russians who, in this respect, did not perceive Australia as united but as a number of colonies with important distinctions between them. Only the colonization of Victoria elicited the Russians' approval because it was based not on land speculation, as in South Australia and Western Australia, not on the labour of convicts, as in New South Wales and Tasmania, but on the hard work of free producers. While the American way might seem an ideal for the Russians, Victoria was the colony which, in the Russian perception, was the closest to that model and the colony whose experience of development the Russians considered as most useful for themselves.

In this period the Russian visitors still did not see Australian society as democratic or free from class divisions, although they noticed some democratic trends which they associated with the formation of a new Australian nation. It is interesting that in the minds of Russian visitors the perception of Australians as a specific nation began relatively early, almost simultaneously with a similar process in the minds of the people of Australia themselves. At first the Russians used the term 'Australians' primarily to oppose the people of Australia to the English and the Europeans, then they used it in connection with their local problems and finally in describing their specific national qualities such as patriotism or hospitality. At the same time individuals were still perceived by the Russians as English.

Russian visitors to the Australian colonies naturally compared those communities to the three other models of society known to them - Russian, English and American. Comparisons with Russian society as a rule elicited in Russians either a feeling of their superiority or a realization that Russian institutions were far from perfect. For instance, the Russians witnessed racism and xenophobia in relation to Aborigines, Pacific Islanders and the Chinese. Behind their indignation about this racism lay realized or unrealized

feelings of superiority: we are not like that; we, in our relations with other peoples, do not behave with such brutality. Unfortunately that Russian belief was far from the reality. It seems that Miklouho-Maclay who passionately struggled for the rights of the natives of New Guinea and South Pacific and the other Russians who blamed the Australian colonists did not notice what was happening in their own country - in Siberia, in the Caucasus, in Central Asia, and beyond the Pale of settlement; did not notice the extermination of native minorities, colonial wars, the deprivation of rights of the Russian Jews, Jewish pogroms etc. Of course Russian censorship affected many Russian writings and in some cases we can discover a disguised criticism of the situation in Russia.

Comparisons with English society were somewhat distorted by a well-established stereotype of English life and customs. This stereotype, along with some positive features, had qualities alien to the Russian way of life. But, it is necessary to admit, it was dominated by negative features. The Russians were inclined to regard all the new features met with in the Australian colonies which differed from their view of England as positive; everything that seemed to them negative was ascribed to English influence. This tendency is especially evident in the Russian view of Australians as possessing positive, non-English characteristics. Certainly, this can be considered only as a tendency rather than an absolute, because in some cases the English features of Australian society elicited a positive appraisal.

And finally, comparisons with American society as a rule favoured America over the Antipodes. The Russian perception of American society was mainly positive: though English in origin, America had already lost many negative English features; it was a democracy; and it was technologically advanced. In Australian society the Russians observed more dependence on England - in politico-economic, psychological and cultural-ideological terms - than in American society. Thus, they rated American society higher as a young and modern country than the English-oriented Australian society. This tendency, however, had some telling exceptions. Russians approved of 'English' features such as adherence to the law in contrast to the spontaneity and anarchy of the American frontier.

The cause of the Russians' negativism towards English features in Australian life was not due to Anglophobia alone. Though Russian relations with England in the international arena were far from perfect there was a great deal of sympathy for Britain among Russian liberals and business circles. It would be inaccurate to speak about Anglophobia as a mass phenomenon in Russian society at this time. The explanation can be found in Russian society itself. At a time of reform and economic change the Russian liberal intelligentsia, to which most of the Russian visitors to Australia belonged, was constantly pondering Russia's future. America was the model for many of them. Coming to Australia the Russians expected to see a new country and an innovative society, as in America, and this pre-conception aggravated their hostility to all the 'Englishness' they met. Instead of a second America they often discovered here a second England in an inferior version. They probably did not consider all English features as negative but thought that they were good in their own place, i.e. in England. But in a new country they expected and hoped for a society as unique and special perhaps as the Australian land itself.

CHAPTER 4

RUSSIAN CONSULS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN-AUSTRALIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

This theme has only recently attracted the attention of Russian scholars. My research of 1985 was devoted to the Russian consuls' reports, published in the Russian press, and their attempts to further develop Russian-Australian trade.¹ Simultaneously V.P. Oltarzhevskii, a historian from Irkutsk, basing his research on the materials in the Archive of Russia International Politics (Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossii), began to study the history of the Russian consulate in Australia and New Zealand.² The activities of the Russian consulate in Australia were also discussed by Rudnitskii, Kim Malakhovskii, and recently in a doctoral thesis by Massov.³

The first Russian consular representatives in Australia were appointed in March 1857 in Melbourne and Sydney.⁴ This date can be considered as making the first step towards the establishment of Russian-Australian diplomatic relations. This was a period when the Russian government, after the defeat in the Crimean war (1854-1855), tried to manoeuvre its way out of international isolation. On the one hand it aimed to keep up contacts with Britain and its colonies; on the other hand Russia, to compensate for its weakened position in Europe, tried to become more active in the Pacific region. In this context the Australian colonies of Great Britain acquired a special importance as British

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- 1 E.V. Govor, 'Doneseniia russkikh konsulov v Avstralii kak istoricheskii istochnik' [The reports of Russian consuls in Australia as an historical source], in *Nauchnaia konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii, 16-aia. Programma*, Moscow, 1985, pp. 23-25; E.V. Govor, "'Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i torgovli" kak istochnik dlia izucheniia sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh otноshenii v Avstralii v 1886-1917 gg.' [The *Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin* as a source for studying socio-economic relations in Australia during the years 1886-1917], in *Nauchnaia konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii, 16-aia. Tezisy dokladov*, Moscow, 1985, pp. 1-5.
 - 2 V.P. Oltarzhevskii, 'Pervye postoiannye predstaviteli Rossii v Avstralii i Novoi Zelandii' [The first permanent Russian representatives in Australia and New Zealand], in *Rossii i strany Vostoka v seredine XIX - nachale XX vv.*, Irkutsk, 1984, pp. 45-52; V.P. Oltarzhevskii, 'Nachalo deiatel'nosti rossiiskogo konsul'stva v Mel'burne (Avstraliia)' [The early activity of the Russian consulate in Melbourne (Australia)], in *Problemy istorii Avstralii i Okeanii*, Irkutsk, 1990, pp. 26-45.
 - 3 Rudnitskii, *Drugaia zhizn' i bereg dal'nii*, pp. 36-37, 60-67; *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, pp. 31-32; Massov, *Stanovlenie i razvitie russko-avstraliiskikh sviazei (1807-1901 gg.)*, pp. 28-31.
 - 4 Mitchell Library, Manuscripts Section. Russia. Diplomatic and Consular Service. A2345, p. 4051; A2362, pp. 2292-2294.

outposts on the shores of the Pacific, which was now included by Russia in the sphere of its economic, political and strategical interests.⁵

Among the main tasks of the Russian consulates in Australia were permanent representation and protection of Russia's economic (first and foremost trade) interests in the Australian colonies and the rights of Russian subjects in Australia; and assisting Russian naval and merchant ships. For a long period the Russian consular representatives in Melbourne and Sydney were, in Russian terms, supernumerary (unofficial) and the men employed were honorary (supernumerary) consuls, local residents who received for their consular service only a tiny income in the form of consular fees. At that time this was the usual practice for places far away from Russia. A certain Russian, D., who lived in Adelaide, fostering the idea of establishing a Russian consulate in South Australia, in 1871 asserted:

I know a number of dignified persons in the city, who enjoy general respect and esteem, and I am sure that they, without any subsidies from the Russian government, would consider it the greatest honour and fortune to represent such a great nation as Russia, and would with pleasure pay 50 and even 100 pounds for the uniform assigned to this title in order to flaunt it at balls and official gatherings at the Governor's residence and at the opening of the parliamentary sessions.⁶

The first Russian consul in Melbourne was the Englishman James Damyon. Initially his official title was 'supernumerary vice-consul' and from 1875 to 1894 'supernumerary consul'. He was born in 1812. As a young man he had served in various Russian firms, mostly in Odessa, in the south of Russia.

To learn Russian ... he lived for a few months in the country with one of the village priests who offered their services as language tutors to foreigners, wrote Tsimmerman, who became intimate with Damyon during his stay in Melbourne in 1881. Damyon had a good command of spoken Russian and could even write it. In 1841 Damyon came to Australia, opened a trade commission business and soon became rich. He 'well and faithfully served' Russia for 36 years after 1857, without earning any income whatsoever from the Russian government. During his time, the Russian consulate was at the Customs House at the corner of Flinders and Market streets. As a result of a

5 The establishment of the first Russian consulates in Australia was only a part of a wider process during the 1850s and 1860s when Russian consular representation was established in Honolulu, Singapore and Hong Kong.

6 D., 'Tuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 145.

bank crisis in 1892, Damyon was ruined completely and his position of customs agent provided almost no income. In the last years of his life he became deaf and lived in poverty. In 1897, after submitting an application to the Tsar, he received an extraordinary allowance from Russia.⁷ Russian naval and merchant visitors greatly appreciated Damyon's assistance and in their memoirs left many kind words about him. In particular, he played an important role in defence of Admiral Aslanbegov's good name during the anti-Russian campaign in Australia in 1882. And certainly many Russian subjects living in Australia, 'friends in need' found in him 'a friend indeed'. They were, as Damyon described them, 'all men of the working class, ... chiefly Finns and Poles earning their bread by the sweat of their brows in agriculture or mining'.⁸ A similar role in Sydney was filled by businessman Edmund Monson Paul who from 1857 served as a supernumerary vice-consul and later as a consul.⁹

Russian-Australian trade, the assistance of which was within the scope of the Russian consul's activity, has its roots in the very beginning of the nineteenth century. Russian naval visitors often made considerable purchases of food and other material for their ships in Australia. As mentioned above, already at that time both Russians and Australians expressed a desire to encourage mutual trade. This early sphere of Russian-Australian contacts remains completely untouched and awaits specialist studies based on Russian and Australian materials. Fitzhardinge in her studies provided some details concerning this trade, particularly the names of Russian and Australian merchant ships which plied the trade routes between Australian ports and the Russian Far East and later to European Russia. However, the information about merchant voyages between Australian and Russian Far Eastern ports has to be regarded with caution.¹⁰ As for the

7 Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii (AVPRI), fond 184, op. 520, d. 820, ff. 104-105; Oltarzhevskii, 'Nachalo deiatel'nosti', pp. 26-27; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 482; 'A chat with the new Russian consul', *Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5; *Argus*, 4 January 1868, p. 6; *Melbourne directory*. 1882-1894.

8 *Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5.

9 *Ezhegodnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh del Rossii (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Year-book)*. 1861-1916; 'Obituary. [Edmund Monson Paul]', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 2 December 1914, p. 46.

10 Consul Paul in Sydney discovered in 1870 that some merchant captains were claiming to depart for Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski as a ploy to get a lower price on the markets, when in fact they were about to sail to San Francisco or Chile. V.Linden from the *Boiarin* in the same year found that although Australian statistics showed certain goods as being sold to Russia, in reality these goods had not been sent there.

Russian merchant ships, they were mainly Finnish vessels sailing under the Russian flag. They brought timber to Australia and carried Australian wool to Europe. Apparently Russian-Australian trade remained insignificant up to the 1890s. D. in 1871 wrote: 'You will find practically no Russian goods in Adelaide except for candles of the Nevskii factory, and even they are counterfeit'.¹¹ That they were 'counterfeit' is a curious statement. It seems that the Australian colonists so greatly valued Russian candles that the local producers, not relying on the patriotism of miners, who were the main consumers, preferred to stick Russian labels on locally-made candles.

As early as the 1870s the Russian press began to sound the alarm that Australia might become a dangerous competitor against Russia in the field of agricultural products. T.G., a Russian from Adelaide, in 1871 warned:

I am afraid that the cunning colonist in company with John Bull will invent some trick and begin to export wheat to England. Russia should be on the alert and not lose this constant consumer.

On the other hand A. Skal'kovskii's article on 'Russian wools and Australia' published in 1863 showed that some Russian jingoists at any rate, although aware of the expanding Australian wool market, tried to persuade Russians that 'Southern Russia... does not fear any competition in relation to merino wool' as Russian wool was the cheapest and the best.¹² But world markets did not agree. By 1880 a Russian reviewer complained in the magazine *World Illustration* (*Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*) that 'not more than ten years ago our south Russian sheep-breeders had to sell off their flocks because of competition from Australian wool'. Tsimmerman in 1882, after acquainting himself with the opinion of European wool brokers and Australian squatters, noticed that, although on the European markets Russian wool was valued lower than Australian, Australian squatters feared Russian competition. He himself, on the contrary, considered that Russia should be more anxious about the Australians. Russia, he wrote, should even worry about the wheat trade since recently

11 Fitzhardinge, *Russian-Australian Relations*, pp. 110-112, 114; Fitzhardinge, 'Russian naval visitors to Australia', pp. 142-143; Linden, 'Iz pis'ma', pp. 14-15; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 12, 1882, p. 482; D., 'Iuzhnaia Avstraliia', p. 145.

12 A. Skal'kovskii, 'Russkie shersti i Avstraliia' [Russian wools and Australia], *Narodnoe bogatstvo*, no. 3, 1863, p. 11.

the Russian grain merchants [have had] to carry on a struggle not only against the Americans, who already are winning over European markets, but also with the no less enterprising Australians.

An economist in the journal *Russian Review* (*Russkoe obozrenie*) in 1892 also considered Australia as a potential rival on the grain market, although he saw the main threats in American and Indian wheat.¹³

By the early 1890s the work of the Russian honorary consuls in Australia had increased considerably because of the growth in the number of Russian subjects and because of the expanding economic connections and associated problems. Now, as a reporter in the *Melbourne Age* put it in 1894, 'the Australian colonies have begun to bulk largely in Russian estimation'.¹⁴ Economic connections, begun as private initiatives by Finnish skippers or Australian merchants who often acted through middlemen, now entered a new phase on the international level. The Russian government felt that Australians acting as supernumerary consuls could no longer satisfy Russia's growing needs in the defence of trade interests and in the collection of information. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to establish regular consular representation in Melbourne and to send to Australia a professional Russian diplomat as Russia's first regular consul.

The Ministry chose for this post Aleksei Dmitrievich Putiata (or Poutiata) who arrived in Melbourne on 13 December 1893 to replace Damyon. The *Age* reporter, after a conversation with Putiata, concluded that he was 'one of the ablest men in the Russian diplomatic service'. Putiata was from the landed nobility in Smolensk province. His father served as a military governor of the Amur region. Aleksei Putiata was born in 1855, was a brilliant philological student in Moscow and Berlin, and since 1885 had been in the Russian diplomatic service. The *Age* reporter described him as

a dark gentleman of 40 years, and looking younger than his age. He is exceedingly affable and one of the literati, and can speak fluently in half a dozen languages, including English of course.

13 T.G., 'Port Darwin', p. 189; 'Vsemirnaia vystavka v Avstralii: Gorod Mel'burn', [The international exhibition in Australia: The city of Melbourne], *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*, no. 610, 1880, p. 207; Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii', no. 8, 1883, pp. 382-383; 'Rossiia kak postavshchitsa khleba v Zapadnuiu Evropu i ee konkurenty: Severnaia Amerika, Indii i Avstraliia' [Russia as a supplier of grain to Western Europe and her competitors: North America, India and Australia], *Russkoe obozrenie*, vol. 6, no. 11, 1892, pp. 468-470.

14 *Age*, 29 January 1894, p.5.

Amongst his literary works was the translation from Sanskrit into Russian of the drama *Sakuntala* by Kalidasa. While he considered humanist writer Leo Tolstoy a friend,¹⁵ nevertheless his political views were extremely reactionary, nationalistic and monarchist. Those views were not shared by most of the Russian intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth century. Such was the personality of the first Russian diplomat who was to change radically Russian-Australian relations.

During his first official visits to the Governor of Victoria Lord Hopetoun and to the premier and ministers of the government, Putiata stressed that his mission had neither a political nor a secret nature and was connected only with the Russian government's intention to acquaint itself with the socio-economic achievements 'of this young but already prosperous country'. In an interview he said:

You ask if Russia considers Australia a place of special importance. Yes, and I think it now occupies a position of importance in the estimation of the whole world. My mission is to gather information as to the possibilities of trade between the [Australian] colonies and Russia.

Putiata very energetically entered upon his mission. Oltarzhevskii's data show that over eleven months Putiata sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 35 reports covering all aspects of the life of the colonies. While he considered Victoria as the headquarters of his business, he had plans to travel extensively in all the colonies.¹⁶

Putiata also immediately planned a number of practical tasks. One of the first was to get Russia to send exhibits of its products and manufactured goods to an international exhibition in Hobart opening on 15 November 1894. Information on the possibility of marketing Russian goods in Australia was published in May 1894 in the *Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin* (*Vestnik finansov promyshlennosti i torgovli*), Russia's main periodical for businessmen and merchants. Putiata began his list of saleable items with the same candles about which D. wrote twenty years previously:

our candles have been known here for a long time and all miners want them. There is no genuine article available, and fakes with the Nevskii factory labels made in Melbourne are sold instead.

15 AVPRI, fond 159, op. 464, d. 2800a, ff. 1-4; *Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5; 'Death of the Russian Consul', *Age*, 17 December 1894, p. 5.

16 AVPRI, fond 184, op. 520, d. 692, ff. 14-15; *Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5; Oltarzhevskii, 'Nachalo deiatel'nosti', p. 30.

Putiata also mentioned goods such as timber, kerosene, oil, leather, textiles, rye flour, beer, sugar, soap and especially Russian 'table vodkas and different nalivkas [Russian kind of brandy]'. Putiata urged Russian businessmen to send goods for the exhibition, stressing that

The Australians are enthusiastic about the idea of organizing a Russian section at the exhibition. In general they are very sensible, practical and extremely amiable and obliging people.

It is significant that the Russian Department of Trade and Manufactures, in connection with the exhibition, described Australia as not only an extensive potential market but 'near' as well. The Department explained that Russia and Australia, 'due to their geographical situation, are neighbours' and after the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railway¹⁷ connecting the centre of Russia with Pacific ports Russian-Australian economic relations will 'get even stronger'. There was one more unexpected geographical aspect: Russian ports on the Black Sea were a great deal 'closer' to Australia than Germany and many other European states. The same avoidance of stereotypes was typical of Putiata, who claimed that wool purchased in Australia and transported to the Northern Russian industrial regions by sea freight would be cheaper than Russian wool transported from its Southern provinces by land.

Both Putiata and the Department of Trade and Manufactures fostered direct trade with Australia without English or German intermediaries. In his report of 15 October 1894 Putiata discussed the expediency of establishing a Russian trade company which could earn the profits that were then going into the pockets of intermediaries.¹⁸

¹⁷ It was completed in 1905.

¹⁸ 'Vystavka v Avstralii' [An exhibition in Australia], *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i trgovli*, no. 19, 1894, pp. 1165-1166; [A.D. Putiata], 'Sbyt russkikh tovarov v Avstralii' [The sale of Russian goods in Australia], *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i trgovli*, no. 19, 1894, p. 1182; 'Ot departamenta trgovli i manufactory po povodu russkoi vystavki' [From the department of trade and industry regarding the Australian exhibition], *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i trgovli*, no. 37, 1894, pp. 612-613; *Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5; AVPRI, fond 184, op. 520, d. 692, ff. 177-178. Still the attempts of Putiata and some enterprising officials in the Department of Trade and Manufactures to further Russian-Australian trade were abortive due to the conservative mentality of the top Russian officials, particularly the Minister of Finance S. Witte who decided that Russia should not participate in the Hobart exhibition of 1894. Even when several Russian businessmen sent a few samples to the exhibition at their own risk, Witte refused to compensate the expenses of placing the samples on stands by the Russian consulate in Melbourne. The decisions of other top Russian officials concerning Russian participation in international exhibitions in Sydney (1879) and Melbourne (1888) were similarly negative. RGIA, fond 20, op. 2, d. 1867, folios 16, 16 reverse, 39; fond 20, op. 16, d. 176, folios 37 reverse, 38; fond 472, kniga 37, op. 38/1305, d. 42, folio 4, 4 reverse; fond 733, op. 142, d. 1037, folio 5. The information concerning these archival sources was kindly provided by Massov.

Putiata at the same time tried to generate interest in the Australian business community in the prospects of exporting a variety of goods to Russia. To this end he told the Australian press about Russia's biggest fair, in Nizhnii Novgorod, which in 1895 was to become an international exhibition. He suggested that 'you Australians should send samples of your products and what you can do in manufactures' to that display. Perhaps earlier than other Europeans, he considered Australia not only as a supplier of raw materials, but as a promising producer of manufactured goods, all of which could promote 'beneficial trade'.¹⁹ Thus by the 1890s in the consciousness of Russian businessmen, and earlier than for other Russians, the image of Australia as an equal partner and a self-sufficient state different from England had been formed. In such a context it is quite natural that Putiata without any hesitation constantly referred to Australian residents as 'Australians' rather than 'English' as other Russians still did sometimes in the 1890s.

At the same time it would be too narrow to see Putiata's activity only in terms of economic relations. Although not a diplomatic plenipotentiary, as an official Russian envoy and a staunch Russian patriot he used every opportunity to improve Russia's image. He clarified Russian domestic and foreign policies to officials and to the Australian press. First of all he tried to dispel the Australians' fears of Russian expansionism: 'Yes, I am aware that you regard Russia as a natural enemy, but there is no ground for that belief... In Russia no one speaks of war'. Rather disingenuously Putiata explained that the Russian advance in Central Asia was not directed against England, as Russia's aim was only to 'punish half-savage chiefs' of little tribes for their encroachments. With the cunning of a professional diplomat he answered acute or embarrassing questions according to the motto 'truth, only truth, but not the whole truth'. The style of his answers is remarkably similar to that of Soviet journalists and officials who addressed the Australian public during the Soviet regime. Putiata's aim was above all to persuade Australians that Russia was a civilized nation. Thus, the Australian reader learned from the interview that at present there was no such thing as 'cruel and tyrannical treatment' of the Russian peasantry; on the contrary, 'landlords are the servants of the

¹⁹ *Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5.

peasants'. Indeed, even before the Emancipation of the serfs in 1861 'a landlord could not sell his serfs', and serfs were required to work for him only two days a week. Although Putiata's statements seemed dubious, he had an energetic retort: 'Look here, if we were as bad as some of you English imagine us to be, how is it we do not have a revolution?'²⁰ This argument, of course, was refuted eleven years later when the Russian revolution of 1905 shattered the illusions of the Russian government.

Evidence abounds that Russia was concerned about how it was judged abroad, including in remote Australia. Thus long before establishing political relations with Australia, Russian official circles, whose opinion Putiata expressed, aimed to create a favourable image about their politics and country. It is not by chance that Putiata in his reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs scrupulously and sometimes over enthusiastically listed all the positive attitudes of officials and the press towards Russia, even taking at face value protocol compliments.

Putiata's analysis of the political and social situation in Australia in 1894, written in numerous reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is of some interest, as it represents the official Russian point of view, expressed frankly, 'for internal use'. For example, according to Putiata, workers and trade-unionists were the organizers of 'disturbances' and 'outrages' and he felt that strict measures should be used against them 'to put things in order'. He considered that the members of the Labor party in Victoria

strain their abilities in order not to extol and strengthen [the Labor party]; but on the contrary, in order to weaken its authority in the parliament and thus do not let the country slip further along the dangerous way of democracy... In official speeches the workers' interests are first priority. But by means of sensibly conceived reforms the government, in reality, aims to restrain the workers rather than to open new horizons for them.²¹

His observations about Australian political life and the Victorian parliament which he watched attentively, often sound sceptical and in this respect continue the tradition of the Russian visitors begun by A. Linden.

²⁰ Age, 29 January 1894, p. 5.

²¹ AVPRI, fond 184, op. 520, d. 692, ff. 149-150, 83-84. (Quoted by Oltarzhevskii, 'Nachalo deiatel'nosti', pp. 31-33). It is significant that such a conservative person as Putiata considered that J.B. Patterson's government was Labour while in reality it was rather conservative-liberal. See P. Loveday a.o., eds, *The Emergence of the Australian Party System*, Sydney, 1977, pp. 60, 70-71.

Putiata, who to the last moment neglected his health, did not live to forty and his life suddenly ended on 16 December 1894 in Melbourne. Many of his ideas remained unrealized. Nevertheless, his one year long activity in the position of regular consul undoubtedly played an important role in establishing Russian-Australian economic relations and in the forming of positive images by Russians and Australians about each other. For various reasons Russian consuls who followed Putiata remained in Australia only for short periods: Baron Robert Robertovich Ungern-Sternberg (Shternberg) (1895 - 1898), Nikolai Gavrilovich Matiunin (1898-1899) and Nikolai Pompeevich Passek (1900-1902). At the end of 1896 the plenary powers of the Melbourne-based Russian consul were officially extended to cover Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand. Paul in Sydney continued to perform the tasks of vice-consul. The consulate office in Melbourne now occupied 475 Collins Street. The consuls continued to gather economic information, especially about the market for those goods which Russia wanted to export as well as about the export of Australian products which competed with Russian goods. That this information was considered important in Russia is indicated by the fact that these consular reports did not remain in the archives but were regularly published in the *Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin* and in the *Collection of Consular Reports (Sbornik konsul'skikh donesenii)*. In 1896-1897 the *Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin* published ten Ungern-Sternberg's reports on topics such as the current economic situation in Australia, silver and gold mining and the trade in butter, frozen meat, lard, wool and kerosene.²² It is quite likely that data supplied by consuls was also used for numerous anonymous paragraphs on Australian trade and economic issues in this and other journals.

Russian-Australian economic relations in general did not inspire much consular optimism, trade remained insignificant and trade contacts haphazard. The available trade statistics are given in Table 5. Probably the nil or very low figures for some years are due to the indirect trade through middlemen.

22 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1836, 1968, 2093, 2097, 2248, 2501, 2503-2506.

Table 5
Australian Trade with Russia, 1885-1900

Years	Imports from Russia (£)	Exports to Russia (£)
1885
1886	...	12,644
1887
1888	...	108
1889	6,991	...
1890	2,760	...
1891
1892	5,900	...
1893	6,180	...
1894	100	165
1895	2,783	...
1896	264	5
1897	117	...
1898	115	...
1899	12,361	20,198
1900	898	...

Source: *Annual Statement of the Trade of the Commonwealth of Australia ... for the Year 1904*, pp. 440-443.

Obviously there was no serious interest in each others' products and the two countries more often than not were seen as rivals. In 1896 Ungern-Sternberg reported:

The extremely rapid development of the dairy industry in Australia threatens us with new serious competition in the marketing of our agricultural products and has impelled the Russian consulate to begin collecting data about the export of Australian butter to Europe.

Another time he complained that when Russian exporters had tried to sell kerosene in Melbourne 'the experience had been unsuccessful because businesses there were more interested in trade with America'. Ungern-Sternberg proposed to send Russian representatives to the Australian wool auctions:

Among the great powers only Russia does not send purchasing agents to the Australian auctions (although, according to generally accepted opinion, our industry cannot manage without Australian wool); meanwhile the presence of Russian purchasers in Australia, even if they do not buy anything, will improve the status of our manufacturers in the European wool markets.²³

In mining technology, however the story is rather different and indicates not only the development of technical contacts but the peculiarities of the Russian mentality in

23 [R.R. Ungern-Sternberg], 'Razvitie molochnogo khoziaistva v Avstralii' [The development of dairying in Australia], *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i trgovli*, no. 11, 1896, p. 669; [R.R. Ungern-Sternberg], 'Vvoz kerosina v Avstraliiu' [The importation of kerosene into Australia], *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i trgovli*, no. 4, 1897, p. 204; [R.R. Ungern-Sternberg], 'Torgovlia sherst'iu v Avstralii' [The wool trade in Australia], *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i trgovli*, no. 13, 1897, p. 811.

relation to Australia. In 1863 Admiral Popov, discovering with amazement several examples of Siberian gold-mining equipment in the Melbourne Museum, wrote:

Most inhabitants here, as is common amongst the English, do not know whether we have any literature and do not even believe we are Christians; nevertheless they adapt our machines to their own uses with practically more benefits than the inventors themselves.²⁴

By the end of the century the roles had changed. There is evidence of some Russian interest in Australian mining technology. When Russian mining engineers visited Australia (M. Shostak in 1884, L.A. Perre in 1892, S.M. Kenigsberg in 1897, V.S. Reutovskii in 1898), they studied methods of exploiting gold deposits and the processing of gold bearing ores and sands. Their research was published in technical journals and books to the benefit of the Russian gold industry. A reviewer of Perre's book *The Gold Industry in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand* in the *Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin* suggested that Russia could learn a lot from the methods of gold-mining in Australia. The reviewer contrasted the constantly improving Australian technology with the obdurate, inert, sluggish and wasteful Russian gold industry and advised the Russians to employ some of the new Australian methods and equipment which enabled miners to extract greater amounts of gold. Another reviewer in the *Amur Newspaper* (*Amurskaia gazeta*) noted that Russian gold-mines relied on increased exploitation of manpower and longer working hours rather than technological improvements to increase production. The discussion that followed was characteristic of Russia for that time. Resistance to innovation can be seen in a complacent response to this review by A. Kirkhner and Z. Makarushkin entitled 'What can we learn from gold-miners of Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand?' published in the same newspaper. It claimed that all Australian innovations were useless for Russia with its specific conditions such as permanent freezing, long winters, and poor roads. Indeed Russia could do very well without the knowledge of foreigners. Finally the *Amur Newspaper* was forced to modify its opinion, explaining in its editorial comment that Russians could learn from foreigners - but only a little. Although in this discussion there were voices arguing for the usefulness of Australian methods, the complacent and nationalistic mentality of other Russians

²⁴ Popov, 'Iz vlechenie', p. 37.

prevented the creation of a sufficiently favourable image of Australia's technology and economy, and consequently, wide commercial and technical ties between the two countries.²⁵

In general, the tone and content of Russian writings about Australia's economy suggest a change in the Russian perception, a recognition of Australia's rapidly growing economic potential. The most dramatic changes in this image took place at the very end of the nineteenth century.

25 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 2071, 2077, 2079-2082, 2085, 2086, 2091, 2104, 2105, 2107.

CHAPTER 5

THE EVOLUTION OF THE IMAGE OF AUSTRALIA IN RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS (1851-1900)

Russian writings about Australia continued to grow from 1851 to 1900. The calculations based on my bibliographical search give the following figures: in 1851-1900 there were 838 items published about Australia, and if reprints are included, the number rises to 921. From the 1850s to the 1880s the number of items published remained relatively stable, on average 14.4 a year (or 15.9 including reprints). However in the 1890s it dramatically increased, reaching 26.2 (or 28.7) a year on average. These were mainly journal and newspaper articles, reviews and sections of books. Also during these years individual books devoted to Australia began to appear. Thirteen Russian and 44 translated books were published in Russian during the second half of the century. Two-thirds of the translated books were fiction. The distribution of the items published in the 'core' Russian periodicals was as follows:

Table 6
Items Published in 'Core' Periodicals, 1851-1900

Title	Years	No. of Items
1. Journals of opinion and literary journals		
<i>The Muscovite</i>	1851-1853	2
<i>Library for Reading</i>	1851-1857	6
<i>Son of the Fatherland</i>	1851-1872	7
<i>Notes of the Fatherland</i>	1851-1883	14
<i>The Contemporary</i>	1852-1854	6
<i>Collection of Foreign Novels, Narratives and Short Stories</i>	1857-1881	27
<i>Herald of Europe</i>	1871-1900	3
<i>Affairs</i>	1872-1880	5
<i>Russian Herald</i>	1887-1900	6
<i>Russian Thought</i>	1888-1898	9
<i>Russian Wealth</i>	1898-1900	2
2. Illustrated magazines		
<i>Picturesque Review</i>	1868-1874	4
<i>World Illustration</i>	1875-1880	5
<i>Niva</i>	1875-1897	12
<i>Neva</i>	1879-1881	4
<i>Illustrated World</i>	1879-1886	5

3. Children, family and teachers' journals		
<i>Journal for Children</i>	1851-1864	7
<i>Journal of the Ministry of Education</i>	1852-1899	11
<i>Family and School</i>	1871-1885	3
<i>Children's Reading</i>	1873-1885	5
4. Journals specializing in geography, travel and nature		
The Imperial Russian Geographical Society's periodicals	1852-1885	39
<i>Herald of Natural Sciences</i>	1854-1860	13
<i>Round the World</i>	1862-1867	20
<i>Round the World</i>	1885-1900	19
<i>World Traveller</i>	1867-1878	32
<i>World Traveller</i>	1887-1894	4
<i>Knowledge</i>	1872-1877	2
<i>Nature and People</i>	1889-1900	17
<i>God's World</i>	1892-1900	11
<i>Natural Science and Geography</i>	1897-1898	7
<i>Science Review</i>	1897-1898	4
5. Specialist periodicals		
<i>Naval Collection</i>	1852-1894	54
<i>Kronstadt Herald</i>	1862-1894	20
<i>Medical Supplements to the Naval Collection</i>	1864-1888	6
<i>Mining Journal</i>	1853-1899	44
<i>Gold-mining Herald</i>	1892-1899	30
<i>The Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin</i>	1886-1900	60

This distribution would suggest that a reader of a journal of opinion ordinarily met at least one article about Australia a year; a reader of one of the geographical, travel or illustrated periodicals had the chance to read two articles a year; and a specialist in the navy, mining or trade would have had the opportunity to peruse one to three items on Australia a year. We also may suppose that our hypothetical reader would regularly look through one or two newspapers where at least once a year some information appeared about Australia. In sum the number of items about Australia available to an average cultured family subscribing to or regularly borrowing a journal of opinion, a children's, geographical or natural science journal as well as a newspaper reached at least four a year; if moreover the head of the family was an expert in any of the above-mentioned fields the number would increase to six or more.

The distribution of writings according to their theme was as follows:

Table 7
Thematic Distribution of Items Published, 1851-1900

Theme	No. of Items
General	28
Travels	29
Geography	136
Discovery and exploring	60
Russian naval expeditions	61
Anthropology, demography	96
Economics	207
History	122
Culture	20
Australian fiction and critiques	17
Fiction about Australia	62
Total	838

If we group related themes together, the proportions of items published in round figures for the first and the second halves of the nineteenth century may be compared:

Table 8
Thematic Complexes of Items Published, Percentages, 1801-1900

Thematic Complexes	1801-1850	1851-1900
General, geography, travel	57	38
Anthropology	4	11
History, culture	29	17
Economics	6	25
Fiction	4	9
Total	100%	100%

We can see a number of tendencies here. While the relative percentage of historical and geographical publications decreased, that of anthropological, economic and fictional writings increased. This movement reflects the changing image of Australia in the consciousness of Russian society. Although geographical and travel materials still dominated, the rapid increase of economic writings testifies that Australia was already regarded not only as a distant and exotic land, but as a country with important economic potential. I will return later to the reasons for the relative growth of anthropological writings and fiction.

While changing criteria about what is considered as original Russian writing and what is translated from other sources make it impossible to give an exact statistical analysis of the Russian press in this respect, it is evident that in the second half of the nineteenth century the proportion of unambiguously Russian writing on Australia

considerably increased, to around 20-30%.

Let us now examine the characteristic features of various thematic groups of Russian 'Australiana'. General and geographic writings boasted a number of popular books: N.S. de Galet's *Australia, its Physical Situation and Colonies and Gold Mines*; A.A. Polkova's *Australia's Nature and People*, M. Cherniaeva's *Tales of Australia and Australians*, S.P. Mech's *Australia: Geographical Narrative*. Collections of tales and geographical narratives for children were compiled by M.B. Chistiakov, N. Malinin and A. Voronetskii. The reviewers of these books applauded the authors' attempts to enlighten the Russian reading public about Australian geography and anthropology, by providing descriptions of Australia based on Western sources and fascinating travel notes and illustrations. They considered these books a 'must' in school libraries.¹

At the same time valuable translations of a general nature were published: Friedrich Christmann's *History of Discovery and Colonization, Plants and Animals of the Fifth Part of the World*; Wilhelm Sievers's and Willy Kukenthal's *Australia, Oceania and Polar Countries*; Friedrich Hellwald's *The Earth and its People*; and Elisee Reclus's *The Earth and its Inhabitants*.² Russian and translated books of travels in Australia were also published. Among the authors were Eduard Tsimmerman, Louis Thiercelin, Henry Russell-Killough, Samuel Smiles, Ludovic Beauvoir, Sophie Wörishöffer, Max O'Rell (L.P. Blouet), Emilio Salgari, Henry Perron D'Ark, Carl Lumholtz and Charles Darwin.³ It is hardly possible to overestimate their importance. These were the books which, along with geographical textbooks and fiction, formed children's and adolescents' perception of Australia. They stood on the book-shelves of school, public and home libraries, and were given to school-children as rewards for educational achievements. Even their physical appearance - gold-coloured covers, numerous illustrations, sometimes colourful and interlaid with tissue-paper (a real rarity) - created a special mood, awakened imaginations, and opened up an unusual world far away from ordinary Russian reality. Incidentally, such books contributed to the yearning for Australia and the South Pacific in the life of

1 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 222, 227, 229, 308, 482, 483, 484, 548, 549.

2 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 224, 228, 479, 485.

3 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 304, 305, 307, 309, 311, 312, 314, 1113, 1264, 1289.

the Russian poet K. Balmont and the student Ia. Glan who came here after 1910. The Russian anthropologist Vladimir Kabo, who has devoted his life to the study of Australian Aborigines, remembers the hours spent engrossed in such books on a leather couch during his childhood in the early 1930s. This experience played an important role in his choice of career.

While such popular and general books and tales for children continued their influence for many years, other writings, published in periodicals, had a more restricted impact. These were, for instance, travel and geographical-anthropological narratives by Eugène Girardin, Mark Twain, Richard Semon.⁴ Fleeting, too, was the impact of numerous specialized articles about Australian geography, geology, flora and fauna, such as the seven or more articles by German artist, naturalist and explorer Ludwig Becker published in the 1850s.⁵ Writings about geographical issues remained a characteristic feature of the Russian press in the middle of the century. The Russian naturalist, biologist-evolutionist and publisher of the *Herald of Natural Sciences* (*Vestnik estestvennykh nauk*) Karl F. Rouillier wrote in 1855:

New Holland, and again New Holland! Tell me, reader, are you not tired of it? What is the reason why the *Herald* has so often spoken about it? ... Because here, the history of the formation of a man ... happens before our eyes, because it happens when a man is sufficiently educated and able to observe and record for future posterity ... the history of the extermination of the native people, animals and plants, the migration of new people, animals and plants, ... because the history of present and future formation here will explain the history of formation in other parts of the world.

Rouillier declared that in the study of New Holland one could

register everything ... not only by its name, but by all appearances and laws of gradual regeneration, degeneration and in general any historical formation.⁶

In the early 1850s the pages of Russian popular and specialist journals were filled initially with emotional and then more detailed geological information about the discovery of gold in Australia. Russia actually may have played some role in the discovery of Australian gold. As early as 1844 the geographer Roderic Murchison, after visiting Russia's Ural mountains which are rich in gold and other minerals, compared their

4 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 317, 318, 319, 855-857.

5 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 563, 564, 642, 644, 818-820.

6 K.F. Rouillier, 'Novogollandskii straus' [The New Holland ostrich], *Vestnik estestvennykh nauk*, no. 25, 1855, columns 779, 781-782.

geological structure with Paul Strzelecki's data about Australian mountain chains. The comparison led him to believe that Australian mountains would also have gold veins. Independently of him a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, Colonel Gelmersen, came to the same conclusion two years later.⁷ And as mentioned before, traces of gold were discovered in the Blue Mountains by Russian naturalist F. Shtein as early as 1820.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Russian press continued to be intrigued by the discoveries in the interior of Australia. There were at least nineteen items published in the early 1860s about Robert O'Hara Burke's and John McDouall Stuart's expeditions. Two fundamental narratives of travels and geographical discoveries in Australia in 1838-1848 and 1848-1853 by a member of the Russian Geographical Society, Karl F. Svenske are very valuable.⁸ These were just two chapters from his enormous manuscript about the discovery of Australia, a work of the last years of his life which unfortunately he did not manage to publish. Svenske's narratives, as well as other Russian writings about the exploration of Australia are distinguished by admiration for the explorers' courage and purposefulness in the name of science, and by regard for the English as 'the most industrious and enterprising people in the world', able to overcome all the obstacles of nature.

The proportion of anthropological literature written about Australia increased as the nineteenth century progressed. This can be explained by the development of anthropology as a science and by changes in attitudes towards the Aborigines. Evolutionists considered their society as a valuable source for the reconstruction of the pre-history of mankind. Many works by Western scholars devoted to social and physical anthropology, in which Australian materials were used in abundance, were quickly

7 R. Murchison, 'Obozrenie uspekhnov geograficheskoi nauki v 1851 g.' [The review of achievements of geography in 1851], *Vestnik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo obshchestva*, part 6, book 1, section 5, 1852, p. 36.

8 K.F. Svenske, 'Obozrenie glavneishikh puteshestvii i geograficheskikh otkrytii v desiatiletie s 1838 po 1848 god. 1. Avstraliia ili Novaia Gollandiia' [Survey of the main travels and geographical discoveries in 1838-48. 1. Australia or New Holland], *Vestnik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo obshchestva*, part 6, book 1, section 2, 1852, pp. 33-76; K.F. Svenske, 'Obzor glavneishikh puteshestvii i geograficheskikh otkrytii v piatiletie s 1848 po 1853 god. Avstraliia' [Survey of the main travels and geographical discoveries in 1848-53. 1. Australia], *Vestnik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo obshchestva*, part 19, book 2, section 2, 1857, pp. 126-226.

translated and published in Russian. The Russian reader was able to keep up with all the latest achievements in anthropology. Among foreign authors whose works were published in Russian in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were Edward B. Tylor, John Lubbock, Herbert Spencer, Friedrich Hellwald, Oscar Peschel, Charles Letourneau, Friedrich Ratzel, Edward Westermarck, Ernst Grosse, Lewis Henry Morgan, Karl Bucher, Joseph Deniker. There was even a translation of *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct* by the Australian scholar Alexander Sutherland.⁹

At the same time original Russian anthropological studies appeared, including a forgotten but very interesting and innovative work 'About the unity of mankind', by a priest, V. Kudriavtsev, who in the early 1850s used Australian evidence to substantiate the Christian idea of the equality of peoples belonging to different races.¹⁰ Russian anthropologists at that time wrote in the tradition of evolutionism, popularizing the achievements of Western science. Among Russian authors using Australian materials were S. Shashkov, M.I. Kulisher, Ia.L. Paper, E.Iu. Petri and D.A. Koropchevskii.¹¹ The latter even published in 1889 a popular book *Australia and Australians: Ethnographical Essays*. Of special interest is the work by N.I. Ziber *Essays on the Primitive Economic Culture*.¹² Ziber, a Russian Marxist, creatively used the materials of Australian anthropology to show the role of the economy and socio-economic relations in the life of primitive society. He was a pioneer in anthropology, revealing the importance of the main socio-economic unit of traditional society - the community - at a time when Western anthropologists, following the tradition set by Morgan and the English anthropological school, devoted their attention mainly to kinship relations. In Western anthropology detailed study of community and socio-economic relations began only in the twentieth century. The Russian specialist in Siberian shamanism, V.M. Mikhailovskii,

9 See Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, section 'Ethnography'.

10 [V. Kudriavtsev], 'O edinstve roda chelovecheskogo' [About the unity of the mankind], *Pribavleniia k tvoreniiam sviatykh ottsev v russkom perevode*, book 1, 1853, pp. 105-110; book 2, pp. 234-238; book 3, pp. 387, 400, 412.

11 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1269, 1270, 1274, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1280, 1287, 1483, 1728.

12 N.I. Ziber, *Ocherki pervobytnoi ekonomicheskoi kul'tury* [Essays on the Primitive Economic Culture], Moscow, 1883. The detailed description of five editions of work see Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 1444.

used Australian and Oceanian materials in his comparative study.¹³

It was natural for the Russian anthropologists to have humane, respectful attitudes towards the indigenous peoples; humanism was characteristic of social sciences in Russia in general. As before, the Russian publications often referred to atrocities against the Aborigines and indeed their extermination by settlers.¹⁴ The journal *Notes of the Fatherland* played an important role in the strengthening of democratic traditions and in 1862 published 'Ethnographic studies' by S.V. Eshevskii, a liberal historian - it was the introduction to his course on general history. Describing the round-up of Tasmanian Aborigines and the eviction of the survivors he concluded:

This is the main cause of the extinction of native tribes clashing with Europeans, rather than the natural inability of these natives to adopt Christian-European civilization.¹⁵

Similar views were expressed by a progressive journal of opinion, the *Affairs (Delo)*, which published a detailed article by the historian Ia.L. Paper discussing the causes of the extinction of the Tasmanian and Australian Aborigines. One of the main causes, he saw, was the fact that the colonists did not perceive Aborigines as human beings.¹⁶ Svenske's essay, mentioned above, is also notable for its sympathy towards and interest in Aborigines. In 1852 he challenged the wide-spread opinion among the English about the Aborigine's inability to be educated:

Would not it be better, instead of forcing these wild children of nature to be servants or to sit at schools against their will to allow them to follow their natural inclinations and to make from them shipbuilders, sailors, hunters and artisans.¹⁷

White Australians had then just come to understand this concept and began to recognize the traditional inclinations and interests of the Aborigines.

Popular literature and text-books in the middle of the century sometimes portrayed Australian Aborigines contemptuously. For example, one of the most widely used

13 V.M. Mikhailovskii, *Shamanstvo [Shamanism]*, Moscow, 1892.

14 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1722-1728; *Vokrug sveta*, no. 10, 1865, p. 340; *Priroda i liudi*, no. 5, 1878, pp. 214-215; *Neva*, no. 41, 1881.

15 S.V. Eshevskii, 'Etnograficheskie etiudy: Vvedenie v kurs vseobshchei istorii' [Ethnographic studies: an introduction to the course on general history], *Otechestvennye zapiski*, no. 8, 1862, p. 549.

16 Ia.L. Paper, 'Vyrozhdenie pervobytnykh ras' [Extinction of the primitive races], *Delo*, no. 7, 1877, p. 132.

17 Svenske, 'Obozrenie', p. 75.

geographical textbooks for provincial schools, by K.I. Arsen'ev, declared that Australian Aborigines 'are Negroes of the most hideous spawn, ferocious, unsociable, lacking even the roughest notions about social life and religion'.¹⁸ *Morals and Customs of Different Peoples*, folksy tales aimed at the popular market, published by Russian writer D.V. Grigorovich in 1860, claimed that in Australia there existed 'blood-thirsty beasts (!) and almost equally blood-thirsty savages'. An anonymous author concluded a story about Australian Aborigines with a rhetorical question:

Of what benefit are they to themselves and other people? Would not it be better if there will be no such people in the world? Together with them their morals and customs, which only disgrace the rest of mankind, will disappear.¹⁹

It is likely that the original of this story was a foreign one, but the fact of its translation and publication 'for the people' says something about the tendency to propagate conservative and chauvinistic ideas from 'above' amongst common people.

By the end of the century the changes came to the popular sphere as well. Polkova's and Cherniaeva's books illustrate the transition. Polkova's *Nature and People of Australia* (1886) depicted Aborigines as the most primitive among all savage tribes, with barbarous and ridiculous customs and miserable lives. Cherniaeva's *Tales of Australia and Australians*, published ten years later by the firm *Posrednik* which shared Leo Tolstoy's spiritual ideas and addressed a working class audience, depicted Aborigines with considerable sympathy, as pitiful but happy in their own way. Characteristically, both Polkova and Cherniaeva became much more sympathetic to the Aborigines when they described the colonists' atrocities against them. In condemning the colonists they perceived them not as 'the Australians', but as 'the English' or 'the whites'. Moreover, Polkova's and especially Cherniaeva's hostility towards the English went further than the usual Russian criticism of their brutality towards the Aborigines. They found fault with the entire English approach toward colonization. According to Cherniaeva,

It was not enough for the English to exterminate or drive away the black native; it seems that they want to change the Australian land itself into England.

18 K.I. Arsen'ev, *Vseobshchaia geografiia* [Universal Geography], 20th ed., St. Petersburg, 1849, p. 251.

19 D.V. Grigorovich, ed., *Navy i obychai raznykh narodov* [Morals and Customs of Different Peoples], St. Petersburg, 1860, pp. 89, 106.

At the same time these Russian authors said nothing about the situation of the natives of the Russian Empire. But it may be significant that a reviewer of the influential journal of opinion *Russian Thought* criticized Cherniaeva because 'the comparison of the Russian colonizers with the English suggests itself'.²⁰

All aspects of the history of the Australian colonies continued to attract the Russian press. The first attempts were made to interpret their history in a long term perspective. I have mentioned already the historical essay by the Russian naval visitor A. Linden (1864) and excursions in the history of some colonies by the Russian traveller E. Tsimmerman (1882-1883). In this period a number of valuable translations were published in Russian, such as the books *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History* (1894) by the Australian politician Henry Parkes, *Colonization of the Youngest Nations* (1877) by French economist Paul Leroy-Beaulieu and *New Anglo-Saxon Societies* (1898) by his son Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu who visited Australia in the 1890s. Russian readers had also an opportunity to acquaint themselves with extracts and reviews of *Land, Labour and Gold* by a British traveller to Australia, William Howitt; *Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines*, and *Australia, its Rise, Progress and Present Condition* by politician and historian William Westgarth; *The History of New South Wales* by journalist and historian Roderick Flanagan; *Greater Britain: a Record of Travel in English-speaking Countries during 1866-7* by an English visiting politician Charles Wentworth Dilke as well as other numerous articles based on the writings of Australian and European politicians, historians and travellers.²¹ Though not comprehensive they gave diverse material for Russian historians and the public at large to form adequate perceptions of the Australian history.

