

A NEW RIVAL STATE?

AUSTRALIA IN
TSARIST DIPLOMATIC
COMMUNICATIONS

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P R E S S



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Editorial notes: Sources, translations, transcription, dates, annotation, and naval and civil service ranks

The present collection contains 123 documents dealing with Australia from the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire (AVPRI). Not all the material held in that archive is published here, but all consuls in the sixty-year period 1857–1917 are represented. The compilers have sought to select the dispatches and other communications judged to be of greatest potential interest to the historian of Russian–Australian relations and the general reader alike. Those documents treat a broad range of topics, including the following: the economic development of the colonies, the gold rush and its demographic and social consequences, diplomatic (consular) relations between Russia and Australia, great power rivalry in the Pacific, fear of Russian expansion after the Crimean War, defensive measures to counter the ‘Russian threat’, the evolution of Australian foreign policy, social movements in Australia, the political and legislative structure of the colonies, progress towards federation, the Commonwealth of Australia and its legislative structure, the rise of the Labor Party, immigration and the beginnings of the White Australia policy, and consular services provided to Russian nationals in Australia.

The documents appear in the chronological order in which they were written. Not included here are the dispatches held in the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), most of them devoted to commercial and economic links between Russia and Australia.

The great majority of the consular dispatches in this volume appeared in Russian in the collection published by Alexander Massov and Marina Pollard in 2014, *Rossiiskaia konsul'skaia sluzhba v Avstralii 1857–1917 gg.*

(Moscow, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*). A small number, however, have not been published in any language; these are marked 'previously unpublished'. A few appeared in print, in full or in part, in Russian periodicals in the years 1894–1912. Where this is the case, it is indicated at the end of the documents concerned. Where there is no such indication, the reader may assume that the document was published in Russian in Massov and Pollard 2014.

Wherever possible, the translations have been made from the original documents, rather than copies of the originals. Where only a copy was available, this is indicated with the information on the source. The same applies to documents written in English.

For the most part, the documents are presented unabridged. However, the customary opening and closing salutations (e.g. 'Your Excellency', 'I have the honour to remain your humble servant ...' etc.) are omitted and marked [...]. Also omitted are the markings on the documents indicating which officials of the Foreign Ministry or other ministries were granted access to them. Exception is made only when this information is of clear contextual importance. Archive references are given at the end of each document in the standard format used by Russian archivists: e.g. 184-520-130, f. [folio] 5, standing for the original *Fond* 184, *opis* 520, *delo* 130, *list* 5. Following the catalogue reference, the language of the original (Russian, French, English) is indicated.

The biographical notes on all diplomatic personnel were prepared by Marina Pollard.

Many of the first translations from Russian were made by Dr Maria Kravchenko of the University of Queensland. All other translations, from Russian and French, are by Kevin Windle, who also checked and revised the first versions from Russian, and completed the annotation.

With few exceptions, the original documents are handwritten, and transcription often poses problems. Those written in English are for the most part reproduced as written, preserving inconsistencies of spelling (e.g. honor/honour, -ise/-ize) and irregularities in the use of capital letters. Some obvious minor slips have been corrected. Numbers in thousands or greater are given in a form which will not confuse the modern reader, rather than the style applied by some of the writers.

All underlining in the documents is by the original authors.

Some systematic errors are allowed to stand. In order to avoid a tedious repetition of an editorial '*sic*', these are pointed out on the first occasion only, in a note. Prominent among these is the repeated misuse by some writers of the title 'Sir' with surname only (e.g. 'Sir Dibbs' for 'Sir George' or 'Sir George Dibbs').

Where the consuls cite English-language sources (e.g. the Australian press and parliamentary debates) in Russian or French translation, wherever possible the quoted passages have been checked against the original publications. On occasion there are notable discrepancies between a quotation as it appears in the press or Hansard, and the translated version cited in a consular dispatch. Where this is the case, an editorial note draws attention to it and a reference to the English-language source is provided. In many cases, however, the quotations cannot be checked: when the consuls relate private conversations conducted in English, or cite speeches which have not survived, there is no record of the original wording. In such cases, it has been necessary to resort to back-translation from the Russian.

Transcription of Russian names: A flexible approach has been necessary, as rigorous consistency would produce its own anomalies and difficulties for the reader. Following convention, all names and titles in bibliographical references are given in standard Library of Congress (LC) transliteration. In the text, however, since LC often seems misleading or phonetically inaccurate to the general reader, a modified style of transcription is applied. Hard and soft signs are omitted; final *-y* replaces *-ii* and *-yi*, e.g. Rossiisky, Dmitry; *-iia-* is reduced to *-ia-* (Maria, Natalia); in initial position, and following a vowel or original soft sign, *ye*, *ya*, *yu* etc. appear, but elsewhere *e*, *ia* and *iu* are used. Hence, Yevfimy, Ilya, Alekseyev, Dmitriyevich, Nikolayevich, Boyarin, Nayechnik, Kriukov, Kliachko and the ending *-skaya*. As in standard LC, Russian *й* = /i/ (Nikolai, Kreiser, Gromoboi).

The following exceptions should be noted: German names of Russian subjects (e.g. Hagemeister, Hedenstrom, Ungern-Sternberg, Krehmer) are given in their German form, rather than in transliteration from the Cyrillic, which would yield Gagemeister, Gedenshtrom, Ungern-Shternberg and Kremer. These apart, some diplomatic staff had their own views on the Latinised forms of their names, e.g. Alexis Poutiata and Chreptowitch (rather than Aleksei Putiata or Putyata and Khreptovich), and their choice has been respected. Damyon and Paul, writing in English

of Russian personalities, used forms of transcription common in their day, often influenced by French—thus Boutakoff (Butakov) and Swetlana (Svetlana)—and not always consistently. The editors have not adjusted these forms, and have adhered to spellings preferred by later writers for their own names: e.g. Peter Simonoff, Constantine Hotimsky and Elena Govor. ‘Alexander’ will appear when an individual’s preference dictates it, and in some other cases, but the surname and patronymic will be Aleksandrov and Aleksandrovich.

Following accepted practice, the names of Russian emperors, dukes and princes are given in Anglicised form (Alexander III, Nicholas II).

The spellings *rouble* and *copeck*, the forms most commonly used in the nineteenth century, are retained.

Dates: Before the revolution of 1917, Russia used the Julian calendar, which in the nineteenth century was twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the West and thirteen days behind in the twentieth century. When, as is usually the case, the dispatches bear dates according to the Julian calendar or ‘Old Style’ (OS), the corresponding dates by the Gregorian calendar (‘New Style’, NS) have been inserted before the Old Style date. Russian diplomatic staff serving abroad in general preferred the Old Style, but often indicated both. Honorary consuls, who were usually not Russian, used only the New Style. If a date appears in one form only, that form is New Style (Gregorian calendar) unless otherwise indicated.

Inconsistencies of various kinds may be noticed, particularly in the style in which dates and times are given in the text of some dispatches. These are often due to differences in the original documents. The editors have not attempted to impose complete uniformity in matters of this nature.

Annotation: Some of the consuls appended their own notes to their dispatches. These have been retained and authorship indicated in brackets. All other notes have been added by the editors, to supply bibliographical details and cross-references, or to provide context and background information on events, personalities and circumstances with which readers may be unfamiliar.

Naval and civil service ranks: Some ranks in the Imperial Russian Navy have no exact counterpart in the Royal Navy or the navies of other English-speaking countries. Rather than attempt to impose inexact near-equivalents, we have followed the widespread practice of translating the

Russian terms, e.g. 'captain first class', 'captain second class', 'captain-lieutenant' (roughly equivalent to RN lieutenant-commander) and 'senior/junior lieutenant' (rather than lieutenant and sub-lieutenant).

Ranks in the imperial civil service also have no equivalent, but standard translations are used (state counsellor, privy counsellor, collegiate assessor etc.).

Kevin Windle
Canberra
May 2018

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Our thanks are due to Dr Maria Kravchenko of the University of Queensland, who made a first draft translation of many of the Russian documents, and to James Grieve of ANU for advice and assistance with manuscript dispatches in French.

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Introduction

This volume comprises a collection of documents from the Russian consuls in Australia over a period of more than half a century, from the establishment of a Russian consular service in the settler colonies in 1857 to the closure of the consulates after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. These documents do more than shed light on the history of the establishment and development of relations between Russia and Australia, and serve as a foreign source on Australia's history. They are also of great interest for a number of other reasons.

Among students of history, it is widely recognised that foreign sources on the history of any country have special value. The importance of documentary material of this kind lies above all in the fact that they offer an opportunity to view the development of a country from an unusual and often unexpected perspective, through the eyes of an outsider who represents a foreign and sometimes completely alien culture. With reference to Alexis de Tocqueville's renowned *Democracy in America*, the eminent American political commentator George F. Will has emphasised 'how much can be learned about one culture seen through the lens of someone intelligent and sympathetic from another'.¹ The dispatches sent by the Russian consuls in Melbourne and Sydney, generally sympathetic, though not uncritical, bear this out. It is clear that the particular nature of the picture thus formed derives from the difference between the traditional systems of values in the country observed and the native country of the observer. The publication and study of foreign sources therefore allow one to identify differences in mentality, cultural codes and behavioural archetypes between the bearers and representatives of different cultural traditions and social institutions. In other words, the study of such sources is of great interest at the level of perceptions and opens new avenues for

1 George F. Will, review of Joshua Mitchell, *Tocqueville in Arabia*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2013, press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo16956679.html (accessed 4 April 2018).

the investigation of the cultural, demographic, social and other features of the society represented by the outsider, as well as those of the society which the outsider seeks to understand.

The surprisingly rapid and generally successful economic and social development of Australia in the last decades of its colonial history and the early years of federation attracted much interest throughout the world and did not pass unnoticed in Russia. The 'lucky country', a 'working man's paradise' and a 'social laboratory of humanity' were titles conferred upon the country by visiting foreigners, and often quoted by Russian visitors. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Tsarist Empire was undergoing a new stage of economic and political modernisation, which was accompanied by a sharp polarisation of society and accentuation of class contradictions. The educated strata of Russian society – the liberal intelligentsia and the country's ruling circles – paid close attention to the way political and social problems were resolved in Australia, and sought to adapt it and, where possible, apply it to Russian realities.²

An analysis of this nationally determined aspect of the consular dispatches presented here, and a study of them from the viewpoint of a peculiarly Russian perception of Australian reality, allows us to pay particular attention to one further important fact. With regard to its civilisation, for the past three hundred years Russia has been, and remains essentially, a state with an incomplete sense of self-identification. Its internal development and foreign policy have fluctuated constantly between a Western and an Eastern way of life, in both its fundamental principles and their day-to-day application in practice. Any drive towards economic and political modernisation along European lines invariably collides with resistance from the traditional Russian value system, which appeals to an autocratic model of authority and a centralised economy, largely dependent upon the state. The fluctuations between these two value systems can clearly be seen in the documents produced by the Russian diplomats. The study of the Russian perception of Australia as represented by the political class, of which many Foreign Ministry staff were members, enables us not only to better understand the attitude of Russia and Russians to Australia; in the wider context it allows us to bring out and explain some features

2 See Elena Govor, *Australia in the Russian Mirror: Changing Perceptions 1770–1919*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1997, p. 244; also N. S. Skorobogatykh, 'Russkie dorevoliutsionnye issledovaniia ob osnovnykh problemakh Avstralii kontsa XIX – nachala XX v.', in *Piatnadsataia nauchnaia konferentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii*, Moscow, Nauka, 1984, pp. 56–62.

of Russian foreign-policy thinking and thus of some features of the way that policy is shaped. An understanding of this foreign-policy paradigm is topical not only for the study of Russia's actions in the international arena in the past, but also for the evaluation of its behaviour and its role in the system of international relations in modern times.

All nations view foreign observers' opinions of their country with interest, noting how perceptions change with the passage of time, and Australia is no exception. In Australia in 1977, an English translation was published of a book by Albert Métin, the French historian, geographer and politician, *Le socialisme sans doctrines*, first published in 1901. In it Métin expressed a high opinion of social policy in the British settler colonies.³ Between 1909 and 1912, the German scholar Robert Schachner, who had spent eighteen months travelling the continent and working at labouring jobs (shearer, prospector, coal miner, factory worker), produced his comprehensive study of Australia in three volumes.⁴ In 1990, a small selection of his writings on the subject appeared in English.⁵ In our view, the Russian consular dispatches concerning the development of the colonies and the Commonwealth of Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries constitute a substantial and no less valuable contribution to the tradition of the study of outsiders' perceptions – this time Russian perceptions – of Australia. It is the editors' hope that the materials presented here will be of interest not only to specialists in the history of Russia and Australia and the relations between them, but also of value to historians of international relations and naval policy. The questions raised in the consuls' dispatches, concerning the constitution of the Australian Commonwealth in comparison with Russia's state structure and other parts of the British Empire and the US, their reflections on the resolution of social problems in Australia and the reasons why Labor and

3 Albert Métin, *Socialism without Doctrine*, trans. Russel Ward, Chippendale, NSW, Alternative Publishing Co-operative, 1977. (*Le socialisme sans doctrines: la question agraire et la question ouvrière en Australie et Nouvelle-Zélande*, Paris, F. Alcan, 1901). It was Métin who first called Australia 'the working man's paradise'. It is noteworthy that this work was translated into Russian and published in Russia as early as 1903, reflecting steadily growing Russian interest in developments in Australia and New Zealand. See A. Meten, *Agrarnyi i rabochii vopros v Avstralii i Novoi Zelandii*, Moscow, M. V. Nemchinov, 1903.

4 Robert Schachner, *Australien in Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur*, Jena, Gustav Fischer, 1909; *Die Soziale Frage in Australien und Neuseeland*, Jena, Gustav Fischer, 1911; *Australien und Neuseeland: Land, Leute und Wirtschaft*, Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, 1912.

5 *The Workers' Paradise? Robert Schachner's Letters from Australia, 1906–07*, eds John Lack, Frederick Ohles and Jurgen Tampke, with an afterword by Robert Schachner Jnr, Parkville, Vic., History Dept, University of Melbourne, 1990.

left-leaning tendencies took root there, and their views on the economic and demographic development of the country will interest a broad spectrum of readers. These may include political scientists, sociologists, economists, demographers, and legal scholars studying the history of the state and the law.

Here it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the current state of research into Russian–Australian contacts. Historians in Russia and Australia alike have explored this field to some extent, but it is hardly an exaggeration to say that until recently the history of Russian–Australian relations has received less attention than it merits from researchers in both countries.

Historians in Australia have dealt mainly with topics related to the history of the Russian diaspora there, paying particular attention to those pro-Soviet members of the Russian community who sought to radicalise the labour movement and played a key role in the formation of the Communist Party of Australia (see various works by Raymond Evans, Frank Farrell, Eric Fried, Stuart Macintyre, David Lovell and Kevin Windle).⁶ Over the past two decades, the field has broadened somewhat with the publication of Elena Govor’s work on Russian perceptions of Australia and her two other books, which have been favourably received. The first is her biography of Nikolai Ilin and his descendants in Queensland, exploring their family links with the Indigenous population of Australia. The second deals with the Russians in Australia who enlisted as Anzacs and fought in the First World War.⁷ For a long time, the political aspect of the history of Russian–Australian relations lay on the outer fringes of the field of interest of Australian scholars. There was little more than the brochures of Constantine Hotimsky and Clem Lack, an article

6 Raymond Evans, *The Red Flag Riots: A Study of Intolerance*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1988; Eric Fried, ‘The First Consul: Peter Simonov and the Formation of the Australian Communist Party’, in John McNair and Thomas Poole (eds), *Russia and the Fifth Continent: Aspects of Russian–Australian Relations*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1992, pp. 110–125; Kevin Windle, *Undesirable: Captain Zuzenko and the Workers of Australia and the World*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012; Kevin Windle, ‘“Trotsky’s Consul”: Peter Simonoff’s Account of His Years as Soviet Representative in Australia (1918–21)’, *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2015, pp. 493–524, doi.org/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.93.3.0493; David Lovell and Kevin Windle (eds), *Our Unswerving Loyalty: A Documentary Survey of Relations between the Communist Party of Australia and Moscow, 1920–1940*, Canberra, ANU E Press, 2008.

7 Elena Govor, *Australia in the Russian Mirror: Changing Perceptions 1770–1919*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1997; Elena Govor, *My Dark Brother: The Story of the Illins, a Russian-Aboriginal Family*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2000; Elena Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2005.

by Duncan MacCallum and two short articles by Verity Fitzhardinge.⁸ Unfortunately, all these relied on a slender body of source material, and those of MacCallum and Lack on Russia's supposed hostile designs on the settler colonies were plainly ill-founded and therefore unconvincing.⁹

The Soviet historiography of Russian–Australian relations presents a fairly similar picture, while reversing the ideological interpretation of the history. Soviet specialists said nothing at all about the political aspect of relations between the two countries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and relations between the Commonwealth of Australia and the USSR were viewed through the prism of confrontation between ‘the world’s first socialist state’ and the reactionary ‘world of capital’. Soviet Australian studies also offered numerous publications about the revolutionary element in the diaspora, presenting the revolutionaries as heroes in a struggle, fraught with danger, for the interests of the working class.¹⁰

The situation underwent some change after the collapse of the USSR, when it became possible to conduct research without constraints of ideology or dogma. The post-Soviet period has seen the publication of scholarly works of high quality. These include Galina Kanevskaya's monographs on the history of the Russian diaspora in Australia, Alexander Massov's history of Russian–Australian relations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Alla Petrikovskaya's history of cultural contacts between the two countries, and Artem Rudnitsky's works on Peter Simonoff, Soviet

8 C. M. Hotimsky, *The Russians in Australia*, Melbourne, Topic Publications, 1957; Clem Lack, *Russian Ambitions in the Pacific: Australian War Scares of the Nineteenth Century*, Brisbane, Fortitude Press, 1968; Duncan MacCallum, ‘The Alleged Russian Plans for the Invasion of Australia, 1864’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 44, Pt 5, 1959, pp. 301–322; Verity Fitzhardinge, ‘Russian Ships in Australian Waters 1807–1835’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 51, Pt 2, 1965, pp. 113–147; Verity Fitzhardinge, ‘Russian Naval Visitors to Australia, 1862–1888’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 52, Pt 2, 1966, pp. 129–158.

9 A more thorough and objective treatment of the Russian naval presence in the south of the Pacific basin in the nineteenth century and the potential danger posed to Australia and New Zealand is given by the Canadian historian Glynn Barratt, making use of Australian and Russian sources, in his monographs: *The Russian Navy and Australia to 1825: The Days before Suspicion*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1979; *Russophobia in New Zealand, 1838–1908*, Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, 1981; *The Russians and Australia*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1988.

10 For example: P. Gutsal, ‘Artem v Avstralii’, *Dobnass*, No. 1, 1958, pp. 119–128; M. E. Privalenko, *Bol'shevik Artem. Oчерk o zhizni i deiatel'nosti F. A. Sergeeva (1883–1921)*, Kursk, Kn. izd., 1964; A. M. Chernenko and V. V. Gotsuliak, *Rossiiskaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia v Avstralii (1900–1917)*, Dnepropetrovsk, Dnepropetrovsk State University, 1978; K. V. Malakhovskii, ‘Uchastie russkikh revoliutsionerov v rabochem dvizhenii v Avstralii’, in *Idei sotsializma i rabochee dvizhenie v Avstralii*, Moscow, Mysl', 1981, pp. 67–85.

Russia's first consul in Australia.¹¹ New sources have become available: in 1993, a collection appeared of documents pertaining to Russian seafarers and travellers in Australia; and, in 2007, a selection of materials on the Russian perception of Australia.¹² In 2014, there appeared a collection of Russian consular dispatches about Australia in the period 1857–1917, the work which provides the basis for the present volume.¹³

Some rekindling of interest in Russia was also seen in Australia. It was reflected in a broadening of themes and the publication of new works on the history of Russian–Australian contacts. Thomas Poole published articles on the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1942 between the USSR and Australia, and on cooperation between the two countries during the Second World War.¹⁴ In 2008, a collection of articles appeared on Australian intellectuals who visited the Soviet Union.¹⁵ The bibliography, *Russian Sources on Australia, 1788–1990*, listing 1,118 titles published in pre-revolutionary Russia and the USSR on Australian topics, was an important aid to the study of Russian–Australian relations.¹⁶ It was based on Elena Govor's *Bibliography of Australia*, published in Russia.¹⁷ In 1992, the first joint volume by Australian and Russian historians appeared, *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, compiled and edited by Thomas

11 G. I. Kanevskaia, *Ia bezdomyi, no zato ia na vole ...*: *Russkie peremeshchennye liitsa v Avstralii (1947–1954 gg.)*, Vladivostok, Izd-vo Dal'nevostochnogo universiteta, 2005; G. I. Kanevskaia, *My eshche mechtaem o Rossii*. *Istoriia russkoi diaspory v Avstralii (konets XIX v. – vtoraiia polovina 80-kh gg. XX v.)*, Vladivostok, Izd-vo Dal'nevostochnogo universiteta, 2010; A. Ia. Massov, *Andreevskii flag pod Iuzhnym krestom (iz istorii rusko-avstraliiskikh sviazei pervoi treti XIX veka)*, St Petersburg, Izd-vo SPbGMTU, 1995; A. Ia. Massov, *Rossiia i Avstralii vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka*, St Petersburg, Izd-vo SPbGMTU, 1998; A. S. Petrikovskaia, *Rossiiskoe ekho v kul'ture Avstralii*, Moscow, IVRAN, 2002; A. Iu. Rudnitskii, 'Sud'ba pervogo konsula: K istorii rossiisko-avstraliiskikh otnoshenii', *Istoriia bez kupiur* (special issue of *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*), Moscow, 2012, pp. 5–26; Iu. Artemov (A. Iu. Rudnitskii), *Ruskaia revoliutsiia v Avstralii i seti shpionazha*, St Petersburg, Aleteia, 2017.

12 E. V. Govor, and A. Ia. Massov (eds), *Rossiiskie moriaki i puteshestvenniki v Avstralii*, Moscow, Vostochnaia literatura, 1993; second edition Moscow, Vostochnaia literatura, 2007; I. N. Vasil'eva-Iuzhina (ed.), *Avstraliia v russkom vospriiatii, 1907–2007. Vpechatleniia. Obrazy. Idei*, Moscow, 2007.

13 A. Ia. Massov and M. Pollard (eds), *Rossiiskaia konsul'skaia sluzhba v Avstralii, 1867–1912 gg. (Sbornik dokumentov)*, Moscow, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2014.

14 Thomas Poole, 'The Establishment of the First Australian Diplomatic Mission in the USSR: Outstanding Landmark or Great Embarrassment?', in John McNair and Thomas Poole (eds), *Russia and the Fifth Continent: Aspects of Russian–Australian Relations*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1992, pp. 172–209; Thomas Poole, 'Comrades-in-Arms during World War II', in Alexander Massov, John McNair and Thomas Poole (eds), *Encounters under the Southern Cross: Two Centuries of Russian–Australian Relations 1807–2007*, Adelaide, Crawford House Publishing, 2007, pp. 204–230.

15 Sheila Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Rassmussen (eds), *Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s–1940s*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2008.

16 Thomas Poole, John McNair and Lyndall Morgan (eds), *Russian Sources on Australia, 1788–1990*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1993.

17 E. V. Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii (1710–1983)*, Moscow, Nauka, 1985. A supplement was published in 1989: E. V. Govor, *Bibliografiia Avstralii 1984–1988*, Moscow, Nauka, 1989.

Poole and John McNair at the University of Queensland.¹⁸ In twelve chapters it covered various aspects of the history of Russian–Australian relations – political, economic, demographic and cultural – as well as the study of Australia in Russia up to that date. For the bicentenary of the inception of Russian–Australian contacts, marked by both countries in 2007, another joint Russian–Australian volume was compiled and edited by Alexander Massov, Thomas Poole and John McNair: *Encounters under the Southern Cross*,¹⁹ a largely successful attempt at an integrated all-round study of Russian–Australian contacts throughout their history. The year 2016 saw the publication by Australian and Russian historians of a collection of articles, travel notes, memoirs and letters by Russian seafarers and travellers who visited Australia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁰

The first contacts between Russia and the British colonies on the Australian continent were established at the beginning of the nineteenth century: in June 1807, the Russian-American Company's sloop *Neva* called at Sydney during a voyage from Kronstadt to Russian America, as Alaska was then known.²¹ During the first third of the nineteenth century, a further fourteen Russian vessels visited Australia. All of them called at Sydney and Hobart in the course of voyages round the world, or half way round it, and Australian ports were important transit points for them, where they could rest their crews, take on stores and water, and repair their ships. Those who sailed on those voyages and visited Australia in the first third of the century included Leonty Hagemeister, Mikhail Vasilyev, Gleb Shishmarev, Thaddeus Bellingshausen, Mikhail Lazarev, Pavel Nakhimov, Yevfimy Putiatin, Vasily Zavoiko, and many other outstanding Russian navigators and naval commanders. The officers of the Russian Navy were highly educated men. They took a close interest in the life of the young British colonies and observed their rapid development. They studied the natural history and ethnography of the exotic and little-known continent, and the botanical, zoological and ethnographic material they collected enriched the collections in Russian museums. After their shared victory over Napoleon, Britain and Russia established stable if not friendly relations, which endured at least until the end of the 1820s.

18 John McNair and Thomas Poole (eds), *Russia and the Fifth Continent: Aspects of Russian–Australian Relations*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1992.

19 Alexander Massov, John McNair and Thomas Poole (eds), *Encounters under the Southern Cross: Two Centuries of Russian–Australian Relations 1807–2007*, Adelaide, Crawford House Publishing, 2007.

20 Kevin Windle, Elena Govor and Alexander Massov, *From St Petersburg to Port Jackson: Russian Travellers' Tales of Australia 1807–1912*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 1–4.

Anglo–Russian accord meant that the Russians could expect a warm and cordial welcome in Australia, and Russian naval officers were sought-after guests in the homes of Sydney’s and Hobart’s high society.

For a long time, however, visits by Russian ships were the sole channel of communication between Russians and Australians. We may say that, in the first third of the nineteenth century, any acquaintance between the two countries remained on a general human level. There were no commercial or economic links, and political interaction did not yet reach beyond the framework of Anglo–Russian relations.²²

In the mid-nineteenth century the situation changed. The discovery of gold in Australia in 1851 laid the ground for a gold fever, which led to a steep rise in the population and provided the stimulus for a powerful and long-lasting surge in the economic development of the British colonies, lasting until the 1890s. In the years 1851 to 1860, 25 million ounces of gold were mined in Australia, or 40 per cent of the worldwide output.²³ Gold became Australia’s principal export commodity. The influx of prospectors led to a rise in the population of the Australian colonies to 1,168,000 in the first decade of the gold rush alone (until 1861). That of the colony of Victoria increased from 77,000 to 540,000, and that of New South Wales from 200,000 to 350,000.²⁴ Among those who came seeking gold were numerous emigrants from the Russian Empire. In 1863, Pavel Mukhanov, a midshipman on the Russian corvette *Bogatyř*, observed that ‘in Melbourne one can hardly walk the street without encountering somebody speaking Russian’, and pointed out that in the city there were ‘quite a number’ of Poles, Germans and Jews from Russia’s western provinces.²⁵ Australian folklore preserves a legend, which undoubtedly has a basis in fact, of a certain ‘Russian Jack’, a prospector who worked in the goldfields of Western Australia in the 1880s.²⁶

Farming continued to develop: the number of sheep and the output of wool in New South Wales, the stronghold of Australian sheep-breeding, increased eleven- and seventeen-fold respectively between 1860 and 1890.

22 For more detail, see A. Ia. Massov, *Andreevskii flag pod luzhnym krestom. Iz istorii rusko-avstraliiskikh svyazei pervoi treti XIX veka*, St Petersburg, Izd-vo SPbGMTU, 1995.

23 N. S. Skorobogatykh, *Istoriia Avstralii*, Moscow, 2011, p. 40.

24 P. I. Puchkov, *Etnicheskoe razvitiie Avstralii*, Moscow, Nauka, 1987, p. 41.

25 P. S. Mukhanov, ‘Avstraliia. Opisanie plavania v Avstraliu s istoricheskim ocherkom ee’, Manuscript Department, Russian National Library, 608-1-3031, f. 63.

26 Peter J. Bridge, *Russian Jack*, Perth, Hesperian Press, 2002.

Industry also emerged in Australia: by 1890, there were over 10,000 industrial enterprises employing 133,000 people.²⁷ Foreign trade increased markedly, and the geographical range of the colonies' exports and imports expanded significantly. By the beginning of the twentieth century, up to 30 per cent of Australia's foreign trade was with countries which were not part of the British Empire.²⁸ Britain's settler colonies were becoming important players in the world market. In 1855, the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia secured from the British Government the right to full internal self-rule. In accordance with an act passed in the British Parliament, a legislative body was established in each colony, consisting of two chambers: a legislative council (the upper house) and a legislative assembly (the lower house). From 1856, the colonies had their own governments. The same constitutional model was adopted when the new colony of Queensland was established in 1859. From that time on, a democratic system of government began to operate successfully in the self-governing Australian colonies.

Australia's rapid socioeconomic and political development caused other countries to pay increasing attention to the position there. The need for information about the internal situation and foreign policy matters in the settler colonies, together with the need to protect the rights of their citizens abroad and their growing commercial interests in that part of the world, led to the opening by foreign powers of consular services in Australia. By 1890, Melbourne and Sydney, the capital cities of the most heavily populated and developed of the colonies, hosted twenty-seven and twenty-one foreign consulates respectively.²⁹

Along with other countries, Russia also established consular representation. The decision to open these services in Melbourne and Sydney was taken at the end of 1856, and as early as the beginning of 1857 two Australian merchants were appointed to consular office: James Damyon in Melbourne and Edmund Paul in Sydney.³⁰ Until 1875, they were honorary vice-consuls, and subsequently Russia's honorary consuls in Victoria and New South Wales respectively. Damyon served until the end

27 Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: An Economic History 1835–1939*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1949, pp. 137, 182–183.

28 *A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand, 1903–1904*, Sydney, 1904, pp. 258–259.

29 *The Australian Handbook (Incorporating New Zealand, Fiji and New Guinea), Shippers' and Importers' Directory and Business Guide for 1890*, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, 1890, pp. 148, 224.

30 Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire (hereafter AVPRI): 184-520-137, ff 1, 7, see Documents 1 and 2.

of 1893 (unofficially until the beginning of 1894) – that is, until Russia's diplomatic representation in Melbourne was made professional and a serving member of the diplomatic service appointed full-time consul. Paul retained his post of honorary consul in Sydney until 1913.³¹

The honorary consuls in Australia came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Consulate General in London. In addition to their representative functions, they performed assignments on an occasional basis for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the London embassy and Consulate General, at intervals collecting and forwarding to London all manner of statistical information on the development of the Australian colonies, and were also called upon to protect the interests of Russian nationals in Australia. The consuls' duties included rendering legal and other assistance to the commanders of Russian naval vessels and the masters of Russian merchantmen while these were in Australian ports.

The work of the honorary consuls to protect Russian interests may be judged by their dispatches to the Russian consul general in London. These dispatches were sent at irregular intervals; sometimes several of them bore the same date. Their preparation and timing was usually linked to the timetable of the mail-and-passenger ships sailing to Europe. Since many of these dispatches were laconic in the extreme, and often the content did not extend beyond formalities, they are of little enduring interest. While James Damyon sent his dispatches to London fairly frequently and endeavoured to provide relatively detailed accounts of everything that bore on his duties as Russian consul, Edmund Paul's reports were considerably less frequent, he did not number them, and sometimes merely acknowledged receipt of instructions and information from the consul general in the British capital. For this reason, the compilers of the present edition felt it advisable to include only those which clearly show the nature and scope of Paul's and Damyon's work as honorary consuls – that is, mainly those from the years 1862–1864.

The honorary consuls in Melbourne and Sydney coped well with the tasks of protecting the interests of Russian nationals in Australia and looking after Russian seamen. The collection of economic and statistical information also proceeded without difficulty. However, the honorary status of these diplomatic representatives made it harder for them to perform political duties, especially the collection of political information.

31 *Ezhgodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossii, 1914*, St Petersburg, 1914, p. 192.

Furthermore, the Russian Foreign Ministry could not entrust any important assignments which had a political colouration to foreign nationals (such as the honorary consuls). Damyon did try, of his own accord, to collect some political intelligence, guided by his own views on the significance to the Russian Government of particular questions. In 1863, he conveyed to Russia some material concerning a new plan, approved by the Government of Victoria, for defensive installations at Port Phillip; he also reported on the progress of Britain's Maori wars in New Zealand, and fairly regularly informed the Consulate General in London of anti-Russian propaganda being conducted by Polish emigrants in Australia.³²

By the beginning of the 1890s, the Russian Foreign Ministry no longer found that state of affairs satisfactory. New circumstances dictated the need to establish professional diplomatic representation in Australia. In Russia, there was increasing interest in the development of the domestic political situation in Australia, in particular military construction and the rapid rise of federalist tendencies aimed ultimately at effectively establishing a unified Australian state, a dominion within the framework of the British Empire. The new state structure would embrace the entire continent, and it already had its own fully formed foreign-policy priorities. The Australians were also moving steadily towards the creation of their own colonial sphere of influence in the South Pacific. In 1874, under pressure from the Australian colonies, Britain annexed the islands of Fiji, and in 1884–1885 forced Germany into a colonial partition of the eastern part of the island of New Guinea. Australia's colonial ambitions, together with its efforts to create an army and a navy, substantially altered the balance of power in the Pacific in favour of the British Empire. All this was taking place at a time of extreme strain in Anglo–Russian relations since the Crimean War, at times teetering on the brink of renewed armed conflict. Rivalry between other great powers was also intensifying in the Pacific. With the rapid entry of this once remote region into the orbit of world politics, the importance of Pacific problems for Russian diplomacy increased and demanded an urgent expansion and strengthening of Russia's diplomatic presence there. As Vladimir Oltarzhevsky has written, in the 1890s, several Russian honorary consular missions in Pacific countries were made

32 AVPRI: 256-555a-1264, ff 29–43; 256-555a-1279, ff 121–122, 147; 256-555a-1146, f. 29; 256-555a-1279, ff 115., 117, 130–143, 148–156; 256-555a-1264, ff 6, 14, 36.

professional. These included the consulate in Melbourne.³³ In 1894, it began to function in a permanent capacity, directly subordinate to the Imperial Embassy in London. It would now be headed by career diplomats in the employment of the Foreign Ministry.

Owing to the importance of the social and political processes in train in Australia, the duties of the representative in Melbourne went beyond purely consular services. In this respect, they might well be compared with those of the Russian consul in another British colony, Canada, which by this time had already become a dominion. There the consul's range of duties were defined as follows in the instructions from the Foreign Ministry: 'The duties of this consular agent are of a dual nature: on the one hand, he is a consul in the strict sense of the term ... while on the other he is to perform the duties of a political agent, closely observing any change which may come about in the attitude of the Canadian Government to the metropolis ... and observing the mood of the country itself'.³⁴

The very first professional Russian consuls in Melbourne, Alexis Poutiata (who took office in 1894), Robert Ungern-Sternberg (consul in 1895–1898), and Nikolai Passek (consul in 1900–1902),³⁵ substantially extended the range and volume of the consulate's work by including a political component. Besides traditional consular services – protecting the property rights and other interests of Russian nationals, issuing documents and passports, affording legal assistance to distressed Russian emigrants – the consuls sent the London embassy information on the domestic political development of the Australian colonies. Here Poutiata's regular detailed reports on the socioeconomic situation, the political struggle and social movements in Victoria as it endured a severe economic crisis are of great interest. The consuls' dispatches meticulously trace the progress of the movement towards a federated Australia, report on plans to build up the colonies' defence capacity, and the earliest evidence of an independent foreign policy. It should be noted, however, that although the Russian consuls could see the growth of centrifugal tendencies within the British Empire, at first they clearly underestimated the strength of the federation

33 V. P. Oltarzhevskii, 'Nachalo deiatel'nosti rossiiskogo konsul'stva v Mel'burne (Avstraliia)', *Problemy istorii Avstralii i Okeanii*, Irkutsk, 1990, p. 29.

34 AVPRI: 184-520-951, f. 72.

35 Personal considerations prevented Nikolai Matiunin, who was appointed Russian consul in Melbourne in 1898, from taking up his post. In 1898–1899, the duties of the Russian representative were discharged by the French consul in Melbourne, Léon Adolphe Dejardin. Nikolai Passek, who was posted to Melbourne in 1899, did not arrive until March 1900.

movement in Australia and overstated the disagreements between the colonies with regard to the principles and the terms of unification. Thus Poutiata, when he considered the possibility of federation in January 1894, thought that ‘the ruling circles of Australia will delay federation, rather than promote it’, and Ungern-Sternberg, reporting in February 1896 on difficulties arising during the discussing of terms, even asserted that ‘the important plan to form an Australian federation may now be considered buried’.³⁶

The consuls’ efforts to improve the image of Russia in Australia were of great importance to the development of Russian–Australian relations. Since the time of the Crimean War, Russia had been seen in Britain and most British overseas possessions as its main rival and the British Empire’s most dangerous foe in the international arena. Furthermore, in Australia there was a widespread belief that, in the event of war between Britain and Russia, the Russian Navy would be sure to launch an attack on Sydney, Melbourne and Australia’s other major ports. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russophobia was a notable factor in the country’s internal political life.³⁷ In an attempt to dispel prejudice against his country, the first permanent consul in Melbourne, Poutiata, began a campaign in the Australian press as soon as he arrived to try to convince the public of Russia’s peaceful intentions. The same purpose was served by the receptions which Poutiata and other Russian consuls held on Russian national holidays for representatives of the Australian establishment. Their participation in the life of Orthodox believers in Australia – besides Russians and South Slavs there were Greeks, Syrians and Lebanese – also served to enhance Russian renown. The efforts made by the Orthodox community and the Russian consuls in 1894–1900 to build the first Orthodox church in Australia were crowned with success. In December 1900, on the name-day of Tsar Nicholas II, in a solemn ceremony attended by representatives of the Victorian Government and the Australian press, the foundations were laid of an Orthodox church in Melbourne. Nikolai Passek, the then consul, lent a political hue to the event and managed to turn it into a demonstration of Orthodox Russia’s concern for her co-religionists.³⁸

36 AVPRI: 184-520-692, f. 22, see Document 23; 184-520-820, f. 7, see Document 50.

37 See A. Ia. Massov, *Rossii i Avstraliia vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka*, St Petersburg, Izd-vo SPbGMTU, 1998, pp. 12–29.

38 AVPRI: 184-520-1004, ff 10–17, see Document 85.

The Russian consuls endeavoured to develop Russian–Australian trade. Poutiata encouraged the participation of Russian entrepreneurs in the Tasmanian International Exhibition in Hobart in 1894–1895.³⁹ Ungern-Sternberg wrote a large number of dispatches for the Department of Trade and Manufacturing, describing the current condition of various branches of the colonies' economy, and pointed out the opportunity and the need to build up Russian–Australian trade and merchant shipping links.⁴⁰ Passek did the same, remarking in particular on the prospects for the sale of Russian kerosene in Australia.⁴¹ It should be noted, however, that in the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, Russian–Australian trade did not reach any significant volume. The only Russian manufactured wares to be found in Australia were soap, candles, linen and furniture. Insignificant quantities of Russian timber also reached Australia. From the beginning of the twentieth century, kerosene from Baku, on the Black Sea, began to reach Australia, while Australian frozen meat exports were sent to Vladivostok. In addition, Australia supplied Russia with some of its traditional export commodities – wool and lard – again in insignificant amounts. Matvei Hedenstrom, Russia's consul general in Australia from 1908 to 1910, noted in a dispatch in December 1908: 'There is hardly any trade between Russia and Australia ... For trade to develop between Australia and Russia, it is essential that Russian traders come here themselves to study the market conditions on the ground'.⁴²

In view of the fact that the range of interests of the Russian diplomatic mission in Victoria increasingly extended to the other colonies, in 1896, on Ungern-Sternberg's initiative, the jurisdiction of the consul in Melbourne was extended to the other colonies and to New Zealand.⁴³ In 1899, a further Russian mission in Australia began to function, in the port of Newcastle, which was often visited by Finnish merchant vessels flying the Russian flag. Here an honorary consul, Robert Wallace,

39 See Russian State Historical Archive (hereafter RGIA): 20-2-1867, ff 17–18, 32–33, 38.

40 Some of Ungern-Sternberg's dispatches on the state of various branches of Australian industry and the prospects for developing Russian–Australian trade were published in the journal *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i torgovli*.

41 RGIA: 23-25-88.

42 AVPRI: 184-520-1300, f. 107, see Document 102.

43 AVPRI: 184-520-820, f. 126. Ungern-Sternberg's request to extend his consulate's jurisdiction is at AVPRI: 184-520-820, f. 139, see Document 49. See also *Victoria Government Gazette*, 22 January 1897. Only New South Wales lay outside the jurisdiction of the consul in Melbourne, but Edmund Paul, who represented Russian interests there from 1857, as honorary consul in Sydney, had instructions 'to achieve a unified *modus operandi* among our consular agents as far as possible' (see AVPRI: 184-520-779, f. 180).

took office.⁴⁴ In 1900, on the eve of federation, Passek, the consul in Victoria, was granted the status of Russian consul in Australia and New Zealand. Thus, by the time the settler colonies were united in a dominion of the British Empire, a fully formed Russian consular service was operating there.

After federation and the ceremony to mark it on 1 January 1901, attended by Passek along with other foreign representatives, the status of the Russian diplomatic mission in Melbourne was raised again: in 1902, it became the Russian Consulate General in the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand, Melbourne having been designated the temporary capital of the new Commonwealth.⁴⁵ In St Petersburg, an awareness was gradually taking hold that the Commonwealth of Australia was something more than a simple assemblage of colonies, and that the new dominion was approaching the status of an independent state. Suggestions that political and commercial relations with Australia might be expanded were viewed with greater favour. Here the view of the Chairman of the Merchant Shipping Council, the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, is typical. In support of a plan for a passenger service between Australia and Europe by sea from Darwin to Port Arthur, then via the Trans-Siberian Railway, the Grand Duke wrote in 1902: 'It is highly desirable to establish close relations with Australia, without reference to Britain'.⁴⁶ With the increasing numbers of Russian emigrants in Australia came an increase in the Russian consular network. The consul general in Melbourne, the honorary consul in Melbourne and the honorary vice-consul in Newcastle were joined in 1909 by honorary consuls in Adelaide, Brisbane and Port Elizabeth, and in 1914 by honorary consuls in Hobart and Perth. The title of the consul general in Melbourne now became 'Consul General to the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand'.⁴⁷

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the disposition of political forces in the Pacific was undergoing a perceptible change. Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 weakened her position in the region. British influence there was also diminishing somewhat: alarmed by the rapid growth of German naval power, Britain, then allied to Japan, was forced to transfer part of its fleet from the Pacific to European waters.

44 *Ezhegodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossii, 1900*, St Petersburg, 1900, p. 340.

45 AVPRI: 184-520-1076, f. 90.

46 RGIA: 95-4-110, f. 12.

47 *Ezhegodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossii, 1909*, St Petersburg, 1909, p. 44. *Ezhegodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossii, 1914*, St Petersburg, 1914, p. 45.

Japan was becoming the dominant political power in the region. None of this could fail to affect Australia's geopolitical situation. Having supported Britain's anti-Russian stance at the beginning of the Russo–Japanese War, Australians now became fearful, after the Russian defeat, not of the weakened Tsarist Empire, but of Japan, which had strengthened its international position. They were fearful, moreover, not only of its military might, but also its increasing competition in Australian markets. That apart, Australia was no longer sure of Great Britain's capacity to provide due protection in the event of a threat of conflict in the Pacific basin. In these circumstances, Australia began, first, to set about establishing its own navy, and second, to take steps to acquire new foreign sponsors, above all the United States of America. These were the aims of the US Navy's visit to Sydney and Melbourne in 1908, and moreover the invitation was conveyed to the Americans by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, effectively without any approval from the British Government.

The Russian consuls in Melbourne followed all these changes closely. Mikhail Ustinov, *de jure* consul in 1902–1907 but in effect operating there from 1903 to 1906 only, kept St Petersburg informed of the anti-Russian stance held by the Australian Government since the beginning of the Russo–Japanese War, sending information on deliveries of Australian horses (15,000) via Hong Kong for the Japanese mounted infantry, and on the supply of forage and grain on British freighters chartered by local companies.⁴⁸ He also protested vigorously against the anti-Russian motions passed by the Australian federal parliament over the Dogger Bank incident.⁴⁹ However, after the Russian defeat and the obviously increased strength of Japan, anti-Russian feeling effectively evaporated. Hedenstrom, the next Russian consul, took note of this and drew particular attention to the evolution of Australian attitudes to Russia and Russians. In September 1908, he reported:

Prior to the Russo–Japanese War, public opinion in Australia clung to the belief that ... Russia had designs upon Australia, and the fear of an invasion by the Russian navy intensified even more the age-old hatred that the British harbour towards Russians. After the unfortunate war this fear passed ... However, a new enemy arose before the anxious eyes of the Australians. This enemy is Britain's ally Japan ... Both the public and the Federal Prime Minister Mr Deakin himself state this quite openly.⁵⁰

48 AVPRI: 133-470-77, ff 32, 48, 52–53.

49 On the Dogger Bank incident, see AVPRI: 183-520-1162, see Document 91.

50 AVPRI: 184-520-1300, f. 77, see Document 100.

Hedenstrom, whose long dispatches are notable for their wealth of factual material and his desire to analyse events as they happened, reported in detail to St Petersburg on Australia's attempts to acquire new foreign-policy sponsors, on reactions to events in Europe, in particular Germany's build-up of naval armaments, on Australian steps to build up its defence capacity and its desire to turn the South Pacific into an exclusively Australian sphere of influence. Surveying the geopolitical landscape in December 1908, in a detailed study of Australia's present and future place in the world, he spoke of its prosperity, which 'would be the envy of any European country', and posed what he saw as a fundamental question, the question which prompts the title of this volume: 'What kind of rivalries – and between whom – may be provoked by this new state?'⁵¹ He also pointed out the 'virtual independence that the Australian Federation (Commonwealth) enjoys' and the weakness of the constitutional ties binding it to the metropolis.⁵² He paid no less attention, often sharply critical attention, to Australia's domestic problems: feverish legislative attempts to lend judicial underpinning to all aspects of the life of the young Australian state, as well as problems of its political, social and economic development. Progress along the road to full sovereignty and rapid economic growth which would lay the ground for enhanced military power and weight in foreign policy – that was the path mapped out, in Hedenstrom's view, for Australia in the twentieth century.

With the dawn of the twentieth century came an expansion of the strictly consular work of the Russian representatives, above all to protect the interests of Russian nationals. This was linked with the rapid rise in the number of immigrants from Russia settling in Australia. By 1914, according to the Melbourne consulate, they numbered about 11,000. Furthermore, the Russian community was increasing by approximately 120 to 150 per month, and the amount of work of the consulate with these expatriates 'doubled every three years'.⁵³ Work with the Russian diaspora claimed the foreground in 1911 when Alexander Abaza assumed the office of Russian consul general in Melbourne. A substantial proportion of the Russian immigrants were from the peasant class, and their main reason for choosing the Australian colonies was a shortage of available land in

51 AVPRI: 184-520-1300, ff 84, 85, see Document 102.

52 Ibid. f. 115, see Document 102.

53 AVPRI: 155-408-1274, f. 6, see Document 121. For more detail, see G. I. Kanevskaia, *My eshche mechtaem o Rossii ... 'Istoriia russkoi diaspori v Avstralii (konets XIX v. – vtoraiia polovina 80-kh gg. XX v.)*, Vladivostok, Izd-vo Dal'nevostochnogo universiteta, 2010, pp. 14–42.

Russia. After the Russian revolution of 1905–1907, some revolutionaries who had fled government persecution also found their way to Australia. These latter made up for their small numbers by their prominence and energy and did their best to carry out their work of propaganda and agitation both among Russian immigrants and Australian workers. To combat the revolutionaries, the Russian consulate sometimes resorted to the services of the Australian police: in 1912 and 1916, at the consul's urging, the Australian authorities closed down the radical Russian-language newspapers *Echo of Australia* (*Ekho Avstralii*) and *News of the Union of Russian Emigrants* (*Izvestiya Soyuza russkikh emigrantov*).⁵⁴ At the same time, Abaza thought that the best way to counter the influence of the 'political criminals ... who have fled Russia' was to create conditions in which Russians 'in faraway Australia do not lose their living connection with their homeland', so that they could all find 'warm sympathy and sincerely-given assistance from the people dear to them'.⁵⁵ To this end, he developed a plan to extend and reorganise the consular service in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. This plan made provision for a whole network of permanent Russian consulates in addition to the consulate general in Melbourne. These were to be in Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. In Brisbane, which at the beginning of the twentieth century was the focus of the Russian immigrant population, Abaza proposed to situate the principal residence of a Russian Orthodox priest, relying – with good reason – on the role of religion in fostering unity and conciliation among the community and preserving their spiritual links with their homeland. His proposals would, he wrote:

serve to greatly assist our Russian community, raise our national prestige and thus be of benefit to Russian statehood by retaining thousands of our respectable fellow-countrymen, who would otherwise ... lose all connection with Russia and become loyal Australians.⁵⁶

54 E. Fried, 'The First Consul: Peter Simonoff and the Formation of the Australian Communist Party', in John McNair and Thomas Poole (eds), *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1992, p. 112.

55 AVPRI: 155-408-1274, see Document 121, f. 4; AVPRI: 153-408-1404, ff 57–58.

56 AVPRI: 155-408-1274, f. 10, see Document 121.

The Foreign Ministry did not reject Abaza's plan, but the onset of the First World War prevented any action being taken. In 1917, the consulate general in Melbourne remained the sole permanent mission, but honorary consuls, mostly local businessmen, operated in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Newcastle, Perth and Fremantle.⁵⁷

The war brought its own alterations to the work of the Melbourne consulate general. Russia and Australia, by the terms of the Entente, were now allies. The consulate took active measures to return any army reservists living in Australia to Russia by the first transport. Russian nationals of military age who could not return were offered the option of enlisting in the Australian army. At the same time, the consulate attempted to extend its protection to 'Austrian Slavs'. As citizens of a state at war with the British Empire, they were faced with the threat of internment. The Russian consul issued temporary certificates of consular protection to them, in which they stated their intention of taking Russian citizenship.⁵⁸

The revolution of February 1917 and the overthrow of Tsarist rule, seen in Australia as a long-awaited bid for freedom, provoked a surge of interest in that distant northern country. The Russian consular staff in Melbourne were untroubled by events in Petrograd (as St Petersburg was known in the years 1914–1924), and expressed their willingness to serve the Provisional Government. It seemed as if the overthrow of the monarchy would open new opportunities for the development of Russian–Australian relations. Only a few weeks before that revolution, in early February 1917, on the initiative of the Russian consul, backed by political and business circles in Australia, a Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau was founded.⁵⁹ The intention was that it would foster Russian–Australian trade to the point where Russia could take the place of Germany in the Australian market. Abaza sent his report on the establishment of the Bureau to the Foreign Ministry in April, when the fall of Tsarism was already a *fait accompli*. His tone exuded optimism, and full confidence that the plan would come to fruition. That, however, was not to be: the October revolution in Russia put an end to all such initiatives. When the Bolsheviks took power, the staff of the Melbourne consulate adamantly opposed them. At the beginning of December 1917, when it became quite clear what was happening in Petrograd, Abaza wrote

57 *Ezhgodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossii, 1916*, St Petersburg, 1916, p. 53.

58 National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A11803, 1914/89/241.

59 AVPRI: 155-408-905, ff 49–53, see Document 123.

to William Morris Hughes, the Prime Minister of Australia, to dissociate himself categorically from the Bolshevik Government.⁶⁰ The response to his letter was the immediate refusal of the Australian Government to recognise any documents issued by the consul general to Russian subjects. At the end of December 1917, Abaza informed Konstantin Nabokov, the Provisional Government's ambassador in London, of his decision to step down from his post in Melbourne.

Abaza's resignation effectively marked the end of consular relations between Russia and the Commonwealth of Australia. The Soviet Government's attempt to appoint a member of the Russian community in Australia, the Bolshevik Peter Simonoff, as Soviet Russia's consul in January 1918 was unsuccessful. Since the British Government did not recognise the Soviet regime, the Australian Government was unable to grant him *de jure* recognition. Having failed to establish his credentials as consul, Simonoff left Australia in 1921.⁶¹ A prolonged hiatus ensued in Russian–Australian relations. It did not end until 1942, when, as allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, the USSR and the Commonwealth of Australia would establish diplomatic relations.

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the Russian consular service in Australia played an important and positive role in maintaining and fostering Russian–Australian relations. At a time when commercial, economic and cultural relations were at the embryonic stage, it was precisely the consular service that signalled a Russian presence in Australia. The consuls successfully protected the interests of Russian emigrants and Russian subjects who found themselves in Australia. It was they who worked to enhance the image of Russia in the Australian community when Anglo–Russian relations were difficult and growing Russophobia was rife. As professional diplomats, the consuls provided their government with a fairly full and objective picture of the

60 NAA: A981, CONS 241.

61 For more detail, see P. Simonov, 'Tri s polovinoi goda sovetskogo diplomaticheskogo predstavitel'stva', *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, 1922, No. 15 (133), pp. 61–66. An English translation may be found in Kevin Windle, "'Trotskii's Consul': Peter Simonoff's Account of His Years as Soviet Representative in Australia (1918–1921)", *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 93, No. 3, July 2015, pp. 493–524. See also A. Rudnitskii, 'Sud'ba pervogo konsula. K istorii rossiisko-avstraliiskikh otnoshenii', 'Istoriia bez kupiur' (special issue of *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*), Moscow, 2012, pp. 5–26; Kevin Windle, 'Pervyi konsul Sovetskoi Rossii v Avstralii P. F. Simonov i ego druz'ia i nedrugi', *Klio*, No. 6 (114), June 2016, pp. 176–188.

processes of Australia's domestic political development, the evolution of its foreign-policy perspectives and preferences, and of the international situation in the South Pacific.

The documents showing the work of the Russian consular service in Australia – that is, primarily their dispatches – now constitute an invaluable source on the history of Russian–Australian relations, as well as being an informative foreign source on the history of Australia as a whole. It is hoped that the present collection will open new avenues and serve as a stimulus and foundation for further and deeper scholarly study of the history of Russian–Australian relations.