More and more often during the second half of the century we can hear the voice of a Russian publisher or commentator in the translated materials while the number of original Russian historical essays grew steadily. They were mostly devoted to specific themes in Australian history: the gold rush, establishment and development of the new

20 A.A. Polkova, *Priroda i liudi Avstralii* [Nature and People of Australia], St. Petersburg, 1886; M. Cherniaeva, *Rasskazy ob Avstralii i avstraliitsakh* [Tales of Australia and Australians], Moscow, 1896; [Review], *Russkaia mysl*, no. 1, 1897, p. 32. Bibliography of all editions and reviews see Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 227, 229.

21 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-61, 3-69, 3-74, 3-83, 3-86, 3-133, 3-518, 3-519, 3-619, 3-742.

colonies, the struggle against the slave trade in the South Pacific, transportation and its abolition, and social issues. Most of these writings spanned the range from uncritical to enthusiastic in their attitudes towards the events of Australian history. This history was perceived as a chain of fortunate conjunctures and facts: first the favourable conditions for agriculture, then the discovery of gold, and, finally, the benefits of self-government and success of social experimentation. They extrapolated from Australia's present to predict a great future:

Victoria ... is undoubtedly the embryo of a great state (1855);
 A new America is emerging (1859);
 Here almost more successfully than anywhere the hard toil of colonization is being realized (1861);
 Incredible achievements ... The country has been completely transformed, as if by a miracle (1867).²²

Alexander Herzen (Gertsen), one of the first Russian socialists, who emigrated and lived in London from 1852, expressed the attitude to Australia which might have been shared by other progressive Russians who knew Western society. In his Russian-language journals *Polar Star* (*Poliarnaia zvezda*) and *The Bell* (*Kolokol*) published in London in the 1850s and 1860s, he criticized the faults of the old regime in Europe and extolled the Australian experiment, where 'civic life is forming in a quite different way'. 'A lot that was impossible to achieve in England' had been achieved in Australia.²³

One of the reasons for success, according to these enthusiastic writings, was the 'colonizing genius' of 'the enterprising', 'energetic', 'indefatigable', 'strong-willed' Englishmen. An anonymous Russian author analyzing the success of the Australian colonies in the *Naval Collection* in 1861 saw the essence of this land in its 'support for law and order at the same time as its love for freedom'.²⁴ The Russian press wrote approvingly of the role of government institutions and especially self-government in the colonization of Australia. Such attitudes contrast widely with the opinions expressed by the Russian visitors to Australia at the same time, who, (with the exception of officers of the expeditions in 1862-1863), were often negative and sarcastic about the colonizing

22 Quotations from the *Herald of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society*, *Journal of the Ministry of Education*, *Naval Collection*, *World Traveller*. For the details see Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 2873, p. 119, no. 2878, p. 160, no. 2881, p. 251, no. 2889, p. 29.

23 *Poliarnaia zvezda*, 1857, Moscow, 1966, pp. 295, 302; *Kolokol*, 1861, Moscow, 1962, p. 894.

24 'Avstraliiskie kolonii' [The Australian colonies], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 51, no. 2, 1861, p. 251.

'genius' of the English.

The history of Australian deportation, as before, attracted the attention of the Russian press. The *Naval Collection* in 1856, introducing the translation of a detailed article from the French journal *Revue Coloniale* about transportation to Australia, explained the necessity for its publication, as 'this subject is little known to Russian readers'.²⁵ But there was not only theoretical interest in the subject. Many Russians saw the Australian transportation experience as comparable to the exile of Russian prisoners to Siberia. For some, transportation could dominate their image of Australia. So it was with Russian writer Anton Chekhov as he prepared to go to Sakhalin to study the results of Russian transportation there. He wrote to writer and publisher A.S. Suvorin on March 9, 1890:

you say that Sakhalin is of no use to anyone, nor is it of any interest to anyone. But is that true? Sakhalin may be of no use, and of interest only to a society which does not banish thousands of people there, and does not spend millions on it. After Australia in the past and Cayenne, Sakhalin is the only place where colonization by convicts can be studied; all Europe is interested in it - and to us it is of no use?²⁶

From 1881 to 1893 Australian transportation attracted the attention of the professional historians I.Ia. Foinitskii, V.A. Sollogub, M.A. Filippov and G.S. Fel'dshtein, who discussed it in an international context.²⁷ The authors saw it as a temporary phenomenon, which was modified with the changing conditions of the Australian colonies and abolished by the authorities precisely when it was no longer useful. They might have been critical of the idea of transportation in theory and sceptical about its moral and punitive effect in Australia, but they unanimously approved of its benefits to colonization there. As they saw it, a favourable concurrence of circumstances - fertile land and a good climate - was reinforced by the absence of scandalous abuses by the British and local authorities (which were common in Russia). Thus, Australian

25 'O ssylke i merakh ispravleniia prestupnikov v koloniiakh Avstralii' [About deportation and correctional measures for criminals in the colonies of Australia], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 23, no. 9, 1856, p. 120.

26 *The Life and Letters of Anton Tchekhov*, Translated and edited by S.S. Koteliansky & Philip Tomlinson, N.Y., 1965, p. 177.

27 I.Ia. Foinitskii, *Ssylka na Zapade v ee istoricheskoe razvitiie i sovremennom sostoianii* [Deportation in the West: its Historical Development and Current Status], St. Petersburg, 1881; V.A. Sollogub, M.A. Filippov, 'O ssylke za rubezhom' [About deportation abroad], *Vek*, nos 1-6, 1883; G.S. Fel'dshtein, *Ssylka: Ocherki ee genezisa, znachenii, istorii i sovremennogo sostoianiia* [Deportation: Essays on its Origins, Significance, History and Current Status], Moscow, 1893.

deportation had become a positive phenomenon. For example, Foinitskii wrote in 1881:

Those ever-changing perfect forms through which [Australian deportation] metamorphosed; the energy that was invested by the central and local governments in the cause of penal colonization; finally, the brilliant and rapid results, achieved in this new part of the world, - impart to the pages of Australian transportation a weighty significance.²⁸

The only critical voice in this field belonged to Cherniaeva who in her popular book criticized the

English government, whose only aim was to get rid of the criminals and who did not think about the people ... did not attempt to improve the exiles.²⁹

A certain Anglophobia along with ignorance of similar sins in Russia were characteristic of popular literature.

At this time the Russian press became more and more interested in Australian self-government and the political life of the colonies. Russian economic reviewer N. Latkin in 1875 in an essay about South Australia asserted that

with the establishing of popular representation which does its best to care for the prosperity of the Australian motherland, self-government and public institutions wrested from England's guardianship go forward quite successfully Energy, industriousness and free public institutions are not hindered by excessive guardianship and chains, which have such a harmful effect on the economy, welfare and productivity of the country and have turned what was only a half-century before total desert ... into a prosperous state.³⁰

Here there is not even a trace of the irony that was usual for Russian visitors. On the contrary, the experience of colonization and organization of life in far away Australia are instructive as a valuable example for Russia, rather than something abstract or exotic.

It is fascinating to review the present state of the rapidly developing New Holland colonies, and especially for us Russians who have just acquired the Amur province and who have to colonize its virgin soil,

noted a Russian publicist in the popular journal *Family Circle* (*Semeinyi krug*) in 1859.³¹

Another anonymous author in the *Naval Collection* 1861, investigating the reasons for the rapid development of the Australian colonies, concentrated mainly on the democratization of their government, especially self-government, and expressed the hope that his essay

28 Foinitskii, *Ssylka na Zapade*, p. 44.

29 Cherniaeva, *Rasskazy ob Avstralii i avstraliitsakh*, pp. 21, 24.

30 N. Latkin, 'Angliiskie kolonii v Avstralii i ikh nastoiashchee politiko-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie' [The English colonies in Australia and their present political and economic situation], *Finansovoe obozrenie*, no. 52, 1875, p. 483.

31 'Evropeitsy v Okeanii' [Europeans in Oceania], *Semeinyi krug*, no. 6, 1859, p. 142.

'might provide [facts for] a useful comparison with the state of our colonies in the same part of the world', i.e. in the Pacific ocean region.³² The author stressed that the Australian colonial governments 'were guided by the desire to improve the state of the productive class of people, rather than by their own interests' and asked a rhetorical question:

Can the Russian-American company say this about itself, which, it seems, up to now has not achieved anything in its colonies besides dislike for itself, moral decline and extreme impoverishment among the natives.³³

In general the Russian authors considered Australia an ideal model of colonization, democracy, self-government and social policy. Their pathos and enthusiasm were addressed to Russian society and reflected the change of mood and political orientation connected with the beginning of reforms at the end of the 1850s and the 1860s in Russia.

Further evidence of Russian interest in Australian life can be seen in the rather extraordinary fact that the *Kronstadt Herald* in the 1860s and 1870s had its own correspondents in Australia and published their materials on its pages. In the 1860s the correspondent was evidently a local resident in Melbourne with whom connections were established through the *Svetlana's* officers in 1862.³⁴ In the early 1870s he was a Russian resident of Adelaide D. or T.G., mentioned in the chapter devoted to the Russian visitors.

The Russian writings reflect the emergence of interest in Australian activity in the South Pacific and its defence potential. In the 1870s Russian journals published a number of articles censuring the kidnapping of the South Pacific islanders for Queensland planters.³⁵ However Australia at this time still was not seen as an independent power in the Pacific arena. That perception of Australia began in the 1880s and was prompted by

32 It is interesting to note that already at that time the modern conception of the Asian-Pacific region as a political-economic entity was not alien to the Russian mind.

33 'Avstraliiskie kolonii', pp. 258, 261-262.

34 Incidentally, this anonymous correspondent got some assistance from the artist Nicholas Chevalier (1828-1902) living in Melbourne. He wrote on July 25, 1863: 'With the help of our talented landscape painter, Calam's protégé, Mr Chevanier (sic!), who was born in St. Petersburg and has not forgotten how to read in Russian yet, we read with pleasure the issues of the *Kronstadt Herald*, sent by you', *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 11 September, 1863, p. 409.

35 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-92, 3-97, 3-101.

Queensland's attempt to annex part of New Guinea. Russian interest in this island was caused by Miklouho-Maclay's activity there which will be surveyed in the chapter about Russian emigres. Russians were conscious of Australian fears of a possible Russian invasion which they perceived as bizarre.³⁶ Towards the end of the century there were extensive writings about the Australian colonies' defence, especially naval. The *Naval Collection* in 1882-1898 published 14 articles discussing these issues.

Almost every Russian publication about Australia praised the colonial governments for the promotion of public education. 'There is no other country in the world where so much would be done for people's education as in Australia', argued the Decembrist Zavalishin in the *Moscow Record* (*Moskovskie vedomosti*) in 1870.³⁷ During the second half of the nineteenth century there were at least seven articles in Russian journals devoted to university, public and women's education in Australia, written in a highly favourable tone. But the popular literature provided a rather jaundiced view:

Australia has a low standard of scholarly education which is explained by the purely commercial bent of the country as the main aim of its citizens is gain That is why youths mainly limit themselves to elementary education only, considering it sufficient for their business.³⁸

Russian travel magazines published adventurous, entertaining narratives such as 'Australian bushrangers', 'Dick-Devil', 'Australian pioneers', 'Australian squatters and their enemies' written by Russian journalists but probably based on narratives and tales from the foreign press.³⁹ They gave their wide readership some facts about Australian history in a fascinating form.

Still, up to the 1890s, Australia was generally perceived as nothing more than a British colony achieving success because of fortunate circumstances. However in the 1890s the image of Australia underwent qualitative changes. Exotic and colonial 'colour' was relegated to the background and the Russian press began to speak about Australia and New Zealand as a peculiar social laboratory. During the period of political reaction at

36 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 1-10, 1-15, 1-73, 1-115.

37 Zavalishin, D., 'Avstraliiskie kolonii' [The Australian colonies], *Moskovskie vedomosti*, no. 13, 1870, p. 5.

38 Polkova, *Priroda i liudi Avstralii*, p. 66.

39 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-117, 3-123, 3-127, 3-367, 3-431, 3-625.

the turn of the century in Russia, Australia seemed to offer a solution to socio-political problems. The Australian experience gave an opportunity to speak allegorically about Russia and its socio-economic needs. For a short period works by both well- and little-known authors discussing issues of Australian social history were translated into Russian. Among the authors were English economists and sociologists Sidney J. Webb and Harold Cox, Australian politician Henry Parkes, French publicist Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, German economist Gerhard Schulze-Geavernitz, French traveller Leon Paul Blouet ('Max O'Rell') and the American writer Mark Twain.

Russian writers and experts as well began to write on issues of social and political life such as the workers' and women's movements. Among them were the sociologist and economist I. Ozerov, journalists S.N. Iuzhakov and Dioneo (I.V. Shklovskii), and feminist L. Davydova.⁴⁰ Their comments were extremely enthusiastic.

There are things that the Old World can learn from a New World which is not afraid to experiment with a new state system and that is why in this matter it can demonstrate the benefits of one or another state system,

the journal *God's World* (*Mir bozhii*) wrote in 1894.⁴¹ Russian writer Leo Tolstoy who claimed a deep interest in Australia, wrote in the draft letter to Australian Socialist Samuel Albert Rosa in 1895:

Your country has the most favourable conditions for establishing a way of life free from the sins of the Old World, a truly Christian, fraternal order.⁴²

Russian publicists were more radical sometimes than the Western sources which they published. For example, a Russian translator of Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, noting the French author's opinion that 'the Australian legislators by their extremely bold innovations expose to risk the future well-being of the country', imposed his own viewpoint that 'in this case and in all the rest young Australia shows other countries the way to progress'.⁴³ Even if direct comparisons with Russian reality were not made (due to censorship restrictions), experienced Russians could read between the lines: compare and make

40 *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 2-146, 2-186, 3-129, 3-131, 3-132, 3-133, 3-134, 3-135, 3-138, 3-139, 3-400, 3-141, 3-404, 3-519, 3-617, 3-619, 3-686, 3-731, 3-744.

41 'Rabochii vopros v Avstralii' [The labour issue in Australia], *Mir bozhii*, no. 4, 1894, p. 211.

42 L.N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Iubileinoe izdanie* [Collected works. Jubilee edition], vol. 68-69, Moscow, 1954, pp. 111-112. See details in N. Christesen, 'Leo Tolstoy and the Australian connection', *Melbourne Slavonic Studies*, no. 19, 1985, pp. 1-13.

43 'Avstraliia i Novaia Zelandiia' [Australia and New Zealand], *Mir bozhii*, no. 9, 1896, p. 287.

conclusions for themselves. The Russian journalist Dioneo as early as 1900 proclaimed:

There is space enough for many in Australia. These are the colonies of the future, and perhaps more than one culture will flow into them like lava-streams during the explosion of obsolete societies.⁴⁴

In the twentieth century Australia indeed became such a place for the peoples displaced by the Second World War and subsequent local wars all over the globe.

As mentioned above, Russian interest in the Australian economy in the second half of the nineteenth century increased considerably. In addition to the 207 items published especially devoted to this subject, Australia's economy was often discussed in general and historical writings. According to subject the distribution was the following:

Table 9
Thematic Distribution of Economic Items Published, 1851-1900

Subjects	No. of Items
General economic issues	14
Mining (including gold-mining 84)	99
Agriculture	36
Transport and communication	20
Trade	31
Finance	7

The intense interest in the economy of the Australian colonies in the 1890s can be explained in part by the rapid development of capitalism in Russia and by the advance of Australia's economy in the world arena. Specialist articles and notes mainly appeared on the pages of the *Mining Journal* (*Gornyi zhurnal*), the *Siberian Gold-mining Herald* (*Vestnik zolotopromyshlennosti*) and the *Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin*. They regularly gave statistical data (such as, for example, the amount of gold mined or wool sold) and published detailed essays on particular issues.

The first large original professional Russian study was the work by economist-geographer A.F. Fortunatov 'The Population and Economy of Australia', which was first published in 1898 in the journal *Russian Thought* (*Russkaia mysl*) and then as a book of 46 pages.⁴⁵ The author transformed dry statistical figures into lively language which an ordinary reader could easily comprehend. The figures indicated that Russia did not do as

⁴⁴ Dioneo [I.V. Shklovskii], 'Iz Anglii' [From England], *Russkoe bogatstvo*, no. 6, section 2, 1900, p. 46.

⁴⁵ Fortunatov, A.F., *Naselenie i khoziaistvo Avstralii* [The Population and Economy of Australia], Moscow, 1898.

well as Australia except in one sphere - the consumption of vodka. Fortunatov considered Australia a positive example for Russia and especially stressed the role of the Australian government in the promotion of education, including agricultural education. Concluding his study he appealed to Russians:

However far Australia is from us, however alien many aspects of its economy are for us, one may hardly deny that even a Russian who is interested in the economic prosperity of Russia, will discover much instructive [information] for himself in what happens in the antipodes.⁴⁶

Finally, the image and mythology of Australia continued to infiltrate fiction in Russian. As before, the Russian press published works by English-Australian writers. Charles Rowcroft's novel *Tales of the Colonies*, first published in Russian in 1850, appeared in an abridged version in 1868. Later, when these early translations were almost forgotten, the *Tales* were adapted for a youthful audience by a well-known woman-translator and editor A.V. Arkhangel'skaia, who published them as *The First Farm on the Clyde River: A Tale from the Life of Australian Settlers*. But the book was not warmly received by reviewers such as M.V. Sobolev and A.M. Kalmykova, noted bibliographers of popular and children's literature. This negative opinion contrasts with a review of Rowcroft's novel in *Notes of the Fatherland* in 1843 when it was seen in a heroic light:

It is very interesting to watch an educated person who settles in a country where civilization has not yet taken root, where the inhabitants are wild and ferocious, and where one has to struggle with nature and people at every step.

But by the end of the 1880s reviewers lamented that 'at the forefront there is a bloody struggle for the enrichment of some and the survival of others'. They reproached Arkhangel'skaia for not putting the question: 'Were the Europeans right in taking away the land from the original inhabitants?' Indeed, the Tasmanians, 'being kind and peaceable, came to hate the whites because of their infamous treatment of the natives'. Nevertheless, the book ran through three editions (1888, 1899 and 1905), which suggests that there was still a high demand for literature romanticizing the white man's exploits in a wild country.⁴⁷

The *Library for Reading* in 1852 published an anonymous novel over two

46 Fortunatov, *Naselenie i khoziaistvo Avstralii*, p. 45.

47 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 5339, 5340, 5342, 5343; A.S. Petrikovskaya, 'Literary contacts: Australian literature in Russia and in the Soviet Union', in McNair & Poole, eds, *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, pp. 212-213.

hundred pages long, 'Life in Australia'. On investigation I discovered that the first section of it describing the experience of settlers in Western Australia in the early 1840s was based on Edward Willson Landor's book *The Bushman; or Life in a New Country*, while the last section was a translation of Rowcroft's second Australian novel *The Bushranger of Van Diemen's Land* (volume 1). The source of the central section describing adventures of smugglers and traders in Melbourne and Sydney - a rare subject for a novel - remains unclear. The person who prepared 'Life in Australia' for publication was very free with the sources, selecting the most exciting pieces from them, connecting them in one plot and changing the heroes' names.⁴⁸ Among other colonial fiction was a short story by John Lang, 'Remarkable convicts', about George Barrington which was published anonymously in Russian in 1859. Russians were also fast to translate a famous Australian detective novel 'The Mystery of a Hansom Cab' by Fergus Hume.⁴⁹ At the end of the century there appeared works by women-writers Rosa Campbell Praed ('Radical', 'Zero: a Story of Monte Carlo', 'The Ladies' Gallery' and others) and by Tasma (Jessie Couvreur) ('In her Earliest Youth', 'Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill', 'The Penance of Portia James', 'A Knight of the White Feather' and others).⁵⁰ The themes of the writers fitted the image of Australia at this time: on the one hand, traditional entertaining characters such as exiles, settlers and villains; but on the other hand, toward the end of the century, political issues. Although Australian poetry was not translated into Russian during these years it still received enthusiastic support by Vsevolod Cheshikhin, a Russian critic of democratic persuasion. He perceived the young Australian poetry not as a pale provincial reflection of the British form but as a unique independent phenomenon. He argued that it did not deserve indifference or even the contempt of snobbish English criticism and praised it because it was poetry not of contemplation but of action while the Australian poets were at the same time 'energetic colonizers and initiators of political reforms'. Among the names that he referred to were Adam Lindsay

48 'Zhizn' v Avstralii' [Life in Australia], *Biblioteka dlia chteniia*, vols 114-116, 1852.

49 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, no. 5530.

50 These novels appeared on the pages of Russian journals of opinion such as *Russian Herald* (*Russkii vestnik*), *Northern Herald* (*Severnyi vestnik*), *Citizen* (*Grazhdanin*) at the late 1880s - early 1890s. See details in Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 5037, 5188-5191, 5378-5382.

Gordon, Henry Kendall and George Essex Evans.⁵¹

Translations of world fiction with passages on Australia were remarkably numerous. Between 1851 and 1900 there were at least 59 works. Here we meet well-known authors such as Charles Dickens, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Jules Verne, Anthony Trollope, Friedrich Gerstaecker, Louis Boussenard, Louis Jacolliot, Sophie Wörishöffer, as well as now completely (or almost) forgotten authors such as Paul Feval, Elie Berthet, Mrs Henry Wood, Ernest Hornung. There were also numerous anonymous works. All these writings were translated predominantly from English and French, sometimes from German or Italian and published mainly in a special literary journal *Collection of Foreign Novels, Narratives and Short Stories* (*Sobranie inostrannykh romanov, povestei i rasskazov*) and later in the popular travel magazines *Round the World* (*Vokrug sveta*) and *Nature and People* (*Priroda i liudi*). Often they were published in instalments, sometimes they appeared as books. Their plots, with few exceptions, were typical examples of the family-adventure novel. The modern literary critic would regard most of this literature as 'pulp' fiction quickly dashed off for money, perhaps as entertaining but rather trashy reading. But it would be unjust to judge this literature only from such a point of view. For their time they accomplished the task of disseminating facts about Australia in a fascinating, easily digestible form. Of all this literature, perhaps the only golden nugget is the novel *Captain Grant's Children* by Jules Verne, which was first published in Russian in 1869 and thereafter in numerous editions. Its plot containing all the classic constituents - shipwreck, romance and villainous convicts - included abundant reliable information about Australian history and the discovery and nature of the country.⁵²

In comparison with the first half of the century the volume of fiction as a proportion of all Russian writings about Australia (fiction and non-fiction) increased from 4% to 9%. The demand for such literature reflects the need of some groups in Russian

51 V. Cheshikhin, 'Ocherki inostrannoi literatury' [Essays on foreign literature], *Nabliudatel'*, no. 4, 1896, pp. 299-303. Cheshikhin made his comments without reference to authors who were becoming the best known of the 1890s such as Henry Lawson and A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson.

52 Surprisingly in the English speaking world this novel (translated as *A Voyage Round the World*) is less known than several other writings of Jules Verne. About its influence on the Russian image of New Zealand see J. Goodliffe, *These Fortunate Isles. Some Russian Perceptions of New Zealand in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. Christchurch, 1992, pp. XI, 29-30.

society for an escape from everyday realities. Australia turned out to be an ideal scene for the literature of this type. Here during the life span of one or two generations could be combined such features of the adventure or family novel as the proximity of the ocean, desert and bush; exile and gold-rush; settlers-pioneers and run-away convicts; natives and British aristocrats; and the loneliness of the outback and the exuberance of the cities. Australia's history provided a rich field for mystery, heroism, brutality, miraculous transformations (from bushranger to aristocrat) and the inevitable happy denouements.

Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century considerable changes took place in the Russian writings about Australia. They clearly specialized in children's, popular, serious and specialist literature. The predominance of geographical-historical materials over the social-political and economic materials during the first half of the century gradually changed in favour of the latter. Two different images of Australia, partly overlapping, were forming. The first - also characteristic of the first half of the century - was that of an exotic country of adventures at the edge of the world. By the end of the century this image was no longer the dominating one; however it continued to prevail in fiction, geography and travel literature. Its target narrowed towards children and adolescents and readers of entertaining literature. The image remained vital because Australia perfectly suited the longing of Russian society to escape Russian reality. Chekhov gives a perfect example of how Australia was perceived as a synonym for an extremely remote, tranquil place. In a letter to Suvorin of March 17, 1892 Chekhov described his feelings about a newly purchased estate, Melikhovo:

A day lasts an eternity. You live as in Australia, at the end of the world, your mood is calm, contemplative ... there are moments when I am so happy that I superstitiously pull myself up and remember my creditors, who one day will banish me from my lawfully acquired Australia.⁵³

The second image - Australia as a country of unique social-economic experiments - on the contrary was tightly bound up with Russian reality and directly or indirectly answered questions confronting Russian society. At the turn of the century this image existed predominantly on the pages of the 'serious' press, aimed at specialists and the educated

53 A. Yarmolinsky, ed., *Letters of Anton Chekhov*, London, 1974, p. 204. Chekhov put a similar but more exaggerated perception into the mouth of a provincial excise officer Kosykh in play *Ivanov* (1887): 'Can't one talk to anyone, dash it all? It's like Australia - no common interests or solidarity, each going his own way'. A.P. Chekhov, *The Oxford Chekhov*, vol. 2, London, 1967, p. 201.

public.

As in the first half of the century these images were not subject to the ups and downs in Russian-British relations. They were invariably positive, with the exception of the condemnation of colonists' atrocities towards the Aborigines. Australian people were still perceived as an integral part of the British nation rather than something outside it. Moreover, the success of colonization was often explained by the positive features of the English character. The positive attitudes of the Russian press were primarily a product of Russian reality itself and reflected the socio-political tendencies of Russian society.

If we compare the images of Australia as portrayed in the Russian publications and those created by the Russian visitors, we discover that the latter were more critical in their attitudes towards Australian reality. The visitors tended, consciously or subconsciously, to contrast Englishmen with Australians; and certainly the visitors had a more negative attitude towards the English than the Russian press in general. What may be the explanation for these distinctions? I believe that they were rooted not in the social-political positions of periodicals or social and class backgrounds of the visitors, though certainly these factors had some influence. The principal reason was perhaps the contradiction between an abstract, ideal image created by the arm-chair writers and the reality discovered by the visitors, as the specific features of the way of life and behaviour of the English became evident to the Russians only when they visited the English colonies and when these features in some way contrasted with their own customs and values. Literature of the imagination, and literature at least one remove from the testimony of witnesses, could create an ever young, dynamic and sun-drenched Australia colonized by exciting heroes and villains. The reality of Australia was rather less romantic.

PART III

CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN TRAVELLERS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Introduction

The new century brought changes to Australian and Russian life. For Australia, these included the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia and a political basis for the concepts 'Australia' and 'Australian'. For Russia, it was a period of economic reforms, especially in agriculture; initial steps toward the creation of democratic institutions; and the extreme social upheavals and polarization of society which led to the October revolution of 1917 and civil war. Russian visits to Australia continued, and visitors' writings not only maintained the traditions of nineteenth century perceptions, but introduced a number of features determined by the new times.

There were only two naval visits at this period. In April-June 1901 the first-class armoured cruiser *Gromoboi*, under the command of Karl Petrovich Iessen, visited Albany, Melbourne and Sydney. The main aim of this brand new ship's visit was to represent Russia in the festivities held for the opening of the first session of the Australian Federal Parliament in Melbourne. Iessen appears with other distinguished personalities in the Tom Roberts painting 'Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia', which now decorates the Australian Parliament House. Iessen made an official report on the festivities for the Naval Ministry, which, though rather formal, provides many valuable details about this important event in Australian history. In April 1903 Adelaide and Sydney were visited by a smaller vessel, the second-class cruiser *Dzhigit*, under the command of captain Aleksandr Nazarevskii and lieutenant Stepan Govorlivyi. The ship was on a training cruise to Australia and the South Pacific. Unfortunately no reports or memoirs about this visit were published.

The main information for our research at this period is provided by the travel notes and diaries of individual Russian travellers. Most of those whose writings were published were specialists, and they came to Australia not as tourists but as professional observers of a particular area. That is why the reports of some of them are too specific for this

chapter, though there are some writings of a wider interest. Biographical details about some of these travellers can help us understand their perceptions and attitudes.

From December 1902 until April 1903 Nikolai Abramovich Kriukov, a Russian agricultural expert, visited Australia. He was born in 1861 into a family of modest means and achieved everything in his life through hard toil and talent. While studying at the Petrov Agricultural Academy he visited America, where he lived with farmers' families. This acquaintance with the American way of life and economy played an important role in the formation of his attitudes. During the 1890s he served as an agriculturalist in the Russian Far East. Later he was transferred to the Department of Agriculture, which he finally headed. Before the revolution he published over 20 books and 300 articles describing different aspects of agriculture in Russia and such countries as Denmark, Norway, England, Canada, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand, which he visited to observe conditions at first hand.

Australia interested him, both as Russia's competitor and as a successful model of agricultural development. He undertook a broad and thorough investigation here, visiting all states and examining nearly 70 private and government farms and enterprises, as well as educational institutions. The result of this study was an extensive (648 pages) monograph, *Australia. Australian Agriculture in Connection with the General Development of the Country*, published by the Department of Agriculture in Moscow in 1906. His observations and findings were not limited to agricultural issues but encompassed broader aspects of rural life, and thus became widely known in Russia. As for Kriukov's destiny after the revolution, his ideas were rejected by the new authorities, his works were no longer published, and he was limited to teaching in the field of agriculture. The last known data about him is from the early 1930s, when he taught in the provincial Perm University.¹

A similar destiny of rejection and oblivion after the revolution awaited another brilliant Russian visitor to Australia - naturalist, geographer and teacher Aleksandr

1 E.V. Govor, 'Zagadki sel'skoi Avstralii (iz nabliudenii russkogo ekonomista N.A. Kriukova)' [Enigmas of rural Australia (from the observations of the Russian economist N.A. Kriukov)], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 234-236; 'Kriukov N.A.', in *Sibirskaiia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 2, Novosibirsk, 1932, columns 1071-1072.

Leonidovich Iashchenko (1868-1943?) (ill. 19). He originated from the family of Leonid N. Iashchenko, former member of the revolutionary organization 'The People's Freedom', which was repressed by the tsarist authorities. Aleksandr Iashchenko graduated from the Physico-Mathematical Faculty at the St. Petersburg University, specializing in the natural sciences. As a student he participated in expeditions to Lapland and Central Asia; later he visited Western Europe. Between 1895 and 1917 he taught geography and natural sciences in different institutions, and between 1911 and 1917 served also as a high-ranking administrator in the Ministry of Public Education. After the revolution this outstanding scientist, whose place should have been in the Academy of Sciences or capital city universities, retreated to Sergach, a remote township in Nizhnii Novgorod province, where he taught children and lectured to collective farmers. Still, that was evidently not enough to hide him from Stalin's security forces. There is unconfirmed evidence that Iashchenko was finally arrested, and released not long before his death.

His expedition to Australia from July to October 1903 was an important event in his life. He undertook the visit with letters acknowledging the official support of the Russian Academy of Sciences, but he travelled at his own expense. In Australia he visited Fremantle and Perth, stayed in Adelaide, travelled by train and coach to Killalpaninna mission station east of Lake Eyre, and then made a trip from Adelaide to Melbourne via Mildura by train, steam boat and coach. He stayed for a while in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and made another expedition to the Cairns area, visiting Kuranda and Yarrabah. This extensive program enabled him to acquire valuable ethnological and zoological² collections, which are held now in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography and the Zoological Museum in St. Petersburg. Iashchenko's Australian ethnographical collections actually helped to rescue his name from oblivion in 1956, when the young ethnographer Vladimir Kabo studied them for his thesis and located Iashchenko's daughter Vera A. Nikiforova, who had preserved her father's journals and collection of Australian photographs. Soon after Kabo's publication on the traveller, Iashchenko's

2 Incidentally Iashchenko discovered a new genus and species of scorpion in Central Australia, *Hemihoplopus yaschenko*.



III. 19. Aleksandr Iashchenko



III. 20. Konstantin Balmont

journal was published in Moscow.³ This version of the journal had been prepared for publication by Iashchenko himself on the basis of his original account of the journey. This publication is one of the main sources of information for this chapter.

In April-May 1908 Australia was visited by another scholar with a scientific mission to collect ethnographic material for the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography - Vladimir Vladimirovich Sviatlovskii (1871-1927). Unfortunately he did not leave any writings which could be described as travel notes, although he wrote occasionally about different aspects of Australian life. His main speciality was political economy, and Australia had interested him long before the visit, as he had published several works about Australian social legislation and workers' conditions. Later he published an article, 'Statistics in Australasia', for which he used data collected in Australia. In 1974 L.G. Rozina published some of his letters sent to the museum from Australia, but they deal mainly with issues relating to the collection.⁴

The Russian symbolist poet Konstantin Dmitrievich Balmont (Bal'mont) (1867-1942) (ill. 20) was quite a different type of traveller from these experts and collectors. He also differed from ordinary tourists, such as Sophia Vitkovskaia. After the defeat of the first Russian revolution of 1905, fearing persecution for his involvement in revolutionary events, he fled Russia for France. In 1912 he set out for the lands of the South Seas - Australia and Oceania - in the hope of finding there a harmonious, happy world not corrupted by Western civilization. He and his wife spent more than half a year in Australia and the South Pacific, between February and August 1912. In Australia they visited Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane and Thursday Island. Unfortunately Australia, unlike the Pacific islands, was not the best place to

3 A.L. Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie po Avstralii [Travels in Australia]*, Foreword by I.A. Solov'ev, Moscow, 1959; V.R. Kabo, 'A.L. Iashchenko i ego puteshestvie v Avstraliu' [A.L. Iashchenko and his expedition to Australia], *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 6, 1957; V.R. Kabo, 'Opisanie avstraliiskoi kollektsii A.L. Iashchenko v Muzei antropologii i etnografii im. Miklukho-Maklaia' [Description of A.L. Iashchenko's Australian collection in the Miklouho-Maclay Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography], *Sbornik Muzeia antropologii i etnografii*, vol. 19, 1960, pp. 111-167; E.V. Govor, 'Ot Killalpaninny do Sergacha (sud'ba A.L. Iashchenko)' [From Killalpaninna to Sergach (A.L. Iashchenko's destiny)] in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 245-246.

4 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1665, 2936, 3035, 4156, 4160; L.G. Rozina, 'V.V. Sviatlovskii - sobiratel' kollektsii iz Okeanii' [V.V. Sviatlovskii - collector from Oceania], *Sbornik Muzeia antropologii i etnografii*, vol. 30, 1974, pp. 127-139. This article also provides biographical details about Sviatlovskii and a bibliography of his writings.

inspire him and he wrote only two poems about it. Still, the impressions of his journey in general received a lot of publicity, as he made lecture tours in Russia in 1913-1915 and wrote about his travels in Russian magazines and newspapers. From Australia and the South Pacific Balmont brought a collection of artefacts, distinguished by their aesthetic value, which he presented to the Moscow University in 1913.⁵

One of the last pre-revolutionary visitors to leave detailed recollections about Australia was professor Aleksandr Petrovich Nechaev (born 1870). He grew up in the family of a religious official and publisher, P.I. Nechaev. Aleksandr began his education in an ecclesiastical seminary, studied philosophy at St. Petersburg University, and finally specialized in and headed the new branch of science in Russia - paedology, in particular the application of experimental psychology to pedagogy. His studies were widely recognized in the West, and in 1914 he was invited to take part in the Australian Congress of the British Association for the Advancement of Science to report on Russian experimental pedagogy. He visited Adelaide, Melbourne, Bendigo, Sydney, and Brisbane and their environs. After his return to Russia he wrote a book about this journey, which he planned to publish in 1917. The October revolution prevented him from fulfilling his plans, and the destiny of the manuscript as well as the author himself after the revolution are unknown. Nevertheless, in 1916-1917 he managed to publish a number of articles about his travels in Australia and the state of culture and education there.⁶

There were other sorts of Russian visitors to Australia at the beginning of the century, but for different reasons they will remain beyond the scope of this chapter. Some of their writings deal only with the specific field of their interests. For instance, Russian experts/visitors studied Australian botanical gardens (V.N. Liubimenko), underground waters (A.D. Stopnevich), and primary industries (F. Iakobson and Ia. Tsekul); while the

5 For a bibliography of some of Balmont's writings on this trip, see *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 2-26, 2-30, 2-31, 2-32, 2-33, 2-34, 2-145.

6 Biographical details from: Pushkinskii Dom, S.A. Vengerov's Archives, fond 377, 1 sobranie, no. 2001. Autobiography of A.P. Nechaev, 1913; A.P. Nechaev, 'Shkol'noe delo i obshchee sostoianie kul'tury v sovremennoi Avstralii' [Schooling and general level of culture in contemporary Australia], *Vestnik vospitaniia*, no. 1, 1916, pp. 144-200; A.P. Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev' [Visiting the Australians], *Istoricheskii vestnik*, vol. 148, April, 1917, pp. 222-250, May/June, pp. 568-603; A.P. Nechaev, 'Zhizn' kul'turnoi Avstralii' [The life of cultural Australia], *Vokrug sveta*, nos 30-33, 1917.

Russian wrestler G. Gakkensmidt wrote about his participation in Australian competitions.⁷ In the early 1900s a Moscow teacher of geography, Aleksandra Aleksandrovna Korsini, toured mainland Australia, Tasmania, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In Russia, for a number of years, she gave lectures about her travels, illustrating them with her own pictures using a magic lantern. She had a good response from audiences and her popularizing activities were appreciated by Leo Tolstoy. Unfortunately the texts of her lectures did not survive. There were some other Russians who wrote about their travels in Australia in fiction, such as Aleksandr Aleksadrovich Usov (known under the pseudonym A.A. Cheglok), Mikhail A. Solov'ev, M.V. Ragozin and N.L. Tolstoi.⁸ Very little is known about them, and even the facts of their visits to Australia are not confirmed.

Thus the majority of Russian visitors whose writings are available for this chapter belong not simply to cultured society as it was in the nineteenth century, but to its cream. Some of them were non-conformists in their political opinions, as well as in their particular fields of research. They were also distinguished by their knowledge of the life, culture and science of Western European countries; most of them knew several European languages, including English. The fact that they were scholars and specialists, as well as their cultural level, suggests that they were prepared to give an unbiased picture of Australian life, or at least one informed by comparative studies and a trained capacity to gather and analyse data. Their views and values can be considered as typical for the liberal, cultured spectrum of Russian society.

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- 7 V.N. Liubimenko, 'Otchet o komandirovke na ostrov Iavu i v Avstraliiu' [Report on a field trip to the island of Java and to Australia], *Izvestiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk*, no. 7, 1914, pp. 461-479; A.D. Stopnevich, 'Okhrana podzemnykh vod v Avstralii' [Protection of underground waters in Australia], *Trudy Terskogo otdeleniia Russkogo tekhnicheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 4, 1912, pp. 9-25; F. Iakobson, Ia. Tsekul, 'Pis'ma iz Avstralii' [Letters from Australia], *Molochnoe khoziaistvo i skotovodstvo*, nos 15-17, 21-23, 1914; G. Gakkensmidt, 'Istoriia moei zhizni' [The story of my life], in *Pu' k sile i zdorov'iu*, Moscow, 1911, pp. 102-172.
- 8 V. Popov, 'Russkaia puteshestvennitsa A.A. Korsini' [Russian traveller A.A. Korsini], *Vokrug sveta*, no. 11, 1910, pp. 193-194; A.A. Cheglok, *Ostrovnye ptitsy (Rasskazy) [Island Birds (Short Stories)]*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925; A.A. Cheglok, *Po Avstralii: Rasskazy iz zhizni zhivotnykh [In Australia: Short Stories about Animals]*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925; A.A. Cheglok, *Po Avstralii: Rasskazy iz zhizni ptits [In Australia: Short Stories about Birds]*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925; M.V. Ragozin, 'Zhivopisnoe puteshestvie po piatoi chasti sveta' [A picturesque journey through the fifth part of the world], *Vokrug sveta*, nos 1-4, 6, 8, 10-13, 15, 1908; M. Solov'ev, *Na avtomobile cherez Avstraliiu [Across Australia by Car]*, Moscow, 1914; M. Solov'ev, *Na verbludakh po Avstralii ... [Travelling Australia by Camel]*, Petrograd, 1917.

In analyzing the Russians' perceptions, we will concentrate mainly on the new features which appeared at this period, and try to distinguish when these features were due to the new times, and when to the personality of the traveller.

The land

Kriukov's impressions of the Australian landscape maintained the Russian tradition of the second half of the nineteenth century: 'a cheerless landscape', but Iashchenko's perception of Australian nature was already ambivalent. On the one hand, like Vitkovskaia and other earlier visitors, he was initially far from enthusiastic: 'cheerless landscape', 'stunted shrubs', 'nothing that could be described as a picturesque place: nature is poor everywhere'. On the other hand, we can distinguish a new attitude in Iashchenko's writings. During his first trip to the bush around Adelaide Iashchenko was possessed by quite different feelings: he spoke about an 'islet' of 'real scrub' which 'remained whole among general destruction in the name of culture' as 'wonderful remains of Australian nature'. And on the next day he wrote about 'beautiful eucalyptus forests'. In the first case his attitude was typical for a Russian visitor, while in the second case it was characteristic of a passionate naturalist. Obviously the new time had an influence too: in the face of the colonists' destruction of gum-tree forests, he felt their beauty especially strongly. A new feature was that he did not perceive Australian nature to be alien and strange to the Russian eye, as had earlier Russian visitors. On the contrary, Australian scenery often reminded him of Russian nature; in particular he was amazed by the similarity between Australian creeks and dried-up streams in the Russian steppe. Still, he dismissed the comparison between the Murray and the Volga which he found was common in Australian schools.

Iashchenko's impressions of the Queensland tropics confirm my suggestion in the previous chapter that the Russians' expectation of seeing romantic 'wild' nature in Australia was better satisfied by the tropical regions than by the bush in the south-eastern areas. Only in the north, travelling around Kuranda and Yarrabah near Cairns, did Iashchenko begin to speak about Australian scenery as a poet rather than an interested naturalist:

The locality delighted with wild beauty The creek seemed mysterious The return journey was positively fairy-like: the mystery of the place, the swiftly falling darkness, movement of phosphorescent insects, moist freshness, ... the wondrous stems of descending lianas, all were set off by a distant ringing of bells.

Kriukov was enchanted with the Australian scenery only once - in a Victorian tree-fern forest which he described as 'antediluvian scenery of fairy-tale fascination'. Though not the tropics, it was something exotic to a Russian eye.⁹

The poet Balmont in 1912 already had quite different perceptions. In his poem 'Black Swan' he praised not the Australian tropics but the bush, believing that the white man's invasion had brought its inevitable destruction:

Eucalyptus' slender trunk showed blue,
The bush of queer wattle has blossomed out
But all this is only a small patch, -
Factory whistle is louder than birds' song
The whites' crowds made the whole country unfortunate.
Black swan, sing the farewell song.¹⁰

Nechaev, though not a poet or naturalist, was enchanted by Australian nature from the very beginning. Describing the impressions of his first Australian night in Adelaide he wrote: 'The moon was shining in the open windows and the sweet scent of gum-trees was in the air'. Travelling in the Blue Mountains, he found new images to depict eucalypts: 'Picturesque groups of eucalypts with transparent leaves and curved shining silver trunks'. And when he observed from above hills covered with 'dark-blue velvet eucalyptus crowns' they reminded him of enchanted sea waves. The naturalist Liubimenko wrote about eucalypts less poetically, but at least positively:

A eucalyptus forest strikes one with its transparence combined with the trunks' might. One can comprehend its grandeur only from a distance.

How far this perception was from the images of alien and dull nature recorded by the Russian travellers in the second half of the nineteenth century! Incidentally, Nechaev was

9 N.A. Kriukov, *Avstraliia. Sel'skoe khoziaistvo Avstralii v sviazi s obshchim pazvitiem strany* [Australia. Australian Agriculture in Connection with the General Development of the Country], Moscow, 1906, pp. 58-59; Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 23, 29, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 75, 121, 122, 123, 129, 155, 160, 166, 167, 168.

10 K.D. Balmont, 'Chernyi lebed' [Black Swan]: Poem, in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 289-290.

the first Russian to mention the importance of the wattle as 'the national Australian flower'.¹¹

Thus, the perception of these Russian visitors indicates a new trend. It was characterized neither by the euphoric images of a tropical paradise usual for the naval visitors of the beginning of the nineteenth century, nor by the disillusionment typical of the visitors of the second half of the century. In the beginning of the twentieth century some of the Russians had already begun to recognize the beauty of Australian scenery, although they still did not see the Australian land and nature as indissolubly connected with its people, as some Australians already did.¹²

Country and society

Russian writings on socio-economic issues not only continued traditions set by the visitors of the nineteenth century, but concentrated on some points which became central to the Russian mind at the beginning of the new century, on the eve of tremendous social changes. The Australian economy, which vividly interested Russian business circles, was investigated by Kriukov in great detail. He contrasted the effective organization of Australian primary industries with the Russian system: extensive agriculture with communal land ownership and poor technology. He believed that land should be owned by those who lived on it and cultivated it, i.e. the farmer's family. The success of individual farming and private ownership of land in Australia proved, according to Kriukov, the necessity for the destruction of the Russian commune and redistribution of land to those who would like to work on their own land. Summing up he wrote:

The success of the Australian economy is based not on the favourable physical conditions of the country ... but on the organization of the human society; all successes of agriculture in Australia are due to the labour of its solid, educated and patriotic population In Australia a farmer working on his own land with the members of his family is the salt of the earth That is why a family ... is the main foundation of both the agricultural progress and the strength and solidity of the whole state.

11 It has begun to be promoted as such in the years just before his visit. The Wattle Day League introduced Wattle Day in 1910. Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 232, 243, 575-576; Liubimenko, 'Otchet o komandirovke', pp. 466-467.

12 See for instance the poem 'My Country' by Dorothea Mackellar.

He considered that following the Australian way would bring prosperity to Russia. Although it has not been mentioned by historians it seems to me distinctively possible that Kriukov's ideas, reinforced by his Australian impressions, became the theoretical basis of P.A. Stolypin's agrarian reforms, which began in the early 1900s in Russia.¹³ In his study Kriukov drew attention to other points pertinent to Russia and Australia, in particular the struggle with the 'tyranny of distance' (he came close to using G. Blainey's famous phrase) - colonization of vast remote territories, which became part of Stolypin's reform in Russia which facilitated the migration of peasants to Siberia. In Australia Kriukov distinguished four major aspects of this important issue. They were: the perfect balance between self-governing, compact states and the Commonwealth; the system of colonization, particularly attention to means of communication; education and development of the population; and the system of landownership and land exploitation.¹⁴

Russian visitors characteristically perceived Australian economic achievements to be closely connected to social issues. Kriukov believed that the most important reasons for the country's success were the principles of the functioning of Australian society and the behaviour of individuals. Nechaev, while not going into the details of socio-economic issues, was persuaded that 'Australians built their life on work' and that they 'felt deep respect for hard work and human rights'. He explained the absence of beggars on the streets by claiming that all the disabled were cared for by special institutions, while for all who wished to work there were the conditions to do so.¹⁵

The issues of ethnic diversity and the national consciousness of the Australian people were perceived by the Russians in varying ways. At one extreme was the naturalist Liubimenko, who saw the people of Australia as

the conservative English who in the new country preferred to surround themselves with their traditional plants instead of domesticating native ones.

His perception is a perfect illustration of the nineteenth century Russian visitors' frequent inclination to blame 'the English' rather than 'the Australians' for all the negative features

13 Stolypin's reforms aimed to encourage peasants who wished to leave the communes to become individual proprietors and to implement improved farming methods.

14 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 141, 612-615, 620-621.

15 Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 244, 570, 582-583.

seen in Australia. Liubimenko's attitude was due probably to his lack of interest in anything in Australia except the botanical gardens.

The perceptions of Kriukov and Iashchenko were more complex. Highly praising the Australian people, Kriukov believed that the ethnic composition of the population, its language and its customs, were extremely uniform in Australia, and was reminded of those of England. He stressed the close spiritual bonds between Australians and England, which Australians perceived as their 'home'. Iashchenko, on the other hand, was the first among the Russian visitors to record the increasing ethnic diversity of the population - he mentioned more than a dozen nationalities whose representatives he met during his travels in Australia. His view of the national consciousness of the people of Australia was not obvious in his journal in the same way as Kriukov's was; still, a number of Iashchenko's references to the subject suggest that he perceived Australian people to be distinct from the English. I attribute the differences in the perceptions of Kriukov and Iashchenko (who travelled in Australia in the same year, 1903) to the fact that, while both of them felt sympathy towards the Australians, they differed slightly in their attitudes to England. Kriukov, as was usual in Russian business circles, had a predominantly positive attitude, while the more 'democratic' Iashchenko was not so pro-English. That is why, to express his admiration for the Australians, Kriukov simply equated them with the English, while Iashchenko tried to distinguish something specific, and thus continued the traditions set by the Russian visitors of the nineteenth century. Also, as a geographer with an interest in anthropology, Iashchenko was more capable of seeing the diversity and the specific features of both England and Australia.

Both Russian travellers used the term 'the Australians'. In Kriukov's book, which was written after his visit, this term was applied throughout the whole text. He used it when he wanted to describe a specific feature: 'Mutton is the main provision of the Australians', 'Australians like to smoke and sit in comfort'. He also used this term as a national definition, the equivalent of 'Englishmen' or 'Germans'. Iashchenko's journal suggests that, although from the very beginning he regarded the Australian style of life as something distinct, he was reluctant to use the term 'the Australians' till the very end of his journey. For instance, he preferred to speak about 'the Australian life style' instead of

'the Australians' life style'; 'pipe usual for the Australian inhabitant' instead of simply 'for the Australian'. Not until two and a half months after his arrival did he use the term 'the Australians' in his journal as a definition of nationality. He also used the expression 'the white Australians' to distinguish them from Australian Aborigines. Nechaev in 1914, although he noticed 'a strong spiritual bond between Australia and England', adopted the word 'Australians' without any hesitation, used it as the only possible ethnic term, and even entitled his essay 'Visiting the Australians'. Thus, we can see how the term 'the Australians' gradually attained a new status in the Russian mind and language.¹⁶

Although reluctant to use the term 'the Australians', Iashchenko extensively observed and recorded specific Australian features and images. He used a number of expressions from Australian English - 'Cooee!', 'lubra', 'gin', 'black fellow', 'tracker', 'station', 'paddock', 'bush', 'bushman' - and noticed objects distinguished by their 'Australianness': 'dingo's skin before a toilet-table' in a provincial hotel, 'an opossum blanket with platypus trimming' used by his fellow-traveller, 'a sofa's back upholstered with platypus skins' in one house and a frosted kangaroo silhouette on a glass door in another house.¹⁷

Iashchenko's travels and life in the outback provided him with material not only for exact descriptions, but for the creation of poetic images of the outback, which makes some pages of his journal resemble short stories or sketches. The most interesting part in this respect is his description of a trip from Hergott Springs (Marree) to Killalpaninna and back, in a mail coach along the Birdsville track. He found himself in a world of lonely farmers, drovers and roadside hotel keepers. That experience helped him realize the bonds of mateship that connected the people there, to accept specific notions of time and travel in the outback so unusual for a Westerner. Sitting on the step behind the coach, beside Aboriginal Harry who 'now and then would leap off the coach, with the driver's permission, to catch a lizard', or to pick up an abandoned boomerang in the bushes for the Russian naturalist, Iashchenko fitted perfectly into the general pattern of this travel.

16 Liubimenko, 'Otchet o komandirovke', p. 463; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 148, 151; Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 64, 65, 155, 178; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 239, 240, 244, 247, 578.

17 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 49, 80, 136, 143.

Journeys by coach involved not just the transfer of passengers from one point to another, but represented an important social event in these places. Drovers whom they met on their way

were sunburnt, serious types. Their heads were invariably covered with characteristic grey hats with turned down brims, in the mouth - the inseparable pipe. They all knew James [the driver of the coach]. Their movement in the desert, I suppose, was also known, as they, riding up to the coach, asked if there were any letters for them and gave James their mail for delivery Our James stopped perforce and chatted with each passer-by.

The slow rate of the coach's progress was also due to the presence among its passengers of a merry laughing lady, and the driver and the male passengers lost all sense of urgency as they 'paid court to her the whole way'.

Iashchenko had experienced to its full extent the romance of life on this frontier - the excitement inspired by the coach's arrival at a lonely station, the hospitality of a manager of the overnight coach stop,¹⁸ 'communal meals' when 'the passengers shared provisions in a brotherly way', boiling tea on 'a big fire in the hearth'. Sometimes a few of Iashchenko's words create the perfect image of an Australian bushman, as if it had emerged from Henry Lawson's writings. Such, for instance, was the portrait of a Clayton Creek manager's son: a strong handsome youth who worked hard on the station during the day and read the *Australasian* late at night with a candle-end. In his travels Iashchenko was not only exposed as an onlooker to the outback scenery - houses of corrugated iron, water tanks, numerous gates between paddocks - but experienced himself the pleasures of sleeping in a hut or a tent with an earthen floor, or on an iron bed with sacks instead of mattresses. He shared with bushmen meat from which they first had to remove fly-blown pieces, drank Australian style 'stewed tea mixed with sand' and enjoyed home-made bread baked in tins.

More and more he acquired a fascination with frontier life. Staying at the boarding-house of a Mrs Wilson in Hergott, he was at first rather fussy about the dirt everywhere and his drunk neighbours. But finally he appreciated the carefree life in this grubby 'hotel', where lodgers courted girls and sipped whisky from cups before going to bed. In the evenings the widow Wilson played the out-of-tune piano, and men danced

18 It is difficult to find a term in English to cover the position of part-time manager/caretaker of isolated centres where coaches stopped overnight.

'the jig and sentimental waltz' with each other. In such company, Iashchenko was not embarrassed 'to surprise the public with his piano improvisations, and even danced the lively Russian *trepak*'.¹⁹

Kriukov's travels in rural Australia, contacts with people there and the literature that he had read²⁰ enabled him to create detailed images of traditional outback types: squatters, shepherds, boundary riders, and shearers; but as these portraits provide generalized images only, without much detail of his personal impressions, we will not discuss them here.²¹

As ever, Australians' social behaviour and social life was a subject that the Russian visitors constantly discussed. Kriukov, for instance, registered strong impressions of Australian society on his arrival at Fremantle:

We are in Australia, at last! ... Light-blue sky, bright sun, perfect harbour, a town with new beautiful stone buildings, well-dressed people moving in different directions and not one policeman - these were the first impressions. Involuntarily I remembered the first disembarkment in Vladivostok: black gangway, black cheerless buildings on the shore, cold mist, no movement and a policeman in the foreground probably amazed himself why he stuck there. And a measured tinkling of spurs instead of people's movement. I do not know about others but I always feel depressed hearing the clanging of spurs.²²

A strong and brave beginning for a book by a Russian official!

The Russian visitors, and especially Kriukov, saw self-respect and recognition of the rights of the individual to be the most important features of Australian society. They noticed them because of the striking contrast with Russia - the humility and poverty of a Russian *muzhik* (peasant), as Kriukov put it.²³ It is not by chance that in his book on agriculture Kriukov devoted a number of pages to the ways Australians instilled self-respect into children, regarding it as a foundation-stone of the success of the society and country in general. He wrote:

Many times I have heard teachers' conversations with children and always the words 'self-respect' and 'gentleman' were in the foreground.

19 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 81-94, 110-115, 124, 127, 132, 155-156.

20 Among the sources which he used were censuses, year-books, agricultural reports and the handbooks of different Australian states, agricultural periodicals as well as books of a general nature about Australia and its people.

21 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 269-270, 274-275, 295-298.

22 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, p. 20.

23 Govor, 'Zagadki sel'skoi Avstralii', p. 235.

Kriukov explained to the Russian reader that the word 'gentleman' had lost its historical caste origin, and now denoted a 'cultured man' whose behaviour is the most proper in public life. Self-respect, Kriukov believed, was the predominant feature of a gentleman. He contrasted two methods of upbringing - intimidation ('It is a sin', 'God will punish') in Russia, and the promotion of the aspiration to become a true gentleman in Australia. According to Kriukov, a cultured man, a gentleman, would not harm others - not because of the fear of punishment, but because he would never stoop to it for fear of losing his self-respect. This was the worst punishment for a cultured man, argued Kriukov, in discussing the positive aspects of Australian society.²⁴

The Russian visitors also noticed and praised the Australians' respect for and recognition of the rights of the individual. Iashchenko, for instance, in conversation with a Commissioner of police, seemed surprised to discover that the police had no right to record physical details of the suspect before his crime was proven. Like Tsimmerman twenty years before, Kriukov was amazed at the unobtrusiveness but effectiveness of Australian police. Again in the Russians' perceptions this was reinforced by the contrast with the Russian reality. Kriukov was ironic describing his impressions of Perth:

I even felt bored after all - what a strange city it is, you are walking and walking everywhere and not one policeman in sight; according to our notions it is unthinkable for a proper city to exist without policemen.

And after Kriukov finally saw a policeman - 'a decent gentlemen without any weapon' - the traveller involuntarily remembered Russian 'streets and squares full of policemen with sabres and revolvers'. Witnessing a scene when a policeman arrested a drunk, Iashchenko seemed to be impressed that everything was done 'quietly', almost inconspicuously, for the benefit of passers-by.²⁵ Noticing these features, the Russians were obviously speaking not only about the police as a state institution, but about a society different from Russia; a society which trusted its members and respected the rights of the individual.

²⁴ Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 129-130.

²⁵ Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, p. 28; Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 32, 65.

The Russians thought the way Australians dressed and behaved to be another manifestation of their self-respect. For instance, Kriukov's first impression of a street crowd was:

People are dressed quite differently in comparison with Russia, there are no bare feet, no *onoocha* [cloth wrapped round feet in bast-shoes - E.G.], no rags, all are dressed in light suits, shirts with clean collars and cuffs and ties, on their feet they have black or yellow boots, on their heads - straw hats.

In the following pages he stressed more than once that everywhere one can see 'people dressed decently and cleanly'. In the chapter discussing the impressions of the Russian immigrants, we will see that they too were impressed with the Australians' dress.

Kriukov especially praised the custom in accordance with which 'people of all classes' washed and changed their dress before dinner, and came to the table looking neat. After the meal the family spent time together in conversation or reading the papers. The same custom was noticed by Iashchenko. Kriukov emphasized that this order of things was usual on all farms - rich and poor.²⁶ The Russians' interest in this feature was caused not only by the dress itself, but by the social customs that the dress suggested. Kriukov saw the essence of this in the fact that 'this highly developed society devoted only certain hours to work. All the rest of the time belonged to social life, at least in the family circle'. He also noticed that in cities, all employees finished their work by 6 pm or earlier and devoted the evenings to social life and entertainments.²⁷

The perceived behaviour of Australians also contributed to the image of a highly developed, well-organized, independent and self-respecting population. Nechaev was impressed with the cleanliness of the streets, and approved the system of fines imposed by society for littering.²⁸ Kriukov especially stressed that people did not hurry, did not fuss, but still got everywhere in time. The first occasion he noticed this was when he came to a suburban train platform 15 minutes before the train's departure and was surprised to see no passengers. A few minutes before departure, the passengers came in a

26 This is a new version of the scene with the transfigured blacksmith which was described twice by the Russian visitors of the nineteenth century - in the 1820s and in the 1860s (see pp. 40, 112).

27 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 20, 27, 152, 153-154; Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, p. 80. Up till now Russian visitors to Western countries were surprised by this unshakable recognition of the right of all members of society, including shop assistants, to a free evening. The fact that most of the shops were closed in the evening seemed to them very strange and inconvenient.

28 Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', p. 244.

considerable number and leisurely took their seats in the train. The explanation was simple: 'all people have watches' and all knew the train time-table. That was obviously a type of behaviour unusual for the illiterate Russian working masses.

Another feature remarked upon by Kriukov was the fact that people generally spoke very calmly and quietly

in order not to disturb the others by loud conversation This custom especially leaps to the eye on farms where I have never heard any shouts; if a farmer needs to tell something to a labourer he will come to him or beckon him, but he will never shout across the yard or from a great distance.²⁹

This recognition of the rights of others, even those of servants or hired labourers, was not a new observation for Russian visitors. Tsimmerman was one of the first to notice the difference between the treatment of servants in Russia and in Australia. Kriukov in his book developed this theme. He noticed that the boss, when addressing a hired worker on his farm, used the same expression and tone as he would use towards his family members or friends. Kriukov believed that in Australia

the view has been settled that a hired worker is not a working animal but a human being whose spiritual and material needs should be recognized.

He especially stressed that servants and permanent workers on the farms had clean and comfortable individual quarters. His interest in these facts is not surprising, as such attitudes and conditions were unusual for Russian life, either rural or urban. Kriukov reached an important conclusion, believing that, due to such conditions for labourers, a worker in Australia never felt irrelevant, but on the contrary identified with the interests of the farm.³⁰

Such aspects of social behaviour as ease and stiffness, informality and formality, attracted less attention in these later writings than in those of the nineteenth century. Iashchenko, while mingling with different classes, had many opportunities to discover the predominance of ease and informality over stiffness and formality. In the second-class carriage, for instance, in spite of constant reminders by the guard that it was a non-smoking carriage, his travelling companions

29 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 20, 22, 27, 154.

30 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 149, 154-155.

joked on this account and as soon the conductor left, smoked their pipes again and without a twinge of conscience spat on the clean floor.

Iashchenko also noticed that people in the trains, in spite of the rules, put their legs on the benches. Finally he even seemed annoyed by the excessive freedom of manners in the trains, especially by the constant swearing of his travelling companions. At the same time, Kriukov claimed that he had never heard bad language throughout all his travels in Australia, which was probably due to his travel in first-class carriages! Similarly, Nechaev's belief in the effectiveness of fines for spitting in carriages can be explained by the fact that he and his colleagues travelled in first class or special trains, not mixing with the working classes. According to Iashchenko, on a steamer carrying passengers along the Queensland shore, a relaxed atmosphere prevailed: the passengers sat and lay wherever they wanted, used matches despite a prohibition against it, men came out of their cabins in nightwear, and many passengers, including ladies, played cards. Staying in different hotels, Iashchenko discovered that the atmosphere often allowed lodgers to live 'without ceremony'. Only once, in the 'Australia' hotel in Brisbane, did he sense formality, explaining it by the fact that 'half of the servants there belonged to impoverished nobility and served very officially'.³¹

Iashchenko's contacts with the Australian upper classes contributed to his belief in the prevailing casualness of Australian society. Visiting Professor Edward Charles Stirling, the Director of the South Australian Museum, at his country estate, Iashchenko at first 'felt ashamed of his travel suit in the refined splendour of the setting', but gradually relaxed because of the naturalness with which he was treated, and Stirling's exhortation not to stand on ceremony in his house. Commenting on his visit to the Premier of South Australia, Iashchenko wrote with confidence that 'during office hours, access to [high officials] in Australia is simple and does not require special dress'. Only once had Iashchenko experienced 'ceremonial sitting in the drawing-room'; he could relax only when he went outside to smoke. This was in the Brisbane house of his fellow-traveller Micheli. Characteristically, Iashchenko explained this ceremoniousness by stating that the hostess was 'an English lady', i. e. not Australian.³²

31 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 74, 76, 79, 118, 121, 149, 150, 152, 164; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, p. 154; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 235, 244.

32 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 47, 51, 174-175.

Unlike their nineteenth-century predecessors, these Russian visitors did not aim to give detailed descriptions of Australian capital cities. They simply referred to them as well-built modern towns in a European style. While Kriukov praised the architecture of public buildings, Nechaev had an impression that buildings were 'not distinguished by richness of architectural imagination ... and seemed to be seen somewhere many times before'. Still, he immediately softened his criticism by adding that their designers might have thought more about interior comfort than exterior beauty. All the visitors praised the abundance of vegetation in the cities and their comfort, and enjoyed the boisterous street life.³³

It was the housing of the different classes that interested the Russian visitors now in Australia. Kriukov was especially enthusiastic. Describing the suburbs between Fremantle and Perth - individual, new, clean, cosy houses surrounded by gardens - he stressed the most important point:

here lives freely the same population which in old cities was destined to live in big gloomy houses on narrow streets and had to put up with all the unhealthy consequences of the lack of fresh air.

Seeing the same houses a few months later Iashchenko did not share Kriukov's enthusiasm: 'In my opinion, as a Russian from the inner regions of Russia, a private house with a patch of land has a miserable appearance'. He criticized 'small yards with ash-grey soil', 'pitiful patches of vegetation which here are bombastically named gardens', 'strikingly monotonous architecture' considering that the houses provided only 'the most basic necessities for a working man'. This polarity in perception was probably due to the different personalities of the travellers. For both this was the first encounter with Australia, but while Kriukov noticed achievements in the social sphere (which was for him of most interest), Iashchenko, was a geographer expecting to see something unique, and was obviously disappointed with the ordinary scenery.

Nechaev, like Kriukov, approved the availability of small individual stone houses for the working classes and, what is especially interesting, captured the main features of

³³ Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 231, 244, 568, 569-570; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 237-238; Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 35, 137.

a typical Australian house which is ideally clean with an abundance of light and every convenience for comfortable home life, with beautiful and cosy furniture but without any sign of the sharp ostentatious luxury that is not in favour in Australia.

Such a perception suggests that he, while not analyzing the roots of 'prosperity' here, saw Australian society as predominantly cultured, egalitarian, rational and respectful of human needs.³⁴

For Kriukov the social aspect of the role of 'home' in a farmer's life was especially important. He wrote in a special chapter titled 'Farmstead':

In the farmstead the main building is the master's dwelling This house never claims attention by its size but is arranged with all possible conveniences necessary for a cultured man The house, even the poorest one, has at least 3 rooms. The main room is the parlour; guests are received here and the whole family usually gathers here after dinner for conversation and rest. This room is arranged with all possible comfort: the floor is covered with carpet, soft furniture, musical instruments, pictures on the walls, albums with photographs, illustrated editions etc. Another equally important room is the dining-room; all family members gather here three times a day for meals and nothing else is supposed to be done here. All the rest are sleeping-rooms In the house of an Australian farmer rooms are ... usually not big, but are arranged very conveniently and comfortably ... and are kept clean and in order. The kitchen is usually separated from the house.

Even these extracts suggest how important it was for Kriukov to convey to the Russian readers the role of social values in the life of an ordinary Australian farmer. This was a continuation of the theme of the social custom of dressing for dinner and the family gathering after it. He obviously wanted to contrast this style of life with the wretched, rude, uncultured life of peasants in Russia. He succeeded, as these pages in his book were an important source of information for Mizhnev's *Lucky Australia*, which played a significant role in acquainting Russians with Australian conditions, and will be discussed in the final chapter.

Kriukov made some other characteristic remarks about an Australian farmstead. He wrote about the social role of the veranda here:

the veranda is usually decorated with creepers and has a number of rocking chairs where in the evening all the farmer's family may gather together; Australians like to smoke and sit in comfort.

He noticed the difference between the appearance of the Russian and the Australian farmstead: in Australia it was a group of houses for farmer and workers, while in Russia it looked like an assembly of different structures predominantly for animals. Moreover he

³⁴ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 23-24; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 23, 27; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 243, 575, 583.

stressed that each farm had park grounds, a flower garden, an orchard and an area of flat ground where tennis and other games could be played.³⁵ Such amenities in Russia were accessible only to well-off landlords.

The picture of life on the farms as described by Kriukov was exaggerated in some points. Hardly all farmers' families had meals in the dining-room every day and used the sitting-room every evening (let alone allowed children to spend time there). It is likely that some families would have preferred to have regular meals in the warm kitchen, and opened the dining-room and sitting-room only on special occasions - such as the visit of a Russian official for instance! Kriukov might have been misled in his assumption that what he saw was the everyday lifestyle. Nevertheless he was quite correct in noting the aspiration to a cultured lifestyle among the farmers: it was undoubtedly true that the sitting and dining-rooms existed and were kept in order on all the farms he visited.

Another point which made Kriukov's comparisons so firmly in favour of the Australian rural style of life, was the difference in social background between Russian peasants and Australian farmers. While peasants in Russia had for centuries been the poorest, most deprived and most uneducated class, in Australia the social origin of farmers was diverse. Farming was just one of the avenues of business open to people from all levels of society.

The Russian visitors left some observations about the question of women's rights. Both Iashchenko and Kriukov noticed equal opportunities for education for men and women; in Russia women did not enjoy such equality. Nechaev referred approvingly to a young lady who, on the eve of her coming of age, was perfectly aware of which party she intended to vote for. Kriukov wrote about the lives of women on the farms. He stressed that

women never work in the fields or in stock-breeding. Their duties are mainly in the house and sometimes partly in the orchard and vegetable garden.

The farmer's wife and daughters usually did all the housework including cooking and cleaning, and only the wealthiest employed a cook and house-maid for help. He approved their 'simple and practical clothes, consisting of light cotton dress and apron'. He was

35 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 147-150.

intrigued to discover that women took part in sports when farmers gathered for such events.³⁶

The Russians' impressions of Australian food, table etiquette and different types of restaurants report more specifically Australian features than was the case in the nineteenth century. Both Iashchenko and Kriukov described the peculiarities of 'Australian tea': 'very strong with boiled tea leaves and milk'. Iashchenko was even treated to bush-style tea, when cold unboiled water was added to the tea brew.

In Russia this drink would be certainly declared as harmful for the health, as Russians believe firmly in the incompatibility of boiled and unboiled water. I cannot say that from the Russian point of view this tea was tasty, but still it was not so bad and I drank it with pleasure,

Iashchenko wrote.

Kriukov, describing the diet of Australian farmers, wrote (characteristically for him) about its social aspects. He stressed, for instance, that 'Neither the farmer, nor his worker will leave for work in the morning without a hot breakfast', and people ate well not less than three times a day, with an abundance of meat at each meal, on rich and poor farms alike: 'The difference is only in the fact that the rich farmers have a more diverse and refined cuisine'. He was the first Russian to describe the importance of mutton in Australians' diet. Iashchenko noticed the availability of tropical fruits for Australians. Certainly the description of the abundant food enjoyed regularly by ordinary Australians sounded like sharp criticism of the insufficient food available to the working classes in Russia. This difference was noticed by the Russians immigrants in Australia as well.

Observing table etiquette in well-off houses, Iashchenko appears not to have been as annoyed by its formality (including a gong) as the Russian travellers in the nineteenth century were. He even identified a custom common to both Russia and Australia, noting that 'in England it was not customary to thank hosts after the dinner while in Australia it is allowed'. This is another indication that he saw Australian society as being distinct from that of England. Often eating by himself in street cafes he noticed some more specific local features - the first signs of ethnic diversity such as fish shops which offered hot food kept by Greeks; travelling snack-bars providing cheap food for the common

³⁶ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 33, 138; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 123, 148-149, 150, 153; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', p. 250.

people who were working late at night; 'free bread and butter in abundance' served in a cafe with the main meal.³⁷

In contrast with the views of the earlier Russian visitors, now Australians' love for sport was not criticized or perceived as something 'English'. Kriukov, watching his English fellow travellers' games on the steamboat on the way to Australia, initially perceived this English engagement in sport as something 'completely useless and senseless'. On the other hand, in Australia he became enthusiastic about the fact that

lawn tennis courts were as typical of an Australian farm as water tanks. Australian farmers are very fond of all kinds of out-of-door sports; here this love for sport is even stronger than in England.

The explanation for his changed views is in the social circumstances. The English indulgence in sport was seen by him as a privileged way to while away the time, and he described with irony their endless 'running about changing for each new sport'. In Australia sport lost its elitist character and was enjoyed by the general population as part of a healthy life style. Kriukov contrasted gatherings to play cards among Russian landlords with farmers' gatherings for healthy outdoor games in Australia. Nechaev approved of Melbourne students' engagement in sports, and was fascinated with a new specifically Australian kind of sport - boomerang throwing - which was very popular among them.³⁸

Similarly, Australians' observance of the Sabbath and their attitude to religion and the church did not provoke criticism from Iashchenko, Kriukov or Nechaev. Iashchenko simply mentioned that 'holidays are observed very strictly'. Kriukov understood the importance of the observance of Sunday in the rural areas and country in general. He was the first Russian to notice the differences between Protestant and Catholic churches here: while Anglican and Protestant parishioners generally belonged to the wealthier classes, their churches seemed poor and simple; on the other hand Irish Catholics, though not so rich, had large and elaborate churches. Kriukov also mentioned a feature unusual in Russia: the social function of a church, which could serve as a place for different meetings. Nechaev, who grew up in the family of a religious worker and studied for the

³⁷ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 24, 29, 31, 42, 49-50, 51, 60, 61, 77, 78-79, 141; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 151-152.

³⁸ Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 16, 150, 153; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', p. 246.

priesthood in his youth, was amazed to discover that because of the separation of church and State none of the universities had a theological department. As a result many Australian priests had graduated from the medical, natural science, arts or law departments of the Universities, studying theology in colleges. Nechaev believed that religion played an important role in the private lives of Australians.³⁹

The Russian visitors were distinguished by their profound interest in Australian cultured life. Iashchenko, as a naturalist and a professional teacher, and Nechaev, as a professor of experimental pedagogy, used every opportunity to visit museums, schools, colleges and universities in different States. Iashchenko was rather critical of Australian schools. He understood the reasons for the crowded conditions in many State schools ('no money, no place'), but what he really disapproved of was the style, the spirit of the teaching system. Making children memorize basic facts about the subject, through chorused repetition and learning the teacher's words by heart, seemed for Iashchenko not enough. This system lacked the most essential element: sheer interest on the part of both teacher and pupils. He saw pupils as disciplined children with responsible attitudes: 'interesting or not interesting, you have to learn and listen to the lesson'. He suspected that in some schools unsuccessful pupils were beaten. The teachers' method he characterized as animal-training, or coaching. Even some of the teachers themselves seemed to him not very intellectual, though rather well-trained.⁴⁰ This criticism is understandable, as Iashchenko himself aimed to awake an active interest in his students, to make them understand rather than memorize material. He seems not to have taken into consideration the scale on which compulsory education was provided in Australia, and the inevitable 'production cost' of it. Paradoxically, his scale of values as a teacher-geographer prevented him from perceiving Australian public education from a social-historical perspective. Nevertheless, his travel journal provides valuable first-hand impressions of different Australian schools and their methods.

Nechaev's study was more systematic, based as it was not only on his personal impressions but also on the considerable amount of literature that he received during his

39 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, p. 47; Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 152-153; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 240, 245.

40 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 10-11, 52-59, 62-63, 138-142, 145-146, 175-176.

visit. He was enthusiastic about the Australian education system in general, and believed that it allowed each talented child to progress to higher education. He also approved of the new methods and interest in experimental pedagogy here.⁴¹ Kriukov too praised the benefits of compulsory education in Australia, and the general aspiration to knowledge:

Every Australian is firmly convinced that only mass education and enlightenment in the broad sense of the word can ensure the economic and political progress of the country This idea has reached all classes of the population.

He believed that Australian schools provided the best conditions for education, in the sense of both physical amenities and teaching methods. Kriukov stressed that in schools children were not only educated, but acquired social skills as well. 'To turn all pupils into cultured men, gentlemen, is the ideal of every school'.

Writing of his visit to the public library in Perth, Kriukov praised its beautiful building and rich collections. All that had been made possible through the support of the government. He discovered that in the evening the library was filled with readers - there were at least 200 readers at that time, and only one librarian at the service desk. Kriukov was amazed that the public enjoyed complete self-service there, using printed catalogues and selecting books from the shelves. He concluded that such order was 'possible only for a very cultured public'. He also stressed the importance and availability of agricultural education, which greatly contributed to the success of agriculture in Australia.⁴²

Iashchenko was enthusiastic in discussing the Australians' attitude to museums and science. His first acquaintance with this attitude came when a customs official left Iashchenko's things alone as soon as he heard that they were 'for photography' and 'for insect collecting'. He experienced real amazement during his visit to the South Australian Commissioner of Police, Colonel L.G. Madley, who had an outstanding collection of Aboriginal artefacts and photographs. Noticing Iashchenko's strong interest, he immediately ordered copies of all photographs to be made for him free of charge, and presented him with a number of valuable artefacts. On Iashchenko's embarrassment and attempts to pay, Madley stated only that 'For the sake of Science he was ready to serve always and everywhere'. This incident supports the observation made by Miklouho-

41 Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', p. 242; Nechaev, 'Shkol'noe delo', pp. 144-200.

42 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 29, 122-130.

Maclay in Australia nearly twenty years before Iashchenko's visit: 'The words "for scientific purposes" can overcome all the obstacles'.

This respect for science in the young federation became especially evident to Iashchenko when he visited museums. The new museum in Perth seemed to Iashchenko 'more than good'. He was impressed not by the modest collections themselves, but by the efforts of the museum's staff to create an institution which would benefit the citizens of the young city. Without snobbery, he believed that this new institution would reach the standard of the museums in older Australian cities, which were already 'nearly as good as European ones'. His journal is a valuable source of descriptions of the museums and their curators in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Among the persons whom he met in the museums, were such scholars as Edward C. Stirling, Amandus H.C. Zietz, Baldwin Spencer, and Robert Etheridge.⁴³

Nechaev's descriptions of the efforts made and the facilities provided by the Australian hosts of the Congress of the British Association for the Advancement of Science sounded like a panegyric to Australians' attitude to science and knowledge. He was impressed by the receptions held for the scholars by Australian high officials, and by their 'refined courtesy' and hospitality (for instance, the Australian government paid practically all the expenses of the participants). And, significantly, he described the interest of ordinary Australians in the Congress - indicated by the success of public lectures, which often had audiences of three thousand. He remembered a particular case when, after having a cup of coffee on a provincial railway station, he was told that he should not pay money for it as a gentleman had paid for his cup already and left. This, and similar incidents described by Nechaev, confirmed his belief, along with other Russians, in the respect accorded to science and scholars by Australians. His conclusion was highly enthusiastic: 'Australians believe that the progress of science is as vital for the normal life of society as clean water and good roads'. In general, he was persuaded that the Australians' efforts had turned the country 'into one of the most cultured places in the world'. He even titled the version of his travel notes for the wide reader 'The life of

⁴³ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 24-25, 28, 31-34, 37, 64, 66-70, 115-116, 135, 137-138, 144-145, 147-148, 171-173.

cultural Australia'. He stressed that Australia already had its own painters, playwrights, composers and poets. Certainly, as a European, he did not overestimate their modest achievements, but was optimistic about the future of the culture there. The extent of Nechaev's interest in Australian culture is indicated by his perfect translation into Russian of what he considered to be the 'Australian national song' by the poet Arthur H. Adams: 'Vast the heritage we hold ...' with the refrain 'God's demesne, Australia'.⁴⁴

Aborigines

The Australian Aborigines were of special and predominating interest for Iashchenko. To collect their artefacts and to see their traditional culture was his strongest aspiration. His travels in Australia and contacts with people who dealt with Aborigines allowed him to gain a broad perspective on the current situation. He had personal contact with Aborigines in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland, where he visited missions, a government settlement and an encampment. The most interesting experience was his stay at Killalpaninna (or Bethesda) mission station (south-east of Lake Eyre), headed by Pastor Johann G. Reuther, where Iashchenko met Pastor Carl Strehlow⁴⁵ as well. Although the inhabitants of this mission - Dieri Aborigines - were already significantly influenced by European culture, Iashchenko's trips to the bush with them allowed him to see many features of their traditional lifestyle. He also saw the last signs of traditional culture, in particular the performance of a corroboree, at an encampment of the Gunggay Aboriginal group near Kuranda in the vicinity of Cairns. Visiting Aborigines in Yarrabah mission in the same area, he discovered that their traditional culture was suppressed, to a considerable degree, by the missionaries. Iashchenko's most dispiriting impressions were of his visit to a government settlement for Aborigines near Mildura.

44 Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 231, 233, 234-237, 240, 242, 247, 569, 570, 578, 583. Adams' verses received the award in the Australian national song competition in 1913 and were popular in Australia at the time of the Congress. See *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid*, 11 December 1913, p. 476. Now this song is forgotten and I express gratitude to Elizabeth Kwan who helped me to find the source of Nechaev's translation.

45 Carl Strehlow (1871-1922) was a Lutheran missionary who came to Australia in 1892 and worked primarily at Hermannsburg mission. He collected remarkable linguistic and ethnographic information about the Aranda and Loritja peoples and was a trusted leader and teacher of the Aborigines.

Iashchenko's democratic background and his interest in anthropology, as well as the rare opportunity to observe Aborigines in their traditional environment, contributed to his specific perception of the Aborigines. Unlike many Russian visitors, and Europeans in general, he never perceived Aborigines as a 'pitiful' race destined to die out in the face of European civilization. Even before personal contact with the Aborigines, he was inclined to believe those Australians, particularly Zietz, a curator of the South Australian Museum, and Madley, the Commissioner of Police, who described them as clever, quick-witted, proud and observant people with regal bearing. His personal contacts soon not only confirmed but enhanced this image. He often described the Aborigines whom he met as 'good-natured', 'good-humoured', 'cordial', 'with handsome and intelligent face', 'with something childish in the appearance'.⁴⁶

Especially important were his observations of Aboriginal abilities in their natural environment. In Killalpaninna, Iashchenko was amazed to discover how well their society was adjusted to life in the harsh semi-desert conditions. He watched how Aborigines skilfully made fire by the rubbing method, extracted drinking water from *Needlebush* roots, crept close to game, and

had only to glance at a burrow in the sand or anywhere else and could instantly say to whom the burrow belonged and whether or not it was occupied, and ... catch the occupant.

Iashchenko discovered how many diverse foods Aborigines were able to get in this arid area due to their skill, experience and thorough knowledge of the environment.

Iashchenko's conversations with Pastor Reuther considerably strengthened this attitude towards Aborigines. Reuther had come to Killalpaninna as a young missionary and not only taught the Aborigines Christianity but learned a lot from them. The results of his observations and studies comprise thirteen big volumes which are kept now in the South Australian Museum. He compiled a dictionary and grammar of the Dieri language, recorded toponyms and anthroponyms, collected Aboriginal myths, and examined the kinship system and religion of the Dieri.⁴⁷ Iashchenko was the first scholar to whom

⁴⁶ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 67, 99, 167, 169.

⁴⁷ The Dieri (or Diyari) people, who included four distinct local groups, occupied a vast territory to the west of Lake Eyre. In spite the scarcity of natural resources they were involved in an elaborate ceremonial life and system of exchange with other people of Central Australia using as barter *pituri* leaves which had a strong narcotic effect.

Reuther agreed to show his materials; understanding their outstanding scientific value, Iashchenko tried to persuade Reuther to publish them, but was unsuccessful.⁴⁸

Iashchenko received quite different impressions when visiting Aborigines whose traditional way of life and values were destroyed. He came to a government settlement near Mildura when all its inhabitants were drunk and 'behaved the same as the "civilized" whites would in similar condition'. White people actually supplied these Aborigines with alcohol. He felt sorrow rather than contempt for the Aborigines. 'One visit was enough for me: I have seen the blacks in contemporary Australian conditions, which tells so much to a scholar', Iashchenko concluded. Even at the Yarrabah mission station, where Aborigines lived according to established regulations, Iashchenko, while observing classes in school, suddenly felt a strong desire to retreat from this European-style school and 'got leave to escape'.

These thoughts on the consequences of European invasion enveloped him when he watched the performance of a corroboree near Kuranda:

In my opinion, this was simply a fragment of something that had once had a definite sense and significance. But however this might be, I was content with what I witnessed. For indeed, it was remarkable that I, who lived just four months ago in Petersburg ..., should be standing here, in a dense tropical Australian forest, illuminated by the oscillating light of bonfires and filled with the primitive shouts of the black descendants of those who, only two or three decades ago, were striving with spear and boomerang to preserve their land and freedom from noxious Europe, which was then sweeping over both.⁴⁹

Other Russian visitors did not contribute much to this theme; still, the diversity of their opinions is of some interest. Kriukov, who had seen hardly any Aborigines, turned out to be extremely racist in his opinions. He depicted Aborigines as 'ferocious cannibals' 'unable to adapt to any elements of culture'. Such a view could have been formed under the influence of his contacts with Australian farmers, and out of the generally scornful attitude to ethnic minorities common for some Russian officials in their own home. The views of the poet Balmont were at the opposite extreme: Australian natives and nature *a priori* symbolized harmony, while the whites were agents of slavery and destruction. In the poem 'Black Swan' he expressed his criticism:

⁴⁸ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 94-103.

⁴⁹ Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, pp. 129-131, 160-163, 165-168.

Rails cut into the waves of yellow hills,
 All calculated space is fettered and coupled.
 Where the blacks had composed harmonious dances, -
 There is a lonely white-faced shepherd.
 Where a fast kangaroo played, -
 There are sheep and sheep in the morning and in the evening

In his public lectures he strongly condemned the English atrocities against the Aborigines, and especially the Tasmanians:

The English exterminated the beautiful dark-complexioned Tasmanian tribes and no trace of them remains. The savagery of the English exceeded even that of the Spaniards in their subjugation of the last Mexicans. The creators of political freedom were unable to comprehend simple human freedom.

The Russian collector Sviatlovskii and Nechaev commented too on the extinction of Aborigines and the disappearance of their culture, but without the bitterness of Iashchenko and Balmont. Nechaev visited an Aboriginal settlement on the outskirts of Sydney, and described its inhabitants sympathetically. The only feature of traditional Aboriginal skills that he could observe there was boomerang-throwing; the flight of a boomerang which lasted for four and a half minutes particularly impressed him.⁵⁰ He stressed the importance of government subsidies for the survival of the inhabitants of this settlement, and illustrated his travel notes with a portrait of a 'civilized Aboriginal woman'.⁵¹

Thus, this period brought some new features to the Russian perception of Aborigines. These perceptions were no longer uniform, and depended on the social and cultural background of the visitors. Many of the Russians no longer saw the Aborigines as 'pitiful' savages with a primitive culture. On the contrary, their culture and artefacts for the first time drew the attention of Russian professional scholars. The concentration on 'English' atrocities towards the natives, which was so characteristic of Russians in the previous century, now decreased. Moreover, some Russians no longer saw European-Aboriginal relations to be wholly antagonistic. They met many white Australians who treated Aboriginal culture with deep interest, knowledge and sympathy. Along with the

50 The length of time of the boomerang's flight seems unbelievable, but Nechaev says he carefully recorded the time on his watch.

51 Kriukov, *Avstraliia*, pp. 35, 80-84; Balmont, 'Chernyi lebed', p. 289; K.D. Balmont, 'Okeaniia: Lektsiia' [Oceania: A lecture], *Vokrug sveta*, no. 44, 1913, p. 717; Rozina, 'V.V. Sviatlovskii', p. 137; Nechaev, 'V gostiakh u Avstraliitsev', pp. 242, 246, 573-574, 581.

theme of extinction appeared the theme of gradual integration of the Aborigines into Australian society.

The Russian perception of Australian society in general was also partly new. The social basis of their observations had widened; some of them had the opportunity to see the lives of ordinary people from close quarters. The Russians now seemed less interested in comparing Australia with Britain and America; the preconceived models and perceptions did not restrict them as before. This was due to the increasing perception of Australians as a nation, and their society as a distinct model. Some of the Russians tried to get to the root of Australia's success, and they came to it now - not through examining Australian history, politics and legislation as Russian publications did; but through observing the functioning of its society, and through the culture of its inhabitants. The growing recognition of Australia as a model for Russia was apparent in the lines of this socio-cultural approach. Among the most important issues in this respect were agricultural success due to wise social policy, the creation of a civil society, recognition of human rights, respect for the individual, improvements in the circumstances of the working classes, and state support for culture and science. Russia at this period could not boast any of these achievements, and the Russian visitors' impressions of Australia provided a fertile soil for comparisons and conclusions.

CHAPTER 7

RUSSIAN EMIGRES AND THE EVOLUTION OF THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF AUSTRALIA

Russian emigres: the demography of ethnic origin

Before I attempt to analyze Russian emigres' perceptions of Australia, their beliefs, social status, cultural level and causes of emigration, it is important to identify their ethnic nationality and explore their ethnic self-consciousness. The ethnic origin and consequently the historical, social, cultural and religious background of the people in many cases may reveal the most likely pattern of their perceptions, and the degree of their 'Russianness'. I consider it reasonable to discuss as 'Russian perceptions' the perceptions only of those emigres from the Russian Empire who shared Russian culture (in the broad meaning of the word), and who thought of themselves as Russian or at least were considered as such by Australians.

In terms of my objectives, the statistics used in many previous writings discussing Russian immigration to Australia are insufficient and even misleading. These usually depict immigration as growing steadily from the 1880s up to the First World War and do not specify the ethnic origin of the emigres.¹ The figures show that in 1891 there were nearly 2300, in 1911 4500, and in 1917 5000-6000 Russian emigres residing in Australia, and they may make an impression of a considerable united long-term ethnic community. Was this really so?

There are four sources for the solution of this problem.

1. Russian statistical data.
2. Australian statistical data, especially the censuses of 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1921.
3. Naturalization records revealed as an important demographic source by Charles Price.

¹ See for example B. Christa, 'Russians', in J. Jupp, ed., *The Australian People. An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origin*, North Ryde, 1988, p. 752; E. Fried, *Russians in Queensland (1886-1925)*, B.A. (Hons) thesis, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 1980, p. 22; Massov, *Stanovlenie i razvitie russko-avstraliiskikh svyazei (1807-1901 gg.)*, pp. 35-36.

4. Writings and recollections of contemporaries based on their personal impressions and estimations.

I will avoid Russian statistical data concerning emigration to Australia as these are completely unreliable because emigration to Australia was largely indirect (in consequence their stated destination was an intermediate country such as Manchuria or England) and also because a significant flow of emigrants to Australia was illegal.

By 1900 the Russian Empire was one of the most multinational states. The peoples inhabiting it had different patterns of national autonomy (if any), different attitudes to Russians and their culture, and had experienced different degrees of 'Russification'. The Duchy of Finland, though absorbed by Russia between 1809 and 1918, enjoyed a number of privileges and its residents experienced comparatively insignificant Russian influence. Finns, being Lutherans, differed from Russians in their religion. They also had different ethnic roots. For my study the emigres from this territory can hardly be considered as having anything Russian in their self-consciousness or culture. The same, though perhaps in a lesser degree, is true of native and German inhabitants of the three Baltic territories - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Poles, whose territory was divided after the end of the eighteenth century between Russia, Austria and Prussia, though ethnically related to Russians and experiencing the influence of Russian culture, generally did so unwillingly. It is unlikely that Polish emigres, and especially those who left Poland as a result of abortive anti-Russian uprisings because of political persecutions, had an eager desire to share the culture of their oppressors and consider themselves Russians. Nevertheless, the Russian influence in this group might be stronger than in the case of the Finns, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians.

The native population of the territories of the contemporary Ukraine and Byelorussia (sometimes named White Russia), especially of their eastern parts and cities, had the strongest ethnic, cultural and religious connections with Russia, and their views can be considered in my study as similar or very close to those of Russians.

Finally, within the territory of the Russian Empire there were Jews inhabiting the so called Pale of Settlement including Poland, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Ukraine and the southern areas of Great Russia. Some of them settled in Siberia and the Far East and a

number lived even in Russian capitals and big cities (rich traders, university graduates, converts etc.). The history of their settlement and resettlement in the Russian Empire significantly influenced their self-consciousness. In spite of religious differences with Russians some of them were Russified to a considerable degree and especially those residing in big cities, southern Russia, Siberia and the Far East - i.e. the most mobile part of their society.

At the very end of the nineteenth century a new type emerged among Russian Jews. These were the Jews involved in revolutionary activities who later escaped abroad as political refugees. Though some of them were born in the Pale of Settlement, they were often completely Russianized, using Russian as their first language and receiving education in Russian institutions. Some of them had not even practised Judaism since involvement in the political struggle. Their self-identification tended to be ambivalent - that of a Jew and a member of the Russian intelligentsia at the same time. Solomon Stedman, author of a number of writings about Russian immigrants in Australia, is a perfect illustration of this type of Russian Jew. He was born in Siberia and came to Australia in 1913. His publication in the *Journal of Australian Jewish Historical Society* reveals his deep spiritual connection with his ethnic background:

Our duty is to preserve for them [the new generation of Australian Jews] the knowledge of the past even as our fathers had preserved it for us,

he wrote introducing his recollections. At the same time Hotimsky visiting him in 1965 discovered that

although he has been away from Russia for so long, his Russian speech is excellent and obviously that of an educated man, and he is still proud to consider himself a Russian.²

Certainly such emigres from the Russian Empire shared Russian perceptions of Australia to a considerable degree.

At the same time Russian Jews *en masse* and especially those who came to Australia from Poland and the Russian Pale of Settlement in the nineteenth century were hardly influenced by Russian culture. Price makes an interesting remark in this respect:

² S. Stedman, 'From Russia to Brisbane, 1913', *Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. 5, 1959, p. 20; University of Melbourne Library, Gift collection, C. Hotimsky archives (unprocessed files).

In recent years Jewish emigrants from Russia usually think of themselves as heirs of the Russian language and culture as well as of the Jewish faith and culture. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, the Jews of the Tsarist Empire identified much less with any particular nationality: rather did they think of themselves as members of East European Jewry.³

My contacts with descendants of some of these Jews revealed cases when a Jew migrating to Australia preferred never to mention to his children and grandchildren that Russia was his birthplace. 'It is better to forget about places where you suffered a lot', commented one of my Jewish informants. Certainly this type of Jew tended to be most desirous of assimilating with Australian Jewry and Gentiles.

Though the statistical data may never give an exact number of those who shared Russian culture, they may still shed light on the real number of ethnic Russians in Australia. The dynamics of immigration to Australia from the Russian Empire are represented in table 10.

Table 10
Immigrants from the Russian Empire in Australia, 1871-1921

Years of census	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Number of persons	720*	1303*	2970**	3372**	4456***	7659****

* Estimates by Price.

** Estimates by Price. Censuses give slightly different figures: 2881 for 1891 and 3358 for 1901.

*** Data from 1911 census.

**** Estimates by Price.⁴ This figure includes emigrants from the successor states of the Russian Empire - Russia, Poland and Finland. 1921 census gives the number of persons born in Russia excluding Poland and Finland as 4138.

Basing his data on naturalization records Price displays clearly territorial and partly ethnic origin of the emigrants for 1901 and 1921⁵ that is shown in table 11:

3 C. Price, 'Russians in Australia: A demographic survey', in McNair & Poole, eds, *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, p. 56.

4 Price, 'Russians in Australia', p. 55.

5 Price, 'Russians in Australia', p. 55.

Table 11
Territorial and Ethnic Origin of Immigrants from the Russian Empire,
1901 and 1921

Country of origin	1901			1921		
	Jew	Other	Total	Jew	Other	Total
Finland	2	598	600	4	1360	1364
Estonia	9	41	50	13	249	262
Latvia	199	97	296	114	255	369
Lithuania	393	26	419	179	43	222
Poland	1037	223	1260	1216	571	1787
Ukraine	338	73	401	860	690	1550
Byelorussia	170	9	179	470	173	643
Other*	111	56	167	154	1308	1462
Total	2249	1123	3372	3010	4649	7659

* Great Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia.

This table clearly indicates an enormous predominance of Jews, and especially Polish Jews and Jews from the Pale of Settlement, among emigrants from the Russian Empire. They are followed by considerable groups of Finns and Poles. Figures for those who might be Russian (56 for 1901 and 1308 for 1921) seem implausibly low. Even by adding non-Jews from the Ukraine and Byelorussia and perhaps a very small number of Russians from the Baltic territories we still have modest figures of approximately 150 people in 1901⁶ and just over 2000 for 1921.

The 1921 census gives more data - the number of people who stated their origin by allegiance as Russians was as many as 2317. It is unclear whether this figure included Ukrainians and Byelorussians, but it is obvious that it did not include Poles, Finns and Jews. Anyway it is very close to the number of non-Jewish immigrants from Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia based on Price's data.

Price also makes an estimate of non-Jewish males from Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia who were naturalized in Australia after 1904 according to the year of arrival.⁷ The numbers of these persons are given in table 12.

6 Thus the percentage of ethnic Russians among all immigrants from the Russian Empire in 1901 was 4.4%. A supportive, though certainly not exhaustive, statistics concerning percentage of ethnic Russians in the earliest period may be obtained from the *Victorian Pioneers Index, 1837-1888* (National Library of Australia). It records that between 1837 and 1888 there were marriages of nearly one hundred persons who claimed Russia as their birthplace. Not more than four of them have Slavonic surnames. The names and surnames of the rest are Jewish, Scandinavian, British and European. At that early period the proportion of persons who, though born in Russia, were British or European by parentage seems quite significant.

7 Price, 'Russians in Australia', p. 57-65.

Table 12
Males from Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia (non Jews) Naturalized in Australia
after 1904

Birthplace	Year of Arrival			
	before 1885	1886-1905	1906-1916	1917-1929
Russia	6	27	390	330
Ukraine	12	21	212	116
Byelorussia	3	...	53	20
Total	21	48	655	466

Price considers that the 'years before 1903 are underestimated as some immigrants were naturalized by the colonies before then'. The female to male ratio between 1891 and 1921 changed from 1:5.4 to 1:3.1. Thus adding females and several other people who were not recorded by Price because they were naturalized before 1903 we may assume that to 1917 there were nearly 1000 Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians who by that time or later became naturalized. Price considers that naturalization records covered some four-fifths of the Jewish population.⁸ In the particular case of the Russian emigres perhaps these records reflect even less than four-fifths as the routine reasons for not being naturalized - death or re-emigration before naturalization - could be aggravated by the considerable exodus of emigres for Russia during World War I and after the February revolution in 1917 as well as partly by the political nature of Russian emigration. Some Russians might have been reluctant to become naturalized and the Australian authorities unwilling to naturalize them because of their radicalism. Making all these assumptions we may conclude that by 1917 the number of Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians may have been nearly 2000.