Alexander Massov
St Petersburg
May 2018

Plate section



Figure 1: James Damyon

Source: Johnstone, O'Shannessy & Co., *Local History News*, No. 20, August–September 2009, home.vicnet.net.au/~malvern/newsletters/news_20.pdf

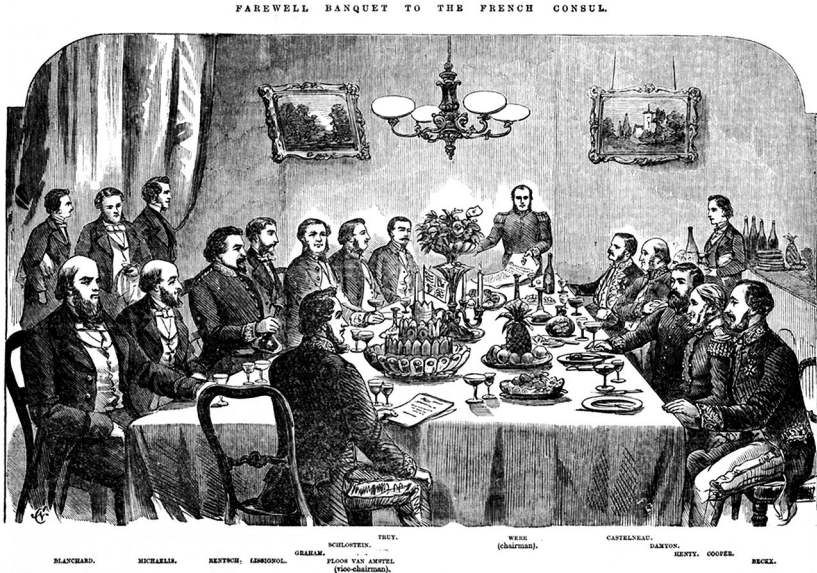


Figure 2: Damyon at the French consul's banquet in Melbourne (seated, fourth from right), 25 June 1863

Source: 'Banquet for the French Consul', print/wood engraving by Nicholas Chevalier, published by Ebenezer and David Syme in *The Australian News for Home Readers*, Melbourne, 1863.

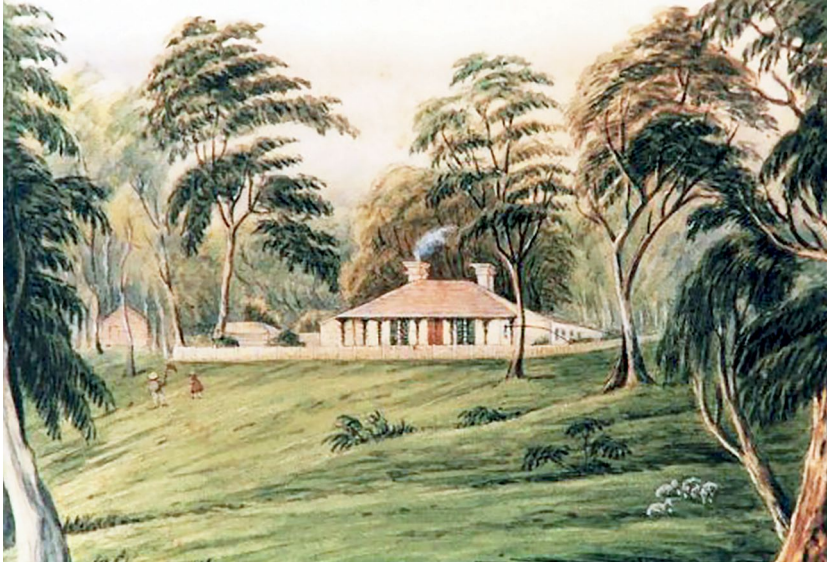


Figure 3: Damyon's farmstead at Glenferrie

Source: Stonnington History Centre, Victoria, artist unknown.



Figure 4: Edmund Paul with other foreign consuls in Sydney, 1895

Source: 'Foreign Consuls in Sydney on the landing of Lord Hampden, 23.11.1895', photo by Crown Studios, Sydney, from Mitchell Library (State Library of New South Wales), Sydney.



Figure 5: Edmund Paul's cottage in Sydney

Source: Photo by Marina Pollard.



Figure 6: Tsar Alexander II

Source: Photo from Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_II_of_Russia



Figure 7: Alexander Berg

Source: Photo from Geni, www.geni.com/people/Alexander-Rembert-Joachim-von-Berg/6000000016224521574



Figure 8: Tsar Alexander III

Source: Photo from Diary of the History of Russia, diaryrh.ru/calendar/may/11th/



Figure 9: Yegor Staal

Source: *Rossia. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del. Ocherk istorii Ministerstva inostrannykh del. 1802–1902*. St Petersburg, 1902.

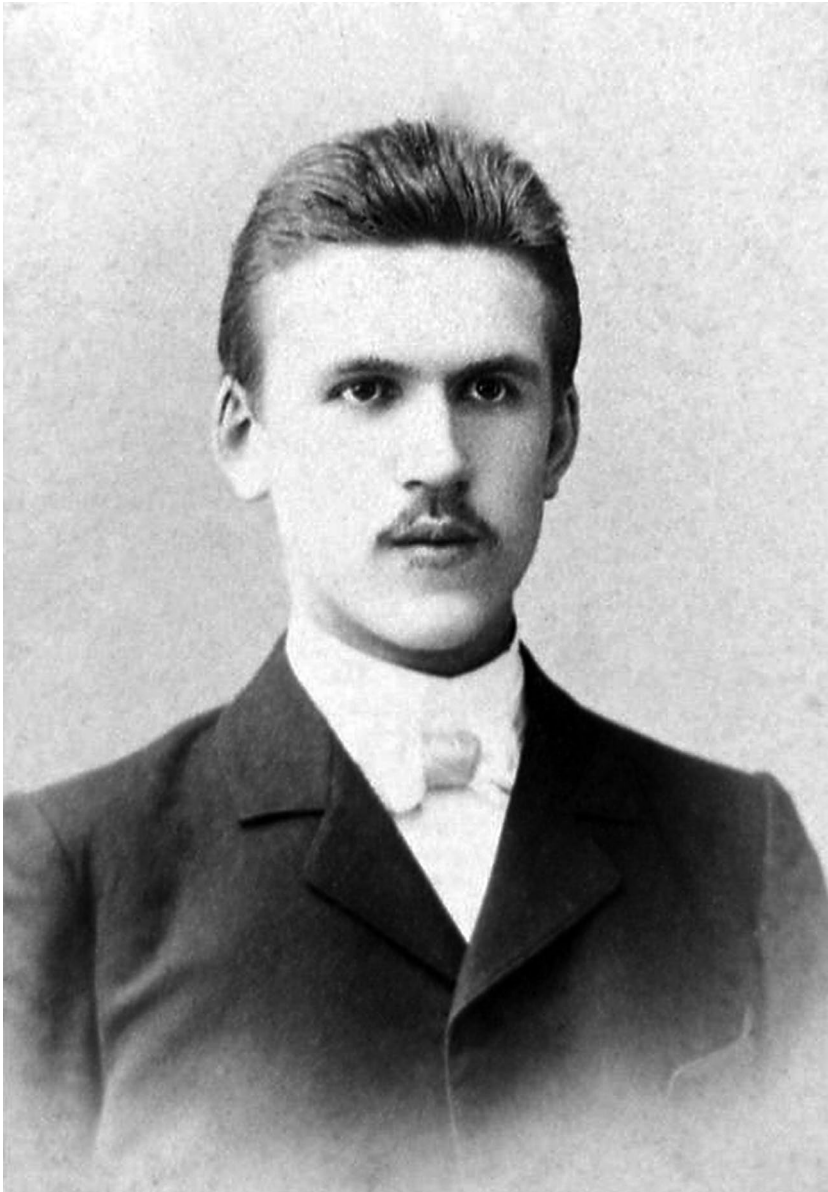


Figure 10: Alexis Poutiata as a young man

Source: Photo from Viazma Historical Museum, Smolensk Region, Russia.



Figure 11: Alexis Poutiata

Source: Photo from Viazma Historical Museum, Smolensk Region, Russia.



Figure 12: Memorial plaque in Market Street, Melbourne, at the site where the Russian consulate was situated in 1894

Source: Photo by Marina Pollard.



Figure 13: Robert Ungern-Sternberg

Source: Photo from the Ungern-Sternberg Family Chronicle, Nils von Ungern-Sternberg, São Paulo, 1979.

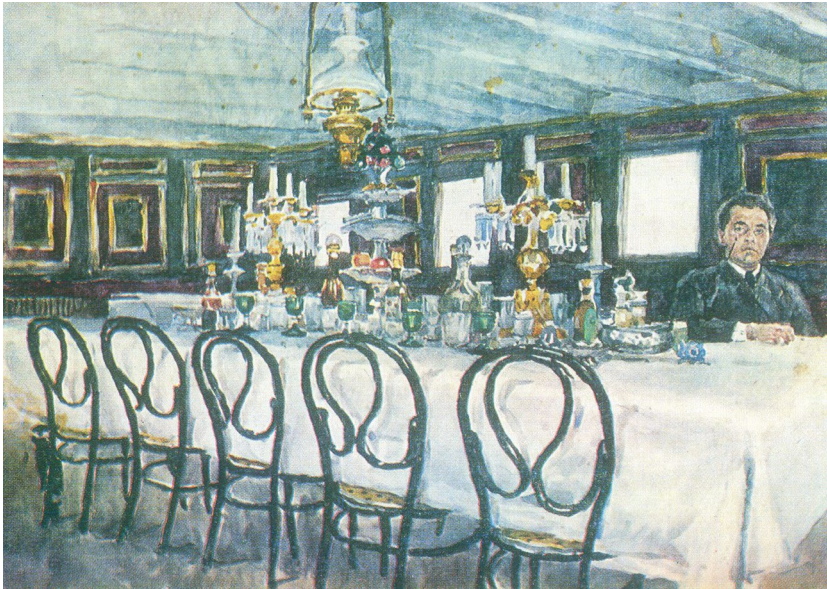


Figure 14: Nikolai Passek in watercolour painting by Vasily Surikov

Source: *In the Dining Room on a Volga Steamer*, c. 1880. Original in the Surikov family collection, Moscow, 3.bp.blogspot.com/-3HDYypx5Lrk/TVfiREs9xfI/AAAAAAAAAAts/DHDRwDrhjl/s1600/SWScan01897_1.jpg

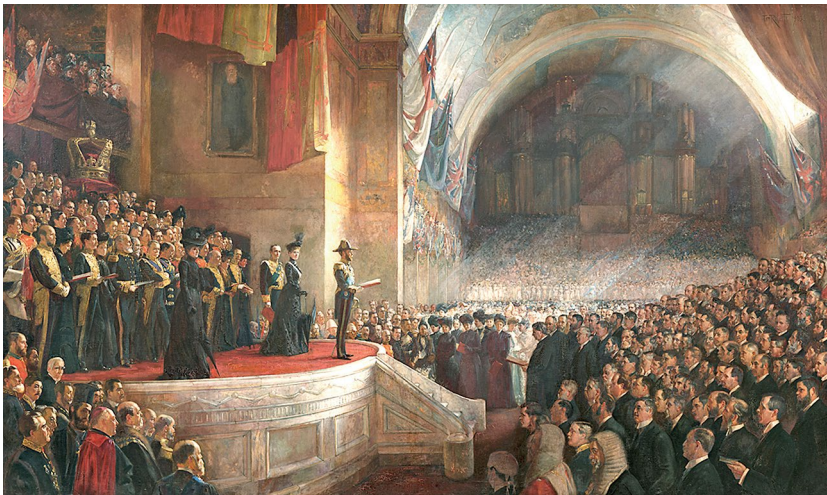


Figure 15: Tom Roberts, *The Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia* (Nikolai Passek is in the bottom left corner)

Source: Painting by Tom Roberts, 1903, Parliament House, Canberra.



Figure 16: Karl Jessen, Captain First Class, Commander of the cruiser *Gromoboi*

Source: Photo from Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Jessen

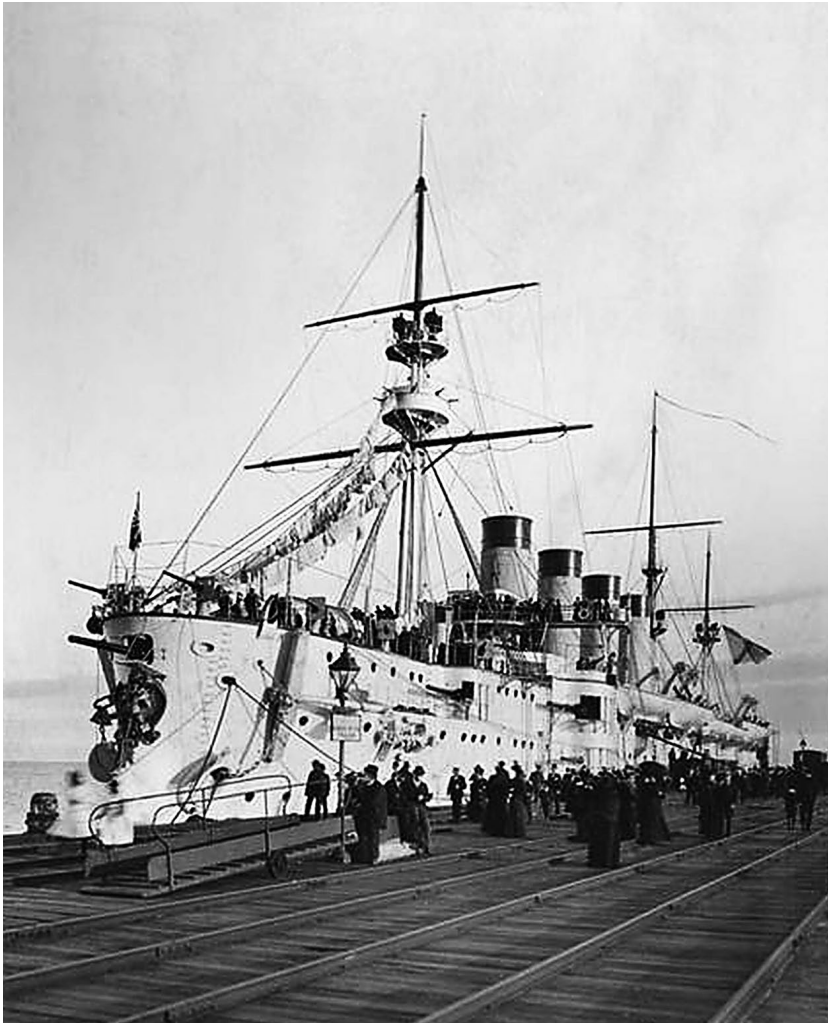


Figure 17: The cruiser *Gromoboi* in Melbourne, 1901

Source: Photo from the National Library of Australia, Canberra.



Figure 18: Tsar Nicholas II

Source: Photo from The Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society, www.ippo.ru/news/article/svyatye-patriarh-tihon-i-car-nikolay-ii-voshli-v-t-403204



Figure 19: Vladimir Lamsdorf

Source: Photo from Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Lamsdorf



Figure 20: Alexander Benckendorff

Source: Photo from Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Konstantinovich_Benckendorff



Figure 21: Mikhail Ustinov

Source: Photo from the collection 'Consulate General in New York', AVPRI 1 (1925)-520-345, Box 55, f. 10, Moscow.



Figure 22: Alexander Abaza

Source: Sketch by Tatiana Kouleshova, from a photograph published in *The Argus*, 9 December 1914.

Yegor Krehmer

Yegor (Georges) Ivanovich Krehmer (1805–1859) began his career in the Foreign Ministry in the 1820s. From 1827, he was a secretary in the Russian diplomatic mission in Washington, and subsequently chargé d'affaires. In 1841, he was appointed consul general in Egypt, and, in 1845, consul general in London. During the Crimean War, when diplomatic relations between Russia and Great Britain were broken off, he did his best to maintain trading relations. Appreciating the importance of trade between the two countries and the need to extend its range, he was among the first to press for the establishment of a Russian consular service in Australia. He died suddenly on 24 September 1859 at his home in London, and was buried in St George's Church, Hanover Square. Alexander Ivanovich Koshelev, his colleague in the Foreign Ministry, described him as 'a clever and extremely capable man'.¹ When writing in French, he signed his name 'Georges Krehmer'.

¹ Olga Kosheleva, *Zapiski Aleksandra Ivanovicha Kosheleva (1812–1883)*, Berlin, B. Behrs Verlag, 1884, p. 20.

1. Krehmer to Count M. Chreptowitch,² Russian Minister Plenipotentiary

London,
22 (10) December 1856
No. 23

[...] Since the restoration of trading relations with Great Britain, some London businessmen have several times approached the Consulate General to request, in the interests of imperial trade, that the Imperial Government establish a consular service at the Cape of Good Hope, in Melbourne for Australasia, and in Sydney for New South Wales.

Among the candidates recommended for these positions by commercial companies which merit the highest confidence are the following:

- (1) Mr James Damyon for the consular service in Melbourne. Mr Damyon served his apprenticeship in trade in St Petersburg, and Mr Robert von Glehn, a Russian subject established for many years as a merchant in London, who has known Mr Damyon since his youth, vouches for his integrity and honourable principles.
- (2) Mr Edmund Monson Paul, for the post of consul in Sydney, New South Wales, is recommended by several trading companies in London, including J. Henry Schroeder & Co., which has branches in St. Petersburg, Riga and Odessa.
- (3) Mr James Duncan Thomson, for the post of consul at Cape Town (Cape of Good Hope), is recommended by Mr John Mollett, a London merchant whose honourable reputation is widely acknowledged and who acts for Stieglitz & Co. in this capital.

If Your Excellency approves the establishment of these new consular services, I beg you to kindly permit me to present to the Imperial Ministry the nominations which I have had the honour to place before you in the above paragraphs of this dispatch. [...]

AVPRI 184-520-137, ff 1–2. In French. Previously unpublished.

2 Count Michel Chreptowitch (Mikhail Khreptovich) was accredited as Minister Plenipotentiary in London in August 1856.

2. Krehmer to Chreptowitch, Russian Minister Plenipotentiary

London,
11 April (30 March) 1857
No. 41

[...] As the Imperial Ministry has confirmed in a dispatch from the Department of Personnel and Accounting [...] the nominations for the vice-consular positions in Cape Town, Melbourne and Sydney, which I had the honour to submit for Your Excellency's approval in my dispatch No. 23,³ I beg you to pass the following official nominations to the Foreign Office.

- (1) Mr James Duncan Thomson as Imperial Vice-Consul at Cape Town (Cape of Good Hope),
- (2) Mr James Damyon as Imperial Vice-Consul at Melbourne, for Australasia,⁴
- (3) Mr Edmund Monson Paul, as Imperial Vice-Consul at Sydney, for New South Wales.

[...]

AVPRI 184-520-137, f. 7. In French. Previously unpublished.

³ See Document 1.

⁴ Despite the recommendation that Damyon be appointed vice-consul for all of Australasia, in the end his jurisdiction was limited to the Colony of Victoria.



Edmund Paul and James Damyon

Edmund Paul

Edmund Monson Paul, who served as honorary Russian consul in Sydney, was born in 1826 or 1827 in Norwich, England, in the county of Norfolk, in the family of a silversmith. In the early 1850s, he arrived in Australia with his brother, William Sheffield Paul, settled in Sydney and established a small wholesaling business. Even before he was appointed vice-consul in 1857, Edmund had had an unexpected brush with the distant northern empire. During the years of the Crimean War, Australia had feared attacks on its port cities by the Russian Navy. These fears were, of course, groundless, but they led to the formation of volunteer detachments in the settler colonies. In 1854, Edmund Paul was one of the first to enlist in Sydney.¹

After his appointment, in 1860, Paul sailed to England for two years to deal with personal matters, leaving his brother in charge of consular affairs.² Then, for some years, the brothers owned a cattle-grazing property called Glendariwell in central Queensland. In 1866, Edmund married Rosalie Purdie in Brisbane,³ and the couple later had a son and three daughters. A terrible drought, which began in Queensland in 1867–1868, finally

1 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 1911, p. 11.

2 AVPRI: 256-555a-1147, f. 2; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 1860, p. 5.

3 *Brisbane Courier*, 15 February 1866, p. 1.

forced him to abandon the land and return to his wholesale business in Sydney. There, in 1870, he became the sole agent in Australia of the British firm J. Schwegle & Co., the producer of mineral water.

Edmund Paul clearly disliked writing dispatches – very few of them have survived. He found his representative duties far more enjoyable. However, as in the case of James Damyon, the commanders of Russian vessels remarked gratefully on his ‘making every effort to meet all our needs’, and ‘valuable assistance and advice in dealing with the local authorities’.⁴ In April 1902, his forty-five years as honorary Russian consul were celebrated in the Sydney hotel ‘Australia’. At that event, Nikolai Pompeyevich Passek, the then Russian consul general in Melbourne, solemnly announced that he had received a telegram from St Petersburg informing him that Paul had been awarded a personal gift from Tsar Nicholas II. For his years in the Russian consular service, Paul was also awarded the Order of St Stanislav, Third and Second Class.⁵

Paul was known for being the very model of an English gentleman of the old school, with a kindly and gentle nature. He was widely respected, had a broad circle of acquaintances and kept open house in the prestigious Darling Point area. There he received the crews of Russian ships, as well as all notable Russian visitors to Sydney. The renowned anthropologist Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay stayed with him for a while in 1878. However, as the years caught up with him, it became increasingly difficult for him to perform his consular duties. In March 1913, after fifty-six years of service, he requested permission to resign his office, and retired in April of that year.⁶ The following year, on 27 November 1914, the longest-serving consul died.⁷ He was buried in Sydney’s famous Waverley Cemetery.

4 From a report by Rear-Admiral M. Fedorovsky, commander of Pacific squadron, 25 August 1872 (OS). See Russian State Naval Archive (hereafter RGA VMF): 410-2-3207, f. 521.

5 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 1902, p. 7; 10 March 1913, p. 8.

6 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March 1913, p. 8; *Ezhegodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossii*, 1914, St Petersburg, 1914, p. 8.

7 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 November 1914, p. 8.

James Damyon

James Payne Damyon, the first Russian consul in Melbourne, was born in Stepney, East London, on 17 December 1812. In the early nineteenth century, Stepney had not yet become synonymous with crime; it was a commercial quarter of Dockland, where the poorer working classes lived, so there are good grounds for assuming that Damyon came from a poor family. In his youth, before settling in Australia, he had lived for a number of years in Russia, working for a variety of commercial companies. The experience not only left him with a love for Russia and the Russians, he came away the richer for his knowledge of the language. Eduard Romanovich Zimmermann, the Russian traveller and writer who visited Melbourne in 1881, established friendly relations with him and wrote that he could not only speak Russian, but write it correctly as well. In Russia, the young Englishman had made a special study of the language, staying for several months as a paying guest with a village priest who taught Russian to foreigners.⁸

Early in 1840, at a mature age, Damyon emigrated to Australia. He opened a second-hand shop and soon prospered. In 1852, he became sole proprietor of Glenferrie Farm, sixty acres of land on the outskirts of Melbourne. In 1843, he started a family. His bride, Mary Anne Philpott, also from England, gave him nine children.⁹

Damyon was thrilled to be appointed Russian vice-consul in 1857 and took great pride in holding that office. On the Melbourne stock exchange building, where for a time he took rooms for his consular premises, he erected a flagpole at his own expense in order to fly the Russian flag.¹⁰ He was extremely conscientious in the discharge of his duties as consul, sending regular dispatches to the Russian Consulate General in London. A favourable attitude to Russia was not simply a function of his status as consul: he genuinely loved Russia. He gave Russian names to two of his six daughters, Yekaterina Olga and Rosa Nadia. In 1870, his elder daughter Agnes Susanna married Edward Constantine Schiele, who had been born in St Petersburg, the son of the renowned Petersburg physician

8 E. R. Tsimmerman, 'Puteshestvie po Avstralii i Okeanii', *Otechestvennye zapiski*, Vol. 265, No. 12, 1882, p. 482.

9 Damyon's date of birth and other biographical facts are taken from the following genealogical site: www.gschneidinger.com/dat195.htm#4 (accessed 4 April 2018).

10 *The Argus*, 19 August 1858, p. 5.

E. I. Schiele.¹¹ In his declining years, in 1825, Damyon's son-in-law would write of him in his memoirs with unconcealed warmth, stressing the 'unforgettable' atmosphere of 'wonderful family life', which surrounded him whenever he stayed in Damyon's home.¹²

The sailors of the Russian navy who had dealings with Damyon when their ships called at Australian ports spoke very warmly of him. In 1862, the commander of the frigate *Svetlana*, Captain Second Class Ivan Ivanovich Butakov, observed that 'his zeal in the discharge of his duties knew no bounds'.¹³ In 1871, Captain-Lieutenant Mitrofan Yegorovich Koltovsky, commander of the *Gaidamak*, made special mention of him in his official report: 'In Melbourne I met Mr Damyon, our consul, whom I cannot pass over in my dispatch. In all my service abroad I have never had occasion to meet such a worthy and estimable consul ... We may indeed take pride in having such a consul as Mr Damyon.'¹⁴ Others who spoke equally highly of his work include Captain-Lieutenant Alexander Mikhailovich Linden, an officer on the corvette *Bogatyr*; Captain Second Class Mikhail Nikolayevich Kumani, commander of the clipper *Izumrud*; and Captain Second Class Vladimir Ivanovich Lang, commander of the clipper *Vestnik*.¹⁵ Damyon was able to rebut the charge of espionage, levelled against Russian mariners in the Australian press during a visit to Australia by a Russian squadron under the command of Rear-Admiral Avramy Bogdanovich Aslanbegov in 1882.¹⁶ He was mentioned with gratitude by Eduard Zimmerman and Mikhail Aleksandrovich Shostak, a mining engineer dispatched on assignment to Australia in 1884.¹⁷

In 1883, Damyon was awarded the Order of St Stanislav, Third Class, for his devoted service.¹⁸ However, in the 1890s, when Australia suffered a deep financial crisis, disaster struck. In 1892, when already advanced in years (he had passed his eightieth birthday), he went bankrupt and

11 *The Argus*, 11 January 1870, p. 4.

12 E. C. Schiele, 'A Short History of My Life', Stonnington History Centre (Melbourne), Local History Catalogue MH 7363, pp. 15, 39.

13 I. I. Butakov, 'Raport komandira fregata "Svetlana" kapitana 2-ogo ranga Butakova. Mel'burn, 10 ianvaria 1862 gg.', *Morskoj sbornik*, No. 4, 1862, p. 181.

14 RGA VMF: 410-2-3063, f. 515.

15 A. M. Linden, 'Zametki iz Avstralii (iz zapisok o plavanii) v 1863 g.', *Morskoj sbornik*, No. 4, 3, 1864, p. 170; RGA VMF: 410-2-3207, f. 521; RGA VMF: 417-1-119, f. 29.

16 For more detail, see A. Ia. Massov, 'Vizit dobroj voli ili sekretnaia missiia? (Prebyvanie v Avstralii eskadry kontr-admirala A.V. Aslanbegova v 1881–1882 godakh)', *Gangut*, 1993, 5, pp. 70–76.

17 RGIA: 468-21-1114, f. 49.

18 AVPRI: 159-464-1083, ff 1–2.

his possessions were sold to pay his debts. Despite being reduced to penury and having lost most of his hearing, he nevertheless continued to perform his duties until 1894, when Alexis Dmitriyevich Poutiata, the first permanent Russian consul, arrived in Melbourne. In 1896, out of respect for his services, the then Russian consul in Melbourne, Robert Robertovich Ungern-Sternberg, wrote to the Foreign Ministry to endorse Damyon's request to the Emperor for a financial allowance. However, instead of an allowance, Damyon received only a single payment of £120.¹⁹ He died in dire poverty on 5 February 1898.²⁰ His grave has been located in St Kilda cemetery in Melbourne.

3. Paul to F. Grote, Russian Consul General in London²¹

Sydney,
16 (4) December 1859

[...] I received your letter of 26th September with the deepest sorrow, as I had great respect for Mr Krehmer, and if anything can provide consolation it is the belief inspired by the tone of your letter that I may continue to enjoy relations with you which will be just as agreeable as those with my previous superior.

I can assure you [...] that there will be no want of zeal or dedication in the performance of my duties, and from the flattering expressions which you are so kind as to honour me with I judge that I will find in you one who appreciates fairly my efforts to carry out my duties. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1147, f. 5. In French.

19 AVPRI: 184-520-820, ff 104–105; 184-520-820-859, f. 10.

20 *The Argus*, 7 February 1898, p. 1.

21 Friedrich Grote: Russian consul general in London 1859–1862.

4. Damyon to Grote, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) January 1862
No. 18

[...] I have the honor to report the arrival here on the 4th inst. of the Imperial Russian Frigate *Svetlana* from Batavia.²² She left this port on the morning of the 23rd (the day before yesterday).²³ During her stay in this port some provisions and coals have been furnished. Enclosed you will find all the accounts as also an account of Messrs. Wilkinson Bros. of this city,²⁴ to whom the Commander (Capt. Boutakoff) was accredited. I enclose also a summary of accounts; but in this are not included the pilotage and a supplementary account marked Y amounting to £16 – 15 – 11. You will also please to observe that in the account marked C there is an amount of £17 – 10 – 0 against which I have put a cross. This is an error – it ought to be £12 – 10 – 0. The difference £5 – 0 – 0 was handed over to the Purser at the last moment after all the accounts were signed and sealed and after the Frigate had actually weighed anchor. It was thought advisable not to alter the account, but I deemed that it would be sufficient to make the explanation.

I trust that Capt. Boutakoff and his officers have been well pleased with their stay in this port. Their society has been sought, and each and every one has been gratified with their urbanity and courtesy. Many have witnessed the departure of the Frigate with regret and hope that she may have a prosperous and safe voyage.

Many merchants of this place were desirous of shipping gold to England on board the Frigate, but Captain Boutakoff declined. I think she might have had a large quantity as the insurance is tremendously high by merchant vessels. I have no doubt the *Pelorus* – the English Frigate now here – leaving here next week, will take a quantity. She will very easily make £700 or 800. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1191, ff 7–8. In English. Author's copy.

22 Jakarta was known as Batavia until 1942.

23 The *Svetlana* weighed anchor on 22 January but departed Port Phillip Bay on 23 January. Commanded by Captain Second Class Ivan Butakov, she stayed for three weeks in Melbourne on the return voyage to the Baltic after completing a series of assignments in the North Pacific.

24 Wilkinson Bros.: an American shipping agency.

5. Damyon to A. de Berg,²⁵ Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) April 1862
No. 24

[...] I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 24th January last informing me that the maps, forming part of the Geological Survey of Victoria, had been received, and that the Direction of the Mining Corps desires to express its thanks and to place at the disposal of said office ten copies of Geological works published in Russia.

I shall immediately transmit these works to the Geological Survey office here, following out your instructions – this would have been done ere this, but for a death occurring in my family. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1191, f. 14. In English.

6. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) July 1862
No. 31

[...] I have made a diligent search after the paper relating to John Finn,²⁶ the Russian sailor who died some time ago in the hospital – but in vain. I enquired at the latter place, but no one there appeared to have seen anything of the kind. The man's clothes were worth nothing – certainly not more than twenty shillings – so I gave them to the lodging house keeper with whom he resided prior to his entering the hospital and to whom he was indebted. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1191, f. 20. In English.

25 Alexander Fedorovich Berg was Russian consul general in London from 1862 to 1883.

26 No further information has been found concerning John Finn.

7. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) September 1863
No. 25

[...] I have the honor to acquaint you that I have prepared a report, in French, on the system of defence adopted by the Government of Victoria, and which I enclose herewith.²⁷ I trust that it may prove of some interest to the Russian Government, and hoping such may prove the case. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1264, f. 29. In English.

8. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
26 (14) October 1863
No. 27

[...] I have the honor to acquaint you that I have been applied to by a Russian, by name Ivan Sharin, to communicate with his father and mother, from whom he has not heard since he left Russia some twelve years ago. I have written the letter for him as, strange to say, he has nearly forgotten his own language. His parents live somewhere in the Government of Archangel and I have taken the liberty to enclose the epistle to you hoping that you will be kind enough to forward it. It appears that he was a sailor and left Russia on board a vessel called the *Troika* which ship was sold in Rio Janeiro. He holds a document to that effect signed by Russian Consul General Schmid dated 1/13 Sept. 1854 and that he was duly paid & discharged.²⁸

27 Report not included here.

28 Ferdinand Schmid, Austrian consul general in Rio de Janeiro, acted for the Russian consul general in his absence.

A person signing himself Capt. Rakowski, who applied to the Russian Imperial Government some time ago, through me for amnesty, has been advertising himself in the papers as agent for Poland.²⁹ I send enclosed the advertisement. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1264, f. 45. In English.

9. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) November 1863
No. 31

[...] I have the honor to inform you that on last Monday evening the 23rd inst. a meeting, got up by Mr Rakowski,³⁰ was held at one of the public houses of the city for the furtherance, as was stated, of the Polish cause. From all the information I can gather – for of course I was not there – there was scarcely a single respectable person in the room and certainly no one of note. A committee, I believe, was appointed to carry out their plans for procuring money, to be afterwards forwarded to Europe and, according to the papers £21 were promised, but I am convinced myself that all their exertions will end in vapour, for nothing of advantage could emanate from such an assemblage. Among the Committee was a man of the name of Goldberg – a Polish Jew,³¹ and Mr Rakowski. I don't know if there were any other Poles – for there are so few here now – but there were one or two Austrians I think. Altogether it was a very foolish display and did not create the least sympathy. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, f. 117. In English.

29 In the margin of the original, next to this sentence, is a note in French 'To the Embassy', apparently written in the Russian Consulate General in London, saying that Seweryn Rakowski is a Polish emigrant, who after the outbreak of the Polish uprising of 1863–1864 declared himself the representative of the Polish National Committee in Australia and headed the Polish Society.

30 See Document 8.

31 Abraham Goldberg, born in Russia in 1829, was a resident of Melbourne from 1857. He sympathised with the Polish independence movement and was a member of the Polish Society, which raised funds in support of the Polish national cause at the time of the uprising against Russian rule.

10. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
26 (14) December 1863
No. 33

[...] I have the honor to enclose herewith a portion of the *Victoria Government Gazette*, setting forth some changes which are about to take place with reference to Lights, Beacons and Buoys in the Colony.

Before closing this I wish to mention that about a week ago another attempt was made in Melbourne to get up what they call a meeting for the Poles.³² I have no doubt by the same parties as on the former occasion. Very few people were there as far as I could learn. In fact the thinness of the attendance was commented on in the local journals. The papers further stated that a resolution was passed, in consequence of so few being then present, to hold a meeting at some future period – and that fifty pounds were collected, or rather promised; (which amounts to nothing) for transmission to Europe. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, f. 115. In English.

11. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) February 1864
No. 4

[...] As regards the few Poles here, they have been very quiet lately – that is to say they have had no public meetings. I believe first efforts are being made to collect money. A Mr Sumner of the firm of Grice, Sumner and Co. here acts as treasurer and a Mr Shillinglaw – the shipping master of this port – is secretary.³³ I know also from good authority that a very short

32 See Document 9.

33 Grice, Sumner & Co.: one of the longest-established trading companies in the Australian colonies. Theodates John Sumner, one of the proprietors, was prominent in Melbourne's social life.

time back a meeting took place (a private one) at Rakowsky's office.³⁴ I don't know how many were there – the doors were closed. I will collect all the information I can. Indeed I should esteem myself unworthy of the post I have the honor to fill did I not do so. I am now trying to find out the name of a Finn who attended one of the public meetings, and who was very loud in his denunciations. I have just ascertained that he is employed at one of the theatres. I am obliged to be a little careful or perhaps I should not learn anything. Of course all I learn I will transmit.

I purpose, if possible, to send you by next mail a full account of the volunteer movement in this Colony. Some £15,000 have just been voted by parliament for the purchase in England of some heavy guns for the Bay,³⁵ and it is noted that a block ship is to be sent for to act as a floating battery, whereupon the guns are to be mounted. All this is not quite fixed yet, but I think it may be looked upon as almost certain. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, f. 123. In English.

12. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
26 (14) March (1864)
No. 5

[...] I have the honor to confirm my last of the 25th ultimo and to acknowledge the receipt of your valued communications of the 7th and 13th January N 25 and 38 – the Box of Plants by the *Hurricane* has been duly forwarded to Dr Mueller;³⁶ and since your last came to hand I have addressed him regarding the freight and charges of same from S. Petersburg to London amounting to £2 – 4 – 1. He has promised to pay me the money next week, so that I shall be enabled to remit it by next mail.

He sympathised with the Polish independence movement and was treasurer of the Polish-Australian Solidarity Committee. John Joseph Shillinglaw: historian and public figure; in 1856–1859 shipping-master for the Port of Melbourne and registrar of seamen.

³⁴ See Documents 8, 9 and 10.

³⁵ The Bay: Port Phillip Bay.

³⁶ Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von Mueller: a renowned Australian botanist of German origin, Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and Vice-President of the Victorian Acclimatisation Society. He advocated increased cooperation in biological research with Russian scientific institutions, in particular the St Petersburg Botanic Gardens.

Dr Mueller informed me by letter on the 5th of this month of his having sent by *Wave of Life* under the charge of Dr Robertson,³⁷ 4 Black Swans, 4 Mountain Ducks, 2 Swan Geese,³⁸ 3 pairs native Black Ducks, 1 pair native Teal,³⁹ and 1 pair native Widgeon⁴⁰ – all for the Acclimatisation Society of Moscow with the exception of two swans destined for the Imperial Botanic Gardens in S. Petersburg. Dr Mueller begged me to acquaint you with this matter. The shipment was made in a great hurry, otherwise he states he would have sent them through me. Dr Robertson is health officer at Port Phillip Heads and will, as Dr Mueller states to me in his letter, wait upon His Excellency Baron Brunnow on his arrival in London.⁴¹ The *Wave of Life* had already sailed before I received any notification on the subject. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, ff 124–125. In English.

13. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) April 1864
No. 9

[...] I duly received from Dr Mueller £2.4.1 for sundry expenses on account of a box of plants ex *Hurricane*⁴² and I have the honor to enclose herewith first of [*sic*] a bill of exchange for £2.9.1 on Dalgety of your city,⁴³ for which sum I give you a short résumé on the other side.

37 *Wave of Life*: a wooden ship built in 1856, then carrying freight on the England–Australia route. Dr James Robertson was a doctor practising in Melbourne Hospital from 1860. In 1864, he became one of the first lecturers in medicine at Melbourne University.

38 Swan goose: a name in use in the nineteenth century for the Magpie goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*).

39 Native teal: this may refer to either the Grey teal (*Anas gracilis*) or the Chestnut teal (*Anas castanea*).

40 Native Widgeon: a name sometimes used in the nineteenth century for the Pink-eared duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*).

41 Baron Filipp Ivanovich Brunnow was Russian Minister Plenipotentiary, later Ambassador in London, in 1840–1854 and 1858–1874.

42 See Document 12.

43 Dalgety & Co. was founded in Melbourne in 1846 to supply sheep graziers. It later became a major international trading and finance conglomerate with branches in many cities of the world and its head office in London.

I am sorry that I am not able to send you by this mail, as I intended, an account of the volunteer movement in this Colony but hope to do so next month.

The war in New Zealand still goes on with unabated vigor.⁴⁴ The Maories declaring that they will fight forever. It will take some time ere they will be finally subdued.

Just after the closing of last mail I heard from good authority that the Committee, who are collecting money here for the Polish cause, as it is termed, remitted to the Earl of Harrowby £59.⁴⁵ This money was sent last month; and is all, I think, that has been subscribed. There have been no more meetings. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, ff 121–122. In English.

14. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) May 1864
No. 11

[...] I have the honor to inform you that since last mail the news from New Zealand has been very discouraging.⁴⁶ The British troops have been twice repulsed with fearful loss. It appears the Maories were lying in ambush so that the English were not aware of their whereabouts. Several officers of rank have been killed. One captain who led a forlorn hope was immediately shot dead on mounting a parapet. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, f. 147. In English.

44 The sporadic conflicts known as the Maori wars lasted from 1843 to 1872. This refers to the 'Taranaki Wars' in the North Island.

45 Sir Dudley Ryder, the Second Earl of Harrowby, backed the Polish insurrection of 1863–1864.

46 See Document 13.

15. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) June 1864
No. 13

[...] I have the honor to inform you that I have this day forwarded to your address 14 maps, which I have received from the Geological Survey office of Victoria, with the request that they may be sent to the Imperial Government.

Mr Rakowski is still busying himself. A few days ago there appeared in the local papers the following – ‘At the instigation of Mr Rakowski, the representative of Polish Nationalities, a lecture will shortly be delivered by Mr Edwards on Poland; more especially since his connection with Russia’.⁴⁷ This lecture no doubt is to be a means of raising some money, as everyone who attends will have to pay. I shall watch the papers as there is sure to be a full and detailed account of the proceedings and if there be anything worth communicating, will let you know. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, f. 151. In English.

16. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
26 (14) September 1864
No. 17

[...] I have the honor to inform you that the lecture on Poland, about which I wrote some short time ago as being got up by Mr Rakowski,⁴⁸ has at length come off. Nothing however worth noticing transpired. The papers did not think is worthwhile to go into the affair. They merely state that such lecture was delivered and that very few people were there. The truth is it was a failure.

47 See Documents 8, 9 and 11. John Edwards: lawyer and member of the Victorian Parliament 1861–1867.

48 See Document 15.

We are in the midst of a general election – parliament is expected to meet about December next.

Commodore Sir William Wiseman has lately been here in command of HMS *Curacoa*.⁴⁹ He has been inspecting the defences and has I believe made various new suggestions which I think are to be adopted. The block ship coming out from England is to be a sort of floating battery with three or four 68 pounders. Since the rumours of war in Europe,⁵⁰ people here seem to be very keenly alive as to the protection of Victoria. It is a subject every now and then started and afterwards appears to be lost sight of. However a good deal has been done but nothing, as I can understand, that would prevent any heavy armed frigate from doing very considerable damage to the place. Anything new occurring I will communicate. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1279, ff 153, 155. In English.

17. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
28 (16) December 1864
No. 12

[...] I have the honor to inform you that some few days ago I received a letter from Sir Redmond Barry, one of the Judges in Victoria, and also Chancellor of the University of Melbourne,⁵¹ expressing his wish that I would forward the books and documents, which accompanied his epistle, to Russia for transmission to the several Universities mentioned therein. For your guidance I beg to enclose his communication to me, and which I will thank you to return at your earliest convenience.

49 Sir William Wiseman: British Rear-Admiral. As commodore in 1863–1866, commanded the Royal Navy station at Sydney. The *Curacoa* was a steam frigate of the Royal Navy.

50 Talk of war in 1863–1864 was linked with a recent and serious deterioration of the international situation in Europe, and in particular in Anglo–Russian relations over the suppression of the Polish insurrection.

51 Sir Redmond Barry: judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria, active in public life, the arts and education, one of the founders of Melbourne University, of which he was Chancellor from 1853 until his death in 1880.

I would here take leave to state that I have forwarded the books and letters, in a parcel, to your address by ship *Essex* which vessel sailed yesterday. Capt. Attwood had kindly promised to have this parcel conveyed to you.⁵² I took this mode of transmission in order to save postage, as I did not conceive there was any very great necessity for hurry. Please let me know if the parcel arrives safely. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1322, f. 3. In English.

18. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) August 1867
No. 11

[...] I beg to enclose herewith two notices – one for Commanders of ships trading to South Australia, the other relating to beacons to guide ships over the Hokianga Bar in New Zealand, both of which I hope will prove useful.⁵³ I also enclose two extracts – one containing statistical information of the Colony of South Australia and the other, the like information of the Colony of New Zealand. These also I think contain matters of interest.

Everything in the Colony of Victoria is at present at a standstill – the Ministry have resigned and without an appropriation bill having been passed. Consequently there are no funds to pay the civil servants with. This has all been brought about in consequence of the coupling of a vote of £20,000 for the late Governor Sir Chs. Darling,⁵⁴ to the appropriation Bill. The upper house were displeased at, what they thought, such a waste of the public funds as £20,000 to a retired Governor and rejected it. This is the second time within the last two years and a half that there is a deadlock. All this is rather unfortunate for the colonists of Victoria just now, because the preparations which have to be made for the reception

52 The barque *Essex* served the London–Melbourne route. In 1866, its master was J. S. Attwood.

53 The notices are not included here.

54 Sir Charles Henry Darling was Governor of Victoria in the years 1863–1865.

of the Duke of Edinburgh will have to be stayed unless some money be soon forthcoming.⁵⁵ No one knows, as yet, what the Governor means to do.⁵⁶ [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1322, ff 176, 180. In English.

19. Paul to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Sydney,
15 (3) May 1875

[...] I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt on the 3rd inst. of your letter of the 22nd February, enclosing the English exequatur approving my appointment as Russian Consul in this Colony.⁵⁷

On the 6th inst. I waited on H. E. the Governor Sir Hercules Robinson and exhibited the exequatur, and asked him to gazette my appointment which he did on the 11th inst.⁵⁸

I beg you will convey to the Imperial Government my thanks for the honor they have conferred upon me and to assure them, my best efforts shall be used in furthering any interests entrusted to my charge.

55 Duke of Edinburgh: Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred (1844–1900), then serving as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. In 1868, he became the first member of the British royal family to visit Australia, in command of the frigate HMS *Galatea*. In 1874, he would marry Princess Maria, the only daughter of Tsar Alexander II.

56 The Governor of Victoria in 1867 was Sir John Manners-Sutton.

57 Exequatur: official recognition of a consul by the Government of the country to which he is accredited, granting authority to exercise consular functions. In this case, the exequatur confirmed Paul's appointment as honorary consul in New South Wales, in connection with the new permanent consulates, replacing honorary consulates, in Melbourne and Sydney (see preceding document).

58 Sir Hercules George Robinson: Governor of New South Wales 1872–1879.

I have much pleasure in informing you, that a scientific expedition to visit the island of New Guinea has been fitted out in this city at the sole expense of a private individual resident here William Macleay Esq. and it will leave in a few days.⁵⁹

I have taken the opportunity to write to Mr Macleay and ask him to make enquiries of the natives if they can give him any tidings of M. Nicolas de Maclay a Russian savant, who was left on the island by the corvette *Vitiaz* in 1871 and rescued by the *Izumrud* in 1873 and taken to Batavia.⁶⁰ From there he wrote and informed me, he intended to revisit New Guinea and would leave Batavia about the 14th December 1873 and hoped to arrive in Australia in the early part of 1875.

From that time I have not heard anything of him.

The expedition will be absent from Sydney for six months. Should they obtain any tidings of M. Nicolas de Maclay I will communicate them to you. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1445, ff 314–315. In English.

59 Sir William John Macleay: prosperous pastoralist and political figure in New South Wales, who did much to promote scientific research in Australia; President of the Linnean Society of New South Wales; trustee of the Australian Museum. In 1875, he bought and fitted out the barque *Chevert*, on which a team of scientists set out for New Guinea to conduct research. Owing to dissensions within the team, the difficult climatic conditions, and the hostility of the indigenous population, the expedition was not a success. It secured only modest scientific results.

60 M. Nicolas de Maclay: Paul is referring to Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay, the eminent Russian traveller, natural scientist and humanist. In the course of his travels in 1871–1882, Miklouho-Maclay conducted biological and above all ethnographic research in New Guinea, the Dutch East Indies, the Malayan Peninsula, the Moluccas, Australia and Oceania. He gathered a great deal of anthropological and ethnographic material and argued forcefully against theories of the inferiority of ‘non-white’ races. At the end of 1873, he set out on his second expedition to New Guinea, the Moluccas and the Malayan Peninsula. This journey lasted until October 1875. Reports of his movements reached Russia at highly irregular intervals, and in the summer of 1874 concern for his welfare was mounting. The Russian Geographical Society sought to explore all available channels, including the consulate in Sydney, to obtain information about him. Paul corresponded with Miklouho-Maclay, and they subsequently met in person. Paul’s dispatch contains one error: Miklouho-Maclay completed his first expedition to New Guinea in 1872, not 1873, leaving the island on the Russian clipper *Izumrud*.

20. Damyon to Berg, Russian Consul General in London

Melbourne,
11 June (30 May) 1880
No. 7

[...] It was with unfeigned regret that I read in the telegrams of the demise of the Empress of Russia.⁶¹ I sincerely sympathize with His Imperial Majesty in His sad bereavement, and hope that He may be sustained and supported in this sore affliction, and receive all the solace and consolation, which a Higher Power can bestow.

The flags at the various Consulates in Melbourne were all hoisted half mast for three days consecutively as a slight mark of respect and esteem for so illustrious and exalted a Personage. [...]

AVPRI 256 (Consulate General in London) -555a-1345, f. 524. In English.

61 The Empress Maria, consort of Alexander II, died on 8 June 1880.



Alexis Poutiata

The first permanent Russian consul arrived in Melbourne in January 1894. He was born on 13 January (OS) 1855 into the family of Collegiate Assessor Dmitry Aleksandrovich Poutiata,¹ and spent his childhood on an estate called Bessonovo in the Viazma district of the province of Smolensk. His father maintained a model stock-breeding farm and had won several prizes at national agricultural fairs for his achievements in producing new breeds of cattle. His son, however, chose a different career. In 1877, he graduated with a gold medal from the renowned Katkovsky Lycée, the Moscow school called ‘imperial’ in honour of the then Prince Nicholas, where he had received a brilliant education in languages and literature. He then went abroad to study at the universities of Jena and Berlin. To the end of his days, he loved literature and produced verse translations into Russian, and while consul in Melbourne even began to translate the work of Australian poets. On completing his studies and returning to Russia, Poutiata worked for a short time in the Ministry of Education, then entered the Foreign Ministry in the early 1880s. His first posting abroad was as secretary at the Russian mission in Bucharest. There he soon showed a remarkable gift for establishing excellent relations with everybody he met. It is reported that the Bulgarian prince, Alexander Battenberg, with whom he had dealings while serving in the Balkans, said of him, ‘He had a rare quality: the ability to charm everybody by

1 AVPRI: 159-464-2800a, f. 1; V.P. Oltarzhevskii, ‘Pervye postoiannye predstaviteli Rossii v Avstralii i Novoi Zelandii’, *Rossia i strany Vostoka v seredine XIX – nachale XX v.*, Irkutsk, 1984, p. 47.

his courtesy and the refinement of his manners'.² In 1888, Poutiata was appointed the ministry's agent in Odessa, and, in 1893, consul in Melbourne.

Although the Australians were at first wary of the new representative of Russia, a country with which Britain had a complex relationship, Poutiata fairly soon won over both government circles and public opinion in Australia. For example, a wide-ranging interview with the *Melbourne Age*, published on 29 January 1894, was well received. He did his best to answer all questions which were of interest to local readers. While assuring them of Russia's peaceful intentions and its desire to develop relations with the Australian colonies, his personality profoundly impressed the newspaper's correspondent, who spoke most highly of his broad horizons and fluency in several foreign languages.³ Any remaining distrust finally melted away during his protocol visits to Victorian Government ministries, where he made an extremely favourable impression. Later, in January 1895, the *Illustrated Australian News* stressed the popularity which Poutiata had succeeded in winning in Melbourne:

His courtesy of manner, the pleasing readiness with which he adapted himself to the novel conditions of residence for the first time in an English community, and the interest he manifested in local affairs, soon won for him a wide circle of friends in the political, social and commercial world of Melbourne.⁴

At the same time, Poutiata's extremely conservative political views were striking. In interviews with the Australian press, he spoke of the happy life of the Russian peasantry since the abolition of serfdom. Now, he claimed, they were their own landlords, while 'we, the landlords, are the servants of the peasants'.⁵ In the field of politics, everything in Russia was splendid: 'Our system of government is not the same as yours, but it is a good system ... It is quite a mistake to think of the Czar as an autocrat ... We do not want ... your democratic government in Russia.'⁶ His appraisal of the internal political situation in Victoria was from the same perspective. In his dispatches, he wrote disapprovingly of the strength of the workers'

2 M. Protopopov, *A.D. Poutiata: First Imperial Russian Consul to the Australian Colonies*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1995, p. 9.

3 *The Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5.

4 *Illustrated Australian News*, No. 476, January 1895, p. 23.

5 *The Age*, 29 January 1894, p. 5.

6 *Barrier Miner*, 20 December 1894, p. 2.

movement in Australia and ‘the authorities’ closeness to the people or, rather, that of the people to the authorities, which has arisen in these colonies in conditions of extreme democratisation’.⁷

Poutiata did not enjoy robust health; for many years he suffered from chronic renal insufficiency. In the end, the hot climate, the huge amount of work he took on and his complete disregard for medical advice took their toll. His kidney disease became acute, and on 16 December 1894 he died in Doctor Crivelli’s private clinic in Melbourne.⁸ According to some sources, his wife Valeria and son Nikolai were with him in Melbourne for some time.⁹ Poutiata is buried in Melbourne’s main cemetery in Carlton, where in 1994 a monument to him was unveiled by his grave, on the initiative of the Russian Embassy and Russian community organisations, to mark the centenary of permanent Russian diplomatic representation in Australia. On the same occasion a memorial plaque was unveiled on the footpath by the site of the Market Street building, demolished in the 1960s, where the Russian consulate was housed in the nineteenth century.¹⁰

21. Poutiata to Y. Staal,¹¹ Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
30 (18) January 1894
No. 1

[...] I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have arrived in Melbourne and taken over the Imperial Consulate from my predecessor, Mr James Damyon.

A few days after my arrival I was received by the Governor of Victoria, Lord Hopetoun,¹² who greeted me with his usual courtesy and asked me at length about the circumstances of my appointment and my journey

7 AVPRI: 185-520-692, f. 35. See Document 24.

8 *The Argus*, 18 December 1894, p. 6.

9 Protopopov, *A.D. Poutiata: First Imperial Russian Consul to the Australian Colonies*, p. 12.

10 See V. Ivanov, ‘Dar konsula’, *Australiada*, 1997, No. 14.

11 Yegor Yegorovich Staal: Russian statesman, ambassador to Great Britain 1884–1902.

12 Lord Hopetoun (John Adrian Louis Hope, 1860–1908): Governor of Victoria from 1889 to 1895, later Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia from 1901 to 1903.

from Russia to Australia. I took advantage of this first conversation with the Governor to inform him from the very outset of the absence of any political nature in my mission and to explain that the appointment of a permanent Consul in Melbourne was motivated solely by the Imperial Government's legitimate desire to become more closely acquainted with the social, economic and commercial development of this young but already flourishing country. This declaration was by no means superfluous, since from the very first days of my arrival here I have had occasion to observe that, among the local population, there is a strongly held, naive apprehension that in a future war, which for some reason everyone here firmly believes to be imminent, Russia will without fail choose Australia as one of its areas of attack.

Lord Hopetoun thanked me for the candour and directness of this declaration, and I have no reason to think that he doubted my words, since, according to everything I have heard about him, in spite of his extreme youth, he is a very serious and educated man and far superior to the class from which the local ministers and members of both chambers of parliament are recruited. The latter have extremely exaggerated notions about Australia and its international significance and, as often happens in countries remote from centres in which world problems are resolved, are extremely prone to political intrigue. In this respect they are perhaps outdone only by the editors of the local press.¹³ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 14–15. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

22. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
30 (18) January 1894
No. 2

[...] Soon after my audience with the Governor, I was received by the Premier of Victoria.

13 In the latter half of the nineteenth century, strained relations between Britain and Russia could not but affect Australian public opinion vis-à-vis the Russian Empire. Ever since the Crimean War, there was a widely held belief that in the event of a new Anglo–Russian war a Russian naval assault on Australia's main ports was inevitable. Throughout the late nineteenth century, suspicion of Russia and fear of 'the Russian menace' constituted a notable factor in the domestic political life of Australia.

Mr Patterson has been in power since January 1893.¹⁴ He is a man of independent mind, and because of this none of the local parties considers him exclusively their leader. His main task, as he himself explained during a lengthy and interesting talk, was to repair the country's finances, badly shaken by the extravagance of previous ministers. Choosing a path of strict economies, he set the first example of salary cuts himself, reducing his own from £2,000 to £1,600. The principle of the cuts has already been implemented by him quite resolutely, and not without civic courage, in many branches of government, although, as he himself admits, these measures are insignificant compared to the sacrifices which the country has yet to bear in order to reach the road to sound economic management.