There is other disputable evidence about the number of Russians in Australia on the eve of the 1917 Revolution. In 1916 a Russian Orthodox priest, Iakov Korchinskii spent five months in Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland in missionary activity among Russians. He reported that he visited 75 families and nearly 500 individuals. 'In general there are up to 5000 Russians in Australia now', he concluded.⁹ While the first figures of those Orthodox Russians whom he visited are reliable, 5000 seems to be the figure of all

8 C. Price, *Jewish Settlers in Australia*, Canberra, 1964, pp. 5-6.

9 I. Korchinskii, 'Russkoe pravoslavie v Avstralii' [Russian orthodoxy in Australia], *Ekonomicheskii sbornik v pamiat' 150-letia Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi v Severnoi Amerike*, New-York, 1944, p. 261. (Information from the archives of N. Christesen).

emigrants from the Russian Empire. This same figure of the number of Russian subjects in Australia by 1914 was given by the Russian consul Count Aleksandr Nikolaevich Abaza.¹⁰ Raymond Evans, basing his estimates on the contemporary press, considers that there were 'more than 6,000 Russian migrants' by 1917. He certainly means all emigrants from the Russian Empire.¹¹ According to the numbers of arrivals and departures (see table 15) this figure could be even higher - nearly 7,000.

Price does not give his estimates of the distribution of emigrants from the Russian Empire according to territory of origin and Jewishness for the 1911 census as he does for 1901 and 1921 in table 11. Luckily it is possible to make some estimates using 1911 census data of the religion of the emigres from the Russian Empire which is shown in table 13:

Table 13
Religious Congregations of Immigrants from the Russian Empire, 1911

Religious Congregations	Number of Persons
Church of England	367
Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational	149
Lutheran	800
Other Protestant	270
Roman and indefinite Catholics	345
Greek Catholics	273
Other Christians	56
Hebrew	1802
Other non-Christian religions	8
Indefinite, no religion, not stated	386
Total	4456

Source: 1911 census.

This religious distribution provides interesting evidence of the ethnic origin of the emigrants from the Russian Empire. The first question that arises is: where are the Russians? It might be useful to notice that the Orthodox Eastern Church (also known as Orthodox Church and Greek Orthodox Church) is a federation of autocephalous Orthodox churches including Russian, Greek, Serbian, Georgian and Syrian. The 1911 census showed the adherents of all these churches under misleading headings: 'Greek

10 'Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh v Avstralii' [The Union of Russian Workers in Australia], *Kommunisticheskii internatsional*, no. 11, 1920, p. 1845. (Signature: R.)

11 R. Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-1918*, Sydney, 1987, p. 115.

Catholics' and 'Other Christians'. The census provides a general list of all churches under the heading 'Greek Catholics' that proves that the statistic meant the Orthodox Eastern Church in general and included here not only Greek Catholics but most Russians who stated their religion as 'Russian Church', 'Greek Church of Russia', 'Greek Orthodox Church'. Thus the figure 273 represents Russians and Orthodox Byelorussians and Ukrainians (some of the Ukrainians might be listed as Roman Catholics). The heading 'Other Christians' in census materials included dozens of different churches and sects. Among them is the Orthodox Church with 23 adherents all of whom lived in Queensland. I believe they were Russians as this is a usual way to name the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus in 1911 there were nearly 300 persons whom we definitely may consider Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian.

Can Russians be hidden under other headings? 800 Lutherans from the Russian Empire were Finns, Estonians, Germans (who could have migrated from different parts of the Empire) and some were Letts. The Poles, Lithuanians and some Letts and Ukrainians were Roman Catholics. But ethnic Russians might also be among the 386 persons who did not indicate their religion and among the 786 adherents of the Church of England, Presbyterians, Methodists and among some other Protestants whose churches did not exist within the territory of the Russian Empire. Presumably these were those who changed their religion as a result of intermarriage or for easier assimilation.¹² The totals of 386 and 786 give 1172, which means that approximately a fourth of the 4456 immigrants from the Russian Empire had a nationality which is unclear from their religious denomination. That allows us to compose an equation $x=300+x+4$ where x is the number of Russians in 1911 which is equal to 400.

Thus, summing up different data and estimates we have the following dynamic of ethnic Russians and other emigrants from the Russian Empire (table 14):

12 This group of Anglicans and Protestants also included persons who were born in Russia of British or other foreign parents temporarily residing at that time in Russia. Such were for instance Australian painters Nicholas Chevalier (1828-1902) whose father was from Switzerland and George Lambert (1873-1930) of English-American descent.

Table 14
Estimates of the Proportion of Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians among All Immigrants from the Russian Empire, 1901-1921

Years	1901	1911*	1917	1921
Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians	150	400	2000	2171 or 2317
Total immigrants from the Russian Empire	3372	4456	6000-7000	7659
% of Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians	4.4	9	nearly 30	28.3-30.2

*It is important to specify that the 1911 census took place in April, as by the end of this year the number of Russians had increased considerably.

This table makes it obvious that to speak about Russian emigrants as an ethnic community before 1910-1911 and their steady growth throughout the beginning of the century would be an exaggeration. The pattern was quite different: between 1911 and 1917 there was a sudden enormous increase of Russians. Their number increased 5 times while their proportion of the total immigration from the Russian Empire increased 3-4 times (from 9% to approximately 30%). It is most likely that, from 1910 or 1911, among the new arrivals from the Russian Empire ethnic Russians became the most numerous ethnic group, increasingly 'diluting' the predominantly non-ethnic Russian immigrants from the Empire who lived in Australia.

From the yearly distribution of the arrivals and departures of persons from the Russian Empire¹³ given in table 15 we may draw further conclusions.

Table 15
Arrivals and Departures from Russia, 1904-1921

Years	Arrivals	Departures	
	No.	No.	As Percent of Arrivals
1904	94	20	21
1905	103	60	58
1906	109	22	20
1907	142	51	36
1908	190	95	50
1909	470	152	32
1910	731	232	32

¹³ In statistical records they are called 'Russians' but it is obvious that this term included all nationalities of the Russian Empire.

1911	1013	211	21
1912	1078	310	29
1913	1221	432	35
1914	1306	609	47
1915	567	500	88
1916	447	466	104
1917	290	618	213
1918	157	156	99
1919	73	84	115
1920	109	238	218
1921	117	202	173
Total	8217	44458	54

Sources: *Shipping and Oversea Migration of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1906-1916*; *Monthly (Quarterly) Summary of Australian Statistics, 1911-1917*; *Commonwealth demography, 1920-1921*.

Considerable numbers of departures after 1914 suggest that many Russian emigres came to Australia not to settle permanently but to earn money and leave after a few years. The social causes of this will be discussed later in this chapter. Here I suggest that this pattern of emigration was especially characteristic for ethnic Russians motivated by economic factors. They often left their families in Russia and from the beginning regarded their stay in Australia as temporary. Certainly some of them who did well brought their families to Australia later and settled permanently. Russian Jews, in contrast, emigrated to Australia to settle permanently from the very beginning. The table also allows us to estimate that between 1901 and 1921 Australia was a place of temporary residence for more than 10,000 emigres from Russia¹⁴, although, due to the high numbers of departures, the total number of emigres in each year between 1914 and 1921 was nearly seven thousand. Thus it appears that at the time of World War I most ethnic Russians in Australia were very recent arrivals, little assimilated.

Another important feature of Russian immigration was the pattern of settlement in Australia. Although none of the existing sources can be considered as completely satisfactory for the period discussed, they suggest an over-all pattern of settlement which is shown in percentage form in table 16.

¹⁴ This figure is estimated as the sum of emigres from the Russian Empire who resided in Australia by 1901 and totals of arrivals during the following twenty years.

Table 16
Place of Settlement of Ethnic Russians in Australia, Percentages, 1907-1947

Years	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	Total
1911*	15.4	8.4	66.6	4.75	4.75	100%
1921**	33.5	21.1	34.9	3.3	6.6	0.3	0.3	100%
1907-1947***	31	9.6	48.7	3.5	5.4	0.6	1.2	100%

* Calculations are based on the number of so called Greek Catholics (i.e. members of Eastern Orthodox Church) born in Russia according to 1911 census.

** Calculations are based on the number of Russians by allegiance in each state according to 1921 census.

*** Price's estimates based on naturalization records.¹⁵

In general this table clearly indicates the preference for Queensland over other states, followed by New South Wales and Victoria. Queensland kept the leading role due to its position as the nearest state to the Russian Far East, one of the most important sources of immigrants in the beginning of the century, and for other reasons that I discuss below.

Russian evidence supports these calculations and estimates. A political emigrant, Artem (Fedor Andreevich Sergeev, 1883-1921) (ill. 25), wrote in November 1911 from Queensland:

There are a lot of Russians here working as navvies Very few interesting persons. They are mainly from Harbin. They say soon the whole of Harbin will move here.

In October 1913 he remarked: 'Here, in the city [Brisbane] there is hardly a hundred of us, Russians ... [Jews] number three time more than we'. A. Sereshininov wrote in his memoirs about 1911:

At that time Russian emigration in Australia still was at the very beginning of its development and all Russians were concentrated mainly in Queensland, scattered all over the state on public railway works.

L.G. Kalinin, organizer of the Russian Association in Queensland, in November 1911 estimated that

there are between 900-1000 Russians in Australia now, including women and children and 85% of that number are in Queensland.

Vasilii Pikunov recollected of life in Queensland:

15 Price, 'Russians in Australia', pp. 68-69.

In 1913 especially many immigrants from Russia arrived. There were political emigrants among them who later played an important role in the life of the Russian colony in Queensland.¹⁶

Thus my calculations show that the use of censuses in estimating the number of ethnic Russians can be misleading. In reality the number of Russians (and of the closely related Byelorussians and Ukrainians) at different periods was not consistently proportionate to the total number of immigrants from the Russian Empire, but grew from 4.4% in 1901 to 9% in 1911 and reached nearly 30% by the time of the February 1917 revolution. Immigration of ethnic Russians experienced an unprecedented growth in 1911-1914, most of it to Queensland. At the same time it is obvious that, before 1921, Russians had not been the dominant nation among the immigrants from the Russian Empire and its successor states.

The assumption that all immigrants from the Russian Empire could form a united ethnic community whose members shared Russian culture is also untrue. Many ethnic groups of emigres from Russia had nothing in common, even language. How many people among non-ethnic Russians might have shared the Russian culture remains an open question. These could have included Russianized Jews from Great Russia, Siberia and big cities, but the predominance of Jewish emigrants from the western outskirts of the Russian Empire suggests that the number of the former was not significant. Probably, mainly political refugees were culturally the closest to the Russians. It is known that by the time of the February 1917 revolution their number was at least five hundred or slightly more, including Russians, Jews, Poles, Finns, Letts and some other nationalities. Thus I would suggest that the number of Russianized persons among non-ethnic Russians was a few hundred.

In the remainder of this chapter I will discuss the perceptions of Australia only by ethnic Russians and the small number of representatives of other nations who were culturally close to them.

16 Artem (F.A. Sergeev), *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma* [Articles, Speeches, Letters], Moscow, 1983, pp. 93, 126; A. Sereshininov, 'Tovarishch Artem (Sergeev) za rabotoi v Avstralii' [Comrade Artem (Sergeev) at work in Australia], *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, no. 2, 1921, p. 123; Australian Archives (AA) (ACT): A3/1, NT1913/1156, part 2, L.G. Kalinin to G. Barber, 26 November 1911; V.I. Pikunov, 'Soiuz russkikh rabochikh v Avstralii' [The Union of Russian Workers in Australia], *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 1, 1960, p. 169.

Early Russian settlers and Australia

Convicts, deserters and vagabonds

Although Russian authorities were always reluctant to encourage emigration, the idea of emigration overseas even as far as Australia and the South Pacific was never completely alien to the Russian mind.

The earliest recorded Russian resident in Australia was John Potaskie (c.1763-1824) who was born in Byelorussia. He was an involuntary 'immigrant' sentenced to transportation for seven years to Van Diemen's Land for a crime committed in England. He arrived in Tasmania in 1804 on the *Calcutta* and after the termination of his sentence lived in Hobart and attained success in farming.¹⁷ Potaskie was not the only Russian convict in Australia. The Russian officers from the *Kreiser* and *Ladoga* who recorded his story in 1823, met in Hobart with three more persons who spoke Russian. Unfortunately they did not provide their names, ethnic origin or status. J.H. Donohoe lists eight Russian convicts in Australia, i.e. those who gave Russia as their 'native place'. My research reveals that most of these persons might have been British and European by parentage and one of Jewish origin. The only person who positively could be identified as ethnic Russian (and probably the first ethnic Russian resident in Australia) was Constantine Milcow (or Konstantin Milkov) born in Moscow c. 1783. A horse breaker by profession, he was convicted in Britain and deported for seven years to Australia where he arrived on the *Atlas* in 1816. One more person in Donohoe's list, Joseph Aurora, a sailor born in Russia and sentenced to Australia for life (arrived on the *Earl Spencer* in 1813), might have a false surname and in reality be of Russian as well as of

17 An. Lazarev, 'Plavanie vokrug sveta', pp. 81-82; Fitzhardinge, 'Russian ships', pp. 138-139 (information provided by Tasmanian archivist Robert Sharman); M. Tipping, *Convicts Unbound. The Story of the Calcutta Convicts and their Settlement in Australia*, [Melbourne], 1988, pp. 29, 104, 163, 301; I. Schaffer, ed., *Land Musters, Stock Returns and Lists, Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1822*, Hobart, 1991, pp. 11, 23, 70, 92, 113, 123, 126, 143, 189, 202, 235. Some scholars consider Potaskie Polish (see L. Paszkowski, *Poles in Australia and Oceania. 1790-1940*, Sydney a.o., 1987, p. 4; Tipping, *Convicts Unbound*, pp. 29, 301; J.H. Donohoe, *The Forgotten Australians, The Non Anglo or Celtic Convicts and Exiles*, Sydney, 1991, p. 93). That is quite correct formally, as he was obviously born in the territory that was part of Poland before its partition. Still I have reason to consider him Byelorussian because he had described himself as such to the Russian visitors. Their records suggest as well that he spoke Russian and was provided by them with the *New Testament* in Russian. The correct spelling of his surname was most likely Potocki.

other ethnic origin.¹⁸ It is hard to judge these convicts' perceptions of the country as very little evidence survived about them. Milcow, whose surname was eventually altered to Mileke, Mellicoe and even Millers, first worked as a government labourer; in 1822 he was in the service of landowner Archibald Bell in Windsor and leased a small farm there; by 1825 he was employed by the Macarthurs in Argyle.¹⁹ In any case when Russian ships called at Hobart and Port Jackson neither Potaskie nor other Russians expressed a desire to return home.

Still some early Russian perceptions of Australia may be inferred by runaways from the Russian naval ships. The first case took place in 1814 when Joseph de Silvier (or Desilve), a Bengali navigator in the Russian service, left the *Suvorov*. One of his colleagues suggested that the cause was not interest in Australia but purely de Silvier's personal circumstances. Thus the first escape of a Russian in Australia did not happen until 1820 when a drummer from the *Blagonamerennyi* left his ship in Sydney. He was followed by several sailors from the *Otkrytie*. An investigation undertaken by the Russian officers discovered that the escapees were helped by 'lewd women, who sometimes were seen lounging about' Russian tents, and their pimps. The trail of the escapees led to the north shore of Port Jackson. Though Governor Macquarie was informed about the case neither his diary nor newspapers provide any evidence. At least two of the sailors were found and returned to the ship.

Stanislav Stankevich from the *Kreiser* was more successful. According to Zavalishin, five sailors, who for a while worked on shore in Tasmania in 1823, were encouraged by local runaway convicts and escaped, and the rest of the team refused to

18 Donohoe, *The Forgotten Australians*, pp. 97, 125; State Archives of New South Wales, Principal Superintendent of Convicts. Bound Indents, 1814-1818 (4/4005), micro-fiche 636, p. 181; J. McClelland, *McClelland's Convict, pioneer and Immigrant series of Australia, book No. 27, index no. 5, Names of All Convicts Arriving Australia, 1811, 1812, 1813*, Silverdale, 1984, p. 63.

As with some other convicts, the crimes committed by these Russians were insignificant in comparison with the terms they received. Milcow being obviously 'distressed' and starving 'stranger in that part' was convicted for seven years for stealing a piece of bacon. Aurora received the death sentence for stolen stockings. The death penalty was finally replaced by a life sentence 'on account of [the prisoner] being a foreigner, and not acquainted with the law of the land'. Great Britain. Central Criminal Court. Sessions' papers. The fifth session, London, 1815, p. 302; The seventh session, 1812, pp. 459-460.

19 State Archives of New South Wales, Colonial Secretary Papers, 1788-1825, Reel 6062, 4/1781, p. 390b); Home office papers, HO 10/1, p. 53, HO 10/3, p. 176, HO 10/8, p. 191, HO 10/13, p. 55, HO 10/20, p. 43; C.J. Baxter, ed., *General Muster and Land and Stock Muster of New South Wales, 1822*, Sydney, 1988, pp. 335, 564.

work. After negotiations four of them gave themselves up, while the fifth, the brightest of them, Stankevich, was never found or heard of. M. Lazarev, explaining the incident to the naval ministry, stressed the Polish origin of Stankevich (perhaps assuming that all Poles were unreliable rioters). Zavalishin's evidence suggests that the cause of the minor rebellion was twofold: unjustly severe treatment of sailors by some officers and the influence of runaway convicts. A few other escapes took place in the following years in Sydney. The main causes of these early desertions were of a general nature - attractions of shore life and liaisons with women. The fact that these escapes occurred in Australia and not in previous ports of call suggests that this land might have seemed especially attractive to the Russian sailors.²⁰

In the second half of the nineteenth century some new cases of desertion were recorded. In 1871 three sailors left the *Gaidamak* in Melbourne under the influence of gold-mining agents, after that the captain Koltovskii severely restricted shore leave for the crew. Even more dramatic events took place in 1882 in Melbourne when a steward and a sailor from the *Afrika* robbed one of the officers and tried to get to Sydney by train. Due to poor knowledge of Australian geography they took a wrong direction and soon were caught by police and returned to the ship.²¹ In 1888 a machinist, Ivan Egorov, left the *Rynda*. Evidence suggests that in this case the cause was a woman. Towards the end of the century along with the previous motives - women and the influence of gold-mine recruiting agents - came a political one: a desire to leave the service of Tsarist Russia. This was especially the case with the crew of the *Gromoboi*, when some sailors deserted the ship in 1901.²²

Several Russians remained in Australia after deserting from foreign merchant ships on which they had been employed. D. Lukhmanov is one such. On graduating from a naval school he served abroad as a ship's boy on some merchantmen. Finally he found

20 Rossiiskii, 'O prebyvanii', pp. 28-29; Vasil'ev, 'Zapiski', in RGA VMF, fond 213, op. 1, d. 102, f. 26; Zavalishin, 'Admiral ... Putiatin'; Zavalishin, 'Krugosvetnoe', pp. 46-47; M.P. Lazarev. *Dokumenty*, p. 248; Massov, *Stanovlenie i razvitie russko-avstraliiskikh svyazei (1807-1901 gg.)*, pp. 42-43, 50-52.

21 M. Koltovskii, 'Iz vlechenie iz raporta komandira klipera "Gaidamak" ... Mel'burn, 10 marta 1871 g' [Extract from the report of the commanding officer of the clipper *Gaidamak* ... Melbourne, 10 March 1871], *Morskoi sbornik*, vol. 115, no. 8, morskaiia khronika, 1871, p. 4; Rudnev, *Krugosvetnoe*, p. 107.

22 RGA VMF, fond 417, op. 1, d. 360, f. 53. (Information was kindly provided by Massov).

himself in Boston, USA, unemployed, without money, shelter or food. With great difficulty he gained a position on the American merchant ship *Samuel de Carleton* on a very low wage. On arrival in Australia in 1885 the crew, being indignant about unjust treatment by the captain and comparing their wages with those on the Sydney market, rebelled. After a short imprisonment and investigation by the American consul their claims were partly recognized and they were free to leave the ship breaking their contracts. Lukhmanov found a job in Sydney immediately. A few months later he left the country on another foreign merchant ship.²³ In such cases Australia was perceived primarily as a land with readily available highly paid employment rather than anything else, for instance a democratic society or place of exotic nature. This is the pattern of Lukhmanov's perceptions:

Anyway, you will not be lost in Australia in any case, this is not Boston in December where they do not know what to do with the unemployed. In Australia white workers are in demand - one can easily earn three, four pounds a week.²⁴

This type of early Russian short or long term 'chance' settler was mostly represented by young, single men.

The first Russian immigrants

In the second half of the nineteenth century the real Russian emigrants who chose to come to Australia to settle permanently were few. It was the discovery of gold that first gave Russians the idea to emigrate to Australia to try their luck. Aleksandr Herzen in *My Past and Thoughts* described the case of a former Russian officer Stremoukhov who, for unclear reasons, first fled from Russia to Western Europe. The Russian community in London, watching him in the mid 1850s become more and more destitute, collected money for him and decided to send him to the Victorian gold fields. The hero thanked the Russians and exclaimed:

23 These are the facts from Lukhmanov's recollections about the case published in 1902: D. Lukhmanov, 'Po belu svetu (Shkola russkogo torgovogo moriaka)' [Over the wide world (The school of a Russian merchant seaman)], *Russkoe sudokhodstvo*, no. 5, 1902, pp. 125-132. He returned to the theme once again after the revolution in a short story 'Under the flag of "the great land of democratic freedoms"' in which he depicted the American consul in a negative light claiming that the consul left the sailors without any help. This proves that the Russian writings of the Soviet period should be used very cautiously.

24 D. Lukhmanov, 'Pod flagom "Velikoi strany demokraticeskikh svobod"' [Under the flag of 'the great land of democratic freedoms'], in D. Lukhmanov, *Na palube*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, p. 73.

As you wish, gentlemen, but to go such a long way off is not an easy task. Suddenly to break with all habits, but it is necessary

It was not the Russian community's fault that Stremoukhov misused the opportunity and a few months later was found drunk and misbehaving in a London pub instead of being on the gold fields, but it is clear that by this time the Russians, like the Europeans, already perceived Australia as a place for a new start in life.²⁵ Some Russian Jews unlike Stremoukhov did reach the Australian gold fields in the early 1850s.²⁶

The perceptions of Australia held by the lower classes at that time were still extremely vague. A Russian political refugee in Britain recorded attitudes expressed by the Russian soldiers, prisoners of the Crimean war, kept in Plymouth:

'I hope, my friends,' said I to them, 'that none of you will be obliged to resume your chains against your inclination. There is a question of sending you to Australia, should you desire it; there you will be free as you have never been.' This project, however, I am bound to confess it, did not at all seem to the taste of my auditors, and many of them did not even understand it. 'What should we do?' said one of the most intelligent among them to me - 'What should we do in a strange and distant country, we who are unable to perform any kind of pacific work?...'²⁷

The best documented among the early successful settlers was the family of German botanist Maurice Holz (Holtze) who had lived in Russia for a long time. In 1873 he brought to Australia his Russian wife Evlampia Simonovna nee Mezintseva (ill. 22) or, as transcribed here, Mesinzoff (1848-1937) and children born in Russia, Nikolai (Nicholas) (1866-1913), Vladimir (Waldemir) (1867-1961) and Ludmilla (1871-1971). Due to unclear family circumstances they wanted to leave Russia and Germany. They chose Australia under the influence of the rumours about a gold rush in the Northern Territory. It is interesting to reconstruct the evolution of this family's attitude to Russia and Australia over nearly half a century. They settled at Palmerston and experienced a lot of hardships at first. Evlampia, who formerly belonged to well-to-do provincial Russian nobility, now had to support the family by doing laundry. According to family tales

25 A. Herzen, 'Byloe i dumy' [My Past and Thoughts], in *Sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh*, vol. 11, Moscow, 1957, pp. 194-195.

26 L.M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, Melbourne, 1954, p. 82; N.F. Spielvogel, 'The beginning of the Ballarat Hebrew congregation', *Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. 1, part 4, 1940, pp. 110-114.

27 'Conversations with the Russian prisoners at Plymouth', *Daily News*, 28 October 1854.

the menial work that dire necessity forced upon her, placed Evlampia in poor regard [of] some of the early white residents. Her difficulties were compounded by not being able to speak English well, and also by belonging to a hated race.

At this time she felt herself a complete stranger in the new settlement. Recollections of relatives suggest that Evlampia's absorption in the local life began only when her sons went to school and she improved her English together with them. This was the pattern of absorption of many Russian women who came to Australia much later, in the twentieth century. Holtze's children seem to have felt themselves at home in Palmerston from the very beginning.

Gradually the family prospered, especially when Maurice became government gardener at the Palmerston Botanic Gardens in 1878. In 1884 he was naturalized. By that time Evlampia was already an integral part of Darwin society connecting her future, and especially the future of their children, with the new country. Summing up the situation by 1891, when Maurice got the position of the Director of the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide, their granddaughter wrote: 'They had come as aliens seeking refuge, they were leaving [for Adelaide] beloved, respected citizens of Australia'. Evlampia's Russian origin still manifested itself in her Russian Orthodox religion, some Russian dishes in her cuisine, a Russian peasant costume for her daughter for a fancy dress ball, a subscription to a Russian newspaper, her tales to children and grandchildren about her life in Russia and hospitality to occasional Russian travellers.

At the same time Aleksandr Iashchenko, a Russian naturalist, who visited the Holtzes in Adelaide in 1903 'was saddened' observing Evlampia's attitude to her motherland:

Due to having been in Australia for a period of thirty years without leaving the country she had partially spoiled her Russian language and had changed completely her customs and usages However, she did speak Russian [with Iashchenko]. She had left her Russian past behind her, and, to my query, whether she was nostalgic about Russian snows, she quickly replied that she was not, and as a confirmation of her point of view she referred to her son, who as a child some twenty years ago was surprised by an offer to return to Russia which he rejected.

Sophia Vitkovskaia met Evlampia's son Nicholas Holtze in 1896 in Darwin and was disappointed to discover that he did not learn any Russian from his mother. The Russian settler Leandro Illin, who had contacts with him in 1912, also confirms this report.²⁸

28 W.J. Ruediger, *The Holtze Saga*, Adelaide, 1988, pp. 5, 16-17, 24, 26-27, 30, 32, 47, 53, 55, 80, 91; 'Holtze, Maurice', 'Holtze, Nicholas', *Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 1,



III. 21. Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay



III. 22. Evlampia Holtze (née Mezintseva)

The story of this family may illustrate a pattern: with prosperity and integration into Australian life, the perception of this country as home led the long-term settlers, and even more so their children, to lose their Russianness.

Adventure seekers and romantic democrats

The last decades of the nineteenth century brought to Australia a new type of Russian who may be described as a 'romantic adventurer' personality. We do not know their exact numbers and names. They would have belonged to the educated strata of Russian society and had dreamed since childhood of seeing the wonders of Australian nature. Usually they had an image of Australia as an exotic land and saw it as an integral part of the South Pacific rather than an outpost of Western civilization. The psychological type of these people is well portrayed in Russian literature. The Russian writer Aleksandr Grin in a short story 'A Far Journey' (1913) told the life story of a provincial functionary who suddenly had been awakened from his dull life by a picture of 'Mountain herdsmen in the Andes' in a children's book. Bewitched, he left for an unimaginable destination and finally found *himself* in these faraway mountains. The young heroes of Anton Chekhov's short story 'Boys' left their parents and attempted to flee to America - courageous American Indians being the dominant image of America for them. Other Russian writings suggest that the police might have had to send home unsuccessful young runaways to Australia as well. With technological advances, America lost its romantic aura and new lands seemed more attractive to this group of Russians.

Robert Il'ich Glan is a good example of such a visitor. He was born in Vilnius into a family of a music teacher. At seventeen, after graduating from high school, he left for America driven by a thirst for freedom and far lands rather than by a desire to become rich. Australia seemed especially interesting to him. He tried many unskilled jobs and wandered for some time in the USA, Canada, Argentina and Uruguay till he finally reached Australia in the early 1910s. His expectation of Australia is obvious from the first lines of his memoirs: 'I was walking along Melbourne streets and could not see

"Australia". 'Up to now there is nothing unusual here', he commented some days later walking along the road from Melbourne to Sydney and expecting 'to see the unknown'. Working as a handy man in a hotel in Kilmore, just north of Melbourne, he kept asking himself 'When, at last, will I see "the real Australia"?' One day in Fern Tree Gully he was captivated by a feeling of 'recognition' and he revealed the origin of his image of 'the real Australia':

In my early childhood I was fascinated by an abundantly illustrated *Book for Adults*. There I read for the first time about the wonders of Australian nature. Like a traveller depicted there I often imagined myself lying on my back under an overhanging fern-tree, and now the dream of my early childhood unaccountably emerged in my consciousness.²⁹

The Russian symbolist-poet Konstantin Balmont who visited Australia in 1912 admitted the same childish attachment to the Southern lands:

The first tale that I read in the sixth year of my life was a half fairy-tale about the life of the South Pacific islanders, I only remember that the book was thin, in a blue cover with very yellow pictures, one of them depicted coral-islands covered with palms, - and I retained it in my memory so strongly, that when in 1912 I saw the coral islands in the Pacific for the first time ..., I started and as if by magic turned into that five year old boy in [a provincial Russian] estate.

His first impressions of Australia revealed a disillusioning lack of convergence with this childish image: 'The Australia of our childhood days no longer exists'.³⁰ Certainly such people who longed to come to Australia because of their romantic image of Australia as an exotic land (probably perceived as part of a more general notion of the Southern seas) were not numerous and represent only a small part of Russian society.

Nevertheless, the episode of Miklouho-Maclay's (ill. 21) plan to found a Russian colony in the South Pacific suggests the important role of these images among different social strata of Russians. The history of this plan is well documented in the literature and I discuss it only from the point of view of perceptions. But it is a little known fact that in 1870, a few months before Miklouho-Maclay's departure aboard the Russian naval ship *Vitiaz* to conduct his naturalistic and anthropological research on the New Guinea coast, an influential newspaper, the *Saint Petersburg Record* (*Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*), published an article by Baron N.V. Kaulbars, a member of the Russian Geographical

29 R.I. Glan, 'Naoborot' [The other way round], in Govor & Massov, eds, *Rossiiskie moriaki*, pp. 269, 274.

30 K.D. Balmont, 'Na zare' [At dawn], in *Stikhotvoreniia, perevody, stat'i*, Moscow, 1983, p. 554; Balmont, 'Chernyi lebed', p. 289.

Society, putting the case for establishing a Russian colony on New Ireland, New Britain or the Solomon islands before other countries did so. The main reason for this colony was to be the development of Russian trade in the Pacific. Kaulbars stressed the importance of the preliminary exploration of these islands by the Russian navy with the help of such specialists as Miklouho-Maclay. Kaulbars had also considered the method of colonization. He did not expect that initially there would be many volunteers and planned to begin with a penal colony of a thousand deportees. He believed that a few years later free settlers would follow.

The time of publication of this article as well as the extremely enthusiastic support of Miklouho-Maclay's research project by the Tsar and some officials, and finally the *Vitiaz's* cruising in these parts, suggest that Russian officials might have had some intention of establishing a colony in the South Pacific as early as 1870. The article was reprinted a few days later in the main Russian naval newspaper the *Kronstadt Herald* and entitled there 'About Founding a Russian Colony in Australia'.³¹ Obviously Australia was perceived by Russians as a synonym for the south-western Pacific.

These publications did not attract public response in Russia at that time, but sixteen years later, when Miklouho-Maclay returned to Russia after years of exploration in New Guinea, on other Pacific islands and in Australia, the situation had changed. His aim was to protect Pacific natives from exploitation and extermination by the Europeans. To achieve this he considered establishing either a Russian protectorate over the Maclay coast of north-eastern New Guinea, that would really protect the rights of the Papuans, or a settlement on unoccupied territories and islands in the South Pacific by Russians sharing his humane ideas. His information in Russian newspapers about this project in June 1886 unexpectedly provoked hundreds of applications from Russians desiring to follow him to the South Seas, and he began to work on a detailed plan for a Russian colony in the Pacific. Considering the colony as a Russian outpost preventing invasion of other imperialist powers, he looked for ways to limit its dependence on the Tsarist state in

31 *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*, 8 August 1870, pp. 1-2; *Kronshtadtskii vestnik*, 19 August 1870, p. 392. The rumours about these plans and the Miklouho-Maclay's expedition reached Australia in 1871 and provoked some fears about Russia's 'indirect method of establishing a footing' in New Guinea. See 'The Russian scientific expedition to New Guinea', *Argus*, 15 April 1871, p. 6.

its internal structure and functioning and thus to minimize possible negative effects on the natives. He planned to organize it on a communal basis as an independent, democratic self-governing commune without private landownership, and with religious freedom.

Each working hand will have not only sufficient but abundant food We will provide opportunity for free capital investment, and traders, and labourers, if one will only work and lead a decent life,

he assured prospective settlers. The most probable place for the proposed colony was the Maclay Coast in the north-east of New Guinea and coastal islands (the region of Madang at present). Russian newspapers nevertheless discussed this project as 'Russian colonization in *Australia*' obviously perceiving Australia and the south-western Pacific as synonyms, as had happened sixteen years before in Kaulbars' case.

By the end of 1886 the number of applicants was over two thousand. Who were these people? A newspaper reporter described Miklouho-Maclay's meeting with some of those who wanted to receive detailed information:

By 6.30 p.m. ... on the 21 [June 1886] Miklouho-Maclay's temporary residence began to be overflow with a diverse array of the public. One could see army and navy uniforms, smart jackets and threadbare overcoats, white ties and Russian embroidered shirts.

Along with applications from St. Petersburg's residents he had letters from those who desired to resettle from Moscow, Poland, Lithuania, Kharkov and the Caucasus. Some months later, when Miklouho-Maclay's project failed and he travelled from Moscow to Odessa by train, he was surprised to receive numerous visitors on provincial stations who wanted to enquire personally 'about the possibilities of the future Russian colonies in the Pacific'. Answering the inquiry of the government Special Committee discussing his project Miklouho-Maclay explained that among applicants there were over one hundred officers, engineers and doctors. Most of them were Russian men. A *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter sarcastically commented that the applicants were 'unaccustomed to ... manual work of any sort' and most were 'nobles who have lost their fortunes, *litterateurs* who have no success, doctors who have no practice'. But after an interview with Miklouho-Maclay he became more sympathetic and conveyed the traveller's words that among his followers there were 'persons of very considerable rank and fortune' having

money and 'a position in life' - nobles, army officers, engineers, students and even two monks.

Still I would not agree completely with E.M. Webster's conclusion that Miklouho-Maclay 'had to devise a commonwealth for the elite' or with the insinuations of reactionary Russian newspapers that the applicants were mere adventurers. It is better to describe his followers as romantic democrats attracted both by the democratic principles of the colony and its situation somewhere in the Pacific, near Australia (accurate geography probably was the last thing to trouble them). One of Miklouho-Maclay's supporters, Professor V.I. Modestov, considered that the success of the appeal was due to the fact that there were many courageous educated people in Russia, unhappy with the present situation and 'desiring to exert their efforts not in the routine way ... but longing for a new life', longing for freedom.³² It is not surprising that Miklouho-Maclay's project was finally rejected by the government which took a more realistic position, being enthusiastic neither to invest money in the remote territory in the Pacific nor to encourage the freedom-loving aspirations of the potential settlers.³³

At that time the Utopian idea of a Russian colony in the Pacific even became a theme in Russian novels by A.G. Konkevich and N.N. Sokolov. While the fantasy of the former author created in the near future a Russian naval base on Malaita Island (Solomon

32 Their spiritual predecessor might be P.A. Bakhmetev, a prototype of the early romantic revolutionary Rakhmetov from Nikolai Chernyshevskii's novel *What is to be done?* (1863). A noble man of substance, Bakhmetev was unable to apply his revolutionary ideas either in Russia or in Western Europe. Finally he left his fortune for revolutionary purposes to Herzen and in 1857 departed for the Marquesas Islands or New Zealand to establish there a colony-commune on new social foundations. The vagueness of the final point of geographical determination was characteristic, as with Miklouho-Maclay's followers. Unfortunately, no trace of Bakhmetev was found after that. N.Ia. Eidel'man, 'Pavel Aleksandrovich Bakhmetev (odna iz zagadok russkogo revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia)' [P.A. Bakhmetev (one of the enigmas of the Russian revolutionary movement)], in *Revolutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859-1861 gg.*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 387-398.

33 Miklouho-Maclay, *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collected Works], vol. 4, Moscow-Leningrad, 1953, pp. 288-299, 306, 311, 314, 433-434, 470-477; V.I. Modestov, 'V dobryi chas!' [Good luck!], *Novosti i Birzhevaia gazeta*, 1 July 1888; [V.I. Modestov], 'Russkaia kolonizatsiia Avstralii' [Russian colonization in Australia], *Novosti i Birzhevaia gazeta*, 10 July 1886; 'O budushchei Russkoi kolonii v Tikhom okeane' [On a proposed Russian colony in the Pacific], *Novoe vremia*, 13 December 1886; B.A. Val'skaia, 'Proekt N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia o sozdanii na ostrovakh Tikhogo okeana vol'noi russkoi kolonii' [The project of N.N. Miklouho-Maclay for the founding of a free Russian colony on islands in the Pacific Ocean], in *Avstraliia i Okeaniia (Istoriia i sovremennost')*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 35-52; E.V. Govor, 'K istorii prebyvaniia N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia na iuge Rossii' [To the history of Miklouho-Maclay stay in Southern Russia], *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 2, 1988, p. 142; E.M. Webster, *The Moon Man. A Biography of Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay*, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 315-325; 'Our St. Petersburg letter', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11, 18 September 1886.

Islands), the latter transferred the events to the time of Catherine II, depicting an abortive variant of the colony.³⁴

Russian emigration from 1910 to 1919

Social background and perceptions of Australia before emigration

The 'adventurous-romantic' element in Russian society, though not numerous, may have had a deep impact on the Russian mind and the image of the South Pacific, including Australia. But it was not their destiny to be among the hundreds and thousands of Russians who came to Australia in the twentieth century. These people came with one desire - to work; and either to return home with a modest fortune or to remain permanently settled. Who were they and what was the role of their perceptions of Australia in choosing this country as a place of residence?

The statistics show that the main flow of these emigrants was from the Russian Far East and Siberia to Queensland. Those who took this route were ethnically mainly Russians. This first 'Russian wave' reached Australia in 1910 and was rising for several years after that. In general it was a time of stable economic growth in Russia, actually its 'star hour', and the reasons for this peak of emigration from Russia may be seen only in a wider context.

The first reason was the official policy of resettlement of peasants from overpopulated regions of Central Russia to Siberia and the Far East. Shortage of land, the low quality of soils, suppression of any peasant initiative first by serfdom and later by *obshchina* (peasant community) - were the main factors provoking increasing resettlement to Siberia. The numbers of migrants increased especially at the beginning of the twentieth century at the time of Stolypin's reforms. A free life on abundant land was the Russian peasantry's cherished dream, one of the determining characteristics of their consciousness. Their aspirations were among the commonest themes in Russian

34 A.K. [A.G. Konkevich], *Kreiser 'Russkaia nadezhda' [Cruiser The Russian Hope]*, St. Petersburg, 1887, pp. 130-133, 148-149, 162-164, 203, 221-233; N.N. Sokolov, 'Russkaia koloniia na Tikhom okeane' [The Russian colony in the Pacific Ocean], *Priroda i liudi*, nos 1-8, 1896/1897, nos 9-12, 14-52, 1897.

literature.³⁵ In psychological terms, Siberia was a kind of Russian frontier, similar to the American Far West and the settlers hoped their dreams would come true there. Though there cannot be statistical evidence concerning the personality of these migrants it is obvious enough that they were the most mobile and adaptable of the Russian peasantry and artisans. This provides an indirect reason for the surprisingly low percentage of illiterate persons among immigrants from Russia in Australia. According to the 1911 census it was nearly 6%, while in Russia at that time the illiteracy rate was 60-75%. Leaving their native villages they for the first time became 'masters of their own' not restricted any longer by regulations imposed by *obshchina* and kinsmen.

For various reasons many of them remained unhappy with their new land and the opportunities for employment provided in Siberia and the Far East at that time. This unsettled element increased after the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) which had as one of its outcomes a considerable number of soldiers and other servicemen who preferred not to return to their original homes in Russia. They were joined by tradesmen involved in railway work and suffering from unemployment, and a smaller group of more intellectual persons without a real trade, such as unemployed clerks and foremen, and unsuccessful business-men and contractors. Thus by 1910 Siberia and the Far East accumulated a growing number of dissatisfied persons who were readily available to try their luck once again. That was the social composition of Russian emigrants to Australia. Initially they were mainly males in their twenties and sometimes thirties. Few came with families. Some sent money for the passage to their families later when they were themselves well settled.³⁶

Still this situation does not sufficiently explain why so many Russians chose Australia in the years 1910-1914. This could not have happened without the second factor - the activity of numerous emigration agencies specializing in attracting emigrants to Australia. Usually they were connected with shipping companies whose vessels

35 See for example *Na kraj sveta [To the World's End]* (1895) by Ivan Bunin or *Bez iazyka [Without language]* (1895-1902) by Vladimir Korolenko.

36 For instance, according to a Russian emigre in 1914 (i.e. four years after the inception of substantial emigration to Australia) on an emigrant ship there were already a number of women with children going to their husbands. N. Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii. Vospominaniia rabochego. [My Life in Australia. A Worker's Reminiscences]*, Moscow, 1933, p. 7; 'Emigratsiia v Avstraliu' [Emigration to Australia], *Permskaia zemskaiia nedelia*, no. 17, 1913, columns 10-11.

transported migrants. Their history and activity in the Pacific needs special investigation but the available facts - mainly from the Russian contemporary press - suggest that they were operated in the Far East along the Russian borders by Russian and foreign agents. The methods varied - leaflets distributed throughout the country and especially in Siberia, advertisements in local Siberian newspapers or personal trips by the agents for recruitment of potential emigrants. These agencies facilitated the transfer to Australia of potential Russian emigrants, and helped in particular with the language barrier and travel arrangements.³⁷ The common route was through Harbin, Dairen (Lü-ta) and Japan. From 1910 each boat departing from these places for Australia brought to Queensland dozens of Russians, on ships such as the *Empire*, *Kumano Maru* and *Nikko Maru*. Stedman and Eric Fried overestimate the availability of subsidized fares to Queensland as a decisive factor. Not many Russians were eligible for these, at least not in the first period of emigration, as they had no one in Australia who could prove that they were true agriculturalists. Usually Russians paid the full lowest class fares.³⁸

The last but not the least important factor was the perception of Australia which had spread among the Russian working classes in Siberia after the 1905 revolution. Local newspapers stated with one voice that many Russians were interested in Australia and longed to get there, having the most favourable perceptions of the country. What was the source of these beliefs? Henry Alexis Tardent, a Swiss by origin, who lived for a long time in Russia and, after settling in Queensland, was in close contact with the Russians there, considered these perceptions as a decisive factor. He believed that immigration was started in 1909 by

37 In the article E.V. Govor, 'Dorevoliutsionnaia pechat' o russkikh pereselentsakh na Gavaiskikh ostrovakh (1909-1910)' [Pre-revolutionary press about Russian emigrants on Hawaii (1909-1910)], in *Nauchnaia konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii*, 17-aia, Moscow, 1986, pp. 32-41 I discussed the vicious role of these agencies in attracting a considerable number of Russians to work on Hawaiian coffee plantations. The tragic destiny of these deceived and enslaved migrants who finally rebelled in Honolulu in 1910 provoked a considerable response in the Russian press. See for comparison Tudorianu's description of agents' activity in the Western part of Russia where emigrants for the USA were recruited: N.L. Tudorianu, *Ocherki rossiiskoi trudovoi emigratsii perioda imperializma (V Germaniiu, Skandinavskie strany i SSHA)* [Russian Working Emigration of the Imperialist Period (to Germany, Scandinavia and the USA)], Kishinev, 1986, pp. 117-166.

38 Stedman, 'From Russia', p. 22; Fried, *Russians in Queensland*, pp. 16-17, 25, 37. For the reference that Russian immigrants to Queensland arrived as full-paying passengers, see the Immigration Agent's reports published in Queensland, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1912, vol. 2, pp. 1255, 1274; 1913, vol. 2, pp. 256, 274 and the following years.

two well-educated Russians Messrs [Anthony] Pashinsky and [Nicholas] Dorf [who] fleeing from the persecutions of the Russian bureaucracy ... escaped from Siberia.

On their way to Sydney they met J.T. Bell, Queensland Minister for Lands, who persuaded them to land in Brisbane. After acquaintance with the conditions in Australia they 'wrote ... copious and interesting correspondence in praise of Queensland to various Russian magazines and newspapers'.³⁹

The writings of two persons, however, were not enough to influence thousands of Russians. The situation was polyphonic, composed of the letters of the first successful Russian settlers to relatives and friends, their publications in local Siberian and Far Eastern periodicals, journalists' comments, while the emigration agents were unseen conductors of this orchestra. As a result, for the first time in history Russian writings on Australia reached new addressees - the working classes - and received an overwhelming response.

Interest among [peasants of our village] in these articles was so great that the newspaper which published them circulated from hand to hand,

a peasant from Chernigovka wrote.⁴⁰

The fact that the majority of Russians chose Queensland as the place of their initial settlement in Australia was due to a considerable degree to the presence of the growing Russian community in Queensland and the publicity which it received in Russia through relatives, friends, press and emigration agents. In the broad sense of the term it was chain migration that facilitated the Russians' selection of Queensland.

Russian authorities could not prevent this emigration. Newspapers from time to time published warnings by Russian consuls in Australia and by Australian officials. Some Russian communities sent their messengers or scouts (*khodoki*) to Australia to study the situation on the spot. The Russian warnings, though reflecting some real problems (for instance difficulties for those without English), were in general distinguished by extreme jingoism and xenophobia. They declared Russian aspirations as 'indecision of mind' because of 'a lack of pride' and Australian freedom as 'a vain and false chimera'. With typical Russian mentality they warned: 'All good jobs are for the

39 [N.A. Tardent], 'Russian immigrants', *Daily Standard*, Brisbane, 23 June 1913.

40 Pavlenko[v], 'Krest'ianskie peredely v nashei oblasti sela Chernigovka' [Peasant re-allotments in our region. The village of Chernigovka], *Dalekaia ukraina*, 31 March 1910.

English, for Russians only unskilled labour', obviously blaming the English for taking the 'good' jobs from the Russians rather than the Russians' lack of skills and language! It was commonplace in these warnings to claim that the Australians treated the Russians especially badly, as the Negroes were treated in America, or to allege that the differences between classes in Australia were so great that this was even 'incomprehensible' for simple Russians. 'It is senseless and stupid to give the results of your work for the benefit of an alien nation from which we see not a bit of good', argued the Russian messenger Pavlenkov. It is characteristic of the Russian mind that official warnings in the press had the opposite psychological effect on potential emigrants suspicious of everything that came from the authorities. 'They write it to discourage us from going there', the Russian workers and peasants concluded and left in growing numbers for Australia, Hawaii and the USA.⁴¹

The memoirs of Nikolai Blinov provide a typical example of the mentality of such a foot-loose person and the influences he experienced, and describe a common way to Australia with the help of an emigration agency. He was born in 1884 in Central Russia into a peasant family. After serving a compulsory term in the army he returned to his village to discover that he had lost his plot of land. He tried to work as a labourer for a *kulak* (rich peasant) but exploitation and humiliation soon forced him to leave. He decided to 'follow his nose'. A person on the nearest railway station advised him to go to Siberia. There he worked as a railway guard for several years but eventually became disgusted at an atmosphere in which the workers were expected to inform on each other and in 1914 he

decided to go to Australia as from there information came that it was 'a country of freedom'. There were six of us. We all left the service at once. But how to go, how to get a passport which cost 25 roubles?

41 P.Ia. Pavlenkov, 'Poezdka iz sela Chernigovki (Primorskoi oblasti) v gorod Sidnei (Avstraliia)' [A trip from the village of Chernigovka (Primorskii region) to Sydney (Australia)] *Dalekaia ukraina*, 13 & 14 February 1910; 'K svedeniiu otpravliaiushchikhsia v Avstraliu' [For the information of those departing for Australia], *Okeanskii vestnik*, 18 March 1910; V. Severovskii, 'Avstraliia i Gavaii (psikhologiya faktov)' [Australia and Hawaii (the psychology behind the facts)], *Okeanskii vestnik*, 7 April 1910; Old Nick, 'Vnimaniu stremiashchikhsia v Avstraliu (Skazochnaia strana)' [For the attention of those rushing [to emigrate] to Australia (A fairy-tale land)], *Dalekaia ukraina*, 30 May 1910; Puk, 'Okolo emigratsionnoi kontory' [Near the emigration bureau], *Nikol'sk-Ussuriiskii*, 28 March 1910.

Blinov decided to cross the border illegally. As he was walking along the railway to the border he heard a peremptory shout by a border guard:

- Stop! Where are you going?
- To Changchun station.
- No, you are lying. Your relatives are in Australia and you are fleeing there.

After inspecting Blinov's suitcase the guard suddenly let him go and even indicated the direction. On Changchun station Blinov and several similar escapees

were met by a Japanese agent from an emigration bureau. He showed us where to retire as soon as possible A few hours later we were met in Dairen by Japanese agents who already had collected in a hotel fifty Russian refugees heading to Australia. Here we were acquainted with Australia in all details by means of the emigration agency journal which was published in Harbin. It consisted almost completely of the letters of emigrants from Tsarist Russia who lived in Australia. And we left, persuaded that soon we would meet our compatriots in the country of freedom and sun, where there is eternal verdure and no winter.

Blinov remembered the Russians' happy mood during the voyage to Australia 'because we have broken away from Tsarist Russia'.⁴²

These simple recollections illustrate well the comparatively large scale of emigration to Australia at that time and the role played in it by prior perceptions of Australia.

K.W. Manning in a study of the Farleigh Sugar Milling Association history (Mackay area) referred to similar Russian recollections of this early period:

Some [Russians] came from Siberia, via China. They were not refugees nor displaced persons. They had heard Australia was a land of opportunity and general recollections are that they did not consider migrating anywhere else.