The delusions of grandeur expressed in the construction of magnificent buildings greatly exceeding the country's needs; the construction of a huge and largely unnecessary rail network; the large number of public servants with inflated salaries; endless loans from England, whose interest rates and repayments now weigh heavily upon the budget; disproportionately high duties, not stimulating any corresponding development of local production; and above all the insane speculation on land prices, causing almost all the local banks to suspend payments – all of these reasons together gave rise to last year's financial crisis, whose victims were a multitude of thoughtless private individuals who were either ruined or hastily departed for England with the pitiful remnants of their quickly acquired fortunes. The budget deficit threatens to continue for several years. Trade and industry have turned out to be so seriously undermined that the sum total of imported goods into Victoria in 1893 amounted to barely two thirds of the imports in 1890, which reached the huge sum of £22,000,000.

In addition to all these difficulties confronting the Premier, there is the growing number of unemployed workers. The workers here represent a formidable political force. The parliamentary majority is in its hands and, as a result, so is the situation of the ministers. Because of some naive ideas, the workers here imagine that all they have to do is ask an exorbitant price for their labour (they receive 8 to 12 shillings for an 8-hour day, and consequently are often without work) for the Government to hasten to their aid. An interesting illustration of this idea is provided by two resolutions at the Intercolonial Labor Conference in Sydney the other

14 Mr Patterson: Sir James Brown Patterson (1833–1895), Premier of Victoria in 1893–1894, at the peak of the economic and financial crisis which Victoria and the other colonies underwent in the 1890s.

day.¹⁵ After only a few hours of debate, it came to the following two extremely oversimplified conclusions: (1) to demand that the Government of the Colony prevent coloured labour entering the country and reducing the wages of the whites; and (2) that, in the event of unemployment, the Government should be obliged in principle to provide work.

The workers here are displaying advanced socialistic tendencies. In order to paralyse this movement, which threatens to aggravate relations between labour and capital even more than at present, Mr Patterson recently delivered a speech which was very instructive to the workers, at a church in one of Melbourne's suburbs. He tried to explain to them that the concept of capitalism does not depend upon the amount of capital a person has, that every labourer who has a few pounds put aside in his savings bank is also a capitalist, and that, should a war begin between labour and capital, all these small capitalists will find themselves in conflict with themselves. This speech, in the enclosed press-cutting,¹⁶ is so elementary in its exposition of the principles of political economy and so full of sophisms like the ones cited, that it merits little serious attention. However, with no weapons at his command other than persuasion in this semi-republican country, where the prestige of government is extremely weak, Mr Patterson is trying by this means to rein in the development of destructive ideas, in the hope that a rapid improvement in the country's situation will do more to defuse the labour problem in Australia than his speeches.

Whether or not Mr Patterson can succeed in this difficult task will be seen in the near future. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 16-18. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

15 The Intercolonial Labor Conference, which opened in Sydney on 19 January 1894, brought together Labor parliamentarians from all the Australian colonies.

16 The enclosure is not reproduced here.

23. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
30 (18) January 1894
No. 3

[...] Of political matters exercising the minds of Australians, first place undoubtedly belongs to the question of federation of the colonies.

So as not to weary your Excellency by rehearsing the history of this idea, which since the federalists' first congress in 1886 has stood to bear fruit,¹⁷ and assuming that the general outlines of this movement are well-known to the Imperial Embassy from the press, I consider it my duty to dwell upon an event which, if not advancing this idea, has at least put it back on the agenda. I refer to the speech made before a very large gathering of people in Melbourne on 9th January (NS) by the New South Wales Member of Parliament, Mr Edmund Barton.¹⁸

Mr Barton approached his theme *e contrario*, speaking not of the positive aspects of federation but, on the contrary, of all the obstacles that lie in the path of its implementation. His main concern was to prove to the intelligentsia of Melbourne that the obstacles to federation come not from New South Wales, as is usually supposed here, but rather that they lie in human nature itself, which is inclined to inertia, apathy and the preservation, by force of habit, of older ways, even when those are no longer applicable. But it is not difficult to perceive that this part of Mr Barton's speech was intended to disguise the true reason for a certain indifference which Sydney has shown towards federation, to wit their fear that Melbourne, a city twice as big as the capital of New South Wales, will become the administrative and social centre of a united Australia and undermine the development of Sydney. As I have been able to ascertain from conversations with local leaders of public opinion, the reason why the idea of unification, assiduously promoted at political meetings and

17 Federalists' first congress: this refers to the congress held in January 1886 of the Federal Council of Australasia, the first consultative body formed from representatives of all the colonies to discuss matters affecting them. The Council was formed in 1883 and marked an important step towards federation.

18 Sir Edmund Barton (1849–1920): a determined advocate of federation. In 1901–1903 first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia.

in the press, is gaining little ground, lies precisely in the secret rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne, and I am unable to see how these two main centres, one of which points to its manifest progress and the other to its historical precedence, can reconcile their interests, unless some unforeseen event or national peril should compel them to forget their individual scores and commit themselves wholly to the interests of a common Australian fatherland.

However, a pointer to the possibility of such peril quickly followed. Changing his tone from that of a theoretician to that of a tribune, Mr Barton exclaimed that it would not do for the slothful to say that federation was a question for the future. If the time was not now, he asked, when was the time to be for federation?

‘When the Russian Fleet arrives,’ came a voice from the floor, causing loud applause and laughter at the same time.

Mr Barton enquired whether that would be the time to sit down and form a constitution, when the Russian fleet was outside the Heads. Would anyone tell him, he asked, that the moment of danger was the moment for deliberation?

In the end, however, the speaker was obliged to admit that although apathy was the main obstacle to implementing the idea of federation, the idea itself still contains a great many obscure aspects, generating mistrust towards it and a regrettable indifference.

On the whole the local press treated Mr Barton’s speech sympathetically but, at the same time took the opportunity to point out yet another obstacle that he had overlooked: the insincerity of certain politicians not daring to declare themselves opponents of federation while doing nothing to aid its success. This allusion refers to the Premier. However, while the parliaments of the colonies are generally in favour of a swift proclamation of federation, their governments are unlikely to favour speeding the process. The fact is that, from the moment of federation, they will all be deprived of income from inter-colonial duties which, especially in Victoria, amount to a very significant sum. Furthermore, unification of all the colonies, at least in the first period, cannot avoid causing considerable confusion in their administration, especially in the budgets, and this means an even greater increase in their financial difficulties, which are already quite significant. That is why I believe that, until the Australian colonies

manage to extricate themselves from the webs which they themselves have woven through their thoughtless financial management, the ruling circles of Australia will delay federation, rather than promote it. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 20–22. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

24. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) February 1894
No. 4

[...] Although unemployment is at present a burning issue in many countries, here in Australia, it continues to acquire a more particular nature as a result of the authorities' closeness to the people or, rather, that of the people to the authorities which has arisen in these colonies in conditions of extreme democratisation.

Rich deposits of gold, first found here in 1855,¹⁹ and an extremely profitable wool trade, attracted a large number of working people, who quickly became accustomed to high wages, which were rarely disputed by colonists who had quickly waxed rich. Now times have changed, Australia has entered into a period of more normal economic life, and workers' wages will inevitably have to be reduced accordingly, to a level little exceeding that in other countries. But the workers, spoilt by the recent past, have formed powerful trade unions and are doggedly resisting the lowering of wages, preferring stoppages, strikes and bloody confrontations with the police (as happened recently at coal mines near the township of Newcastle in New South Wales) to a wage of eight shillings per day (i.e. 50 copecks an hour, since the 8-hour working day has already been introduced here). Groups of unemployed workers gather in the streets daily and send their deputations to parley with Ministers, who are obliged to receive them, like it or not, since the majority in the legislative assemblies consists of representatives of those very same workers.

19 The date is incorrect. Gold was discovered in Victoria in 1851.

This phenomenon can be observed simultaneously in all three main colonies, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. I will take the liberty of recounting a typical episode which took place in Adelaide the week before last.

A deputation from a meeting of workers appeared before the Premier, Mr Kingston,²⁰ and demanded that the Government provide them with work. Mr Kingston replied that he too was worried about this, and that he would tell them his decision tomorrow. The next day he decreed that they be told that the Government was hiring them to break stones for the construction of proposed highways, with wages from 6 to 8 shillings per day. The workers greeted this offer with roars of laughter. On the following day they assembled a meeting of over 2,000 men and passed a resolution saying that in view of the latest 'insult' the Government had inflicted upon the working class, they were denouncing: Mr Kingston, the Premier of South Australia, Mr Patterson, the Premier of Victoria and Sir George Dibbs, the Premier of New South Wales,²¹ as the foremost 'anarchists' of the world. In the end some of the workers agreed to break stones, but announced that they would work for one week only, in order to give the Government time to change its mind and find them some other work more worthy of them.

Here, in Victoria, matters have not yet reached this point, probably owing to Mr Patterson's personal influence and authority. The local Government here has, in my opinion, adopted extremely judicious measures: the establishment of 'village settlements' by the distribution of crown lands and monetary loans, on preferential terms, in order to establish farms. The drawback of these measures is that the loans to the farmers have to be drawn from the savings banks (other sources, apparently, were not to hand). The Government is guided in this by the following casuistic principle: that, since the main investors in these banks are small-scale manufacturers and labourers, then they are the ones who should now make use of loans from them in order to facilitate their transition from work in towns and factories to a more stable and advantageous settlement on the land that they themselves are tilling. But the opposition, not without reason, points to the fact that the Government would not have ventured to touch the savings banks if private banks had been able to offer the

20 Mr Kingston: Charles Cameron Kingston (1850–1908), prominent political figure in South Australia and later in the Commonwealth. Premier of South Australia 1893–1899.

21 Sir George Richard Dibbs (1834–1904): prominent figure in New South Wales politics and advocate of federation. Premier of New South Wales in 1885, 1889, and 1891–1894.

farmers credit on the strength of the newly granted lands. On the other hand, the Government, as custodian of public property, would hardly have the right to offer credit under guarantees which the private banks consider insufficient, especially for such a large sum (up to 10,000,000 roubles) which, according to general estimates, might be required for the complete implementation of the Government's plan.

Be that as it may, however, the Ministers are very strongly promoting this measure, taking every single suitable opportunity to urge the workers to take up the plough as quickly as possible, in order to avoid the fate of others in industrial and technical centres where the supply of labour exceeds demand. But it is difficult to tell yet whether many of these unemployed will agree to move to the countryside and take up the hard farming life. The majority of them have already changed a great deal. In this connection, a very witty illustration of the present situation is represented by a cartoon in the local *Punch* (similar to the London one): a worker goes up to a railway ticket office and asks for a ticket to one of the new village settlements.

'Where exactly do you wish to go?' asks the cashier.

'To Idle-berg,' the worker answers grandly.

In conclusion I cannot avoid mentioning a curious phenomenon: the process taking place here is exactly the opposite of what we see in Europe and especially in Russia: in our case the village built the town, while here the town is only now devising and building the village.

One cannot but wish the present Cabinet success in this judicious and beneficial undertaking, although one also cannot expect that, in the matter of establishing village settlements, everything will go smoothly and without a hitch. At least Mr Patterson, with whom I often have occasion to talk about these matters (and who, by the way, is very interested in the organisation of our villages in Russia) recently expressed the following thought to me: 'Believe me,' he said, 'our history will prove that it was easier for previous governments, in our "gold and boom times", to build the half-marble Melbourne with all its superfluous splendour and over-ripe civilisation, than for me to build ten villages. That is the extent to which all our concepts of rational internal policy and principles of stable social welfare have become distorted under the influence of our transient successes.' [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 35-38. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

25. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) February 1894
No. 5

[...] I consider it my duty to give Your Excellency an account of certain circumstances associated with my presence here in the capacity of first permanent Russian Consul.

While still on my long voyage here I had the opportunity to speak at length with several people who had lived in or been to Melbourne, such as the Interim Governor of the French Colony of New Caledonia, Mr Gauharou,²² who told me much of interest and to some extent comical concerning local public opinion towards Russia and did not conceal that, in view of the deeply ingrained suspicion towards us here,²³ my position in the eyes of the Government and of society would not be the easiest, especially since, in Australia, they had never yet seen any plenipotentiary diplomatic representatives on their soil, and partly also because, out of colonial self-importance, they consider as such all permanent consuls of the Great Powers, ascribing to them an importance which far exceeds their actual functions. As I vaguely suspected this myself, I quickly concluded that the best way to dispel this unfavourable and onerous atmosphere of suspicion towards me would be to eliminate any secrecy surrounding my person and quite directly indicate that, far from having any political or secret mission, I had been sent to Australia simply on account of a natural desire by Russia to become acquainted with the social, economic and commercial development of the colonies here, and also to prepare the ground for those direct relations which, as a result of the spread of civilisation and industry in all corners of the world, must inevitably be formed between our two countries as well.

The press plays a huge role in the Australian colonies (there are 200 newspapers and magazines published here). No sooner had I arrived than representatives of various political and literary periodicals called on me. In order to avoid any fabrications on their part, I communicated to them quite candidly the

22 Mr Gauharou: Léon Gauharou, Acting Governor of New Caledonia from 21 February to 10 June 1894.

23 Suspicion: see Document 41.

above-stated views as to the reasons for my appointment. I must give them credit for their conscientiousness: they fully accepted my statements and, as I was able to satisfy myself a few days later, the impression made upon the public by their extremely kind remarks about me was most favourable. I commenced my official visits to ministers (upon whom, I instinctively felt, would depend my future standing in Australia) only after this preparatory work, and the result of these tactics exceeded all my expectations: beginning with the Premier, they all received me in the best possible manner and made it clear that not only did they not have any suspicions with regard to me but, on the contrary, felt flattered that Russia had appointed a permanent consul and would be pleased to furnish any information I might request of them in order to compile my dispatches. They made good this promise at once, by kindly sending me more than forty different books, periodicals, lists, maps etc., as well as a complimentary ticket for travel on all the railways to view the colonies (not as consul, since this year all other consuls have been refused such tickets because of economic considerations, but as a 'distinguished visitor').

Thus I had every reason to be quite content on my own account. But then an episode occurred that confused me somewhat for a certain time. The main (and, truth to tell, very good) Australian newspaper *The Argus* published an extremely tactless and outrageously foolish report about me,²⁴ in which it announced that the reason for my appointment here was none other than the desire of the Imperial Government to become acquainted with the state of this country's defences, while at the same time, although quite unwittingly, paying me a very high compliment by saying that the local Government should now be aware that henceforth the state of the fortresses and military forts of Victoria would be just as well known in St Petersburg as in the Defence Ministry of the colony. The secret, or rather, the personal motive for this senseless hoax was that the owner of this newspaper (which he considers to be the *Times* of the Southern hemisphere), as I was later informed, for some reason imagined that I would pay him a visit, whereas it would never have occurred to me that my public duties could possibly include visits to journalists; nor would they in any circumstances be in keeping with my official standing. But, to his cost, this article was late: on the very same day, the evening newspaper *The Evening Standard* (apparently at the suggestion of the Premier, for it belongs to the Government camp) gave a firm and businesslike defence

24 *The Argus*, 30 January 1894.

of my official capacity, and I myself was thereupon immediately able to satisfy myself that all educated and serious-minded people in the city had treated the *Argus's* hoax with the utmost condemnation.

For its part, the Government also did not delay in proving to me how little, in its view, the *Argus's* insinuations had achieved: a day or two later I received an invitation to go with the Premier and many other senior Government personages in their special train far into the countryside, and particularly, to the town of Maldon (250 versts from Melbourne),²⁵ where a banquet was to take place in honour of the Minister of Lands, Mr McIntyre.²⁶ Without describing this extremely interesting trip made by me under exclusively favourable conditions, I consider it my duty to at least report that, in his speech at this banquet, the Premier touched upon my presence amongst the invited guests, and announced that the country considers it a great honour to have here the first permanent Russian representative, and he requested that I convey to the great northern people everyone's gratitude for taking this first step towards mutual rapprochement, and stated that Victoria would be pleased to respond to Russia with those same feelings of 'brotherhood' ('to fraternise with Russia').²⁷

At the same banquet yet another speech was made which, owing to its particular significance, I consider myself fortunate to impart to Your Excellency in detail in a separate dispatch.²⁸ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 39–42. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

26. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) February 1894
No. 6

[...] Further to my previous dispatch No. 5, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency most respectfully that at the recent banquet in the town of Maldon, given in honour of the Minister of Lands in Victoria,

25 250 versts = 267 kilometres. The distance is actually closer to 120 km.

26 Sir John McIntyre (1832–1904): in Patterson's government (1893–1894) held the post of President of the Board of Lands and Works and Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

27 Quoted in English in the original.

28 See Document 26.

and attended by the Premier, several ministers, numerous members of Parliament and up to 130 other guests, the senior member of the Upper House, Mr Fitzgerald,²⁹ generally considered to be the best orator in Australia, delivered a brilliant, deeply heartfelt speech in honour of our Sovereign Emperor and Russia, met with loud, prolonged applause and shouts of 'hurrah' from all present. This speech, translated by me in full from the text Mr Fitzgerald himself kindly assembled and immediately passed to me, is remarkable not only in its profound well-considered content, doing honour to the independent views of the orator, free of any of the prejudices which have taken root here, but also by the fact that, as many of those present declared to me, it was the first open and spontaneous acknowledgement in the history of Australia of Russia's peaceful intentions and the exalted aspirations of its Monarch. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, f. 44. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

27. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) April 1894
No. 11

[...] On 27th of last March the cruiser second class *Kreiser* arrived here.³⁰ As I had already made a timely request of the local authorities for permission for our ship to anchor as close as possible to the quayside, its appearance in full view of the whole port district of the city aroused great curiosity amongst the inhabitants and became the subject of the most diverse discussions. Successive large numbers of the public, daily permitted to visit it, gave high praise to the order and impeccable cleanliness on board. The next day, the Austrian corvette *Fasana* also arrived here, and its commander, Mr Adamovic,³¹ having appraised the splendid condition of the *Kreiser* with an expert eye, asked our commander, N. I. Nebogatov,

29 Mr Fitzgerald: Nicholas Fitzgerald held a seat in the Upper House without interruption from 1864 to 1908.

30 The date is incorrect. The *Kreiser* reached Melbourne on 3 April (23 March) and remained there until 20 (8) April 1894. It was commanded by Captain Second Rank Nikolai Ivanovich Nebogatov, who later earned ill fame for the surrender of the Russian fleet at Tsushima in the Russo–Japanese War.

31 The Austrian steam corvette *Fasana* arrived in Melbourne on 5 April 1894. Its commander was Karl Edler von Adamovic, later an admiral in the Imperial Austrian Navy.

to permit him to send over a senior officer during our crew's morning exercise, in order that he might see how a warship should be properly maintained. From the very first day of our mutual acquaintance, relations between our sailors and the Austrian ones, amongst whom there were many Slavs, became most trustful and friendly.

Local authorities and the public afforded the officers of both warships the most cordial hospitality. Without any exaggeration one could say that there was not a single day when our officers did not receive several invitations, both official ones to inspect various institutions and places of note, and private ones. Particular attention was paid to them by: the Premier Mr Patterson, the Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Mr Zeal, the Mayor of Melbourne Mr Snowden, and General Tulloch, the Commander of the Militia, who invited them to inspect the colony's army barracks and depots.³² The Minister responsible for the Department of Railways presented them with free tickets for travel on all railway lines in Victoria, which they used to make several trips into the interior. All the main city clubs sent the officers complimentary membership cards, and a ball was given in the German Club; the French Association 'Alliance pour la propagation de la langue française en Australie' organised a literary soirée in their honour. Whenever they entered the halls of these assemblies, our sailors were met with the strains of our national anthem. During a morning concert in the Town Hall, on a huge and truly magnificent organ (this organ, costing 200,000 roubles, is considered to be second in the world) they performed a symphony specially composed for this event, 'The Flags of all Nations', with splendid closing chords taken from the incomparable motif of our 'God Save the Tsar'. The officers of the Militia invited the sailors to tea and refreshments at the docks, during which the local ladies' society played lawn-tennis and shot at targets. There were also a great many private invitations, especially from families in the French community, who organised several dance evenings in honour of the Russian guests.

32 Zeal: Sir William Austin Zeal, Speaker of the Upper House of the Victorian Parliament from 1892 to 1901; Snowden: Sir Arthur Snowden, Lord Mayor of Melbourne 1892–1895; Tulloch: Sir Alexander Bruce Tulloch, British army officer and writer, in the 1890s, with the rank of Major-General, commanded the volunteer militia in Victoria and acted as military adviser to the governments of the colonies.

Receptions given for Russian officers in the countryside were distinguished by no less cordiality. Travelling to Ballarat in the company of two officers in order to inspect the gold fields, Commander Nebogatov was struck by the courtesy with which the local authorities and inhabitants greeted him, taking him to all places of interest and regaling him with speeches and toasts appropriate to the occasion.

In response to all these courtesies, not long before the *Kreiser's* departure from Sydney, almost all the city's high society were invited to a tea party on board on behalf of the Commander, the officers and myself. By this time the popularity of the Russian officers had grown so great that, in spite of the small dimensions of the ship's decks, we were obliged to invite up to 250 people. Through the efforts of the officers and crew, the ship was elegantly decorated with flags, carpets and tropical plants. Thanks to the splendid weather the event was a complete success, and the guests departed displaying unconcealed impressions of pleasure at Russian cordiality and hospitality.

For a long time afterwards the Commander's quick-witted response to Mr Patterson, the Premier of the colony, circulated in society and even reached the press. The Premier said archly, 'We have seen how everything is in splendid order on deck and in the cabins: but now it would be interesting to know what you have in the holds?' Mr Nebogatov answered, 'Well, we don't have anything in particular in the holds; here's where we keep the champagne, and here the gunpowder.'

Thus, there is good reason to assume that the suspicions which arose here concerning the establishment of a permanent Russian consulate have now been dispelled, if not completely, then at least to a significant degree, partly owing to prevailing common sense, and partly to the timely arrival and sojourn of the *Kreiser*. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 56-58. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko. Original first published in abridged form with no indication of authorship in the newspaper *Kronshadtsky vestnik*. See 'Mel'burn' (a report in *Kronshadtsky vestnik*), 17 June 1894.

28. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) April 1894
No. 12

[...] Difficulties which have arisen in the Samoan Islands have elicited a movement in Australia which, even if it does not prove fraught with consequences, will certainly not be devoid of interest.³³ The affair concerns nothing more nor less than the removal of the triple protectorate of Germany, Great Britain and the United States and replacing it with an individual protectorate over Samoa by New Zealand.

Only two weeks ago in the society here, where the mood remains depressed as a result of the sorry state of affairs, there was no talk of any such daring political project. At the present moment, this idea has not only advanced into the foreground, but has already assumed a completely official nature.

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr Seddon,³⁴ telegraphed the Government here that, in view of the disorder reigning in Samoa, New Zealand, which has larger commercial interests in these islands than all other countries, is using its own resources to take over the establishment and maintenance of order, and is prepared to assume full responsibility for this, on condition that its intervention has the support of the other colonies.

This took place only five days ago, and one can only be amazed at the alacrity with which this daring enterprise has been seized upon in Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart. Our Premier, Mr Patterson was flattered, it seems, to be the first person on the Australian mainland to whom New Zealand's proposal was officially communicated, and the determination with which this cautious and serious man has taken upon himself the role of chief advocate of this step has come as a surprise not only to me. Just a few hours after receiving the above-mentioned telegram, Mr Patterson convened his Cabinet and, encountering not the slightest

33 In 1889 Britain, Germany and the US established a triple protectorate over the Samoan islands, but conflict between the tribes, backed by the various protector powers, continued.

34 Seddon: Richard John Seddon, an eminent political figure in New Zealand, Prime Minister from 1893 until his death in 1906.

opposition from his colleagues, that very evening telegraphed copies of the communication he had received from the Prime Minister of New Zealand to the governments of New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, Western and South Australia, with the proposal that they immediately instruct their Agents General in London to support the New Zealand project.³⁵ The whole affair is being conducted here with a kind of ostentatious candour, and the morning newspapers the next day already printed the texts of all these communications. Here is the text of the telegram sent by Mr Patterson himself to the Victorian Agent General:

Give cordial support to New Zealand's application to the Imperial Government respecting Samoa, but urge undivided control rather than a control on behalf of the treaty powers, which may be unsatisfactory in practice. Co-operate with other Agents General.³⁶

Apart from Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania have already sent the instructions demanded by Mr Patterson to London. What position New South Wales will take is not yet clear. However, in any case, there is no doubt that Australia is attempting to act as a united federal government in a question of international political significance.

In social terms, New Zealand is a very advanced country. Political rights in it are granted equally to both men and women. In one of the small towns of this colony, the mayoress is a certain eloquent lady who, they say, manages her rather uncomplicated duties quite well.³⁷ There is nothing surprising, therefore, that this strange project has emerged in precisely this enterprising environment. Less explicable is Mr Patterson's enthusiasm. One is involuntarily forced to suppose that he has seized upon this idea, which has every chance of becoming popular here in view of the approaching sitting of parliament, already convened by the Governor's decree for the 18/30 May. Public interest in New Zealand's venture could serve as a convenient way for him to distract members' attention from a multitude of pressing economic and financial problems, the solution of which could have a more direct influence on his fate as Premier.

³⁵ Agents General: special representatives of the Australian colonies in London. The colonies instituted this office between 1857 (Victoria) and 1891 (Western Australia).

³⁶ 'The Control of Samoa: New Zealand's Offer', *The Argus*, 25 April 1894.

³⁷ A reference to Elizabeth Yates, Mayor of Onehunga, a town near Auckland, in the years 1893–1894.

Furthermore, the New Zealand project is of great patriotic significance in the eyes of the Australians. Here and in Britain there is much interest in the question of laying a submarine cable and establishing a new shipping line between Vancouver and Sydney. The benefits of this communication are that the distance from Australia to London will be reduced by 10 days' travel, while the route itself will run entirely through British possessions: should the present route through the Suez Canal be cut, Australia will not be cut off from England, either commercially or strategically. The Islands of Samoa may serve as an important coaling and military station.

Finally, the idea of placing these islands under the protection of New Zealand also gratifies the self-esteem of the local colonies here by promoting Australia in the eyes of the mother country and the whole world as a new political entity within the system of powers comprising British might. As if by order, an interesting article on this subject appeared in the local newspaper *The Age*, only two days before the Premier received the telegram from Mr Seddon. I have the honour to forward this article herewith for your Excellency's consideration.³⁸

Everything indicates that the laurels of Sir Henry Loch are keeping the Australians awake;³⁹ and besides, the military picnic on the Samoan Islands, ruled by a princeling well drilled by the triple protectorate,⁴⁰ promises to be much more enjoyable than the not always pleasant encounters of the South African Militia with the armies of King Lobengula. [...]

P.S. I have just returned from seeing the Premier, with whom I had intended to speak privately about these matters. But Mr Patterson was evidently out of sorts because telegrams from Europe did not indicate that the Australian enterprise was being taken seriously. Although not entering into a prolonged conversation with me, he did, however, very kindly request his private secretary, Mr Thomas,⁴¹ to acquaint me with all the details of his correspondence concerning this affair and to show me all the original telegrams and documents. 'Without making any kind of secret of all this, we are very pleased to satisfy your quite understandable curiosity,' he added.

38 The attachment is not reproduced here.

39 Loch: Henry Brougham Loch, Governor of Victoria 1884–1889, later Governor of the Cape Colony, honoured for his role in putting down the Mashonaland rebellion led by the Matabele King Lobengula.

40 This refers to King Malietoa Laupepa of Samoa, in his third reign in 1893–1898.

41 No further information has been located concerning Mr Thomas.

After examining these documents, which did not contain anything that was not already known to me from newspapers and social conversations, I asked Mr Thomas, ‘Does New Zealand have sufficient manpower and resources, and, more importantly, the experience to administer Samoan affairs better than the three Great Powers?’ Mr Thomas answered me frankly, ‘It does. About thirty years ago, fierce wars were in progress there against the native tribes, and the British troops, unable to gain control, had to evacuate these islands. Then the New Zealand militia, under the command of Colonel Pitt,⁴² pacified the country, and you yourself now know how quickly European civilisation began to flourish there. In any case, we are assuming responsibility...’

It is difficult to find a common language with people who prefer to cling to their illusions. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 59–62. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

29. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) May 1894
No. 14

[...] The impending opening of Parliament in a few days’ time,⁴³ as was to be expected, is giving rise to much speculation in the press and in society. It concerns government bills almost exclusively, since very little has been heard about any serious proposals from the opposition. It is appropriate here to say something about the composition of the local parliamentary parties.

The grave crisis which almost the whole of Australia has undergone, and is still partly undergoing, has badly confused party interests and greatly disturbed all local political dilettantes, formerly so fearless, by its profundity. Although an organised opposition does exist, it lacks internal cohesion and, above all, a clear programme. Until recently it was

⁴² Colonel Pitt: apparently Colonel Albert Pitt, who in 1881 with 900 men crushed Maori resistance in the community of Parihaka.

⁴³ Victoria’s third parliament opened on 30 May 1894.

led by one of the former ministers, Sir Graham Berry,⁴⁴ whose careless leadership of the country was, it is generally believed, the main reason for the misfortunes that have befallen it. But a few weeks ago the opposition chose a new leader, Mr Turner.⁴⁵

The Government is led (officially) by the democratic party, or the Labor Party, consisting mainly of the working class representatives. But here an interesting phenomenon may be observed. While being the elected representatives of this Labor Party, the present ministers are applying all their efforts not to promoting or strengthening it, but on the contrary to weakening its authority in Parliament and thus preventing the country from sliding further down the dangerous path of democracy. It goes without saying that they certainly do not state this (or, if they do state it, then in a very restrained manner, and only in private conversations). In their official speeches, the interests of the workers are foremost. But by means of judiciously conceived reforms they are, in actual fact, striving to rein in the workers, rather than open up new horizons for them. I proceed to some evidence for the foregoing:

In dispatch No. 4, I mentioned the village settlements.⁴⁶ The Government intends to pass several new measures in Parliament to consolidate and enlarge these agricultural settlements. It goes without saying that the result of these measures will be to remove from the towns the industrial working masses at present filling them, which in democratic countries constitute an increasingly dangerous political element, and thus weaken this new social force by dispersing it in the countryside, in close proximity to the beneficial effects of nature upon the nerves.

The high import duties, introduced here several years ago, were the result of trade union influence. By holding up the import of foreign manufactures, the unions literally controlled wages; but in so doing they so inhibited trade that many commercial houses and companies ceased to operate, and the cost of living increased so much that European immigration almost came to a complete halt, and a certain outflow of the population

44 Sir Graham Berry: liberal politician, premier of Victoria in 1875, 1877–1880, and 1880–1881. He waged a determined campaign against the dominant conservatives in the Victorian Legislative Council, pressed for land reform to reduce the economic power of the squatters, and supported protectionist policies to nurture the young manufacturing industries of the colony.

45 Mr Turner: Sir George Turner, liberal leader and premier of Victoria in 1894–1899 and 1900–1901. To overcome the financial crisis, he pursued a policy of reducing spending. Minister of Finance after federation.

46 See Document 24.

from Australia to other countries was even observed. The result of both was unemployment. The present government decided to reduce import duties. Recently a meeting even took place in Melbourne, led by the most serious of people, and carried a resolution on the need to abolish them completely.

The third major governmental measure does not relate strictly to the working classes, but concerns the whole country. Noting the confidence enjoyed here by the banknotes of the three major banks which received permission, for a certain annual fee, to issue them, the Government itself has decided to initiate a system of state paper money, although for the time being for the very modest sum of 900,000 pounds sterling (9,000,000 roubles). The opposition, in both newspapers and at mass meetings, is protesting against this measure, but their arguments are weak. There is therefore reason to believe that the Government will implement it and, subsequently, of course, will not fail to increase it to a more serious amount. These monies are vitally needed by the Government to cover the deficit.

But, for all this, it cannot be said that there is no money in the country: on the contrary, as we are assured, there has not been such an accumulation of gold coin here for a long time. According to the latest reports, there are up to 8,000,000 pounds sterling (80,000,000 roubles) stored in the vaults of the Melbourne banks. This all goes to show that the Government either does not expect to, or on principle does not wish to borrow money from the banks, and is therefore resorting to an urgent measure which is entirely new to English financial institutions. It is afraid of increasing the already colossal interest on previous loans. To do this it also needs to strengthen the country's economic productivity, but it is impossible to do so while the Labor Party is managing affairs and disinclined to make any kind of concessions. This is why Mr Patterson is endeavouring to break its power.

But since he understands perfectly that if he breaks the power of the ruling party without having enough support in the ranks of the opposition, he may be left without any support, he has already secured the Governor's consent for the dissolution of Parliament should even one of his draft bills be rejected.

This decision of Lord Hopetoun's is known to the opposition and that is why they are faced with either giving battle and undergoing all the uncertainties of a general election, or humbly bowing their heads before the present energetic and, as far as one can judge, extremely prudent Premier.

In any case, the forthcoming session promises to be very important, if not critical, for the country, and of great interest to the outside observer. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 83–86. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

30. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) May 1894
No. 15

[...] A delegation from the colony of Victoria comprising Mr Fitzgerald and Mr Fraser, members of the Upper House, and Sir Henry Wrixon from the Lower House, departed recently for Canada to attend the Colonial Conference in Ottawa on the laying of a new cable and the establishment of a new shipping line between Vancouver and Sydney.⁴⁷

Both these major undertakings are seen here as being very important. Any new shipping line will be of great benefit to Australia, which has extensive trade with Europe and America, as such lines always lead to lower freight costs. As Australians hold only a very limited number of shares in the six companies which maintain the current express mail service to Australia, it is of little concern to them whether these companies recoup their expenses. Likewise a new telegraph line can bring only benefit to Australians, as it will undoubtedly reduce the present very high costs.

In their eagerness to urge the Imperial Government to implement these two plans, Australians have accorded them some special strategic importance, which cannot be considered proven: an enemy warship can just as easily

47 The second Colonial Conference was held in Ottawa in June–July 1894. It was attended by representatives of Canada, the Australian colonies (except Western Australia), New Zealand and the Cape Colony. Simon Fraser: later a member of the federal Senate, grandfather of Malcolm Fraser, Prime Minister 1975–1983. Sir Henry John Wrixon: until July 1894 member of the Lower House of the Victorian Parliament.

sink a British freighter in the Pacific as in the Indian Ocean. Of course the closure of the Suez Canal would immediately cut the route for most ships sailing to Australia, but there is another route (used, for example, today by the New Zealand Shipping Company) which for Australia is not very much longer, round Africa.

On the other hand, Australia has no intention of bearing any of the major material costs of this new project: while pointing out that the new line is primarily of strategic significance, Australia is trying hard to lay all financial responsibility for guaranteeing shares and for subsidies on the Imperial Government, and as far as I have been able to ascertain, the instructions given to the delegates can be reduced to essentially two points: to support the project, stressing the importance to the state of a new route which runs exclusively through the possessions of the British Crown, and to reduce to a minimum the material responsibility of the colony. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 87–88. In Russian.

31. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) May 1894
No. 16

[...] The birthday of Queen Victoria was celebrated in Melbourne with due solemnity and universal expressions of loyalty to the Person of Her Majesty.

On the eve of this day a ceremonial dinner for 80 persons was held by the Governor at Government House, to which were invited the Chief Justice,⁴⁸ occupying the first seat at the table next to Lord Hopetoun, the speakers and bureaux of both Houses of Parliament, ministers, the consular corps and all Chiefs of Staff of the military, naval and civil departments.

48 Chief Justice: this office was held by Sir John Madden from 1893 until 1918. In 1899–1901, he served as Acting Governor of Victoria.

After dinner, a large and, for Australia, very resplendent ball was held in the throne room and the apartments adjoining it, for which up to 1,500 invitations were sent. Prior to the commencement of the ball, Lord and Countess Hopetoun took up positions on a raised dais on which the throne stood, standing on either side of the latter, accepting the greetings of the arriving personages. The size and appointment of the hall and drawing rooms, the splendour of full-dress uniforms and ladies' gowns (some of which came directly from Paris), the liveries of Count Hopetoun's powdered lackeys and all the aristocratic décor, could easily allow one to compare this event, if not to court balls in minor capitals of Europe, then at least to any ball in any of the leading embassies. I take the liberty of informing Your Excellency of these details in the belief that they might seem not uninteresting, owing to the paucity of information that we have about Australia and the outward aspects of social life in its main cities.

On the actual day of the Queen's birthday, in the morning, the Governor held a levée, during which everyone occupying a position in the public service or involved in it, arriving in very large numbers, in turn shook his hand. Persons occupying a higher position and members of the consular corps were received separately in one of the palace drawing rooms – in the throne room. The whole ceremony lasted for about an hour and a half.

At one o'clock the Mayor of the city of Melbourne hosted a luncheon in the Town Hall, to which I was the only one of the consular corps to be invited. Although almost all the guests, coming straight from the levée were still wearing ceremonial dress (officers in full-dress uniforms, judges, speakers and parliamentary leaders in wigs and gowns), the luncheon itself was not of an official nature.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a military parade took place in Albert Park, attended by the Governor and Lady Hopetoun. Upon the arrival of their carriage a royal salute was fired from cannons, and upon their departure, three volleys from rifles.

The present celebrations of Queen Victoria's birthday had special significance for this colony, because Her Majesty deigned to bestow upon her Premier, Mr Patterson, the Order of Commander of Saint Michael and Saint George, with the title of 'Sir'. This distinction, coming only a week before the opening of Parliament, will be of some political importance and will in all likelihood significantly strengthen the position of the present ministry. [...]

32. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
15 (3) June 1894
No. 17

[...] On 19th/31st May the opening took place of the new session of the colonial Parliament.⁴⁹

The ceremony observed during this represents an exact copy, in miniature, of that which accompanies similar celebrations in London, and therefore I do not consider it necessary to describe it to Your Excellency.⁵⁰ The Governor, seated on Her Majesty's throne as the Queen's representative, read the speech hereto attached, setting forth in considerable detail the programme for Parliamentary business. Here are the main bills that will be proposed by ministers for consideration by the members: measures for the expansion and further organisation of village settlements; measures to facilitate the sale of the colony's products in various parts of the world; a scheme to reduce rail fares; a review of customs' tariffs; a reduction in the cost of credit to farmers according to the *Crédit Foncier* system with the issue of loans by savings banks;⁵¹ the construction of a new railway line to Yelta,⁵² at the confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers, and several other less important lines; and a series of bills of a more particular nature referring to water-supply, mining, prisons, the extermination of insect pests and so on.

Thus the members will have quite a lot of serious work to do, and we may assume that the importance of the present session, whose task is to lead the country out of its present grave financial and economic situation, will restrain them from pointless squabbling, which only adversely affects the work of the Government, whose strength and energy is so essential to the country, particularly at the present time.

49 The date is incorrect. The session opened on 30 May.

50 The attachment is not reproduced here.

51 *Crédit foncier*: a system of advancing credit to landholders, in which the mortgage document does not indicate the particular property designated as collateral. The mortgage document thus becomes a kind of security, in the nature of an obligation. The total amount advanced by the mortgaging institution must not exceed the total of long-term loans guaranteed by the mortgaged property.

52 Yelta: in the late nineteenth century, the centre of an administrative district.

The Governor's speech prudently remained silent about the scheme to issue State banknotes; the Government, evidently, wishes to give local political circles time to familiarise themselves with this rather bold idea; on the other hand, Lord Hopetoun emphatically indicated the Government's readiness to promote the federation of the Australian colonies, but the terms he used on this score were somewhat nebulous:

I rejoice that increased interest is being taken throughout Australia in the subject of federation. My advisers will cordially co-operate with the other governments of the group in any scheme that will provide uniformity in our laws, and that will remove the barriers by which we are at present separated.

If one takes into consideration that the Central Government has recently also raised the number of colonial representatives in the Federal Council of Australasia to five per colony,⁵³ then one may suppose that, contrary to the adage *divide et impera*, London also considers the unification of the colonies an advantageous matter for the Empire. But, in all likelihood, Australia is still seen as such a weak political entity that, even in unified form, it does not appear any less firmly bound to the mother country than, for example, Canada. However, as Your Excellency may be pleased to discern from one of my subsequent reports, the form of federation on which Sir James Patterson and his colleagues have settled, and which the Governor probably also had in mind, can do no harm to the integrity of the Empire or to their own personal pride as rulers of an independent state. In these circumstances it is understandable that the Government prefers to take the lead in this movement itself and to arrange the federation according to its own model, rather than allow it to become established by, to some degree, revolutionary means. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 97–98. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

53 Central Government: i.e. the British Government.

33. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) June 1894
No. 19

[...] Although the Australian Federation League was formed in Victoria about two months ago and joined by crown judges, parliamentarians, university authorities and various persons of professional and private occupations, almost immediately after the ceremonial opening of the League, and perhaps in consequence of it, the leadership of this movement was passed to the governments of both the main colonies, New South Wales and Victoria, and in particular to their Premiers, Sir George Dibbs and Sir James Patterson. These two personages have now come to the fore, and the success of federation depends on their mutual agreement (at least at the present stage).

A few weeks ago Sir George Dibbs, having shown himself a fervent advocate of federation at several meetings in New South Wales, wrote a lengthy letter, which is in the attached press cutting,⁵⁴ severely criticising the 1891 act of union, known as the Commonwealth Bill, and now proposing to proceed towards federation or, rather, to the amalgamation of the two main colonies, leaving the others to join when they desire to do so. Sir George also set forth in detail his own personal plan for this federation, little differing from complete union.

This document is extremely interesting as an example of the ease with which a colonial minister is capable of doing away with existing structures and proposing a radically altered scheme for a new political edifice. We should not forget that barely fifty years have passed since Victoria separated from the very same New South Wales with which it is now proposed that it again merge.

The Premier of Victoria's response (which I also forward in a press cutting)⁵⁵ was much shorter and more restrained. While agreeing to federation, Sir James Patterson upholds local parliaments, preserving them with all their powers and authority. But in this case the federation scheme

⁵⁴ The attachment is not reproduced here.

⁵⁵ Press cutting not reproduced here.

which he outlines is hardly worthy of the name, but more resembles a kind of Zollverein or Latin monetary union,⁵⁶ and the like. In essence, according to his scheme, no kind of federation is presupposed, but simply a unification of customs, taxes, laws, rail fares etc. The administration, however, in both colonies remains, as previously, independent. Nor does he say anything about a common parliament. The grounds for these measures, in the newspapers which support Sir Patterson,⁵⁷ are not any national political idea, but simply statistics showing the financial, economic and commercial benefits. As one wag here put it, Patterson's Australia will not be a 'United Colonies', or 'United Australia' (as Sir Dibbs proposes to call the new union), but simply: 'New South Wales, Victoria & Co. Ltd.'

Sir Patterson concludes his letter with a proposal to convene a conference of several ministers from both colonies and task them with the development of the fundamentals for a definitive agreement. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 105-106. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

34. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
2 July (20 June) 1894
No. 20

[...] The Commander of the Victorian Militia Force, Major-General Tulloch, recently gave a sensational lecture here of military-political content, about Russia's advance towards India's borders, utilising for this purpose a book recently published in London, *Russia's March towards India, by an Indian Officer*.⁵⁸ The military and scheming political circles in

56 Zollverein: customs union, a term widely used in the nineteenth century for the arrangement between the German states in the decades preceding unification and the founding of the German Empire (Reich) in 1871. The Latin Monetary Union was established in 1865 by France, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland, later joined by Spain, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, Serbia and Venezuela. Its aim was to unify the minting of gold and silver coinage to support stable circulation of currency in the member states. It officially existed until 1926.

57 Sir Patterson: as may be seen here and below, some Russian consuls were unsure of the correct usage of names with the title 'Sir'.

58 *Russia's March towards India*: this anonymous work in two volumes appeared in 1894 (Sampson Low, Marston & Co., London). The view that Russia, after completing its conquest of Central Asia in the 1880s, would begin to advance into India was widespread in British political and military circles.

Melbourne awaited the day of this lecture with impatience. The audience assembled to listen to this high-ranking speaker was just as numerous as it was diverse: senior officers, including the Acting Minister of War, members of Parliament, journalists, professors, several priests of the Jesuit Order and other representatives of the intelligentsia packed the spacious Athenaeum Hall.⁵⁹

General Tulloch, with whom I am on friendly terms of acquaintance, invited me to attend the lecture, while warning me at the outset that he would be considering his subject not from the Russian point of view, but from the British, and that, therefore, he was inviting me not as a consul, but as ‘his personal friend’. This invitation was issued to me in the city’s main club, in the presence of many strangers and others of our mutual acquaintance. I must admit, I was placed in a very awkward position. On the one hand I feared that by refusing directly and categorically I would somehow confirm the hostility and irreconcilability of Russia’s and Britain’s policies in Asia, which here, for some reason, are considered to be a fact not requiring any proof; on the other, I instinctively felt that it would be better if they could hold the function without my being present. But I was immediately informed that the Governor himself would be chairing this ‘meeting’, as it is usual here to call any gathering of a serious nature, and this afforded me a guarantee that, in the presence of the representative of the Queen, so closely connected by bonds of kinship with our Royal House, nothing would be said about Russia that would offend Russian sensibilities. Prompted partly by curiosity as well, to hear how such matters are treated ‘from a British point of view’, after some hesitation I accepted General Tulloch’s invitation.

As was to be expected, the speaker could not manage without alluding to ‘insidious’ Russian policies, singling out particularly the late Prince Alexander Gorchakov who, owing to his diplomatic talents, managed to ‘lull’ Britain into the ‘sleep of the sleeping beauty’.⁶⁰ But what greatly surprised me was that he spoke with considerably more bitterness about all the British diplomats who accepted Russian assurances that the operations in Central Asia were not intended as an advance upon India. General Tulloch practically accused these diplomats of state treason,

59 The Melbourne Athenaeum, founded in 1839 as the Melbourne Mechanics Institute, offered rooms for meetings, theatrical performances, lectures and exhibitions, and housed a large library.

60 Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov: eminent Russian statesman, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the years 1856–1882, and last Imperial Chancellor.

referring several times to their entire policy by the striking term 'a masterly inactivity'. In conclusion he spoke emphatically about the sterling qualities of the Russian army, the bravery of our soldiers, the wisdom of our officers' orders, and in particular the military prowess of the late General Skobelev.⁶¹ At the very end of the lecture, *pour la bonne bouche*, he related several episodes from the Crimean War, in which he had taken part. His account of Russian hospitality after the armistice, when he and other British officers were almost daily invited by the Russian officers to their quarters and each time treated to British national drinks, such as ale and porter, for which the Russians paid the sutlers, as they later learned, 14 to 16 shillings a bottle, elicited a sympathetic response from the audience, and even some applause.

After General Tulloch's lecture, the Governor addressed the meeting with a few words of his own. He supported the General's opinion about the 'masterly inactivity' of the former British policy and said that, fortunately, a similar treatment of Britain's interests in Asia would not be repeated. The present Cabinet would not, he said, follow in the footsteps of Mr Gladstone.⁶²

These words can hardly be considered timely. Such an *ouf de soulagement* almost the very day after the end of the political career of an honourable elderly statesman, under whom the present Governor of Victoria himself served here for about four years, cannot be called tactful on the part of such a young man as Lord Hopetoun, who has not yet had to bear any serious responsibility. But it must be said that in the colonies, in spite of their inclination towards liberal systems of administration, the public mood has always been extremely hostile towards the Prime Minister who has now quit the stage.

General Tulloch is known here as an alarmist. He is soon to retire, not of his own volition (for he receives a salary of 18,000 roubles), but as a result of the Government's decision, for economic reasons, to place a colonel in command of the Militia in lieu of a general. By using Russia to frighten Australians, he hopes to force Sir Patterson to revoke this decision. With a view to this, he even organised a special detachment of student volunteers

61 Mikhail Dmitriyevich Skobelev: outstanding Russian general, hero of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878.

62 William Gladstone: leader of the British Liberal Party and Prime Minister in 1868–1874, 1880–1885, 1886 and 1892–1894.

from Melbourne University, and gave a speech on the occasion which roused them to a state of bellicose excitement, rather comical in its pointlessness. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-692, ff 108–110. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

35. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) July 1894
No. 21

[...] For the past three weeks the local Parliament has been considering a new law regarding commercial and industrial companies with the aim of putting an end to the shameless fleecing of the shareholders by their boards of directors.⁶³ Upon opening operations after an instalment of only a small part of the share's cost and then paying out the first (usually very large) dividends from the sum already collected, the boards often distribute the money among their cronies and, instead of further profits, treat the shareholders to demands for payment of the next instalment. There have been many instances here when, having lost the whole of their first instalment because of the board's senseless extravagance, shareholders were left owing the company two or three times as much, which completely ruined them. One such company, which suspended payments and was brought to trial, is trying to justify its balance sheet by the signatures of the unfortunate shareholders who had not paid their instalments in full. It displayed these figures on the credit side and insisted that it was not bankrupt at all, but, on the contrary, had a surplus of assets over liabilities and needed only to be permitted to recover in full from the shareholders the amount they had signed for. The crashes of banks last year led to the bankruptcy of approximately 550 large and small companies in Victoria alone, and one can but marvel at the fact that only after such a terrible lesson did the Government of the colony admit, finally, the necessity to curb the operations of various speculators.

63 The Companies Bill, aimed at establishing legal controls over commercial operations, came before the Victorian Parliament in 1884. After unusually protracted debate, it was passed in 1896.

The previous laws had freely permitted them the widest of abuses owing to the inexplicable British aversion to everything that resembles official interference in private transactions.

Fluctuations in share prices here are interesting: shares in the Melbourne Tramway Company, whose vehicles run on a special system of continuously-moving cables, reached a price of 9 pounds sterling during the period of financial fever preceding the crashes, but are now selling for 8 shillings, i.e. they have fallen from 90 roubles to 4 roubles!

Apart from the Companies' Bill, Parliament has also spent a great deal of time on a bill about the introduction of a *Crédit Foncier* system for the issue of loans from Saving Banks' funds.⁶⁴ The bill passed all three readings in the Lower House and has now been sent to the Upper House, which, it is said, however, will subject it to major amendments. During the debates one of the orators said that, since it had been decided to introduce State paper money in Victoria, then it would be better not to touch the Savings Banks, but simply to issue paper notes for the whole sum of their capital (50,000,000 roubles) and use them to give the farmers their loans. But this proposal was quashed.

Victoria's financial difficulties are very great: in a few days the budget for the next financial year (from 1st July 1894 to 1st July 1895) will be introduced. They say that the deficit is close to 7,000,000 roubles, which for a total budget of 85,000,000 comprises a little less than 1/10. The Government is dismissing 600 staff and offering them places in the new village settlements on preferential terms.⁶⁵

In order to somehow save face before Parliament, the Treasurer, Mr Downes Carter, is working day and night to draft the budget and, so that no one bothers him during this period, has claimed to be ill.⁶⁶ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 128-129. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

64 *Crédit Foncier*: see Document 32.

65 Village settlements: see Document 24.

66 Godfrey Downes Carter: Treasurer in Patterson's government. His failed Budget was one of the reasons for the fall of that government.

36. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) July 1894
No. 22

[...] Australia plainly wishes to amaze the universe with the speed of its social progress: after the granting of political rights to women in New Zealand,⁶⁷ a similar proposal was tabled in the Parliament of Victoria the other day.

Why this measure was deemed necessary, and at this precise moment, when the members have so much other work to do and when the state of the country gives rise to so many well-founded concerns, is decidedly difficult to understand. This curious bill, (enclosed herewith in its parliamentary original),⁶⁸ was tabled by Mr Maloney and the former Premier Mr Shiels,⁶⁹ who was recently elected Leader of the Opposition instead of Mr Turner, who was found to be unsuitable for this position.

The degree to which this bill is not taken seriously, however, even in a forum as frivolous as the Lower House, is demonstrated by the following amusing exchange. At some risk of lapsing into an unseemly tone, I take the liberty of quoting it in its original form:

Mr Henry Williams,⁷⁰ speaking to the bill, in a fit of eloquence, pointed out that ‘women are not only capable of carrying out exactly the same political duties as men, but can even join their ranks in battle, on horseback, as the Roman wars showed.’

67 In 1893, women were accorded the right to vote in New Zealand, the first country in the world to introduce female suffrage.

68 The enclosure is not reproduced here.

69 William Robert Nuttall Maloney: member for the seat of West Melbourne and a determined advocate of equal rights for women; William Shiels, Premier of Victoria in 1892–1893.

70 Henry Roberts Williams: later held various ministerial positions in the colony.

‘You are talking about the Amazons,’ retorted another delegate, Mr Frank Madden,⁷¹ ‘but you forget that the Amazons cut off their left breast, depriving themselves of half of their womanhood. Are you assuming that our ladies will also ...’⁷² But it was impossible to make out the orator’s subsequent words owing to the laughter of the members and the public.

If the saying that ‘rien ne tue comme le ridicule’ is true, then this bill may be considered buried, in the present session, at least.

As an illustration of this tale I am taking the liberty of enclosing a press-cutting with an account of another no less amusing episode, which strikingly displays the attitude of some women here to authority. Dissatisfied by the repeal of the land partition carried out in one of the new village settlements by a person unauthorised to do so, they appeared before the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr McIntyre, as a deputation, and, demanding the ratification of the partitions, began noisily shouting at him that he had not approved the land partitions because he was in an inebriated state at the time of the inspection. This Minister, the Premier’s right-hand man, is exceptionally honest and well-intentioned. After his clash with the deputation of ‘ladies’ he avoided appearing in public for several weeks, in order to allow some time for facetious comments, of a purely anecdotal nature concerning his supposed predilection for drink, to fade away.

As a newspaper correctly observed, this episode shows the kind of scenes that may occur if women here are granted the right to form independent political parties. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 130–131. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

71 Sir Frank Madden: Member of the Victorian Parliament known for his conservative views.

72 Poutiata’s account of this exchange, translated here, is less than fully accurate. The parliamentary record shows that it was Downes Carter, not Williams, who raised the prospect of women in combat, but with no mention of mounted warriors. Williams mentioned Clunes and the Roman wars. Madden took up the theme, but did not use the word ‘Amazon’. Cf. *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, Season 1984, Vol. LXXIV, 19 July 1894, pp. 917–918.

37. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
19 (7) August 1894
No. 23

[...] The budget presented to Parliament for the financial year 1894–1895 gave rise to serious clashes between the Government and the Opposition, almost ending fatally for the present Cabinet of the colony.

Even before this, as I reported in dispatch No. 21,⁷³ the opponents of Sir Patterson were greatly annoyed by the Government's intention to dismiss from work up to 600 persons and settle them in village settlements, and also by the impending introduction of income tax. Both of these schemes were subjected to the fiercest of criticism at meetings in Melbourne as well as in almost every town of any significance in the land. And, indeed, it is impossible not to see a certain inconsistency in the fact that the Government on the one hand is introducing the *Crédit Foncier* system to issue loans to experienced farmers already well established on the land but unable to make ends meet without Government aid, and, on the other hand, is settling on the very same land, in the same unfavourable grain market, people with no experience of agriculture, former functionaries, technicians and various specialists, unused to rural life.