George Krisin, one of Farleigh's old-timers, remembered that after serving a term in the Russian Army, in 1913 he decided to leave for Australia as the block of land which his family owned was

far too small to support a growing family [His family's] limited knowledge of the southern continent led them to believe that he ran a grave risk of being eaten by Aborigines and they were most distressed at his decision.⁴³

In some cases the perceptions of emigrants had a more politicized character. Kutuzov, another Russian emigre from the Far East, said:

⁴² Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, pp. 3-8.

⁴³ K.W. Manning, *In Their Own Hands: a North Queensland Sugar Story*, Farleigh, 1983, pp. 267, 268.

I am a miner and worked near Vladivostok in Suchan, and well, I thought: Australia - the fifth part of the world, a workers' country, what if I go there!

This image was so popular among the Russians that journalists who wanted to discourage potential emigrants often wrote sarcastically about this belief as a commonplace:

Russians rush to Australia. Of course! Kingdom of freedom and workers! Is it worth abandoning everything for the sake of some sort of free-thinking and some special high blessings [in Australia]?⁴⁴

It is characteristic of Russians that 'the workers' kingdom' was perceived as a place of easy work and high wages.

Thus the perceptions of this category of emigrants had the most general, schematic nature - sun mixed with abstract freedom and an idealistic belief in the land of opportunities and a workers' kingdom. Such ignorance gave grounds to a Russian press report that settlers were going to Australia 'at random, knowing almost nothing about it' and perhaps to Solomon Stedman's somewhat hyperbolic conclusion that Russians arriving in Queensland

knew very little about Australia and were quite ignorant of the existence of cities like Sydney and Melbourne. They discovered them later - some of them years later.⁴⁵

I have already mentioned that this category of migrants had one more characteristic feature. Many of them perceived Australia as a good place to earn a modest fortune rather than as a country of permanent settlement. Blinov wrote about his compatriots employed on the railway works in mid 1914: 'Among us predominated people who simply dreamed of returning to Russia with money'. Similarly, R., presumably a political refugee, stressed in 1920 that the majority of Russians were workers and peasants from South Siberia 'who emigrated to Australia to earn a couple of hundred pounds' and then return home. A short story 'No luck' by Vasilii Starshinov, who came to Australia in 1909, was published in 1937 in the Australian Russian language magazine *Emigrant's Way* (*Put' emigranta*). Starshinov provided a collective portrait of such emigrants in the person of his hero Nikolai whose land allotment in Siberia was not big enough to support his wife

44 V. Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii po zemnomu sharu* [Fifteen Years Wandering the Globe], 2 ed., Moscow, 1933, p. 72; Old Nick, 'Vnimaniiu'; Pavlenkov, 'Poezdka'.

45 A.V. Marakuev, 'Ocherki russkoi emigratsii (Pereselenie iz Rossii v Avstraliu)' [Essays on Russian emigration (Migration from Russia to Australia)], *Kolos*, no. 17, 1913, p. 407; S. Stedman, 'The Russian revolution in Australia', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 65, part 3, 1979, p. 201.

and children. His attempt to earn a fortune in Siberian mines was not successful and in 1912 'he heard from his mates, who received letters from Australia, that in this country wages were high and there were a lot of jobs'. He left for Australia planning to return to his family in one or two years with money.⁴⁶

These numerous ethnic Russian 'seekers of better luck', who were a considerable proportion of the Russian emigration, do not fit the categories 'settlers' and 'exiles' employed by Christa to characterize early Russian immigrants.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, there were real peasant-settlers as well, who were interested primarily in farming and long term settlement on the land. Their perceptions could be more realistic and practical. A.V. Marakuev, in arguing in favour of migration to Australia, considered the availability of land and especially the low density of population as positive features.

For migrant-agriculturalists (and there are mainly agriculturalists leaving Russia) it is worth going only either to South America or to Australia. Both these territories are lightly populated and have huge quantities of free land convenient for settlement.

He also stressed the equable climate of Australia as a distinctive positive feature. D. Margolin, in the *Emigrant's Companion* published in Kiev, also wrote in favour of Australia's agricultural opportunities. At the same time Marakuev warned that 'land is not given free and one has either to buy it or to take it on lease'. He was probably responding to widespread Russian popular social-Utopian beliefs in the existence of a far-away land where each peasant could get free as much land as he needed and enjoy justice and freedom from oppression.⁴⁸

In general the pre-war Russian press had responded positively to the publicity of Australian governments encouraging immigration and, in particular, attracting agricultural immigrants. Such articles appeared in the *Bulletin of Finance, Industry and Trade* which was oriented to business circles, and in the press at large. The favourable impression of

46 Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 10; 'Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh', p. 1845; V. Starshinov, 'Ne vezet' [No luck], *Pu' emigranta*, Sydney, no. 29, 1937, p. 11.

47 Christa, 'Russians', p. 752; Christa, 'Great Bear', p. 93.

48 Marakuev, 'Ocherki russkoi', pp. 406-407; D. Margolin, *Sputnik emigranta: Prakticheskii putevoditel' i spravochnyi ukazatel' dlia vseh, sobiraiushchikhsia pereselit'sia v chuzhie strany* [The Emigrant's Companion: A Practical Travel Guide and Practical book for Everyone Intending to Settle in Foreign Lands], Kiev, 1906, p. 6; K.V. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy XVIII-XIX vv.* [Russian folk socio-Utopian legends of the 18-19th centuries], Moscow, 1967.

Australia regarding the availability of land obviously dominated Russian peasants' perceptions of this country.

Political refugees and their choice of Australia

Though proportionally making up approximately only one tenth of the whole emigration, the perceptions and experiences of political refugees are commonly perceived and discussed by writers as those of Russians in Australia in general. Christa correctly remarks that it was the political exiles who 'had the most powerful impact and made the Australian public keenly aware' of the Russian presence. But I cannot agree with him that 'here ... we find most of the ethnic Russians'.⁴⁹ There was a considerable number of ethnic Jews among them along with Letts, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Poles and some other nationalities. Nevertheless, it is quite correct to consider them predominantly Russian in culture and mentality (or at least sharing Russian culture and mentality with those of their own ethnic background).

There are no special statistics or studies giving their numbers. The accepted figure of five hundred before the February revolution has its origin in an anonymous article by R., presumably one of the activists of the Union of Russian Workers.⁵⁰ During 1917, after the February revolution, nearly six hundred Russian emigres left Australia. Many of these were political refugees who could prove their political status and return at the expense of the Russian Provisional Government of Kerensky.⁵¹ But not all political emigres left Australia in 1917. There were some groups and individuals departing in 1918, while in 1919 the question of Russians seeking repatriation became a cause of the notorious Red Flag Riots.

49 Christa, 'Great Bear', pp. 93-94.

50 'Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh', p. 1845.

51 'Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh', p. 1845; AA (ACT): A981, Cons 240; *Rabochaia zhizn*, 18 April 1917. Australian historians often claim that in 1917 five hundred Russian political emigrants left Australia on a chartered ship that departed either from Sydney or from Brisbane (Stedman, 'From Russia', p. 28; Stedman, 'The Russian Revolution', p. 204; Fried, *Russians in Queensland*, pp. 59-60; E. Fried, 'The First Consul: Peter Simonoff and the Formation of the Australian Communist Party', in McNair & Poole, eds, *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, p. 112; Christa, 'Russians', p. 753; Christa, 'Great Bear', p. 96; R. Evans, '"Agitation, Ceaseless Agitation": Russian Radicals in Australia and the Red Flag Riots', in McNair & Poole, eds, *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, p. 128). This might be a legend as statistical data suggest that the 618 Russians who departed Australia in 1917 were rather evenly distributed throughout the year with the rise to 109 in May only. See *Monthly (Quarterly) Summary of Australian Statistics*, bull. 61-74, 1917-1918.

In general, it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between political and non-political emigrants from Russia at that time. Some initially came to Australia to earn money but soon, under the influence of the extremely politicized Union of Russian Workers and Industrial Workers of the World, became involved in political activity, began to read social-democratic and other literature and were finally transformed into the psychological type of the political emigrant. Moreover, in a broader sense, most emigrants from the Russian Empire had some political, or at least non-economic, reasons to emigrate: either an indefinite desire for freedom, or because of ethnic or religious persecutions,⁵² or to avoid conscription, or they were deserting from the army.⁵³

But here we should speak about political emigrants in the narrow meaning of the term. Most of these came to Australia after participation in the Revolution of 1905-1907. A usual fate for them was imprisonment, exile to Siberia (mainly in the form of settlement in a Siberian village) and then flight across the border to China, Korea or Japan and finally to Australia. Artem's letters describe this route vividly. Some, after participating in disturbances, as for instance Ivan Grigor'evich G. who had burnt a landlord's estate, did not wait to be arrested and fled Russia. A few of the escapees had financial support from party members and relatives; many, like Artem, earned their fares to Australia working for a few months in some transit port in the Far East.⁵⁴ Their political spectrum was extremely diverse - Liberals, Social-Democrats, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries (*Esery*), Maximalists, Anarchists and even a member of the populist

52 An interesting group are Russian Old Believers, adherents of unreformed Orthodox rites persecuted by Russian authorities since the seventeenth century, who established in Queensland two settlements as early as 1913. AA (ACT): A458, C156/3.

53 Among the non-economic emigrants can even be considered people unmasked in Russia as agents of the Tsarist secret police or participants in anti-Semitic pogroms who fled Russia fearing revenge and persecution. Some of these 'dark personalities' were later employed by Australian security for surveillance over other Russians during World War I and especially after the Russian revolutions of 1917. The most notorious person among them was Anatolii Mendrin, a former Russian socialist revolutionary who betrayed his comrades and became a member of the Russian Secret Service. It is likely that after fleeing to Australia he was used as a police informant to spy on the Russian community. His case was even discussed in the Australian parliament. AA (NSW): SP43/2, N59/21/945; Australia, Senate and House of Representatives 1918-1919, *Debates*, vol. 87, pp. 9512-9516. Evans used the reports of these police informants as one of the valuable sources for his book *The Red Flag Riots. A Study of Intolerance*, St Lucia, 1988.

54 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 64-81. The case of Ivan G. see in P. Gutsal, 'Artem v Avstralii' [Artem in Australia], *Donbass*, no. 1, 1958, pp. 125-126. Gutsal met with Russian emigres in Queensland in 1950 and recorded a number of their stories. Unfortunately, his numerous writings are in the style of extreme Stalinist propaganda and cannot be considered a reliable historical source in general, with the exception of some separate facts which he had no reason to falsify.

'Narodnaia Volia' (People's Freedom) who began his political struggle in the 1880s. There were also members of a number of national and ethnic parties of Social-Democratic orientation - Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Jewish. The Ukrainian historian Chernenko considers that most political emigrants to Australia 'formally had no membership of any party, though could be affiliates of one or another party'.⁵⁵ Before the formation of the Union of Russian Workers in 1912 the dominant role among political parties belonged to the more moderate sector of the Socialist movement but after that Bolsheviks mostly dominated the leadership.

The social and educational background of the political emigres was diverse, from workers who had little formal education to such educated people as Viktor Kurnatovskii (ill. 26), who studied at Petersburg and Moscow universities and graduated from the Zurich polytechnic institute, or Professor Konstantin Klushin. In general their educational level was higher than that of ordinary emigrants. Moreover, it was characteristic of political emigres to be engaged in self-education; they regularly read books and periodicals, especially political, social and economic literature.

The diversity of political persuasions and affiliations of these emigres contributed little to choosing Australia as a place of destination, though the general perceptions of Australia they had in Russia may have had some influence upon them. Evans has formulated the most general basic reason for their choice of Australia:

They had settled in Queensland almost by default - it was a Western outpost at the end of a tortuous escape route from political imprisonment, principally in Siberia.⁵⁶

I believe that their perceptions of Australia, at least for some, were more specific than that, and that they were influenced by Australian achievements in social reform. Mark Ostapenko, a railway worker, wrote:

we left our native land to escape persecution and firmly believed that in coming to Australia we would find freedom and peace

55 A.M. Chernenko, compiler, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia v Avstralii (1900-1917)* [*Russian revolutionary emigres in Australia (1900-1917)*], Dnepropetrovsk, 1978, p. 11.

56 Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 28.

Russian political emigre Iu. Iogansen also considered that many believed that Australia was a free country with good conditions for workers.⁵⁷ Artem wrote that, when leaving for Australia,

I had very vague perceptions about it. The only perception that I had about Australia as a free, most democratic country, was based on Pavel Mizhnev's book *The Advanced Democracy of the Modern World*.⁵⁸ Besides I was full of the most amazing rumours about this far country. It was said that Australia was a 'workingmen's paradise, God's own country, a lucky country, the ideal of democracy' etc, etc.⁵⁹

Nicolas Illin (Nikolai Dmitrievich Il'in, 1852-c.1922) (ill. 23), writer, a former Doctor of Law and prosecuting judge in Russia, fled Russia because of political persecution in 1894 for South America. In 1910 he came with his family to Queensland and became a selector.

I came from the Cordilleres to Australia because of the reputation for justice which I understood the Australian authorities possessed,

he wrote.⁶⁰ School knowledge of the uniqueness of Australian nature and some romantic images of the society may also have influenced these emigrants.

The Russian press carried messages that may have made Australia especially attractive for Russian refugees. The *Kolos* assured readers in 1913:

On arrival [in Australia] no one asks about any money and does not take any duty; ... also, no one needs any documents - one can name himself by any name.⁶¹

Of course, a change of name was very common among Russian political emigres. Many of them are now known under double names, one of which was a pseudonym - Taranov-Skvirskii, Orlov-Klushin, Rezanov-Bykov, Nasedkin-Liubimov, Blinov-Pampushkin. Fedor Sergeev was known as Tom or Artem. The large family of Pavel Ivanovich Klark (Clarke), one of the 'grandfathers' of the Russian revolutionary movement and a member of the 'People's Freedom' organization, finally settled in Australia. Here they changed their surname to Gray and anglicized their Christian names. As a result, when members

57 Ostapenko's opinion is quoted in Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 162; Iu. Iogansen, 'Russkie politicheskie emigranty v Avstralii v 1913-1917 gg.' [Russian political emigres in Australia, 1913-1917], in *Na voliu!*, Leningrad, 1927, p. 119.

58 The book was devoted to a favourable description of New Zealand and Australian social legislation.

59 Artem, 'Iz svobodnoi Avstralii' [From free Australia], *Prosveshchenie*, no 3, 1914, p. 69.

60 AA (ACT): A1, 1913/2427; A1, 1913/17541.

61 Marakuev, 'Ocherki russkoi', p. 407.

of the family came under suspicion for radical activity, the Australian authorities had to undertake a special investigation to identify who was who.⁶²

An important characteristic of Russian political emigres was that some of them came to Australia to wait out social changes in Russia rather than to settle for ever. They had a specific attitude to work too; they needed money to have an opportunity for reading, discussions and political struggle rather than accumulating wealth or buying property as did some other migrants.

Perceptions of Australia on arrival

How did the Russians' perceptions change on arrival in Australia? Did they find themselves 'strangers in a strange land', as Stedman expressed it, or even as 'conspicuous strangers in a strange land', as Evans paraphrased it?⁶³ I believe that 'strangeness' was not the dominating feature of their initial image of Australia. There was no uniformity. Even among those who came to Australia together, seeking refuge and sharing similar hardships in the new place, perceptions could be different.

The Bolshevik Artem, in spite of his proletarian awareness, on arrival in Australia in June 1911 at first seemed rhapsodic.

I feel myself quite free Nowhere in the world, I think, I could find such an excellent sanatorium for my nerves and muscles as here This is one of the best countries for a worker. By now a worker here has everything at his disposal It is good for farmers here as well In general Australia is the most perfect country,

he wrote in a private letter a month after his arrival in Australia. A week later he still believed that 'Australia was a wonderfully good and tranquil country. Here one has a feeling of confidence. It is spacious, rich and free ...', although by that time he had already become aware of its social faults, like exploitation of workers and farmers and lack of cultural interests among them.⁶⁴ Nasedkin, Artem's companion-in-arms and co-traveller, described Australia as a 'splendid country' and, in spite of all hardships, remained interested not only in its social questions, like other political emigres, but in its

62 See big file AA (ACT): A1, 1922/22833.

63 Stedman, 'From Russia', p. 29; Stedman, 'The Russian Revolution', p. 201; Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 28.

64 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 82-84, 87.

history, geography, culture and the life of people. Their third co-traveller and co-worker 'San'ka-stoker' after a few days labouring on a railway 'swore like a trooper about Australian life and work and decided to leave the country as soon as possible'.⁶⁵ A Bolshevik, M.Ia. Mikhailov, on arrival to Sydney in 1908 'after acquainting himself with the situation wrote in an extremely pessimistic tone' to his colleague Kurnatovskii in Japan. But the latter was in such a desperate situation that this did not stop his coming.⁶⁶

Ordinary emigrants on arrival were probably so overwhelmed by particular features of Australian life that they did not attempt generalizations. What first struck Russian eyes can be of historical and psychological interest. Staying in the Immigration bureau in Brisbane in 1909 the Russian peasant Pavlenkov recorded the fact that each immigrant 'received a separate bed with clean sheet, blanket and pillow'. It probably seemed extraordinary and memorable to him. Really, it was so easy to surprise a Russian!

A worker Blinov who arrived in April 1914 first of all noticed the difference in clothes between Russians and Australians and the consequent feelings experienced by the Russians. In Darwin: 'People are white, in white clothes. They peer at us as if they want to eye us from head to foot'. And later in Brisbane when twenty people from his group were taken to the Immigration Bureau the initial feeling of embarrassment was replaced by gaiety.

It seemed to us that all here were dressed very well ... people were looking at us as on Russian bears. And really, our clothes - parti-coloured Russian shirts, wide velveteen *sharovary* with wide belts or just sashes, *kartuz* [Russian type of cap] on our heads - distinguished us on the streets of the Australian city But our lads behaved themselves freely, without embarrassment, and even felt proud that people on the streets stopped to look at us. Many Australians had cameras.⁶⁷

Nasedkin who came in June 1911 also was at first impressed by the dense movement on Brisbane streets and the clothes of the people who were 'dressed decently but simply'. Moreover, he noticed that

65 Nasedkin, *Piatnadtsat' let skitanii*, pp. 44, 52.

66 M. Mikhailov, 'V.K. Kurnatovskii (v period 1907-1912 gg.)' [V.K. Kurnatovskii (during the period 1907-1912)], in *Staryi bol'shevik*, sbornik no. 1, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, p. 168.

67 Pavlenkov, 'Poezdka'; Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, pp. 9-10.

men's uncovered biceps with well developed muscles showed that these arms were capable of the most hard, rough labour. Most women's hands were toil-hardened as well.

Artem soon after arrival made a detailed observation in this respect too: 'Here there is no loud extravagant luxury of the commanding classes. All dress similarly, eat similarly'. The same impressions were shared later by the Russian immigrant M.I. Maksimov who arrived in Brisbane in 1925. A few days after arrival he wrote: 'You will hardly recognize, especially on a holiday, who is a bank or office employee and who is a worker ... All dress similarly'.⁶⁸ Thus, the initial manifestation of the 'workers' country' was perceived mainly through the appearance and clothes of the people.

Patterns of employment, conditions of work and their influence on Russian perceptions

Life, however, did not give the Russians much time for reflection and urged them to begin a practical acquaintance with Australia immediately after arrival. 'Our situation was such that we had to begin to work as soon as possible', Nasedkin wrote. Artem began his first letter from Australia giving as an excuse for the delay that he had had no money to buy writing-materials.⁶⁹

Certainly the pattern of Russian employment influenced considerably their perceptions of Australia. The availability and conditions of jobs primarily led most to participate in trade union activity and made them later think about the political situation in the country in general.

The situation with employment equalized Russians of different social background - economic migrants, political refugees and seekers of adventure. Presumably the range of jobs depended on the state of the economy at the time and point of arrival. The main obstacle to qualified employment was poor English, the most usual kind of employment before the war in Queensland particularly being excavations on railway construction sites. Some comments from Russians are as follows:

There are a lot of Russians here on excavations (1911).

68 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, p. 47; Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 87; [M.I. Maksimov], 'Pis'ma iz Avstralii' [Letters from Australia], *Russkii golos*, Harbin, 8 July 1925. [Newspaper copy from Hotimsky Archives in Melbourne University Library].

69 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, p. 48; Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 82.

The Russians ... were scattered all over the state on public railway works. Very few had the opportunity to find situations in Brisbane where 5-6 persons were employed as clerks; some worked on the waterfront while the rest were occupied with ... 'literary toil' by means of pick and shovel. The fate of all - intellectuals as well as workers - was the same, especially those who did not know English (1911).

They did not keep us long in the Emigration Bureau and proposed jobs. As we did not know the language almost all of us went on excavations. In Australia at that time new branch lines were being constructed and Russians worked on almost every railway under construction (1914).⁷⁰

Other usual places of employment according to Russian memoirs were mines, cane-fields and meatworks. Price, on the basis of naturalization records, gives a broader spectrum of occupations including commercial men, engineers, skilled tradesmen, mechanics, carpenters, painters, shoe-makers, hairdressers, smelters etc.⁷¹ In the early years of Russian emigration, however, the pattern was probably closer to the above mentioned Russian recollections. It is also unsafe to assume that the Russians living in rural areas were engaged in rural activities and had farms. My calculations based on the 'List of Russians in Queensland'⁷² which recorded 753 persons in 1919 show that only 1.6% were farmers, 22.1% were persons with some trade (the most numerous were fitters, miners and carpenters), 3% were business owners and members of intellectual professions, while all the rest, 73.2%, were registered as 'labourers'. This list of Russians is not complete but the percentage distribution shows the general trend for Queensland.

Russians emigres were distinguished by extreme mobility. Perhaps only a few of them settled at one place immediately after arrival and practised one occupation. More common was a pattern of intensive local and interstate migration with changes in occupations. Russians 'have to travel constantly in search of a piece of bread', a Russian newspaper wrote in 1915.⁷³ At the same time there is no need to overdramatize the situation with employment before 1914 as Artem Rudnitskii did in his book.⁷⁴

70 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 93; Sereshininov, 'Tovarishch Artem', p. 123; Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 10.

71 Unfortunately, his percentage distributions are not relevant for my study as he deals with the pattern of employment of Russians in general up to 1947. Price, 'Russians in Australia', pp. 67, 70-71.

72 Queensland State Archives: PRE/A639, 10583 of 1919.

73 *Izvestiia Soiuza Russkikh emigrantov*, 14 October, 1915.

74 Rudnitskii, *Drugia zhizn'*, pp. 73-75.

It was not uncommon for Russians to leave a job being unsatisfied with the conditions of labour or after earning enough money for a period of rest. Nasedkin, for instance, during his three year stay in Australia (1911-1914) experienced a number of periods of desperate need when he was ready to pick up discarded sandwiches from rubbish bins in Sydney, short-term and long-term employment, and leisure months when he had enough money not to work and enjoyed reading and education. He mentions at least thirteen positions tried in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Most were short-term jobs. In a few cases he was sacked for being unable to manage the heavy physical work; in some cases he left voluntarily, dissatisfied with conditions. Two years after arrival he found long-term employment as a marble polisher in a Sydney; this position gave him security and prosperity and he left himself because of personal circumstances.⁷⁵

The level of wages before World War I was seen by Russians as very high. 'Out of the eight shillings [a day] of my wages two thirds remained', Nasedkin admitted in 1911. After a few months of work he could buy a new suit, other clothes and footwear. Artem, after a few months of hard work on excavations, wrote in a private letter:

As a matter of fact, I have no need to work. I have now 80-100 roubles [i.e. approximately 8-10 pounds - E.G.] which I cannot, alas, spend. I could live two months doing nothing. But I cannot live doing nothing.

'A Russian has a lot of money, works hard', was the opinion of Australian co-workers about Russian labourers on railway construction. 'An unskilled worker can easily save 700 roubles a year, and that is a real fortune for him!' exulted a Russian newspaper.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, as we will see, the high level of wages and personal well-being of the Russians did not guarantee their favourable perception of the workers' conditions in Australia in general.

At the same time memoirs and other writings reflect numerous cases of desperate need among the Russians. The situation of those without any trade and unfitted for hard physical labour was especially difficult. That was the case with Russian intellectuals, the political emigres. Tragic outcomes were not uncommon. Alexy, a teacher, who came to

⁷⁵ Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, pp. 48-70.

⁷⁶ Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, pp. 53, 54; Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 95; Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, pp. 10-11; 'Emigratsiia v Avstraliu', p. 10.

Australia in 1913 'worked on the railway in North Queensland. Unaccustomed to the heavy work and sub-tropical heat, he was dead within a year'.⁷⁷ Kurnatovskii, highly educated as a chemist, worked in New South Wales in 1908-1910 as a factory worker and kitchen hand, fed pigs on a farm and blasted tunnels in the mountains. Finally he became fatally ill while working as an axe man in a remote part of New South Wales. With Lenin's help Bolsheviks sent him a ship's ticket to Europe. His friends in Australia had not even money for a cab and one of them

had to carry him on his back to the ship taking a rest from time to time near the street-lamps. At first V.K.[urnatovskii] laughed, and then... then he began to cry,

Mikhailov recollected.⁷⁸ Many others whose names were not recorded by history had no less tragic experiences. Blinov wrote: 'I have seen several of my countrymen who remained invalids to the end of their lives after work in the cane-fields'.⁷⁹

Even those who were as young and strong as Artem and did not experience misfortunes found grounds to criticize the situation in Australia. One of the main points of criticism was, as Kurnatovskii put it, 'the sweating system' or, as another political emigre, Iu. Iogansen, described it, 'the Taylor system' in its highest form where capital 'buys for eight shillings a day a speaking automaton'.⁸⁰ The first job that Nasedkin and Ermolenko had in Australia - loading a van with ballast soil - was so hard that though they 'were dripping with sweat' they did not manage to fulfil even half of the necessary rate of output and the boss sacked them in four hours. A Russian fellow-worker tried to console Nasedkin and told him he had had the same misfortune at first till he became used to the Australian style of work. 'In Russia with a twelve hours working day I would not be able to do the amount of work in a week which I do in Australia during eight hours', he told Nasedkin. A similar opinion was expressed by other emigres.⁸¹ Those Russians

77 Stedman, 'The Russian Revolution', p. 202.

78 Mikhailov, 'V.K. Kurnatovskii', pp. 170-171; Chernenko, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia*, p. 10.

79 Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 17.

80 Chernenko, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia*, p. 10; Iogansen, 'Russkie politicheskie', p. 119. By this term Russians understood a system intended to effect maximum efficiency from both men and machines based on the output of the strongest and fittest workers and aimed to provide capitalists with the maximum profits. An American engineer F.W. Taylor was the originator of this system basing his studies on the measurement of industrial productivity.

81 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, pp. 48-49; 'Pis'mo iz Avstralii' [A letter from Australia], *Okeanskii vestnik*, supplement, 3 July 1910.

who were young, fit and strong and aimed to earn money after a while adapted to the hard work and turned out to be good workers. As Blinov recollected, sometimes even their Australian co-workers 'took offence comparing them with Chinese coolies ... and said to them in Russian "Net skoro, net skoro"'.⁸²

It seems that Artem during his first months on the railway excavations greatly enjoyed the intense physical work, considering it a perfect cure for his shattered nerves, a result of persecution and humiliation in Russia and China. During this time Artem did not speak about his personal exploitation by the employer. On the one hand he stated in his letters: 'The work is very hard', 'It is especially hard when it is so hot Sweat does not simply drop from the face but runs in a flood', 'The work is drudgery'; but on the other hand he admitted:

As a matter of fact, no one drives me to work. I drive myself Not an Englishman who has worked on that job for years works better than me. But in Russia I would not be able to work like this. The food is different here. I eat nearly a half a pound of butter a day, the same amount of jam; as for the meat it is difficult to calculate its amount. I eat it as much as I can.⁸³

Other points of Russian criticism were the poor conditions of work and the absence of labour protection, especially in the mining industry. Kutuzov said of his two years experience in coal mines near Newcastle:

I do not know how I survived. There was no day without an accident. Only recent emigrants work there and they are squashed like flies. The administration does not pay any attention to the roofing, pursuing exclusively gain, regardless of the number of victims. What do I need these 10-15 shillings for, when I may be smothered in the mine tomorrow, if not today!

Blinov was nearly killed in copper mines in Trekalano in North-East Queensland. 'I was given a very dangerous place. Each moment my life was under threat', he wrote. Nikolai, a hero of Starshinov's short story, became disabled after an accident in a mine. 'Nearly the whole shift was killed in a mine in Tasmania as there were not even elementary safety devices in case of an accident', Artem commented in 1912.⁸⁴ The working conditions of Russians in the Richmond Main Colliery near Newcastle became the focus of attention in the press and with state authorities. The Russians employed there were underpaid and

82 In broken Russian 'Not so fast'. Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 11.

83 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 82, 93, 95.

84 Nasedkin, *Piatnadtsat' let skitanii*, pp. 71-72; Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 15; Starshinov, 'Ne vezet', pp. 11-12; Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 113.

worked in dangerous conditions. The investigation resulted only in a recommendation to translate the special rules of the colliery into Russian.⁸⁵

The Russian mentality and customs were manifested in their perceptions of employer-employee relations in Australia. They all agreed that 'honest work is praised' here but some of them were bewildered on discovering the demand for strict obedience to a contract and fines for any breach. It seems they did not enjoy the 'quite polite but strictly formal treatment of workers' which significantly differed from the looser customs of the Russians. Similarly, the Russians misunderstood the necessity for a clear denomination of their trade or craft which was expected of them in Australia and, as V. Severovskii described it, they would murmur scratching the back of their heads: 'Devil knows Sort of Jack of all trades'. Such behaviour was more usual for new arrivals. The Russian immigrant N. Kalashnikov, after three years in Australia and New Zealand, became an ardent convert to the Australasian type of relations:

Domestics and workers are only helpers of the master but not beasts of burden or slaves. The attitude to a hired worker is quite humane. A worker sells his toil but will not kowtow to his master.⁸⁶

Russian emigres' perceptions of the workers' situation in Australia and the quality of their lives were not unanimous. Though the Russians experienced periods of hardships they did not see everything in a dark light and noticed Australian achievements in labour conditions.

In Australia it is quite normal for a worker to live in a four-room cottage, to order suits for ten or twelve pounds, to have each morning two or even more newspapers, visit theatres, races etc,

Petr Simonov, a former labourer and later the first, though not recognized as such by Australian authorities, Soviet consul in Australia, admitted in 1922. Nicolas Illin, a Russian farmer in Pearamon, Queensland, wrote in a Petersburg newspaper in 1912:

The life here, given the wages, is not expensive A worker in general lives here with the comfort of a Russian intellectual on an average income.

The intellectual Konstantin Vladimirov, was especially rhapsodic in 1912:

85 'Russian miners in the state', *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 13 June 1913; New South Wales, Legislative Assembly 1913, *Votes and Proceedings*, pp. 575-577.

86 Pavlenkov, 'Poezdka'; Severovskii, 'Avstraliia i Gavaii'; Old Nick, 'Vnimaniiu'; 'Pis'mo iz Avstralii'; N. Kalashnikov, 'Pis'mo iz Avstralii' [A letter from Australia], *Dalekaia okraina*, 19 June 1910.

No poverty exists anywhere in Australia. Everyone is 'Mister'; that is a common title I am now so used to the Australian high standard of life that when (in the moving pictures, for example) I see a picture of extreme poverty I always say to myself 'This is Europe, for certain'. The working classes in Australia have enough money to purchase good food; they usually have two or three courses three times a day. The everyday food consists of meat, fish, tea, sugar, butter, and jams.

Kalashnikov had the same opinion about both Australia and New Zealand. Even Artem at first wrote with enthusiasm: 'This is one of the best countries for a worker'.⁸⁷

Nasedkin described pluses and minuses of Australian life. On the one hand

demand for building workers was very high There is every opportunity for a fit, strong man to receive a job The necessities in Australia are very cheap. Meat and sugar are the cheapest The majority of shops in Sydney are full of the necessities Footwear and clothes are very cheap.

On the other hand when he himself was jobless and homeless in Sydney he was surprised to discover how many unemployed there were

in this apparently beautiful city with so many 35 to 40 year olds looking like complete invalids, their strength undermined by hard Australian work.⁸⁸

A great many Russians' appraisals of Australian conditions of work, the so called 'workingmen's paradise', were negative. Ordinary workers did not delve deeply into analysis but simply stated the fact of hard conditions. Vinogradov, whom Iashchenko met in 1903 in Melbourne, told about 'the difficulty of living even on high wages here ... [and] the hard life of the proletariat'. Kutuzov, after some years of hard dangerous work, became completely disillusioned with the tales of a 'workers' country' - 'now I never believe anyone who says life is good here!' He used the first opportunity to leave the country.⁸⁹

Even social-democrats, Marxists, such as Kurnatovskii, were reluctant at first to apply Marxist analysis to Australian conditions and simply stated that, 'It is good here only for artisans or fit, strong people, able to do hard physical toil'. He certainly was aware of the cliché 'Lucky Australia' employed by Russian liberal writers, but disclosed its false nature through his own personal tragic experience rather than theoretical generalization. In a letter to his friends he described his work as an axe man:

87 P. Simonov, 'Belaia Avstraliia' [White Australia], *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, no. 9, 1922, p. 39; N. Il[in], 'Russkie v Avstralii' [Russians in Australia], *Novoe vremia*, 30 July 1912; AA (ACT): A3/1, NT1913/1156, part 3, K.N. Vladimirov, 'Report on the Northern Territory of Australia', p. 61; Kalashnikov, 'Pis'mo iz Avstralii'; Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 83.

88 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, pp. 53, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61.

89 Iashchenko, *Puteshestvie*, p. 135; Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, p. 72.

Heat, poor food, ... an infernal number of mosquitoes Dirty, sunburnt, ragged - that's how your obedient servant looks Add to that after work I have to make up a fire, carry firewood, cook and wash clothes on Sundays and you will perceive my life in free Australia.⁹⁰

Nearly all Russian emigres in Australia, including Russian intellectuals and political refugees, had to engage in physical labour and so could see the Australian workers' life from the inside. The complexity of the labour market in Australia, or simple variations in time and place, could lead to contradictory perceptions. Most Russians, however, did not share the abstract enthusiasm for the 'workingmen's paradise' in Australia as characterised in the Russian press at the beginning of the twentieth century. The emigres' impressions of the actual life were far from optimistic. The difficulties experienced by all emigres, especially those without initial capital, trade and language, in the case of Russians were aggravated by their pre-perceptions of Australian opportunities. The agents' promises of a workers' kingdom clashed with grim reality. Instead of picking up golden apples it was necessary to work hard and skilfully to earn them. Also, the specifically Russian legacy of forced labour and passive behaviour formed by the conditions of serfdom and peasantry *obshchina* complicated the Russian emigres' adjustment to Australian working conditions. This initial psychological shock added black shadows to their negative perceptions of the situation.

Proposed Russian colony in the Northern Territory and Russian impressions of the land and people

To understand the aspirations, expectations and mentality of these early Russian emigres, and their perceptions of Australian land and society, we will discuss in some detail two Russian reports on the Northern Territory produced in 1912 in connection with a federal plan to establish a Russian colony there. This interesting phase of Russian-Australian contacts is now completely forgotten and has never been mentioned by Russian or Australian scholars.

Russian immigrants, who had arrived in Queensland in increasing numbers since 1910, by the end of 1911 were causing serious concern among Queensland authorities.

90 I. Guro, *Ozarennnye [The enlightened ones]*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 153-154.

Immigration depots in Brisbane were full and Queensland expected the arrival of subsidized emigrants from Great Britain, who were obviously preferred to Russians in spite of the Russians paying their own fares and having a good reputation as agriculturists. The Russian consulate was advised by the emigration authorities to stop the immigrants coming from Russian Siberia. To do this was certainly beyond the power of the consulate and on 16 November 1911 the Russian Vice-Consul in Melbourne, Harold Crofton Sleigh, discussed with the Minister for External Affairs Josiah Thomas the possibility of settling the arriving Russians in the Northern Territory. Thomas, a former miner and enthusiast for Northern Territory development,⁹¹ appears to have had no prejudice against Russians. He heard from E.L. Batchelor, his predecessor as the Minister for External Affairs, and Senator George Foster Pearce who travelled with some Russians from the East, that these Australian officials 'were greatly impressed with [the Russians'] agricultural knowledge and general suitability for settling work'.⁹² Thomas immediately told the Vice-Consul that if two Russians from Queensland could be selected he

would make arrangements for them to visit the Northern Territory to spy out the land, with a view to getting as many Russians as would come to settle there.⁹³

It is characteristic of the democratic approach of Thomas's department that it supported the idea that Russian immigrants should choose candidates themselves at a general meeting of their Association in Brisbane rather than have someone proposed by the Russian consulate. The Russian Consul-General Abaza, an extremely reactionary official, who considered nearly all Russian emigres political suspects, felt very indignant. He stated that the Consulate did not recognize the Russian Association and could not support anything done by it. Finally, the Russians elected two delegates, L. Illin (Il'in) and K.N. Vladimirov.

91 The Australian Federal Government had just taken control of the Northern Territory in 1911, and was searching for an effective development policy. Thomas (1863-1933) who was Minister for External Affairs in 1911-1913 was distinguished in general by his interest in working conditions and sympathy towards workers.

92 Batchelor (1865-1911) and Pearce (1870-1952) visited Russia on their return from the 1911 Imperial Conference in London.

93 Australia, Senate and House of Representatives 1911, *Debates*, vol. 62, pp. 2825, 3193-3194, 4774; vol. 63, pp. 4874-4875, 4880; 'Russian immigrants', *Age*, 17 November 1911; 'Immigrants warned off', *Argus*, 17 November 1911.

Leandro Nikolaevich Illin (1882-1946) (ill. 24), who was nearly thirty, though belonging to a family of the Russian educated elite, was experienced in agriculture and had travelled much. His father Nicolas Illin, Doctor of Law and judge, had to flee Russia in 1894 because of political persecution. According to his family Leandro as an 11 year old boy travelled alone to Argentina to join his father, the rest of the family came later. Leandro lived in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. He travelled a lot droving sheep and cattle. In 1910 the Illins emigrated to Queensland and settled on the selection at Gadgarra, on the Atherton Tablelands. To earn a living Leandro also worked at 'pick and shovel work', as he put it, on railway construction. His unusual life made him a person who successfully combined the strict moral principles and responsibilities usual for the Russian intelligentsia with the common sense, sharpness and adaptability to hardships and physical toil of the Russian peasants. He wrote in his diary:

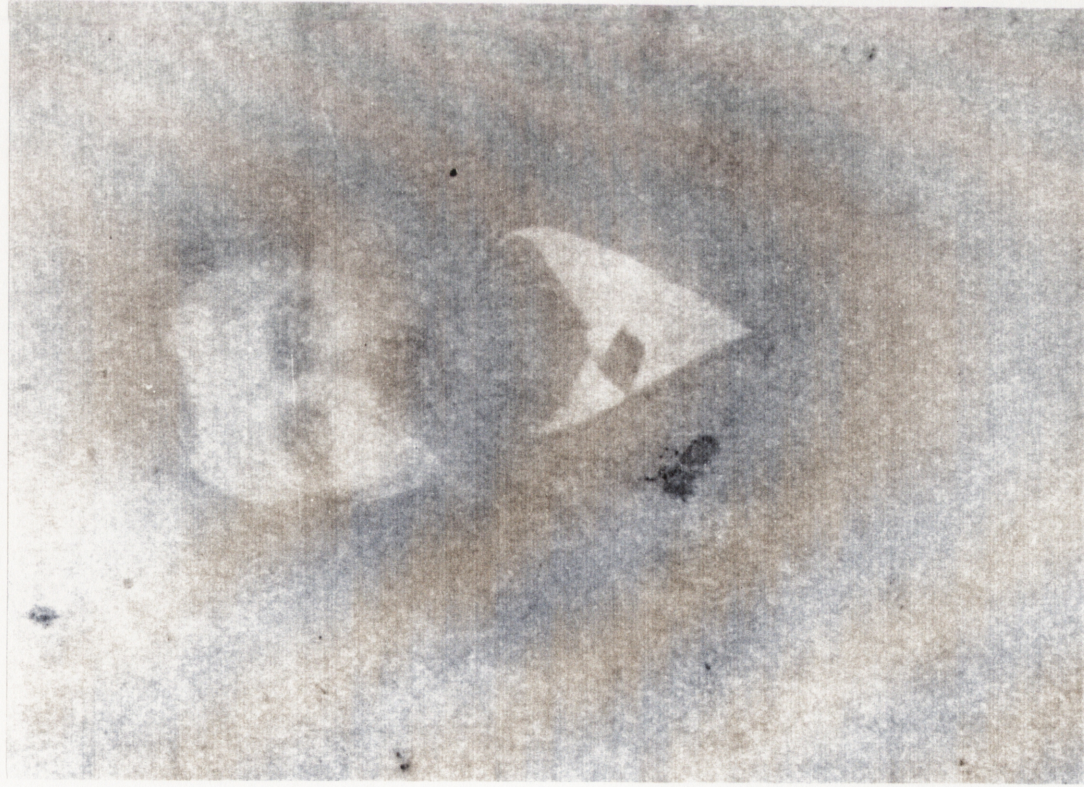
I am not a learned man I never thought I was the right man for [writing a report about the Northern territory for my countrymen], but it was their wish that I should go there.

Konstantin Vladimirov, who arrived in Queensland a couple of weeks before the expedition, was quite a different type of person. Being a highly educated specialist in agriculture he was connected with agricultural colleges and the Institute of Forestry in Russia. For eight years he served as Inspector of Fisheries on the Aral Sea and in Turkestan. He published a number of works on agriculture and other matters and he had experience of writing reports to the Russian Geographical society of which he was a member. As a person he was probably rather arrogant with lordly manners and unused to physical work. Illin wrote in his diary:

We carried our luggage to the "ding[h]y", a little distance. I believe Mr Vladimirov was doing this kind of work for the first time in his life.

Still he possessed great self-command and experience in travel and, although the frontier conditions of the Northern Territory were an ordeal for him, he endured them perfectly. It should be added that Vladimirov did not know English at all, while Illin could communicate in the language having learnt it from an English governess in Russia in his childhood. In general, as a team they complemented each other well.⁹⁴

94 AA (ACT): A1, 1913/17541; A3/1, NT1913/1156, parts 1-3; Letter of 16 August 1995 from Mrs Flora Hoolihan, daughter of Leandro, to me.



III. 23. Nicolas Illin



III. 24. Leandro Illin

The Russians arrived in Darwin on the *Empire* at the beginning of March 1912 and stayed in the Northern Territory more than two months. They inspected nearly all accessible farms between the middle reaches of the Daly River, Pine Creek, and the upper and lower Adelaide River. They had close contact with at least three dozen local farmers and officials and vividly portrayed them. Illin kept a diary throughout the expedition: 'My idea is not to express opinions of other men, picking out the best, but to speak only about what I have seen'. The typescript of his diary is 92 pages. Vladimirov compiled a 'Report on the Northern Territory of Australia' addressed to the Department for External Affairs in systematic form consisting of 64 pages of typescript. The English translations of these works are held by the Australian Archives.⁹⁵ The results of their reports certainly deserve a special article, and I will concentrate now only on some main observations which are of special interest to my thesis.

One of the most fascinating features of their reports was the image of nature at the time of creation, of the wilderness and frontier character of the Northern Territory.⁹⁶ Like other Russians, Vladimirov sometimes did remark that 'the poor and hard leaves of the trees are of a dull grey-green colour',

the forest is generally very monotonous and tiresome for the eyes The grass looks as monotonous as the forest, without any bright coloured flowers.

But even he was finally enchanted by the landscape. As for Illin, he seemed simply overwhelmed by the surrounding world:

[We came] to a nice deep creek with water as clear as crystal, 15 feet deep. As it was very hot I simply walked into the creek and drank, like a horse, as much as I could.

During the night we had a performance by 'dingoes'. It is really a pleasure to wake in the night, bright and moonlit, and listen to their wild howling - You feel then that you are in the middle of wilderness near to nature.

[At] the mouth of the Bamboo Creek I heard a noise which made me think about alligators. I went quietly and looked through the bush and saw a wonderful thing. The creek was alive with fish, nice big ones. Sometimes they jumped out of the water and made the noise which attracted my attention.

95 AA (ACT): A3/1, NT1913/1156, part 3, L.N. Illin, 'Report of the Northern Territory'; K.N. Vladimirov, 'Report on the Northern Territory of Australia'. Illin himself realized that his English was not perfect and quoting him I have occasionally made minor amendments that do not affect the sense or style.

96 In 1911 there were fewer than 4000 settlers in the Northern Territory, and only 1 182 were 'white'.

It was a world where 'hundreds of kangaroos and wallabies followed' the travellers while they 'walked through the jungle' near Daly River; where the grasses were 'of the same height as the horses';⁹⁷ where 'millions of geese', ducks and other birds were flying over swamps near Adelaide River and large mobs of buffalos and wild pigs rushed through the forest.⁹⁸

The Australian outback where they travelled extensively helped them to create other bright, memorable images:

An old settler of Wheel Danks Creek [somewhere near Daly River], Mr George Warr, ... met us very kindly, brought a fine, sweet watermelon from his little garden, and killed a goat for us. There were also a few aboriginals, and a dark lady played the gramophone for us. They play with the same needle for years, I believe. The wood of this machine is eaten by the white ants, and it holds together miraculously.

[At Humpty Doo, near Adelaide River], before dark a native was sitting near the pigsty drumming for hours on a kerosene tin, calling the pigs in.

Rich farmers coming out for 5 o'clock tea in 'paradisiac dresses and bare feet', 'humpy made of bark', 'stringy bark' used as bed - this world had nothing of the 'Englishness' which was so severely criticized by the Russians of previous decades. And it is not by chance that Illin and Vladimirov used without any hesitation terms such as 'Australian people', 'Australian', 'Tasmanian' when speaking about the Northern Territory population both in general and on an individual level. Moreover, Illin easily adopted distinctly Australian words which he often used without inverted commas, as though they were quite natural for him: brumby, billy can, damper, humpy, billabong, lubra etc.⁹⁹

Russian fascination with the frontier was nevertheless mixed with awareness of the social problems which would immediately confront Russian immigrants settling in the Territory outback. The main thing that worried Illin was alcohol. He gave a good description of Australians' 'generosity in drinking and paying':

People have not much else to do or to say but 'come and have a drink' Six or seven friends (and sometimes people unknown to each other) drink a glass each and one pays. Everyone gives money to the barkeeper, as the man who does not 'shout' is not a gentleman, and other men certainly lose their honour or break up friendships if they refuse to drink.

97 It was at the end of the wet season and growth was at its maximum.

98 Vladimirov, 'Report', pp. 50, 51, 52; Illin, 'Report', pp. 36, 45, 47, 50, 68, 78, 79.

99 Vladimirov, 'Report', pp. 44, 52, 56; Illin, 'Report', pp. 3, 4, 11, 19, 22, 23, 24, 32, 37, 40, 43, 46, 51, 70, 84, a.o.

It is characteristic of Illin that he perceived this situation in a broader social context and did not blame the 'short-witted' and 'dull' English as radical Artem did. Illin believed that the Australian Federal Government, unlike the Russian, would be able to overcome this evil. In dealing with alcohol he considered the help of women important. He thought it a vicious circle when men did not marry before they had enough money to make a home and, at the same time, were unable to save money, as after 'long pioneering and living in a tent in the lonely bush' the only places where they could relax and forget about hardships were hotels and bars.

The earnings of these honest men go like a stream into the barman's pocket accompanied by three words, 'Have a drink' The women of Australia should be more patriotic, and take the lead in fighting against alcohol,

he wrote.¹⁰⁰

Both the newly arrived Vladimirov and Illin, who had worked in Australia as a labourer and farmer for nearly two years, had enthusiastic perceptions of Australian social legislation and conditions of the working class in general. Vladimirov believed that

Probably nowhere else in the world can be found such a number of people perfectly satisfied with their own country as in Australia today (I do not know about America). People here are proud of their social organization.

Illin considered that

Australian people ... incline to provide for themselves the best laws and liberty, and ... wish to go ahead of all nations with their labour platform, and are proud of their Labor Government.¹⁰¹

Inspecting the Territory as envoys of the Federal government the Russians could now see the practical realization of all these theoretical declarations.

They were not, however, optimistic about the situation they observed in respect of the ways of the local administration. Little by little the Russians became acquainted with 'Darwin's punctuality' and the bureaucracy which 'could happen only on Government employment'. Enduring in a small 'dinghy' a four day long fruitless trip by sea to Daly River, a trip that from the very beginning was doomed to fail in that season, Vladimirov could only philosophically state: 'If all Englishmen travelled always in the way we do

¹⁰⁰ Illin, 'Report', pp. 9, 18, 19, 24-27.