Taking advantage of the unfavourable public mood, and noting that the budget did not satisfy Parliament, the leader of the Opposition, Mr Shiels, there and then announced that, on the day the budget debate opens (it should have followed a week after the first reading), he would propose a vote of no confidence in the Government. But it was in precisely this haste that Mr Shiels's parliamentary error became apparent: a week turned out to be quite sufficient for the Ministers, forewarned of the Opposition's intentions, to exchange views with various groups in the House and to reassure them by announcing that, since the budget gave rise to objections, they had no intention of insisting on it, and were prepared to subject it to a complete revision. This had its effect, and Mr Shiels's proposal of a vote of no confidence was not even put to the

73 See Document 35.

vote. Moreover, it was clear to most in the House that, if Sir Patterson had not satisfied it with his budget, then Mr Shiels who, in the event of the fall of Cabinet, stood to become Premier, was unsatisfactory because of all his own former activities and even his personality. He was Sir Patterson's predecessor, but held office for only 10 months and was forced to step down eighteen months ago, leaving the country in the most lamentable condition. The present deficit⁷⁴ was to a significant degree achieved under him. Furthermore, owing to the inefficiency of the Government, up to 15,000 workers were wandering the streets of Melbourne without work, annoying the authorities with their demands and even prepared to resort to violence. Now these 'unemployed' have been settled on the land and we hear no more about them. Mr Shiels is a creature of the Labour Party⁷⁵ and an advocate of high duties, which have already caused the country much harm. His influence on a certain section of Parliament can be explained exclusively by his oratorical talent and the brazen manner in which he shapes his sallies. Here is an example of his methods: during the budget debate, while ranting and raving at all the members of Cabinet in turn, he forgot himself to such an extent that he called the Attorney General, Sir Bryan O'Loughlen, 'a wild Irishman, a guerrilla'.⁷⁶ The insulted dignitary flared up, and his friends rushed to his side to avert a possible great parliamentary scandal. Noticing the effect of his words, Mr Shiels hastened to correct himself, thinking that he had been misheard: 'I said guerrilla,' he exclaimed, 'not gorilla.' This performance was all the more crude, as everyone perceived it as an allusion to Sir Bryan's features.

Had the Premier had a more authoritative opponent, the Cabinet would very likely not have held out against the general displeasure elicited by its budget

The reason for this displeasure was that the Government, in drawing up the budget, displayed a strange inconsistency in its customs policy: it greatly lowered the tariff on many of the imported items, including certain luxury items, e.g. foreign wines; but on the other hand, it proposed

74 The colony's total deficit is made up of the following figures: the deficit for the past financial year, £665,000, and the deficit accumulated over previous years, £1,251,849: a total of £1,917,187. But part of the capital debt has to be paid off in 1896, so the total deficit, including this amount (for which there are no special resources), will reach £3,500,000, while total revenue amounts to £7,023,292 pounds per year. (Poutiata's note.)

75 Labour Party: given in English with this spelling.

76 Sir Bryan O'Loughlen: Premier of Victoria in 1881–1883, Attorney General 1893–1894 in Patterson's government.

to impose a 10% duty on almost all goods previously imported duty-free, including kerosene, an essential commodity, especially in the country, which is not produced in Australia. At meetings and in the press, even in those sections of the press favourably disposed towards the Government, these new duties were described as a tax upon the poorer classes. This is hardly fair, however: with the present low price of kerosene, a 10% duty would not present a burden to the country, and the Government – it is said – could have had the newspapers on their side, if they had only thought to exempt the imported duty-free paper on which they were printed from their proposed new taxes.

The Government's plan to introduce income tax was subjected to the same censure. Income tax is a thoroughly unpopular measure here, if only because it may reveal the true balance figures of commercial companies resulting from the general shortage of finance caused by last year's crashes – figures they have done their best to conceal from the public.

The result of all these protests was that the Government withdrew its budget, promising to revise it in accordance with the wishes of the majority of members. Only in this way did it save its position. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 141–144. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

38. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) August 1894
No. 24

[...] The failure of the Opposition in the House's expression of no confidence in the Government has not diminished the courage of its leaders. Ascribing the failure to the negative qualities of its Leader, Mr Shiels, the Opposition flung their previous Leader Mr Turner into battle with Sir Patterson. Mr Turner tabled a motion of no confidence in the Cabinet. But the day this motion was debated was also the day of a new defeat for the Opposition: Mr Turner managed no better than Mr Shiels to back his motion with sufficiently convincing arguments; his speech was colourless and insipid. Sir Patterson's speech in reply, on the contrary, created a deep impression, and the motion was not put to the vote again.

Enraged by the Premier's success, opposition newspapers are giving vent to torrents of the most unseemly abuse against him, and being powerless to find anything of consequence, are accusing him of illegally sending off-prints of his speech to the provinces under government labels, without postage stamps.

The speech delivered the next day by the Opposition's third-in-command, Sir Graham Berry, was criticised even by the press of his own party, so little serious content or even common sense did it contain. But, in spite of all this, Sir Patterson's worries are far from over: the motion of no confidence has not been removed from the agenda and, although Parliament is tarrying in putting it to the vote, it will, however, have to do so. People who know the local Parliamentary procedures better than I affirm that, if the Government does win, it will only be by a majority of perhaps five, at most seven votes. With such a majority it is impossible to govern, and it is more than likely that the Governor will dissolve Parliament.

In view of the obvious weakness of his opponents, it is highly possible that, after the new elections, Sir Patterson will again be summoned to the helm of Government. If this does happen, one can only congratulate the colony. The present Premier is the first of the local political figures to have abandoned the tone of boastful self-aggrandisement and soberly looked facts in the face. And the facts are very unattractive. I have already mentioned the financial deficit.⁷⁷ A shortfall of 3½ million pounds (by 1896) on an expected annual revenue of 7 million; these figures speak for themselves. But the fact is that, unless a radical reduction in spending is undertaken, unless, in particular, they dismiss a good third of state employees, one can see no way out. Russia spends about 10 roubles a year on administering and guaranteeing the rights of each of its citizens, Belgium – about 25 roubles, France – about 35. Whereas Victoria, barely maintaining an army and not waging any wars, spends up to 60 roubles. From what resources is it to raise such sums? True, its population is enterprising and skilful, but hardly more so than that of France. It is true that there is much gold in the ground; that discovery led to the development of the colony. But it is more natural for a person who finds treasure on his property to make loans to others, rather than be a borrower himself. In Victoria the exact opposite has come about: having

77 Deficit: see Document 37.

found gold, it has not only made no loans to anyone, but itself borrowed 48,000,000 pounds, while having a population equal to that of a single Russian province (1,200,000 souls). [...]

P.S. 18 August.⁷⁸ Yesterday a motion of no confidence in the Government was put to the vote, and the Government was left in a minority (42 votes against 46). It is being asserted that the Governor will dissolve Parliament. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 145–146. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

39. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) August 1894
No. 25

[...] The fall of Sir George Dibbs's Cabinet, which took place in New South Wales a month ago, and its replacement by the ministry of Mr Reid,⁷⁹ have not delayed the development of the idea of federation in Australia. On the contrary, the struggle with the present financial and economic difficulties is disposing the governments of the colonies, apparently more than previously, to try and see whether they can find any relief in a mutual rapprochement.

Recently, the new Premier of New South Wales sent all his colleagues a circular letter proposing to convene a conference of representatives from the largest possible number of colonies for a preliminary discussion of this matter on an official basis. I do not know the responses of the rest of the colonies, but the Premier of Victoria, Sir James Patterson, as a reliable source has told me, has already replied with agreement. The conference will be held in Sydney, and the first item on its agenda will be the abolition of inter-colonial taxes. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, f. 148. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

⁷⁸ The date is given in Old Style: 30 August New Style.

⁷⁹ Sir George Houston Reid: supporter of Federation, Premier of New South Wales in 1894–1899. Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1904–1905.

40. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) August 1894
No. 26

[...] About three months ago, unionist-workers in Queensland, having assembled in an armed mob, burnt down a storehouse of wool on a certain squatter's property, causing damage to the value of 5,000 pounds sterling. I did not report this event, believing it to be an isolated incident. But in recent times, similar criminal offences have become much more frequent and have spread from Queensland to almost the whole of New South Wales, where it is now the sheep shearing season.

Owing to a fall in the price of wool, the squatters had signed an agreement among themselves for a uniform lowering of wages for shearing sheep, from 20 shillings to 18 for every 100 sheep, i.e. they reduced the workers' earnings by 10%. The unionist-workers reacted to this by striking and, upon quitting the sheep stations, entrenched themselves in kinds of fortified camps. From these, they make sorties against non-union workers whom the squatters are recruiting from other areas in order to continue the work. These attacks are in the nature of real battles. Each day brings more and more reports of similar clashes. Detachments of police, moving from one troubled location to another, are utterly powerless to contain the movement. At times they themselves are badly hurt. I have lost count of the number killed and particularly those wounded, reported in the newspapers every day. The audacity of the workers has reached such a pitch that they burnt a whole steamer travelling along the River Murray near one of their 'camps' and carrying a group of non-union workers. They are threatening that, as soon as the wet season is over and the grass dries out, they will burn it all. If they do, thousands of sheep will starve to death.

The newspapers have dedicated special sections in their columns to detailed daily accounts of all these outrages. *The Age* has even named this section 'The Shearing War'. This movement has not yet reached Victoria, however, since the shearing season has not yet begun here.

All this is the result of populist moves by certain members of Parliament to gain favour with Labor voters. The kind of representatives of these parties in the parliaments of the local colonies and the kind of fantastic measures these parliaments take under their influence is clear from a very interesting article in the *Argus*, enclosed herewith.⁸⁰ While widely reducing wages in all branches of the administration, the patriotic Parliament of South Australia also selflessly reduced its own members' salaries, by 2 pounds, 10 shillings per year, from an annual salary of 200 pounds. The Queensland Parliament, on the other hand, doubled its members' salary from 150 to 300 pounds per year, and raised the tax on tobacco to cover the increase. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 149–150. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

41. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
22 (10) September 1894
No. 27

[...] On 30 August [11 September], the Ceremonial Name-Day of His Majesty the Emperor, a reception was held at the Russian Consulate for all persons who wished to attend, in order to register their respect for the Russian Monarch and for Russia. Exceeding my expectations, up to one hundred and fifty people called at the Consulate, including about forty ladies who honoured me with their presence on this day.

Of people occupying official positions who personally offered their congratulations or sent their representatives were: the Speakers of both Houses and members of the Parliamentary Office, several Ministers (most of the Ministers were away travelling on account of the election campaign, which was then in full swing), the Commandant of the Victorian Military Forces, General Tulloch, with the permanent secretary of the Ministry of War, the Mayor of the City of Melbourne with the senior officers of the municipal administration, the Catholic Archbishop Monseigneur Carr,⁸¹ the Consular Corps in full strength, the Prefect

80 Enclosure not reproduced here.

81 Monseigneur Thomas Joseph Carr, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne 1887–1917.

of Police, the President of the Main Council of Public Works, the Director of the Customs Department, the Director of the Department of Ports and Harbours, members of the supreme judicial institutions, Fathers of the Jesuit Order, several senior clergy of the Protestant churches, university professors, representatives of industrial and commercial establishments and others.

Representatives of the local Russian Orthodox community (whom I received separately from the other guests, so as not to give cause for any undesirable comments) conveyed their feelings of boundless devotion in most touching terms and expressed their sincere good wishes for the August Protector of Orthodoxy.

This reception, being the first such event to take place on Australian soil, attracted the attention of society and of the press. All the local newspapers without exception and, following their lead, newspapers in other cities, carried more or less detailed accounts of the event at the Consulate, and recorded the warmth with which most of the city's leading citizens hastened to participate in the celebration of this most solemn Russian date. Furthermore, I was pleased to note that almost the kindest and warmest account, with regard to my person, appeared in the *Argus*, the newspaper which had greeted my appearance in Melbourne with such hostility and misplaced suspicions regarding the nature of my duties.⁸² From this, one may conclude that these suspicions have now been completely dispelled, both in the political press and in society. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 167–168. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

42. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) September 1894
No. 28

[...] On 8/20 September, a general parliamentary election took place in the colony of Victoria.

82 See Document 25.

This election produced an entirely unexpected result for supporters of Sir Patterson's Ministry: the Opposition was decisively victorious, and three of the former ministers lost their seats. Sir James Patterson himself held his seat with only a very modest majority in his constituency of Castlemaine, which had voted for him for 25 years running. The overall result of the election for the 95 seats in the Lower House was 65 members from the former Opposition and only 30 members from the previous ruling party.

Lord Hopetoun, who was visiting the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Robert Duff,⁸³ during the election, returned to Melbourne only the day before yesterday, and held his first meeting with the former Premier so that the latter could tender the resignation of his cabinet. Upon accepting that resignation, the Governor thanked the Cabinet for its work and, according to constitutional custom, asked Sir James's advice as to whom he should appoint as the new Premier. The former Premier loyally indicated his chief opponent and Leader of the Opposition, Mr Turner.

The new Parliament will be opened on 4/16 October, but the sitting will then be adjourned for three weeks, in order to allow the new ministry time to prepare the budget and to draw up other financial plans in their final form.

Without entering into conjecture as to what course the new Government will take on individual issues, I shall confine myself to noting that the Opposition's triumph means: 1) the triumph of the Labor Party; 2) the triumph of supporters of high duties; 3) the entry into Parliament of a large number of new young people with no experience of politics. We may expect, therefore, that the new Government will hardly continue the policy of reducing spending by cutting staff and salaries and curtailing certain public works which are a burden on the public purse. Being a Labor Party, it will hardly be able to keep on the land the workers that Sir Patterson settled in the village settlements.⁸⁴ It is very possible that these workers will return to Melbourne, seeking work and demanding government support while threatening disorder. The new Government will also scarcely be supportive of the implementation of the idea of federation, since its tariff principles are diametrically opposed to the attitude of New South Wales, where, on the contrary, the Free Trade Party

83 Sir Robert William Duff: Governor of New South Wales 1893–1895.

84 See Document 24.

was victorious. Finally, it is predicted that the Women's Suffrage Bill, rejected by the previous parliament, will be tabled in the new parliament and passed.

On the whole, it is clear that the era of political experiments, for which the country is already bearing cruel punishment, is still far from over for Victoria. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 169–170. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

43. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) September 1894
No. 29

[...] Further to my dispatch of 15 August, No. 26,⁸⁵ regarding the trouble caused by trade-unionist workers in those areas where owners of sheep stations are shearing sheep with the aid of non-union labour, I have to report again an extremely disturbing state of affairs on Victoria's border.

About one hundred union men from Momba Station (in New South Wales)⁸⁶ marched out onto a road along which non-union workers hired by the property-owner were to come, with the aim of intercepting them, but started looting and causing damage to settlements along the road. In West Copagan they pulled down and burnt the sheep sheds and tore down wire netting put up to protect the paddocks from rabbits, for a distance of 5 versts;⁸⁷ at another place they pulled down a water-pumping motor (these motors cost up to 1,000 pounds), hurling its separate parts into the water, and then set fire to sheds where other machinery was kept. Only four policemen were sent to deal with this band of vandals, and they could only follow the shearers and passively observe their disgraceful behaviour. But later another 12 policemen arrived and as the shearers had broken up into groups the police were able to arrest and shackle the ring-leaders, and seize the cart in which the ruffians were transporting their provisions, rifles, revolvers and ammunition.

85 See Document 40.

86 Momba Station is situated in the White Cliffs district of northwestern New South Wales.

87 5 versts: approximately 5 km.

The central committee of the trade union in Sydney sent its members a circular urging them to use their own methods to resist the new conditions being offered by the squatters (landowners) on the basis of the recent agreement. It called these conditions predatory exploitation of labour by capital, and recommended that they threaten arson and other forms of violence against those employers who were going to hire non-union labour.

In Queensland the Government has seen sense: there, in spite of protests from the Labor Party, a Peace Preservation Bill has been passed, forbidding the carrying of arms without a special permit, and no longer allowing the police to fire into the air during armed conflict with trouble-makers.⁸⁸ This measure has had a salutary effect. Unfortunately, it came into force after the main outrages had already been committed and the riots had ceased of their own accord, as the shearing season had ended.

It will be very interesting to see what kind of measures the new Government in Victoria, indebted mainly to the working classes for its election, will employ to put an end to similar trouble on its own territory when the shearing season is over in New South Wales and these same workers come to work here. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 171–172. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

44. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) October 1894
No. 30

[...] I have just returned from Sydney, where I have spent over two weeks attempting, at least in general terms, to become acquainted with the state of affairs in the oldest of the Australian colonies.

My general impression, when inevitably – if involuntarily – comparing New South Wales and Victoria, is not in favour of the latter. The people in power in the former seemed to me both more serious and more sincere

⁸⁸ The Peace Preservation Bill came into effect on 4 October 1894.

than those who are now in charge in Victoria. In Sydney they understand very well that a country with only 1,300,000 inhabitants cannot offer an internal market for all kinds of artificially introduced manufactured goods, so the main political task of Mr Reid's cabinet is a gradual return to free trade, with the aim of lowering the cost of living, reviving commerce and thus attracting the large number of settlers essential for the progressive development of the country.

In Victoria exactly the opposite view holds sway. That is why its population, instead of increasing, is quickly decreasing and the State's resources are decreasing with it (in the last two years up to 40,000 people have moved from Melbourne).

Besides this, in Sydney I realised that it is possible for Russia to engage in fairly appreciable trade with Australia. I made the acquaintance of a certain Mr Wroblewski, the publisher of a newspaper called *Le Courier australien*, a native of the province of Grodno, whose father left Russia for reasons of a political nature, if I am not mistaken, taking with him his still young son.⁸⁹ In 1888 Mr Wroblewski imported 18,000 tons of Russian kerosene, on behalf of a certain Sydney firm, for 360,000 roubles, and says that it is possible to make a clear profit of 8–10% here for Russian kerosene. He also imported other Russian goods, e.g. cigarettes, and maintains that, if a syndicate were formed in Russia to trade with Australia, if only, at present, for the following commodities: 1) petroleum products, 2) candles, 3) hides and 4) cigarettes (especially with the assistance of our Government in the early stages), business could develop to significant proportions.

At present a Finnish ship, the *Winefred* (1,360 tons),⁹⁰ is unloading in the port of Melbourne, having brought a large consignment of timber here. The master of this ship told me that a lot of timber is coming to Australia from Finland and Russia, but all through British intermediaries, and that if only we could form a trading company it would get all the profits which foreign middle-men are receiving at present. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 177–178. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

89 Charles Adam Marie Wroblewski [Karol Wróblewski]: entrepreneur of Polish descent who founded the French newspaper *Le Courier australien* in 1892.

90 The *Winefred*, from Raumo in Finland, arrived in Sydney with a cargo of timber from Canada on 12 October 1894. Its captain was F. W. Laine.

45. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) October 1894
No. 31

[...] My presentiment regarding the possibility of workers settled by Sir Patterson in villages returning to Melbourne upon the inauguration of the new liberal-democratic administration in Victoria, reported in dispatch No. 29,⁹¹ is beginning to come to pass sooner than I expected. The new Parliament had not even had time to open, when unemployed workers were already beginning to gather in groups, roam the streets and stand for hours outside government buildings. The other day they elected a deputation which appeared before the new Premier, Mr Turner, and informed him that the workers expected to receive work and wages from the Government. The Premier replied that he was concerned about this himself, and that he already had several plans for various public works. At the same time he expressed surprise at the fact that throughout the winter there had not been a single vagrant worker in Melbourne, and now hundreds of them had suddenly appeared. He advised them not to gather in groups, nor send deputations, but to wait until the plans for providing them with employment were developed.

‘Yes, it’s all right for you to wait,’ the workers answered. ‘You have a luxurious office, a padded armchair, a large salary and only a little work to do. But what about us and our families? Many of us are starving.’

‘In that case go back to the village settlements. Field work is beginning there now, and you will easily find yourself some work,’ Mr Turner replied.

‘Village settlements are Patterson’s invention,’ retorted the workers. ‘He promised a lot, but did not deliver anything. So now we have come to see what we can expect from you!’

‘I promise to supply you with work, and soon ...’

‘Would you like to put that in writing?’ asked the workers.

But even Mr Turner, a Labor Party man, refused that humiliating proposal.

91 See Document 43.

The conversation I cite, whose authenticity cannot be doubted since it took place in the presence of newspaper reporters, and was reproduced in all the local press,⁹² is characteristic of the relationship between the representatives of authority and the workers, and also reveals the trap into which the Liberal Party has fallen by resorting to the support of the working classes at the last elections. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 179–180. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

46. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) November 1894
No. 32⁹³

[...] The untimely demise of our beloved Sovereign,⁹⁴ mourned by the whole civilised world, has also elicited a certain sympathy in Australia for Russia's sorrow, but, unfortunately, only on the part of the Government and the official world in general. The public (with the exception of my personal acquaintances) and in particular ordinary folk have displayed an astonishing indifference to such an important and grievous an event. The reason for this lies in the fact that the local papers (with one exception) systematically mislead their readers with regard to Russia, and these readers, too remote from Europe to recognise all the falsehoods being spread about Russia and its monarchs in the press, have become the innocent victims of a malicious hoax.

The Governor, Lord Hopetoun, sent me a very nice letter in his own hand, in which he expressed his sympathy for the grief that had befallen our fatherland and informed me that, upon instructions from London, all official flags in the city would be flown at half-mast until the funeral of our late Emperor, but there would be no gun salute (as there was in Sydney, where the local authorities, on their own initiative, fired 49 cannon

92 Poutiata may have relied on an account published in *The Argus*, 18 October 1894, p. 5.

93 This dispatch is written on black-bordered notepaper in a calligraphic hand and signed by Poutiata. It was apparently written by Vladimir Ber [Behr], the son of a Moscow factory owner, then in Melbourne and hired by Poutiata as his private secretary.

94 Alexander III died on 1 November [20 October] 1894.

shots from Fort Macquarie,⁹⁵ that being the age of our late Sovereign Emperor). In this same letter, Lord Hopetoun gave me to understand that his Government would not fail to take the opportunity in the immediate future to announce its own sympathy for our loss. But more than 20 days have now elapsed since our Sovereign's passing, and neither the Government nor the Parliament have done anything to express that sympathy. Subsequently the mayor of the city of Melbourne wrote to me in the name of its citizens, expressing their sympathy regarding the misfortune that had befallen Russia. These two letters, in essence, show the full extent of official British sympathy for the grave event to which all sections of the European population responded so warmly. The local Greek (Orthodox) community proffered me an address couched in the most touching terms, and I also received a telegram of condolence from the Governor of New Caledonia.⁹⁶

I cannot remain silent about the fact that Lord Hopetoun and the Governors of the four other colonies, visiting him for the Grand Prix races, permitted themselves a lack of tact for which it is hardly possible to find any justification: the two balls and a garden party set to be held at Government House were not cancelled. Moreover, the Governor himself and other colleagues of his, with their spouses, took part in the dancing, as if there were no mourning at all. This extreme impropriety has been condemned here even by the local inhabitants.

This communication gives me no pleasure, but being obliged to write the truth and deeply dismayed myself by this disregard for the elementary requirements not only of etiquette, but even of decency, I did not consider it possible to conceal from Your Excellency that of which I have been an involuntary witness. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff190-191. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

95 Fort Macquarie: a defensive installation built in 1817-1821, on the site of the present Opera House, named in honour of the Governor of New South Wales in 1810-1821, Lachlan Macquarie.

96 The Governor of the French colony of New Caledonia in 1894-1902 was Paul Théodore Ernest Marie Feillet.

47. Poutiata to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
27 (15) November 1894
No. 33⁹⁷

[...] The new Parliament of the colony of Victoria was ceremonially opened by the Governor on 18/30th of October last.

In his speech, this time extremely brief, Lord Hopetoun pointed out that the main task of the members would be the restoration of the country's finances, for which new taxes would have to be levied on uncultivated land.

The new Premier, Mr Turner, who also holds the office of State Treasurer, presented a draft budget with a deficit of 528,000 pounds sterling, which they proposed to defray, for the most part, by the new land tax.

The Opposition, however, led by Sir James Patterson, received this budget most unsympathetically, arguing that a land tax, whether or not it brings in any revenue, would lower the value of land, cause the banks in which it is mortgaged to impose unfavourable measures on landowners, and as a whole be tantamount to a kind of confiscation by the State of part of the present landowners' properties.

These arguments were to the liking of both the landowners and farmers, as well as those city-dwellers sympathetic to their interests. Resistance to the Government's financial reforms is growing by the day, as was demonstrated in a recent sitting of Parliament when Mr Mackenzie proposed a motion of no confidence in the Government.⁹⁸

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the new Government, having been in office for no more than a month, will in its turn be defeated, which will serve as manifest testimony to the abnormal, unhealthy condition in which the Colony of Victoria finds itself today. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-692, ff 192–193. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

97 This dispatch is written on black-bordered notepaper.

98 Malcolm Kenneth McKenzie: Member of the Victorian Parliament for Anglesea.

IV

Robert Ungern-Sternberg

The consul appointed to replace Poutiata arrived in Melbourne in November 1895. His name was Robert Robertovich Ungern-Sternberg Freiherr von Pirkel, the scion of an ancient baronial line of Baltic Germans. He was born on 5 May (OS) 1845 in the province of Estland (Estonia) on the island of Dagö, now known as Hiiumaa,¹ and his family owned a large number of landed estates in the area.

In 1857, Robert Ungern-Sternberg's father sent him to school in Reval (now Tallinn), after which he studied law at the universities of Geneva and Berlin, and later the Imperial University in Odessa, where he graduated as a Doctor of Laws. However, Ungern-Sternberg chose a military career, and, in 1868, was commissioned in a horse guards regiment. In November 1875, the young officer was attached to Tsar Alexander II's retinue. He spent the Russo–Turkish campaign of 1877–1878 with the Emperor on active service and was present when the fortress of Nikopol fell to General Nikolai Kridener's forces in July 1877. From the end of 1879, he served in the Ministry of Internal Affairs until he was retired to the reserve in 1888, with the rank of major-general,² but after almost seven years of retirement he returned to work. Having passed the compulsory examination, and assisted by Count Aleksei Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovsky, then Minister

1 Rahvusarhiiv (National Archives of Estonia), File No. eaa1674_002_0000207_00039_m.png. Baron Roman Fedorovich Ungern-Sternberg, the well-known proponent of the White cause in Far Eastern Russia, was a nephew of R. R. Ungern-Sternberg.

2 *Sbornik biografii kavalergardov. Po sluchaiu stoletnego iubileia Kavalerhardskogo ee velichestva gosudaryni-imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny polka*, Vol. 4, 1826–1908, St Petersburg, 1908, p. 269; AVPRI: 159-464- 3335a, ff 14–17.

of Foreign Affairs and a personal friend, he joined the Foreign Ministry in June 1895. The documents on his appointment indicate that he took it up 'readily and willingly'. He departed for his new posting with his wife, née the Countess Wilhelmina Yevstafyevna von Berg.³

At his post in Melbourne, Ungern-Sternberg displayed his prodigious energy and capacity for work to the full. His dispatches clearly show the precision and clarity of a military man, and a certain pedantry in the presentation of facts, and at the same time a pronounced dislike for abstract debate. His appetite for work did not go unnoticed by his colleagues in the diplomatic service. The well-known lawyer and historian Mikhail Aleksandrovich Taube, a member of the legal section of the Foreign Ministry, recalled later, when Ungern-Sternberg became Consul General in London, 'the particularly valuable zeal ... displayed by our energetic Consul General Baron Ungern-Sternberg, a former army officer'.⁴ His immediate superiors also highly appreciated his work as consul in Melbourne. In April 1898, he was awarded the Order of St Stanislav, Third Class, and his service record described him as an 'extremely able officer'.⁵

In Melbourne, Ungern-Sternberg became very popular and had a wide circle of acquaintances. Being extremely learned, especially in the field of history, he had the ability to draw people to him. In April 1898, the consul and his wife left for Russia on leave and the cream of Melbourne society gathered to see him off. He was due to return in September of that year, as he told his friends in Melbourne, but he did not in fact come back to Australia. In July 1898, he was promoted to the post of consul general in London. That was to be his last posting. He worked in London for ten years, until his death on 4 August 1908.⁶

3 AVPRI: 159-749/1-1081, f. 229; *The Argus*, 6 August 1898, p. 9.

4 M. A. Taube, 'Zarnitsy'. *Vospominaniia o tragicheskoi sud'be predrevoliutsionnoi Rossii (1900-1917)*, Moscow, ROSEN, 2007, p. 89.

5 AVPRI: 184-520-779, f. 210.

6 *The Argus*, 6 August 1898, p. 9; AVPRI: 157-464-3335a, ff 17-18; *The Times*, 5 August 1908, p. 9.

48. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
30 (18) December 1895
No. 63

[...] I beg leave to bring the following matter to Your Excellency's attention.

The present dispute between Britain and the United States has resounded loudly in the Australian colonies.⁷ We have witnessed a veritable explosion of British patriotism, providing yet further evidence of the deep attachment between the colonies and the mother country. When we hear talk of Australian 'separatism', this term is actually inappropriate. We should rather speak of particularism. It is this which characterises the public life of the colonies: Australians cling passionately to their local autonomy, just as they cling to their six distinct governments with their chambers, ministries, majorities and all the trappings of modern constitutionalism. But one would search in vain for any trace of 'separatism'. In one of his latest harangues, Lord Brassey said, 'If you cease to belong to Britain, you will be neither freer nor stronger'.⁸ This felicitous euphemism served to remind Australians of a truth of which they were, no doubt, fully aware: without Britain they could not exist, for it is British power which guarantees the stability and functioning of their institutions, and British capital alone which feeds their economic prosperity. Britain is a splendid creditor. According to official figures, the Australian colonies, together with Tasmania, having a total population of 3,140,000 souls (equal to that of some Russian provinces, such as Kiev, Viatka or Perm, taken singly), have borrowed £215,000,000 from the mother country, of which £165,000,000 were lent to governments and £50,000,000 to banks, quite apart from private transactions.

At the same time, the British Government's colonial policy displays an attitude of boundless and imperturbable indulgence, the very opposite of the system which led to the rebellion in the American colonies in the

7 Deteriorating relations between Britain and the United States, almost bringing them to the brink of war, were linked to US intervention on the Venezuelan side in a dispute between Britain and Venezuela on the demarcation of the border between Venezuela and British Guiana.

8 Lord Thomas Brassey: prominent political figure in Britain and Australia; Governor of Victoria in 1895–1900.

days of Lord North and Lord Chatham.⁹ It can be illustrated by a recent incident. The governors are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen but paid by the colonies. Sir Thomas Buxton had just been appointed Governor of South Australia with an annual salary of £5,000 when suddenly the colony reduced it by £1,000.¹⁰ Mr Chamberlain was not in the least discountenanced.¹¹ He merely remarked that he was sorry to see South Australia in such straitened circumstances. And Sir Thomas, for his part, concurred. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 171–172. In French.

49. Ungern-Sternberg to the Personnel and Management Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
17 (5) February 1896
No. 114

[...] I have the honour to report that, in response to the instruction of 21 December (No. 4439) I have informed Mr Lewenberg, of Auckland,¹² that the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs has no plans at present to open an honorary consulate in New Zealand.

In connection with this, I beg to suggest to the Department that in the interests of the service it would be desirable to ask the British Government to extend the exequatur of the Russian Consul in Victoria to all the Australian colonies (with the exception of New South Wales, where there is an honorary consul),¹³ to wit, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand.

9 Lord North: Frederick North, Second Earl of Guilford, British Prime Minister in 1770–1782. His hard-line taxation policy and refusal to make concessions led to rebellion in the American colonies and the American War of Independence. Lord Chatham: title of William Pitt the Elder, British statesman, opponent of North's harsh taxation policy.

10 Sir Thomas Buxton: Governor of South Australia 1895–1899.

11 Joseph Chamberlain: British statesman of conservative views, advocate of imperial expansion. Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1895–1903.

12 Nicholas Lewenberg: an entrepreneur of Russian extraction. In 1895–1897, he attempted to establish a business near Waikato, North Island, for the production and processing of sugar beet.

13 The Honorary Consul was E. M. Paul.

This measure is desirable for two reasons:

- (1) because the governments of the colonies are independent of one another, which means that an official position in one colony may not be recognised in another;
- (2) there are numerous Russian nationals now resident in Australia.

These people, mostly Finns and Letts who have deserted from British ships, for the most part earn good wages. (They never visit the Consulate.)

In the event of their death, if they have no relatives in Australia, their effects, to which Paragraph No. 1 of the Declaration of 1880 is inapplicable,¹⁴ pass into the safe-keeping of the trustees and guardians of unclaimed deceased estates, and subsequently, when no heirs declare themselves (there are no public announcements) into the colonial treasury.

If the exequatur of the Consul in Victoria extended to the other colonies, he could in many cases, by requesting information and through official correspondence, from Melbourne protect the rights of heirs resident in Russia, and by reports to the Ministry on each individual case assist in locating those heirs.¹⁵ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, f. 139. Copy. In Russian.

50. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
21 (9) February 1896
No. 117

[...] I beg to inform Your Excellency that the important plan to form an Australian federation may now be considered buried. Negotiations are continuing, but there is no longer any doubt as to their outcome.

¹⁴ The Declaration of 1880, signed by the British and Russian governments in August 1880, covered the mutual repatriation of estates left by deceased British and Russian seamen sailing on vessels of the two countries. Paragraph 1 dealt with estates not exceeding £50 or 350 silver roubles.

¹⁵ Ungern-Sternberg's arguments were heeded in St Petersburg. In November 1896, he was granted the official status of Russian consul in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand.

The plan envisaged the union of the various colonial governments in a single legislative and administrative centre. Her Majesty's Government lent it their full support, and might even be described as its main proponent.

Among the arguments in favour of federation, one above all was forcefully advanced by the British Government: the question of an Australian army. And in effect only a federal government might have had sufficient authority to attempt the delicate and ruinously costly enterprise of building a standing army in a country where radicalism is in power, there is no compulsory military service, and the worker to be enlisted to the ranks earns four roubles for eight hours work.

At present the 'armed forces' of the colonies amount to absolutely nothing, but are adequate for what is required of them. Can one imagine circumstances in which Australia would need to defend itself against aggression? To this we may reply that one cannot. A future Australian army will therefore be condemned to being merely a luxury – unless one day the deep and sincere loyalty of Australians should require them to place it at the disposition of the mother country. This last eventuality may not have been entirely unrelated to the warm interest shown by the British Government, and tirelessly and eloquently transmitted by the Victorian Governor.

In seeking the causes of this final failure, apart from economic and local factors, we may attribute much to the aversion felt by many Australians to a standing army: the radicals see it as a threat, and the land-owning class fears financial ruin. But the primary cause, the true cause, lies elsewhere. It is to be found in the spirit of special identity which has always and everywhere been the birthright of the Saxon races, owing to which amalgamation as such is repugnant to Australians.

Studying the political life of the colonies, one is struck by certain remarkable analogies with events in the United States when they achieved independence, and in Germany in the early days of the Zollverein.¹⁶

We are compelled to conclude that the colonies will form a federation only when there is a pressing and immediate need to do so.¹⁷ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 7–8. In French.

16 Zollverein: customs union. See Document 33.

17 Ungern-Sternberg's assertions on this topic indicate that he underestimated the power of the centripetal tendencies at work in the colonies, and the scale of the federalist movement.

51. Ungern-Sternberg to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
22 (10) February 1896
No. 467

Last year the Colonial Government in Melbourne sent Mr Cecil Hake, Chief Inspector of Explosives, to England to study the manufacture of smokeless powder with a view to establishing an independent Australian powder factory on the basis of the information thus gathered.

In view of the scale of importation of explosive compounds into Australia (£238,000 a year), planning for a factory capable of supplying both the mining industry and the defence requirements of the country has long been under consideration.

The aim of Mr Hake's journey was principally to select from the wide range of products the powder best suited to Australia's needs.

In a detailed secret report, Mr Hake has now recommended a smokeless powder called 'cordite', which has been studied at the experimental station at Waltham Abbey in England.¹⁸

Contrary to the wishes of the Government, that report has been published in the local newspaper *The Age*, in extract form.

I enclose the press article in the original, in case the Department wishes to communicate this to our War Department.¹⁹

I have been unable to procure a complete copy of the report; Mr Hake and the Secretary for Defence, both of whom I know well, assure me that the Ministry had decided to keep it completely secret. I judged it inappropriate to take the matter further, and did not know how much it might interest our specialists.

18 The Royal Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey, Essex, began experiments to develop new types of explosives in the mid-1850s.

19 The enclosure, 'Smokeless Powder', from *The Age*, 12 February 1896, is not reproduced here.

I confined myself to enquiring of the Secretary for Defence whether the article in *The Age* was reliable, and he replied that it was.²⁰ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 30–31. Copy. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

52. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
14 (2) April 1896
No. 179

[...] I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that in the course of the past week a further exchange of views has taken place in Sydney, in the presence of three Governors, on the question of an Australian army (mentioned in my report No. 117, of 9/21 February).²¹

It seems that the British Government attaches increasing importance to a prompt resolution of this matter. It is even recommending that it be treated separately from the plan for federation, which is being held up by many difficulties in the detail.

It is reported that during the last round of negotiations, direct overtures, so to speak, were made concerning the services which the mother country would expect of the future Australian army: in time of war it would be sent to India to replace troops called to a theatre of war.

Once again the negotiations did not lead to a satisfactory conclusion. It is true that the Australian ministers did declare that if the need arose a special detachment would be raised, at the colonies' expense, and dispatched to join the regular army, like the 600 men equipped by New South Wales for the campaign in the Sudan in 1885.²² But the memory of that unruly band is still fresh in the mind of the British High Command. Rowdy

20 In February 1896, the Minister for Defence in the Victorian Government was William McCulloch.

21 See Document 50. The reference is evidently to a meeting between the Governors of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia (Lord Hampden, Lord Brassey and Sir Thomas Buxton) in Sydney on 8 April 1896.

22 A 750-strong contingent of Australian troops was sent to the Sudan to assist the British in putting down the Mahdi revolt. Stationed in Suakin in March–May 1885, the Australians took little part in combat operations. They were used mainly to repair the railway line by which the British force received its supplies.

and ill-trained, those men were an embarrassment to their commanders and a singularly bad example to their comrades, and the enormous sums allocated by the Government in Sydney gave cause for murmurs of discontent. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 25–26. In French.

53. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) April 1896
No. 202

[...] I have the honour to submit to the Imperial Embassy in London some data which I have obtained through official channels on the number of Russian nationals resident in the Australian colonies, according to the general census of the Australian population undertaken in 1891:

	Male	Female	Total
New South Wales	987	189	1,176
Victoria	911	261	1,172
Queensland	207	28	235
South Australia	156	33	189
Western Australia	56	15	71
Tasmania	33	5	38
New Zealand	289	31	320
Total	2,639	562	3,201

According to information received privately, the number of Russians in South Australia and Western Australia (especially the latter) has increased very significantly in recent years. [...]

AVPRI: 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, f. 34. In Russian.

54. Ungern-Sternberg to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Internal Department

Melbourne,
26 (14) September 1896
No. 319

[...] I have the honour, in response to the instruction of 7 August (No. 6698), to supply information concerning the person of Mr Damyon and his financial situation. He resides at 224 Williamson Road, Toorak, and has appealed to the Sovereign Emperor for financial support.

In the years 1857 to 1894 Mr Damyon managed the Russian Consulate in Melbourne, first as Vice-Consul, and later as Consul. In January 1894 he handed over consular affairs to the newly appointed Consul, A. D. Poutiata, now deceased.

Mr Damyon is 84 years old. In his youth he worked for many years for various companies in Russia, and still today speaks good Russian.

He came to Australia in the 1840s, established an independent trading company, and soon grew wealthy.

Until 1892 he was considered a rich man; he owned land and held shares in various commercial banks. However, when the terrible financial crisis broke upon Australia and the banks suspended their payments, British law required him, as a shareholder, and others like him to use his other properties to pay the banks' creditors. As a result, all his property was sold.

Although Mr Damyon has not approached the Consulate for support, I am fully aware of his extreme, even abject poverty.

In view of the universal respect in which he is held, the colonial government granted him the office of Customs Agent for life. This office is unpaid and yields only a modest income, proportionate to commissions from importers, and since there are many customs agents, and the public prefer to deal with younger ones (Damyon is now almost completely deaf), his earnings are negligible.

Damyon receives no assistance from his sons. Two of them hold junior clerical positions in small establishments, and the third, who has tried his hand at various trades, is at present idle and a burden to his father.²³ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 104–105. Copy. In Russian.

55. Ungern-Sternberg to V. N. Kovalevsky, Director of the Department of Trade and Manufacturing, Russian Ministry of Finance²⁴

Melbourne,
15 (3) October 1896
No. 338

[...] I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that in a separate package I have dispatched to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing samples of the highest-quality merino wool of the latest cut, in the hope that a comparison of these samples with wool procured abroad by our manufacturers, mainly at third hand, will be of some interest.

It is now the shearing season in Victoria, and sheep graziers lavish generous hospitality upon their acquaintances.

I took up some invitations to visit the district of Ballarat, which has the best fine-fleeced sheep in all of Australia, and where, by a happy coincidence, the graziers escaped the banking crisis of 1893.

The properties there are very large, and not being mortgaged, bring handsome returns to their owners. The graziers are therefore well placed to take advantage of all the latest innovations in agriculture.

23 Damyon's appeal for regular support was unsuccessful, but early in 1897 the Russian Government made a single payment of £120.

24 Vladimir Ivanovich Kovalevsky was Director of the Department of Trade and Manufacturing from 1892 to 1900.

The properties I visited are all well known in the world's wool markets for the superior quality of their product, which has won prizes at the World Fair in Chicago. The properties in question, where I received the said samples, are: Ercildoune (40,000 head of sheep), Trawalla (42,000), Carngham (28,000), Langi-Willi (18,000), and Stoneleigh (48,000).²⁵

Shearing is done partly with the aid of steam-powered motors, but on the whole this innovation has not yielded the expected results, so manual labour predominates. In our currency, the shearers receive nine roubles per hundred sheep (in Russia, I believe they are paid between three and five roubles) for hand-shearing and seven per hundred for machine-shearing.

My stay in the Ballarat district has convinced me that rumours of the unviability of sheep-rearing in Australia are without foundation. The only graziers in difficulty are those whose properties are mortgaged to major trading companies dealing in wool, and therefore exploiting them.

The climatic and soil conditions in Australia are so favourable to sheep-breeding that even the exorbitant cost of labour is of no consequence.

A farm-labourer hired by the year receives, in our terms, ten roubles a week all found (except for tobacco and drink) and works eight hours a day for five days and only four on Saturdays. It is true that he is an excellent worker, and the number of such full-time workers is very limited. A large property like Ercildoune (40,000 head), for example, has only twenty: to mind and maintain the fences and protect the water supply. Barns, sheds and stockyards are non-existent: the flocks graze in the open throughout the year with no shepherds to mind them.

It is too early to judge Australian wool prices in the current season, since public auctions are only just beginning and the market is still very slack, something which is attributed to restraint on the part of American buyers, who fear changes in the currency values in connection with the coming US presidential election.

25 Ungern-Sternberg lists localities and farms to the west, north and northwest of Ballarat. Ercildoune was established in 1838 by the Livingstone-Learmonth brothers, and was one of the best-known sheep stations in Australia. Trawalla, founded in 1838 by the Hamilton family, became the property of Rear-Admiral W. B. Bridges in 1887. One of the first owners of Carngham, from 1843, was Philip Russell. Langi-Willi also belonged to Russell from 1859, and Stoneleigh belonged to the Russell family from 1847.

In spite of this, we may probably suppose that the final prices are likely to be higher than last year's because the total yield for 1895 was relatively low on account of the drought, which compelled graziers to sell off their flocks for slaughter (in New South Wales alone, some 9,000,000 head of sheep were disposed of in this way).

A comparison of my samples with the varieties of wool (Australian and South American) bought by our manufacturers in the German, Belgian and French markets – wool which is said to be essential to our manufacturing industry – shows how desirable it would be for our manufacturers to send their specialised agents to the Australian wool auctions, or at least the London auctions, where, as I know, they do not appear. The sums they overpay to German, Belgian and French trading companies for second-rate wool at second and third hand must also be very considerable.

I consider it my duty to bring this to Your Excellency's attention. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 108–109. Copy. In Russian.

56. Ungern-Sternberg to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
2 November (21 October) 1896
No. 358

I have the honour to present some intelligence collected by the Consulate on the state of the supply of kerosene in Australia.

With the exception of a trifling amount produced locally, all kerosene is obtained from America.

Australia's sources of oil, and those of New Zealand in particular, are of poor quality. They are being exploited by two joint-stock companies in New South Wales (Australia Kerosene Oil & Mineral Co. and New South Wales Shale & Oil Co.), and one company in New Zealand near the township of Orepuki.²⁶

From 1865 to 1894, a total of 804,069 tons of crude oil was extracted; in 1894 21,700, and in 1895 59,426 tons.

26 Orepuki: a township in the South Island of New Zealand, near Riverton.

A NEW RIVAL STATE?

New Zealand oil is now processed exclusively as lubricating oil.

From New South Wales, export of kerosene has been in the amounts shown below:

To	1892	1893	1894
Victoria	3,559 t.	2,997 t.	1,328 t.
Britain	7,717 t.	6,236 t.	8,019 t.
Dutch East Indies	18,578 t.	8,064 t.	5,884 t.
Italy	1,045 t.	4,064 t.	1 t.
USA	1,210 t.	603 t.	152 t.
Spain	3,438 t.	1,735 t.	–
Brazil	4,180 t.	–	–
Chile	1,950 t.	2,328 t.	1,914 t.
others	3,119 t.	1,718 t.	1,561 t.

These figures are taken from the work of the official Government statistician A. Coghlan.²⁷

American kerosene is sent in wooden crates, each of which holds two metal containers – each container holding four British gallons or five American gallons. It is purchased from the American Standard Oil Company at the production site, and delivered to Australia by middlemen, partly on commission, but in most cases it is ordered by Australian importers.

Since 1891 the quantity of American kerosene imported into Australia is as follows:

1891	1892	1893	1894	1895
8,433,336 gal.	8,583,832 gal.	8,686,080 gal.	10,958,528 gal.	10,645,936 gal.

Since 1st January this year the amount imported from America is as follows:

State	Gallons
Victoria	2,947,040
New South Wales	1,358,200
Queensland	888,000
Western Australia	239,800

27 Sir Timothy Augustine Coghlan, New South Wales public servant and the colony's first government statistician.

State	Gallons
South Australia	1,002,080
New Zealand	1,061,800
Total	7,496,920

Tasmania obtains its kerosene from the neighbouring colonies.

Prices in Sydney on 7/19 October 1896 are as follows:

American 150 grade: 1 shilling, 1½ pence per gallon

Colonial: 11 pence, 11½ pence per gallon

The duty payable on kerosene in New South Wales is three pence per gallon; in Victoria six pence per gallon.²⁸

Russian kerosene appeared in Melbourne a few years ago. A London firm made a trial delivery of 35 crates. The trial was unsuccessful, which was to be expected, given the dominance of companies interested in trading with America. Our kerosene was sold for 6 pence a gallon. We must assume that, if it were to be marketed again today, the same coalition would immediately form, and the sparse population of the Australian continent means that the market is too restricted for us to succeed in the face of the competition. Furthermore, freight costs would give the American product a significant advantage.

In order to verify the above information, I asked the leading purveyor of kerosene here, Couche, Balder & Co., to tell me if the figures in the Consulate's possession were correct. In reply they confirmed their accuracy, and added:

The question of Russian Kerosene Oil has been closely studied by us for some years past, and when in Europe about four years ago our Senior tried to obtain accurate information from persons who had control at Baku or Batoum,²⁹ but at that time it was found the interests were so divided that nothing definitive was forthcoming. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 124–125. Copy. In Russian. Published in part; see [Ungern-Shternberg R. R.] 'Ot rossiiskogo konsula v Mel'burne. Vvoz kerosina v Avstraliuu', *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i torgovli*, No. 4, 1897, pp. 203–204.

28 Alongside the measurements in gallons, the author gives the equivalents in pails (*vedra*), the liquid measurement used in Russia: 1 pail (*vedro*) = approximately 12 litres.

29 Baku: the capital of Azerbaijan, on the west coast of the Caspian Sea; Batoum, now Batumi, is a port on the Georgian Black Sea coast.

57. Ungern-Sternberg to Imperial Embassy, London

Melbourne,
17 (5) November 1896
No. 372

I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of my dispatch of 5/17 November this year (No. 370) to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing on the establishment of a regular steamship service between Japan and Australia.

Baron Ungern-Sternberg
Consul, Melbourne

Attachment to No. 372

Copy of dispatch of 5/17 November (No. 370) to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing

Referring to §§ 91 and 92 of the Consular Regulations, I have the honour to report that the arrival here last week of the Japanese steamer *Yamashiro Maru*, of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha steamship company, finally marks the inauguration of the first regular steamship communication between Japan and Australia.

The aforementioned company, which is also well known in our Far Eastern ports, plans to make two regular return voyages a month, by agreement with the Japanese Government and fares calculated by the mile, between Yokohama, Kobe, Nagasaki and Australian ports: Hong Kong, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

The *Yamashiro Maru* (2,527 t.), which has now arrived here, was built at the Armstrong yards in England, and during the last war had guns fitted and was converted into an armed cruiser.³⁰ According to the Japanese honorary consul here,³¹ other vessels of this line are of a more modern type and larger deadweight (5,000 to 7,000 t.).

30 Last war: the reference is to the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 concerning control over Korea.

31 The Japanese consul at the time was Tsunejiro Nakagawa.

The future of this enterprise may perhaps be considered secure from a commercial and economic standpoint, but it remains highly dubious in view of Australia's reluctance to admit Asians.

The so-called 'Coloured Immigration Restriction Bill', is not only in force; it is extremely popular throughout Australia.

Taking account of this public mood, the colonial governments quite recently collectively declined to take part in the trade treaty of 1894 between Britain and Japan, which recognised the Japanese as fully equal in this respect.³²

After the arrival of the Japanese steamer, its captain gave a ceremonial luncheon last Friday. (I did not attend.) The Japanese Honorary Consul, who is a broker here, delivered a speech, during which, among other things, he pointed out the injustice of the aforementioned law. The speech was met with general indignation, and since then the newspapers, with a single exception, have not ceased to subject it to severe censure. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-820, ff 140–142. Copy. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

58. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
25 (13) January 1897
No. 425

[...] I beg to inform Your Excellency that on 12/24 April E. Paul, our consul in Sydney, will have been performing consular duties for forty years. Vice-Consul in 1857, he was appointed Consul by imperial decree on 21 December 1874.³³ In 1882, after our Pacific Squadron's visit to Sydney, on the recommendation of Admiral Aslanbegoff,³⁴ he was awarded the Order of St Stanislav, Third Class.

32 'As reported by the Consulate in dispatch No. 152 to His Excellency the Ambassador on 11/22 March this year' (not reproduced here) (Ungern-Sternberg's note). (In the late nineteenth century, the Australian colonies vigorously opposed any rapprochement between Britain and Japan. The 1894 trade agreement was unpopular as it was seen as a threat to local industry and might lead to an influx of Japanese immigrants.)

33 Paul was made honorary consul in Sydney by order of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Order No. 15) on 7 September 1874.

34 Rear-Admiral Avraamy Bogdanovich Aslanbegoff held command of a detachment of the Russian Pacific Fleet in 1881–1882. He visited Sydney and other Australian ports in 1881–1882 with a squadron consisting of the cruiser *Afrika* and the clippers *Plastun* and *Vestnik*.

During his long career, Mr Paul has witnessed the arrival of the following men-of-war in Sydney: the *Bogatyr* (1865), the *Boyarin* (1870), the *Izumrud* (1872), the *Afrika*, *Vestnik* and *Plastun* (1884), the *Rynda*, with His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Alexander on board, and the *Nayezdnik* (1894).³⁵

The archives of the Sydney consulate testify to the fact that our sailors have never departed the city without voicing their satisfaction and sincere gratitude to our Consul for the astute readiness with which he placed himself at their service and was helpful to them. His home became the daily meeting place of our naval officers; even his Imperial Highness several times honoured it by his presence.

In Sydney Mr Paul is universally respected. Despite the rumours which circulated in the French community last year, which I deemed it my duty to report confidentially, his financial situation is thoroughly satisfactory. Mr Paul is no longer engaged in private business on his own account, but continues to serve as principal agent in Australia, as before, for the major London concern Schewppe & Co. Ltd (manufacturers of mineral water), with whom he has a valid contract.³⁶ He has a personal fortune, and resides with his wife in his own house at Darling Point, an elegant district of Sydney.

I beg to convey some details, both personal and professional, in case Your Excellency should wish to request an Imperial honour for Mr Paul on the occasion of his fortieth year of service. I know that he would be delighted beyond measure, and his gratitude itself, given his popularity, would bring handsome rewards.

Mr Damyon, the former Consul in Melbourne, was awarded the Order of St Stanislaw Second Class last year,³⁷ although he has neither comparable distinctions nor a comparable position in society.

35 This account contains a number of inaccuracies. The corvette *Bogatyr* visited Sydney in March 1863; the *Afrika*, *Vestnik* and *Plastun* in December 1881 and January 1882; the *Rynda*, on which the Grand Duke Alexander was a midshipman, in January–February 1888; and the *Nayezdnik* in December 1888 and January 1889. The cruiser *Kreiser* visited Sydney in 1894.

36 Schewppe & Co. Ltd, producer of mineral water, was founded in London by Jacob Schewppe in 1792. In 1873, Queen Victoria granted the company a royal warrant of appointment as official purveyor of its product to the royal house.

37 No confirmation has been found of the assertion that Damyon was awarded the Order of St Stanislaw Second Class. He did, however, receive the Order of St Stanislaw Third Class in 1883.

If Your Excellency should see fit to pursue the matter I have had the honour to place before him, and to seek an award for Mr Paul, it would be desirable that the award be not inferior to that conferred upon his junior colleague in Melbourne.³⁸ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-779, ff 38–39. In French.

59. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
29 (17) January 1897
No. 439

[...] I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government has taken a step with regard to the Colonies which has been received here with great satisfaction: it has appointed the Chief Justice of South Australia, Mr Way, Australian Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,³⁹ which has its seat in Westminster.

Until now this great judicial institution was predominantly British in character.

Australians are pleased to view Mr Way's nomination less as a political concession than as an act of courtesy towards them. It should perhaps also be seen as a step towards the unification of the Empire, so deeply desired, especially if the rumour is borne out that Canada and the Cape Colony are to receive the same favour.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was established quite recently, during the reign of William IV (1830–1837). At first its functions were purely consultative, but were subsequently extended. At present, any plaintiff from any part of the British Empire may have recourse to the Judicial Committee as the supreme and final authority.

38 Paul was awarded the Order of St Stanislav Second Class only in 1912, fifteen years after Ungern-Sternberg's recommendation.

39 Sir Samuel James Way: eminent South Australian lawyer and statesman. From 1875 until his death in 1916, Chief Justice of South Australia. Appointed in January 1897 to the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council, but served on it only until the autumn of that year.

In its structure the Judicial Committee resembles that of the First Department (administrative) and the Cassation Departments (common law) of our Senate.⁴⁰ As in Russia, its interpretations of the law acquire the force of law *ipso facto*, and become precedents by which all courts must be guided.

The new member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, with whom I have the pleasure of being personally acquainted, is a man of true distinction, as well as being a learned and experienced lawyer. His appointment has received unanimous approval. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 21–22. In French.