¹⁰¹ Vladimirov, 'Report', pp. 62-63; Illin, 'Report', p. 24. The Labor Government of Andrew Fisher had come to power in 1910.

now, they would never discover anything, and would never be a naval power'. 'Poor Northern Territory administration! I think they know as much about their Territory as I do, except by hearsay', - Illin commented when, instead of travelling to Daly River overland, they were kept in Darwin 'doing nothing but living at Government expense', having been assured by officials that the roads were unpassable which was far from true. The Russians felt that the local officials 'were making a joke of [them], as they did with the Federal Party' inspecting the state of agriculture in the Territory. For instance, Illin believed that Darwin's administrators sent Federal Party members to the Batchelor Experimental Farm, 'where there is nothing to see', instead of showing them a prosperous private farm, only because 'the inscription the Federal Party saw in big letters, "Batchelor Experimental Farm", made a very good impression, and filled their hearts with hopes'. The Russians conversed with a Territory old-timer, ex-Police Inspector, Paul H.M. Foelsche, who believed that many enterprises failed there

because the money was never spent by the managers on the business for which it was collected, but was nearly all spent on drinking, building fine cottages for the managers, making tram lines, telephones, sheds. The sugar cane was planted on the gravel stones and every business was carried on in the same way.¹⁰²

The Russians' final opinion was that poor, inadequate, wasteful management knew only how to cut a dash during the inspection. Nevertheless, they continued to believe that the federal government could play a positive role in settling the Northern Territory.

The Russians left perceptive remarks about the Aborigines of the Northern Territory, in particular about the social and numerical composition of Aboriginal 'camps', their traditional diet, and the role of hunting and gathering of wild rice in it. They also wrote about the importance of traditional religion in Aboriginal life. But the main issue of interest was Aboriginal-European relations. I will not idealize the Russians. Viewing this problem they, and especially Vladimirov, were greatly influenced by the usual European persuasion of white man's superiority. Still Illin in his diary recorded a number of shocking cases of local farmers' treatment of the Aborigines and he censured the extreme cases of exploitation and cruelty.

102 Illin, 'Report', pp. 10, 13, 17, 57, 61-62, 64, 67-68, 88-89.

The Russians' most impressive lesson was from Thomas and Roberts, the owners of Glenavon plantation near Daly River. When Illin wanted to pay the Aboriginal guides who had brought them to the plantation with some provisions, he was reproached by the hosts for 'spoiling the blacks for them. "They would not get as much from us for a year's service", said Mr Thomas'. When on the next day Illin wanted to throw away a tin of spoiled salmon he was advised by Thomas to give it to the native boys.

'They will be poisoned perhaps', said I. 'No matter' he replied, 'there are plenty of them'. When I wanted to give them tea he became really angry and said 'There is plenty of water, don't you spoil my blacks!'

It was not unusual for Roberts to fire a shot to frighten 'blackfellows' approaching his fields.

Is it not interesting to see in free Australia a man in a white cork hat in the middle of twenty blacks with his hand in his pocket holding a small Browning?

Illin concluded sarcastically.

Twenty Aborigines who were working on the farm were paid with boiled maize and tobacco (both grown by themselves) and a pair of trousers, or a belt, or a hat for a year's work. 'This is less than twopence per man for food', Illin calculated. Starving Aborigines had to bring their own food to the farm which gave Mr Thomas grounds to boast to the Russians:

Are they not silly animals? They have plenty of game and fish, and could live without work, but yet they come to work and bring some tucker.

The Russians constantly heard from the locals that they could use natives' labour for nothing.

Illin saw that the whites' invasion brought to the Aborigines all kinds of evil, for instance, addiction to alcohol and 'nicotine' 'which keeps the natives in slavery'. 'Their English is composed specially of swear words'. Their women were used by white men, and children were kept at the Mission station on Bathurst Island ('a kind of prison for unhappy half-castes'). The Russians witnessed chained, imprisoned Aborigines and watched how they were tried without understanding the nature of their trial. For instance, Constable Miller at Pine Creek gave an Aboriginal 'three months' gaol, for going in a prohibited area'. All this created a depressing picture in the Russians' mind.

Nevertheless, Illin also recorded cases of quite different attitudes to the Aborigines by some other farmers. Mr Glasson, who lived not far from Thomas, was disliked by the neighbours because he treated Aborigines better than others. Mr W. Milton, an intelligent farmer from Stapleton, according to Illin

speaks highly of the aboriginals he has working for him - He says they can do any kind of work on the farm nearly as well as himself. Mr Milton treats them well, with clothing and food the same as his own. This shows that the natives can be useful with good people.¹⁰³

The main concern of the Russians was the state of agriculture in the Northern Territory and the prospects for the Russian settlement there. Their observations, which cover many pages in their reports, are of significant value as they provide a broad, reliable picture and first hand data and records of farmers' opinions. The Russians realized that they were 'in a really difficult position. Here nothing is done in agriculture, and we have to do fortune telling'. Still their general conclusions were optimistic: 'The climate ... is not so dreadful as they say', 'The Europeans can live and work in the Northern Territory but of course some precautions must be taken'. As for precautions, Vladimirov believed that it was possible to drink only boiled water there, while Illin went even further in undertaking a risky experiment on himself:

I have always every day drunk water from the creeks, swamps, billabongs, rivers, etc. I know Russians are not careful about their health, and if they come here they will do the same. Mr Vladimirov tells me I will get malaria. If I do, Russians must not come here.

Luckily this experiment did not affect his health.

In general the Russian visitors were not discouraged by the modest achievements of the Northern Territory economy, believing in the potential of the country. As for the Russians' own needs, they came to the conclusion that the best results would come from mixed farming, including pig breeding, supplemented by vegetable gardening and goat breeding for the farmer's own family needs. With cattle breeding they considered it necessary to investigate further the preservation and use of silage and hay during the dry season, which was the usual method for cattle feeding in Russia but very unusual for the Northern Territory. Illin prepared a collection of samples of grasses for his countrymen.

¹⁰³ Vladimirov, 'Report', pp. 47, 56; Illin, 'Report', pp. 5, 14, 21, 31, 33, 34, 46, 57, 59, 63-64, 68-70, 73, 75-78, 81-83, 90.

The Russians considered that the Northern Territory was suited neither for wage-earning nor for living in villages as Russians usually did. The only way for immigrants would be immediate family farming; and that would be possible only with initial Government assistance when the new arrivals would be provided with a house, stock, seeds and a plot of cleared land. They believed this would be the most reasonable measure as the Northern Territory then was not a place to make a fortune and was unlikely to attract those with capital who could find better places elsewhere in Australia. Still it was a good country for people who 'do not need much money, but food and quiet living'. 'Take the man who has nothing to lose, the people who starve ... give them assistance and they will do well', Illin appealed to the Federal Government.¹⁰⁴

In May 1912 the Russians returned to Queensland and in July Illin read his report to the Russians in Brisbane. They inspected the samples of soils and crops so assiduously they even damaged some of them. After the report many of them were enthusiastic about settling in the Northern Territory. Impressed by the news about famine in Russia Nicolas Illin, Leandro's father, reported in a popular St. Petersburg newspaper the *New Time* (*Novoe vremia*) in July 1912 the results of Leandro's expedition. He claimed that the Australian government was especially interested in attracting Russian colonists and stressed the availability of subsidized fares for genuine farmers. In subsequent months Leandro sent several letters to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Josiah Thomas, appealing to him to save starving people in Russia and direct those Russians who were already in Queensland to the Northern Territory. In January 1913, after his and Vladimirov's reports were translated and submitted to the Government, Illin had a meeting with Thomas and planned to go to the Territory to work there. Obviously, after Thomas left his position in 1913, the Government lost interest in the project. Illin's and Vladimirov's proposals about mixed farming and Government assistance were not accepted. Several Russians who did go to Darwin were sent either to the Batchelor Experimental Farm ('a horrible, dreadful place, the worst I have yet seen in the Northern

104 Vladimirov, 'Report', pp. 55, 59-62; Illin, 'Report', pp. 22, 28, 51, 70-72, 80, 86, 89, 91, 92.

Territory', according to Illin) or struggled on their own as labourers in Darwin.¹⁰⁵ The sad story of the Manikovs, one such immigrant family, I will tell below.

Illin's and Vladimirov's proposals were quite realistic. Those Russians who wanted to farm in the Northern Territory could have been the best type of agricultural settlers there. Hundred of such colonists might really have contributed considerably to the economy of the Northern Territory and facilitated its further development¹⁰⁶ as well as changed the destiny of the Russian community in Australia. The initial assistance that they asked for might soon have returned a hundredfold. Unfortunately, this was not done and instead of becoming farmers and landowners the Russian emigres remained hired workers turning more and more radical under the influence of subsequent events.

Australian society in the perception of Russian immigrants

We do not have much evidence about the Russians' attitude to different aspects of the Australian style of life and institutions, but their available writings present a grim picture. Probably the impressions of society in general held by the more intellectual Russian emigres were similar to those of Artem:

It is rather hard for me, a Russian, to live here. Everything here is too simple, elementary. We have intellectual demands which cannot be satisfied here.

His judgements about Australian people were even more negative:

People are rather short-witted They are too lazy to look after themselves just a little bit. If one can get some whisky-soda or soldier's gin, he is in seventh heaven.

He perceived Australians through the stereotype of the English and referred to Australians as 'the English':

The English are perfect organizers Wherever you look - everything is ... simple, convenient, cheap, solid. But still the English are a dull nation, that is why they drink so awfully.

105 N. Il[in], 'Russkie v Avstralii'; AA (ACT): A3/1, NT1913/1156, parts 1-3. In spite of this abortive attempt to establish a Russian colony abroad the Illins did not give up hope. In about 1920 Nicolas and all members of the family, except Leandro, left Australia for Central America in the hope of getting sufficient land for resettlement there for 10,000 Russian refugees from the 1917 revolution. This plan was never fulfilled as Nicolas died c. 1922 in Honduras soon after his arrival.

106 While it is true that the history of the independent small farmers in the Northern Territory has indicated success was difficult, the Russians were more accustomed to subsistence farming in extreme climatic conditions. Several Russian farmers who settled in the Katherine area in the 1920s and 1930s played an important role in the development of the economy there.

A few weeks after his arrival, working as a labourer on a railway construction site, Artem had already made up his mind about the society's values:

They are interested in sport everywhere Theatre, music, literature, art are absolutely alien to the masses In Queensland at large there is no theatre except in Brisbane. There is not even a cinema for a hundred kilometres around here. In the nearest town of Warwick there is nothing except shops, pubs and brothels, and, certainly, sporting clubs.

Artem was especially indignant to learn that in Australian schools children were often beaten by teachers. By that time such punishment was not accepted in Russia.

In the art of destroying a person's independence, will and aspiration for knowledge the New World has left far behind the Old Is it not a free country for teachers, this Australia, where they beat small children to their heart's content?¹⁰⁷

It was characteristic of Artem and other radicals to perceive particular faults as a universal phenomenon (in reality there was no state approval of beating children in schools 'to heart's content') and to gloss over Australian achievements in education. A Russian political emigre of Polish descent Peter Modrak who studied in the University of Queensland and worked as a teacher in a Queensland school in 1914 published a detailed article in the journal *Russian school (Russkaia shkola)* about the Australian system of education. He was not completely rhapsodic, as Russian liberal publicists were, and mentioned some drawbacks such as the poor education of teachers in outback schools, low teachers' salary, and the availability of university education only to the students of well-to-do families. At the same time he did acknowledge considerable achievements of the Australian educational system, for instance attention to the needs of the outback children, and concluded not only that illiteracy had dropped rapidly but that already nearly all professional and office work in the country was done by the graduates of Australian schools and universities.¹⁰⁸

Nasedkin too had a more balanced perception of the Australian life. With great sympathy he described his first encounters with 'Australians' when he was penniless and walking from Talwood to Warwick. A shepherd whom he met by a camp-fire was happy to share his supper with the stranger. A day later, when Nasedkin arrived completely

¹⁰⁷ Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 84, 87-88, 94-95, 114, 115, 120.

¹⁰⁸ P. Modrak, 'O shkolakh Avstralii' [On Australian schools], *Russkaia shkola*, no. 7-8, 1914, pp. 21-31. About Modrak see Paszkowski, *Poles in Australia*, pp. 317-318; AA (ACT): A458, F510/4, part 1.

exhausted at a farmer's cottage, the only question to him was 'Are you hungry?' He was given clean clothes to change into and invited to share dinner with the farmer's family. Nasedkin was pleasantly surprised to discover that there were pictures on the walls 'and a very big library in the house Living in such a remote corner the farmer and all his family greatly valued their books'. Later Nasedkin enjoyed visiting museums and libraries in Sydney and Melbourne and he even translated into Russian Marcus Clarke's novel *For the Term of His Natural Life*. (The translation unfortunately was lost). But even he finally became deeply disillusioned with Australian society because of its xenophobia and Philistinism.¹⁰⁹

Australian society was perceived by some Russians as xenophobic, individualistic, formalistic, uncompassionate and even with deep divisions between classes. The Russian peasant Pavlenkov in 1909 described his impressions:

In this country you have to pay everywhere ..., even in a public toilet. They will not let you take even a glass of beer before you pay money. If someone appears dressed untidily (because of his poverty) all doors will be locked against him They turn away from you if you do not know the language, regarding you as a person of a lower race.

Another Russian complained: 'Prohibitions, directions, rules are everywhere, if you break them you have to pay'. Such negative judgements arose from a Russian mentality formed under the collective decision making and collective responsibility of communal life on the one hand and arbitrariness on the other. The clash with Australian society based on the values of individuality and law was especially painful for Russians. Pavlenkov's discovery: 'Police are not numerous but they know everything about you' obviously reveals a preference for the more usual pattern of numerous but ineffective Russian police who 'lived themselves and let others live'.¹¹⁰

Still some of the Russians after the initial period of adjustment were able to appreciate these new values. Kalashnikov, a Russian emigre who spent three years in Australia and New Zealand, disagreed with Pavlenkov. He said that though people may really judge you first according to your clothes, Australian workers had every opportunity

109 Nasedkin, *Piatnadtsat' let skitanii*, pp. 50-51, 59, 63-64, 70-71.

110 Pavlenkov, 'Poezdka'; Old Nick, 'Vnimaniiu'.

to dress well and tidily if they were not drunk or lazy persons. Moreover, he enjoyed a system where

all offices and institutions were for the public and not the public for bureaucrats ... and would provide fast and exact answers without any bribes.¹¹¹

As for many ordinary Russian workers and peasants, especially those whose English was poor, they at first led very isolated lives and were hardly able to make any far reaching judgements about Australian society in general. For instance, Blinov 'looked around him' only after two years of intensive work when his economic situation had worsened.

The prevalence of negative judgements is especially evident in changing Russian attitudes towards the Australian judicial and prison system. Throughout the nineteenth century Russian visitors and the press usually described these institutions in favourable terms. Now, when Russian emigres became acquainted with them, not as detached onlookers but as the accused and inmates, their perceptions were hostile.

Russians became acquainted with Australian justice in different ways. In 1913 the case of Gregor Manikov's family in Darwin became a *cause celebre* throughout Australia. Manikov, a former Russian peasant, a hard working and sober man, served in the Russian army through the Russo-Japanese war and was decorated for exceptional bravery. In December 1912 he and his family emigrated to Australia. Mr Roberts, Manikov's counsel for the defence, described their misfortunes:

The oppression of these poor Russian immigrants has been simply monstrous. They arrived here en route for Brisbane, and were lured off the steamer by the Director of Agriculture by prospects of good employment in a British country under the free and untrammelled conditions which obtain in Australia. They were dumped down on a Government experimental farm, where they were not properly paid and where the manager did his best to outrage their women.

A few months after arrival Manikov claimed that the manager of the farm C.N. Woolley had attempted 'to have carnal knowledge' of Mrs Manikov and their 16 year old daughter Pasha. Manikov was committed for trial for criminal libel. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty. The judge refused to accept it and discharged the jury. Public opinion was on the side of the Manikovs, as seen in the editorial of the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*:

¹¹¹ Kalashnikov, 'Pis'mo iz Avstralii'.

the story told by the girl was seemingly straightforward and true; ... although she was subjected for over three hours to the most searching cross-examination by the Counsel for the defence her story remained substantially unshaken. People are asking, is it probable that this ignorant Russian girl, of the peasant class ... could concoct such a tale.

The editor claimed that the judge showed bias in favour of Woolley. Manikov was kept waiting four months in the Territory for a new trial while the Court did not prevent Woolley and key witnesses leaving Darwin. Finally, the case was dropped in spite of the fact that Manikov never withdrew his plea of justification. In November 1913 Manikov, with undermined health, left with his family for Russia.¹¹² Certainly their opinion of the Australian justice system, shared by many Russians who followed this case, was most negative.

Another example is that of Nasedkin, who in 1912 in Sydney was arrested and committed for trial because, being unemployed and unable to pay for accommodation, he slept one night in a park. He was eventually released only because he produced a trade-union card, but he had the impression of extremely severe sentences handed out by Australian justice.¹¹³

Artem too had a dramatic experience of Australian justice. In 1913 together with Brisbane socialists he took an active part in a 'Free Speech Fight', speaking on Sundays in the streets in spite of a ban against speeches on Sundays. Soon he and another Russian, Pavel Gray, were arrested. Artem and other socialists used the trial to preach to a broad audience and managed to drag out the trial for a long time. Finally Artem was sentenced to one month's imprisonment in Boggo Road Gaol. He used this experience to make a comparative study of Russian and Australian prison conditions which he described in two articles 'Socialists in court' and 'Brisbane Gaol'.¹¹⁴ The fact that he, a former Tsarist political prisoner, was imprisoned for making a political speech in 'democratic' Australia contributed considerably to his view that this country still had no real democracy. Nevertheless, he understood that, had he and the other socialists been in

112 *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 14, 24 April, 1, 8 May, 19 June, 9 October, 13 November 1913. I express gratitude to Darrell Lewis, who drew my attention to this case and kindly provided the photocopies.

113 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, pp. 60, 61-62.

114 Artem, 'Iz svobodnoi Avstralii', pp. 63-79.

Russia, their provocative behaviour on free speech would have condemned them to penal servitude in Siberia. As for Australian criminal laws, he considered that they were harsh and

have been the same since Australia was a penal colony In its humaneness the Russian criminal code ... was as far removed from Australian as heaven from earth Only drumhead martial justice could be compared with Australian justice.¹¹⁵

The arrest and imprisonment of Simonov, when he had already been appointed by Soviet Russia as a Consul-General, obviously contributed to the Russians' critical attitude to Australian justice. Simonov did not submit to the Aliens Restriction Order¹¹⁶ prohibiting him from public speaking and continued his propaganda campaign. Consequently he was arrested in November 1918 and received a year's imprisonment, being kept in Maitland and Long Bay Gaols. He appealed to the Prime Minister:

I was arrested and tried in your law court for nothing more but performing my legal and lawful duties to my country, and therefore I ... consider my imprisonment ... an outrage and violation of international diplomatic customs and usages.¹¹⁷

He was supported in his struggle for release by Australian workers and the Australian Labor Party. He was finally released in July 1919.

The most famous case of Russian imprisonment happened after the Red Flag Riots in Brisbane in March 1919 when five Russians were arrested, accused of exposing the prohibited Red Flag during a demonstration and received 6-7 months sentences in jail. Herman Bykov from this group was finally deported. Evans, whose book *The Red Flag Riots* is devoted to these events, refers to their trials as 'biased and expedient legal encounters' and shows how the Russians 'struggled to turn a political trial into a political forum to air their radical beliefs'.¹¹⁸ Eight other Russians, allegedly linked with the radical Union of Russian Workers, were also arrested and deported without a trial. They were kept in Boggo Road Gaol in Brisbane and Darlinghurst detention centre in Sydney.

115 Artem, 'Iz Avstralii', pp. 54-55.

116 The Aliens Restriction Order of 1915 which initially restricted only the rights of people belonging to enemy nationality had been extended to cover all aliens, particularly their registration. A War Precautions regulation (no. 55) 'gave authority to intern any naturalized subject who was ... disloyal', see E. Scott, *Australia during the War* (Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, vol. 11) 6th ed., Sydney, 1940, pp. 109-110.

117 AA (ACT): A981, Soviet Union 42, part 1, Peter Simonoff to W.W. Watt, Acting Prime Minister, 25.02.1919.

118 Evans, 'Agitation', pp. 140, 141, 144, 157.

For unclear reasons the wives and children of the deported, in spite of the authorities' promise to deport them with their husbands, were separated from their men and left 'practically starving'. Celia (Civa) Rosenberg, the young pregnant wife of Aleksandr Zuzenko, being unable to receive any information about where her husband was sent, appealed:

If this method of making war on women and children is part of the liberty we enjoy under the British flag, we shall be only too glad to be sent back to Russia.

The especially cruel treatment of these prisoners and their families provoked protests by Australian politicians.¹¹⁹

As for prison conditions, we will not find a trace of enthusiasm in the twentieth century writings of those Russians who experienced them personally as distinct from visitors of the nineteenth century. Artem provided a detailed description of Boggo Road Gaol. Comparing Russian and Australian prisons, he believed that they all were bad and each type had its own faults. He criticized severely the diet at starvation level and especially the predominance of maize in Australian prisons. Nasedkin, who spent only one night in prison, also remembered for ever 'the disgusting maize'. The Russians arrested after the Red Flag Riots claimed: 'the food [we] received is not fit for human consumption, and the men are debarred from buying food at their own expense'. In Darlinghurst they were 'compelled to sleep on the cement floor of the cells with a few dirty undisinfected "blankets" to cover them'. 'Stop treating us like dogs', they pleaded. Finally, the Red Flag prisoners declared a hunger strike in Boggo Road Gaol and Darlinghurst, demanding to be treated not as criminals but as political prisoners. At Boggo Road their conditions were improved after that.

The everyday prison procedures, such as regular searches and prohibition of smoking, gave Artem a feeling of 'insignificant but very painful oppressions and insults'. He was impressed by one aspect of the Australian system: the behaviour of the warders who 'exactly fulfilled regulations to the letter' without any arbitrariness, while in Russia the warders often behaved as 'independent princelings, who in their domains treated

¹¹⁹ AA (ACT): A2, 1920/1025; A2, 1920/1039; A981, Soviet Union 42, part 1, file 1.

prisoners as they pleased, not fearing any redress'. Still his conclusion was that 'Boggo Road is a refined form of torture, a highly sophisticated, bloodless form of murder'.¹²⁰

We might expect that Russian emigres, as distinct from travellers, who lived in Australia for a long time would give a more adequate portrait of society's life. But that was not so. The Russian travellers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century had a profound interest in Australian society especially and left numerous descriptions of it. On the contrary, the Russian emigres as a rule were very little interested in the surrounding people and because of their poor knowledge of English and work in remote places (farms, railway construction sites, mines) often lived in isolation or were surrounded by immigrants from other countries. In some cases their negative attitudes were reinforced by their radical prejudices, as we will see in the next section.

The Bolshevik Artem's Marxist perceptions of Australian conditions

Probably Artem was the first Russian to apply Marxist ideology to interpreting conditions in Australia. His basic dogma was that workers could not be really happy under capitalism - and he set out to prove it by all means. His initial positive and even rhapsodic attitude to the country - free, tranquil, rich - gave place to a poignant search for the answer to the question: why, in spite of capitalism, the Australian working class enjoyed numerous privileges and had no inclination for the class struggle? Six weeks after his arrival Artem provided his first rather confused explanation in a letter to E.F. Mechnikova who shared his socialistic persuasions:

Not starving masses, but a higher and more developed form of capitalist exploitation serves here as the basis for creating the wealth of the bourgeoisie The demand for working hands is always high here. A worker feels himself tranquil, confident, and so does a farmer, though both are severely exploited But still they are left with more than they need in comparison with their demands and, certainly, in comparison with a European worker.

He pounced upon the nature of an Australian worker:

A worker here has no need for sharp and strained reflection. He is not interested in general questions and lives for today's interests. If he wants - he goes to work; if he does not want to work - he sleeps or goes to the city First of all, certainly, to a pub.

¹²⁰ Artem, 'Iz svobodnoi Avstralii', pp. 69-79; Evans, 'Agitation', pp. 158-159; Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, pp. 163, 170-172.



III. 25. Artem



III. 26. Viktor Kurnatovskii

Three months later he again blamed workers who did not 'fit' into the Bolsheviks' dogma:

The workers' movement ... has no good theoreticians Workers are incredibly backward (!? E.G.) but by the power of chance they have managed to elect Labor governments.¹²¹

Artem witnessed and, together with other Russians in Queensland, supported a sugar-cane strike in mid 1911 and a general strike in early 1912. Still even that organized, courageous struggle did not warrant his complete approval because the workers 'defended an abstract idea of justice and unionism' instead of 'laying down the aim of socialization of the means of production' and the seizure of power. And again he blamed the nature of the workers, the Labor party which they supported and the English in general:

The workers here are not socialists.¹²² They are liberal-protectionists (in the person of ... their political leader the Labor party) Dull, narrow-minded people with wooden heads. I have experienced terrible feelings listening to their banalities at meetings. They need only to be elected to the parliament, to become a majority and then there will be no strikes, no unemployment and Australia will become a true Christian country.

In July 1912, after organizing a tiny socialist group in Brisbane he exclaimed in despair 'Alas, there is not one innate politician among them Moreover Australian life gives them too few causes for wide political campaigns'.¹²³

In his letters of 1912-1913 he repeated as an invocation that Australia is 'a country of slaves of ... capital', 'workers are slaves of the class of capitalists', 'workers are slaves of society', but instead of troubling about improvements in workers' conditions he passionately waited for the 'development of contradictions peculiar to contemporary societies on a wider scale'.¹²⁴

His dogmatic socialist aspirations finally led him to isolation from representatives of the Australian workers during the federal election campaign in May 1913.

Workers were against us [i.e. socialists]. We struggled against the local Labor party which was in power Patriots from the Labor party nearly set up a boycott against us.

121 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 87, 94.

122 That point of view was shared by some contemporaries - in spite of the claim of the Labor party that it wanted to socialise the means of production, distribution and exchange.

123 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 102-103, 111.

124 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 111, 118, 119, 112.

His perception of this party from the very beginning was in the best Leninist tradition of 'political' arguing: 'it is difficult to exert influence on the copper foreheads of the leaders of the local Labor party'¹²⁵. The disclosure of the nature of the Labor party he considered as the key factor refuting the legend about a workingmen's paradise in Australia. This was one of the main points in his article 'From Australia' published in a Marxist journal *Enlightenment (Prosveshchenie)*. There he argued that the Labor and the Liberal parties were 'both reactionary with little to distinguish them' and that the Labor party was nationalistic and relied

on the reactionary feelings of the urban petty-bourgeoisie ... [and] the growing class of capitalists in the manufacturing industry The Labor party is not a representative of the worker's democracy, but rather the petty bourgeoisie's democracy.

He concluded that it was controlled not by workers and trade unions but by someone else. In this article he made one more 'discovery': he found what was wrong with Australian workers who did not want to be involved in a political class struggle for the ownership of the means of production and thus did not fit Marxist theory:

The absence of capitalist production has resulted in the absence of an industrial proletariat. There was capitalist exploitation ... of the independent and semi-independent producer which fanned discontent. It is, however, still a far cry from this to a proletarian class struggle Australia, until very recently, did not have a worker, a proletarian, in our sense of the word.

He passionately believed that a new, socialist 'force was growing' that

will discover the lost principle of the class struggle ... between opposing classes for objectives displayed ... on the banners of Europe's workers [and will make] Australia at least a remotely democratic country.¹²⁶

Artem's writings show him as a typical Bolshevik-dogmatist of the Leninist type, who attempted to fit Australian conditions to the dogma of Marxism-Leninism. Instead of serious socio-economic and historical analysis of the specific features of the Australian labour movement he argued at the level of political labels and cheap journalistic rhetoric. It was not by chance that such a personality as Artem had a dizzy career in the first years after the revolution, becoming a member of the highly exclusive Central Committee of the

¹²⁵ Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 121, 97.

¹²⁶ Artem, 'Iz Avstralii' [From Australia], *Prosveshchenie*, no. 10, 1913, pp. 56, 57, 59, 60. The article is translated by T. Poole and E. Fried in the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1985, pp. 246-254.

Russian Communist Party. In all the turns of the political struggle he always supported Lenin's line and was one of his closest confidants.

The influence of radical perceptions of Australia on the Russian emigre community

Artem's dogmatism and 'doctrinaire socialist position'¹²⁷ are obvious from the present day point of view. But how far were his and other radicals' perceptions shared by other Russian emigres? Potentially, Russian immigrants composed a favourable social and psychological environment for such ideas. A number of factors contributed to this. Firstly, there was the influence of their previous Russian experience. Their preliminary migration to Siberia or the Far East was due to economic, social or military conditions in their native places in Russia. This migration as well as the Russo-Japanese war and the Russian revolution of 1905-1907 contributed considerably to influencing their attitudes and making them politically active. Secondly, they were disadvantaged in employment in Australia by comparison with local residents primarily because of language difficulties and, later, political prejudice.

The third factor was the significant proportion of political refugees among them and their influence through the Union of Russian Workers on the Russian community. This latter factor needs some more detailed remarks. The situation in Australia differed from that in Western European countries and the USA. In Europe the Russian political refugees (mainly members of the intelligentsia) were predominantly occupied in some type of professional or office work and in political debates with each other. They hardly aimed to exert influence upon Russian workers and peasants who came to Europe from western parts of the Russian Empire for seasonal employment. The USA with a million Russian immigrants spread through a huge territory allowed separation of the purely economic migrants and the political refugees.¹²⁸

Australia after 1910 was quite a different case. Here the Russian political emigres had to get employment as labourers in the same enterprises as the economic migrants - former Russian peasants, workers and soldiers - mainly in Queensland, Sydney and

¹²⁷ T. Poole & E. Fried, 'Artem: A Bolshevik in Brisbane', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1985, p. 244.

¹²⁸ Tudorianu, *Ocherki rossiiskoi trudovoi emigratsii*.

Melbourne. As the Russian community was relatively small, personal factors were also very important. Such organizers and propagandists as Artem, Herman Bykov, Vasiliï Pikunov, Petr Simonov, Boris Taranov-Skvirskii, Petr Utkin and Aleksandr Zuzenko successfully imposed their influence through the Union of Russian Workers and the Russian press in Australia.

The history and activity of Russian organizations in Australia and especially in Queensland have been described in a number of publications by Russian, Ukrainian and Australian scholars. These have been also described in letters and memoirs of participants and contemporaries (among them Artem, Pikunov, Sereshininov and Stedman). The Russian newspapers published in Australia at that time also provide valuable facts. I will give a short, general review of the history of these organizations in the context of their political, cultural and ideological influence on their participants and the changing of their perceptions of Australia.

The Union of Russian Emigrants,¹²⁹ known also as the Russian Association, was founded at the end of 1910 by a group of Brisbane Russians. Initially it was headed by L.G. Kalinin, a non-Party worker, a participant in revolutionary struggle in Harbin. Fried has referred to him as a 'moderate leftist'.¹³⁰ According to the Marxist terminology of a Ukrainian historian Aleksandr Savchenko,

soon the leadership in the Union was seized by representatives of the Russian petty bourgeois parties who aimed to subordinate to their influence the Russian working emigrants in Australia.¹³¹

The nature of this organization in 1910-1911 primarily was that of a self-help, benevolent society. It assisted the new arrivals through an immigration house providing shelter and advising them where they were most likely to find employment. It also produced hand-

129 Fried, *Russians in Queensland*, p. 45 and Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 30 erroneously name this organization the Union of Russian Immigrants. The difference in vocabulary is important as it reflects the Russian emigres' attitude to Australia at this time. They obviously considered themselves primarily as emigrants i.e. escapees, refugees who with changes in their motherland would return, rather than immigrants who ultimately wanted to adapt themselves to the new country.

130 *Izvestiia Soiuzu russkikh emigrantov [Bulletin of the Union of Russian Emigrants]*, Brisbane, 9 December 1915; Fried, 'The first consul', p. 111.

131 A.I. Savchenko, 'Bol'sheviki i rossiiskaia trudovaia emigratsiia v Avstralii (1907-1917 gg.)' [The Bolsheviks and the Russian working class emigre community in Australia (1907-1917)], in *Nauchnaia konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii, 19-aia*, Part 2, Moscow, 1988, p. 159.

written leaflets with information about events in Russia and conditions of Australian life and distributed these leaflets at the places where Russians worked.¹³²

By the end of 1911 the Union had experienced tension between two groups which wanted to go in different directions: either to concentrate mainly on the provision of material help to ordinary workers and peasants or to transform itself into a more refined 'intelligentsia's circle'. The latter direction was supported by members dominant in the Union, the functionary intelligentsia belonging to the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties. Artem, who came to Australia six months before this confrontation and had regained sufficient strength to resume his political activity, decided to use this opportunity in the best traditions of Bolshevik tactics. At a general meeting of Russians at Christmas 1911 instead of the two proposed ways he claimed that the organization should fulfil cultural and educational work with a political, proletarian accent, i.e. 'each worker should become a class-conscious worker and understand well his class situation and proletarian duty'.¹³³ Moreover, Artem's aim was to involve Russian immigrants in Australian trade-union activity and finally to make them champions of Marxist-Leninist ideas in the Australian workers' movement. Dissatisfied non-proletarian intellectuals could do nothing but leave the Union and its dominant political tendency became that of Bolshevism.¹³⁴ In a private letter written immediately after this coup Artem expressed hope that this 'would have a beneficial influence on the success of socialism in Australia'.¹³⁵ Artem did not stop with declarations but put his ideas into action.

Certainly, at the beginning of 1912, when the mass Russian emigration had just started, the political persuasions (if any) of the majority were hardly socialistic or Bolshevik. Artem himself admitted in 1911-1912: 'Very few interesting persons', 'We have ... an amazingly diverse selection of compatriots, and hardly 10% among us are people'.¹³⁶ For him 'people' meant obviously 'class-conscious' persons who shared the ideas of class struggle and socialism. Perhaps it was Artem's personality and even

132 Pikunov, 'Soiuz russkikh rabochikh', p. 167.

133 Sereshininov, 'Tovarishch Artem', pp. 123-124; Pikunov, 'Soiuz russkikh rabochikh', p. 168.

134 Chernenko, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia*, pp. 24, 25, 26; E. Ross, *The Russian Revolution - Its Impact on Australia*, Sydney, 1972, p. 12.

135 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 97.

136 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 93, 103.

charisma as well as his talent for organization of the masses (in 1905, for instance, he headed the Kharkov uprising in the Ukraine) that let him to change the Russians' outlook and influence their perceptions of Australia. In three months after the Christmas coup, the Union of Russian Workers was 'a strong organization with enough money to launch a newspaper', A. Sereshininov, its secretary, recollected.¹³⁷ In June 1912 the first issue of its weekly the *Echo of Australia* (*Ekho Avstralii*) was published under Artem's editorship. It goes without saying that it became the organ of propaganda for socialist ideas. Artem wrote in the first editorial:

Launching the newspaper we will not try to convince [anyone] of our impartiality We proclaim at once that our task is to elucidate and protect the Russian-speaking workers' interests.¹³⁸

Artem made shrewd use of the economic, social and psychological situation in which the Russian emigres found themselves on arrival in Australia:

Separated, dumb, not knowing the country and unknown to the country, we were obedient toys in the hands of whoever came first. [Australian] workers treated us with distrust and semi-hostility, the upper class slighted us as a lower race. And we felt ourselves as hunted down wolves in an unknown forest.¹³⁹

The revolutionary nature of the newspaper led to it being banned by the authorities in September 1912. Its successors: the *Bulletin of the Union of Russian Workers* (*Izvestiia Soiuz russkikh emigrantov*) (November 1913 - February 1916), the *Workers' Life* (*Rabochaia zhizn'*) (February 1916 - December 1917) and the *Knowledge and Unity* (*Znanie i edinstvo*) (1918)¹⁴⁰ shared its destiny.

The Union of Russian Emigrants operated a library with a considerable proportion of Social-Democratic literature from abroad. In 1912-1913 Artem established connections with the Central Committee of Bolshevik organizations abroad and with Lenin.¹⁴¹ In 1912 the Australian Society for relief of political exiles and convicts in Russia was

137 Sereshininov, 'Tovarishch Artem', p. 124.

138 *Ekho Avstralii*, 27 June 1912.

139 *Ekho Avstralii*, 25 July 1912.

140 From December 1918 to August 1921 it was published in English becoming in 1921 the journal of the Brisbane branch of the Communist Party of Australia.

141 A.I. Savchenko, 'Avstraliiskie adresa v dokumentakh bol'shevistskoi partii (1912-1917 gg.)' [Australian addresses in Bolshevik party documents (1912-1917)], in *Nauchnaia konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii, 18-aia*, Moscow, 1987, pp. 121-126; A.M. Chernenko, O.I. Savchenko, 'V.I. Lenin i rosiis'ka revoliutsiina emigratsiia v Avstralii (1907-1919 rr.)' [V.I. Lenin and the Russian revolutionary emigre community in Australia (1907-1919)], *Ukrains'kii istorichnyi zhurnal*, no. 4, 1988, pp. 81-89.

established. In December 1915 the Union of Russian Emigrants adopted a new, more class oriented name: the Union of Russian Workers (*Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh*). It is important to mention a lexical nuance in this name. The word 'rossiiskii' though translated into English as 'Russian' means not ethnic Russian but one from the territory of the Russian Empire. Thus the new name of the Union stressed that it embraced emigrants from the Russian Empire and included people of different nationalities. Nevertheless, some members of ethnic minorities from Russia were not happy with the Bolshevik or anti-nationalistic orientation of the Union (or simply perceived everything Russian as 'anathema') and attempted to establish their own ethnic organizations.¹⁴²

The figures for membership in these Russian organizations are very scarce. Chernenko, proceeding from the accounts in the *Bulletin of the Union of Russian Workers*, wrote that in December 1914 there were 298 subscribers, while in December 1915 there were 654. According to the *Workers' Life* at the end of 1916 the Union of Russian Workers had a central body and eleven local branches with nearly 500 members. At the beginning of 1917 the Department of Defence listed membership of Russians as between 300 and 400 throughout Queensland. Savchenko and Chernenko's estimates show that at the beginning of 1917 nearly two thousand people were involved in the Union's activities (this does not mean formal membership).¹⁴³ As the number of immigrants from Russia and Russians at the beginning of 1917 was, according to my estimates (table 14), 6000-7000 and 2000 respectively, it seems a considerable proportion of them were at that time under the influence of the Union's ideology.

Already at the end of 1913 Artem approvingly remarked of their influence:

It is possible to hear the Russians and about the Russians everywhere. Australia has a better influence on the Russian workers than does America. A Russian in America is a synonym for a rowdy, drunkard, savage. Here the Russians *en masse* are sober Nearly all of them are studying, nearly all join at once the class-conscious working movement. Individuals who do live 'the American way' accentuate this class-conscious proletarian attitude of the Russian colony.

142 Stedman, 'From Russia', p. 23; Jupp, ed., *The Australian People*, pp. 465, 664, 736, 825; For information on the Queensland Finnish Association in 1917 see AA (ACT): A2, 1919/1480, Russian residents in Australia.

143 Chernenko, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia*, p. 49; *Rabochaia zhizn'*, 29 November 1916; Chernenko, Savchenko, 'V.I. Lenin i rossiis'ka', p. 84; AA(ACT): A2, 1919/1480, Acting secretary, Department of Defence, to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 6.01.1917.

Iogansen wrote in his memoirs that regular Sunday meetings of the Union of Russian Workers were a real political academy for many Russians. Some of the near illiterate not only acquired literacy under this influence but also became workers' leaders.¹⁴⁴ The Russian Consul-General Abaza, on the other side of the barricades, complained in his report to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that hundreds of Russian immigrants

fall under the pernicious influence of escaped Russian political criminals and soon turn from peaceful loyal migrants into violent socialists.¹⁴⁵

Blinov, a non-Party labourer, who came to Australia in 1914 because it was said to be 'the country of freedom', is again a good example of the influence of different factors on the perceptions of an ordinary Russian emigre. In a chapter of his memoirs entitled 'When I began a class-conscious life' he wrote about a crisis that he experienced in 1916:

The economic situation of the working class deteriorated. I felt this myself. Unemployment continued to increase. 'Why did this happen?' - I asked myself. This question gave me no rest. I began to look for the answer in books. I read Darwin, some books by Tolstoi, Kropotkin, Bebel and others. I subscribed to American newspapers the *New World* and the *Labour's Voice* and our [i.e. the Australian] *Bulletin [of the Union of Russian Workers]*. And I understood that I am surrounded by enemies. It is necessary to act before they devour me alive.

In 1916 he joined a local of the IWW in Innisfail and became an active member.

In 1916 I changed jobs a half a dozen times I had conflicts with the bosses so often that I could only earn enough money to travel from one place of employment to another.

By that time he definitely had lost the idealistic perception of Australia as a country of well-dressed people that struck him and other Russians on arrival. A new Marxist image of class stratification emerged:

Among a small part of the population there is a terrible luxury, the abundance of all good things of life, but unemployment and hunger rage in the country.¹⁴⁶

Thus, by the time of World War I and the revolutions of 1917 the perceptions of Australia held by a considerable proportion of the Russian emigres had undergone a gradual but significant change from vague, sunny, multicoloured and predominantly sympathetic images to a more negative class oriented, black and white opposition. In that

144 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 126; Iogansen, 'Russkie politicheskie', p. 120.

145 AVPRI, fond 184, op. 520, t. II, d. 1506, f. 57. Quoted from Savchenko, 'Bol'sheviki i rossiiskaia trudovaia emigratsiia', p. 160.

146 Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, pp. 13-16.

period the number of Russian class conscious workers increased dramatically and socialist ideology became more influential among them, making them one of the most radical ethnic communities in Australia.

Certainly, that was not the only trend. There were people, perhaps especially among the Russian Jews, who, according to Solomon Stedman, on arrival in Australia abandoned

the struggle for most of the ideas for which they had paid such a high price in personal sacrifice, because these ideas were already part of the daily life of the Australian people: freedom of person, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of conscience, freedom of association. The only obstacle to the full enjoyment of all these true attributes of democracy was the absence of a common language [i.e. immigrants' poor English].¹⁴⁷

A Russian Jew Sidney Myer, a future millionaire and one of the greatest Australians who left Russia to avoid compulsory long term army service and to obtain freedom, initially, at the time when he was still hawking along Australian roads, believed that Australia was 'a land of liberty and toleration' and its society 'was chiefly composed of good Samaritans'. He was possessed by the ambition to assimilate and reach success from the very start.¹⁴⁸

Successful farmers were also likely to enthuse, at least at the very beginning. In 1906 Isaac Abrahams, a Russian-born Jewish farmer in Toowoomba, declared in the *London Jewish Chronicle*

A more suitable country for farming and dairying than Australia is hard to find I can safely say that this is a land of milk and honey.¹⁴⁹

Nicolas Illin, head of a large prosperous Russian family, farming on the Atherton Tablelands in Northern Queensland, wrote to the Russian newspaper *New Time* in 1912 that the region is newly colonized and

is built on principles that have nothing in common not only with our primordially-Russian ones but also with the foreign, European and American ones.¹⁵⁰

147 Stedman, 'The Russian Revolution', pp. 201-202.

148 A. Pratt, *Sidney Myer, a Biography*, Melbourne, 1978, pp. 43, 61-62. Sidney Myer (1878-1934) was born at Krichev (Kritchev) in the territory of Byelorussia, the Western part of the Russian Empire, within the Pale of Jewish Settlement. His selection of Australia as a place of migration in 1898 was obviously determined by the fact that his relation and brother had already settled there.

149 Quoted from H.L. Rubinstein, 'Australian Jewish reactions to Russian Jewish distress, 1891-1913', *Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. 9, part 6, 1984, p. 450.

150 Il[in] N., 'Russkie v Avstralii'.

By these 'principles' he obviously meant progressive social and economic legislation. This favourable perception lasted until a person experienced economic or social difficulties. The same Illin a few months later wrote an indignant appeal to the Department of External Affairs in connection with his application for naturalization. He claimed that the local police 'agent' who had to collect information about the applicant 'in his manner of treating me, showed, to say the least of it, evident negligence'. Still Nicolas blamed not the system as other Russians did, but the particular bureaucrat. The conflict was settled and Illin soon naturalized.¹⁵¹

The encounter with Australian social justice experienced by another 'enthusiast', Leandro Illin, Nicolas's son, was even more dramatic. He wanted to marry an Aboriginal Kitty Clarke with whom he had a son but he could not do so without the permission of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. According to his daughter Flora he 'had to fight hard to get the permission' to the extent of visiting the Queensland Premier. Meanwhile, writes Flora,

the police were trying to get my mother and my brother and send them to a mission on Palm Island. When my father knew that, he took a gun and went into the thick scrub, lived like a bushranger with the other Aborigines ... I was born in October 1915, a month after they got married. If father did not worry about my mother and brother the three of us would have ended up in Palm Island mission and I would not know who my father was and where I came from like a lot of half caste kids.

This was unusually honest behaviour for a European at that time (in 1915, for instance, only six Europeans in the whole of Queensland received permission to marry women of Aboriginal descent). After Leandro's wife died in childbirth in 1925 he brought up his five young children by himself. His descendants reveal that, although Russian ethnic features (like religion and language) did not survive among them, they, the younger generation included, preserved and followed Nicolas's and Leandro's moral credo of a Russian *intelligent* of the late nineteenth century: 'all people are equal', 'one has to stand up for the lower classes', 'to help down trodden people', 'to fight against unfair things', 'to distinguish between right and wrong' etc.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ AA (ACT): A1, 1913/2427.

¹⁵² Letter of 16 August 1995 from Mrs Flora Hoolihan to me and my interviews with Leandro's great grandsons Derek and Dynzie Hoolihan.

At the same time there were immigrants who did not bother about any social and political principles, being concerned only with their personal well-being. A Russian Pole, Wolf Weinberg, who after the Red Flag demonstration in Brisbane in 1919 was arrested and deported due to mistaken identity, appealed:

I have been five years in Australia and have never belonged to any association whatever and do not agree to Bolshevik principles of any kind and intend to become naturalized and settle in Australia.¹⁵³

A certain Aleksandrov, former sergeant major, who later made a fortune in petty trade by binding workers to buy shoddy goods in his shop, immigrated to Australia in 1908 and had a pig farm near Sydney. This immoral greedy person provoked deep disgust in Kurnatovskii who worked for a while at his farm.¹⁵⁴ For Aleksandrov and his like Australia was just a place to make capital. They were happy to pursue this goal under any political regime.

Polarization in the Russian community was rapidly increasing, as it was in Russia itself, and at the time of the Russian revolutions of 1917 many Russians in Australia turned out to be true socialist believers.

Australian attitudes towards the Russians from 1910 to 1914

The attitude of Australian people and authorities to the Russian community played an important role in the Russians' perceptions of their new place of residence and affected their desire to integrate and assimilate into Australian society or to lead a secluded life in their own ethnic community. During the turbulent time from 1910 to 1920 this attitude underwent significant changes. Some aspects of it have been discussed in Evans' works based mainly on Australian archival sources and in Fried's thesis.¹⁵⁵ The recollections of the Russians also describe their impressions of Australians' attitude towards them.

Prior to World War I Australians on the personal level had mixed feelings about Russian immigrants and I would describe it as a suspicious curiosity. 'People were

153 Quoted from Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 165.

154 Mikhailov, 'V.K. Kurnatovskii', p. 170.

155 Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*; Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*; Evans, 'Agitation', pp. 126-171; Fried, *Russians in Queensland*.

looking at us as on Russian bears', - was Blinov's impression on arrival in 1914.¹⁵⁶ Nasedkin in 1911 recorded a surprised exclamation of a cashier who was watching Artem writing: 'How d'you like that! A Kanaka can write so beautifully'.¹⁵⁷

The attitude could be even more biased. In 1914 on Nasedkin's engagement to an Australian girl one of her relatives said in his speech:

How happy [you] should be after escaping from such a barbarous country as Russia where people live in dirt, ragged, lousy, eating only black bread and sour cabbage! ... Settling in our family you will recollect with horror your previous life. Surely, after the wedding we will help you and you will become an Australian citizen.

Certainly such xenophobic prejudice did not leave the Russians indifferent. Nasedkin wrote: 'his words whipped me like lashes; I made a great effort to control myself'. That was too much: he suddenly realized that his place was not in that nation and he fled Australia on the eve of his wedding.¹⁵⁸

At the same time the Russianness of the immigrants did not provoke in Australians only black and gloomy images. Traditional Russian songs, dances and music delighted many Australians. Probably this was one of the reasons some Russian emigres, including Artem, soon married Australian women. Nasedkin recollected that in 1911-1912 in Brisbane

to marry, especially after the perfect evenings organized by the Russian colony, was not in the least difficult as the girls dreamt of Russian dances and songs.¹⁵⁹

Still Artem and some of his 'friends in arms' were primarily concerned not with sentiments towards the Russians among the public at large but with those of Australian workers. One of his initial impressions was:

In general, we are not looked down upon as mere European riff-raff, as Germans are. Only the dregs of German workers, Scots and Irishmen get here. All ask us with curiosity about Russia, a Russian worker. It was not without thorns. But now it is better.¹⁶⁰

The fact that the Russian immigrants unanimously refused the proposal to become scabs during the Queensland strikes of 1911-1912 and, organized by such personalities as

156 Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 9.

157 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, p. 52.

158 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, pp. 70-71.

159 Nasedkin, *Piatnadsat' let skitanii*, p. 54; Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, pp. 98, 124.

160 Artem, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma*, p. 85.

Artem, behaved themselves with extreme discipline, contributed to their being respected by Australian workers.¹⁶¹

As for Russians' political activities and especially their socialistic propaganda, they found little interest and support from local radicals though the Russians emigres took an active part in the formation of Australian socialist organizations. Fried believes that due to the despotic bloody nature of the Russian autocracy 'the Australian public was prepared to view Russian radicals with a certain amount of sympathy and understanding'. I think this sympathy and understanding were short lived and never extended beyond the boundaries of specific Russian issues. Any political ideas that Russians wanted to convey met with the disapproval and suspicion of most Australians. The Russian Far Eastern journalist Severovskii wrote that the first wave of Russians to reach Australia soon after the 1905 revolution was met enthusiastically:

'Fighters for freedom have arrived!' But as soon as it was known that some of the Russians had been involved in robbery the attitude of the public at large and the authorities changed radically and the following wave of emigres was perceived suspiciously.¹⁶²

The attitude of the Australian government to the Russian immigrants was initially sympathetic: the Russians were white Europeans and believed to be diligent peasants, whom the Australian economy needed at that time. There were even some government plans to establish Russian agricultural settlements in different parts of Australia, one of which - in the Northern Territory - I discussed above. Certainly, the Russian agricultural immigrants were aware of such an attitude and wrote back to other potential emigrants: 'Australians approve of Russian emigration and definitely prefer Russians to Italians, Spaniards and other colonists'.¹⁶³ Obviously the Russians were unaware that already before the war another tendency in the official attitude, described by Evans, was gaining strength: after the Brisbane general strike of 1912 the Queensland Liberal Premier D.F. Denham 'tried to have the Commonwealth block' Russians' admission. The grounds were both suspicion of the radical nature of the arriving migrants and general xenophobic

161 Sereshininov, 'Tovarishch Artem', p. 125.

162 Fried, *Russians in Queensland*, p. 54; Severovskii, 'Avstraliia i Gavaii'; AA (ACT): A1, 1915/11795.

163 Il[in] N., 'Russkie v Avstralii'; Evans, 'Agitation', p. 126; Fried, *Russians in Queensland*, p. 54.

prejudices against 'practically destitute and very dirty' 'Asiatic Russians'.¹⁶⁴ Yet at that time Queensland's attempts to prevent Russian migration 'were frustrated by Commonwealth Authorities. Ultimately, the Russians were narrowly saved by the colour of their skin'.¹⁶⁵

Thus the attitude of Australians towards Russian immigrants in these years gave a clear message: we may admit you if you will work as colonists or trade-unionist workers, we may even put up at first with some strange features of your appearance and customs as you are white, and even tolerate political activity within your community, but as soon as you attempt to touch upon the foundations of our society we immediately say: Go away! That was the time when the majority of Russians still had a good chance to integrate into Australian society after a few years. The other options were either to flee from it voluntarily as Nasedkin and hundreds of others did or to confront it in an attempt to change it. The forthcoming historical events pushed many Russians to the third option.

World War I, the Russian revolutions and changes in attitudes and perceptions

The events of the First World War, the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia and finally the Red Flag Riots brought the Russian community in Australia to further polarization in their attitudes to and perceptions of this country. This was determined by three factors:

- the changing attitude of Australian people and the authorities to the Russian community;
- the general situation with employment in the country;
- the Russians' attitude to the changing political situation in Russia.

The war brought a radical change in the Australian attitude to the Russians. A gleam of sympathy towards them as the representatives of an allied power soon was overshadowed by their active support for the anti-conscription movement. Their behaviour stemmed from the general policy of 'revolutionary defeatism' of the left wing

¹⁶⁴ Denham, who held the position of Queensland Premier in 1911-1915, the time of the most intensive Russian migration to that state, was in general distinguished by right-wing views and 'genuinely feared a revolution'. D.J. Murphy, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 8, pp. 281-282.

¹⁶⁵ Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, pp. 12, 13.

of the Social-Democrats, and especially the Bolsheviks, whose influence was rather strong in the Russian community. This policy coincided with the personal aspirations of many Russians who neither wanted to shed their blood for Russia which was so unkind to them (moreover, some of them left Russia specifically as deserters or to avoid conscription), nor perceived Australia as a new motherland and so were not eager to protect its interests overseas. Certainly this policy immediately provoked anti-Russian sentiments and actions at personal and state levels. Russians were suspected of disloyalty, pro-Germanism and German-Russian conspiracy. These accusations became especially strong after the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty between Bolshevik Russia and Germany in March 1918.

But even before that the Russians came under pressure from Russian and Australian authorities. The Russian Tsarist government acting through its Consul-General in Australia, Abaza, tried to oblige all Russians of military age to enlist either in the Russian or Australian army. That appeal did not find wide support in the Russian community. For instance, A. Loozin, secretary of a branch of the Russian Association at Mount Morgan, complained on 1 April 1916 about the victimization of the Russians by the Mount Morgan Co.:

A number of Russians who could not produce passports were discharged and told that they [had] to enlist Our boss is distributing a letter with an [official] Russian [symbol] on [it]. This letter is demanding [we] enlist.

Moreover, although the Australian authorities had no legal power to compel enlistment, the Russians found themselves in a desperate position: 'enlist or starve'. Being foreigners they were prohibited from employment on government works - their usual place of employment. At a time of general economic deterioration this prohibition made their position extremely vulnerable. As aliens they underwent another discriminatory measure: they were obliged to register with the police when transferring from one place to another. Evans has discovered that the police 'kept an eye' on the Russians even before the war and from 1916 there was official surveillance of all Russian correspondence.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ F. Sergeev [Artem], 'Eshche o mifakh' [More about myths], *Izvestiia Souza Rossiiskikh rabochikh*, 3 February 1916; Pikunov, 'Soiuz russkikh rabochikh', p. 170; Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, p. 17; Stedman, 'From Russia', p. 29; Stedman, 'The Russian Revolution', p. 204; AA (ACT): A1, 1915/11795; Chernenko, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia*, pp. 55-56; Evans, 'Agitation',

The rapid deterioration of the Russian emigres' economic, political and psychological situation during the war contributed greatly to their growing negative attitude to Australia. Even those who previously cared only about earning a small fortune and had no interest in anything else in Australia now became involuntarily involved in current events and had to share the responsibility of being Russians with their more politically active countrymen. Evans cites an interesting case of the Russian left Socialist-Revolutionary German Bykov:

In a diary purporting to describe his experiences in 'a free country', [Bykov] ... related how, soon after arrival, he had hoped to become an Australian 'gentleman'. He had even aped their ways 'by putting on a straw hat and white boots' and repudiating his nationality. Yet social acceptance had avoided him. With the outbreak of war, however, these assimilationist gestures were abandoned; 'his political convictions were roused to life and he became the same Russian revolutionary as when he landed'.¹⁶⁷

A short story by Starshinov tells about the more prosaic disillusionment of his hero Nikolai who emigrated in 1912:

He came to Australia at a good time; there were plenty of jobs, the wages were high, but he hardly managed to cover the expenses of the passage to Australia, as the situation began to change; industrial stagnation, strikes and so on did not let him fulfil his plan [to earn a small fortune]. Suddenly World War I came; many coal mines were closed including the one where Nikolai was employed. There was no reason to remain at the mine; and it was grievous to run through hard earned savings.¹⁶⁸

The February and especially the October revolution in 1917 added a new dimension. After the February revolution Russian political refugees received legal opportunities and financial aid to return to their motherland. Their passages were paid by the Provisional government. Moderates and Mensheviks predominated among those who used this aid, as Consul Abaza did all he could to prevent the repatriation of 'Russia's unwanted anarchic element', especially Bolsheviks. According to different sources, during 1917 more than 500 political emigres used the opportunity to return to Russia.¹⁶⁹ Still this exodus did not solve the problems of the remaining Russians.

pp. 130-131; Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 32; Fried, *Russians in Queensland*, pp. 50, 54, 63. See also footnote 114.

¹⁶⁷ Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 29; Australian Archives (Queensland): BP 4/1, 66/4/2165, H. Bykov, 'Russia in Australia - Diary of a Tramp'.

¹⁶⁸ Starshinov, 'Ne vezet', p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ 'Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh', p. 1845; Chernenko, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia*, p. 61; Stedman, 'From Russia', p. 28; Fried, 'The First Consul', p. 112; Evans, 'Agitation', pp. 127-128.

The October revolution brought further deterioration of the Russians' situation legitimating the Australian perception of the Russian community as an especially radical one and, according to some strange logic, converting all Australian Russians into persons somehow responsible for the revolution and its aftermath. The traditional clichéd descriptions of Russians as 'nihilists', 'anarchists' and 'terrorists' as well as 'dirty and greasy' 'barbars' and 'Huns' which had been constantly employed by the Australian press since the second half of the nineteenth century, now were finally cast in the mould of 'barbarous Bolsheviks'. This image peaked during the Red Flag Riots in Brisbane on the 23 March 1919. Several hundred Russians and other left radicals held a rally with the prohibited red flags demanding repatriation to Russia, the repeal of the War Precautions Act, and prevention of the Allies' intervention in Russia. The loyalist forces soon took revenge unleashing a kind of pogrom in the URW headquarters and its neighbourhood which was followed by arrests, convictions and humiliating deportation of some of the participants in the rally, along with country-wide sackings, evictions of Russians, boycotts of their businesses, physical abuse etc.¹⁷⁰ As a result the Russians found themselves in a desperate situation: they were refused naturalization by the authorities and consequently equal employment with Australians, and they were unable to obtain permission and passports to return to Russia. Even naturalized Russians who served in the Australian Army were now the first to be dismissed only 'because we are Russians' as J.K. Lenko explained it after being sacked with ten other Russian ex-servicemen from the wharves.¹⁷¹

By that time left radicalism had seized the Russian community. The cause of this radicalism was not only the ceaseless propaganda of the Bolshevik oriented press, and the URW and IWW locals' activists among the Russians, especially in Queensland. This was not enough to arouse the normally sluggish, pragmatic masses of Russian 'fortune-makers'. The Australian reality - an extreme deterioration of their economic situation as well as changing attitudes to Russians by the government, press and public at large -

170 See colourful details in Evans' works 'Agitation'; *Loyalty and Disloyalty*; *The Red Flag Riots*, Fried's thesis *Russians in Queensland* and F. Cain, *The Origins of Political Surveillance*, Sydney, 1983.

171 AA (ACT): A981, Soviet Union 42, part 1; A2487, 1920/2196; A1, 1918/4350.

created fertile soil for the explosion of the Russians' radicalism roused by local Bolsheviks and other left wing radicals.

Russian leaders put before the community two equally unrealistic options: to struggle for social revolution in Australia or to receive free repatriation to Russia. The unreality of the first option became clear after the severe repressions in 1919. Nevertheless, Russians took an active part in creating the Australian Communist Party in 1920.¹⁷² The second option was also impossible as, whilst the majority of Russians had no money for passage to Russia, the Australian government, from the beginning of the Allied intervention to Russia in 1918, prevented Russian emigres from leaving the country, believing repatriated Australian Russians might reinforce the revolutionary forces in Russia.¹⁷³ Actually the demand for repatriation became the main goal of the Russian community at that time. Different estimates suggest that there were then several hundred Russians anxious to return to Russia.¹⁷⁴

Now black perceptions of Australia dominated. Evans has discovered in archives a number of heart-rending appeals of Russians at that time that provide vivid details. In a letter of four Brisbane Russians to Vladimir Lenin (who never received it as it was intercepted by the Australian authorities) they complained:

the opposite psychology of the masses here and its characteristic British antagonism to the other nationalities (especially to the Russians) ... always kept us in the position of a class of workers being able to depend only on the casual employment which affords one just a bare living and no chances of any savings.

Now they had to bury dreams about earning a fortune and returning to Russia with money. The job dismissals led to complete despair as men tried to protect their families from starvation. A group of Russians from the Bundaberg area pleaded to the Acting Prime Minister

Soon there will be no course left for us but to go to Local Authorities and ask them to gaol us Let us go from this Babylon prison. We will spend our last money and very soon face family starvation Let us go from Australia to the old contry [sic].

¹⁷² This theme is beyond the scope of my thesis. See details in Ross, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 37-40; J. Normington-Rawling, 'Foundation of the Communist Party in Australia', *Quadrant*, vol. 9, no. 5, 1965, pp. 71-77; Fried, 'The First Consul', pp. 115, 117, 119.

¹⁷³ Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, pp. 100, 110, 111.

¹⁷⁴ AA (ACT): A981, Soviet Union 42, part 1.

Herman Bykov, one of the leaders of the March 1919 rally, during his trial said: 'I am ... a political prisoner of Australian capitalists'.¹⁷⁵ This expressed not only his usual political rhetoric but the general feeling of the Russian community whose hopes for a more prosperous life had been ruined and who had suddenly become 'war prisoners' surrounded by a hostile public and authorities.

Due to a concurrence of circumstances the most radical Bolsheviks' claims about Australian society that they had been propagandizing in the previous years seemed to have come true in 1919. Their image of Australians as an undemocratic, petty bourgeois society with an 'under-developed' working class which was dominated by nationalistic, xenophobic sentiments instead of internationalist class solidarity proved to be correct at least in relation to the Russians themselves.

Even those Russians who had never been involved in radical political activity and condemned the Bolshevik revolution now had to endure the atrocities of the populace at large as well as the authorities just because they were Russians. A Russian, obviously unsympathetic to Bolshevik radicalism, wrote to his friend after the March 1919 events in Brisbane:

Through the fault of some silly Russians, it falls on all of us I met a Russian here and started to speak to him I was nearly beaten for speaking Russian - by Englishmen. We must be as far from Russia as we possibly can. There is danger for the Russians on every step and corner.¹⁷⁶

That was the predominating image of Australia for those Russians who happened to live there - quite different from those who looked at it from a distance.

The perception of Australia as a prison and themselves as innocent victims led a number of Russians to make attempts to leave Australia in the 1920s and even later. Sources and figures concerning this exodus are very scarce. The newspaper *Knowledge and Unity* which resumed publication in English described the Russians' ordeals in attempting to leave the country in 1919-1920. Evans mentions that groups of Russians became 'stranded, in severe destitution, at Singapore, Shanghai and Hong Kong'.

¹⁷⁵ Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, pp. 29, 159, 174-176.

¹⁷⁶ Australian Archives, MP 367, 512/1/898, Unsigned to Kalashinikoff, 24 March 1919 (quoted from Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, p. 138).

Blinov, aspiring to return after 1919, reached Russia only in 1931.¹⁷⁷ The trend of the Russian exodus from Australia was even reflected in Russian fiction of that time. The Russian writer Konstantin Paustovskii in a short story 'An Australian from Pilevo station' recounted the trying experience of a Russian peasant in Australia and his final joyful reunion with his motherland.¹⁷⁸ Pikunov was one of the last of this emigre community to leave Australia for Russia in 1959 in the relatively safe time of Khrushchev.

The fate of those who returned to Russia is beyond the scope of my thesis. Scarce sources suggest that many of them perished in Stalin's prisons and camps as people under suspicion because of their overseas past. Some of the Russians who left Australia inspired by the revolutionary events in Russia soon became disillusioned and regained a more sympathetic perception of Australia. Some even looked for opportunities to return to Australia. John Paul Gray, a former secretary of the URW, wrote to Australia in 1918 after repatriation: 'I am quite sick with ... Russian affairs and am anxious to return to our sunny Queensland'. Michael Zadorsky after repatriation realized: 'I ought not to have left Australia'. Jacob Abramovich-Tomas, after his arrival in the Far East in 1919, advised the Zacharin family in Melbourne: 'Remain in Australia and give up all thought of returning to Russia'. Aleksandr Kudrin, currently living in Australia, recollects the boot-maker Grigorii Kashcheev, an Old Believer, whom he met in Harbin in the early 1920s:

He came to Harbin from Australia in 1918, having emigrated there with his family in order to avoid conscription during the Russo-Japanese War. He was not an exception, there were many like he [who returned]. So imagining that after the revolution a 'Paradise' has set in Russia and having listened to plenty of revolutionaries who had escaped to Australia from Russia, off he went, but got stuck in Harbin. He greatly regretted that he had made such a hasty step - left Australia.¹⁷⁹

This first Russian emigre community which probably numbered nearly two thousand by the 1920s was soon overtaken in numbers and in the Australians' perceptions by a new wave of emigrants - so called White Russians - who were

177 *Knowledge and Unity*, 29 November 1919; 1 May, 12 June 1920; Evans, 'Agitation', p. 162; Blinov, *Moia zhizn' v Avstralii*, pp. 66-69.

178 K. Paustovskii, 'Avstraliets so stantsii Pilevo' [An Australian from Pilevo station], *Sobranie sochinenii v 6 tomakh*, vol. 4, Moscow, 1958, pp. 511-527, 652. Paustovskii, a tragic figure, who tried to reconcile his conscience with the demands imposed by the Stalinist epoch on writers, wrote this short story at the end of the 1930s; it bears a strong imprint of that time and can hardly be considered as a reliable source in general, though it definitely was based on some actual facts.

179 Evans, 'Agitation', p. 136; AA (ACT): A981, Com 8, part 1, [File 4]; A.I. Kudrin, 'Aleksandr Ivanych', *Avstraliada*. Sydney, no. 3, 1995, p. 30.

distinguished by their Orthodoxy, conservatism (especially monarchism) and hatred of the Soviet communist regime in Russia. According to a Soviet sailor, P. Gutsal, who visited Brisbane in 1950, the two communities were at odds. Those who came before the revolution were now labelled 'Red Russians' in contradistinction to this new wave. The old guard of the pre-revolutionary emigres was gradually vanishing; the bloody events in their motherland probably facilitated their reconciliation with Australian reality. Still, as late as 1959, a handful of them gathered to meet a Soviet journalist Viktor Maevskii (one of the first visitors from Russia after the Cold war and the Petrov affair) to share with him their recollections about their young 'fighting' years in Australia and hand him a valuable gift - sets of the issues of the first Russian newspapers in Australia the *Echo of Australia*, *Bulletin of the Union of Russian Emigrants* and *Workers' Life*.¹⁸⁰

Perceptions were important in the tragic destiny of this first emigre community. Actually it was their lack of desire and probably an inability to form an adequate understanding of Australian life that brought them to such an end. Stupefied at first by the image of paradise and then by the image of a capitalistic hell, they managed to see very little of actual Australian ways of life. They were little interested in discovering the real causes of Australian wealth and freedom or poverty and restrictions, or in understanding the way of life of the people around them, their culture and traditions, seeing the nature of the land that gave them a refuge. In this respect the appeal of the Russian Association of 1920 seems to express quintessentially Russian prejudices:

It was the Russian Czardom that had driven the majority of Russian workers out here. Besides, past Governments in Australia kept their agents in every Russian port who used to tell the Russian people: 'Australia was an earthly paradise. Come there, populate it, and reap the gold'. They [Russians] have found more Czars in Australia than States ... and the most perfect exploitation of workers.¹⁸¹

The naive belief that a land where one could 'reap gold' might really exist mixed in their consciousness with the demagogic aspirations of an Australian 'revolution and the transfer of the means of production to the hands of producers'.¹⁸² This easy submission

180 P. Gutsal, *Avstraliiskaia tragediia* [An Australian tragedy], Kiev, 1954, p. 193; V. Maevskii, 'Ekho proshlogo' [An echo from the past] in V. Maevskii, *Krepkie liudi*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 17-25. These issues later found their place in the Kharkov State Historical Museum.

181 'Position of Russians. An Association protest', *Knowledge and Unity*, 1 May 1920, p. 3.

182 'Soiuz rossiiskikh rabochikh', p. 1846.

of many Russians to unrealistic images and dogmas made their integration into Australian society at the beginning of the twentieth century especially hard and painful.

CHAPTER 8

IMAGES OF AUSTRALIA IN RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS (1901-1919)

During the years before the October Revolution of 1917 there was a considerable increase in the number of Russian writings about Australia. In the years 1901-1917 there were 564 items published about Australia (or 645 including reprints), on average 33.2 a year (or 38 including reprints). After the revolution, in 1918-1919, there was a dramatic decrease. My bibliographical search yielded only 5 items in 1918 and 2 in 1919.¹ A significant new feature of this period was the proportionate growth of original Russian writings. While in the second half of the nineteenth century, these numbered around 20-30%, now they comprised at least half of all items published, the rest being translations and anonymous articles. For the first time there were more Russian books than translated ones (29 and 23 respectively). As before, the writings were published mainly in periodicals. In contrast with the nineteenth century, the role of 'core' periodicals diminished while the number of titles of journals, magazines and newspapers which covered Australia increased to over one hundred. The following periodicals wrote more than twice about Australia in 1901-1917:

Table 17

Items Published in 'Core' Periodicals, 1901-1917

Title	No. of Items
1. Journals of opinion, literary and education journals	
<i>Moscow Weekly</i>	9
<i>Literary-Science Herald (in Ukrainian)</i>	9
<i>Russian Thought</i>	8
<i>Russian Wealth</i>	5
<i>Herald of Learning</i>	5
<i>7 Days</i>	4
<i>Russian School</i>	3
<i>Education</i>	3

1 The resurgence and gradual growth in the number of publications about Australia in Soviet Russia occurred only after 1923-1924.

2. Journals specializing in geography, anthropology and travel	
<i>Round the World</i>	35
<i>Nature and People</i>	25
<i>Nature</i>	8
<i>Ethnographical Review</i>	8
<i>World of Adventures</i>	8
<i>Geography</i>	7
<i>God's World</i>	7
<i>Natural Science and Geography</i>	6
<i>Meteorology Herald</i>	5
3. Specialist periodicals	
<i>The Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin</i>	109
<i>Collection of Consular Reports</i>	6
<i>Gold-mining Herald</i>	5
<i>Proceedings of the Refrigeration Committee</i>	5
<i>Naval Collection</i>	5
<i>Russian Miller</i>	4
<i>Agriculture and Forestry</i>	4
<i>South-Eastern Farmer</i>	4
<i>Dairying and Cattle-breeding</i>	3
<i>Poultry Farming</i>	3
<i>National Economy</i>	3
<i>Proceedings of the Mining Engineers Society</i>	3
<i>Russian Subtropic</i>	3

This table suggests approximately the same availability of periodical articles for an average cultured family as in the second half of the nineteenth century - nearly four a year and more if they also subscribed to an agricultural or other specialist periodical.

The distribution of all writings according to theme was as follows:

Table 18
Thematic Distribution of Items Published, 1901-1919

Theme	No. of Items
General	14
Travel notes	19
Geography	66
Discovery and exploring	7
Russian naval expeditions	7
Anthropology, demography	70
Economics	169
History	137
Culture	10
Australian fiction and criticism	37
Fiction about Australia	35
Total	571

Table 19 represents the changes in the proportions of items published on related themes from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Table 19
Thematic Complexes of Items Published, Percentages, 1801-1919

Thematic Complexes	1801-1850	1851-1900	1901-1919
General, geography, discovery, travel, Russian expeditions	57	38	20
Anthropology	4	11	12
History, culture	29	17	26
Economics	6	25	30
Fiction	4	9	12
Total	100%	100%	100%

These changes confirm that most of the tendencies characteristic of the nineteenth century persisted at the beginning of the twentieth century: a decreasing percentage was concerned broadly with geography, and there was an increasing proportion of anthropological, economic and fictional writing. The only new tendency was the growth of historical writings, reflecting Russian interest in the social achievements of the Commonwealth of Australia. For the first time writings on geographical themes ceased to dominate, being supplanted by economics and history. Thus in the beginning of the twentieth century the image of Australia as a socio-economic reality finally predominated over its image as an exotic continent.

Nevertheless, often Russian geographical and travel literature continued to treat Australia according to the exotic guide-lines of the previous century. For instance, the geographer A.P. Sutugin in 1903, in an article summing up the latest discoveries in Australia, could not help beginning with a cliché:

Up to now we still perceive Australia as a country of paradoxes. Swans in Australia are black, bees do not sting, ants give honey...

Sutugin's image of Australia, and that of others who wrote on this subject, was predominantly that of a dry, arid, strange land. Certainly Russian geographical literature in general gave a more balanced view. The geography books were in demand by different categories of Russian readers: children, adolescents, the lower classes and the more advanced and educated elite. This is borne out by the fact that some books from the end of the nineteenth century were reprinted. For instance, Cherniaeva's *Tales of Australia and Australians* was reprinted twice, Mech's *Australia and Tasmania* five times, Sophie

Wörishöffer's *The Naturalists' Ship* five times, and Samuel Smiles' *A Boy's Voyage Round the World* as well as Tsimmerman's and Mark Twain's travels, - once. Some new Russian books also appeared: L.P. Kupriianova's *Australia and New Zealand*, E. Pimenova's *Australia and its Inhabitants*, P. Vol'nogorskii's *Country of Living Fossils*, and M. Sabinina's *Australia and its Primitive Tribes*. Particularly valuable was A. Kruber's illustrated geographical reader *Australia and Polar Countries* which ran to three editions in 1903-1912, and S.P. Bobin's *Australia and Oceania*. Together with articles in Russian journals, they introduced the Russian reader to the travels of Richard Semon, Carl Lumholtz, Robert von Lendenfeld, Albert Daiber, Moritz Schanz, Arthur Baessler, Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen. N.A. Rubakin, a famous populariser of science and bibliographer, selected Lumholtz's travels as worthy of retelling in plain language for the working classes, in a special book *Among Cannibals*.² This period was also remarkable for the publication of accounts of Russian visits to Australia, which were discussed in a special chapter.

Anthropological literature in Russian continued to acquaint the reader with the main Western studies which treated Australian Aborigines as a classic example of primitive society. Among them were K. Weule, A.E. Crawley, C. Letourneau, F.C. Mueller-Lyer, A.R. Brown, W. Wundt, H. Cunow, A. Lang, G. Shurz. At the same time the early decades of the twentieth century were a period of profound interest in anthropology among Russian scholars and readers in general. A trend that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century - the use of Australian data for original Russian studies - now became one of the characteristic features of Russian anthropological literature.

Classical social evolutionism remained the predominant tendency of Russian anthropological studies of this time. It aimed at broad theoretical generalizations depicting the development of mankind and human culture, and perceiving Australian Aborigines as a perfect example of the initial stages of this evolution. For instance, K.M. Takhtarev chose Australian Aborigines as a basis for the study of early forms of primitive social organization and culture. The interest in his method is confirmed by the fact that one of

2 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 229, 230, 231, 232, 307, 311, 312, 318, 319, 484, 487, 489, 490, 532, 1294, 1302.

his books ran to four editions between 1907-1924. General, substantial books by Nikolai and Vera Kharuzin discussed Australian data in a broader framework. These books were targeted at university students and for a long time were desk companions for all Russians who began anthropological studies.³ Other writers did not attempt the above-mentioned general compilations, and undertook narrower studies of a more creative nature, using Australian material to confirm their findings. The Russian Prince Petr Kropotkin, a scientist of broad-ranging interests and a famous theorist of anarchism, was especially interested in the development of ethics and related issues. As a political emigre in England he wrote *Mutual Aid: a Factor of Evolution*, which ran to at least four editions in Russia in the beginning of the century. Australian materials available to him fitted perfectly his theory that mutual aid had been the corner-stone of ethics, justice and harmony in human society since the early stages of mankind. The Russian sociologist and anthropologist Maksim Kovalevskii, in his book discussing the history of clan life, used Australian materials for a creative development of Marxist ideas, combining them with an evolutionist approach.⁴

Evolutionism and Marxism were not the only methods of Russian social anthropology. One of the first to depart from these theories was Aleksandr Maksimov, for whom Australian materials were of considerable importance as a theoretical weapon for nearly three decades. In his works he argued that each people had its unique way of development and that the social organization of Australian Aborigines did not confirm the evolutionists' ideas. In 1901-1930 he published nine works dealing with Australian Aborigines, discussing in particular their kinship organizations, group marriage and economy.⁵

At the beginning of the twentieth century Russian intellectuals developed an interest in non-European, and especially primitive, folklore. For instance, Konstantin

3 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1300, 1304; 118, 1295, 1307.

4 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1494, 1495.

5 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos. 159, 1460, 1492, 1497-1499, 1501, 1516, 1566. Maksimov's theories were not recognized by his contemporaries or by later Soviet anthropologists. Only recently, when official dogma in this sphere was shaken, have his research methods and particularly his Australian studies been appraised for their true worth in Olga Artemova's article 'Zabytye stranitsy otechestvennoi nauki: A.N. Maksimov i ego issledovaniia po istoricheskoi etnografii' [Forgotten pages of Russian science: A.N. Maksimov and his research in historical ethnography], *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 4, 1991, pp. 45-64.

Bal'mont, after his visit to the South Pacific and Japan in 1912-1913, recounted in Russian newspapers and magazines numerous tales of the peoples of these countries and published his original poetry inspired by the folklore of the 'Distant South'. Unfortunately I did not manage to find any of his writings connected with Australian Aboriginal folklore. Another Russian poet, Valerii Briusov, though he had not been to Australia, published in 1913 two of his poems imitating Australian Aboriginal songs. The Russian folklorist P.N. Sakulin in his book *Primitive Poetry*, published in 1905, made extensive use of Australian materials. Also two important Western works were translated into Russian. In 1901, Kharuzins published Andrew Lang's *Mythology* and in 1903 S. Rusova translated K. Langlo-Parker's *The Australian Legends*. All these publications, and especially *The Australian Legends* which was directed at juvenile and general readers, contributed to the more enlightened perception of the Aborigines as people with an ancient elaborate culture, as opposed to the idea of 'pitiful natives' which dominated in the previous century.⁶ This interest in Australian folklore remained characteristic of Russian literature throughout the 1920s.

While the study of the above fields was characterised by gradual development, history and sociology experienced an unprecedented growth of public interest. Historians, sociologists, specialists in law and legislation, journalists of different persuasions, translators and popularisers brought abundant information about social development in Australia to Russian readers.

Russian translators and publishers made available to the reader a number of Western works about Australia. The first among these were writings by the French publicists Paul and Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu published at the end of the nineteenth century and mentioned in the previous section. They were followed by the American Henry Walker's *Australasian Democracy* (translated in 1901), the French Albert Metin's *Socialism Without Doctrine* (1903), the Italian Ugo Rabbeno's *The Agrarian Question in Australian Colonies* (1903), the French Louis Vigouroux's *Social Evolution in Australasia* (1907), the American Victor Clark's *The Labour Movement in Australasia* (1908), as well as articles and booklets based on the writings of New Zealander William

6 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1667, 1668, 1679, 5855.

Pember Reeves, the Frenchman Georges Biard d'Aunet, the Australian Charles Eyre and many others. Moreover, Russians translated the Australian Constitution and workers' legislation.⁷ The aspiration of Russian translators, editors and publishers to publish a range of notable Western writings on Australian social issues put the Russian reader, to some extent, in a more privileged position than, for example, the French one, as it made available to the reader the perceptions of international authors rather than those of only one nation. Sometimes these perceptions were rather critical, though a favourable attitude to Australian achievements certainly prevailed.

But the main point of interest for us will be the original Russian writings on Australian social issues. The main figure here was Pavel Grigor'evich Mizhnev, historian, sociologist and writer. He discussed Australian issues in at least five books, the most famous among them being *Lucky Australia*. Among other authors were the journalist Dioneo (V. Shklovskii), who wrote mainly on sociological and literary issues; the barrister M.I. Brun, who in 1907 published eight articles on different aspects of workers' legislation; A.F. Fortunatov, a specialist in agricultural issues; the sociologist V. Sviatlovskii; law specialists S.A. Korf and P. Pokrovskii, along with about a dozen other writers. Their works were based on Western and Russian accounts and studies, as well as on Australian official and statistical materials. For the first time these original Russian studies outnumbered translations.⁸ The political sympathies of these writers, though diverse to a certain degree, were those of the liberal intelligentsia. A characteristic feature of these writings was the perception of Australia and New Zealand as a whole. It was not uncommon for the authors to discuss New Zealand experiences in a work entitled 'Australia' and vice versa.

While the translations of Western works were predominantly aimed at an educated reader, the original Russian writings targeted different social groups. For instance Korf's study of the Australian system of government was written for experts; while articles

7 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 2187, 2191; *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-155, 3-158, 3-159, 3-364, 3-458, 3-491, 3-517, 3-527, 3-567 to 3-571, 3-643, 3-644, 3-645, 3-709, 3-723, 3-733.

8 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1839, 1840, 4665-4667; *Russian Sources on Australia*, nos 3-352, 3-376, 3-378 to 3-386, 3-405, 3-423, 3-456, 3-497, 3-498, 3-499, 3-511, 3-577, 3-579 to 3-583, 3-602, 3-603, 3-606, 3-617, 3-623, 3-624, 3-629, 3-631, 3-632, 3-635, 3-708, 3-709, 3-723, 3-730, 3-755.

dealing with different aspects of workers' and agrarian legislation, though written by specialists, were comprehensible to a general educated reader. The articles discussing worker's legislation were published not only in specialist journals such as *The Finance, Industry and Trade Bulletin*, but also in influential journals of opinion such as *Russian Thought* and *Russian Wealth* (*Russkoe bogatstvo*), as well as in popular science magazines such as the *Herald of Learning* (*Vestnik znaniia*), *Education* (*Obrazovanie*), *National Economy* (*Narodnoe khoziaistvo*) and *God's World*. These popular magazines were aimed at people involved in self-education and at the new 'intelligentsia from the people'. Mizhnev's books, especially *Lucky Australia* (1907, reprinted 1909 and 1918), though addressed to an educated reader, had chapters of general interest. Booklets by N.P. Ignat'ev, *How People Live in Australia* (1902), and A.B. Piotrovskii, *In the Land of True Democracy (Australia)* (1917), were intelligible to a reader with several classes of secondary school or to a worker engaged in self-education; while a booklet by K. Nevskii, *A Workers' Kingdom (How Workers Live in Australia)* (1917), was written for those workers who were just literate.

Most of these writings had a significant feature: they went beyond the limits of a purely academic or an intellectual hobby interest in life in distant Australia, and made direct connections with Russian life. It is not by chance that two peaks of Russian publications on Australia occurred after the two Russian revolutions of 1905 and February 1917. During these years Russian society looked for the best options for social reform, and perceived the Australian experience as a perfect model.⁹ This 'practical' interest determined the selection of topics and evaluation of the Australian material.

Discussing Australian history, Russians focussed on the dichotomy of 'despotism - democracy'. Continuing the traditions of the nineteenth century, and trying to consider without bias the effect of transportation on the process of colonization, Mizhnev portrayed the phenomena predominantly positively. At the same time, more radical publicists were inclined to concentrate on its negative side. Dioneo claimed that

The convict system not only broke thousands of human lives: under it Australia was

9 Incidentally, many of the books about Australia which are now held by the State Historical Library in Moscow bear the cancelled stamps of the Duma library - i.e. the library of the first Russian parliament established in 1905.

almost as useless as Sakhalin.... Still even here we hold a record: on Sakhalin the human personality was more crushed and trampled than even on Norfolk.

D. Saturin, though not specifically mentioning Russia, definitely addressed his polemic to the Russian situation:

absolute subordination on the one hand and unlimited despotism on the other were the only foundations of the new regime. Under such conditions no settlement whatever can prosper... Periodicals appeared but were muzzled by censorship.

K. Nevskii simplified the situation for the Russian people:

First the English sent their criminals to Australia as we did before to Sakhalin. No good came of it of course: convicts who lived at public expense worked badly, drank hard and fought.¹⁰

Discussing Australian history of the following decades, the Russian writers considered the most important factor to be the 'continuous process of democratization of public institutions' which finally made Australia the leading democracy of the modern world. Russians saw the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia as the logical result of the freedom and democracy enjoyed by its population, and stressed the active participation of the working classes in the federation movement. It is interesting to note that Russians, soon after the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia, tried to find an adequate Russian expression and translated it as 'Australian Federation', 'the United States of Australia' and even 'Australian Republic', believing that in spite of formal dependence on Britain the federation was 'the most systematic realization of democratic principles' and has 'the most democratic constitution in the world'. Korf in his detailed comparison of the Australian, Canadian and the United States constitutions stressed that the Australian constitution had

an excellent feature - complete trust by the law-makers in the people and open support for the principle of self-government... The constitution was created for the people, and people themselves to the fullest degree received a chance to be masters of their state system by changing the constitution and adjusting it to the new demands of life.

While liberal writers extolled Australian democracy, the Russian General Consul

10 P.G. Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii i kolonial'noi politiki Anglii* [A history of Britain's colonial empire and colonial policy], 2nd edition, St. Petersburg, 1909, pp. 95-98; Dioneo [I.V. Shklovskii], 'Iz literatury molodykh demokratii' [From the literature of the young democracies] in his *Na temy o svobode*, part 2, St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 363; D. Saturin, 'Ocherk razvitiia kolonii Avstralazii' [An essay on the development of the Australasian colonies], in G. Uoker, *Razvitie avstraliiskoi demokratii*, St. Petersburg, 1901, pp. XIII-XVI; K. Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo (Kak zhivut rabochie v Avstralii)* [A Workers' Kingdom (How Workers Live in Australia)], Moscow, 1917, p. 3.

in Melbourne, N. Passek, published a factual study of Australian self-government and the federation movement without even mentioning the word 'democracy' or making any appraisal of the process. That was a characteristic attitude of Russian officials.¹¹

The Russian visitors of the previous decades were often sceptical about Australian parliamentary democracy, not seeing the essence behind its external forms. The opinion of Russian liberal writers at the beginning of the twentieth century was quite different. They all discussed the Australian political system as the foundation stone of Australian democracy.

Considering the degree of Australian independence from Britain, the Russians tended to believe that the Governor-General's and consequently Britain's power was only a formality (Nevskii, Mizhnev, Piotrovskii), that he was servant of the law rather than of Britain (Ignat'ev), and that he did not interfere with Australia's affairs, as the people recognized only those whom they elected themselves (Nevskii). Ignat'ev's understanding of the situation was especially interesting. Citing the instructions that the Governor-General received from Britain on assuming the position, Ignat'ev stressed as the most important features of the order that he respect Australians, and that he understand they did not tolerate any 'oppression, injustice or violence'.

Certainly the Russians enthused about Australia's democratic electoral system, and believed that through this system Australians brought to power only the best candidates, who were true servants of the people. Ignat'ev emphasised that freedom of speech and of the press guaranteed the accountability of authorities, and Nevskii claimed that all authorities in Australia were elected. An interesting feature of these writings was their authors' understanding of the role of the Australian working class and of the Labor party in the political life of the country. They translated the name of this party as 'Workers' party' (modern Russian prefers the more neutral transliteration *Leiboristskaia*), and assumed without any hesitation that it consisted of workers and represented workers'

11 Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, pp. 8-9, 122; P.G. Mizhnev, 'Obrazovanie Soedinennykh Shtatov Avstralii' [The formation of the United States of Australia], in his *Sotsiologicheskie etiuudy*, St. Petersburg, 1904, pp. 1-93; Saturin, 'Ocherk razvitiia', p. 246; S.A. Korf, *Gosudarstvennyi stroi Avstralii* [The Australian System of Government], Moscow, 1912, p. 90; N. Passek, 'Istoricheskii ocherk avstraliiskogo samoupravleniia' [A historical essay on Australian self-government], *Sbornik konsul'skikh donesenii*, no. 3, 1901, pp. 229-248.

interests. Consequently, when the party was in power, workers and labourers were in power. Thus the Russians believed that workers played a significant role in politics and that the Australian system of government allowed any able and ambitious worker to succeed. This theory was usually supported by various examples of the success of an Australian worker who became a Minister.¹² This simplification of the situation - sometimes naive, sometimes deliberate - was common not only for the Russians but for other nations too. Still, the Russian liberals seized the Australian material as a perfect example for the instruction of autocratic Russia.

Along with democracy and the means of its realization the Russians were interested in the practical advantages that it brought to the people. Australian social legislation, and particularly workers' legislation and conditions, were of special interest to the Russians.

Considering the history of the Australian workers' movement, the Russian liberals no longer explained its successes through favourable circumstances like the discovery of gold or the shortage of labourers, but praised the unity and struggle of workers; they explained this success by the fact that workers, following their defeat in the strikes of the 1890s, changed from a pure economic struggle to a political struggle and organized their party. Nevskii explained to the Russian working classes that Australian 'workers began to elect people to the parliament who would defend workers' interests with might and main'.

The Russian scholars wrote several dozen articles discussing all aspects of workers' legislation and the arbitration system. Though some of them, like Sviatlovskii, were rather cautious and wrote that what was seen in Australia was only an experiment, and that it was too early to proclaim Australia to be a country without strikes, the predominating belief was that strikes were dying out, that the Australian government cared about improving the workers' situation, and that the legislation indeed protected the

12 N.P. Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii* [How People Live in Australia], Odessa, 1902, pp. 25-29; P.G. Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia: (Sotsial'noe zakonodatel'stvo Avstralii i ego rezul'taty)* [Lucky Australia (Australia's Social Legislation and its Results)], St. Petersburg, 1909, pp. 3, 4, 32, 198-199; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 4, 8, 15; A.B. Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia (Avstraliia)* [In the Land of True Democracy (Australia)], Petrograd-Moscow, 1917, p. 11-13; Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, appendix, pp. 9, 13; K.A. Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* [The Lessons of Australian Democracy], Odessa, 1917, p. 15.

health of workers and prevented extreme exploitation, particularly the sweatshop system, and guaranteed high wages. The Russian liberals were of one accord in claiming that the working day in Australia was the shortest and the wages were the highest in the world. They praised such social achievements as state accident compensation schemes, support for mothers and children, and the old-age pensions.¹³

This distant view differed greatly from the personal experience of the Russian emigres who in the same years often suffered severely under working conditions in Australia. This difference was for a number of reasons. Russian Liberal writers based their conclusions primarily on the legislation itself rather than its practical implementation. Moreover, the authors of the sources the Russians used had observed the conditions of the most successful workers in big cities. In contrast, the Russian emigres, as we have seen, were employed in the most unfavourable conditions.¹⁴

The Russians were especially interested in the social consequences of this legislation for the working classes in Australia. Among the features that drew the writers' attention most was the availability of individual comfortable houses with baths and gardens for the majority of the workers' families. The contrast with Russian conditions invariably struck the writers. Nevskii wrote:

If our worker lives in accommodation attached to a factory, it is not a flat but a bug-house, a prison-cell; if he has his own flat it is a wretched dump of a hovel on the outskirts of the city... In Australia it is quite different.

Piotrovskii invited his readers:

Let us drop in at an Australian worker's dwelling. To do this we will not have to go along dirty streets and lanes, to climb up the stinking stairs to the fifth or sixth floor of a huge house. There are no such houses ... in Australia at all.

Mizhnev reminded the Russian reader that the size of the premises and gardens of

13 Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 64-98, 197-207; Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, p. 124-127; Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, pp. 9-11, 14-17, 19-20; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 6-12; Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii*, pp. 46-47; Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* p. 7, 13-14; V.V. Sviatlovskii, *Polozhenie voprosa o rabochikh organizatsiakh v inostrannykh gosudarstvakh [The Situation Regarding Workers' Organizations in Foreign States]*, 2nd edition, St. Petersburg, 1906, p. 70; B. Brazolenko, 'Ocherk fabrichnogo zakonodatel'stva v Avstralii' [An essay on Australia's factory legislation], *Vestnik znaniia*, no. 6, 1905, pp. 105-113; I. Ozerov, 'Rabochee zakonodatel'stvo v avstraliiskikh koloniakh Anglii' [Workers' legislation in Britain's Australian colonies], in *Iz zhizni truda*, Moscow, 1904, pp. 97-134.

14 Departing for Australia many Russian emigres believed that Australia was a 'workingmen's paradise', and writings of the Russian Liberals certainly contributed to this view. Artem, particularly, referred to reading Mizhnev's book *The Advanced Democracy of the Modern World*.

Australian townspeople was often larger than that of a Russian *dacha* (summer country residence of the well-off). The Russians also demonstrated that the necessities were not expensive, praising particularly the availability of abundant meat, believing that the good diet resulted in the good health and longevity of Australians. They noted, for instance, that mortality in Australia and New Zealand was two or three times lower than in Russia.

Another point of interest was the Russians' belief that workers spent their greater leisure time in a cultural, useful way: they participated in public life, played with their children, worked in their gardens, read books and periodicals, visited theatres and concerts, went in for sports. Nevskii explained the social needs of an Australian worker to his Russian brothers: 'A worker longs to go to the workers' club, to talk a little with a mate about politics, about elections'. Mizhuev stressed that general elections under the conditions of complete freedom of speech and gatherings (a feature totally lacking in Russia) considerably promoted the political education of the working classes.

Speaking about Australians' family leisure, Mizhuev noted that it was a luxury inaccessible to Russian workers, who worked 10-11 hours a day. Ignat'ev wrote that in contrast to Russia, Australian 'single women-workers were not left to the mercy of fate' but could have cultural leisure in women's clubs. The writers praised the general system of education and the availability of education for the working classes, in particular through special courses and lectures. Ignat'ev claimed that public education in Australia was the best in the world and this was due to state as well as public support of, and respect, for schools. Comparing Australian and Russian expenditure on education, the writers made it obvious that Russia spent per person approximately fifteen times less than Australia. The Russians believed that Australian workers were not only literate, but kept at home editions of English classics, and read, as well as general periodicals, popular-scientific journals. Piotrovskii concluded that

the Australian workers as result of all these conditions considerably outstripped their European brothers in intellectual development, in their interest in science and art.

As for the Australians' love of sports, which was so severely criticized by the Russian visitors of the previous century, now the Russians considered it as a positive healthy pursuit, especially because it was accessible to all social strata, allowing people

from different classes to mix; and because workers were the main participants in different sports. Obviously the Russians compared the Australian situation to the European one, where sport was accessible predominantly to the more privileged classes, and contrasted Australian involvement in sporting games with the unhealthy types of leisure common in Russia, like card games and drinking. Ignat'ev claimed that Australia was one of the most sober countries in the world.¹⁵ In contrast some of the Russian emigres hardly referred to any intellectual life in Australian workers and believed that they often spent most of their leisure time drinking in bars. The explanation for the differences might be that the emigres observed the life of the single labourers under frontier conditions, while the writers referred to the skilled workers who lived in towns with their families and often had long-term employment.

The Russians' general conclusion was that workers in Australia had reached 'a high general standard of living' (Kuznetsov) on a par with that of the middle-class in Europe, and even 'enjoyed some creature comforts inaccessible to some of the middle class in Europe and especially in Russia' (Mizhnev). Still Mizhnev preferred to be a bit cautious, admitting that

in Australia a significant difference between rich and poor remained even though the poor there lived much better than the poor of the Old World.... Australia is a 'workingmen's paradise' only in comparison with ... [European countries].

Nevskii, admitting that there were rare cases when a worker could experience hardships, claimed that if one compared the living and working conditions of Russian and Australian workers one 'would involuntarily exclaim: we have hell, they have paradise'. Mizhnev stressed that the conditions he described were those of the working classes, 'while the well-to-do enjoy such comforts as Russian imagination cannot even conceive'.¹⁶

One more feature that appealed to the Russians was the strong tendency towards equality in Australian society. The writers spoke not only about formal aspects of the issue - for instance, that in Australia the gap in the wages of skilled and unskilled workers

15 Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 55, 199-201, 210-224; Saturin, 'Ocherk razvitiia', p. XXXIII; Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, pp. 20-24; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 12-15; Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii*, pp. 12, 47-51, 54-56, 58-60; Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* p. 7, 13.

16 Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 217, 224-225; Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, p. 125; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 15; Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* p. 14.

was less than in Europe or Russia, or that all people dressed well and one could not distinguish by appearance their social background. The Russians also tried to convey to their readers an equally important feature: 'the spirit of equality', usual for Australians, the smoothing over of class distinctions, the importance of self-respect and respect for others which so attracted Kriukov.

It goes without saying that the treatment of workers in Australia is more well-mannered and polite than anywhere else in Western Europe, to say nothing of Russia,

Mizhnev enthused. He cited as an important feature from Vigouroux's book that 'Servants are often called 'lady help' and addressed as 'Miss so-and-so' (surname), not just by the first name'. Nevskii, to make it sound more impressive for the Russian reader, translated the title used to address to servants as *gospodin* or *gospozha*, which were never applied in Russian speech to the lower classes. Moreover, the Australian custom of greeting people by a casual nod to the side instead of a bow was perceived by the Russians as a sign of self-respect and absence of any humility. Even when discussing the situation of the elderly and disabled Ignat'ev, it seems, perceived not only financial but also moral respect: 'there are very well-furnished institutions for them which do not have the depressingly abusive atmosphere of alms-houses'.¹⁷

Among other aspects of the progressive Australian legislation discussed in Russian writings were progressive income and land taxes and agrarian legislation in general. The Russian writers approved the state policy towards the agrarian question, in particular the preservation of a significant part of the land for state ownership, state assistance for small farmers and for the development of agriculture in general through the system of experimental farms, education, export of agricultural goods, etc. They believed that the tendency in Australia was to give land to those who worked it and considered the policy (or what they believed was the policy) of land nationalization by the Labor party to be an important step in this direction. The writers' aspiration was certainly to demonstrate to the Russian government possible solutions to agrarian problems which were a burning question in Russia. Kriukov's study of Australian agrarian conditions, discussed in the

¹⁷ Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 207-210, 213-214, 218, 219; Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, p. 21; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 14-15; Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii*, p. 57.

previous chapter, had a number of direct implications appropriate for Russia.¹⁸

Russian interpretations of the 'White Australia' policy were predominantly favourable. They regarded it not as a racist policy or as a reaction to a perceived threat to British culture, but as a reasonable desire to protect workers' rights. Kuznetsov saw it as part of a general reluctance to open Australian doors to any immigrants, be they white or yellow. All Russians stressed that it was a policy not of capitalists but of Australian workers and their party. Piotrovskii argued that

the workers' legislation would not yield even one tenth of the present results ... if the workers' party did not nip the awful evil, i.e. coloured labour, in the bud.