60. Ungern-Sternberg to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing, Russian Ministry of Finance

Melbourne,
19 (7) February 1897
No. 465

Further to my dispatch of 3/15 October 1896 (No. 338) to the Director of the Department, concerning wool,⁴¹ I have the honour to report that I have taken the liberty of sending another packet, the third, containing more wool, from the 1896 season, via the Imperial Embassy in London.

This wool obtained the highest price of the season: 2 shillings and 11 pence per pound; and one batch fetched as much as four shillings. That batch came from Mount Bute, the property of the heirs of Sir Samuel Wilson, in the Ballarat district of the colony of Victoria (with 52,000 head of sheep).⁴²

40 Governing Senate: in the Russian Empire, supreme organ of executive and legislative authority, established by Peter I in 1711 as a consultative body for the Tsar. By the end of the nineteenth century, its importance had declined to a supervisory role, as well as functioning as the highest appeal court.

41 See Document 55.

42 Mount Bute: a property to the southwest of Ballarat, belonging to Sir Samuel Wilson. His eldest son and heir, Captain Gordon Chesney Wilson of the Royal Horse Guards, was married to Lady Sarah Isabella Wilson, née Churchill. Ungern-Sternberg appends a note, saying that the estate was in the process of being transferred to the heir. Lady Sarah's brother, Lord Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill, was the father of Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister in 1940–1945 and 1951–1955. Capt. Wilson was killed in action at the First Battle of Ypres, in November 1914.

Rather than being sent to London for auction, Australian wool is increasingly being sold at local auctions, as the following figures show.

Sales in Australia (bales):

1886–87	1890–91	1892–93	1894–95	1895–96
372,000	595,000	803,000	873,000	890,000

As the total volume exported in the 1895–96 season was 1,952,000 bales, the proportion marketed locally was 45%.

On the basis of these figures, taking account of the fact that Russia alone of the major countries sends no buyers to the Australian auctions (although it is generally acknowledged that Australian wool is essential to our industry), and supposing that were Russian buyers to visit Australia, even if they bought nothing, the position of our manufacturers in the European wool markets would naturally be stronger, I raised before the Director in my dispatch of 3/15 October last the question of encouraging our manufacturers to send a Russian buyer on a trial mission to next season's auctions.

In case my suggestion concerning this matter should receive consideration, I have gathered some information on the conditions in which buyers here work.

An auction is always preceded by an exhibition of all the available wares, so that the buyer has every opportunity to inspect them and assess their value. The buyer also has the choice of a wide range of major firms which offer brokerage services: for purchase by order at the auction itself, for dispatch of goods to Europe, as well as for cashing bills of exchange. Over and above that, these firms also have special rooms in their offices where clients can work, with all the office staff at their disposal. For all this they charge 0.5% of the price of the goods purchased.

For Russian buyers it would probably be most convenient to approach the large French company Wenz & Co. (Rheims, Buenos Aires and Melbourne).

Payment is effected immediately upon purchase by bills of exchange guaranteed in London, with bills of lading attached to guard against any possible abuse. A bill of exchange is invalid without a bill of lading. Buyers issue bills of exchange on the basis of their letters of credit. I attach some samples of such letters.

In addition, the buyer should be equipped with a special letter of credit to cover his travel and other expenses, since he will be unable to obtain cash using the letters of credit mentioned above. Return fares and expenses for the season 3/15 October to 15 December, approximately converted to roubles, are as follows:

Russia to Marseilles return: 300 roubles
Marseilles to Melbourne return, first class: 1,100 roubles
Expenses en route: 300 roubles
Board and lodging (2 months at £6 week): 480 roubles

Total: 2,180 roubles

Add 30% for general and unforeseen expenses: 654 roubles

Total: 2,834 roubles.

As the season begins on 3/15 October, the buyer should depart from Russia no later than early September. The splendid French steamers of the Messageries Maritimes line make the journey from Marseilles to Melbourne in 30 days.

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 28–29. Copy. In Russian. Published in part; see [Ungern-Sternberg R. R.] 'Ot rossiiskogo konsula v Mel'burne. Torgovlia sherst'iu v Avstralii', *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i torgovli*, No. 13, 1897, p. 811.

61. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
22 (10) February 1897
No. 468

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that Mr Chamberlain has invited the seven premiers of the Australian Colonies to attend the jubilee celebrations of Her Majesty the Queen as guests of the British Government.⁴³

43 The celebration of Queen Victoria's 80th birthday (24 May 1897) was combined with that of the 60th year of her reign (20 June 1897). It was held on 22 June 1897.

The premiers' first instinct was to decline, on the pretext that their duties prevented them from leaving Australia. However, owing to the weight of public opinion, highly flattered by the courtesy of such an official invitation, and the insistence of the Governors, the premiers soon found themselves obliged to accept.

Following an audience with Lord Brassey, Sir George Turner, the Premier of Victoria, who had been the first to decline and thus, it seems, set an example to his colleagues, has just sent Mr Chamberlain a cable signalling his humble gratitude and compliance.

While the invitation from the Secretary of State for the Colonies was no doubt intended to bring to the fore, on this solemn occasion, the ties which bind the Colonies to the mother country, the premiers' refusal – however unfortunate it may have appeared – was certainly by no means grounded in any hostility to Mr Chamberlain's motives.

The wish to avoid making the journey to England sprang solely from personal considerations: the fear that during their absence the opposition might move to overthrow them.

The Australian premiers, whose merits and real personal qualities should not go unrecognised, are professional politicians: they live on their annual salaries of £1,400, and it is of vital importance to them not to be deprived of that income.

Sir George Turner, for example, one of the most outstanding of them, was a solicitor with no clients and mayor of a suburb before the whims of parliamentary favour placed a ministerial portfolio in his hands. A single vote would suffice to reduce his ministry to a minority and send him back to his cardboard boxes, empty of files, in his small office in Little Collins Street.

In these circumstances, Australians find it natural and just that, before agreeing to go, he should extract from the leaders of the opposition a formal promise to attempt no aggressive moves during his absence.

We must assume that his colleagues in the other colonies have taken similar precautions. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 25–26. In French.

62. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
23(11) February 1897
No. 471

[...] I have the honour to report that, having no direct address for packages, I have sent to the Imperial Embassy a parcel containing some wool, and most humbly request that you will not decline to forward it to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing.⁴⁴ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, f. 33. In Russian.

63. Ungern-Sternberg to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing, Russian Ministry of Finance

Melbourne,
26 (14) February 1897
No. 473

[...] I have the honour to report that I have collected information concerning Russian vessels arriving in Australasia and departing all Australian ports in the year 1896.

To this end I have contacted the customs authorities in all the colonies separately, as well as our honorary consul in Sydney.

From the information thus received, it emerges that in 1896 no Russian ships called at the ports of four of the colonies: Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

44 Ungern-Sternberg appended a copy of his dispatch of 7/19 February 1897, addressed to the Finance Ministry's Department of Trade and Manufacturing. See Document 60.

A single sailing vessel, the *Paul*, 744 tons (the master is a Mr Kron; the vessel, built in Libava in 1856, is owned by S. V. Schroeder of Riga) called in New Zealand and sailed for London with a cargo of timber.⁴⁵

Tasmania was visited by the *Winefred*, 1,359 tons (the master is Captain Laine; the vessel, owned by Söderlund of Raumo, Finland, was built in Chester in 1855).⁴⁶ It sailed for France, also carrying timber.

South Australia was also visited by the *Winefred*,⁴⁷ and by the sailing ship *Hermes* (1,053 tons, built in Newcastle in 1875; the master is Mr Svanstrom and the owners I. Lindblum of Åbo).⁴⁸ It sailed for St Nazaire (France) with cargo to the value of £5,575.

The combined tonnage of the three vessels is 3,156 tons.

I consider it my duty to add that none of the masters notified the Consulate of his arrival, as laid down in the consular regulations (Paragraphs 47–56).

The master of the *Winefred* replied to a note from the Consulate, saying that he did not understand Russian, and did not reply at all to a cable and messages in English.⁴⁹

Consequently the Consulate has faced no small difficulty in delivering letters, with the aid of various commercial agents, sent from Russia to members of the crew. Six of them have unfortunately not reached the addressees at all.

While the number of Russian vessels in Australian waters is very limited, the number of Russian sailors, mostly Finns, is considerable. Most of them occupy good positions (for example, on the British ship *Lochee* –

45 *Paul*: sailing under the Russian flag, reached Kaipara Harbour in New Zealand on 1 August 1896 from Brazil, and took on a cargo of timber for delivery to Britain. No further detail is to hand concerning the master or owner, whose names are here transcribed from the Cyrillic.

46 *Winefred*: British sailing ship that, since 1894, had been sailing under the Russian flag. She reached Hobart on 27 January 1896, with a cargo of wheat from Adelaide and was then loaded with timber. Her owner was Johan Wilhelm Söderlund (Söderlund & Co.), of Raumo. According to Australian sources, the master at this date was Wilhelm Fagerholm, who had replaced Frans Wilhelm Laine. In 1896, Laine held command of another Russian (Finnish) vessel, the *Fennia*, which reached Australia in early 1897. See Document 64.

47 En route to France from Tasmania. (Ungern-Sternberg's note.)

48 *Hermes*: reached Australia from Hudiksvall, Sweden, on 16 January 1896, and sailed in mid-February for Dunkirk with a cargo of ore. No further detail is to hand concerning the master or owner, whose names are here transcribed from the Cyrillic.

49 The cable and notes had the sole purpose of establishing where to send the letters to the crew, which had accumulated in the Consulate. (Ungern-Sternberg's note.)

1,812 tons, registered in Dundee – almost all the crew are Finns and natives of St Petersburg region).⁵⁰ Those without positions who have come to the Consulate have all without exception received consular assistance and been taken on by various masters at wages between £2 10s. and £4 a month. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 40–41. Copy. In Russian.

64. Ungern-Sternberg to the Personnel and Management Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
No date [April 1897]
No. 559

In the last two months a total of seventeen sailors have deserted three Finnish ships, the *Lochee*, the *Fennia* and the *Winefred*, in South Australian ports.⁵¹

In only one case were the men captured and returned thanks to official intervention by the Consulate. In the other cases, the masters did not notify me as they did not know that as from October last year the Consulate's sphere of operation has been extended to the other Australian colonies.

The official British press announced the extension of my jurisdiction (I sent a copy of the newspaper to the Department at the time).⁵²

It seems, however, that the Government press published no announcement,⁵³ which may explain why the masters remained in ignorance. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, f. 116. Copy. In Russian.

50 The mixed nationality of the *Lochee's* crew may be due to the fact that in 1896 this British ship was sold to the shipowner John Rivell, of Nystad, now known as Uusikaupunki, in Finland.

51 See Document 63 on the *Lochee* and the *Winefred*. The Russian (Finnish) barque *Fennia*, under Captain F. W. Laine, reached Port Adelaide at the very end of January 1897 with a record cargo of Baltic timber worth approximately £15,000.

52 Official British press: apparently a reference to a report which appeared in the *London Gazette*, 13 November 1896.

53 Government press: apparently meaning the *Victorian Government Gazette*.

65. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
10 June (29 May) 1897
No. 610

[...] In connection with the recent New Zealand census, I wrote to the Premier of that colony and asked him to provide the Imperial Consulate with the official report on the results of the census.⁵⁴

From that very substantial work, received today by courtesy of the Premier, I take the liberty of presenting the following figures:

The population of New Zealand comprises 703,360 souls of both sexes, not counting the native Maori, whose number is in rapid decline: on 12 April 1896 they numbered 39,864.

There were 365 individuals born in Russia: 330 of them male, 35 female.⁵⁵ Adherents of the Orthodox Church numbered 116: 99 male and 17 female.

We may assume that this total does not include the (numerous) Levantines and Syrians,⁵⁶ some of whom attend the Catholic mass because there is no Orthodox priest in New Zealand. This assumption is confirmed by the following categories: Roman Catholics (97,525), Catholics undefined (1,279) and Catholics Apostolic (247). [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, f. 114. In Russian.

54 Premier: i.e. Richard Seddon.

55 Cf. the different figures given in Document 53.

56 i.e. mostly Greeks and Christian Arabs from the Levant (Lebanon) and Syria.

66. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Embassy, London

Melbourne,
18 (6) June 1897
No. 619

[...] I have the honour to submit to the Embassy herewith a copy of my dispatch of 5/17 June this year (No. 617) to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing, concerning the drought. [...]

Annex to No. 619

Copy of dispatch of 5/17 June (No. 617) to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing

I have the honour to report that this summer, from February until June, the farmers of Australia, in particular the sheep graziers, have suffered cruelly from drought. Older residents aver that this drought is truly without precedent.

Now, with the onset of the Australian winter, rain has begun to fall, but the general situation has not yet improved.

No doubt the Australians, with their Anglo-Saxon energy, will soon recover from the calamity, but we must nonetheless assume that the consequences of the drought will very acutely affect the economic situation of the colonies for some time, and quite probably even have an effect on European markets.

The present increased rate of gold exports, which I have had the honour to report,⁵⁷ is closely linked to the fear that a fall in agricultural production will lead to a temporary decline in exports, leading to a new deterioration in the trade balance, which already, despite a huge preponderance of exports over imports (on average £12,000,000 a year), thanks to interest payable on colonial and private loans, was far from being in Australia's favour.⁵⁸

57 Ungern-Sternberg's dispatch No. 587, dated 7/19 May 1897 on Australian gold exports is not reproduced here.

58 Ungern-Sternberg appends a note referring to an earlier dispatch, No. 210, of 8 May (26 April) 1896. This dispatch has not been located.

I permit myself to cite certain figures taken from the reports of the Melbourne customs office alone for April and May of this year. They clearly show a rapid rise in gold exports and a fall in agricultural output:

Export commodity	April 1897 (£)	May 1897 (£)
Gold coin	637,703	901,665
Silver coin	–	20
Gold ingots	–	12,348
Silver ingots	–	33
Butter	45,827	30,820
Frozen meat	21,218	18,294
Wool	105,186	56,480

When compared with last year's exports, the current figures for gold exports illustrate the situation even more clearly:

	April 1896	May 1896	April 1897	May 1897
Gold exported	£441,974	£640,277	£637,703	£914,066

In the first five months of 1896 and 1897, also at the Port of Melbourne alone, gold exports were as follows:

1896	1897
£1,869,261	£3,755,003

Butter exports, which from Australia as a whole reached over £1,000,000, have fallen very significantly, and will probably temporarily cease altogether. (A few days ago the press even reported that dealers here had demanded the return of 1,000 tubs of butter from their London warehouses.)

As to the state of the wool market, one can only conjecture, as the season does not open for four months.

There is speculation that average prices will rise to £14 a ton, as they did in 1891, but even with an increase on that scale the loss to Australia will be appreciable, compared to 1895 and 1896.

	Bales sold	Price per bale	Total proceeds
1895	2,001,000	£11.00	£22,011,000
1896	1,846,000	£12.00	£22,152,000
1897 (projected)	1,346,000	£14.00	£18,844,000

Direct and indirect losses due to the drought have yet to be calculated, but are sure to be very great. In places they have reached as much as 60% of the total herd. The colonial governments and private associations formed for this express purpose are now engaged in raising funds to relieve the small holdings which have been affected, and much has already been done. The larger property-holders mostly find assistance and salvation in cheap credit and the competition which exists between the banking institutions, so, in spite of the scale of the disaster, a general economic crisis is not to be expected. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 118–120. Copy. In Russian. Published in part. See [Ungern-Sternberg R. R.] ‘Ot rossiiskogo konsula v Mel’burne. Zasukha v Avstralii’, *Vestnik finansov, promyshlennosti i torgovli*, No. 33, 1897, p. 274.

67. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
7 July (25 June) 1897
No. 638

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that Her Majesty the Queen’s diamond jubilee has been celebrated on a grand scale throughout Australia and particularly in Melbourne, with much display of loyal devotion.⁵⁹

Australian patriotic fervour, which was already warm, was maintained and nourished during the celebrations by cables from London, several times a day, reporting details of the ovations which greeted the representatives of the Colonies.

In the attached I take the liberty of drawing Your Excellency’s attention to one example of such reports.⁶⁰ They are generally thought to issue directly from the Colonial Office.

59 Diamond jubilee: see Document 61.

60 *The Argus*, 28 June 1897, not reproduced here.

However, these reports have not always produced the same result. If there was much satisfaction with the reception accorded to the contingent of Militia, the same cannot be said of the honours bestowed upon the premiers. Australians are extremely egalitarian, and at the same time jealous of the prestige of royalty. For these very different reasons, the excessive prominence of the premiers has incurred some displeasure.

We may suppose that the general esteem shown for the representatives of the Colonies has been intended to prepare the ground for the talks which have commenced in the Colonial Office. At present the premiers are attending a conference there, presided over by Mr Chamberlain.⁶¹ Its aim is to discuss measures leading to the implementation of the 'Greater Britain' project, which is certainly high on the agenda.

The 'Greater Britain' project, if implemented, will mean a new turn in British colonial policy: its relations with the colonies, which heretofore have been entirely those between protector and protected, will be transformed into a true federation, in which expenses and onerous restrictions will be borne by all the parties.

This is the first part of the programme which has now been tabled for discussion. It comprises the following:

- (1) colonial participation in maintaining the Royal Navy;
- (2) differential tariffs in the colonies to favour British goods.

Cables received this morning cover the first sessions. It appears that disagreements have already emerged.

The premiers are asserting that the budgets of the Colonies will not permit any increased expenditure. Here they are, no doubt, correct: the balance of colonial finance has long been guaranteed by a surplus in revenue.

61 Conference: the first Colonial Conference, attended by Joseph Chamberlain and the prime ministers of eleven self-governing British colonies, who were in England for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. There was discussion of ways to strengthen the Empire, and above all bolster its defence capacity. Later colonial conferences (renamed 'imperial conferences' in 1911) would become the instrument by which the British Government endeavoured to maintain the unity of the Empire and slow the incipient process of disintegration. The self-governing colonies and dominions, for their part, strove to extend their prerogatives and reduce their dependence on London.

As for differential tariffs, the premiers are prepared to agree. In return they are seeking only the following concessions:

- (1) the inclusion of Australian funds in those known in Britain as ‘*Sûretés pupillaires*’;⁶²
- (2) subsidies for shipping companies operating the postal service;
- (3) exemption from British income tax for persons in Britain who hold Australian assets (as they already pay tax in Australia).

While we expect to learn before long whether accord can emerge from the diversity of opinions, it is difficult – in view of the insignificant potential benefits – to comprehend the reasons which have led the Colonial Office to depart from its traditional *laissez faire* policy with regard to the Colonies, and seek to replace the very popular status quo with a system which distantly perhaps, but nevertheless de facto, recalls the regime of contributions and monopolies of George III and Lord North.⁶³

That regime, as we know, led to the loss of the American colonies, when the colonists claimed, in return, the right to send their representatives to the British parliament and were met with refusal.

If, contrary to all expectations, the idea of a ‘Greater Britain’ is realised, the historical lessons of the last century will certainly not be forgotten: members of parliament representing the nine million people who make up the white population of Canada, Australia and the Cape will be only a question of time. However, those new members will inevitably be either ‘home rulers’ or radicals, and probably both. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 134–136. In French.

62 *Sûretés pupillaires*: originally, property held in trust and managed by a guardian to produce income for a minor. Later the term acquired a broader sense: a form of investment with minimal exposure to risk of the principal.

63 Regime of contributions: the reference is to the British Government’s repressive taxation policy applied to the American colonies. See also Document 48.

68. Ungern-Sternberg to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing, Russian Ministry of Finance

Melbourne,
31 (19) July 1897
No. 656

Further to my dispatches Nos 588, 621 and 655,⁶⁴ and guided by Paragraph 88 of the Consular regulations, I have the honour to suggest that the Department consider the matter of entrusting a local firm which has representatives in all the main Australian ports – not officially, but simply by means of an exchange of letters – with the establishment and maintenance of a Russian shipping agency. This would be of benefit in view of the increasing volume of Russian maritime traffic in Australian waters and the distance separating many Australian ports from the Russian Consulate in Melbourne.

The advantages of such a measure would be as follows:

- (1) whenever ships' masters had cause to appeal to a court of law, they would be able to obtain more effective assistance from legal consultants than by turning to local lawyers. NB: by agreement with the local authorities, the Russian Consul in Melbourne now has the power to transmit by telegraph requests for deserters to be handed over, so this matter does not present any problems;
- (2) masters would have greater security in the matter of cargo, as a major company would always be quicker to find freight, and on more favourable terms than the small agents with whom they now deal;
- (3) perhaps most important of all: with time, by this means the opportunity would be opened for our vessels to come here with cargo from Russia, in particular, timber, which a large agency, acting as a broker, could sell here by commission without risk to the shipper.

NB: I will send a separate dispatch about the importation to Australia of timber for construction and mining works, which is increasingly assuming large proportions (Australian timber is unsuitable for these purposes).

⁶⁴ These dispatches are not reproduced here.

There would be much greater advantages in establishing such an agency than in appointing commercial vice-consuls. Leaving aside the fact that it would be highly inconvenient to appoint such vice-consuls in all Australian ports, it is extremely difficult to select them and, judging by the experience of other countries, almost always unsuccessful: if commercial vice-consuls occupy a position in society and in business, they are usually idle, and if they are small businessmen they have no influence. In the latter case, moreover, they are more than likely to order goods on commission from the country they represent, which often leads to regrettable complications.

On the subject of the proposed agency I have held private and of course purely preliminary talks with the director of Dalgety & Co.,⁶⁵ which has a special shipping department and offices in Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle, Adelaide, Port Pirie, Western Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. Its head office is in London. (I wrote of this in my dispatch No. 588.)

I am sure that this company will gladly take on the operation of such an agency, without any special remuneration, if an official proposal is made by the Russian Consul.

I enclose a draft of a letter which I could send to Dalgety & Co. if the Department approves it. The agreement proposed in it would permit the master of any ship flying the Russian flag, ipso facto and at any time of his choosing to approach any office of Dalgety & Co. as a client and avail himself of that great company's services. His right to do so will remain entirely optional, that is, he is not obliged to exercise it if, for example, he is already chartered or under obligation to a charter party, or simply does not wish to.

The purpose of the proposed agency is to render assistance to ships' masters whenever such assistance is required.

The question very naturally arises: why should Dalgety & Co., which enjoys such considerable financial turnover, undertake anything which offers such negligible returns? I have asked myself this question more than once, and come to the conclusion that on the one hand they are motivated by a wish to enter into direct commercial relations with Russia at last, and on the other by the idea that by extending their sphere of operations into Russia they will further raise the already high prestige of the company in the local world of commerce. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-859, ff 152-153. Copy. In Russian.

65 On Dalgety & Co., see notes to Document 13.

69. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
20 (8) September 1897
No. 703

[...] Last year the Imperial Embassy informed me in dispatch No. 584 of 21 May/2 June that the Most Holy Synod had resolved (1) to appoint the Reverend Hieromonk Nifont, a member of the Jerusalem Spiritual Mission, to the position of priest in Melbourne, and (2) to place the newly established Orthodox Church in Melbourne under the stewardship of the Most Holy Metropolitan of St Petersburg.⁶⁶

To date, however, the aforementioned hieromonk has not arrived.

A few days ago, the former Prior of the Orthodox Church in Baghdad, Archimandrite Dorotheios, arrived and offered his services to the Melbourne Orthodox community (which consists entirely of Levantines).⁶⁷ The local Orthodox gladly welcomed him and appointed him priest with an annual stipend of £120, with lodgings etc.

Archimandrite Dorotheios has made a most agreeable impression upon everybody.

He brought with him a letter for me, which I beg to attach, from the chargé d'affaires of the Imperial Consulate in Baghdad.⁶⁸ [...]

AVPRI: 184 (London Embassy) -520-859, f. 163. In Russian.

66 Most Holy Synod: the supreme state organ governing Church affairs in the Russian Empire. Dispatch No. 584 is not included in this collection.

67 Poutiata, the first Russian consul in Australia, had also attempted to meet the spiritual needs of the Orthodox in Melbourne. His correspondence with Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Supreme Procurator of the Holy Synod, led to the decision to send Hieromonk Nifont, from the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, to Melbourne. However, Nifont declined to serve in Australia, so Archimandrite Dorotheios was sent instead, appointed by the Jerusalem Patriarchate. But Dorotheios did not stay long. The then small Orthodox community in Melbourne could not afford to maintain him. Moreover, his haughty and lordly demeanour irritated his parishioners. See also Documents 98 and 109.

68 The copy of the letter is not reproduced here.

70. Ungern-Sternberg to the Department of Internal Affairs of the Russian Ministry of Finance

Melbourne,
2 November (20 October) 1897
No. 756

[...] On 8/20 September last I had the honour to report the arrival here from Baghdad of Archimandrite Dorotheios and his appointment by the local Greeks as priest in the Orthodox community with a monthly stipend of £10.

However, after the first month the Greeks have refused to pay his stipend, claiming that the members of the community are too poor.

As an elder of the community personally introduced Archimandrite Dorotheios in the Imperial Consulate, and as that choice seemed to me fully satisfactory, I felt it my duty to make every effort – in a purely private capacity, of course – to persuade the community to reconsider, but in that I was unsuccessful.

As a result, the Archimandrite finds himself in a very difficult situation. He cannot afford the fare back to Constantinople, to whose patriarchate he belongs. For that he needs at least £50.

In these circumstances, it is easy to foresee that he will soon be entirely without funds and in a state of extreme poverty.

In order not to permit a worthy Orthodox priest, whom all have seen in his priestly vestments, to fall inevitably into humiliating destitution, I beg to request permission to assist Archimandrite Dorotheios at official expense, and if need be supply him with the fare to Colombo, where ships of the Volunteer Fleet call and whence he could sail for Constantinople.

In reporting the above, I beg to suggest that in view of the extremely difficult situation it would be desirable to receive the Department's instructions by cable.⁶⁹ [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-859, f. 170. Copy. In Russian.

⁶⁹ Ungern-Sternberg received the required instructions and was able to give Dorotheios the financial support needed to leave Australia.

71. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

20 (8) December 1897

No. 807

In my dispatch of 11/23 March 1896,⁷⁰ I had the honour to bring to Your Excellency's notice the fact that, fearing that Japanese immigration might compete with the all-powerful white worker, the Australian Premiers at their conference in Sydney had declined to adhere to the trade agreement reached between Great Britain and Japan on 16 July 1894.

Since that time the Japanese Government has made repeated efforts, both in London and with the Australian Premiers, to arrive at an arrangement which might mitigate the rigorous prescriptions of the Aliens Act and allow Japanese trade to develop in these parts. To this end the Japanese consul has recently sent a memorandum to the Premiers, which I take the liberty of submitting to Your Excellency in summary form from the press.⁷¹

However, since these repeated efforts have not led to any understanding but instead awakened the malevolent vigilance of the Labor Party (which has an absolute majority in the parliaments), it appears that the Japanese Government has resolved to secure its own foothold in the Pacific. It has commenced talks with a syndicate of small investors, who bought a group of Pacific islands from some native chieftains at the time when sugar-cane growing still promised great profits, with a view to re-selling them. These islands, the main one being 'Torres', are said to possess an excellent harbour in the north of the New Hebrides, at 14 degrees south and three or four days' sailing from Sydney.⁷²

Talks have begun in the greatest secrecy. We may suppose that they will soon culminate in a formal acquisition, which will probably be concluded in the name of the subsidised company Nippon Yusen Kaisha. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-779, ff 299–300. In French. Previously unpublished.

⁷⁰ This dispatch has not been located.

⁷¹ The Japanese consul at the time was Tsunejiro Nakagawa. The summary of the memorandum is not reproduced here.

⁷² Ungern-Sternberg is referring to the main island, now called Hiw, in Vanuatu, then known as the Torres Islands, and the port of Yögevigemëne. The islands had lost much of their population to 'blackbirding'. Hence the desire of the Japanese to acquire them.

72. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
29 (17) December 1897
No. 817

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that a few days ago the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Reid, received a cable from Vladivostok signed Zovoroff,⁷³ enquiring at what price 750 tons of frozen meat could be delivered to Vladivostok.

The cable was evidently the work of some private agent and had no official standing. It may have been simply a hoax. Nevertheless, it has given rise to an outcry throughout Australia. The press has seized upon it to declare in no uncertain terms that Australia must not send supplies to Russian forces in the Far East.

Yesterday Mr Reid, the Premier, interrupted his holiday at Mount Kosciuszko to put an end to the excitement. In an interview on this subject with the owner of the *Sydney Morning Herald* he has just stated that he was very glad to receive the cable in question, that he hopes that it was official in origin, and that Australians should consider themselves fortunate in finding a market for their products in a friendly country such as Russia. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-779, ff 51-52. In French.

73 Zovoroff: as given, possibly a corruption of Suvoroff. If so, it is probable that the reference is to Mikhail Ivanovich Suvoroff [Suvorov], well known in Vladivostok as a merchant, developer and philanthropist.

73. Ungern-Sternberg to the Department of Trade and Manufacturing

Melbourne,
No date [early 1898]

Annex to No. 885

Copy of No. 876

I have the honour to report that I have collected information concerning Russian vessels which have visited Australian ports in the course of 1897. To this end I contacted separately the customs agencies in each of the colonies within my Melbourne jurisdiction, and our Honorary Consul in Sydney,⁷⁴ which, however, does not fall within my jurisdiction. On the basis of the information thus obtained, I have compiled the table below. Unfortunately I am unable to add details concerning the ships mentioned in it, because I did not obtain most of the information from the captains, and that published in the well-known Lloyd's Register is still very meagre with regard to our ships.

The number of Russian ships in Australian waters has risen, as follows:

	1895	1896	1897
Victoria	0	0	2
S. Australia	1	2	4
NSW	0	0	4
W. Australia	0	0	2
New Zealand	0	0	1
Tasmania	0	1	0
Queensland	0	0	0
Total	1	4 ¹	13

¹ The total '4' is as given. This should clearly read '3'.

In January this year the *Yarkand* arrived, and the steamers *Varunga* and *Cuthana* are expected.

[...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-779, f. 63. Copy. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

⁷⁴ i.e. Edmund Paul.

74. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
21 (9) February 1898
No. 886

[...] I seek Your Excellency's permission to report that I am leaving Melbourne for a brief sea voyage.

During my absence, which will last only two weeks, my secretary will be working under the guidance and supervision of my French colleague.⁷⁵

I am obliged to take this voyage to treat a kidney infection, an ailment which frequently afflicts Europeans living in these latitudes. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-779, f. 60. In French.

75. Ungern Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
1 March (17 February) 1898
No. 896

[...] I have the honour to bring to Your Excellency's attention that the Australian Premiers, in conference in Melbourne, have just been notified of a grand plan for a submarine cable linking Australia to the mother country by way of the Cape of Good Hope. It will be 13,000 leagues long and will cost up to £3,000,000.

At present, communication by telegraph relies on a single line which runs for 19,000 leagues, crossing the whole Australian continent before reaching from Cape Darwin to Java, Singapore and Madras. It belongs to two major companies, which are in effect merged in one: the Eastern Telegraph Co. Ltd and the Eastern Extension Australia and China Telegraph Co. Ltd. A treaty with the colonies assures these companies an

75 The French consul general in Melbourne at the time was Léon Adolphe Dejardin.

annual subsidy of £32,000 until the end of 1899, and at the same time guarantees a gross income of £227,000, plus £10,000 for New Zealand, although the rapid progress of telegraphic communication is making this guarantee superfluous.

However, the line functions very badly, both because of frequent submarine volcanic eruptions between Port Darwin and Java, and because of the difficulties of monitoring it in the Australian interior, which is desert. A week does not go by without communication breaking down, to the great detriment of the world of business.

In view of the general dissatisfaction occasioned by this state of affairs, the companies declare that they are prepared to lay the large submarine cable at their own expense, if in return the agreement now in effect is prolonged for a further twenty years.

We may say with certainty that the Australians will willingly subscribe to this arrangement, but it appears difficult to obtain the same contribution – which is essential – from the colonies, and from the Cape Colony and Natal, where the number of transactions is more restricted.

At present the men of the Cape are seeking some less burdensome scheme. It seems that they have conceived the idea of allocating to the cable, as a profitable investment, the million pounds which they had offered with such a flourish to the mother country, to mark the Queen's jubilee, for the construction of a cruiser to be called the *Afrikander*. As the consent of the British Government to this substitution is hardly in doubt, the million pounds not yet having been spent, we should perhaps consider the venture of the cable financially assured. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-779, ff 70–71. In French. Previously unpublished.

76. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
14 (2) March 1898
No. 913

[...] I have the honour to report that State Councillor Reutovsky, entrusted at the highest level with the study of the gold-mining industry,⁷⁶ has arrived in Melbourne.

Yesterday Mr Reutovsky set out for Ballarat and Bendigo. From there he intends to proceed to Queensland and Western Australia. He specialises strictly in mining machinery.

The Melbourne Consulate has furnished Mr Reutovsky with letters of recommendation (over 30), from both government bodies and private individuals. Furthermore, I have introduced him personally to the local leading figures in the field of gold extraction. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-779, f. 99. In Russian.

76 Viacheslav Stepanovich Reutovsky: a special commissioner of the Tomsk Mining Board. In 1897, he was sent to South Africa and Australia to study new methods of geological surveying. He was in Australia from March to May 1898, and visited the goldfields of Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

77. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
14 (2) March 1898
No. 914

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that the Governor of Victoria is travelling to England for six months' leave. Lord and Lady Brassey have chosen the Colombo-Suez route. They will halt in Western Australia to stay for a week at their fine property, 'Goblup Estate', which Lord Brassey has recently made over to his spouse.⁷⁷

It is widely believed that this departure is final, and that Lord Brassey does not intend to return. However, there is nothing to support this assumption. On the contrary, Lord Brassey gives every appearance of setting much store by his active life in Melbourne and his daily representative duties. His previous popularity, however, has not proved enduring. While the Australian people are unanimous in recognising the sterling qualities of Lady Brassey, and appreciating her courtesy and good grace, they forget the merits of their Governor, for quite trifling reasons.

It must be said that in general, in the press and among the different classes of society, a critical spirit with regard to the Governors has become quite widespread in Australia, and the public perception of the Queen's representatives has changed since the premiers returned from London: the memory of their excessive prominence at the jubilee celebrations appears to have inculcated in them some airs of independence,⁷⁸ hitherto unknown in the Governors' residences.

As a time may well be approaching when it will be extremely difficult to recruit men of good will among the British aristocracy to take up remote and thankless postings in Australia, we should perhaps hope that the Colonial Office in London will bend every effort to ensure that it does not prematurely lose a Governor like Lord Brassey. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-779, ff 100–101. In French.

77 Goblup Estate: situated near Broomehill, north of Albany, WA. Sybil de Vere Capell Brassey was Lord Brassey's second wife.

78 Jubilee celebrations: see Documents 61 and 67.

78. Ungern-Sternberg to Staal, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
24 (12) March 1898
No. 930

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that the delegates selected by the various colonies to draft a constitution for the future Australian Federation have just completed their work.⁷⁹

It is now up to the voting public in each colony to declare their view. The voters, who in South Australia include women, will have to vote 'yes' or 'no', for or against the federation of their colony. It seems that the approval of three colonies out of seven is assured: Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. In Western Australia and New South Wales, opposition is still quite strong. Queensland and New Zealand have flatly refused to participate. It is thought that the first three will unite in any case, and then permit the others to join.

As soon as the result of the ballot is known, I shall take the liberty of sending Your Excellency a detailed report on the delegates' work. However, the product more closely resembles an outline or a framework than an organic draft law. It is extremely radical in its fundamental principles, and at the same time abounds in details of secondary importance at the expense of those of primary importance. Tariffs, public debt, railways and even the choice of the federal capital are all left to the future federal parliament. 'We must trust the future parliament': such was the watchword which led the delegates to brush aside difficult debates and subscribe to the vaguely worded preliminary accord. After the ballot, the said federal constitution will be considered by the parliament of the United Kingdom, then submitted to Her Majesty the Queen for approval. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-779, ff 113–114. In French.

79 The third session of the National Australasian Constitutional Convention concluded its work in March 1898. It produced a draft constitution for the future federation of Australian colonies. In the referenda held in June 1898, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania voted for federation, but in New South Wales the proposal did not receive sufficient support. A further series of talks was needed before the supporters of federation finally obtained a majority in a second referendum in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland in 1899.

79. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
26 (14) March 1898
No. 933

[...] On 25 December a brawl occurred at Port Adelaide, South Australia, between some sailors from the British ship *Natal Queen*.⁸⁰ Among them was a Finn named Johann Andersen, a Russian national, but it transpires that he took no part in the brawl. The British sailor Lee was killed by an unfortunate blow from one Josef Pedro. In court, Pedro admitted his guilt, but stated that he had attacked Lee because the latter had verbally abused Andersen. Not only Pedro was found guilty, but also Andersen. Both were sentenced to ten years' hard labour. I learned of the case only by chance from a brief press report, which I attach.⁸¹ In order to inform the office of the Finnish Governor-General, I contacted the Chief Secretary of South Australia and sought information from him about Andersen's character.⁸² On receiving a thoroughly unsatisfactory note, a copy of which I attach,⁸³ I renewed my request, appending a copy of my credentials, to be provided with the details I sought. The Chief Secretary then sent me a press cutting with a report of the court proceedings. From that report I came to the conclusion that Andersen was probably in no way culpable and that a terrible and incomprehensible misunderstanding had occurred. Since British law allows no appeal against a decision of the Assize Court, and annulment is possible only if new evidence is brought, and it is therefore impossible to reopen the case, I felt it my bounden duty to approach the Governor of South Australia and seek a pardon for Andersen, formulating my application as an appeal against the sentence. In view of the difficulty of English legal language and its special judicial references, I asked W. E. Johnson,⁸⁴ a local specialist in criminal law, to draft the application for

80 The barque *Natal Queen*, 1,230 tons, commanded by Captain James Davies, reached Port Adelaide from Hobart on 20 December 1897 with a cargo of saw timber. Johann Andersen, John Lee, Frederick Johansen, Patrick Kilmartin, John Anderson and Josef Pedro, a Portuguese sailor, were involved in a fight. For the court proceedings, see 'Supreme Court: Criminal Proceedings', *Adelaide Advertiser*, 24 February 1898, p. 3.

81 The press cutting is not present with the dispatch.

82 The Chief Secretary of South Australia in 1896–99 was James Vincent O'Loughlin.

83 The attachment is not reproduced here.

84 No further information has been found concerning W. E. Johnson.

me. When I receive the result, which will not be for over a month on account of the great distances in Australia, I will not fail to communicate it. The costs are insignificant, and I will put them down as unforeseen expenses, according to the Annex to Article 37, Paragraph 108 of the Consular Regulations. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-890, ff 14–15. In Russian.

80. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
26 (14) March 1898
No. 934

[...] Further to my earlier dispatch of today (No. 933)⁸⁵ and in view of Paragraph 2 of the Consular Regulations, which states that the Embassy's permission must be sought for any action not foreseen in the Regulations, I beg to request approval for the steps previously reported which, on account of the urgency and the great distance to Australia, I felt it my duty to take to secure the release of the Russian national Johann Andersen from hard labour in South Australia.⁸⁶ [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-890, f. 16. In Russian.

85 See Document 79.

86 In May 1898, the Russian Embassy in London responded to Ungern-Sternberg's request and granted him freedom of action in the Andersen case.

81. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London

Melbourne,
20 (8) April 1898
No. 968

[...] Further to my dispatches of 16/28 March (Nos 933 and 934),⁸⁷ I have the honour to report that the Governor of South Australia, guided by the opinion of the ministry responsible, has not seen fit to exercise his authority and release Andersen from hard labour. The reports forwarded to me by Governor Buxton have not persuaded me of Andersen's guilt; on the contrary, I have come to the unhappy view that an innocent Russian national is suffering in these distant parts.

In submitting the above for the consideration of the Imperial Embassy, I have the honour to attach the following:⁸⁸

- (1) My appeal of 29 March for Andersen's release (a copy);
- (2) The reply from the Governor's secretary;
- (3) The Premier's report on the case;
- (4) The Crown Prosecutor's report.⁸⁹

[...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-890, f. 24. In Russian.

⁸⁷ See Documents 79 and 80.

⁸⁸ Attachments not reproduced here.

⁸⁹ Ungern-Sternberg's energetic campaign for a review of Andersen's case eventually bore fruit. In March 1900, after two years, the British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury informed Staal, the Russian Ambassador in London, that the case had been reviewed and an amnesty granted to Andersen. His release is reported in the *Chronicle*, 31 March 1900.

82. Ungern-Sternberg to the Imperial Embassy in London⁹⁰

28 (16) June 1898
No. 997

I have the honour to report that today I concluded an agreement with the London firm Dalgety & Co. I attach a copy of the agreement, which is intended to protect and assist our captains in Australian and Pacific waters in matters concerning the law courts, the police, and especially freight.

The draft agreement was drawn up by me in St Petersburg recently, and submitted via the Department of Trade and Manufacturing of the Foreign Ministry to the Finance Minister,⁹¹ who in a report to the Foreign Ministry, dated 9 June (No. 1,360), acknowledged that the implementation of the plan was desirable. [...]

1 attachment

Copy

In London on 16/28 June 1898 the following agreement was concluded between the Imperial Russian Consul in Melbourne, Baron R. Ungern-Sternberg, acting in his capacity of Consul, and Mr David Robert Kemp, who, as Managing Director,⁹² represents Dalgety & Co. Ltd, of 52 Lombard Street, London.

- (1) Dalgety & Co. Ltd undertakes to act as agent for Russian and Finnish merchant vessels in all Australasian ports where it possesses or will possess a bureau and agency. The company will have the right to the title 'Russian Shipping Agency for Australasia'.
- (2) Recourse to the agency will be optional. The masters of Russian and Finnish merchant vessels will have the right, but no obligation, to resort, *ipso facto* and as clients, to the bureaux and agencies of Dalgety & Co. Ltd for all matters which a ship's master would usually refer to the company to which he is attached.

⁹⁰ This dispatch was written while Ungern-Sternberg was in London, where he was on leave. He had left Melbourne in April 1898. His dispatch is in Russian. The attachment, the text of the agreement, is in French.

⁹¹ The Russian Finance Minister in June 1898 was Sergei Witte.

⁹² David Robert Kemp was Manager and Colonial Superintendent of Dalgety & Co.

- (3) The services of the agency will be free of charge, exception being made, naturally, for the commission which the bureaux and agencies may charge in each particular case in which their assistance is sought, in conformity with their particular terms and on the same terms as their regular clients.
- (4) Disputes and differences which may arise, despite all expectations, will in each individual case be settled by an exchange of opinions between the Russian Consul in Melbourne and the Director or Manager of Dalgety & Co. Ltd in Melbourne.
- (5) The present agreement shall take effect as from today. The contracting parties shall take care to ensure that it receives, without delay, all the publicity deemed necessary by those whose interests it is intended to serve.
- (6) The present agreement may be revoked by either party. In case of termination, its effect shall cease twelve months after the relevant notification has been served.

[signed: Baron R. Ungern-Sternberg, Russian Consul; D. R. Kemp, for Dalgety & Co. Ltd.]

Note: Dalgety & Co. is a joint-stock company with capital of four million pounds and branches in the following Australian and Pacific ports: Geelong, Sydney, Newcastle, Adelaide, Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Perth, Fremantle, Albany, Christchurch, Dunedin and Napier.⁹³

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-779, ff 192–194. Introductory paragraphs in Russian. Attachment (a copy) in French. Previously unpublished.

93 This note, in French, is appended at the foot of the original document. On Dalgety & Co., see also Document 13.



Nikolai Passek

After the departure of Ungern-Sternberg, Nikolai Gavrilovich Matiunin was appointed to the Melbourne consulate, but owing to ill health he was unable to take up the position. In July 1899, without having reached Australia, he was relieved of his duties. On 29 August (OS) 1899, Nikolai Pompeyevich Passek was appointed Russian consul.¹ He left St Petersburg in February 1900 for Odessa, and from there sailed for Suez, and thence on the French steamer *Australien* to Melbourne, where he arrived at the very end of March, after a short stay in Adelaide. When the Australian press announced his arrival, a brief profile appeared: ‘Although he has never previously visited Australia Mr Passek is acquainted with our system of Government and politics. The Consul is a typical Russian and speaks several languages.’²

Nikolai Passek was born on 15 November (OS) 1850 into a landowning family in Kharkov. Having received his basic education at home, he was sent by his parents to King’s College in London, to improve his English. He then received his higher education at Moscow University, from which he graduated in 1874. From there, he went to work in the auditing office in Kharkov. He joined the Foreign Ministry in January 1876 and was attached to its Asian desk, but soon left to work in private enterprise. At the age of nearly fifty, he rejoined the Foreign Ministry and in 1899 received his first diplomatic posting, as consul in Melbourne.³

1 AVPRI: 159-464-2577, ff 19–20.

2 *The Advertiser*, 27 March 1900, p. 5.

3 AVPRI: 159-464-2577, ff 15–19.

Passek was married to Yelizaveta Petrovna Kuznetsova, the daughter of Petr Kuznetsov, a well-known Siberian gold-mine owner and patron of the arts, a merchant of the First Guild. Passek's father-in-law had paid for the artistic education of his fellow Siberian Vasily Surikov in the Academy of the Arts. The Passeks knew Surikov well and maintained friendly relations with him and his family. In 1887, they returned together from Krasnoyarsk to Moscow. After the journey, in a letter written on 28 October 1887, Surikov wrote, 'The journey went well. Passek and I parted in Nizhny Novgorod. He is a fine and very jolly fellow. On the journey (on the steamer) we would take tea together, provided in turn by him and his wife, then by my family and me.'⁴ On board the steamer, on the Volga, Surikov would paint a watercolour study showing a man sitting at a dining table waiting for his tea. The painting bears the title *In the Dining Room on a Volga Steamer*, and the seated man is Nikolai Passek. It is now held in a collection belonging to Surikov's great-grandsons, the film directors Nikita Mikhalkov and Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky.⁵

Passek proved a very energetic and enterprising diplomat. He attempted, for example, to urge Russian officials and entrepreneurs to take more interest in developing trade between Russia and Australia, by bombarding with letters not only the relevant government departments but his own relative, a petroleum engineer from Baku, encouraging him to participate in establishing a trade in petroleum products with Australia.⁶ During Passek's consulship, the Australian Commonwealth was proclaimed on 1 January 1901. Passek took part in Sydney as the representative of Russia. Noticing what he regarded as a disrespectful attitude to the consuls accredited in Melbourne, he speedily arranged for them to make a demonstrative departure from Sydney.⁷ In many ways such actions were due to his irrepressible nature. Later, Passek's colleague in Persia, where he was transferred after his service in Australia, would say of him: 'He knew no restraint and brooked no objections; he was hot-tempered and abrupt ... He would get carried away with work and often wrote from morning

4 Quoted in N. P. Konchalovskaia, *Dar bestsenyi*, Moscow, Detskaia literatura, 1964, p. 177.

5 Nikita Mikhalkov: actor, film director, head of the Russian Union of Cinematographers, best known for his films *Oblomov* (1980) and *Burnt by the Sun* (1994). Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky: brother of Nikita; film director, known for *A Nest of Gentlefolk* and *Uncle Vania*, among other films.

6 RGIA: 23-25-88, ff 1-2.

7 AVPRI: 184-520-1004, f. 50.

to night for weeks on end ... He was a splendid orator, quite at home at receptions and official dinners, when his duty gave him an opportunity to speak.⁸

In two years spent working in Australia, Passek wrote five long articles, which were published in the *Collected Consular Dispatches* in 1901 and 1902. Of these, the most interesting is 'A History of Australian Self-Rule'.⁹ In the view of Elena Govor, the specialist in Russian–Australian connections, that article 'may justly be called the first Russian study of the development of the political system of the Australian colonies and the establishment of federation'.¹⁰

Apparently Passek's family broke up in Australia; his wife Yelizaveta returned to Krasnoyarsk, and he set off for Persia, having been appointed consul general in Bushehr. There he worked until 1912, his principal task being to counter British efforts to neutralise Russian influence in southern Persia. He succeeded in effectively having a visit to Bushehr by Lord Curzon, the British Viceroy of India, called off. One of his important achievements in Persia was the map that he compiled, showing all the country's roads and railways, stations, post offices, telegraph and marine cables, and the population of its cities and towns. For that he was granted an award by the Shah and made a member of the Persian Academy. In 1912, he was sent to Montreal as consul general. In the summer of 1913, he was due to be transferred to Barcelona, but he was not to reach Spain. He died in Montreal on 20 February 1914.¹¹ In 2012, the Montreal journalist Eugene Sokoloff found his grave in Mount Royal cemetery.¹²

8 S. V. Chirkin, *Dvadsat' let sluzhby na Vostoke. Zapiski tsarskogo diplomata*, Moscow, Russkii put', 2006, p. 93.

9 N. P. Passek, 'Istoricheskii ocherk avstraliiskogo samoupravleniia', *Sbornik konsul'skikh donesenii*, 1901, 3.

10 E. V. Govor, 'Doneseniia russkikh konsulov v Avstralii kak istoricheskii istochnik', *Programma XVI nauchnoi konferentsii po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii*, Moscow, IVAN, 1985, p. 24.

11 *Toronto World*, 23 February 1914, p. 2.

12 E. S. Sokolov, 'Obretennaia stranitsa russkoi istorii Monrealia', *Ostrov Monreal*, No. 15, 2012, pp. 6–8.

83. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
13 April (31 March) 1900
No. 8

[...] I have the honour to attach herewith for the Imperial Embassy the draft of the federal constitution of the Australian Colonies in the form drafted by a meeting of premiers of the colonies and adopted by the federal Australian congress of representatives on 16 March 1898.

As the Imperial Embassy is aware, this draft is now under consideration by the British Parliament.¹³ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-984, f. 120. In Russian.

13 In March 1898, the third session of the National Australasian Constitutional Convention, which Passek calls the 'federal Australian congress of representatives', completed its work in Melbourne. (See Document 78.) On 16 March 1898, the conference completed the drafting of the constitution of the future Commonwealth of Australia. From 29 January to 2 February 1899, a conference of premiers of the Australian Colonies was held in Melbourne, and final amendments were made to the draft. In 1899, supporters of federation won a majority in a referendum in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland. At the end of December 1899, a delegation from the Australian Colonies set out for London to discuss the draft federal constitution in the British corridors of power (see Document 78). In July 1900, after talks with the British Government in London, the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900* was passed in the British Parliament and was given royal assent by Queen Victoria. Western Australia agreed to join the Commonwealth on special conditions. The Commonwealth of Australia was officially proclaimed a dominion of the British Empire on 1 January 1901.

84. Passek to N. I. Bobrikov, Governor-General of the Grand Duchy of Finland¹⁴

Melbourne,
28 (15) September 1900
No. 75

[...] While travelling through the Australian Colonies which fall within my purview, I visited Sydney, where one Mr Paul, a British subject,¹⁵ acts as Imperial Russian Consul. Mr Paul passed to me a letter which he had received in April of this year, written in Finnish and sent to him by Finnish immigrants living in the Colony of Queensland.

Not knowing what he should do or how he might be of assistance to the petitioners, he decided to let the matter rest until my arrival.

On receiving the letter, I engaged a sworn translator and asked him to make a literal translation of it. I am forwarding the original to Your Excellency, and keeping a copy, the English translation, in the Consular files.¹⁶

As you will see from the letter, there are at present up to 125 Finnish settlers in Queensland, and all were apparently taken in by the promises of some quasi-governmental agents operating in Finland in the period 1897–1898. From the letter it is clear that these agents acted with great deliberation, inviting mostly working people with large families, thus ensuring that any return to their homeland would be more difficult, if not completely impossible.

Wishing to find out and clarify the facts of the case, I made semi-official enquiries to establish the names of the agents who had visited Finland and so successfully recruited over one hundred Russian subjects, but could find no information, as I was told that they were officially unknown.

14 Nikolai Ivanovich Bobrikov: a general of infantry, later statesman. In 1898–1904, Governor-General of the Grand Duchy of Finland, where he pursued a policy of coercive Russification. The translation is made from the author's copy of an official letter to the Governor-General of Finland. Passek sent his copy to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London.

15 Edmund Paul, honorary Russian consul in Sydney.

16 The letter is not reproduced here.

A few days ago, however, chance provided an opportunity to learn more – though not everything – about this case: a certain Finnish baron, Carl Ferdinand Alfthan,¹⁷ the holder of a Russian–Finnish passport issued in Helsingfors¹⁸ (and now expired), visited me and asked me to help him return home. In conversation it emerged that he was travelling as an inquisitive tourist but he had apparently chanced to visit Brisbane, where he had met some Finns and heard them complain of their hopeless situation. He also told me that he was without funds because he had had to take pity on two or three families and give them money for the fare home. He said that the emigrants complained to him of some Finnish anarchist (whose name he did not tell me) who had, it seems, enticed them into their situation, advising them insistently to avoid military service by settling in Australia, where he promised them mountains of gold. They later realised how they had been deceived and how their thoughtlessness and gullibility had brought them to this plight.

The Baron, a young man of educated appearance, thin, with a little moustache and auburn hair, made a favourable impression upon me. He speaks neither Russian nor French, so we conversed in English, which he knows well enough to make himself understood. Besides his passport he showed me a steamship ticket to the Cape of Good Hope, saying that he lacked the money for the fare to London, which he wishes to reach in order to take a Finnish steamer to Finland. I paid the balance of his fare to London and added some money for expenses en route, and at present he is on his way to England.

I am communicating this to Your Excellency as I assume that the information, meagre though it may be, will nonetheless provide a basis for the investigation of campaigns in Finland to canvas emigration, apparently conducted by agents with a political agenda.

If special funds could be found for the return of such settlers, in my view that would be the best outcome for dozens of families of Russian nationals, who would upon their return serve as valuable examples of the dangers of leaving one's homeland, the groundlessness of the propaganda and its false promises. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1004, ff 8–9. Author's copy. In Russian.

17 Alfthan: Baron Carl Ferdinand Alfthan, a Finnish nobleman, the son of the former Russian governor of the provinces of Uleaborgs and Nylands, Lieutenant-General Georg von Alfthan.

18 Helsingfors: renamed Helsinki when Finland gained independence in 1917.

85. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
11 January 1901 (29 December 1900)
No. 138

[...] I have the honour to forward with this a copy of my correspondence with St Petersburg concerning the Orthodox Church in Melbourne, with other various attachments related to the ceremonial founding of the first Orthodox Church in Melbourne. [...]

Letter to V. K. Sabler,¹⁹ 6 June 1900 [OS]

Dear Mr Sabler,

Before departing for Australia I requested that Your Excellency assist the Orthodox Christian community in Melbourne in the colony of Victoria, both in the matter of appointing an Orthodox priest, and in that of funds for his maintenance, as well as, if possible, establishing at least a small chapel in which the faithful could meet and worship. At that time I had no precise information on the then state of these matters; I knew only that (1) in Melbourne there was a certain Father Dorotheios, who was held in little esteem by the local Orthodox community, (2) that the local Orthodox community had applied to the Patriarch of Jerusalem to have another priest sent, and (3) that the Patriarch's requirement of a guarantee of maintenance for the priest could not be met.²⁰ The ministry did not know how matters really stood, because for the past two years when there were no Russian imperial consuls in Melbourne the duties of consul were discharged by the French Consul General in Melbourne, who did not feel himself entitled to deal with such matters.²¹

In view of this uncertainty, Your Excellency decided to leave the question unresolved, while at the same time instructing me to collect all the information in order to clarify the real situation.

19 Vladimir Karlovich Sabler: Russian statesman, in 1900 deputy to the Supreme Procurator of the Holy Synod. Supreme Procurator in 1911–1915.

20 See Documents 69 and 70.

21 From 1898 to 1900 (from Ungern-Sternberg's departure until Passek's arrival), L. A. Dejardin, the French consul general, acted as Russian consul in Melbourne.

Now that I am in possession of all the facts, I have the honour to bring them to Your Excellency's attention.

In the colony of Victoria the Orthodox number over 1,000, but they are mostly scattered over the broad area of the colony; in Melbourne itself, the capital of the colony, there are 140 families of Orthodox Greeks, 67 of Orthodox Syrians, and two Russian Orthodox families. All these people have been here for many years, and until 1894, that is, before the appointment of the first consul in Melbourne, A. D. Poutiata, they felt powerless, lamented the absence of Orthodox services, and felt much moral regret for their children, whom they could neither baptise nor bury according to the Orthodox rite.

Seeing their sorry situation, Sister Esther, the head of the Diocesan Deaconess's Home,²² took pity on them and, as they had learned to speak English, translated the Orthodox services and prayers into English, gathered them in the premises of that society, read them the gospels, psalms and prayers, and with the help of an Anglican High Church pastor, baptised their children according to the Orthodox rite. (See the attachment for details.)²³

In 1894, when our first consul, A. D. Poutiata, arrived, their situation changed. He eagerly set about establishing an Orthodox church in Melbourne, applied to have a priest sent, saw to the raising of capital to provide for the priest and establish the church, drafted the statutes for an Orthodox parish of Russian, Greek and Serbian faithful, corresponded with his relatives about orders for an iconostasis and having church utensils etc. sent out, but his strength failed. The consumption from which he had long suffered progressed rapidly,²⁴ and after only nine months here he died, and the burial service for the first Russian consul in Australia was conducted by a pastor of the Anglican High Church, according to the Orthodox rite, in the hall of the Deaconess's Home.

In 1895 a certain Father Dorotheios, of Greek extraction, arrived in Melbourne. How he came to be here, the consular files contain no information. However, the local Orthodox welcomed him with open

22 In full: the Diocesan Deaconess's Home and Mission to the Streets and Lanes, opened by the Anglican Church in 1885 as a charitable mission to aid Melbourne's slum-dwellers. It was headed by Sister Esther (Emma Caroline Silcock).

23 The attachment has not been traced.

24 This is incorrect. Poutiata died of kidney disease.

arms and furnished him with all that their resources would permit. But it soon emerged that, as he was only a deacon, he could not conduct mass. Moreover, he was by nature exceedingly arrogant and imperious and often surrendered to a liking for drink. All this meant that the local Orthodox began to cool towards him, then to avoid him, and finally collected funds and sent him to Sydney. There he stayed for a few months, then, according to some information I managed to obtain, he had to decamp for San Francisco. There all trace of him was lost.²⁵

All this took place in the years 1895–1898, when the post of consul here was held by Baron R. Ungern-Sternberg, a Lutheran, and as the question concerned primarily Orthodox Greeks, Serbs and Syrians, he did not feel he had to intervene at all.

From 1897 to March of this year, after the departure of Baron Ungern-Sternberg, our consular affairs were handled by the French Consul General, a Catholic, who had even less reason to deal with the matter. Owing to this combination of circumstances, the Foreign Ministry was left completely uninformed as to its progress throughout this period. In the meantime the local Orthodox, driven to the limit, have done all they could over the past two years to achieve the appointment of an Orthodox priest, to provide for him, establish a temporary church and acquire land for the construction of an Orthodox church in Melbourne. And I am happy to be able to report to Your Excellency that they have achieved much: the Patriarch of Jerusalem has heeded their pleas and sent them a priest,²⁶ the church utensils they need, books for their services and vestments for the clergy. Upon my arrival I met the priest, who had already been serving the needs of the local congregation for about two years, and for almost two years he has been holding services in a temporary Orthodox church, an abandoned church which belonged to the Church of Scotland. Such an agreeable surprise made up for my being far from my homeland and dispelled the fear that I would be deprived for many years of the solace and communion of Orthodoxy. At the same time it has made me so bold as to appeal to Your Excellency to seek the assistance of the Holy Synod in bringing the worthy endeavours of the local Orthodox Christians to a successful conclusion, so that that handful of Orthodox Christians

25 On the role of the Russian consulate in Melbourne in the departure of Father Dorotheios, see Document 70.

26 In 1899, Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem sent Father Athanasios Kandopoulos to Melbourne.

should be able to establish firmly and elevate Orthodoxy here, and make possible the raising of the Holy Orthodox Cross in this part of the world, so that it might shine as brightly and proudly as at home in Holy Russia.

I do not presume to indicate the extent or nature of the assistance of the Holy Synod, but at the same time, in order that the Synod should understand the needs, I have the honour to include herewith for Your Excellency some additional information.

I dare to hope that Your Excellency will not deny me, as the sole representative here of an Orthodox state, your kind assistance and good will, in which, as I recall the generous welcome and sincere readiness you extended when we met in person, I place my hopes, for it is my wish to instil in the hearts not only of the local Orthodox, but of all members of the British colony here, the awareness that Great Orthodox Russia, often called Holy, is the protector of Orthodoxy everywhere and always, irrespective of race and citizenship.

This letter was accompanied by the curriculum vitae and all information about the Melbourne Orthodox priest; the financial position of the church community, and an inventory of all its property, books and utensils; a photograph of the interior of the church and a plan of the future church which we propose to construct when land has been purchased for it.

N.B. I received no answer to my letter! Not having received the assistance we sought, we have had to rely on our own resources.

The lease of the premises has no fixed term and the rent is paid by the month, so the Committee (which I chair)²⁷ has reason to expect a refusal at any moment, because it is rumoured that the site, along with old churches and some other buildings, is being purchased by the Melbourne city council in order to build a college. This means that, in spite of all our endeavours, our work and our good will, we Orthodox may again one fine day find ourselves without a church.

In view of this, the Committee has opened a subscription fund among the local Orthodox believers in order specially to raise the capital to acquire a site for a future church and to build it. Plans (attached) have been drawn

27 The Committee of the Orthodox Community in Melbourne, chaired by Passek.

up by a local architect.²⁸ A little over £600 has been raised, and we now have a vacant lot at the corner of two fine streets in the centre of the city. The price, with sundry purchase fees, came to £607.7.8d. The work of construction according to the attached plan remains to be done. The architects estimate that in its present form it will cost £3,500, which is of concern to the Committee. This is why it has appealed for support.

The rumours concerning the purchase by the city of the site of our temporary church, and the structures, proved correct. On 1 November last year the council demanded that we vacate the premises. Thanks to my intervention, we were granted a reprieve of two months. Given our hopeless situation, we were obliged to seek premises for another temporary church. Fortunately we came to an agreement with the city and obtained a large government-school hall for temporary use, on Sundays only. For this we pay £2 a month. However, this has spurred us to proceed speedily to the building of a permanent church; another subscription fund was set up and about £600 collected, and we have decided to lay the foundations and make a start on its gradual construction. We chose our Emperor's name-day as Foundation Day, and that occurred on 6th/19th December at one o'clock.²⁹ The laying of the foundation stone was conducted with all possible ceremony, and all the local authorities were also invited.

I also attach a description of the ceremony.³⁰

On Foundation Day I sent two telegrams: one to Count Lamsdorff in Livadia;³¹ the other to our envoy in Athens. (See over.)

To Count Lamsdorff,
Livadia

'Today the foundation stone of the first Orthodox church in Australia was laid. I beg your Excellency to convey to His Majesty the absolute loyalty of the Russian subjects and the endless devotion of the Syrians and Greeks, and the warmest wishes of health to the Emperor. Recognition from the Supreme Head of the Church will succour the faithful.'³²

28 The plans, a whimsical mixture of Byzantine tradition and typical Anglican church architecture, are not reproduced here. They were drafted by the local architects George Charles Inskip and Walter Richmond Butler.

29 19 December. The Emperor from 1894 to 1917 was Nicholas II, whose name-day was marked on that date.

30 The description, from press material, is not reproduced here.

31 Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorff was imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1900 to 1906. The Russian Envoy in Greece in 1889–1901 was Mikhail Konstantinovich Onu.

32 The Emperor Nicholas II was considered secular head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

To the Russian Envoy,
Athens

‘Today the foundation stone of the first Orthodox church in Australia was laid. I beg Your Excellency to convey to Her Majesty Queen Olga the loyalty of her subjects and the deepest respect of the Russians and Syrians. The gracious attention of Her Orthodox Majesty will succour the faithful.’³³

To the first telegram I have had the pleasure of receiving the following reply: ‘On your telegram the Emperor has been so kind as to write, “I am glad to learn of this event. I thank you. Please convey this to all who took part in the ceremony.” Count Lamsdorff.’ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1004, ff 10, 14–17. Original and author’s copies. In Russian, with text of cables in French.

86. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
11 January 1901 (29 December 1900)
No. 140

[...] During the month of July the local newspapers published several reports and even, apparently, telegrams to the effect that the Russian Government has not only enquired of local trading companies the prices of various items of provisions needed to supply our forces now engaged in China,³⁴ but also gone so far as to place orders.

33 Queen Olga: consort of King George I of Greece, who reigned from 1863 to 1913. Olga Konstantinovna Romanova was the daughter of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich, a niece of Tsar Alexander II.

34 This refers to the participation of Russian troops in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1898–1901. The Boxer Rebellion was a popular anti-colonial uprising against the penetration and growing influence of the European great powers, the US and Japan. To crush it, joint intervention was organised by the armies and navies of Russia, Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, the US, Japan and Italy.

Being interested in the reports and telegrams, and knowing that the British Government is continuing to place large orders for pressed and salted meat, hard tack, rusks and even pressed fodder for horses (oats in green form), and that the German Government has procured up to 4,000 horses for its cavalry in China, I approached representatives of local specialised firms with the aim of discovering the source of these announcements. From talking to them I learned that the Russian Government has not directly approached anybody in Australia, but that agents of Australian companies in Vladivostok, Port Arthur and Weihaiwei have been making enquiries about prices on the pretext that representatives of our defence ministry have asked them.³⁵

Since I am very familiar with conditions in Siberia, which I have visited four times, and the absence in those parts of many essential goods, and appreciate all the difficulty of transport and supply of provisions in those parts, having in mind the scale of an order to provision our forces in China and wishing to reduce as far as possible the costs which our Government would incur should it place an order, I judged it my moral obligation to render all possible assistance. To this end I made the rounds of all the trading companies in Melbourne which make special deliveries, and visited Sydney for the same purpose. From Brisbane I obtained written communications from the companies there – all in order to gather and establish the current prices at first hand for various commodities. I spoke to a Japanese shipping company about freight charges and delivery times to Vladivostok or Port Arthur, and having gathered all this information sent a telegram (copy attached)³⁶ to the Second Department of our Ministry.³⁷ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1004, ff 22–23. In Russian.

35 Weihaiwei: a port city on the north coast of the Shandong Peninsula. In 1898, it was leased to Britain for the establishment of a naval base.

36 The attachment is not reproduced here.

37 Passek's efforts to arrange supplies from Australia for the Russian army in China came to nothing.

87. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
25 (12) January 1901
No. 157

I have the honour to report to the Embassy that on 23rd January, the day on which news came of the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria,³⁸ I thought it my immediate duty to send two official telegrams.

Telegram to Lord Hopetoun, Governor-General:

‘The death of Her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria calls upon me to express to Your Excellency, on behalf of the subjects of Russia resident in the Commonwealth of Australia and myself, the profound grief we feel at the great loss the British nation has sustained. I have further to offer our condolences for the personal loss of a Royal Friend whom Your Excellency has to mourn.’³⁹

Telegram to Sir John Madden, Lieutenant Governor for Victoria:

‘On behalf of the Russian residents in the State of Victoria and myself, I would beg leave to inform Your Excellency of the infinite distress we felt at the demise of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, which has plunged the British nation into such grief at so grave a loss.’

The same day I received a reply from Sydney:

‘I beg to acknowledge with grateful thanks receipt of your sympathetic telegram which I shall not fail to transmit to the members of the Royal family at the earliest opportunity. Hopetoun, Governor-General.’

In addition, I made arrangements for a solemn requiem mass to be held on the premises of the Orthodox Church on 24th January and placed an announcement in the local press. An account of the service is attached.⁴⁰
[...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1004, f. 29. In Russian, with text of cables in English.

38 Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901.

39 During his career, Lord Hopetown had been lord-in-waiting to the Queen and lord chamberlain.

40 The account is not reproduced here.

88. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
3 April (21 March) 1901
No. 242

[...] I have the honour to inform the Embassy hereby that, during the celebrations associated with the Proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia, which took place on 1st January this year, I was present at two of the official ceremonies together with our consul in New South Wales.⁴¹

Incidentally, I consider it necessary to state that the external décor for all these celebrations was splendid and cost a great deal of money, whereas the internal organisation left much to be desired: we consuls had to fight to obtain invitations. Owing to the confusion, five Consuls General and I, having arrived from Melbourne, attended only two of the ceremonies: the proclamation of Federation and the banquet, and only as private individuals at that. After that, finding such lack of attention by the local authorities towards foreign representatives unacceptable, we all returned to Melbourne together, where, a week later, we received up to twenty different official invitations, with the explanation that the unfortunate incident had occurred due to the inexperience of the Organising Committee's office staff in dealing with a new task.

An eloquent example of the absence of any kind of organisation in the issuing of invitations was the official invitation sent to the President of the Legislative Assembly in the Colony of Victoria,⁴² who was allocated a seat on the back bench at the ceremony for the Proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia, and at the banquet (for 1,200 persons) was placed next to the exit doors. Finding these places inappropriate to his post, he declined to attend.

41 Consul in New South Wales: i.e. Edmund Paul, honorary Russian consul in New South Wales.

42 It is difficult to be sure who Passek is referring to. In the Victorian political system, the President was the head of the Legislative Council, the upper chamber of Parliament. The lower chamber, the Legislative Assembly, was headed by the Speaker. The President of the Legislative Council of Victoria was Sir William Austin Zeal. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1897–1902 was Francis Conway Mason.

The opening of the first Federal Parliament by His Highness the Duke of Cornwall,⁴³ as well as all the celebrations associated with this event, will take place in Melbourne and not in Sydney. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1004, f. 50. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

89. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
16 (3) April 1901
No. 252

[...] A few days ago the principal permanent Agent of the state of New South Wales in London wrote to the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth Mr Barton,⁴⁴ to draw his attention to the island of Kerguelen (50° S., 68° E.) in the south of the Indian Ocean,⁴⁵ pointing out that it is an extremely important strategic point for the Commonwealth.

This island, he wrote, being half-way between Britain's African and Australian possessions, is a splendid observation point, not only for the trade routes which pass to its north, between it and St Paul,⁴⁶ but also in the event of naval operations.

The island of Kerguelen is 100 English miles long and 58 miles wide. It has several fine bays, convenient for anchorage, including the famous Christmas Harbour.⁴⁷ The climatic conditions are very severe and it is considered to be completely barren of vegetation, for which reason it was long called Desolation Island.

In 1893 it was claimed by France.

43 Duke of Cornwall: one of the titles of the eldest son of the British monarch and heir to the throne. After the death of Queen Victoria and the accession of her son Edward VII, the title passed to the new heir to the throne, the future George V. George and his consort Mary also held the titles Duke and Duchess of York.

44 The Agent General for New South Wales in London in 1900–1903 was Henry Copeland.

45 Kerguelen is 2,000 km north of Antarctica and approximately 4,800 km southwest of Australia. In area it is 6,675 sq. km.

46 St Paul is a volcanic outcrop of some 6 sq. km, situated in the Indian Ocean about 1,200 km north-northeast of Kerguelen. From 1892, it belonged to France.

47 Christmas Harbour: a bay on the northwest side of Kerguelen.

At present Mr Copeland (the New South Wales Agent in London) believes that the time is right for the Federal Government to pay due attention to this island, and advises it to take all steps to annex it to the Commonwealth.

The question was considered yesterday by the Cabinet, which fully shared Mr Copeland's view and instructed the Prime Minister to approach Mr Chamberlain about it.⁴⁸ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-988, f. 72. In Russian.

90. Passek to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
17 (4) June 1901
No. 282

[...] Owing to the pneumonia which I have just suffered, my dispatch about the Melbourne celebrations on the occasion of the opening of the first Federal Parliament has been very much delayed.⁴⁹

On 6th May, at 1.30 p.m. the steamer *Ophir*, with the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall on board,⁵⁰ approached a line of warships stationed at a set distance one from another on her route to her designated position. The ships were ordered according to their draught; first in line stood the *Gromoboi*, which was also the first to greet their Royal Highnesses with a salute.⁵¹ I was on board that ship.

48 Joseph Chamberlain: British Colonial Secretary at the time.

49 The first session of the Federal Parliament opened on 9 May 1901. The dates given by Passek are in New Style.

50 The Duke of Cornwall and York, the son of King Edward VII, and the Duchess arrived in Melbourne on the royal yacht *Ophir* as representatives of the British royal house for the opening of Federal Parliament.

51 The *Gromoboi*, a first-class cruiser of the Russian Navy, was specially ordered to Melbourne by Nicholas II. In its way, the visit was an act of international courtesy: this powerful vessel of the latest design, with German, US and Dutch warships, performed honorary escort duties for the Duke and Duchess in Australian waters. The *Gromoboi* reached Melbourne on 30 April 1901, under the command of Captain First Class Karl Petrovich Jessen.

When the *Ophir* dropped anchor, all admirals and captains of the foreign warships moored close to it and presented themselves to their Highnesses.

A ceremonial entry into Melbourne then took place, in which, at the request of the Duke, no one participated except for their Highnesses and their retinues.

Of the eleven-day celebrations, only three ceremonial events were of an official nature. The first was the official presentation to His Highness at the Governor-General's residence; 4,000 people were introduced to him as they arrived; no exceptions were made, nor was any order of rank observed. His Highness silently shook the hand of everyone presented to him.

The second was the ceremonial opening of Parliament, which took place in the building of the former Melbourne exhibition; 8,000 people were invited to the ceremony, and seating was allocated according to status. I cannot say that the consular corps were particularly honoured, but since I arrived with the captain of the cruiser, who possessed an invitation ticket in the section assigned for consuls, I requested better seats and we were immediately given armchairs in the front row. The United States admiral and his adjutant were sought out during the ceremony and given seats next to us. The German admiral and his adjutants, however, had to stand throughout the whole ceremony, while all the British naval officers occupied a separate section and were seated in the front rows, and the British admiral sat in His Highness's box. Who was to blame I do not know, but I do know that all the foreign naval representatives, including the commander of the cruiser *Gromoboi*, were indignant at such treatment of their comrade in arms.

The third occasion was the review of the local troops, which took place at the racecourse; 15,000 people were invited. There was no order whatsoever, and an unimaginable crush. The naval representatives were personally invited by the Duke to join him in his marquee.

The rest of the celebrations were of a partly semi-official, partly private nature, and the Duke and Duchess attended them only as guests of honour.

I did not raise the matter of rank or any agreement concerning our relative positions with the Captain,⁵² as I endeavoured to ensure a suitable place for him at all times, so that no misunderstandings could arise in this area, nor did they.

The one thing that I do regret is that the Imperial Embassy, when notifying me about the cruiser's arrival, did not inform me as to the particulars of the Captain's authorisation, or the nature and extent of his representative powers, for in his speeches at several of the semi-official luncheons the Captain spoke of himself – in very poor and incorrect English, incidentally – not as a representative of the State, but as a representative of the Sovereign Emperor, and I was not forewarned of this.

Furthermore, it was not entirely clear to me whether the ship was sent to attend the country's political celebrations, or if it was sent solely to greet the Duke. To the best of my knowledge, Australia petitioned all countries through the British Government to send naval vessels for the proclamation day of Australia's Federation or for the opening day of the first Federal Parliament. Moreover, as the Embassy is aware, by virtue of the political and administrative organisation of the country, the host of the festivities and the focus of the celebrations was the local government and not its guest of honour the Duke, which is why it seemed difficult for me to identify the purpose of the warships' arrival. Nonetheless, the Captain of the cruiser made it known at every opportunity that he was sent solely and exclusively to greet the Duke.

Our first visit to the Parliament, initiated by me, was accompanied by much unexpected ceremony. All the ministers of the Federation and the state, and the speakers of both Houses, assembled to meet us on the front steps of the Parliament building, clad in their quaint full-dress uniforms, and invited us to luncheon there, and the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Barton,⁵³ in his speech expressed Australia's deepest gratitude to our Sovereign Emperor for His gracious attention towards a young country. 'We all take pride,' he said, 'in this high honour bestowed upon us by

52 As Passek and Jessen were effectively appearing as representatives of Russia at the ceremonial opening of parliament, particular importance was attached to the question of precedence – that is, of who officially headed the small Russian delegation. Passek's instructions from the Foreign Ministry said nothing about it. The official purpose of the *Gromoboi's* visit was also unclear to him. Was it solely as an escort for the Duke and Duchess, in accordance with the Emperor's orders? Or were the vessel and its crew also to participate in the ceremonies as representatives of Russia? Passek provides more detail on the resulting misunderstandings in his dispatch.

53 The luncheon at which Edmund Barton spoke was on 1 May 1901.

mighty Russia, and will endeavour to hand down to our descendants our feelings of gratitude ...’ On the following day all the Ministers, together with the Governor-General’s adjutants and the Governors, paid a visit to the Captain of the cruiser and presented the wardroom with a huge photograph of Parliament House ... Endless official and semi-official invitations to luncheons and dinners followed, all accompanied by words of gratitude for the honour, but in reply the Captain found it necessary to announce every time that he had been sent to greet the Duke.

Frankly speaking, this frequent repetition of the purpose of his visit markedly cooled the enthusiasm of local representatives and they began to treat us Russian representatives with noticeably increased reserve and coolness. I, however, wanted to restore the former spirit, the former tone, and maintain it until the end of the *Gromoboi’s* visit. For this reason, in my capacity of Imperial Russian Consul, I sent printed invitations to a luncheon to all the Australian and Victorian Ministers, all the representatives of the administration and foreign navies, and of course to the whole crew of the cruiser and the Captain. Luncheon was fixed for 1.30 p.m.;⁵⁴ everyone arrived at the appointed time, with the exception of the Russian Captain and his officers. Apologising to the guests, I telephoned the ship in order to ascertain the reason for their absence, and received the reply that for some reason, at that precise time, the cruiser had to be towed from one mooring to another. Having receiving this reply, we were obliged to sit down to luncheon without the representatives of Russia! At 2.30 p.m. several of the officers appeared and at 3 o’clock the Captain arrived in civilian clothes, whereas all the other representatives were in full-dress uniforms. Since luncheon was coming to an end, I immediately arose when the Captain arrived and delivered a speech, in which I thanked all the local authorities for their unflinching readiness to accommodate my requests, for their generous and cordial reception, for the kindness and warmth with which they welcomed their Russian guests, and concluded by saying that I was deeply touched by the fact that they fully appreciated Our Sovereign Emperor’s gracious attitude towards their newborn nation and their young country. Immediately after me, the Captain rose and announced that, although he was very grateful for the welcome afforded him by the local government, he must, however, again declare that had the Duke and Duchess not been here, the *Gromoboi*

54 This luncheon was held on 18 May 1901.

would not have been in Australian waters, so he proposed a toast to the health of the Duke and Duchess ... There was an awkward silence and some slight, dismissive shrugs.

I, of course, have the honour of occupying a consular position for the first time, but I hope I may be permitted to state that I had assumed that the orders issued to the captain of a warship sent as a representative, whatever the reason, to a country where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a representative, should include both the objective of the mission and the programme of obligatory speeches, with which he should comply in full, in order to avoid lamentable incidents (!) and to be at one with the local representative.⁵⁵ [...]

Of course, none of the above led to either difficulties or misunderstandings between the Captain and me, but all our relations remained on a strictly official footing, which is less than desirable when in a foreign land!

The *Gromoboi* was due to sail from Sydney on 3rd/16th June.⁵⁶ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1004, ff 134–136. In Russian.

55 This incident, which arose because the Foreign Ministry's instructions to Passek were inaccurate and incomplete, later became the subject of an official investigation in the Ministry.

56 The *Gromoboi* left Melbourne for Sydney on 23 May and stayed in Sydney from 25 May to 20 June 1901.

VI

Mikhail Ustinov

Mikhail Mikhailovich Ustinov came from a large noble family, as did his first cousin once removed, the famous British actor Sir Peter Ustinov. The future Russian consul in Melbourne was born in Moscow in 1861. His father, an army officer whose military career was cut short by illness, had a long-lasting affair with a Frenchwoman named Marie-Louise Tetevund, who bore him a son, Mikhail, and a daughter, Lidia. When his beloved died, the father married Olga Prezhentsova, the daughter of a landowner from Tula, but he did not neglect his children born out of wedlock; he ensured that they were formally recognised as his, and he and his wife brought them up. In 1876, Mikhail was sent to a naval cadet school in St Petersburg, after which, in 1882, he joined the Baltic customs flotilla. In the mid-1880s, he married Maria Nikolayevna Bolotnikova, who gave him a daughter Maria and a son Platon. In 1890, he retired from the navy and was transferred to the Foreign Ministry,¹ and, in 1893, received his first posting abroad, as vice-consul in Hakodate. After that he served as consul in Nagasaki and Hong Kong, and in 1902 was appointed consul general in Melbourne, where he arrived in May 1903.²

1 'Ustinovy', *Sbornik materialov po istorii roda Stepanovykh XVIII–XXI vv.* mistep-ka.narod.ru/barin-5.htm (accessed 3 April 2018).

2 AVPRI: 184-20-1076, p. 89.

Ustinov's consulship in Australia coincided with the Russo–Japanese war, in which Britain allied itself with Japan, and Australia actively supported the mother country, at least until the defeat of the Russian fleet at Tsushima. This meant that Ustinov's main effort lay in actively countering anti-Russian sentiment in the Australian press and government circles. However, his time in Australia was to be a relatively brief episode in his service career. He returned to St Petersburg in 1906, and in June 1907 was appointed consul general in Lisbon. The following description, by a correspondent of the Russian newspaper *Novoe vremia* [New Time], relates to this period of his life: 'Our Consul General here, Mikhail Ustinov, is a still-youthful man of brilliant education. He speaks and writes English and French just as well as his native Russian. He understands Japanese and even some Chinese, having previously served in Japan and China.'³

From 1913, Ustinov was consul in Montreal, but the summit of career was his posting as Russian consul general in New York, which he received in 1916. He naturally refused to recognise the October revolution or the Soviet regime, but continued to perform his consular duties for almost twelve more years. The US Government financed the work of the Tsarist consuls until the USSR was granted recognition in 1933; they had to see to the affairs of many Russian refugees in America. In July 1929, Ustinov informed the State Department that he was leaving the US for Europe.⁴ He set out for France, where his grandson Adrian then lived. He died on 5 May 1942, in the Belgian town of Waterloo.

3 Quoted in *Novaya zhizn'* (Harbin), 16(29) December 1910, p. 2. (First published in *Novoe vremia*, No. 331, 1910, p. 2.)

4 See *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1933*, Vol. II. The British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East and Africa, Washington, 1949, p. 824.

91. Ustinov to A. Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador in London⁵

Melbourne,
10 December (27 November)⁶ 1904
No. 160

[...] As I have already had the honour to report in dispatch No. 45,⁷ the local press has constantly manifested extreme hostility toward Russia since the outbreak of the war.

The operations of our cruisers in interdicting military contraband, followed by the latest regrettable incident in the North Sea,⁸ have completely obscured any sense of proportion, while the criticisms in the newspapers, were that possible, have become even more venomous, and the foul language viler.

A comparison of the coverage of events as reported by telegraph with reports of the very same events in British and continental newspapers fully confirms the previously expressed opinion that those accounts are being deliberately edited and distorted according to whatever impression they wish to produce in the colonies at any given moment.

Subsequent receipt of more impartial accounts has not changed anything. It is difficult for newspapers which have overstepped the mark to completely repudiate their former judgements, and they apparently never feel the need to do so.

5 Alexander Konstantinovich Benckendorff: Russian Ambassador to London in the years 1902–1916.

6 Ustinov gives only the November date. Indirect evidence indicates that Old Style is meant.

7 Dispatch No. 45 has not been located. Ustinov is referring to the Russo–Japanese War, which began in February 1904. In accordance with the Anglo–Japanese treaty of 1902, Britain in effect supported Japan, and Australia also assumed a pro-Japanese stance, which was reflected in both the Australian press and in statements from political figures. However, with Japan's increasing military success, and especially after the defeat of the Russian fleet at Tsushima in May 1905, the mood of a substantial proportion of the public and of the ruling circles began to change. Traditional nineteenth-century Australian fears concerning the Russian presence in the Pacific were replaced by fear of Japan, whose growing power came to be seen as the main threat to Australian interests there.

8 This refers to the so-called Dogger Bank incident. On the night of 21 October 1904, ships of the Russian fleet en route from the Baltic to the Far East to relieve the siege of Port Arthur fired on British fishing trawlers off the Dogger Bank in the North Sea. Having received intelligence reports of Japanese plans to attack Russian vessels in the Skagerrak and Kattegat straits, in dense fog the fleet commander mistook the fishing boats for enemy vessels. One boat was sunk and five damaged; two British trawlermen were killed and six injured. The incident provoked a heated anti-Russian campaign in the British and colonial press.

One is convinced of this by the fact that the French consul in Melbourne has repeatedly attempted to place extracts from French and even British newspapers which provide more balanced coverage of events,⁹ as well as information on questions raised regarding international law, concerning which, incidentally, they have no clear conception here (it is not part of the university curriculum). Meanwhile the editors have almost always paid no attention to these communications or published only excerpts, on the last pages and in minute print.

The same practice may be observed in Sydney. There a newspaper called the *Courrier australien*, subsidised by the French Government, is published at the French consulate-general. It regularly prints less one-sided selections from European newspapers, and frequent masterful leading articles regarding Russia and the war, but the local press has never borrowed anything from it, although they frequently cite this newspaper about other subjects.

In the absence of news unfavourable to us from the theatre of war, the columns are, as usual, filled with reports of internal uprisings in Russia, about its hopeless situation and, at times, vile insinuations about certain members of the Imperial family. All manner of slander is being poured upon our army and navy – in a word, everything possible is being done in order to discredit Russia.

At present the favourite topic is the cooling of the Franco–Russian alliance, which gives *carte blanche* to British aggressiveness.¹⁰

As usual the Sydney *Bulletin* is quite well, even sympathetically, disposed towards us, but unfortunately, a lone voice is the voice of no one.¹¹

Even before the North Sea incident, the indecent bias of the press had reached such a pitch that Senator Higgs raised a question in the Senate about restraining it, but did not gain any sympathy.

9 The French consul in Melbourne in the years 1901 to 1908 was Paul Maistre.

10 France was Russia's ally in Europe, and during the Russo–Japanese War the French press and public opinion favoured Russia. On an official level, however, while sympathetic to its ally, France declared its neutrality, thus allowing the British press to speak of a weakening of the Franco–Russian alliance.

11 In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the *Bulletin* hewed to a nationalist Australian line. While sharing majority fears of the 'yellow peril', during the Russo–Japanese War it tended to favour the Russian side, seeing it as representing 'the white races'.

Mr Higgs requested that a proclamation be published,¹² inviting certain publications to refrain from printing dishonest, unfounded and biased articles, notices or caricatures clearly intended to provoke contempt in Australians for the great Russian nation.

The Government spokesman, Senator Sir Josiah Symon,¹³ replied that he assumed that Senator Higgs, always so protective of the dignity of the Senate and its valuable time, was probably not serious when he made his statement. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1162, ff 19–21. In Russian.

92. Ustinov to Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
23 (10) December 1904
No. 163

[...] Influenced by the extraordinary and disproportionate agitation gripping the whole of England regarding the incident in the North Sea,¹⁴ several of the local parliaments have decided to express their loyal feelings to the Imperial Government.

The initiative belongs to the New Zealand Parliament, which decided on 12/25th October to express, together with their deep sympathy for the victims, the hope that this tragic happening will prove to be only the consequence of a huge misunderstanding.

The original resolution was formulated somewhat differently; it expressed the conviction that ‘no-one would lament the regrettable incident more than the Tsar and Russia.’ But during the debate the existence of a certain distrust towards us became obvious, as well as a noticeable irritation, so it was deemed more expedient to omit the words cited above completely.

12 Higgs: Senator William Guy Higgs.

13 Sir Josiah Henry Symon was Attorney General in the years 1904–1905.

14 See Document 91.

The forbearance of the New Zealanders is to a considerable degree due to the prudent foresight of their agent in London,¹⁵ who, foreseeing upon the first report of the disaster that the newspapers would not fail to adopt an excessively alarmist course, telegraphed to the Prime Minister, Mr Seddon, that in his personal opinion, the incident, notwithstanding its seriousness, would be settled peacefully.

Three days later the Federal Government followed New Zealand's example, but without its tactful restraint in expressing its sentiments, it proclaimed profound indignation at a 'cruel and wanton attack' upon innocent fishermen by the Russian Navy, and the hope that peace would be preserved through Russia's honest and direct observance of its obligations.¹⁶

This resolution was passed in the House of Representatives with acclamation and without any objections. In the Senate, however, it initially provoked a fairly lengthy debate.

A few sensible men raised their voices against the illogicality and inappropriateness of the wording. It was pointed out that the harsh condemnation, inconsistent with the peaceful declarations desired, was based solely on false and biased reports in the jingoistic British press, which was clearly bent on stirring up hostility towards Russia. The bias of the local press was described as 'villainous', while the disrespect and sharp tone of the wording was wholly ascribed to the hostility provoked in Australians by a group of unscrupulous journalists.

Objecting to these veracious statements, a representative of the Government, Sir Josiah Symon, lost all sense of proportion to such an extent that he unashamedly called the event 'murder', adding that the Tsar's weak apology was an affront not only to him as an individual, but also as a British subject.

I am enclosing a printed account of the session,¹⁷ which clearly shows to what extent jingoistic tendencies have developed here.

15 New Zealand's Agent General in London at the time was William Pember Reeves.

16 The resolution on the Dogger Bank incident was passed in the House of Representatives on 28 October 1904, and a resolution on the same matter was passed in the New Zealand Parliament on 25 October.

17 Enclosure not reproduced here.

Finding it impossible to remain silent over this affair, I addressed a letter on 2nd November, to the Prime Minister of the Federation, Mr Reid, upon whose initiative the resolution was drawn up. I have the honour to present herewith to Your Excellency a copy of that letter,¹⁸ as well as a copy of the Prime Minister's acknowledgement of its receipt from 7th November.¹⁹

I assume that this letter served some purpose, since in a political speech Mr Reid made on 9th November at the Lord Mayor of Melbourne's annual dinner, he alluded only in passing and with much restraint to the unfortunate incident in the North Sea, while other speakers refrained from mentioning it at all.

All the colonies in the Federation, with the exception of South Australia and Victoria, apparently were satisfied with the actions of the Federal Parliament, since their parliaments did not make any independent comment. The two colonies mentioned, however, telegraphed London via their Governors separately: South Australia only communicated sympathy, and Victoria's cable was in the same spirit as the Federal resolution. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1155, ff 2-3. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

93. Ustinov to G. H. Reid, Prime Minister of Australia

(Annex No. 2 to Dispatch No. 163,
of 10/23 December 1904)
2 November (20 October) 1904
No. 151

[...]

Dear Prime Minister,

The records of the session of Federal Parliament in which the fatal Dogger Bank incident was discussed have just appeared in *Parliamentary Debates*.²⁰

18 See Document 93.

19 Acknowledgement not reproduced here.

20 See Document 91. *Parliamentary Debates*: in full, *Parliamentary Debates. Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia*, first published in 1902.

It is clear from these that Parliament, while expressing its very natural sympathy to the Government of her Britannic Majesty, saw fit to voice indignation at the 'outrage' committed by Russia and its Navy.

That resolution, adopted by the Government of a British dependency at the very moment when the cabinets in St Petersburg and London are seeking to achieve a peaceful and mutually honourable solution, cannot but produce a painful impression, the more so as that resolution is not founded on any official report, but solely on telegrams known to be edited, incomplete and tendentious.

In these circumstances, it seems regrettable that haste has been made to level such a categorical accusation, in terms which will give well-founded offence and are difficult to reconcile with the good relations which have until now always existed between the governments of the Russian Empire and Her Britannic Majesty. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1155, f. 4. Author's copy. In French.

94. Ustinov to Second Department of Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[St Petersburg]

4 June (22 May) 1907²¹

[...] I have the honour to set forth below a review of the work of the consulate entrusted to me for the three-year period commencing May 1903 up to 17th April 1906.

Here it is necessary to point out that as I have no documentary data to hand apart from lists of dues, the information I quote from memory may not be absolutely accurate.

CONSULAR DUES: For the aforementioned period of three years (the last two thirds of 1903, the whole of 1904 and of 1905, and the first third of 1906), the dues in total comprise the sum of 795 roubles,

21 Ustinov left Australia on 15/28 April 1906. This dispatch, in effect a report on his work in Melbourne, was prepared in St Petersburg and addressed to the Second Department of the Foreign Ministry. Dated 22 May (OS) 1907, it was recorded as received by the clerical administration of the Department on 30 May. The dispatch therefore bears no number, and the author cites statistical data from memory, sometimes incorrectly, and with errors in the arithmetic.

32 copecks (in 1903 – 20 roubles, 25 copecks; in 1904 – 390 roubles, 16 copecks; in 1905 – 259 roubles, 62 copecks; and in 1906 – 124 roubles, 74 copecks).²²

The total is made up of the following:

- (1) Dues of all kinds from merchant ships 681 r., 07 c.
- (2) The certification of various documents, signatures and registration of passports 114 r., 25 c.

MERCHANT SHIPPING: The ships coming into port were exclusively Finnish sailing vessels. The crews are mainly natives of Finland, supplemented only when necessary by foreigners. Russian sailors, however, are rarely found on them. The ships come primarily to load grain, which they transport, from year to year, to Great Britain or South Africa. Therefore, their arrival coincides with the cereal harvesting season (approximately from December to May). They do not come at other times. These vessels usually arrive carrying only ballast and, if they do sometimes bring a cargo, it is usually one they have happened to pick up, and not a full one.

During the three-year period under review, the port was visited in all by 20 vessels with a total tonnage of 30,012 register tons. Given the conditions and the small number of vessels, the work of the Consulate is not onerous and amounts to the following: (a) the registration of ship's documents for the 30 vessels mentioned,²³ (b) 145 alterations were made in the records of 16 vessels, (c) assistance was rendered in the capture of several dozen deserters,²⁴ (d) affording consular care to several sick sailors and returning them to their homeland, (e) examining, relieving and placing in hospital a mentally ill skipper, who was later transferred to a ship to be conveyed to his homeland, (f) four declarations were made in order to lodge an extensive sea captain's protest within the stipulated period, and in only one instance were the detailed documents of the protest presented to the local authorities examined and certified.²⁵

22 Ustinov's total is incorrect here. It should read 794 r., 77 c. However, the total by category is indeed 795.32 roubles.

23 Earlier in this paragraph, Ustinov mentions only 20 Finnish ships, not 30.

24 This refers to sailors who deserted Finnish merchant ships flying the Russian flag and were taken on as crew by British merchant vessels, where the pay was much higher.

25 Captain's protest: a statement by the master or shipowner, lodged with the appropriate legal authorities to guarantee the protection of the property rights and interests of the shipowner while at sea or in port.

Besides this, there were several occasions when the Consulate was obliged to look into some commonplace misunderstandings arising from time to time with local port authorities, or between ships' masters and sailors, as well as constantly having to render assistance in seeking accommodation and employment for the latter when they remained on shore in unfortunate circumstances etc.

NOTARIAL SECTION: Negligible. Over the three-year period, the following documents were certified: (a) 30 warrants, all without exception issued by foreigners to commissioning agents in Russia for acquisition rights to patents of inventions, (b) four foreign passports and one Russian one, (c) a marriage certificate and the registration of three children's birth and baptismal certificates for two Russian subjects and (d) one certificate was issued on the basis of article 3.4.

RUSSIAN SUBJECTS AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE CONSULATE: In spite of statistical data indicating that the population of native-born Russians in Australia numbers several thousand,²⁶ there is no Russian colony to be found anywhere. Russians in Australia are mainly Finns and Jews and belong to the working or artisan class. These are people who have left their homeland for good, having broken all ties with it and have either become naturalised or intend to do so. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that they have no need whatsoever of the Consulate and only very rarely do they apply to it.

In the consular register of Russian subjects over the three years, only four people entered their names, and only one of them was a technician with practical training, who had long lived abroad and had come with his family intending to open his own workshop, with very limited capital, but he left Melbourne within six months. The other three were unemployed and in needy circumstances.

As for upper and educated classes, during this same period only six people visited the Consulate. Of these, five were travelling for pleasure, including a wounded officer from Port Arthur and a confidential agent from the

26 According to Australian statistics, there were 3,358 Russian nationals in the country at the time of federation (1901).

War Office sent to purchase a steamship for naval purposes,²⁷ and one native of the Baltic provinces married to an Australian woman and residing in Australia as an expert in the wine-making business.

Therefore, the work of the Consulate with regard to local Russians is almost non-existent.

Over the period under consideration it consists of rendering assistance in finding work for a few people and making enquiries in connection with their personal affairs. The only person to cause the Consulate any significant trouble was the agent sent to purchase a steamer, who was prosecuted in the local courts on a charge of breach of contract.²⁸

TRADE: There are no Russian commercial or industrial enterprises here. Nor have there been any Russian merchants, either local or visiting. There were a few occasions when certain Australian firms made inquiries concerning regulations for the importation of foodstuffs into Vladivostok and about the state of the timber industry in Siberia. There were also several minor enquiries from Russia, none of which, as far as the Consulate is aware, led to any practical result.

INCIDENTAL: During the eighteen months of the war, the Consulate engaged in much unobtrusive work in surveillance over military contraband.²⁹ Having virtually no well-wishers among the local inhabitants and not a single real fellow-countryman, it was necessary to keep a constant close watch on the newspapers of all the colonies and draw conclusions by means of comparison.

ADMINISTRATION: The Consulate engages in correspondence with local authorities, receives and answers enquiries from various ministries, and so on. There were also six or seven instances of correspondence with regard to small legacies left by local inhabitants to their relatives in Russia. Correspondence with Governors and their offices has been insignificant.

27 The 'secret agent' sent to Australia early in 1905 was Captain (rtd) P. F. Varavva, who was instructed to purchase the steamship *Peregrine* from the Australian company Howard Smith & Co. for the Russian Ministry of War, for use in carrying military supplies to Port Arthur. When Port Arthur fell, there was no further need to purchase the *Peregrine*, and the transaction was not completed.

28 When Varavva declined to purchase the *Peregrine*, Howard Smith & Co. sued him and secured his arrest, demanding compensation for its losses. The Russian consulate in Melbourne played an active part in securing his release on bail and in arranging his defence in court. In the end, Varavva was acquitted.

29 Ustinov is referring to the work of the consulate in observing Australian trade with Japan and the supply of goods with 'military applications' during the war (e.g. horses for the Japanese army, or the steamer *Rockton* as a Japanese transport vessel).

General correspondence on all matters amounts on average to approximately six hundred items annually, taking into account all incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Summarising all the above, it must be acknowledged that the ordinary, i.e. purely consular, work of the Consulate in Melbourne is insignificant. As for political work, in view of the specific conditions and isolation from the rest of the world, there is none.

All that remains is to look upon the Consulate as an observation post in a remote and unusual land.

At present the Consulate could also prove to be useful in the gathering of intelligence and the compilation of responses to enquiries concerning any agrarian³⁰ and social questions which might arise,³¹ although Australian and New Zealand conditions are so different from ours that such information would probably be of only theoretical interest.

That apart, all the Great Powers and the majority of secondary ones have their own representatives there. [...]

AVPRI 155 (Second Department) -408-1355, ff 13–17. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

30 Prior to the period under review, the specialist State Councillor Kriukov, now appointed Director of the Department of Agriculture, was posted to Australia and New Zealand by the Ministry of Agriculture. (Ustinov's note.)

31 Ustinov refers in his footnote to Nikolai Abramovich Kriukov, an eminent agricultural scientist, economist and ally of Petr Stolypin, Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs in 1906–1911. His visit to Australia in 1902–1903 and his study of its agriculture led him to write his book *Australia. Agriculture in Australia and the General Development of the Country* (*Australiia. Sel'skoe khoziaistvo v Australii v sviazi s obshchim razvitiem strany*, Moscow, 1906). Kriukov made some use of his experience of the development of agriculture in Australia and many other countries in his work as Director of the Department of Agriculture, the post he held during the period of Stolypin's agrarian reforms.

VII

Matvei Hedenstrom

From the date of Ustinov's departure from Australia in May 1906 until the arrival of a new Russian diplomat, Matvei Matveyevich Hedenstrom, in March 1908, the Russian Consulate General was managed by the French consul in Melbourne, P. Maistre.¹ Hedenstrom was born on 12 December (OS) 1858 in Odessa into the family of a captain in the Yelisavetgrad Hussars.² He was a grandson of Baron Matvei Matveyevich Hedenstrom, the renowned explorer of Northern Siberia. Upon graduation from the University of Kiev in 1882 he joined the Kiev Palace of Justice, but voluntarily resigned that post the next year. In 1886, he reappeared in Paris. On the recommendation of the Société de géographie commerciale de Paris, supported by the French Ministry of the Navy, the twenty-two-year-old Hedenstrom travelled to northern Sumatra, the region of Aceh, 'for purposes of research'. This was a very dangerous journey, as at that time the Dutch were at war with the forces of the sultanate of Aceh. Moreover, the aims of the journey were somewhat unclear. It lasted a long time. Only in 1890 did Hedenstrom return to Russia, and in 1892 he joined the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At first he was responsible for special assignments in the office of the Governor-General of Tomsk region, in Siberia, then took charge of the office of the governor of the Amur region, in Russia's Far East.³ In 1900, he submitted a request to be transferred to

1 *The Advertiser*, 15 May 1906, p. 11.

2 Date of birth and Hedenstrom family details drawn from archive materials made available by Natalia Motorina, the Tiumen' local historian.

3 AVPRI: 159-749/1-1351, ff 37-44; *Bulletin de la Société de géographie commerciale de Paris*, Vol. 9, 1886/1887, pp. 207, 318; Tomsk Regional State Archive, 3-2-3170, ff 12-15.

the Foreign Ministry. This was supported by a letter of recommendation from his former superior, Hermann Avgustovich Tobiesen, the governor of Tomsk in the years 1890–1895, who described him as ‘a man of outstanding ability ... in both his personal and professional capacities’. He was, Tobiesen said, ‘intelligent, courteous, at home in several foreign languages, circumspect in matters of business’.⁴

In 1900–1904, Hedenstrom served as acting vice-consul in Hakodate. Even at this date he was evidently performing secret intelligence-gathering assignments on behalf of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of the Navy. In June 1904, he was sent to the Red Sea ports to take part in ‘prophylactic measures for the Foreign Ministry’: at the outbreak of the Russo–Japanese war it was essential to ensure that Russian ships could pass safely through the Suez Canal and Red Sea to reach the Far East.⁵ He then served for a short period as consul in Malta, before being transferred to Melbourne. It must be said that in all his time in Australia Hedenstrom fully lived up to the testimonial he had been given. Everywhere he displayed extraordinary energy, and his judgements – both in interviews with the press and in his official dispatches to the Foreign Ministry – were distinguished by his perspicacity and the frank expression of his views, which were extremely conservative. In Australia, for example, while acknowledging the country’s many successes, he was sharply critical of what he saw as the excessive influence in public life of the trade unions and socialist elements. ‘Unionism,’ he remarked, ‘is against liberty’,⁶ and in one of his dispatches he did not omit to stress that Australia’s prosperity had been achieved not ‘thanks to the socialists’ but rather ‘in spite of them’.⁷

Hedenstrom willingly assisted travellers and scientists who visited the countries where he worked and helped them achieve results. In 1903, he provided assistance to a scientific expedition to Hokkaido, led by Vatslav Seroshevsky (Wacław Sieroszewski) and Bronislav Pilsudsky (Bronisław Piłsudski) and organised by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society,

4 AVPRI: 159-749/1-1351, ff 46–47.

5 D. P. Pavlov, ‘Rossiiskaia kontrrazvedka v gody russko-iaponskoi voiny’, *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, No. 1, 1996, p. 22.

6 Quoted in *Barrier Miner*, 14 April 1909, p. 4.

7 AVPRI: 155-408-484, f. 236. See Document 99.

and, in 1908, during a visit to Australia by Vladimir Vladimirovich Sviatlovsky, a lecturer at the University of St Petersburg, he helped him obtain ethnographic exhibits.⁸

In 1908, Hedenstrom's endeavours in the support of science were recognised: for 'significant services to enrich the Museum's collections' he was elected a corresponding member of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography ('Kunstkamera') in St Petersburg.⁹

In Australia, Hedenstrom was accompanied by his wife, Baroness Maria Dmitriyevna Stuart, from the Russian (more precisely, Moldavian) branch of the famous Scottish Stuart clan. While her husband served as consul, the Baroness was not idle: on a voluntary basis she headed the Victorian Branch of the Alliance Française.¹⁰

In October 1909, the Hedenstroms sailed for Ceylon on leave and never returned to Melbourne. In July 1910, he was officially relieved of his duties as consul general in Melbourne 'at his own request', though retained in the service of the Foreign Ministry.¹¹

In 1914, Hedenstrom reappeared in Italy, where he was apparently serving as a clandestine agent of the Foreign Ministry. It is known that he made contact with Benito Mussolini, who made his newspaper *Popolo d'Italia* available for propaganda articles favouring a renunciation of Italy's neutrality and its entry into the First World War on the side of the Entente. Through Hedenstrom, Mussolini proposed in 1915 that the Russian Government should finance a stepped-up propaganda offensive in the press and provide funding to provoke an armed clash on the Italian border with Austria, so as to draw Italy into the war. Hedenstrom returned to Russia to discuss Mussolini's proposals in government and military circles, but, after Italy's entry into the war at the end of May 1915, they were no longer relevant.¹²

8 See G. I. Dudarets and V. M. Latyshev, 'Ekspeditsiia V. Seroshevskogo i B. Pilsudskogo na o. Khokkaido v 1903 g.', *Izvestiia instituta nasledii Bronislava Pilsudskogo*, No. 6, 2002, pp. 137–145; L. G. Rozina, 'V. V. Sviatlovskii – sobiratel' kollektssii iz Okeanii', *Sbornik Muzeia antropologii i etnografii* (Miklouho-Maclay Institute of Ethnography), Vol. 30, Leningrad, 1974, pp. 127–139.

9 Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St Petersburg Branch): 1-1a-155, f. 402.

10 *The Argus*, 27 March 1909, p. 16.

11 *The West Australian*, 12 October 1909, p. 5; AVPRI: 159-336/2-655, f. 59.

12 A. S. Korneev, 'Iz istorii odnogo zagovora ("Delo Mussolini-Gedenshtroma")', *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, No. 5, 1962, pp. 96–112.

In 1916, Hedenstrom was in Petrograd,¹³ but it seems that in August 1917 he and his wife left the city, intending to sit out the uncertain times in the remote provinces. As an experienced intelligence agent, he sensed the danger of the political situation and its tragic consequences for people of his social background and position. His wife's two brothers were soon arrested and perished. In his memoirs, the singer Fedor Shaliapin left this account of their arrest:

At almost the same time as the arrest of the Grand Dukes, two of my close friends, the Barons Stuart, were arrested in St Petersburg. ... In truth the Stuarts were no proletarians, whether by origin, conviction, experience or spirit. However, they had never been involved in politics. But they were barons. ... Barons! That was quite enough for them to be suspected and arrested. ... Knowing them as intimately as I did, I could vouch with my own life, anywhere and at any time, for their complete innocence. I set out for the Cheka headquarters in Gorokhovaya Street. I had to go there many times ... seeking their immediate release ... It seems that the leadership had decided that the death penalty would no longer be imposed for political offences, and a decree on this was expected, so in order to ensure that none of the detainees should escape death – Heaven forbid! – they were all shot in one night. Thus my two good friends, the Barons Stuart, perished for no reason.¹⁴

It has not so far proved possible to establish where or how Hedenstrom's life came to an end, only that it was not in revolutionary Russia. In May 1921, the Hedenstroms registered in a hotel in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, having arrived there from Petrograd, and at the end of that month they proceeded to the estate of Kolga, which belonged to Count Peter Stenbock, a major-general in the imperial army and distant relative of Hedenstrom's wife.¹⁵

13 *Vés ' Petrograd 1917*, Petrograd, 1917, p. 152.

14 Fedor Shaliapin, *Maska i dusha*, Paris, Sovremennye zapiski, 1932, p. 63.

15 Rahvusarhiiv. Tallinna aadressbüroo fondi aadresslehed, TLA.1376.1.64.

95. Hedenstrom to A. Bentkovsky,¹⁶
 Director, Second Department, Russian
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
 8 April (27 March) 1908
 No. 1

Confidential

[...] Yesterday, over a period of two hours, I had occasion to speak with the Federal Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Deakin.¹⁷ The conversation was of an exclusively political nature and was, in my opinion, so interesting that I consider it my duty to bring it to the attention of Your Excellency for the information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁸

Mr Deakin began by saying that, although he was aware that the British Government was rendering assistance to Japan during the Russo–Japanese War, in Australia even then sympathies lay wholly on the side of the Russians.¹⁹ He added that the misconceptions held in certain countries regarding the Japanese prior to that war have now all been dispelled, and he could state with all certainty that should there be another war between Russian and Japan, the latter would be left entirely to its own devices, without direct or indirect aid from any quarter, including China.

Hostility towards Japan is particularly strong in Australia, which will never grant the Japanese free access to it. Any intervention by the British Government in this direction would be met with the fiercest opposition from the Federal Government of Australia. However, he added, such intervention is unlikely since there is a stipulation in the Anglo–Japanese Treaty that Japanese entry into Australia can occur only with the consent of the Australian Government. Without such consent, Japan has no right to demand that the British Government exert any influence in this matter. Consequently, Australia is completely closed to the Japanese. Mr Deakin

16 Alfred Karlovich Bentkovsky: Foreign Ministry official, Director of the Second Department in 1905–1916.

17 Alfred Deakin was Prime Minister in 1903–1904, 1905–1908 and 1909–1910.

18 The Russian Foreign Minister in 1906–1910 was Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky.

19 On Australian attitudes to Russia and Japan at the time of the Russo–Japanese war, see Document 91.

observed that, although in recent years the population of Japan has been increasing by 800,000 per year, the Japanese are not emigrants. They seek to subjugate new countries not to resettle any surplus of their own people, but to exploit the subjugated peoples for their own benefit, to force the population of conquered countries to work for them. When they have, so to speak, wrung every last drop from a nation which is foreign to them, they return to their homeland. Mr Deakin evidently keeps a very close eye on everything that happens in Japan and considers that the financial and industrial crisis which it is undergoing is more serious than is reported in the newspapers.