Kuznetsov was the only one who noticed a 'degree of egoism' in the Australian workers' unwillingness to let in European immigrants, and expressed concern that this policy 'in the nearest future might become a dangerous stumbling-block'.¹⁹

It would be unjust to say that the Russian liberals perceived the Australian experience uncritically. Professor Kuznetsov attempted to show that Australian democracy was unable to solve such general problems as a declining birth-rate, increased divorce rate, and urbanisation (with its associated dominance of town over country). He claimed without any proof that Australia lacked an original high culture, that the population was more interested in material wealth than in a rich spiritual inner life, that 'the universities satisfied the petty feeling of conceit rather than aspiring to learning for the sake of learning'. But even he did not attempt to question Australian democracy and social achievements. Mizhnev, the most enthusiastic propagandist of 'Lucky Australia', admitted that the unemployed might experience difficulties there and that immigrants brought some negative features from the Old World, but saw the main remedy to such problems in the democratic government that struggled to improve the lives of all the people. Other writers shared this optimistic belief.

The Russians' praise certainly outweighed their criticism, and depicted a more

18 Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 55-63; Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, p. 124; Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii*, p. 32, 47; Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* pp. 10-12; Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, pp. 25-28; A.F. Fortunatov, 'Agrarnoe zakonodatel'stvo v Avstralii' [Agrarian legislation in Australia], in *Agrarnyi vopros*, Moscow, 1905, pp. 128-133.

19 Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 99-108; Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, appendix, pp. 9-10; Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii*, p. 21; Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* pp. 5, 6, 19; Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, pp. 17-19; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 7.

favourable image than that of other European authors. They believed that the colonization of Australia and creation of the Commonwealth of Australia were 'the most striking and important facts in nineteenth century world history' and brought a new power to the world arena (Mizhnev, Saturin). Though preferring to refer to the people of Australia as 'Australians', the Russian writers perceived them in close connection with England and saw the key to Australian success as being the political and economic freedom granted to the colonies by Britain. Dioneo wrote that in Australia 'a new England was reborn more powerful than the old one'.

The Russians claimed that Australia was the most free, democratic and enlightened country in the world, where just social relations satisfied the material and spiritual needs of the whole population. They believed that Australia 'enacted political and social reforms which were only discussed in other countries including England itself' (Mizhnev) and 'laid the foundations for a just social organization of the future' (Piotrovskii). The latter argued that here 'the demands of the socialists of all the world are fulfilled already ... and thus we can see that socialism is not only a dream or a fairy-tale' but the real future of all the world. And all Russian writers agreed that in general Australia was the luckiest country in the world.²⁰

Thus the Russian liberals approved the situation in Australia, preferring to turn a blind eye to any faults. Their criticism, if any, was certainly not a result of Marxist objections. The Australian way as a model for Russia attracted them especially, because Australian achievements were the result of stable development and progressive reforms, without any revolutions and bloodshed. Kuznetsov wrote after the February 1917 revolution: 'young Russian democracy ... should not only surprise the world by radical slogans, but learn to put the slogans into practice', as demonstrated by Australian democracy.²¹

Russian liberals appear to have been unaware that the Australian experience might

20 Mizhnev, *Schastlivaia Avstraliia*, pp. 3, 197, 224-225; Mizhnev, *Istoriia kolonial'noi imperii*, pp. 123, 124, 126, 127; Saturin, 'Ocherk razvitiia', pp. V, XIX, XXXVIII, XXXIX; Ignat'ev, *Kak zhivut v Avstralii*, pp. 30, 54; Dioneo, 'Iz literatury molodykh', p. 358; Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, pp. 4, 8, 28-29; Nevskii, *Rabochee tsarstvo*, p. 4; Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* pp. 4, 6-9, 19-20.

21 Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* p. 3.

be analysed from other, Marxist, positions. Only Kuznetsov noticed that despite Marx's belief that the development of capitalism would bring increasing exploitation of workers, Australia was far from that. Australian workers, through self-organization and special laws against exploitation, achieved good conditions and did not 'hurry to fulfil all the aims of the Social-Democrats'.²²

After the revolution it was the duty of Soviet historians to unmask the unique Australian way from the point of view of Marxist ideology and Lenin's 'statements'.²³ Except for his article 'In Australia', Australians (even Australian Marxists) know little of Lenin's writings on their country,²⁴ and for that reason, I will devote some attention to them. Lenin referred to Australia in at least nine works. The two most interesting are the article 'In Australia', first published in the Bolshevik newspaper *Truth (Pravda)* in 1913, and *Notebooks on Imperialism*, a collection of materials gathered by Lenin in 1915-1916 for his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916). The *Notebooks* consist of Lenin's notes, extracts and summaries of the literature on imperialism; here he referred to Australia more than forty times.²⁵

Lenin based his political appraisals on economics. In keeping with Marxist tradition, he considered Australia as a colony of a 'settlement' type, i.e. a colony where 'virgin soils' were 'colonized by free immigrants' who brought to it their civilization, and where the majority of the population did not experience oppression as in 'classic' colonies.²⁶ Australian-British relations, as an example of a wider model, were a point of interest for Lenin. He perceived as a principal feature of the Australian economy the

22 Kuznetsov, *Uroki avstraliiskoi demokratii* p. 14.

23 G.I. Kanevskaia, 'V.I. Lenin o nekotorykh problemakh istorii Avstralii' [V.I. Lenin on some problems of Australian history], *Vestnik Leningradskogo universiteta*, no. 14, issue 3, 1970, pp. 65-69; G.I. Kanevskaia, 'Istochniki i literatura izuchennye V.I. Leninym po istorii Avstralii' [Sources and literature on the history of Australia which were studied by V.I. Lenin], *Uchenye zapiski Dal'nevostochnogo universiteta*, vol. 40, 1971, pp. 43-52; K.V. Malakhovskii, *Istoriia Avstraliiskogo Soiuza [A history of the Australian Commonwealth]*, Moscow, 1971; A.Iu. Rudnitskii, *Dvesti let avstraliiskoi istorii. Kontseptsii natsional'nogo razvitiia [200 years of Australian history. Conceptions of national development]*, Moscow, 1987.

24 L.L. Sharkey, *Australia Marches on*, Sydney, 1942; *Lenin - through Australian Eyes*, Sydney, 1970; R. Kuhn, 'Lenin on the ALP: The career of 600 words', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1989, pp. 29-49.

25 Bibliography of Lenin's writings on Australia in Russian see in Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 86-95. Most of these texts are translated into English in V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 45 vols, London-Moscow, 1960-1970.

26 K. Marx, *Capital. A critique of political economy*, vol. 1, Chicago, 1932, p. 838; V.I. Lenin, 'Notebooks on Imperialism', in his *Collected Works*, vol. 39, pp. 405, 562.

considerable investments of British capital which led to economic and, therefore, to political dependence. Lenin understood the importance for Australia of its trade with Britain. Noting "a de facto increase in custom duties against non-English producing countries" and inter-colonial preferential tariffs, Lenin made in the conspectus a remark which he marked by three lines: 'N.B.: a step towards a customs union of the whole empire. *My addition.*'²⁷

At the same time Lenin seemed to agree with Engels' prediction of 1882: 'In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population - Canada, the Cape, Australia - will all become independent'. Lenin equated the Russian socialists' demand 'Get out of Central Asia' with British Socialists' demand 'Get out of ... Australia'.²⁸ Studying Andre Siegfried's *New Zealand* (Berlin, 1909), Lenin summed up the peculiarities of 'Australasian imperialism':

Two trends of imperialism (fully compatible):

- 1) Great-Power imperialism (participation in the imperialism of Great Britain).
- 2) 'Local imperialism'... - its isolationism... exclusiveness

which also could be described by Siegfried's term 'colonial jingoism'.

Lenin believed that 'Great-Power imperialism' manifested itself in the cooperation of the bourgeoisie of Britain with self-governing Dominions in the plundering of such British colonies as India and Egypt, as well as in Australia's active support of Britain in the Boer War. Discussing this issue, he concluded:

N.B.: a union of the privileged, of participants in monopoly, in Australia - the monopoly owners of a vast territory - for jointly plundering the 'yellows' and 'blacks', etc.

This 'Great-Power imperialism' benefitted the Australian bourgeoisie and strengthened its ties with Britain.

'Local imperialism', the term which Lenin underlined by three lines and marked 'N.B.' in the margin of his manuscript, was seen by him to refer to more than the colonial expansion of New Zealand and Australia in the Pacific. He included in this notion the extermination of the natives, opposition to 'coloured' and even European

27 Lenin, 'Notebooks on Imperialism', pp. 100, 192, 286, 287, 289, 290, 291, 292, 305, 389, 554; V.I. Lenin, 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism', in his *Collected Works*, vol. 22, pp. 243, 291.

28 V.I. Lenin, 'The discussion on self-determination summed up', in his *Collected Works*, vol. 22, pp. 337, 352; Lenin, 'Notebooks on Imperialism', p. 671.

immigration, and, probably, the mentality of the population, which I discuss below.²⁹

Lenin's article 'In Australia', written after the federal general elections held in May 1913, shows that he was aware of the attitude of Liberal Russian and European writers to Australia, and explained it in Marxist terms.

What sort of peculiar capitalist country is this, in which the workers' representatives predominate in the *Upper* House and, till recently, did so in the Lower House as well, and yet the capitalist system is in no danger?

he asked. To explain the situation he suggested examining not the parties' 'sign-boards but their class character and the historical conditions of each individual country'. Unlike Russian Liberals, who ultimately believed that the Workers' party' in Australia consisted of workers and represented their interests, Lenin's class-oriented approach led him to believe that

The Australian Labour (sic!) Party does not even call itself a socialist party. Actually it is a liberal-bourgeois party, while the so-called Liberals in Australia are really Conservatives ... In Australia the Labour party is the *unalloyed* representative of the *non*-socialist workers' trade unions. The leaders of the Australian Labour Party are trade union officials, everywhere the most moderate and 'capital-serving' element, and in Australia, altogether peaceable, purely liberal.

Lenin's famous art of arguing might seem convincing only if we accept his *a priori* position that socialists (i.e. Marxists whose final goal is to establish socialism and to deprive the bourgeoisie of the means of production) are the only party which can truly represent workers' interests.

Lenin argued that the 'liberal Labour Party [arose] only for a short time by virtue of specific conditions' and saw the historical roots of Australia's 'atypicality' in the fact that Australian workers emigrated from Britain

at the time when the liberal-labour policy held almost undivided sway there, when the masses of the British workers were *Liberals* ... in the result of the exceptionally favourable, monopolist position enjoyed by Britain in the second half of the last century.

He believed that as soon as the 'quite youthful' Australian capitalism matures, 'the conditions of the workers will change, as also will the *liberal* Labour Party, which will make way for a *socialist* workers' party'.

This attempt to explain the Australian phenomenon from Marxist positions was very important for Lenin, because the success of Australian social reforms threatened to

29 Lenin, 'Notebooks on Imperialism', pp. 521-522, 532, 562-563.

undermine the Marxist tenet of class struggle as the only option for workers in their relations with capital and the bourgeois state. Lenin wrote:

Those Liberals in Europe and in Russia who try to 'teach' the people that class struggle is unnecessary by citing the example of Australia, only deceive themselves and others. It is ridiculous to think of transplanting Australian conditions (an undeveloped, young country, populated by liberal British workers) to countries where the state is long established and capitalism well developed.³⁰

The question of Australian social reforms was a tricky point for Russian radicals in general. B. Brazolenko, an author with Social-Democratic sympathies, wrote in 1905:

We, however, are far from idealizing Australian social relations.... The capitalist still reigns, his throne is not overturned yet.... But each act aimed at protecting the worker and limiting the tyranny of the capitalist is of great importance as it facilitates the liberation of mankind.... From this point of view one should welcome the social creative work of young democracies.

Lenin did not approve even this much. Australasian social reforms rankled with him, and he believed that they were not in the workers' interests. Enumerating New Zealand's social reforms from Siegfried's book he summed up: 'N.B. the imperialist bourgeoisie is buying the workers by social reforms'.³¹ Elsewhere, at the end of a list of literature discussing Australian reforms, he remarked: 'The example of Australia, and her influence: "a socialism that addresses itself to the ruling class"'. Being aware of agrarian reforms in Australia and New Zealand, he summed up Siegfried's materials in the following way:

Creation of small landownership; large estates (stolen, etc., in the basest fashion from the Maoris, etc.) bought out and sold to smallholders - that is '*democracy*', but not '*socialism*' ... ((True!))

It is characteristic that in compiling the 'Essayed summary of world history data after 1870' Lenin did not record any social reforms in Australia at all, and noted only one democratic reform in Australian history - the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia.³²

When Lenin did recognize Australasian democracy he had a special explanation for this phenomenon which otherwise did not fit his theory of imperialism. In 1916 he

30 V.I. Lenin, 'In Australia', in his *Collected Works*, vol. 19, pp. 216-217.

31 This reminds me of my teacher of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union. Explaining to confused students why so many workers in the USA have cars (a sign of luxury in Russia) he said: 'Well, the bourgeoisie first bribed the workers' aristocracy and then the rest of the workers'.

32 Brazolenko, 'Ocherk fabrichnogo', p. 113; Lenin, 'Notebooks on Imperialism', pp. 98, 217, 460, 533, 699.

argued:

Imperialism is the exploitation of hundreds of millions in the dependent nations by a handful of very rich nations. Hence, the *possibility* of full democracy inside the richest nation *with its continued* domination over dependent nations. That was the state of things in ancient Greece on the basis of slavery. That is how things now stand with New Zealand and Britain.

In 1913 the Bolshevik Artem blamed the nature of 'backward' Australian workers who did not want to participate in an active class struggle: 'Dull, narrow-minded people with wooden heads' who had leaders with 'copper foreheads'. Lenin, reflecting on the facts in Siegfried's book, came to a similar conclusion about New Zealand society:

A country of inveterate, backwoods, thick-headed, egoistic Philistines, who have brought their '*c i v i l i s a t i o n*' with them from England and keep it to themselves like a dog in the manger. (Exterminated the natives - the Maoris - by fire and sword; a series of wars.)

If he had written about Australians, he probably would have made a similar appraisal.³³

After the revolution Lenin, it seems, became more tolerant of Australian workers and the Labor party. The *Biographical chronicle* of Lenin records his interest in the situation in Australia. In 1922, during the IV Congress of Comintern, he met with the delegates from Australia and spoke with them for nearly two hours. Soviet scholars have expressed regret that no further facts were available about this conversation.³⁴ I discovered some interesting evidence about this interview, preserved in a police intelligence file about Soviet Russia in the Australian Archives. The information was received through delegate J.S. Garden. Lenin advised the members of the young Communist Party of Australia to combine their efforts with the Labor Party but to continue their propaganda. 'Capture the Trade Union movement, including the Labour Council, form nuclei in every organization, and on with the revolution', was Lenin's

33 V.I. Lenin, 'Remarks on an article about Maximalism', in his *Collected Works*, vol. 41, p. 385; Lenin, 'Notebooks on Imperialism', p. 532. In the manuscript Lenin underlined the word 'civilization' with four lines obviously inserting a sarcastic meaning into it.

34 V.I. Lenin. *Biograficheskaya khronika* [V.I. Lenin. Biographical chronicle], vol. 8, Moscow, 1977, p. 536; *Ibid.*, vol. 12, Moscow, 1982, pp. 500, 512, 513, 516, 526; V.P. Kudinov, 'Zarozhdenie i razvitie kommunisticheskogo dvizheniia v Avstralii' [The origin and development of the communist movement in Australia], in *Idei sotsializma i rabochee dvizhenie v Avstralii*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 39-40.

advice according to this document.³⁵

Lack of space does not allow me to discuss in detail Russian perceptions of the Australian economy and Russian-Australian economic relations, or the activity of Russian consuls in Australia. Still, I will attempt to provide a summary of the main facts and outline the general trends in Russian perceptions.

The Russian consular network in Australia experienced steady growth, due to the further development of economic relations and the increase in immigrants from the Russian Empire. The headquarters of the Russian regular consul remained in Melbourne; he was responsible for the Australian colonies and New Zealand. The growing recognition of this position is indicated by the fact that after April 1899 the rank of the Russian consul was raised to Consul-General. After Nikolai Pompeevich Passek (1900-1902), this position was occupied by Mikhail Mikhailovich Ustinov (Oustinoff) (1902-1907) and Matvei Matveevich Gedenshtrom (1908-1910). The last and the most active Russian Consul-General was Count Aleksandr Nikolaevich Abaza (d'Abaza), appointed in 1910. He began his activity in Australia in 1911 and resigned after the October 1917 revolution, in January 1918. At the same time, before and during the First World War, Russian consular representations were established in all Australian capital cities and some ports (Newcastle, Port Pirie, Darwin). The functions there were performed by honorary consuls and vice consuls who were local residents. All of them resigned after the October revolution.³⁶

Australia - Russia trade figures are given in Table 20.

35 AA (ACT): A6122/40, 111, Summary of Communism, vol. 1, pp. 272-273. The text of this interview was also recorded by the second Australian delegate, W.P. Earsman, and discovered in 1976: see W.P. Earsman, 'The interview with Lenin', introduction by R. Coater, *Australian Left Review*, no. 53, 1976, pp. 13-16. For details of the connections between Australian and Moscow communists see in M.H. Ellis, *The Red Road. The Story of the Capture of the Lang Party by Communists Instructed from Moscow*, Sydney, 1932. According to this book Lenin's knowledge of Australia had astonished Garden (p. 102).

36 The fate of the Russian consular archives, which could be of a great interest to researchers, remains unclear. Official correspondence shows some confusion on this point. According to some documents Abaza, after his resignation, destroyed cipher and code books but gave materials to the vice consul H.C. Sleight. Later Sleight stated that he did not have anything, as Abaza had destroyed all the papers. At the same time, official correspondence with Jacques Abramovich Tomas, a Russian who was an Acting Consul in Brisbane for a few months in 1917 and after that was associated with Abaza in Melbourne, suggests that he received part of the archive from Abaza. Departing for the Russian Far East in 1919, he intended first to leave this archive to the Prime Minister's Department but finally decided to deliver the papers to the Russian consul in Nagasaki. AA (ACT): A981, CONS 241, Consular matters USSR includes Imperial Russia; A981, CONS 242, Consular Russia at Brisbane includes claim on USSR.

Table 20
Australian Trade with Russia, 1901-1919

Years	Imports from Russia (£)	Exports to Russia (£)
1901	62,568	3,195
1902	25,701	35
1903	10,029	928
1904	29,372	...
1905	13,355	10,339
1906	2,073	115,608
1907	46,982	120,763
1908	126,654	75,206
1909	93,039	609
1910	149,877	1,793
1911	217,410	8,184
1912	29,906	135,609
1913	22,636	99,891
1914-1915	105,896	270,368
1915-1916	44,215	899,565
1916-1917	40,278	1,465,399
1917-1918	29,369	75,072
1918-1919	19,730	2,069

Source: *Annual Statement of the Trade of the Commonwealth of Australia... for the Year 1904; Trade and Customs and Excise Revenue of the Commonwealth of Australia for the Year 1906 ... 1918-1919.*

Trade between the two countries had increased considerably since the end of the nineteenth century, but it remained unstable. In general it was characterised by a prevalence of imports from Russia over exports to it before 1912, and the opposite situation after 1912, especially in the war years. Timber, lubricating oil and kerosene prevailed in the Russian exports to Australia, followed by furs, flax and indiarubber goods. The Australian exports to Russia consisted of meats, tallow, wheat, wool, lead, copper, zinc, coal and copra. Active steps to further Russian-Australian trade were taken during the war. In January 1916 Vasilii Denisov (Denissow), an official Russian envoy, came to Australia aiming to increase Russian exports to Australia. One manifestation of the movement for closer trading relations was the establishment of the Russian-Australian Bureau of Commerce and Information in January 1917. Consul General Abaza, who initiated this body and was its president, argued in an article in the *Argus* that 'of all the British Dominions Australia is best situated to supply Russia directly with many commodities that Russia needs' and that Russia has 'an inexhaustible market' for many goods which Australia had previously exported to Germany. He also suggested that mutual trade with 'certain articles of manufacture' would be beneficial for both countries.

The February 1917 revolution did not end the Russian interest in trade with Australia. In June 1917 the new Russian Provisional government sent a trade mission to Australia. The October revolution practically brought to an end economic contacts between the two countries for a long time (some Australians lost their property in the Russian territory as a result of Soviet Russia's refusal to accept the Russian Empire's obligations).³⁷

The attitude of the Russian press in the pre-revolutionary years to Australia in economic relations generally followed the trend emerging at the end of the nineteenth century. While the number of Russian items published on Australian mining declined, the amount of material about Australian trade and primary industries continued to grow. These writings were often of a practical interest to the Russian farmers, especially after the Stolypin's reform, suggesting rational ways of dairying and meat farming. It is not by chance that many of these writings appeared in provincial agricultural magazines targeted at local farmers.³⁸

At the same time, Russian producers and businessmen became increasingly concerned about Australia's successful competition with Russian goods. For instance, the appearance of Australian frozen mutton on the St. Petersburg market in the pre-war years (it became one of the main items of Australian export to Russia) provoked a negative response in Russian business circles. They argued that Russian farmers often did not know what to do with the overproduction of their mutton and due to inertia did not take active steps to improve the quality of their meat, to organize the transportation of it, or to use freezing techniques. The press used the success of Australian farmers to show the Russians how the business should be organized in the modern world. The supplanting of Russian tallow (a traditional item of Russian export) by Australian tallow in England and even Russia also concerned the Russians. The First World War, on the contrary, brought some hope to them. The influential journal *Financial Review* in 1915 argued that after the war Russia should occupy the place of Germany and some other countries in trade with

37 A.N. D'Abaza, 'Russia and Australia', *Argus*, 31 January 1916, p. 6; AA (ACT): A1, 1916/3535, Russia & Australia - Promotion of direct trade between; A458, F510/4, part 1, Trade: Russia - Trade with, part 1.

38 Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii*, nos 1838-1844, 1970-1973, 2110-2119, 2125-2127, 2185-2191, 2253-2275, 2361-2372, 2515-2552, 2699-2714.

Australia. It proposed a plan which included the establishment of a direct line between Vladivostok and Australia operated by Russian trade steam-ships, which would attempt to replace the German steamers previously operating to Australia. The journal explored a number of fields of mutual trade where Russia and Australia would not compete, as they did with the mutton trade, but supplement each other's resources. 'We do not doubt that the development of our relations is desirable, necessary and possible', enthused the journal.³⁹

Australian fiction became an essential element in the writings about Australia available to the Russian reader. The selection was a mixture of classic Australian works and briefly popular ones. Among the Australian classics were such works as Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of his Natural Life* (published in Russian in 1903), Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* (1904, 1912), and Edward Dyson's *The Gold Stealers* (1906, 1907). Interest in Australian short stories predominated. Among those authors whose stories were translated were J.A. Barry, Louis Becke, Albert Dorrington, Edward Dyson, Steele Rudd and nearly twenty others. The Russian scholar Alla Petrikovskaia remarks that

Some of these writers are now all but forgotten, their names to be found, if at all, only in histories of Australian literature and anthologies, but in their time they enjoyed wide popularity.⁴⁰

These translations appeared either in popular adventure, travel or juvenile periodicals, or as separate booklets. In general they created a rather fascinating, though not complete, picture of Australian bush life and of adventures in Australian settings. Sometimes translators preferred short stories which dealt with the most general human feelings and situations without any Australian local colour. Thus they 'overlooked' Henry Lawson, probably considering him too specifically Australian for translation. Other aspects of Australian reality, such as city life, remained beyond the scope of the Russian translations.

39 Ia. P-v, 'Avstraliiskaia baranina na russkom rynke' [Australian mutton on the Russian market], *Iugo-vostochnyi khoziain*, no. 11, 1910, pp. 10-12; D.V. Fedorov, 'Opasnaia konkurentsia' [Dangerous competition], *Sel'skii khoziain*, no. 8, 1911, columns 306-309; 'Avstraliiskoe salo v Rossii' [Australian tallow in Russia], *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta*, 31 December 1912, p. 2; 'Nash tovaroobmen s Avstraliei' [Our exchange of goods with Australia], *Finansovoe obozrenie*, no. 14, 1915, pp. 9-10.

40 Petrikovskaya, 'Literary Contacts', pp. 214-215.

Still, the literary critics brought the landmarks of Australian literature to the notice of the Russian reader, through literary criticism. The Russian essayist Isaac V. Shklovskii, who was involved in the democratic *narodniks* movement at the end of the nineteenth century and exiled to Siberia, found his way to Britain, where he wrote articles for the journal of opinion *Russian Wealth* under the pseudonym Dioneo. Australian literature was a theme that allowed him to discuss broader issues such as methods of colonization, social types, class relations in modern Western society, and such dominant features as self-respect and democracy. His writings were full of direct and indirect comparisons between Australia and Russia. Trying to make the Russian reader understand the early attitudes of colonial poets to Australian nature, he mentioned a handwritten magazine produced by his exiled friends in Yakut taiga in Siberia. All these works were inspired by their recollections about the past, rather than the surrounding world. He considered the poetry of Adam Lindsay Gordon to be like that, believing that it did not reflect Australian life. On the other hand, he believed that the poetry of Henry Kendall, though not outstanding in quality, was typically Australian.

He made a detailed study of three Australian novels: Marcus Clarke's 'For the Term of His Natural Life', Henry Kingsley's 'The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn' and Rolf Boldrewood's 'The Squatter's Dream'. He treated these texts not only as a source of information about transportation or squatters' lives, but as a basis for wider reflections and comparisons. Thus Clarke's novel allowed Dioneo to condemn the institution of transportation in general, and in Russia in particular. 'The Russian reader, who is familiar with the Sakhalin conditions ... will not be horrified to the same degree as the English', was Dioneo's comment on the most tragic pages of the novel. Again, Clarke's description of atrocities towards deported children gave Dioneo grounds not to condemn the English, as some other Russian publicists did, but to remind Russians of 'worse cruelties which happened not in distant Tasmania but in European Russia' - the conscription of eight-ten year old boys, sons of serf soldiers, whose suffering and death did not really trouble Russian public opinion in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Dioneo's democratic persuasions led him to a rather ironic perception of Kingsley's novel:

Australian squatters of the sixties, whom the growing proletariat called vampires and cannibals, were pleasantly surprised to discover from Kingsley's novel that they were such heroes and knights.

As for Boldrewood's novel, he considered that it had only historic value.

The squatter's dream is primitive: he dreams of growing rich fast, though for him money is not an end in itself but a means for cultured leisure... In a word, it is the old Russian landlord idyll

without its worse excesses and 'with immeasurably higher intellectual demands'. All Dioneo's sympathies were with young, energetic, democratic Australia, whose authors appeared in the 1890s and were grouped around the *Sydney Bulletin*. He devoted a special article to the role of this periodical, acquainting the Russian reader with specific Australian genres - the ballad and 'condensed' short stories. Dioneo approved the national and patriotic spirit which was a distinguishing feature of this new generation of writers and had not yet evolved into jingoism. He believed that Henry Lawson was one of the most remarkable of the *Bulletin's* authors.⁴¹

Translations of world fiction about Australia continued to grow, and their relative proportion increased. Their authors continued the traditions of the previous century, using Australian scenery as a perfect setting for mystery and adventure novels and short stories. A new feature was the abundance of Russian names among these authors. While such writers as M.K. Pervukhin, K.M. Staniukovich, and A. Tsvetnovich used Australia as a setting for their fiction, others, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, claimed that the described adventures took place during their real visits to Australia, though these visits remain unconfirmed. Among the latter are A.A. Usov (A.A. Cheglok), M.A. Solov'ev, M.V. Ragozin and N.L. Tolstoi. As their writings were often published in the most popular travel journals for youth or the working classes, it might be interesting to refer to the impressions these authors disseminated. Their Russian heroes came to Australia either as sailors on merchant or naval ships, or as tourists or even adventure seekers. The tone of most of these writings was neutral; the authors, in the form of travel notes, tried to provide the reader with easily digestible information about Australian nature and some aspects of modern life. Among the themes they discussed

41 Dioneo, 'Iz literaturny molodykh demokratii', pp. 353-400; Dioneo [I.V. Shklovskii], 'Pressa molodykh demokratii' [The press in the young democracies], in his *Refleksy deistvitel'nosti: Literaturnye kharakteristiki*, Moscow, 1910, pp. 283-317.

were the kangaroo hunt, the rabbit problem, life on the gold fields, impressions of the cities, and Aborigines. Peculiarities of life on the farms, the everyday life of workers and middle class town dwellers, as well as any social issues, remained beyond the scope of these writings. It was more an image of the Australia of the 1860s-1880s than of the beginning of the twentieth century.

Their accuracy, in terms of history and geography, was far from perfect. For instance, Solov'ev began his *Travelling Australia by Camels* with a description of his 'travelling on a merchant ship from Perth to Fremantle' which took him a day and a night. After that the author probably acquired a map of Australia, and without much confusion led his hero through outback Western Australia from Hopetoun to Yalgoo and Lake Macdonald. Ragozin managed 'to see' in the surroundings of Ballarat in 1904 scenes of gold diggings typical for the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Some authors describing Aborigines often concentrated on cannibalism, probably the most striking feature to arrest the reader's attention, and often confused them with South Pacific islanders, while the others severely condemned the colonists for their atrocities towards the native inhabitants. The later approach was characteristic of Cheglok and Al. L'va whose short story 'The kangaroo hunt' I analysed in the chapter devoted to Russian visitors of the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴²

Thus the twentieth century brought a significant polarization in the perception of Australia in the Russian publications. On the one side, refined intellectuals and specialists argued about the relevance of Australian achievements to Russia, while on the other side an ordinary Russian reader, often a newly literate one, still flew in his dreams to this distant land of adventures, preferring this outmoded image to that of the up-to-date socially and technologically advanced country. The statistics on the dynamic of publications suggest that, although the image of Australia as a distant exotic continent was still in demand, it was finally overshadowed by the image of the country which achieved socio-economic miracles. The conflict of these two images was perfectly formulated by Piotrovskii in his book in 1917:

42 Cheglok, *Ostrovnye ptitsy*; Cheglok, *Po Avstralii: Rasskazy iz zhizni zhivotnykh*; Cheglok, *Po Avstralii: Rasskazy iz zhizni ptits*; Ragozin, 'Zhivopisnoe puteshestvie po piatoi chasti sveta'; Solov'ev, *Na avtomobile cherez Avstraliu*; Solov'ev, *Na verbludakh po Avstralii*

[Australia] is a country where the foundations of the future just social order are laid down already.... Some readers may be surprised to hear it: all of us used to learn at school and read in travel books that Australia is a country inhabited only by black savages and convicts.⁴³

The Russian socio-economic image of Australia had specific peculiarities. The determining feature of it was the immediate response to and connection with Russian problems. No other nation looked so eagerly towards Australia in the hope of finding a way to solve its own problems; no other nation discussed Australian achievements in order to speak about its own drawbacks under conditions of political censorship; and finally, no other nation produced a political group which so bitterly attempted to disparage Australian reforms in an attempt to protect its own ideological tenets. Australia was no longer a field of predominantly academic interest. Both Russian Liberals and Marxists not only studied the Australian experience, but used it for political propaganda. In this propaganda they attempted to target the broad social strata of the Russian society, including the working masses. That led to deliberate simplification, and concentration only on those aspects of the Australian situation that fitted the authors' ideology.

In the economic sphere, practical interest was also strong. Stolypin's economic reforms in Russia were to a certain degree the adoption of Australian methods of economic development; and the Russian authors now aimed to provide local farmers with information about Australian achievements. In economic competition, Australia was perceived as an example to unenterprising Russian farmers, rather than as an enemy.

Under the onslaught of the October revolution, civil war and devastation the old Russia was gone for ever. Its image of Australia at that time was like a last desperate dream. The Russian writer Ivan Bunin, trapped in Odessa occupied by 'the reds', wrote in his *Damned Days*:

16 April, 1919... The heaviness on the soul is unspeakable. The crowd that fills the streets now is physically unbearable, I get tired of this brutal crowd to the point of exhaustion. If one could have a rest, escape somewhere, go away, for instance, to Australia! But it is already a long time since all the ways, all the roads were forbidden.⁴⁴

And they remained forbidden for three generations of Russians after that...

43 Piotrovskii, *V strane istinnogo narodovlastiia*, p. 4.

44 I.A. Bunin, *Okaïnnnye dni [Damned Days]*, London, 1977, p. 52.

CONCLUSION

When I look back on Russians' perceptions of Australia from settlement until the early twentieth century, at their fascination and disillusionment, their enthusiasm and criticism, their usage of Australia to provide both pro and contra arguments on issues of Russia's future, I feel how illusory may be my aspirations to speak about 'the Russians' and their perceptions in general. I try to imagine what were the impressions of Australia of the 33 year old half-blind convict Constantine Milcow, a horse breaker Muscovite, whose sallow face was fanned by the Australian wind and warmed by the winter sun, as the *Atlas* unloaded his live-stock in Port Jackson in 1816... Had his perceptions anything in common with those of the astronomer Ivan Simonov, an envoy of a friendly superpower, who visited Australia aboard the *Vostok* in 1820, and who was entertained by Governor Lachlan Macquarie? Milcow probably saw a land of suffering and doom, whereas Simonov perceived 'a perfect society of cultured people' in 'the kingdom of the eternal spring'. I try to compare the feelings of the young lady Evlampia Holtze, a member of the Russian provincial nobility, who 'left her Russian past behind her' and was doing laundry in the Darwin heat in 1872, with those of Grand Duke Aleksandr Mikhailovich who studied coal mines in Newcastle and who charmed Lady Carrington, the Governor's wife, in 1888. Probably Evlampia believed in a land which would finally bring prosperity to her children and the Grand Duke perceived Australia as a curious place with some achievements. And was there anything in common in the perceptions of the Russian labourer emigre, Nikolai Blinov, who 'felt himself surrounded by enemies' and was nearly killed in a mine in 1916 and those of the Russian historian Pavel Mizhnev who throughout the early years of the twentieth century promoted Australia as the workingmen's paradise?

Maybe Milcow's perceptions were closer to those of the British or Irish convicts than to those of his own successful countrymen who came to Australia as visitors? Maybe Evlampia's attitude was more similar to that of the industrious German settlers than to that of Russian visitors primarily occupied with British influence on the Australian way of life? Maybe Russian radicals could find more brotherly understanding among Australian

socialists than among liberal Russian writers? Obviously the variation in the perceptions of members of different social strata was stronger among Russians than among other nationalities such as Americans, Germans or French.

The period discussed (1788-1919) was distinguished by the changing social background of those who wrote about Australia and whose perceptions are thus available to us. Their social origins changed from a tiny stratum of the educated elite in the early nineteenth century to the broad working class masses by the second decade of the twentieth century. Likewise the social status of Australian people whom the Russians described changed. In the early nineteenth century the Russians mixed predominantly with the Australian elite. In the second half of the century their field of observation widened, but they were still only onlookers when they wrote about the working classes. It was in the early twentieth century that the Russians for the first time really had the opportunity to mix with ordinary people, albeit not a typical cross-section. This was especially the case with Russian immigrants, but even travellers, such as Kriukov or Iashchenko, visiting farms and the outback, shared experiences and saw the life of ordinary people at close hand. By the early twentieth century the Russian publications, to a significant degree, addressed their writings to the Russian working classes too and often discussed the situation of the working classes in Australia. Thus the Russian image of Australia turns out to be a versatile phenomenon, changing not only according to time but with the social background of the observers and the observed.

Along with social and temporal factors there is a third important factor determining Russian perceptions of Australia. This is the gap that existed between the totality of Russian observations and writings in each particular period and that which was actually read and which determined mass perceptions. For instance, from the 1860s Jules Verne's *Captain Grant's Children* was a standard reading for practically every literate youngster and adolescent for several generations, while dozens of profound original Russian studies of Australia may have been beyond the scope of their reading.¹

1 Similarly Colleen McCulloch's *The Thorn Birds* translated into Russian in 1980 now determines the perception of the mass of female Russian readers in spite of the abundant literature about Australia that exists in Russian at the present time.

Still, having made all these reservations, and assuming that in studying the evolution of ethnic perceptions one can arrive at relative truth only, I have attempted to outline some more general tendencies characteristic of the different categories of Russians. In summing up the evolution of these tendencies I would group my findings thematically as follows.

Russian images of the Australian landscape created by armchair writers and visitors differed considerably. The armchair critics followed the pattern set by European writers and depicted Australia as an exotic country of natural curiosities, a land of mysteries where nature was successfully tamed by the British colonists. In other words the Australian land was perceived as sometimes harsh but always exciting. This image did not undergo significant changes throughout the period discussed and its exotic character perfectly satisfied the aspirations of Russian readers for a distant dreamland full of wonder. On the contrary, the perceptions of the actual visitors were more complicated and changed over time. The evolution was from fascination with the Port Jackson and Hobart areas at the beginning of the nineteenth century to disappointment with and rejection of non-tropical Australia in the second half of the century and then to gradual understanding of the peculiar beauty of these areas by the early twentieth century. The determining factors of this evolution were the visitors' expectations and the geographical part of the continent that they visited.

In Russian writings about Aborigines it is important to stress that their accounts of their early contacts are valuable not only from the point of view of perceptions, but also because of the abundant facts which can be used for further studies by anthropologists. Eurocentrism certainly dominated the early Russian perceptions. A specific tendency was that when the Russians turned from generalizations to description of individuals their view became more sympathetic. Moreover, as late as 1820 some Russian visitors perceived Australian Aborigines against images of 'the noble savage' which at that time was less usual for other Europeans. Also throughout the nineteenth century a strong tendency in the Russian writings was to adopt a compassionate attitude towards Aborigines as 'pitiful'. This was in the framework of a broader Russian tradition of compassion for the 'small man'. By the twentieth century some writers went beyond the

purely 'compassionate' attitude and saw Aboriginal society as harmonious, perfectly fitted to the specific Australian environment and having a right to exist in its own way. The issue of the colonists' abominable treatment of Aborigines was the only point which invariably provoked Russian criticism throughout the period discussed. The above mentioned Russian sympathy for Aborigines, as well as general disapproval of British relations with other peoples (which the Russians believed were less charitable and just than their own) were the reasons why Russians, describing European-Aboriginal conflict, were predominantly on the side of the Aborigines. A new feature of the early twentieth century was an inclination not to blame 'the English' in general for the brutality but to distinguish between different groups and individuals among them.

From the earliest visit in 1807 Russians were in general enthusiastic about the Australian economy and their forecasts were optimistic, though not without remarks on particular shortcomings. The inclination to overestimate Australian achievements was due to both the contrast within Australia of wilderness/civilization and to the contrast with the Russian economy. The Russians especially approved features which were lacking in their own economic system such as: respect for hard work by individual, free producers, wise government support, and the use of advanced technology. From the 1890s in Russia there was a growing interest in the practical application of the Australian achievements to the developing Russian economy. While before the 1860s Russians were inclined to see the cause of Australian economic success in fortunate conjunctures, later on, and especially in the early twentieth century, they connected the success with the solution of social problems and the cultural development of the society. In the Russian mind a favourable attitude towards trade with Australia dominated over apprehensions of Australia as a possible economic rival. In spite of some practical steps in the development of mutual trade, especially after 1894 when a Russian consulate was established, trade did not expand significantly, partly due to the sluggish mentality of the top Russian officials.

The Russian perception of the Australian political system was subject to significant evolution through time. Visitors in the first half of the nineteenth century approved of the absolute power of the governor if he was a humane and wise autocrat,

and in the second half of the century were rather sceptical towards Australian parliamentary democracy, being unable to see the essence beneath the external forms. By contrast, for the Russian authors the triumph of democracy over despotism was the determining factor in Australian history, and armchair writers believed that democracy was the cause of the economic and social success of the country, and saw federation as its culmination.

The transportation of convicts to Australia and the prison system were of particular interest to Russians and their perceptions of these institutions also underwent significant evolution. The attitudes of the early visitors to transportation were invariably enthusiastic: they praised not only the perfect conditions of the convicts' lives, but the efforts of the humane authorities to reform criminals. Russian historians of the second half of the nineteenth century still saw transportation as a successful page in Australian history in which a conjuncture of circumstances was supplemented by the absence of abuses by the authorities. Only from the end of the nineteenth century did the Russian democratic writers begin to take a critical attitude towards the Australian transportation system, considering it despotic, cruel and ineffective. Visitors in the second half of the nineteenth century continued to express the favourable attitudes of the early visitors towards prison conditions, with particular approval of rehabilitation and the retention of prisoners' self-respect. At the same time some of them recorded more critical nuances. And by the early twentieth century, when some Russian emigres were convicted in the courts and became prison inmates, they by no means shared the earlier favourable attitudes. They considered the prison conditions extremely negatively and thought the system of justice prejudiced and hostile. Moreover, by the time of the October revolution, many of the Russian emigres began to perceive the whole of Australia as a prison and themselves as innocent victims.

Russian perceptions of the formation of the Australian nation exhibited a number of interesting peculiarities. On the lexical level, in the Russian visitors' writings the term 'the Australians' began to supplant 'the English' from the 1860s. Its meaning gradually widened. First it was used to oppose Australian people to 'the English' and Europeans in general, then the Russians used it when discussing local Australian problems, and finally

when describing specific Australian national qualities. In the early twentieth century the term 'Australian' was applied for the first time by some Russian visitors to their individual acquaintances.

Visitors' writings also manifested a controversial Russian understanding of the differences between 'the Australians' and 'the English'. The stereotype of 'the English' in the Russian mind at that time was often dominated by negative features, and as a result they were inclined to ascribe all negative features noticed in Australian life to the English legacy. By contrast, all that was positive was 'Australian', and considered distinct from the English influence. This tendency had emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and was fully developed in the second half. By the early twentieth century, however, this polarity was reduced and the association of negatives with the English had declined, though not disappeared completely. The Russian armchair writers, throughout the period, exhibited this tendency only to an insignificant degree.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Russian visitors noticed distinctive features (connected with the better climatic conditions and the higher general living standard) in the appearance of the Australian people and especially their dress. Russian writings provide a wide range of material illuminating their understanding of peculiar features in Australian social behaviour. Egalitarianism, respect for the lower classes, self-respect among all classes - were the features increasingly arresting the Russians' attention, obviously because these were features distinct from what Russians knew at home and partly, in Russian understanding, from English society. At the same time the Russians' criticism of such features as formality and individualism were due to the Russians' collective mentality, their preference for spontaneity, for chaos over cosmos. While Russian middle-class visitors and liberal writers made the exploration of Australian social behaviour a sphere of predominant interest, Russian radical emigres were often indifferent to it or perceived Australian society as undemocratic and xenophobic. This was due not only to the Russian mentality and dogmatic persuasions but to the extremely difficult situation in which some emigres happened to be.

The question of stereotypes as such - one of the main problems with imaginological studies - did not become a central issue in Russian writings about

Australian society throughout the period discussed. The old stereotypes, which often determined the perceptions of Russian visitors to European, American or Asian countries, lost their importance in Australia. Obviously there was no stereotypical Russian legacy in the perception of Australian people. Australia was a new and unique country, and it was thought to be inhabited by particular people. In understanding and defending the specific features of the Australians the Russians concentrated on their distinctions from the English, rather than attempting to formulate a stereotypical image of Australians.² At the same time the Russians did distinguish a number of national characteristics, particularly egalitarianism, anti-authoritarianism, mateship, secularism, which, according to Russel Ward, constitute the Australian Legend,³ but the Russians' image in general was broader and more critical than the legend. Certainly in 1919 it was too early to expect the Russians to have created a stereotype of the newly formed Australian nation, but they were well on the way to it.

Australian social reforms and particularly the conditions for Australian workers were a topic of Russian interest. Russians praised the high living standard of workers from the 1870s but initially believed that it was due to favourable economic circumstances. From the 1890s, and especially after the first Russian revolution of 1905, the Russian liberal writers became extremely enthusiastic about the conditions of the Australian workers, probably even more than their European counterparts. That was due to the sharp contrast with the Russian reality as well as to some confusion in the analysis of facts. For instance Russian writers did not distinguish between legislation and its practical application, between Labor party declarations and those policies it was ready to put into immediate practice, between conditions of qualified workers in the cities and those of some labourers in the outback and the poorest suburbs. Such enthusiasm was contradicted by radical writers and increasingly by Russian emigres. The former could not accept it because the Australian way denied the dogma of class struggle, the latter because of the hard conditions suffered by unqualified foreign labourers, especially during the First World War.

2 For instance in the period discussed Russians were more likely to state that Australians, as distinct from the English, were hospitable rather than simply treat this quality as a national feature.

3 R. Ward, *The Australian Legend*, Melbourne, 1978.

The most general, simplified graphic approach to the evolution of the Russian image of Australia reveals the following. The image was predominantly positive from the early visits to the 1860s, then it began to exhibit certain negative features, which still did not overshadow the previous positive image. From around the time of the revolution of 1905 the image exhibited increasing polarization between enthusiasts and critics. As far as I can judge comparing Russian with other European nations' attitudes, the Russians seem more extreme, whether they are praising or criticizing Australia.⁴ This increasing polarization together with the extremities in the perception might be due to greater social polarization of the Russians in comparison with other European nations.

With regard to stereotypes (in the broad meaning of the word) the Russian image of Australia and its people obviously followed the European pattern. The stereotype of the Australian land - distant and strange - was the first to form soon after the earliest Russian contacts and writings, and by the middle of the nineteenth century it was well established. Attempts by Russian visitors to enrich it were without success. The stereotype of Australia as a state - an advanced democracy and a workingmen's paradise - formed between the two Russian revolutions (1905-1917). It obviously overshadowed all critical voices of Russian emigres who had many reasons to disagree with it. And, finally, the stereotype of the Australian nation, although in formation from the first half of the nineteenth century, was not yet established by 1919.

Judging Russian writings in terms of their themes, on the basis of my statistical analysis of nearly 1,700 Russian publications dealing with Australia throughout 1770-1919, the following pattern may be discovered. The percentage of writings dealing with geography and travel gradually decreased, while the percentage of socio-economic writings increased. Thus the image of Australia as a country of socio-economic achievements gradually overshadowed the image of a country of exotic geography. The latter image of a distant mysterious continent still remained in circulation, but its readership gradually narrowed to children and adolescents. Although there are no similar statistical studies of the literature of other nations about Australia, it seems obvious that in

4 This is only a preliminary observation and the comparative study of different national images of Australia is a topic for future investigation.

this respect the Russians parallel the most general tendency of the dynamic European perception of Australia prior to 1919.

My study reveals the necessity to distinguish between the images created by Russian publications and those created by visitors. The general tendency is for the images of visitors to be more profound though limited by the circumstances of the particular visit, more critical and more specifically Russian; by contrast the images created by the armchair writers were of a broader character, less critical and closer to general European perceptions, although their 'Russianness' did increase with time.

Images of Australia played an important role in Russian history and culture. While their role was less important than images of France or America, Australia still found a special place in the Russian heart and mind which no other country could claim. It satisfied the Russian thirst for, and interest in, a land of fantasy in the far Southern ocean, a land of paradoxes and mysteries, a land of adventures and luck, a land of frontier life and the formation of a new nation, a land of advanced Western civilization in economic and social spheres, and - finally - a land of refuge. When writing about Australia Russians always directly or indirectly compared it with their own country. These comparisons were dominated by two contradictory attitudes: on the one hand Australia was seen in many respects as a model for Russia, while on the other hand it was not uncommon for Russians to have a feeling of superiority over the embryonic Australian nation and over the English way of life in general. Reflecting on Australia helped Russians reach a deeper understanding of their own people and country and to speak about Russian problems under conditions of censorship. Yet it is in the exaggerations and delusions of the Russians that we find material most intriguing to a contemporary reader: it is in their errors that the Russians are most revealing of their mentality.

A study of the history of Russian-Australian contacts prior to 1919 and of the origin of relations between the two countries suggests that perceptions and preconceptions played an important role, even forming the main component of Russian-Australian relations throughout all this period. The abstract and the distant were more significant than the concrete and immediate. For instance, because of perceptions and beliefs, rather than trustworthy first hand knowledge, and even in defiance of this

knowledge, a considerable exodus of Russians to Australia took place before the First World War. Perceptions, rather than comprehensive facts, were the basis for arguments between Russian radicals and Liberals when they discussed the Australian situation and applied it to Russia. The catch phrase 'Australia is a distant country' obviously hindered the development of trade in spite of arguments proving that it could be profitable. The French and Germans were obviously more reliant on facts than on images or 'ideas' when they successfully developed trade with Australia or dispatched there better prepared emigrants.

In summary we may conclude that the available literature allows us to trace the changing Russian image of Australia and single out its main specific features. From the 1820s this image can be considered as well-developed, in many respects not less developed than the images created by other nations. It exhibited a number of features characteristic of all European cultures, yet its 'Russianness', increasing with time, always played an important role. A study of the adequacy of the Russian images relative to the Australian reality proves that the Russian writings in total supplied the reader with abundant trustworthy facts, but also present among the Russian exaggerations and delusions is material that may help us to look at both the Australian and Russian realities with a new, fresh glance. Indeed, the fact that the early Russian visitors with one accord described Macquarie's Australia as a paradise and many of the Russian emigres at the time of the First World War perceived it as hell, may suggest to an Australian historian that it is time to revise some accepted views. Similarly it might lead a Russian historian to wonder what was the Russians' mentality and what were their ideals on the eve of the October revolution, and was the Russian way really doomed to differ from that of other European nations.

The imaginological approach proves to be of considerable importance for modern historical research. Russian perceptions of Australia analyzed and systematized by way of a concrete-historical and composite methodology prove to be a promising source for further comparative studies as well as of potential value for a better understanding of various aspects of both Australian and Russian history.

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