Mr Deakin subscribes to the idea of Australia establishing its own standing army and hopes to have a bill passed in Federal Parliament on general military service, introducing this gradually.²⁰ He believes that by 1921 the Australian Army will comprise over 200,000 men for the purpose of supporting Britain and defending only Australia, in the event of war between Britain and some foreign power.

Any resolution of the question concerning a common colonial policy with Britain is as yet premature, since it will be raised again only in four years' time and will depend on which party, the Protectionists or the Freetraders, has a majority at that time.

Mr Deakin expressed his regret that the Russian Naval Squadron is not en route to the Pacific Ocean. Otherwise he would have taken the opportunity to invite it to visit Australia, like the American Fleet, which will be here in September.²¹ If, in the light of this, the Minister of Foreign Affairs deemed it advantageous to show the Russian naval standard in Australia, I believe I could arrange for such an invitation to be issued by the Australian Government, through the mediation, of course, of the British Government. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1037, ff 98–101. Author's copy. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

20 A system of compulsory military training was first introduced in 1909 on Deakin's initiative, and fully adopted and implemented in 1911.

21 See Document 100.

96. Hedenstrom to Personnel and Management Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
28 (15) June 1908
No. 17

[...] Australia is a vast country, equal in area to 4/5 of Europe, and consisting of six separate states, which in 1901 formed a federal government and was named the Commonwealth of Australia. The states are the following:

- (1) Western Australia; capital Perth; port Fremantle;
- (2) South Australia; capital Adelaide;
- (3) Victoria; capital Melbourne; seat of the Federal Government and its parliament;
- (4) New South Wales; capital Sydney;
- (5) Queensland; capital Brisbane;
- (6) Tasmania; capital Hobart.

New Zealand chose not to join the Australian Commonwealth, and constitutes a separate British colony, with Wellington as its capital.

Trade between Russia and Australia is insignificant, and the country's interest to us lies almost exclusively in the political sphere.

Only a few Finnish schooners under the Russian flag visit Australia annually, but these sail mainly not between Russia and Australia, but between Australia and other foreign countries, usually Britain and South America.

Given this situation, one consul general is sufficient for Australia, as there is little clerical work.

However, quite frequently in one or other of the cities listed above circumstances arise which require intervention or action by the Russian consul in person. These most often concern sailors or masters of Finnish ships flying the Russian flag.

In view of the immense distances between some Australian ports, for example Fremantle and Melbourne (seven days' sailing), a consul who is resident in Melbourne cannot be asked to set out for another city to resolve a matter which might be dealt with by an honorary consul. Furthermore, such journeys involve expenses. For such eventualities the need arises to institute the office of honorary consul and vice-consul in each of the aforementioned ports, to render assistance and support to Russian nationals cast by destiny to the ends of the earth.

In view of this, should the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concur with my opinions set out above regarding the need for honorary consuls in each of the state capitals, I have the honour to request that the persons named in the attached lists be appointed to that office.

I have taken extreme care in the selection of these persons.

In Sydney we already have an honorary consul in the person of Mr Paul, who has served in this capacity for 51 years. Though elderly, he is still in fine fettle and enjoys wide respect, so there is absolutely no reason to replace him.

For Sydney and Newcastle there is a vice-consul, Dr Rougier, a French subject, who also meets the necessary requirements in full.²²

James Stewart,²³ for whose appointment as honorary consul in Melbourne I seek approval, is a former lord mayor of Melbourne, a highly esteemed and well-known lawyer who enjoys universal respect and possesses considerable funds. It is true that he is 72, but, like most Englishmen, he is completely hale and hearty. Since there is a permanent consul general in Melbourne, an honorary consul is needed only in his absence, in order that no appeal be made to other consuls for their services, and to avoid being in their debt.

In Brisbane there is Mr Macdonald, the director general of the biggest Australian shipping line.²⁴

22 Emile Rougier: a French doctor resident in Sydney who worked for the Australian branch of the Pasteur Institute; honorary Russian vice-consul in Sydney and Newcastle from 1907 until his death in 1911.

23 Actually James Stewart Butters, a Victorian politician and entrepreneur; Mayor of Melbourne in 1867–1868.

24 Benjamin Wickham Macdonald: Australian entrepreneur and co-owner of 'Macdonald, Hamilton & Co.', an agency serving the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company.

In Adelaide, Dr Giles is respected by all,²⁵ and rendered service in the case of the Russian sailor Lindberg, who died, and in that of the sailor Zaphiridis, who was tried in court.²⁶

I shall shortly submit proposals concerning other persons, about whom I have not as yet received sufficiently detailed information.²⁷ [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1314, ff 1–4. Author's copy. In Russian.

97. Hedenstrom to Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
28 (15) July 1908
No. 20

[...] Until the present time, international law has recognised three types of civilised state: (1) sovereign or independent states, (2) vassal or semi-independent states, and (3) colonies. But I am a Russian Imperial Consul in a country whose state system, from the point of view of international law, does not fit a single one of these three types.

Australia, and perhaps some other British colonies, represents a new, fourth type of state to which a special place probably needs to be assigned in textbooks of international law.

In their international relations, all civilised states assume the existence of a responsible authority in each one, to which they may turn to in case of need. I shall attempt to demonstrate that, in practice, Australia has no such authority. This matter is very closely connected to Britain's relationship to its colonies.

25 William Ansley Giles: an Australian surgeon who had practised in Adelaide medical establishments since 1885.

26 In 1907, Åke Lindberg, a sailor and Russian national, was sent to hospital in Wallaroo, SA, where he soon died of dysentery. His treatment led to a number of financial problems and Hedenstrom took charge of resolving these. A year later, in April 1908, while the British steamer *Ocean Monarch* was in Port Adelaide, a drunken brawl took place on board and a sailor called Alexander Zaphiridis, a Russian national, shot and killed another sailor on the same ship, Heinrich Stender, a Russian Finn. The jury accepted that Stender had provoked him, but sentenced him to prison for twelve months.

27 Hedenstrom's efforts to expand the Russian consular service in Australia brought results: in November 1908, Giles and Macdonald were appointed honorary Russian consuls in Adelaide and Brisbane respectively.

Absorbed in their internal affairs and especially in competition amongst themselves, the governments of the European states have up to now, I believe, devoted little attention to the study of this relationship. Yet this study is of particular interest to governments which have entered into alliances or agreements with Britain. The question of the direction of Britain's colonial policy, and with it the direction of its own internal life, is dependent on whether the relationship between the mother country and her enormous and remote colonies will be strengthened or weakened. Without reaching far into the future, one can, however, already foresee that, before long, public opinion in England will have to settle upon one of two directions. It will have to choose between classical – so to speak – all-consuming imperialism, which assumes that every British colony is an inalienable part of the British Empire, existing and administered according to London's decree, and liberal imperialism, under which the central government does not concern itself with the internal administration of its possessions. It is linked with them almost solely through homogeneity of race and community of interests. The British Government's attitudes towards European states, especially those with whom they have concluded agreements, will probably also depend upon this choice. Russia is one such state.²⁸ One must assume that the policy which is most advantageous to the colonies will triumph. It is impossible to prove this at present, the factual data are not yet clear, but it may be that they are more apparent from Australia than from anywhere else.

Both the British themselves and the Australians assert the loyalty of the colonies. Here the meaning of the concept of loyalty needs to be agreed. In Australia, at any rate, it is understood in the sense of assuming no renunciation of even the smallest part of rights already acquired, both those recorded in the constitution and those established in practice. Therefore, supporters of unlimited imperialism will, from the very beginning, need to be able to accommodate both the inflexible determination of the colonies to preserve all that they have acquired, and the discharge of obligations assumed by the central government in agreements and treaties with other states. Of course, there may be instances where compliance

28 Hedenstrom is referring to the Anglo-Russian Convention signed in St Petersburg on 18/31 August 1907, determining spheres of influence in Central Asia and Persia. The Convention effectively amounted to an Anglo-Russian alliance and the final act in the creation of the Entente (Britain, France and Russia).

with certain clauses in Britain's international treaties will entail limitations in the internal autonomy of its colonies. In such cases the position of the British Government will be extremely delicate.

In order to gain some idea of the full complexity of this situation, it may perhaps be worth considering the rise of the self-governing British colonies, in particular Australia, and the general fundamentals by which it is administered, i.e. its constitution. Knowledge of this may be of practical as well as abstract value.

Among the self-governing British colonies, two stand out by the vastness of their territory, the scale of their trade, the value of natural resources as well as their debts to Britain: Canada and Australia.

The former, by virtue of its geographical location, is not as free as the latter. Having a 5,000-verst border with the great American republic,²⁹ it looks to England as the natural protector of those freedoms which it would hardly enjoy should it be swallowed up by its neighbour.

The Canadian constitution is more than 40 years old,³⁰ the Australian constitution only seven, so the latter most closely reflects contemporary relations between Britain and its colonies.

From the point of view of the country's internal organisation, the Australian constitution formed a federal government (the Commonwealth) in 1901, which serves as a central organ for the six Australian states, which until then were completely independent of one another: Western Australia with its capital Perth and its port of Fremantle, South Australia with its capital Adelaide, Victoria with its capital Melbourne, still the seat of the Federal Ministry and Parliament, New South Wales with its capital Sydney, Queensland with its capital Brisbane and the island of Tasmania with its capital Hobart.

New Zealand declined to join the Federation.

The six states surrendered some of their rights in favour of the Federal Government in order that this central organ could govern the country for the common interest, observing, however, certain restrictions and submitting to certain obligations.

29 5,000 versts = 5,334 km. In fact the border is almost 8,900 km, approximately 8,340 versts.

30 Canadian Constitution: Hedenstrom is referring to the *British North America Act*, adopted by the British Parliament in March 1867, establishing the Dominion of Canada.

Among the powers surrendered to the Federal Government, external interests, i.e. those which concern other countries, are most prominent. Each separate state has retained self-government in its own internal affairs. Here, already, a somewhat strange situation arises, since, although the Federal Government is in charge of external affairs, from a diplomatic point of view Australia itself bears no responsibility and has no independent representation at all.

The functions of the Federal Government consist of the right to legislate and administrate in affairs of external trade, navigation and all matters associated with them, including the extremely important area of setting customs tariffs. It has charge of excise duties, premiums for export and manufacture, posts and telegraph, military and naval defence, lighthouses, quarantine, fisheries (marine), immigration and emigration, matters of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, naturalisation), and legislation regarding banks, insurance, coinage, weights and measures. To this should be added the right, in certain circumstances, to underwrite the debts of the separate states, to acquire railways with their permission, the right to levy taxes and execute loans, and, finally, the management of all external relations, in particular those concerning the islands of the Pacific Ocean. There is a Minister and Ministry of External Affairs.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that the Federal Government had left the governments and parliaments of the separate states extremely little power and few functions.

The latter retain the absolute right to sell or rent their own public lands, operate their railways, conclude loans at their own expense, liquidate and convert them. With the exception of excise duty, customs and posts and telegraph, they manage all other direct and indirect taxes. The separate states deal with matters of agriculture, mining, public works, arbitration, public education and justice (with the exception of cases subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court).

In certain matters the Federal Government is granted legal powers which have not been removed from the separate states. In cases of discrepancy, Federal parliamentary law must be applied. These cases mainly concern immigration, banks, insurance and bankruptcy.

Irrespective of this duplication of authority, some of the functions of the Federal Parliament are even more limited. Thus, in matters of trade, the Federation (Commonwealth) has charge of relations with foreign

countries as well as those between the separate states whereas the legislation regarding trade is completely under the jurisdiction of the separate states. The Federal Government must observe complete uniformity in matters of premiums for internal manufacture and export, whereas in this respect conditions in the separate states are quite different.

Under the two-chamber system, the House of Representatives and the Senate, the latter constrains the Federal Government's power most of all with regard to the interests of the separate states.

In Canada, senators are appointed by the Government,³¹ so it can always be sure of a favourable majority. In Australia, senators, as well as members of parliament, are elected directly by the people, and each state, regardless of its size, has the same number of representatives in the Senate. Their prestige and independence from the Government represent a considerable force, and the standing of the Senate in Australia is extremely high.

The norms determining the relationship between the Federal Government and the mother country from a political point of view are the most interesting part of the Australian constitution, since they give us an idea of the degree of this country's independence.

In general these norms are borrowed from Canada's constitution, but with certain quite significant changes.

A comparison of both constitutions leads to the conclusion that the independence granted to Australia is even broader than that enjoyed by Canada.

The Governor-General of Australia is the representative of the British Government,³² but though paid from local budget resources, he plays a dual role. On the one hand he is the connecting link between the Colonial Office and the Federal Government; on the other, as head of the executive authority he is the leader of the parliamentary system. These last functions do not entail any special responsibilities, since the Governor-General enacts his decisions only with the agreement of the

31 This is inaccurate. In Canada, senators were appointed not by the Government, but by the Governor-General, who acted on behalf of the Crown. However, the appointments were made on the basis of a list recommended by the Canadian Prime Minister.

32 The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia is not, in fact, the representative of the British Government, but of the British sovereign; in 1908, of Edward VII.

cabinet. In reality, serious matters are discussed and decided without his participation, and the political role of the Governor-General amounts to signing whatever is placed before him.

Should a government submit its resignation, then, by virtue of established custom, the Governor-General summons the leader of the opposition and instructs him to form a new ministry, on no account taking any part in discussions as to its formation. The sole prerogative of the Governor-General consists in agreeing to or refusing the prime minister's request to dissolve Parliament.

When the British Government wishes to discuss important matters with the governments of the self-governing colonies, the Governor-General's intermediary role disappears. The British Colonial Office discusses matters of this kind directly with the prime ministers of those colonies.

Thus in 1902 a conference was convened under the chairmanship of Mr Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, at which matters of political and commercial relations between the constituent parts of the British Empire were discussed, as well as the future organisation of defence.³³ Not one of the Governors-General was present at this conference. The same happened in 1907.

The Canadian constitution, incidentally, states that the Governor-General administers the country according to his instructions, i.e. those he receives from London. There is no such clause in the Australian constitution. It was considered inadvisable to accord the Governor-General the right to refer to any instructions from without; the instructions he receives from the Federal Prime Minister are sufficient. The fiction underlying the British organisation of government professes, it is true, that this is only advice, but with the proviso that it be carried out: 'There is no compulsion, but you must.'

There does exist, however, a fundamental principle: that no law in any part of the British Empire can take legal effect without royal assent.

33 Here and below, Hedenstrom is referring to the Colonial (Imperial) Conferences of 1902 and 1907.

In Australia, as in any other self-governing British colony, the powers of the Governor-General give him the right to grant such assent in the King's name, or to submit the law to the British Government for consideration. In actual fact, the Governor-General almost always gives assent, and, moreover, at once.

In cases when a law touches upon broader imperial interests or infringes upon any international agreements in force between Britain and foreign countries, the Governor-General confers with the law officers of the Crown to decide whether to ratify the law or submit it to the British Government. In the latter case, one can be fairly confident that His Majesty's Government will not refuse to ratify it. We shall shortly see that, even when the adoption of certain laws was likely to lead to misunderstandings with foreign countries, the British Government still approved them. It prefers to meet such difficulties half-way, rather than place its veto on decisions of the Federal Parliament.

In cases of extreme importance, when a law directly infringes upon British laws, the Government of the mother country intervenes in its passage through the Federal Parliament, but strives to do this before it has been finally passed, while it is still at the discussion stage. This was the case with the law on navigation, which, however, was ratified in the form Australia wanted.³⁴

The Governor-General of Australia does not have the title of viceroy, and he communicates officially only with the Colonial Office, upon which he directly depends.

Apart from the Governor-General, who, as stated above, is the intermediary between the Australian Federation and the mother country, the only constitutional tie between the two countries is the institution of the Federal High Court.

The powers of the Federal High Court created by the constitution are extremely broad and diverse. Without dwelling on the list of its functions, one important circumstance should be emphasised: prior to the ratification of the Australian Constitution, one of the fundamental

³⁴ This refers to the *Sea-Carriage of Goods Act 1904*.

principles underlying relations between the mother Country and the colonies was that, in certain instances, any decision of the Colonial Court could be appealed in the Privy Council (King-in-Council).³⁵

In 1899 the draft constitution drawn up by Australia was presented in London. Chamberlain, at that time Colonial Secretary, expressed complete sympathy with the idea of creating the Federation, but thought that the Australians had gone too far in their desire for independence, even encroaching upon the prerogatives of the central government. As a consequence of this he invited delegates to London in order to discuss certain changes in the text of the constitution. The Australians hastened to do the Colonial Secretary's bidding, but from the very outset they announced that they had been given precise instructions not to agree to any changes; the bases of the draft had been drawn up with the agreement of all the states, and they demanded that the draft be ratified in the exact form in which it was presented. They noted that amendments could lead to the breakdown of the agreement to form a federation, achieved with such difficulty. Chamberlain did not dare assume responsibility for the failure of a project as important as the founding of a federation, and renounced the amendments he had proposed, with the exception of one, the question of the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court.

According to the original draft wording in clause 74 of the constitution, the Federal High Court rules definitively in disputes concerning the interpretation of the constitution, both with regard to relations between the Federal Government and the state governments, and between the state governments themselves, without right of appeal to the British High Court. In Chamberlain's opinion, it was impossible to agree to this clause without infringing upon the supreme power of the King. For the Australian delegates it was also a matter of principle not to accept amendments to a project which had been drawn up with the consent of the whole populace. There were, incidentally, certain other grounds for this, but of those they could not speak openly. They knew that in interpreting the Canadian Constitution, the Privy Council did not always produce rulings sufficiently broad for the colonies. With respect to their own country, the Australians therefore wished to see the interpretation of

35 King-in-Council: a British legal term signifying the actions of the monarch agreed by the competent organs of executive authority. In the present case, the reference is to an appeal to the Privy Council against the ruling of a court. The monarch acts as King-in-Council, on the Privy Council's recommendations.

the constitution wholly within the jurisdiction of its very own national institution, and asserted that that institution would resolve such matters with great dispatch and knowledge.

They finally came to an agreement in which, essentially, the Australians had their own way, but yielded in the format, so clause 74, now in force, states that Federal High Court decisions regarding interpretation of the constitution are subject to appeal only when the Court itself decrees that its decision may be appealed.

Since both sides wanted to come to an agreement, they made haste to settle upon such a compromise, although it left the matter not entirely clarified and continues to give rise to misunderstandings.

The federation of the separate states of Australia could not change the official position of this new state with regard to foreign governments. Theoretically, however, there are no relations, since from a diplomatic point of view the Commonwealth of Australia is no more than a British province. In drawing up their constitution, however, the Australians included legislation on foreign affairs among the areas administered by the Federal Parliament and, as stated above, formed a special Ministry of External Affairs. Canada does not have one. It goes without saying that this ministry is in charge of only those matters that concern Australia, but since foreign governments have no diplomatic relations with Australia, in their eyes the entity responsible is the British Government; a country which has no responsibility, it would seem, cannot have any corresponding rights. Meanwhile, the path that Australia is taking in the promulgation of laws which undoubtedly affect the interests of foreign nationals is so provocative that its finances are no match for it, let alone its military power.

In a subsequent dispatch, about the socialist movement in Australia and its influence upon legislation,³⁶ I shall consider more closely the restrictive and anti-liberal laws now in effect in this country. I shall now mention only in general outline those of them which directly affect the interests of foreign nationals.

36 See Document 99.

I. The Customs Bill.³⁷ According to this law, all consumables on any ship arriving in Australia, from the moment of its entry into port, are subject to custom duties, and payment of these continues until the ship departs from the last Australian port. The first Australian port of call for ships coming from Europe, especially steamships, is Fremantle, the last – usually Sydney. The return voyage from Fremantle to Sydney is about 4,900 miles.³⁸ Upon leaving Fremantle the ships go out into the open sea, where they have to remain for several days, and if they are proceeding to another Australian port the duty applies throughout this time. This law is enforced by government officials in the most irksome ways: at one time they even affixed seals on provisions so that the ship would be forced to purchase supplies in an Australian port. Some captains broke the seals when they reached the high seas, and used the provisions, but they were then subject to punishment upon arriving at an Australian port. This bill thus violates the most elementary fundamentals of international law, according to which every merchant ship on the high seas is subject only to the jurisdiction of its own country.

It also violates general legal principles, since duty may only be levied on goods or products which are used within a country or are imported into it, not those beyond its borders.

II. The Post and Telegraph Act, ratified by the British Government in 1901.³⁹ By the terms of this act the Federal Government refuses subsidies for transporting mail to shipping lines which employ coloured labour as crew. It is well known that almost all ships employ black men as stokers for transit through the Red Sea and the tropics. For a long time this law had resulted in the extremely unpunctual delivery of mail. It is still in force today.

III. But the most serious violation of international interests is the Immigration Restriction Act.⁴⁰ In its present form, it unconditionally prohibits the admission of all coloured people into Australia, with the sole

37 This bill came into effect as the *Federal Customs Act 1901*. It introduced a unified national system of duties and tariffs.

38 The return voyage from Fremantle to Sydney, without calling at ports en route, is 4,374 miles.

39 The *Post and Telegraph Act 1901* provided for subsidised postal services to Australia. Article 15 of the Act stipulated that the crews of all vessels delivering mail to Australia should be entirely white.

40 The *Immigration Restriction Act* adopted by the Australian Parliament in 1901, with subsequent amendments, became the basis for the White Australia policy, with the aim of limiting non-white immigration as far as possible and protecting the Anglo-Saxon cultural identity of the nation. The Act was also intended to protect the Australian labour market against competition from workers from Asia and the Pacific.

exception of visiting officials. Europeans arriving in Australia, if they are not British subjects, may be subjected to an examination on their knowledge of one of the world's languages, chosen by a government official. In theory, therefore, it is necessary to know all languages, including Chinese, Arabic and so on. Besides this, contract labourers are not admitted and, finally, a person cannot set foot in Australia if an official believes that he might be a burden upon any public or charitable institution.

This law violates the generally accepted right of freedom of movement.

An unbelievable law applies to masters of merchant ships, including British ships: it subjects them to a fine of 100 pounds sterling (1,000 roubles) for every sailor who jumps ship. This is contradictory because the police do not assist in the capture of fugitive sailors, stating that the latter are under the protection of the laws of a free country, while the masters are fined for the lack of vigilance which allowed an undesirable immigrant to enter the country.

I have cited laws which I would have difficulty in believing if I did not have them before my very eyes. They affect the rights and interests of foreigners and therefore may be the subject of enquiries from interested governments. In these instances, Australia's lack of responsibility stands out particularly sharply. The Federal Government, driven into a corner, replied that these laws had received royal assent and were of general imperial interest. Upon inquiry, the British Government replied that these were local Australian laws, and that they did not consider they had the right to interfere in the affairs of self-governing colonies. On various pretexts, the British Government dragged out negotiations, greatly assisted by the long distances, and in the end they came to naught.

Let us assume, however, that one of the Great Powers, from one reason or another would like to pursue its protest to its conclusion, i.e. until they received a definite positive or negative answer and, if the latter, to apply the laws operating in Australia to their own country; for example, the immigration laws I referred to or those on navigation. Australians are British subjects, so any retaliatory measure would have to apply to all British subjects without exception. What would the British Government say if, for example, Germany enacted a law by which German jurisdiction would apply to crimes committed on board British ships on the high seas, on the ground that those ships were sailing from one German port

to another? In such a case, would the British Foreign Secretary deem that the fundamental principles of international law and international treaties on trade and navigation had been violated?

Prior to the formation of the Australian Federation, the separate states were an insignificant quantity in the eyes of the Great Powers, so their ways of doing things were of concern to very few. Upon the formation of the Federation a new nation emerged, occupying an area of land equal to 4/5 of Europe. On this huge expanse live a mere 4 million inhabitants, including women and children. Adult males number 1.5 million.⁴¹ It is natural that the eyes of states with an excess of population should turn more and more to a country which could accommodate and support a population exceeding that of Australia many times over. It is quite understandable that the question of the international position of a country which is considered a British province, but has its own Ministry of External Affairs and enacts the most provocative laws concerning foreigners, is becoming a pressing problem. The time may be not far off when some naval power might wish to test Australia's executive power and see if it actually exists.

In this country, relations between the Federal Government and the mother country are complicated by the constitutional rights of the separate states, whose memory of complete independence is still very fresh.

A recent example of misunderstandings between the central government of the United States of America and Japan showed that the constitutional rights of individual states in a federal state can give rise to acute complications where international relations are concerned.⁴² Something similar could easily happen in Australia, but with more serious consequences.

Russia's interests in Australia are so insignificant that of course there can be no question of officially raising the delicate question of Australia's position from a diplomatic point of view. The elucidation of this uncertainty would naturally place both the British and the Federal Government in a most ambiguous position. If, however, in individual cases, it became

41 According to official statistics, on 31 December 1907 the population of Australia was 4,167,037, comprising 2,212,480 males and 1,984,557 females.

42 In 1906–1907, the US adopted a series of discriminatory measures against Japanese immigrants and banned the entry of Japanese into the US from the Hawaiian Islands. In May 1907, there were anti-Japanese race riots in San Francisco. This led to a sharp deterioration in US–Japanese relations, and only the efforts of both countries' diplomats served to ease the tension. In late 1907 and early 1908, the two countries reached a gentleman's agreement on a voluntary limit on Japanese emigration to the US.

necessary to choose which of the two governments to address, I believe that one should choose the Federal Government and not the Imperial Government.

The Federal Government is not well pleased when negotiations on matters concerning Australia are held in London, and on the contrary is somewhat flattered when addressed directly. On the other hand, the British prefer to comply with petitions emanating from the Federal Government. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1037, ff 194–226. Author's copy. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

98. Hedenstrom to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
10 August (28 July) 1908
No. 25

[...] A few days ago I was visited by a representative of the Melbourne trading company Campbell, Itone & Co., who told me that Russian-produced furniture is for sale in Melbourne and that it reaches Australia by way of London or Hamburg. Finding that the furniture is of high quality and is retailed here, the representative would like to establish direct contact with the manufacturers in St Petersburg, so that Russian furniture might be ordered directly from Russia, by-passing the places en route and thus avoiding the costs paid to middlemen in London or Hamburg.

The representative gave me a written list of questions to which he would like answers. In addition he expressed a desire to receive a catalogue of the products of Russian furniture manufacturers, in English, and with English measurements. I am well aware that German manufacturers send out catalogues of their wares in the languages of the countries where they intend to market them.

Herewith I have the honour to enclose for Your Excellency the letters sent by the aforementioned company, expressing their wishes.⁴³

⁴³ The letters are not reproduced here.

In my opinion this matter merits attention, as it may lead to the direct importation of Russian industrial goods to Australia. In addition to passing copies of the attached letters to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and publishing a brief summary of the contents in the press, I wonder whether you might perhaps deem it possible to invite a representative of the St Petersburg furniture manufacturers and suggest that he make contact, directly or through my office, with the Melbourne company, on the terms proposed by that company. In this way we may bring about a practical result.⁴⁴ [...]

AVPRI 155 (Second Department, I-5) -408-484, ff 124–126. In Russian.

99. Hedenstrom to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
1 September (19 August) 1908
No. 27

[...] I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency herewith a dispatch on the socialist movement in Australia.

I do not know what view the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or you yourself, will take of it, but if the question should arise of publishing it in the *Collected Consular Dispatches* I would respectfully request that it should not appear while I am in Australia.⁴⁵ This is because Australians are extraordinarily averse to any form of criticism except praise, and therefore the publication of this dispatch will make my position even more difficult than it is now, and will shut off the few channels of information still open to me. [...]

44 The material appended by Hedenstrom was forwarded to the Ministry of Trade and Industry and from there to the furniture manufacturers F. Meltzer (St Petersburg) and F. Fischer (Moscow). They did not, however, show any interest in developing direct trade with Australia. From documents preserved in the Russian State Historical Archives, it emerges that both firms replied to say that they had never had any catalogues of their wares and therefore could send nothing to Australia.

45 *Collected Consular Dispatches*: a journal published by the Foreign Ministry six times a year in the years 1898–1910, containing the most interesting dispatches from diplomats and commercial agents on the socio-economic development, political configuration, economy, transport and trade of foreign countries.

Melbourne,
1 September (19 August) 1908
No. 26

Socialism in Australia

Australia and New Zealand enjoy the reputation of being countries which apply the principles of the most advanced socialism and, in this respect, of carrying out the most audacious experiments. In general, these countries are thriving and those who would revitalise the contemporary social system are drawing the conclusion that all peoples should follow their example.

A closer acquaintance with Australian socialism will perhaps indicate that such conclusions are somewhat too hasty.

The structure of European societies could hardly accept the methods they resort to in these far-off lands, where the climatic, economic and political conditions are completely different from ours. It does not follow from this that we have nothing to learn or nothing to borrow from them. The study of this or that order of things is always useful, whether in the sense of introducing it at home or, on the contrary, so as to profit from the experience of others in order not to repeat their mistakes.

Up to now, European socialists have done but little to acquaint us with their like-minded confederates in Australia, confining themselves to the sole assertion that everything is good in Australia thanks to socialism. I repeat, a closer acquaintance with this question in Australia itself will perhaps elucidate the reason for the European socialists' restraint, for which sufficient explanation may be found in the characteristics which are peculiar to socialism in Australia and make it especially interesting.

It is true, both European and Australian socialists are united by one common goal – the desire to gradually destroy private property. Their reasoning, however, is completely different.

European, in particular French and Russian socialists, have difficulty in reconciling themselves with the idea of patriotism; the extremists deny it altogether. In Australia the feeling of patriotism is extremely highly developed. The disparity lies only in the fact that some extend their patriotism to the whole of Australia, while others restrict it to a rather

narrow framework, but in both parties patriotism is uncompromising, mistrustful and exclusive, often reaching the point of over-weening self-praise.

This is the first difference between European and Australian socialism.

The second concerns their attitudes towards religious questions and feelings.

In Europe, events are full of hostile socialist manifestations against what they call a perversion of the mind and the conscience. In Australia and New Zealand political activists are indifferent to matters of religion, including so-called clerical ones. Indifference is at its greatest, perhaps, in the most extreme workers' circles. The churches of various denominations are not especially friendly with each other, but the Government treats each of them with equal impartiality, extending its assistance and protection to each of them in equal measure. Under such conditions, political activists' membership of completely different denominations has absolutely no effect on their work or their popularity.

One should also note yet a third difference.

Respect for peace and public order occupies a completely secondary position in the eyes of European socialists. As advocates of active propaganda, they condemn the use of force only when the latter is directed against themselves. Thus far in Australia respect for the individual and the property of others constitutes a basic principle, although the general crime rate is probably the same as in other civilised countries. Violent actions as a product of socialism are very rare, owing to an innate respect for the law. The existence of this factor has stood Australian socialism in very good stead. The correct actions of the Labor Party have misled the public with regard to its aggressive power and its essentially total indifference to public or private interests, as long as these do not coincide with its own interests involving its predatory inclinations not only to utilise, but to abuse the advantages obtained. In a British country, where the difference between classes is especially pronounced, in the legendary home of snobbery, elevated almost to a cult of outward observance of generally accepted norms, a different, less circumspect mode of operation would probably have harmed the socialists' cause and from the very beginning raised a barrier to the achievement of their desires. It is possible that the leaders

of socialism in Europe would also have encountered less opposition if their harsh actions had not set patriots, believers and peaceful citizens against them. But this error has been committed and can hardly be remedied.

Perhaps for these reasons the European socialists desire that what is going on at the far end of the world should remain unknown as far as possible. It is therefore of all the more interest to us.

The Labor Party in Australia has not yet decided to openly call itself socialist. Its leaders have only recently begun to utter this word, and then only with caveats and qualifications of all kinds. It is as if they were preparing society to accept ideas which it regards with suspicion, perhaps in the hope that with time the suspicion will abate and the time will then come to reveal the ultimate aim of a pure socialist programme, the essence of which is expressed in 'collectivism'. There is no doubt that socialism in Australia, as in Europe, is the organ and instrument of a class of people who nourish the hope of satisfying their interests by means of a gradual general levelling. Socialism attacks capital because the latter is a source of personal initiative and generates the inequalities which socialism hopes to destroy. But Australian socialists are more cautious and perhaps more practical than European socialists, and therefore refrain from over-harsh actions and strikingly abstract philosophical theories. While European socialism calls for international solidarity, Australian socialism is exclusive and has no wish for any contacts beyond its own borders, finding that Australia's geographical situation enables it to carry out experiments without any outside interference. Australians on the whole are averse to the idea of free competition and strive to eradicate it in their own land.

The federation of Australian states was only formed in 1901. Workers' unions existed in the six Australian states much earlier than this and had their own representatives in the local parliaments. But, in the absence of a central government, they were unable to impart a common character to their efforts. Furthermore, the rivalry between the separate states, or rather, colonies, as well as the vast area across which the population was scattered, served as obstacles to general agreement. The influence of the unions was of necessity limited and showed in the fact that in the local parliaments of individual colonies they were able to achieve aid for the unemployed, increases in wages and a reduction in working hours. At the same time they organised and directed strikes and promoted the election of their like-minded associates to parliament or to administrative appointments. The establishment of the Federal States could have threatened such political

sport, from which the labour unions were deriving a certain benefit, and the Labor Party could have blocked the formation of the Federal Parliament, but, on the other hand, it also understood the benefits to be derived from being its originator, and the Federation (Commonwealth) of Australia was founded.

Naturally, the Federal Parliament would reduce the importance of the local parliaments, so the Labor Party had to occupy the most influential position possible in the former. While maintaining its former influence in the local parliaments, the functions of which were quite extensive, the Labor Party set to work. Circumstances favoured its prospects.

For quite understandable reasons, the newly-formed Federal Parliament possessed neither the experience, nor, in particular, the unity which lends strength to any collegial entity. For the most part, differences were related to the aims which the Federation was to pursue in the near future. The Labor Party, however, owing to its previously existing unions, embarked upon a new political life, already organised. All it needed to do was preserve its organisation and discipline, which it achieved with great benefit to itself.

In 1903 the Labor Party held one third of all the seats in Parliament, and in 1904 it took power, but was obliged to step down due to the complete inability of its representatives to manage affairs of state.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, for the first three years of Federation the Labor Party took every opportunity to put forward its programme, which projected measures only for the immediate future. It was not yet concerning itself with the more distant future, but the socialist principles underlying the laws it proposed and enacted are beyond any doubt. They all had the purpose of State interference in the private affairs of its citizens and sought to eliminate any manifestations of private initiative, any possibility of individuals profiting from the fruits of their own labours and any competition in general. For these reasons these principles can only be called anti-liberal.

The most immediate aim of the Labor Party's legislation was the isolation of Australia.

46 In the 1903 federal election, the Labor Party took twenty-three of the seventy-five seats in the House of Representatives. In 1904, when Alfred Deakin resigned, the Labor leader John Christian Watson formed a government, the first Labor Government in Australia and the world. However, it held power for less than four months, from 27 April to 18 August 1904.

Thus, at a time when this country – isolated commercially by the seas, and politically by the British fleet – had only just come into being, only just joined the ranks of other nations and attracted their attention, its first step was to lock itself away. Upon the initiative of the socialists, a whole set of laws was enacted, imbued with the narrowest and most hostile sentiments, augmented by even more restrictive rules, applied with relentless severity as if their main aim was to suppress all industry, trade and movement of people.

On 1st May 1904, on the pretext of the international Labour Day celebration, a deputation from the Labor Party presented the Government in Melbourne with a declaration which for the first time categorically stated its resolve ‘to abolish all hired labour and capitalism and to prepare the rebirth of a new social structure in which all the implements of production and their administration should belong to the people’, and, in the meantime, to fix by law a standard working day of eight hours or less with adequate remuneration for all industries and workers without exception, all disputes to be settled by compulsory arbitration, a pension for the aged to be set up at the expense of the Federal Government, the establishment of a federal bank belonging to the people, and so on.⁴⁷ This was a completely clear and definite socialist programme, setting out its aims and means. A few months later a general assembly of the Labor Party of the State of Victoria demanded a gradual nationalisation of all means of production, distribution and exchange, adding a further demand: that members must not dare to vote for any bill which did not accord with this programme.⁴⁸ The Government could not openly agree to such a harshly-worded demand, so the Labor Party then thought up an extremely vague term, which I had difficulty in elucidating: it demanded the ‘nationalisation of monopolies’. Since public institutions in Australia (including railways) already belonged to the State, the phrase ‘nationalisation of monopolies’ meant that the State could take over any private enterprise simply by declaring it a monopoly. This bill, however, did not pass.⁴⁹

47 Hedenstrom appears to be referring to the demands set forth at a May Day rally in Melbourne in 1904 by the prominent British socialist Tom Mann, then living in Australia. According to the *Adelaide Advertiser* (2 May 1904, p. 6, ‘May Day Celebrations’), Mann moved a motion signifying ‘determination to overthrow wagedom and capitalism, and the establishment of an international co-operative Commonwealth, in which all the instruments of industry should be owned and controlled by the whole people’.

48 The reference is clearly to the resolutions of the Third Commonwealth Political Labour Conference, held in Melbourne in July 1905.

49 The nationalisation of monopolies bill, presented by Watson’s Labor Government in 1904, was not passed because this was a minority government.

In 1906 the Labor Party's programme was as follows:⁵⁰

- I. A complete cessation of coloured immigration.
- II. The establishment of a progressive tax on large properties of land.
- III. The setting up of an old-age pension for the whole of Australia.
- IV. An alteration to the law on compulsory arbitration in favour of the workers.
- V. The promulgation of restrictive laws concerning navigation.
- VI. The establishment of a militia for defence.
- VII. The nationalisation of monopolies.

There was no longer any mention of destroying capitalism, which was somewhat comforting to the well-to-do classes.

Thus a halt came about in the socialist-workers' movement and demands, which it is necessary to explain.

In a country whose constitutional government is based on universal suffrage, also including women, every government must reconcile broad interests of State with the demands of the mass of the population. Such concordance is not always easily achieved. In other countries this aim is substantially assisted by well-known traditions, bitter past experience, the fear of external complications and the existence of a certain cultural national minority capable of exerting political influence upon an uneducated majority. Because of the youth of its polity, Australia does not yet possess such elements and its political life is of an impetuous nature.

Apart from that, Australia is a wealthy country with a temperate climate, suitable to life and diversions in the open air. These conditions involuntarily foster the desire to enjoy oneself. Therefore the idea of labour and working is not as strong as we see in other countries, while the view of government as an institution intended to guarantee the freedom and safety of its citizens has expanded to such an extent that they consider the government is obliged to provide everything and, consequently, everything may be demanded from it. Under such conditions the terrain is very favourable for socialism of the Australian kind, which differs from the European by its greater patience and, at the same time, is not particularly interested in

50 In fact, the Labor Party did not adopt any new programmes in 1906. At the time when Hedenstrom was writing 'Socialism in Australia', the programme adopted at the Third Commonwealth Political Labour Conference in 1905 was in effect.

the distant future. Here, one must also point out another difference from European socialism. The latter, dismayed by the severe inequality between separate classes of the population, strives to create a new order by first destroying the old; European socialists do not recognise half-measures.

In Australia the situation is more uniform; the Australian worker is never destitute and, therefore, does not see the need to tear down everything existing at present. He is not a follower of fiery and militant representatives and at times pauses, wishing only to retain the results achieved, not yet desiring to demolish society, but only to continuously improve his own well-being within it.

These circumstances, taken together, have influenced the fact that the Labor Party has temporarily rejected the extreme principles expressed in its initial programme.

But not only material conditions and the safety provided by British power have determined the nature of socialism in Australia. It is also a consequence of the relationship between labour and capital which obtained in the earliest years of colonisation. At that time huge works were commenced. The population of Australia was increasing quickly. Workers, especially good ones, were scarce. A good stonemason earned 15 roubles a day.⁵¹ Until 1892 Australia enjoyed unlimited credit in Britain.

Such prosperity could not continue forever. With the increase of population thanks to immigration, which at that time was encouraged, and given some competition, worker's wages had to fall. But the workers had been spoiled by the previous years, their appetites had been whetted, and they had no desire to go backwards. The trade unions closed ranks, foreseeing the inevitable conflict which eventually broke out. Extremely violent strikes took place in the years 1890–1892, which, however, were put down, public opinion being against them.⁵² After this, the unions changed their tactics and turned their efforts to achieving political influence in the new Federation. This tactic consisted in offering their

51 Here and later, Hedenstrom quotes values in roubles at the exchange rate of the time: ten roubles to one pound.

52 Hedenstrom is referring to the major and long-lasting strikes that shook the country in 1890 (the seamen's strike), 1891 (the shearers' strike) and 1892 (the miners' strike). All ended in failure, but served as a stimulus for the growth of the trade union and labour movement, and prepared the ground for the formation of a labour arbitration system in the colonies.

services, and then, having made themselves indispensable, enforcing the implementation of their wishes. It was successful and the unions achieved almost dictatorial power, and have retained it to this day.

On the basis of certain data from the past few years, it is possible, I believe, to distinguish three movements, three aims pursued by the Labor Party, which until 1905 were also shared by both the Government and public opinion.

The first was directed against the principle of competition and made steady progress; the second was aimed at impeding the development of private initiative, encroaching upon the principle of free labour; the third was directed towards the abolition of private property, designated as capital or the means of production. The success (incidentally, unproven) of this last move has so far been expressed in the enactment of laws concerning compulsory arbitration in industrial affairs, but promulgated with a certain bias towards the workers.⁵³

I consider it my duty to point out that the main purpose of my classification of the socialist movement is to make a detailed investigation of it more accessible.

The first two movements pave the way for the third, but all three have the ultimate aim which we have already seen in the Labor Party programme of 1904,⁵⁴ the aim pursued by the European socialists with the greatest passion and the least method, to wit, the complete destruction of the social order that the socialists call bourgeois.

As I have just said, the socialists' first step was aimed at the destruction of the principle of competition. They first set about destroying it from without.

The introduction of such a system would obviously have restricted trade with foreign countries and thus reduced trade in general, but the Labor Party, having an extremely limited understanding of political economy and pursuing only its most immediate aims of increasing wages and reducing working hours, forced the Government to table some draft bills:

53 The *Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act* was passed in December 1904.

54 Labor Party programme of 1904; apparently another reference to Tom Mann's May Day demands.

- I. a customs act;
- II. an act concerning navigation, posts and telegraph;
- III. an immigration act.

In my previous dispatch concerning Australia's international status,⁵⁵ I cited these three laws as impinging upon foreign interests. I am constrained to repeat them here, since they, with other laws, are products of the work of the socialist Australian Labor Party.

I. The Customs Act

This bill received royal assent and came into force on 3rd October 1901.

In accordance with one of its clauses, all consumable products on ships entering Australia are subject to customs duties from the moment the ship arrives at the first Australian port until the moment of its departure from Australia. Of necessity, ships sailing from Europe to Sydney are obliged to stop at Fremantle. The distance between this port and Sydney, in both directions, is about 4,900 miles through open seas. Throughout this time, they continue to pay duty on the products they consume. Initially the customs officers would affix seals on all products as soon as a ship came into Fremantle, so that the ship was obliged to stock up on all necessities in Australia. The ships' masters used to break the seals upon sailing out into the open sea, but in this case they were subject to punishment upon arrival at the next Australian port. The Australian authorities thus claimed for themselves the right to pass judgement upon the actions of foreign nationals committed on their own territory, since a merchant ship on the high seas is subject only to the jurisdiction of its own government. The enforcement of this law elicited a mass of disputes and ended in a compromise between the Australian Government and the shipping companies, by which the local authorities would not apply any more seals, but the masters were obliged to declare and display all the products they had and pay duty on them.

Besides being in breach of the basic principles of international law, the introduction of such a restrictive and irksome law cannot be explained by fiscal aims, since in comparison with total customs revenue it represents an insignificant amount. Whereas revenue from customs duties as a result

⁵⁵ See Document 97.

of an improbably high tariff (on average about 40% of declared value) brings in the impressive sum of 80 to 100 million roubles per year, the aforementioned yield is less than 200,000 roubles annually.

From an impartial point of view, this law makes no sense at all, but this is not how it seems from the Australian socialists' point of view. Taking advantage of Australia's remoteness and the protection of the British fleet, the Labor Party began to isolate Australia, showing that, if it was unable to completely forbid the entrance of foreign ships into its ports, then it was free to place upon them whatever restrictions they chose. I am informed by the most reliable of sources that the Labor Party was guided by precisely such considerations when the bill was passed into law.

II. The Post and Telegraph Act.

According to one of the clauses concerning navigation, coloured crew members are forbidden to set foot on Australian soil, and clauses concerning the mail mean that, in view of the cessation of any contact with coloured men, those European shipping companies (including British companies) which employ coloured labour will receive no subsidy from the Post Office for transporting mail.

The law on navigation is enforced so strictly that, when a sailing ship with a Chinese crew was wrecked on Australian shores, the Chinese who survived were imprisoned and then deported.

By means of these laws the local socialists apparently wished to preserve the purity of the Australian breed against the infiltration of unsuitable sheep into the flock.

The Post and Telegraph Act almost demands the impossible. When sailing across the Red Sea and the tropics, ships have to employ black stokers, because white men are unable to endure such labour.

By the introduction of these restrictive laws, the socialists came close to achieving the aim I referred to above: the isolation of Australia.

The extracts I have cited from the above laws, drawn up by the socialists, are, however, only the precursors, so to speak, to a declaration of war. The declaration itself came very swiftly in the form of an unlikely law on immigration (the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901).

The title of this act indicates its purpose, but in reality the purpose is much broader. One need only read two clauses to realise that it is not a question of restricting immigration, but of terminating it completely. This task was not so easy to achieve, for the matter concerned free access to a civilised country, i.e. a universally recognised right. By violating it, Australians would have placed themselves outside the statutes of international law. However, instead of promulgating precisely defined laws, they devised a formula which, instead of clarity, introduced the arbitrary application of discretion. Thus Clause 3 of the Immigration Act says, word for word: 'entry into Australia is forbidden to any person who, upon the request of a government official, is unable to write 50 words in any of the European languages selected by the official.'⁵⁶

But even this was deemed insufficient. After a period of time, in 1906, the law on immigration was changed and, at the present time, its initial wording refers to all Europeans except British subjects, and the requirement concerning knowledge of languages has been extended to all the languages of the globe. This last amendment was made in consequence of an application from the Japanese Government, which asked that their language be assigned a position equal to the European ones.⁵⁷ Entry into Australia by coloured people, including British subjects, has been absolutely forbidden (with very few exceptions). Furthermore, according to that same Clause 3, no person may enter the bounds of Free Australia if an official thinks that he might be a burden to society or some charitable institution.

There is no need to demonstrate that the said laws had not the aim of limiting immigration, as their titles hypocritically announced, but of terminating it completely. And indeed, those who were interested in settling in Australia stopped going there, while the shipping companies refused to carry any coloured people at all.

56 Hedenstrom's 'word-for-word' rendering conveys the sense, without using the word 'dictation'. The relevant clause of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* reads: 'Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in a European language directed by the officer'.

57 The date given by Hedenstrom is incorrect. The amendment was adopted in December 1905 and permitted the holding of language tests not only in European languages, but in any one of the 'prescribed' languages. It was adopted at the request of Japan, which insisted that Japanese should be given status equal to that of European languages. In practice, however, the amendment meant an increase in the number of languages in which the immigration authorities could apply the test, and thus exclude undesirable immigrants.

Here are the numerical data for immigration by decade, commencing in 1852.

1852 to 1861: 521,000 persons
1862 to 1871: 188,000 --- ‘ ---
1872 to 1881: 223,000 --- ‘ ---
1892 to 1901: 2,400⁵⁸ --- ‘ ---

For the three-year period 1902 to 1905, departures from Australia exceeded arrivals by 8,000 persons.⁵⁹

Mention should be made of one more appendix promulgated in 1905, referring to workers arriving by contract, and not excluding British subjects. Here the hypocritical law states that contract workers will be admitted, but only in cases when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or a person authorised by him, finds that they are not coming for the purpose of competing with local workers. This is tantamount to the exclusion of all contract workers.⁶⁰

At the same time as this, a whole population of coloureds (Kanakas) was forcibly expelled from one of the Australian states (Queensland), on the pretext that they were not native Australians, although they had been there much longer than the British. The Kanakas were unskilled labourers on the sugar plantations, where white people cannot work because of the difficult climatic conditions.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the Kanakas were expelled to nearby islands, while the plantation owners were thus deprived of working hands and were ruined.

In Tasmania the natives were dealt with even more simply: they were exterminated by murder.⁶²

58 The decrease in migration for the period of 1892 to 1901 occurred not as a consequence of immigration laws, which at that time had not yet been promulgated, but as a consequence of a terrible drought that lasted for seven consecutive years, causing untold misfortune in Australia and temporarily halting its economic life. (Hedenstrom's note.)

59 The figures cited accord broadly with the official statistics, except for the period 1902–1905 when, according to the consul, departures exceeded arrivals by 8,000. In fact, the net balance in that period was also positive, at 2,660.

60 This refers to the federal *Contract Immigrants Act*, passed into law in December 1905.

61 In the years 1906–1908, 10,000 Kanakas (Kanakas) were sent home from Queensland. They had earlier been brought by force by ‘blackbirders’ to work on the sugar plantations.

62 Practically all the native Tasmanians were exterminated by the British in the first thirty years of colonisation, which began in 1803. Of some 5,000 natives on the island, by 1833 only 500 remained. The last full-blood Tasmanian, Truganini, died in 1876.

By means of the law on immigration and contract labour, Australia has raised an insurmountable barrier against the admission of any European labourers and any coloured persons, whoever they might be.

Thus, the aim of the socialists' first move – the isolation of Australia and elimination of competition from without – was achieved. Since the promulgation of the immigration laws, Australia has been visited by travellers, tourists and businessmen, but there have been no more immigrants.

It should be noted that, with the exception of the socialists, no one in Australia favours these laws.

Having safeguarded itself from external competition, the Labor Party set about destroying internal competition. This was done by attacking the principle of free labour, by limiting opportunities to profit from the fruits of one's labour, and it involved even deeper aims: the destruction of capital, which the socialists call an implement of production.

Investigation of this matter is extremely complex; it is further complicated by the fact that the laws are written in a specific language with many technical expressions barely intelligible to any Englishman.

A place of honour in Australian socialists' legislation in this field is occupied by laws regarding arbitration between employers and employees.

It is not a matter of an arbitration tribunal chosen by both sides in agreement, but of compulsory arbitration invoked by only one of the parties and thus compulsory for the other.

In essence, compulsory arbitration, imposing upon owners or proprietors obligations which do not result from a contract they have signed, violates the principle of private property. Apart from this, it infringes upon free will, i.e. upon personal freedom, for it creates an institution which has the right to alter a contract freely entered into by two sides, and to determine the new conditions under which they must continue their joint labours.

In introducing the law on compulsory arbitration, the socialists presented an aim which found general favour: if not complete cessation, then, at least, a significant reduction in strikes and lock-outs, events which inflict enormous damage upon the entire economic life of the country.

The achievement of such important practical results could perhaps have justified the harm caused to abstract theory, as long as the bodies involved acted to protect the important public interest and that of the state.

Let us examine the extent to which the introduction of compulsory arbitration in Australia has served its purpose.

The initiative in this matter was taken by the state of New South Wales in 1902. The law enacted by the Federal Parliament in 1906 is simply a repetition of that state's law. It is called the Industrial Arbitration Act.⁶³

One of the bases on which it is founded consists of the existence of so-called Industrial Unions⁶⁴ or syndicates, made up of the employers on one side and the employees on the other, or of employees alone. It is sufficient to have 50 persons in order to form such a union. It must be formally registered and ratified, and from that moment the arbitration court considers it a legal entity whose rights and obligations are clearly defined by the Act itself.

The Arbitration Court operates continuously and consists of three arbitrators, of whom one is elected by the employees, one by the employers, and the third (the president) is appointed by the Government.

With regard to the employees, complaints made about them or by them are investigated only when the worker belongs to an industrial union and the latter is acting on his behalf in the capacity of a legal entity. As for the employers, any one of them is subject to the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court even if does not belong to any union.

From the moment a complaint is presented before the Arbitration Court and for the whole duration of the proceedings, strikes and lock-outs are forbidden and are considered a crime. The court possesses extensive rights of investigation, decides matters by a majority of votes, and its resolutions are implemented immediately. The property of the unions may be seized

63 The *New South Wales Industrial Arbitration Act* was passed in 1901, and the Arbitration Court began to operate in the state in 1902. Hedenstrom's information is not correct with regard to federal legislation. In 1906, federal parliament did not pass a law on industrial arbitration. The 1904 federal *Conciliation and Arbitration Act* remained in force. In 1906, as part of anti-monopoly legislation, the federal Australian Industries Preservation Act was passed.

64 These unions should not be confused with the workers' unions frequently mentioned in this report, which are an entirely different organisation. (Hedenstrom's note.)

in order to cover a penalty imposed by the court; but, should that be insufficient, then every member of the union is also personally responsible for a sum of no more than one hundred roubles.

The initial impression created by these laws is favourable, and the article banning strikes and lock-outs could have had extremely tangible results. But misunderstandings and objections arise from the very beginning.

The Arbitration Court has the right, upon a complaint from one of the sides and in spite of any prior agreement, to set wages in every separate case. The question then arises, what happens if the court decides to change the wages for workers at any one factory? If it decides to raise them, then all workers in a similar industry will demand a pay rise; if it decides to reduce them, the employees will want to profit from this decision.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Act foresaw this situation and permitted the court to extend the application of such rulings to all similar enterprises in a certain area. This is known as the Common Rule. Although this rule makes the work of the Court easier by reducing the number of cases, on the other hand it completely alters the purport of a law which was intended only to settle disputes, i.e. it grants the Arbitration Court functions of a judicial nature. The Common Rule attempts to level working conditions, whereas these conditions vary in each separate enterprise, depending upon the location, the market and the state of the enterprise, and require a degree of flexibility. Owing to the Common Rule, the Arbitration Court unwittingly moved beyond the framework of a judicial institution and became nothing less than an administrator of the country's industry. The composition of the court naturally concentrates all responsibility upon the president, since the workers' delegate is always on their side, while the employers' delegate is on the side of the latter. Thus the proprietors of industrial enterprises receive directions concerning their operation from a government official. Hence the Government is imposing restrictions upon private initiative and personal freedom of operation in an area which can only prosper when in the absence of such restrictions.

In the clause in question, the concealed aim with which the socialist proponents of the act got it through Federal Parliament emerges for the first time; that aim is an assault by the State upon the rewards of private endeavour, i.e. capital. To the socialists, the word 'State' means the people, and 'the people' means themselves.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Act did not establish a preliminary agreement for the solution of disputes, nor did it define the limits of the jurisdiction of this court. For this last reason, the court receives a mass of complaints about the most insignificant matters, which could otherwise have been settled through amicable agreement, and moreover much faster than by any court.

Furthermore, practice has shown that since it is easily accessible to employees, the Arbitration Court, though created with a view to bringing about peaceable relations between employers and employees, has on the contrary increased hostility between them, since complaints are brought by employees regarding the most insignificant disputes, to the obvious irritation of both parties.

One of the most unfortunate and at the same time unjust principles laid down by the Act lies in the Court being granted the right to give preference to workers who belong to industrial unions over those who do not; in other words, the Arbitration Court can decree that employers must hire 'union' labour first, and, moreover, this same court determines under precisely what conditions employers have the right to hire workers who do not belong to unions.

This law is a blatant assault upon the freedom of labour. It is at the same time inhumane: membership of an industrial union entails certain expenses, and not every worker is able to pay. It has happened that the union simply did not wish to accept a certain worker, because it considered him insufficiently able or too capable, or because it thought that the number of unionists available was sufficient for the requirements of the industry in question. For such a worker there is no work, neither for the wage fixed by the Arbitration Court, because the unionists have used the Act to claim all the vacancies, nor for a lesser wage, because the Common Rule forbids paying less than the set rate.

By means of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the socialists have created their own kind of workers' aristocracy, not consisting of the best people at all, but rather one with the slogan 'for the unionists everything, for the rest – nothing'.

It is superfluous to state that this aristocracy holds sway in the Labor Party.⁶⁵

65 It should be noted that, for a broad combination of reasons, the number of workers enrolled in industrial unions is significantly less than the number of those who are not. In Sydney, the most industrial centre of Australia, only one-third of all workers belong to unions. (Hedenstrom's note.)

The industrial unions have acquired such power that they have even affected international law. In Sydney, because of complaints by unions, the Arbitration Court handed down a ruling which was binding upon foreign merchant ships.

In New South Wales in 1903, as well as all the previously existing constraints upon foreign merchant ships, an injunction was placed upon the masters of these ships forbidding them to use their own crews to unload a ship. This ruling was not made because of any complaint by the crews, but on the strength of a declaration by the port workers' union. On 30th October 1903, the master of an American sailing ship the *Andromache* was fined 50 pounds sterling (500 roubles) because he had not sought unionist port workers to unload his ship. Moreover, the fine was motivated by the fact that the work was not done by union members, in contravention of the Common Rule.⁶⁶

This ruling reveals all the hypocrisy of this law especially clearly, for it is obvious that neither the master, nor his crew – all being Americans – could belong to a workers' union in Australia!

These facts very closely resemble the activities of the Camorra in Italian ports.

The ruling fairly clearly exposes the strangeness of the Common Rule. Contrary to generally accepted principle, in the case in question, laws are promulgated not by the legislature, but by the arbitrator. The latter receives the complaint and must resolve the dispute; he pronounces his ruling, which at the same time applies to all similar cases, in other words, he creates the law. As stated above, these rulings are handed down categorically and, in practice, by the president alone. Naturally, this converts a special and civil jurisdiction into a general and criminal one: general because these decisions are binding for a great many people unconnected with the case at issue; criminal, because violations of the law thus established (by the arbitrator) entail penal consequences

When foreigners are involved, their rights and interests can only be defended by diplomatic means, but in my previous dispatch 'Concerning Australia's international position'⁶⁷ I pointed out that, with regard to Australia, these means do not exist. Intervention by a consul would elicit

66 The vessel was in fact the four-masted American sailing ship the *Andromeda*.

67 See Document 97.

a scornful smile from the local authorities, since according to instructions from the British Colonial Office consuls are not even considered public servants. An application by a consul of a foreign power to the British Foreign Office in London would elicit the response that it is a matter for the Colonial Office, while the Colonial Office would reply that it was entirely within the competence of the government of the autonomous colony.

In New South Wales, the number of strikes has certainly fallen since the Conciliation and Arbitration Act came into force. It is almost certain that in many instances the rulings of the Arbitration Courts have averted strikes. There is no doubt that the aim – favoured by the public – of the law enacted by the socialists was to a certain extent achieved, and the sacrifice of the principles of private property and free labour led to a certain favourable result, which, however, turned out to be only temporary. The extent of the benefits achieved during this time is also in question.

How many strikes were averted by the Arbitration Court? How many disputes could have been settled by amicable agreement? Were the rulings more expedient than an amicable agreement would have been, if one had taken place? What influence did the Common Rule exert upon the development of industry in the country?

All these questions remain open.

It should be noted that from 1893 to 1901 Australia was stricken by seven consecutive years of bad harvests: many cattle perished, and some tens of millions of sheep. All the banks, except the three largest, were forced to suspend payments, and so on. With the first bumper harvest came an extraordinary economic boom; at the same time the price of wool, the main export commodity, rose strongly; several new gold fields were discovered, and the workers demanded an increase in wages, etc. The employers resisted, and, on the basis of these conflicts, the Arbitration Courts were established. Because at that time the workers' claims were to a certain extent reasonable, the arbitration courts almost always favoured them. The employers submitted to them without question. But the industrial unions, encouraged by this initial success, began to make excessive demands. The first judgement made against them took place in Sydney in 1905 and concerned coal miners. The latter refused to submit to an unfavourable settlement of their claim and, despite the law, went on strike. The executive organs, being completely in the hands of the

ruling socialistic Labor Party, could not, or felt too ashamed, to impose punishment too zealously, and could not countenance the imprisonment of several thousand people. Thus, taking advantage of their virtual impunity, the workers ceased obeying the rulings of the arbitration courts and the latter, so to speak, operated in a vacuum.

But this situation was not to the liking of the socialist leaders, who wished to achieve their aims 'on a legal basis'.

Another reason why the Arbitration Courts did not fully match the socialists' expectations was the high level of morality of British judges. Although appointed by the local government and therefore dependent on the ruling political party, they nevertheless did not compromise their consciences and handed down their judgements impartially. Strikes commenced anew, and the socialists began to work in favour of abolishing the Arbitration Courts they themselves had created. The pretext they put forward was that, since the strikes had recommenced, the courts had not met the expectations placed upon them, and therefore the experiment had failed. They were silent, of course, as to the reasons for the failure. The employers and public opinion also viewed the results of arbitration proceedings with disfavour, since in reality they proved to have validity only when the court pronounced in favour of the workers.

In New South Wales, the Arbitration Courts were abolished as from 1st July 1908,⁶⁸ and at present all the Labor Party press is openly declaring that the best way to settle disputes between employers and employees is by strikes.

The Federal Arbitration Court so far still exists, but its jurisdiction is concerned with matters arising in the various states, and therefore instances of its use are somewhat limited.

In the state of South Australia the Conciliation and Arbitration Act does exist, but is not applied because it can only hear cases in instances when both sides belong to industrial unions, and the employers in this state did not wish to join them.

68 This is inaccurate. The Arbitration Courts in New South Wales were not abolished, but replaced by Industrial Courts, established in the state in 1908 in accordance with the new *Industrial Disputes Act*.

In Western Australia arbitration courts operate more successfully owing to the homogeneous nature of industry in that state (almost exclusively gold-mining). They have to settle disputes arising in more or less similar conditions.

Public opinion in Australia today considers that the establishment of Arbitration Courts has not been successful, since it did not satisfy any class of the population.

However, it would hardly be correct to say that the failure was complete. There is some benefit, at least, in the fact that, owing to the experiment, several of the socialists' hidden designs were clearly revealed.

The idea of compulsory arbitration, modified and adapted to the economic and political conditions of countries where the relations between labour and capital, between employers and employees, constitute a burning question, as for example in Russia, could perhaps be applied in our country, and the defects which emerged in Australia could be eliminated.

The fundamental question is to establish which basic principles should guide the Arbitration Courts when they deliver their rulings. The disputes they consider, in essence, always involve the question of whether there is a reason or possibility, at a particular moment in some given industrial enterprise, or even in a whole branch of an industry, to improve the welfare of workers or not? But whether this improvement will be achieved by an increase in wages, a reduction in working hours, or a change in working conditions disliked by the workers, all comes down to the question of the enterprise's profitability.

There are only two sets of circumstances in which such disputes occur on a purely economic basis:

I – when the workers demand improvements in their material situation because they consider the existing conditions unsatisfactory (rightly or wrongly),

and II – when the workers demand a specific improvement on the grounds that they consider the profits made by the enterprise in which they work would allow the proprietors to improve their welfare, i.e. deem themselves entitled to enjoy, in one form or another, the proprietor's profits.

Although the Arbitration Courts in Australia have been distinguished by a certain partiality towards the employees in their decisions, they have never acknowledged their right to the profits of an enterprise.

The multitude of bills introduced by the socialists with the aim of state intervention in private enterprise includes an attempt to compel private banks to move a proportion of their assets held in precious metals funds (40%) into interest-free treasury bonds. The pretext the socialists put forward for this was that the precious metals fund, required for monetary circulation, did not earn any interest, so the banks would not lose anything if part of it was placed in government (Australian) securities. This fund represents a total of about 200 million roubles.

Public opinion and the financial world took an extremely negative view of the proposed bill, easily discerning its concealed purpose, systematically pursued by the socialists: to appropriate capital for the State.

Several days ago, the socialist party did succeed, however, in passing a law by which all deposits held in banks and unclaimed for a long period of time will become the property of the State.

Bills and laws such as this have aroused distrust among the prosperous and business classes, as they have in England, which at one time had given unlimited credit to its colony.⁶⁹ The well-to-do classes are doing their best to sell off their assets – to the extent that their circumstances permit – and transfer them to England. Some Australians are even leaving their homeland.

I said at the beginning of this dispatch that Australia and New Zealand find themselves in flourishing condition. This fact is beyond doubt, but it would hardly be correct to claim that they reached this condition thanks to the socialists. It would be closer to the truth to say that it has come about in spite of them. The fact is that there is another factor at work in Australia that is much more serious and has more practical effect than socialism, an economic rather than a social one. Being for the most part an agricultural and pastoral country, it is completely dependent upon its harvests. If there is rain, the country flourishes, if there is no rain, there is a drought and the

69 Evidently, capitalists do not wish to invest their capital in a country that is doing its best to destroy it. (Hedenstrom's note.)

country is destitute, no matter what laws the socialists would confer upon it. But in years of good harvests the socialists claim credit for the country's prosperity, remaining silent about the disastrous times.

It would be a mistake, in my opinion, to exaggerate the successes of the socialist party in Australia, deeming it an all-consuming force. In most recent times, obstacles to its autocratic rule are beginning to emerge. Thus, the governments in the states of New South Wales and Western Australia are beginning again to encourage immigration, which, it is true, applies only to Europeans, and moreover only to farmers. Only two years ago not a single government of any state in the Federation would have ventured to adopt such a measure. The socialistic Labor Party was compelled to yield in this matter with extreme reluctance.

The still predominant influence of the socialists may be explained partly by the initial conditions of colonisation, and partly by the appealing and humanitarian aims under whose banner they strove to achieve their desires. However, as soon as their true aims began to be revealed, public distrust was aroused and it is not clear that the socialists have claimed the final victory in Australia. There is one further reason for this.

If one accepts the idea that socialism may triumph, this can hardly come about without international solidarity. It is precisely this factor that the Australian socialists do not admit. They wish to isolate their country from the whole world, while still making use of all world markets for the sale of their products. One does not need to be far-sighted to foresee the complete collapse of such ideals.

The question of what value and importance Australia might embody in the eyes of civilised countries and some others, and what kind of competition might arise, from which quarters, will be the subject of a subsequent dispatch.⁷⁰ [...]

AVPRI 155 (Second Department, I-5) -408-484, ff 168-240. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

70 See Document 102.

100. Hedenstrom to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
10 September (28 August) 1908
No. 30

Confidential

[...] On 16th/29th August of this year, a North American Squadron, comprising 17 naval vessels under the command of Admiral Sperry, arrived in Melbourne.⁷¹

It came at the invitation of the Federal Government of Australia, although that invitation was made to the Government of the United States of America through the mediation of the British Colonial Office.

The purport of this event is of broader significance, of course.

The American sailors came, so to speak, to make the acquaintance of a country which they might perhaps have to defend, if it should happen that the British fleet is so deeply engaged as to be unable to detach sufficient naval forces for its distant colony.

Prior to the Russo–Japanese War, public opinion in Australia clung to the belief that, incredible as it may seem, Russia had designs upon Australia, and the fear of an invasion by the Russian navy intensified even more the age-old hatred that the British harbour towards Russians. After the unfortunate war, this fear passed, but the hostility remained. However, a new enemy arose before the anxious eyes of the Australians. This enemy

71 In December 1907, US President Theodore Roosevelt dispatched a large group of naval vessels on a voyage round the world, under the command of Rear-Admiral Charles Stillman Sperry. The purpose of the voyage was a demonstration of American naval power and its capacity to defend US interests in any of the world's oceans. At the same time, it was intended to demonstrate US power to Japan, whose rising strategic power in the Pacific had begun to cause serious concern to ruling circles in the US after the victory over Russia. Japan's growing naval might could not fail to be of concern to Australians too, especially in the light of Britain's diminishing military presence in the Pacific; Britain was compelled to concentrate its naval forces in European waters owing to the growing confrontation with Germany. Given the new geopolitical situation, the Federal Government took steps to find a new protector – a role that, it seemed, might be filled by the US. In late 1907, without prior agreement with London (again showing a growing trend towards an autonomous Australian foreign policy), Deakin, the Prime Minister, declared that he intended to invite the US navy to visit Australia. The visit to Sydney and Melbourne took place from 20 August to 5 September 1908. Hedenstrom was quite right to see the visit as a combined anti-Japanese demonstration.

is Britain's ally Japan. Not only the possibility of a Japanese military conquest of Australia, but also Japan's intention to seize the first available opportunity to do so, is regarded here as an almost unquestioned fact. Both the public and the Federal Prime Minister Mr Deakin himself state this quite openly.⁷²

It is well known that, after the Russo–Japanese War, relations between Japan and the United States also changed. Thus the combined interest of three nations – Britain, the United States and Australia – led to this anti-Japanese demonstration.

One would think that, under such circumstances, this visit should have called forth genuine and most sincere delight on the part of the Australian population. In reality, however, it proved not to be so.

The Government took every step to provide a most splendid welcome for the American fleet, doing everything in its power. The city was decked with flags, with the exception of a few private homes, and there was floodlighting every evening. Official dinners, receptions and balls followed one after the other, but the majority of the population manifested only curiosity, in no way expressing any pleasure. Occasional applause in the streets during a parade of US naval personnel created a somewhat artificial impression and underlined the indifference of the crowd.

Among the upper classes of society, distaste for the Americans was not even concealed, and many expressed complete satisfaction when the squadron sailed from Melbourne.

This may be explained partly by the envy with which Australians regard the great republic, and partly by a certain contempt which the Americans manifest towards Australians.

In any case, in terms of its welcome by the population, the American Naval Squadron's visit to Australia was not a success.⁷³

In a speech addressed to Admiral Sperry at an official function, Prime Minister Deakin expressed quite clearly the hope that, should Australia be threatened by some foreign power, the USA, a nation related to Britain,

72 See Document 95.

73 This statement, like the claim that Australians showed indifference to the American visitors, is not supported by any other known source. On the contrary, all the evidence suggests that the American officers and men received a welcome of unprecedented enthusiasm. In Sydney, 400,000 people turned out to greet them; in Melbourne, 600,000. That represented over a quarter of the total population of Australia.

would defend it against the enemy. The American Admiral was extremely reserved and circumspect in all his official speeches, and only once, at a dinner held in his honour by the Melbourne Club, did he mention two sister nations which should always walk hand in hand. But, although there were 200 people present at this dinner, this was still a private gathering and his speech was not published. The official celebrations included a parade of local troops and American sailors. Although the newspapers wrote that there were 15,000 troops in the parade, this does not correspond to the truth. Strictly American forces comprised one battalion of marines and two artillery batteries. There were 2,000 American sailors marching in an orderly manner. The rest were Australian forces comprising one infantry regiment and two cavalry regiments. Two cavalymen, who were probably intoxicated, fell from their mounts while proceeding at a walking pace. The rest were children: cadets, marching in a most disorderly manner. In all, there were no more than 8,000 men.

On the whole, the parade created a most pathetic impression on everyone and could not compare in any way with those I had seen on the island of Malta.⁷⁴

Everything stated here is absolutely authentic, since I witnessed it personally.

As far as I am aware, the Americans were also unfavourably impressed with their visit to Australia. They were much more interested in seeing this wonderful country than thinking about defending it for the Australians.

According to several knowledgeable people, the American naval vessels were splendid, but the crews unsatisfactory. There were hardly any veteran re-engaged gunnery ratings, and the senior officers were well into their declining years and could not in any way compare with their brilliant, young and well-trained British counterparts.

The American fleet left Melbourne for Manila on 5th September of this year according to the New Style calendar. According to newspaper reports, the number of sailors deserting their ships was about 300, but this number cannot be verified, since apparently Admiral Sperry and his staff did not wish matters of this kind to be known. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1300, ff76-82. In Russian. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

⁷⁴ From 1906 until his posting to Australia as consul general, Hedenstrom was Russian consul in Malta.

101. Hedenstrom to Bentkovsky,
Director, Second Department,
Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
25 (12) September 1908
No. 32

[...] Among the commodities imported into Australia from the United States of America, American cigarettes occupy an important place. The same may be said of Japan, where the cigarettes sold are almost exclusively American.

Having made the acquaintance in Melbourne of the proprietor of the largest tobacconist, I steered the conversation towards the possibility of importing Russian cigarettes. Mr Altson⁷⁵ took a keen interest in the idea and said, among other things, that one reason for the absence of Russian cigarettes on the Australian market is that Russian merchants do not inform foreigners of their wares and, unlike the Americans, do not send any marketing agents to Australia. He expressed a desire to establish contact about this matter with a major Russian trading company.

The attached letter from Altson's company shows that in the first instance they wish to obtain only samples of Russian cigarettes, in order to inspect the quality and investigate opportunities to distribute them here.⁷⁶ According to Altson, they must be extremely carefully packed to prevent damage during passage through the tropics: every carton of 100 must be packed in a separate zinc-lined box, and these boxes placed in a large zinc-lined crate, which itself must be placed in a wooden crate.

Perhaps Your Excellency will find an opportunity to arrange for our Russian trading companies which deal with export of cigarettes to be informed that they might wish to establish business relations with Altson of Melbourne, a first-class company, and thus initiate the export of Russian cigarettes to Australia.⁷⁷

75 Barnett Hyman Altson was a prominent Melbourne tobacconist, the proprietor of a company that supplied high-quality tobacco.

76 Altson's letter is not reproduced here.

77 Hedenstrom's information on the opportunity to export Russian tobacco to Australia was forwarded to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, which in turn passed it to the Council of Representatives of Trade and Industry, the executive body of the most influential organisation of Russian entrepreneurs.

A firm from Perth in Western Australia has approached me with a similar proposal. I attach their letter.⁷⁸

AVPRI 155 (Second Department, I-5) -408-484, ff 340–342. In Russian.

102. Hedenstrom to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
20 (7) December 1908
No. 47

[...] I have the honour to submit to the Imperial Embassy herewith a copy of my report on Australia's economic and political situation. [...]

Melbourne,
14 (1) December 1908
No. 44

Copy

Part I⁷⁹

In commencing work on the third of my dispatches, with the purpose of elucidating what value and interest Australia may have in the eyes of European and certain other countries,⁸⁰ I was obliged to deal with a mass of statistical numerical data. I shall attempt, however, to present them in as limited a number as possible, since the main interest lies not in numbers, but in the answer to the question, what kind of rivalries – and between whom – may be provoked by this new state, information about which is fairly scant.

78 Rosenblatt Brothers' letter is not reproduced here.

79 The translation is made from the author's copy, sent by Hedenstrom to the Imperial Embassy in London. The original was sent on 1/14 December 1908 to A. K. Bentkovsky, Director of the Second Department of the Foreign Ministry.

80 See Documents 97 and 99.

‘A land without water, without mountains, without rivers, without shade’ – that is how Captain Cook and his comrades spoke about Australia when, on 28th April 1770, they first set foot on its soil.⁸¹ They could have added ‘and almost uninhabited’. Nobody knows, even now, how many natives there are living in Australia, a continent equal in area to 4/5 of Europe. Official data cite a figure of 50,000, others believe that there are two or three times more,⁸² but no matter how many there are now, in a few years’ time all that will remain of Australian natives will be memories and skeletons in museums, as proof that they once existed.

At present there are 4 million Europeans, almost exclusively English, living in a country which seemed so wretched to those who discovered it, in prosperity that would be the envy of any European country. The population of Australia, however, is growing slowly. This arises not as a consequence of difficulty in feeding a larger number of people, since it has been proved that the fully explored part of Australia alone could easily accommodate over 40 million inhabitants, but because the birth rate is falling, moreover, fairly rapidly. Whereas 40 years ago there were 40 births per year per thousand inhabitants, there are now only 25. It is true that mortality has also decreased somewhat, but at a significantly lesser rate. At present the annual natural increase in population comprises 60,000 persons. If the former rate of births had been maintained, this increase would be not 60,000 but 100,000 per year. One should, however, bear in mind that the rate of births could fall even lower, since research into the reasons for such a decrease has shown that they are not accidental, but are the same as those seen in France and more generally in countries with ultra-socialistic tendencies. On the other hand, one cannot count on a fall in the death rate, since owing to the favourable climatic conditions it is already insignificant (11 per 1,000). On the contrary, rather, one may assume that with the development of the manufacturing industry, the death rate will increase somewhat. Immigration, which at one time completely ceased, or rather the balance of arrivals over departures, amounted to 10,000 persons in 1906.⁸³

81 On 28 April 1770, James Cook, aboard the *Endeavour* in Botany Bay, first sighted Australian Aborigines. The British went ashore on 29 April. However, judging by Cook’s journals, the words cited by Hedenstrom do not appear to have been uttered on either 28 or 29 April.

82 Here and below, Hedenstrom cites rounded and therefore sometimes imprecise figures from the official statistical yearbooks of the Commonwealth of Australia.

83 Hedenstrom did not consider it necessary to state that the figure quoted relates only to the male population. In 1906, the female population fell by almost 6,000. Arrivals therefore exceeded departures by approximately 4,000.

On the basis of these data, it may quite reliably be assumed that over a fairly lengthy period of time, the population of Australia will increase annually by no more than 70,000, and, if living conditions remain the same as today, then in twenty years' time its population will not exceed 5½ million people.⁸⁴ Consequently, the time when this country might be in a position to occupy any kind of independent standing, by the number of its inhabitants, in the eyes of European countries, can come no earlier than the next century.

This fact is of direct relevance to the question which is the subject of this present dispatch, since it indicates both the limits of Australia's political future and, to a certain degree, the limits of its economic development.

Let us examine what Australia's wealth consists of, and what benefits have been derived from it by those English immigrants whose numbers only a quarter of a century ago barely reached the population of St Petersburg.

This country at present produces all that is necessary for human existence and for industrial prosperity according to the last word in science. Nevertheless, the original dismal impression expressed by its first pioneers was not mistaken. This is because, with the exception of the resources in the ground, everything else in Australia has been imported, developed and created by the colonising genius of the Anglo-Saxon race.

One of the main factors which propelled Australia onto the path of prosperity was the discovery of gold. In 1851, 10 million roubles worth of gold was extracted. By 1853, 140 million roubles worth of it had been mined. In subsequent years significantly less, but after that, commencing from 1903, the amount reached 150 million and, with insignificant fluctuations, continues to remain at this level up to the present time.

Not a single industry in the world is as fickle and exposed to the vagaries of chance as gold-mining. Both with regard to gold dust and veins of ore, Australia is no exception. In the 1850s the state of Victoria occupied first place for gold extraction, but now Western Australia has moved into the lead.

Concerning this industry, assumptions may be made only for the immediate future. But two circumstances speak in favour of the fact that the reserves of gold in Australia are still enormous. The first is that gold has been found in all its states without exception, and the second, that the

⁸⁴ In fact, by 1926, the population of Australia exceeded 6,000,000.

area still unexplored represents an immense expanse. The amount of gold mined also depends on the methods of its extraction, which are being improved with every year and, in this respect, the same phenomena as we have in Siberia can be seen here.

Over the past 50 years, 5 billion roubles worth of gold has been exported from Australia, and this sum is increasing annually by 150 million roubles.

Of paramount importance in the Australian economy is sheep-breeding. It commenced at the end of the eighteenth century with the importation of several pairs of the purest Spanish breed. In 1871, in the six Australian states, there were already 40 million sheep, in 1881 – 65 million, and in 1891 – 106 million. Subsequently, as a result of seven consecutive years of terrible drought, one third of all the sheep perished but, with the onset of favourable years which then ensued, this loss was soon made good, and at present the number of sheep is again approaching 80 million head. In good years Australia exports about 700 million pounds in weight of the finest wool for a sum of about 260 million roubles. Half of this wool is bought by Europe, 1/3 by England, while the rest goes to the United States of North America and to Canada. The total value of the sheep is set at 400 million roubles.

From the point of view of this dispatch, one question is of great interest: can sheep-breeding in Australia develop limitlessly, and if not, where does the limit lie?

In answering this question, one should bear in mind that, apart from sheep-breeding, which requires a considerable amount of pastureland, Australia also has agriculture. The latter also requires expanses of land and, moreover, of no lesser quality. It has already been observed that, little by little, the farmers are driving the sheep-breeders into the interior of the continent, where the soil is less and less fertile and finally becomes desert. Under such conditions the area of land available to sheep-breeders is naturally limited, on the one hand by expanding tillage, and on the other by desert.

On this basis, cautious knowledgeable people consider that the maximum possible number of sheep in Australia cannot exceed 160 million head, i.e. approximately twice the present number.⁸⁵

85 By 1990, the number of sheep in Australia had reached 170,000,000. The number then fell, owing to economic factors, to approximately 120,000,000 by 2000, and 100,000,000 by 2014.

An important place in Australia's economic life is occupied by cattle-raising.

Australian cattle, just like the sheep, suffered badly during the terrible drought. In 1891 cows and bulls numbered 11 million head. In 1903 there remained a little over 7 million, but these losses are gradually being replenished. The value of all the cattle in Australia is stated to be about 500 million roubles.

It is superfluous to say that the number of cattle far exceeds the needs of the local inhabitants, although they consume far more meat than any of the European countries. According to statistical data for the year 1906, every Australian inhabitant consumes about 1 *pood* [36 pounds] of meat per year whereas in Russia the total is about 5 pounds.

Besides meeting the needs of the local population, Australian cattle are also a significant source of income in the form of exported butter, frozen meat, hides, and so on.

Thus in 1906 Australia exported:

25 million roubles worth of butter;
 11 million roubles worth of frozen mutton;
 4½ million roubles worth of frozen or tinned beef;
 15 million roubles worth of sheepskins;
 6 million roubles worth of cattle hides;
sundries worth 7 million roubles;
 to a total value of 68½ million roubles.

To this we must add the export of live cattle, cheese, sterilised milk, and bones, to a total of about one million roubles.

Here it is necessary to mention another animal, the export of whose skins yields approximately 6 million roubles annually. This animal is the rabbit. Although it provides the country with a certain income, the rabbit is in fact a real pest for cattle-raising and especially for sheep-breeding. Multiplying with amazing speed, the rabbits are destroying the pastures, leaving nothing for the sheep and cattle. With government participation, all possible measures, costing enormous amounts of money, are being taken to eradicate them, but the results are not always propitious.

Of some interest is an incident from Australian political life, in connection with the search for a way to exterminate rabbits. The return of favourable weather in 1903 also stimulated their reproduction. The devastation of the pastures was terrible, as it was calculated that five rabbits consume the amount of grass needed for one sheep. The Government appealed to the Pasteur Institute in Paris for assistance in the national disaster and to seek a way to exterminate them. In 1906 a French doctor arrived in Sydney for this purpose.⁸⁶ In order to carry out his experiments, a small island near Sydney was placed at his disposal. To everyone's amazement, his mission was met with such hostility that he was soon forced to leave. The reason was soon revealed.

The fact is that, prior to Parliamentary elections, local or federal, the candidates are in the habit of hiring people and sending them out to kill rabbits. These people from the working class are provided with guns, powder and shot and, as well as that, are paid a certain sum of money in the form of daily wages. This is done, however, on condition that these people unflinchingly vote for the candidates who send them out. Thus a special class of workers was formed, comprising several thousand persons who work exclusively as rabbit hunters, particularly before Parliamentary elections.

The Labor Party (the socialists) judged that if the rabbits were exterminated the said worker-hunters would be deprived of their livelihood, and, being the dominant political party, compelled the Government to stop the French doctor's experiments, whose aim was to avert a national disaster.⁸⁷ The Government complied, and the doctor departed. A graphic example of the socialists' attitude to state economic interests.

According to the latest data there are about 1½ million horses in Australia, with a value of approximately 150 million roubles. They are exported almost exclusively to British colonies, with the main demand coming

86 This refers to Dr Jean Danysz (Jan Danysz), a microbiologist of Polish extraction, from the Pasteur Institute in Paris. He was invited to Australia in 1906 and conducted successful trials of his biological methods of rabbit control.

87 Danysz's experiments led to deep dissatisfaction in Labor circles. At a conference of NSW Labor on 5 February 1906, a resolution was tabled demanding an end to attempts at biological control of rabbits. Opponents of the trials argued that biological methods meant unemployment for those employed at shooting rabbits. The resolution was carried. See Michael Hogan (ed.), *Labour Pains: Early Conference and Executive Reports of the Labor Party in New South Wales*, Vol. II. 1906–1911, Sydney, The Federation Press, 2008, pp. 135–136.

from India, where 10,000 to 15,000 are sent every year. The height of trade in Australian horses took place in the years 1901–1902 during the Boer War, for which 26,000 horses were sent.

The export of horses earns about 2½ million roubles annually.

Thus the sum total of exports produced by the pastoral industry, including rabbits, is approximately 337 million roubles, more than twice that earned by gold mining.

Of that total, 75% comes from sheep-breeding.

Another benefit of the pastoral industry for the Australian population lies in the fact that the owners of the gold mines are mainly British and not Australians, so almost all the gold extracted is sent to Britain. Only the wages earned by the workers (about 70,000 persons) and the tax levied by the local government remain in the country. The proceeds of the pastoral industry, which employs the same numbers of people, go entirely to the benefit of Australians.

The work done in the mines, its product and the profits from the sale of the gold might as well not exist for Australia. Furthermore, when the gold mines are worked out, in places where the soil is infertile the temporary animation brought by the opening of the industry dies down and everything returns to its original state. No change at all takes place in those districts, except that the gold has disappeared. One could, it is true, object that Australians are not losing anything by this, but that is the advantage of industries connected with cultivation of the land: the fact that permanence and limitlessness are characteristic of them, in the sense of progress, at least, and consequently they are the surest means of providing for the population.

As everywhere else, agriculture in Australia developed later than grazing. It was particularly insignificant during the gold fever. Throughout the whole Australian continent, no more than 400,000 hectares was under cultivation in 1858. The cultivated area is now about 4½ million hectares. It is an interesting fact that the quantity of cereals obtained rose from 14 million hectolitres in 1901 to 26 million in 1903, while the area of land sown increased by only 9%. This is a clear indication that the result was mainly due to improved methods of cultivation. An example worthy of imitation in Russia.

In a good year (1903), the value of cereals harvested came to approximately 240 million roubles.

Just like cattle-raising, crops produced far exceed the needs of the population. The latter need 10 million hectolitres of cereals per year, whereas over the last 5 years the annual yield averaged 24 million hectolitres. On the whole, the export of agricultural products so far gives about 60 million roubles annually, and Australia at present occupies a position of considerable importance among countries exporting grain.

Apart from grain, the export of other agricultural products is insignificant. Fruit to the value of about 3 million roubles is sent to England from Tasmania.

As stated above, the Australian soil is capable of producing all that is needed. Nevertheless, certain agricultural products such as coffee, sugar, tea and tobacco are imported. This is not because it is impossible to produce these commodities here, but because they can only be grown in Northern Australia, in its tropical areas where, because of the climatic conditions, only coloured people can till the land. However, the Labor socialists have completely blocked their admission to Australia in order to prevent competition. For these reasons, huge expanses of land remain uncultivated, and Australia imports 18 million roubles worth of tea, sugar, coffee and tobacco annually.

As in the case of sheep-breeding, there are certain data of some interest from the point of view of the present dispatch. These indicate the degree to which it might be possible to extend cultivation in Australia. It has been proved that only 43% of Australia's entire territory receives an annual rainfall of 37 centimetres. This is the minimal amount of moisture required for agriculture. Those 4½ million hectares which are now sown comprise 1.5% of that area. The well-watered area, that which receives 75 centimetres of rain a year, amounts to 100 million hectares, which means that it is possible to increase the cultivated area by 25 times.

These calculations, it is true, are of a theoretical nature, but do at least indicate that there is still a great deal of land suitable for farming in Australia.

With regard to mineral wealth, I believe that all the minerals essential for industry are to be found in Australia. But for certain reasons the mining and exploitation of mineral resources is not particularly developed.

Excluding gold, the value of all the other metals mined is 75 million roubles per year, and when gold is included the annual total is 225 million roubles.

Iron, copper, tin and silver are found here and, from that point of view, the future of Australia is completely assured.

One of its principal resources is coal, which to date is mined in large quantities only in New South Wales, although it is found in all the Australian states and in New Zealand. The total amount of coal mined annually comes to 9 million tons, 7 million of it in New South Wales. This amount (9 million tons) exceeds the requirements of the local market by 1½ million tons, so in view of the enormous deposits of coal available, Australia will never need to import it.

I have, perhaps, omitted some branches of Australian industry reckoned in more modest numbers, but Australia produces a total of about 700 million roubles a year from mining and from the land. If one takes into consideration that its population comprises 4 million, of whom only 1½ million are adult males, it becomes clear what a high level of prosperity Australians enjoy. It is important to note that such a significant result is obtained not by expending a large amount of labour, as we see in other countries, but because of the natural resources of the country.

In an official speech in 1906, the Federal Prime Minister, Mr Deakin, put the value of Australia's trade at one billion roubles.⁸⁸ Knowledgeable people consider that figure a little exaggerated, but there is no doubt that Australia produces much more than it consumes, and that its exports exceed its imports.

Its principal client is England (the mother country), which takes more than half its output. Second place in this respect is occupied by the British colonies.

As far as imports into Australia are concerned, Britain again stands at the forefront; next come the United States and Germany. Imports into Australia from Britain represent a sum of 220 million roubles. All these goods arrive on British ships.

88 According to the official Commonwealth statistical yearbooks, foreign trade in 1906 did indeed exceed £100,000,000, reaching £114,000,000. However, in his most important official speech of 1906, delivered at Ballarat on 17 October during the election campaign, Deakin did not cite this figure.

There is hardly any trade between Russia and Australia. Of late, a certain amount of frozen meat has been exported from Sydney to Vladivostok, while from Vladivostok to Melbourne timber, for which there is great demand here, has begun to arrive. There are some Russian goods in Melbourne stores, namely furniture. For trade to develop between Australia and Russia, it is essential that Russian traders come here themselves to study the market conditions on the ground.

Australia's financial situation is in a completely satisfactory condition. In this respect the budget is what attracts most attention.

With the establishment of Federation, a certain part of State responsibilities passed from the governments of the separate states to the Federal Government, which thus obtained access to essential funding. The revenues from customs, post and telegraph were put at its disposal.

Customs revenues provide about 90 million roubles annually, and post and telegraph 25 million, so the Federal Government has a total of 115 million roubles at its disposal. Up to now, however, the Federal budget has not exceeded 45 million roubles. Owing to a disparity between revenues and essential expenditures and the excess of the former over the latter, the constitution obliged the Federal Government to give the surplus obtained from customs revenues to the governments of the separate states, distributing them proportionally. But, on the one hand for the greater stability of budgets of the states, and on the other to give the Federal budget some flexibility, it was ordained that the Federal Government had to return no less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the customs revenues to the states, i.e. about 60 million roubles per year. But even under this condition the revenue at the Federal Government's disposal has exceeded its requirements to this day. This situation may soon change, as the Labor Party has firmly decided to pass a law providing pensions both for those who are unable to work and for elderly workers. These pensions are to be from the Federal budget.

The railways, which belong to the governments of the separate states, provide an annual revenue of 120 million roubles. This covers all their operating costs and, in addition, 3% for the capital borrowed for their construction. This latter was borrowed at 4%, so the Government has to pay only 1% extra.

Taken together, the budget of the six Australian states comprises a total of 270 million roubles. Consequently, the entire Australian budget, including the 50 million roubles of the Federal budget, comprises

320 million roubles. To this should be added 150 million roubles worth of municipal expenses, obtained from city taxes. Thus Australian state and city expenses including the railways approach 500 million roubles. Taking into account the number of inhabitants (4,000,000 people) and the fact that no more than 10 million roubles per year are spent on defence requirements, i.e. less than 5% of the whole State budget, the sum of 500 million roubles seems high.

There is no Federal debt as such, but there are debts arising from loans contracted by each of the separate states for themselves. In 1906, the total of all these loans came to about 2 billion, 300 million roubles, for which they pay 85 million roubles interest a year. Thus there is a government debt of about 550 roubles per citizen. True, the portion due to loans for the construction of railways should be excluded from this sum, since these latter almost pay for themselves. These loans amount to one billion, 300 million roubles. Nevertheless, the State debt comes to the imposing sum of one billion roubles.

Four-fifths of Australia's loans are contracted in England, so the stock-exchange value of these securities is set in London. At present the prices stand at par for 3.5% of them.

From the above figures one may conclude that Australia's financial situation is in a satisfactory state, but one should not forget that it spends the insignificant sum of ten million on defence, and the question of Australia's defence is one of vital necessity. It could lead to expenses that would cause a radical change in its budget.

With this I conclude the first part of my dispatch. Its aim was to present, in general outline, materials bearing on the significance and value Australia might have in the eyes of those countries which are constrained to seek unoccupied land for their own surplus population.

These materials will perhaps provide an indication of what hopes those countries could place on this wealthy and, at the same time, almost uninhabited country.

I also intend to have done with the tedious statistics I was of necessity obliged to cite, and which I have attempted not to misuse, as far as possible.

Part II

Everything I have said in my previous dispatches has had the aim of presenting Australia from an international, social and economic point of view.

It remains to determine what position it occupies at present in the eyes of civilised countries, for, no matter how isolated and remote it is, significant interests are already linking it with both Europe and America.

Judging by the particular tendency that is accepted in Australian legislation, Australians are apparently not especially concerned about their relations with other countries, as if not conscious of the significance these relations have, first and foremost, for them themselves.

Of interest to the Russian Government is the position Australia already occupies amongst countries, and, particularly, the role that it may be called upon to play in the not too distant future, since it inevitably must become an object of competition.

In my dispatch concerning Australia's international status,⁸⁹ I indicated the virtual independence that the Australian Federation (Commonwealth) enjoys. From the general principles of its constitution, which I set out, it is apparent how weak are the ties that link it to the mother country. But a study of its economic and financial situation leads to the conviction that Australia is still linked to Britain, by ties that will probably keep it in a state of familial subservience for a long time.

From the point of view of international law, Britain alone, in the eyes of foreign governments, possesses the authority to protect the rights of Australians and ensure that they discharge their obligations. The first task does not cause Britain any difficulties, the second is more delicate.

On the surface, the mutual relations between Australia and Britain seem simply a question of a form of government. For us, however, they are of the greatest interest, since the future direction of British imperialism is based on these relations.

In these relations the question of Australia's defence is paramount. So far Australia has been protected principally by its remoteness. It could also be protected by the British fleet, but only as long as the fleet had no other commitments. As for the Australian squadron of the British fleet, it is

89 See Document 97.

completely insignificant; its main asset is the cruiser first class *Powerful*, and its entire force is insufficient even to guard Australia's vast seaboard. There can be no question whatsoever of serious defence by this squadron. I am not even speaking of a situation in which it might be called upon at any moment to serve in some other theatre. The Federal Government makes an annual contribution of 2 million roubles to the maintenance of this squadron, and New Zealand contributes 400,000 roubles.

Public opinion in Australia is not particularly sympathetic to this state of affairs, and would prefer to see its own Australian fleet.

It goes without saying that the formation of this fleet would not have the purpose of replacing the British squadron, but rather of supporting it, with the exclusive aim, however, of protecting Australia alone. A programme for the creation of an Australian navy has been planned and consists of building three cruiser-destroyers, 16 torpedo-boat destroyers and 15 torpedo boats,⁹⁰ but no one knows when this project will be completed. It has been discussed for three years and circumstances indicate that defence or criticism of it serves merely as a weapon in the hands of some politicians.

The cost of constructing a fleet of the stated size has been estimated at a total of 20 million roubles. In British maritime circles the construction of an Australian fleet is regarded with scepticism. The British Admiralty asserts, with good reason, that the cost of one armoured cruiser at present is almost equal to the estimate for the whole fleet.

If, however, one concedes that Australia will, at some time, have its own fleet, adequate – in its view – for its defence, then one of the ties linking it to the mother country will be broken. The project of building an Australian fleet undoubtedly reflects some uncertainty as to the ability of the British navy to protect its colony.

90 The Deakin Government did indeed devote much attention to reinforcing the country's defence capability, insisting particularly on increasing the British naval presence in Australian waters. When these efforts came to nothing in 1905, planning began for the creation of an Australian navy, but the scale of the process of building an army and a navy, and the cost estimates, varied with changes in the international situation and the growing threat of world war. For a long time, the British Government actively opposed the establishment of an Australian navy under exclusively Australian Government control, instead proposing various ways to build up the British naval presence in Australian waters. However, increasing Anglo-German rivalry, which required greater British naval power in European waters at the expense of other regions, forced the British Government to modify its position. In 1909, the Australian and British governments agreed on the establishment of an Australian naval force. The first vessels of this force, the destroyers *Yarra* and *Parramatta*, reached Australian waters and entered service at the end of 1910.

The situation with regard to land defence is a little different, since there are no British land forces here. The local force, numbering 24,000 men in all, is under the supreme command of British officers, who are in the service of the Federal Government. In the opinion of the British military authorities, these troops would not present any serious opposition to an enemy, even if the strength of the landing force was no more than that of the total Australian forces.

The troops are under the direct supervision of the Defence Council, which, in turn, is dependent on the ruling political party. The Minister of War, a member of Cabinet, is always a civilian.

A proposal by the British War Office to separate the Australian Army from matters of local politics was declined. Under such conditions its troops cannot constitute a serious fighting force.

Although Australians do possess the physical qualities capable of making them good soldiers, they have neither the taste nor the aptitude for military pursuits. On the basis of the Boer War, in which Australia played some part, public opinion holds the conviction that a few thousand good riflemen would be quite sufficient to repel any attack. The leaders of the Labor Party are convinced of this or, at least, say that they are convinced.

I consider it imperative here to make a small digression into the past.

During the Anglo–Boer War, the enthusiasm with which the self-governing British colonies came to the aid of the mother country by sending several thousand soldiers to the war was famed throughout the world.

Indeed, from the end of 1899 until February 1901, three colonies—Canada, Australia and New Zealand—with a total population of 10 million, sent 30,000 men to the theatre of operations: Australia—16,000, Canada—8,000 and New Zealand—6,000.⁹¹ On the whole this contribution was fairly modest, but the Australians trumpeted both their loyalty and their feats of arms. Without denying their martial deeds, one must take into consideration that, as a result of several years of drought in Australia at this time, there was a terrible economic crisis. Business had come to a halt and there were many unemployed. The pay for volunteers was high:

91 The figures cited are not fully accurate. From the beginning of 1900, a total of over 20,000 Australians fought in the Boer War: 16,000 men as part of volunteer units sent by the separate Australian colonies, and from 1901 by the Federal Government, and over 5,000 in British and partisan detachments. Canada sent a contingent of 7,400 men and New Zealand 6,500.

an ordinary soldier received 2 roubles, 50 copecks plus travelling expenses per day, a non-commissioned officer 3 roubles, 50 copecks, a captain – 12 roubles per day. It would be correct to say that there would hardly have been such a number of volunteers, had they been obliged to accept the pay of a Russian soldier. Apart from this, they were setting out to an almost certain victory and therefore had every hope of returning home covered in laurels.

I have not cited these considerations in order to call into question the personal services of those Australians who took part in the Boer War (they apparently fought splendidly), but in order to also present the reverse side of the coin.

As I said earlier, the entire annual defence budget amounts to the modest sum of 10 million roubles, of which 8 million are spent on land forces and two million in the form of a subsidy to the British Admiralty for the upkeep of the squadron in Australian waters.

Of the 24,000 men comprising the Australian land forces, only 1,400 are in the regular army (employed by contract); 16,000 men constitute the militia; the rest are volunteers, who differ from the militia only by being unpaid.

The Australian forces comprise only 3% of the whole population capable of bearing arms. The local governments avoid paying attention to this abnormal state of affairs, confining themselves solely to soothing assurances.

In 1905 the Federal Government, probably just for show, appealed to the British War Office for instructions on the creation of an Australian land force. In response to this, a scheme for the organisation of an army was sent, with an estimated cost of 30 million roubles.⁹² This document was shelved and is no longer spoken about.

Thus, at present, Australia is almost defenceless.

Connected with Australia's lack of military defence is a question raised at the Colonial Conference in London in 1902, which emerged again after the Anglo-Boer war. At this conference there was talk for the first time

92 Hedenstrom is apparently referring to the Australian Government's appeal to London in November 1905 to draft a proposal for the organisation of Australia's defences and the fortification of its ports.

about the formation of a permanent colonial force, supplied by all the British colonies in proportion to their population. This corps was to be stationed permanently in England, ready to be sent to any colony where it might be needed. It had already been given the title of the Imperial Reserve Force. In spite of the fact that this project had been proposed by the respected Colonial Secretary at that time, Mr Chamberlain, the representatives of Australia and Canada refused to countenance a corps which would have been entirely at the disposal of the British Government. They feared that a permanent force of that kind could serve not only as protection for a colony against external foes, but also for the suppression of movements in the colonies uncongenial to the central government.

The general question of the colonies' protection needs to be resolved. As long ago as 1903, Chamberlain expressed himself quite clearly, saying that the burden of protecting the Empire was so heavy that England could not bear it alone. It was necessary, he said, that those colonies which had acquired influence and wealth should either renounce the idea of being a constituent part of the Empire, or should proportionally bear their full share of responsibility.

The question of its defence is much more serious for Australia than for Canada. As long as Britain remains at peace with the United States of America, that is, for a long time to come, Canada will always be under the indirect protection of the Monroe Doctrine.⁹³ In this regard Australia is much more on its own. It has undoubtedly acquired 'influence and wealth', but has been able to achieve this precisely because its defence expenditure until now has been so meagre, and also because Britain has lent it two billion roubles. However, its legislation – at times extremely provocative – is not matched by its military capability, and of course it will have to pay a certain insurance premium in the future – in the form of a much more serious defence budget – against possible external dangers.

However, it has avoided doing this up to now.

The question of the 'responsibility', of which the former Colonial Secretary spoke, was raised again, relatively recently, in the British House of Commons by Harold Cox, a member of the House. He said that the

93 Monroe Doctrine: a statement of the principles of US foreign policy, enunciated in 1823 by President James Monroe, declaring the Americas a region closed to European colonisation and political intervention and asserting the principle of 'America for the Americans'. In practice, the doctrine laid the ground for wider US influence and territorial expansion in the Americas.

defence of the Empire was costing Britain 66 million pounds sterling a year. For the very same purpose, the colonies were spending only 900,000 pounds sterling.⁹⁴ The revenues of the colonies were equal to half of those of Britain, he went on. Their population was one quarter of that of Britain, but they contributed at a rate of only 1.5 per cent, he said, questioning whether such a situation could continue.⁹⁵

This categorical statement drew the immediate reply that the British Government baulks at those obstacles it would encounter if it wished to exert too much pressure upon the colonial governments.

This response is in complete accord with reality. Nevertheless, the question of Australia's defence cannot be put aside, and the subjects to be discussed at the Colonial Conference in 1912 will again include the defence of the colonies.⁹⁶

The mother country's burden in this respect is 'too heavy', so Australia must assume 'its proportional share of responsibility'. But who is to determine this share and the nature of this responsibility?

It is said that this will be achieved through mutual agreement. But political, economic and financial conditions are subject to change. It is not sufficient to come to an agreement, it must also be implemented. What authority and what entities will, if need be, ensure that the obligations are discharged?

When we consider these matters, the international question of British imperialism arises with all seriousness.

It involves not only the question of colonial defence. It assumes a whole series of essential agreements in trade and maritime law, commercial exchange, naturalisation, emigration etc.

94 This sum is for Australia and New Zealand (at present about one million pounds sterling), since Canada has refused to contribute to the cost of maintaining a British squadron in its waters. (Hedenstrom's note.)

95 Harold Cox was speaking in the House of Commons on 15 February 1907, as recorded in Hansard for that date (*Parliamentary Debates. Fourth Series*, Vol. CLXIX, 2nd session, 28th Parliament, 1907, p. 454). Hedenstrom's paraphrase of a much longer passage is correct in essentials, but Cox is reported as having said that the colonies paid 1.3 per cent, not 1.5 per cent.

96 The Imperial Conference in question actually took place in London in 1911, but the deteriorating international situation and the rapid rise of German naval power made it necessary to discuss matters of imperial defence at a specially convened conference, at the level of ministers and defence experts, in London as early as 1909.

At the Colonial Conference in 1912, at the suggestion of the Federal Government, the question of forming an Imperial Council for colonial matters, to consist of permanent members from the colonies and the Colonial Office, will be discussed. This council would be something like a permanent Colonial conference, only with lesser authority, since the Prime Ministers of the self-governing colonies attend the conferences.

It is difficult to foretell the future of this project, since there is no doubt that, if the Imperial Council is to function with due independence, it will impinge upon the freedom of action of the colonial parliaments and governments, so not all the self-governing colonies will view with favour the formation of such an institution.⁹⁷

On the part of Australia and New Zealand, incidentally, the notion of forming an Imperial Council conceals a desire expressed by them a long time ago: that not a single question with any direct or indirect bearing on them, particularly in matters of foreign policy, be decided without their agreement. This includes, incidentally, any international agreements concluded by the British Government. For Australia and New Zealand the sorest point in these agreements is the admittance of coloured people into their territories.

In London, of course, the colonies' desire to have the right to vote on questions of an international nature is not very favourably viewed. This applies particularly to Australia and New Zealand, where the ruling Labor Party does not recognise any interests but its own, and then only its most immediate interests.

The question of trade relations, both between Britain and its colonies and between the colonies individually, is directly linked to British imperialism.

In 1902 this was given the name 'Preferential trade', which endures to this day.

97 The proposed Imperial Council, raised for discussion at the Imperial Conference in 1911 by the representatives of New Zealand, was rejected. Herbert Asquith, the British Prime Minister and conference chairman, feared that the dominions would gain excessive influence in matters of foreign policy. The representatives of Canada, Australia and the Union of South Africa, for their part, saw the proposal as an attempt to provide the British Government with a new instrument by which to limit the growing independence of the dominions.

Here the interests encountered are threefold:

- (1) the interests of Britain (the mother country);
- (2) the interests of its colonies and
- (3) the interests of foreign countries or, rather, of their trade.

Two conjectures may be made regarding the direction that will be taken by the conference in this matter. The degree of infringement of foreign trading interests will depend upon the choice made: Britain could grant its colonies certain trade preferences, in exchange for preferences which it will itself receive in the colonies, or these preferences will be granted only by the colonies, without any reciprocity from the mother country.

The choice, in connection with the threefold interests referred to, bearing on innumerable details pertaining to each colony individually and various commercial commodities, constitutes the essence of that complex question which is called 'Preferential trade'.

In both events the interests of foreign trade will suffer.

Let us take Australia alone as an example.

In the event that the difference in customs duties in favour of England is too great, then, even if the duties are not punitive, foreign goods will be unable to compete. If, however, Australian products simultaneously enjoy the same advantage in England, then the damage to foreign trade will be double.

Britain will, of course, gladly accept certain trade preferences from Australia, if it is not obliged to reciprocate. On the other hand, Australia will hardly accept such a procedure over a prolonged period of time. But, as soon as the question of mutual preferences arises, the British Government will have to reckon with both its own free-traders, and with foreign countries, foremost amongst them Germany, followed by the United States of America. It should not be forgotten that Britain's trade with foreign countries is considerably greater than that with all its own colonies taken together, and also the fact that its commercial and industrial might has developed on the basis of free exchange and not protectionism.

As for specifically Australian trade relations, both with its mother country and with foreign countries, this matter will be discussed in 1912. From a legislative point of view, these relations are reflected first of all in the

customs tariffs. These latter, now operative in Australia, constitute a rare and original document. In general, foreign goods attract duty at 45% of value. Although the tariff states that duty is 40%, in actual fact 45% is exacted, because another 10% is added to the valuation made by a customs official on the strength of regulations, which makes it 44%. Furthermore, if the goods did not come from England, a further 40% is levied on the cost of transporting them from the place of dispatch to the port from which they were shipped. Thus, for example, for goods sent to Melbourne from Paris via Marseilles, the duty payable in Melbourne is 40% of the assessed value, plus 40% of the additional 10%, plus 40% of the cost of transport from Paris to Marseilles, which comes to 45%.

The question of customs tariffs in the self-governing British colonies was first raised by the Minister, Chamberlain, at the Colonial Conference of 1902. Pursuing his object of creating an actual, rather than a fictional Great British Empire, he then proposed establishing a common customs tariff for all constituent parts of the empire, including Britain itself, so that within British territory goods could be transported duty-free.

As is well known, this project was unsuccessful. In Britain it was rejected by the free-traders, while the Australians insist that they tried to meet the Minister's patriotic intentions half-way, by setting the customs duty for British goods brought by British ships at 10% less than that on goods carried by other ships. This difference does indeed exist at present, but it was achieved not by lowering the tariff applied to British goods under the given conditions, but by an increase of 10% for foreign goods or British goods shipped on foreign vessels.

The passing of this law in the Federal Parliament prompts some interesting reflections. Britain is linked with foreign countries by trade agreements, on the strength of which British ships are afforded exactly the same rights as local ones. The greatest advantage of such agreements is derived by Britain, since its merchant navy is the biggest. Yet one component part of the British Empire establishes its own procedure, which quite clearly violates these agreements. This act has not received royal assent, but it does exist.

Besides the question of establishing an Imperial Council, Australia and New Zealand intend to officially express the wish that the British Government not conclude a single international agreement without the assent of the parliaments of the two respective colonies, if such agreements directly or

indirectly affect their interests.⁹⁸ Should the British grant this wish, the trading interests of foreign countries will find themselves dependent on the legislative caprices of self-governing colonies which do not bear any responsibility, and then, naturally, the question will arise as to whether such irresponsible behaviour, in the eyes of foreign governments, can continue under the powerful protection of the British flag.

Foreign countries, in no way obliged to share the views of Australia and New Zealand, could, under such circumstances, renounce any treaties with Britain regarding trade or industrial matters. In that case, British maritime trade, which occupies first place in all the ports of the globe, will cease to enjoy the benefits granted to it by those same treaties and conventions.

The aspirations of the self-governing British colonies to be fully their own masters ill accord with the theory of imperialism, which, on the contrary, desires closer rapprochement and a great community of interests between all the constituent parts of a single empire.

With regard to all these notions, the Colonial Conference of 1912 will be of significant international interest.

Although not having any diplomatic relations with foreign nations, the Federal States of Australia have, however, established their very own Ministry of External Affairs. Its establishment is associated with the idea of Australia's own, so to speak, local imperialism, which emerges in the belief that neighbouring islands should be under the protection of Australia. This idea came to light fairly clearly in connection with an incident concerning the islands of the New Hebrides.⁹⁹

An agreement between the British and French governments regarding control over these islands was reached at the end of 1906, as a sequel to the agreement on Egypt and Morocco. But as early as 1905, the Federal

98 At the Imperial Conference in 1911, the Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher raised the question only of British consultation with the dominions in the case of international treaties that affected their interests.

99 On 20 October 1906, Britain and France signed an agreement on joint control (a condominium) of the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu. This agreement was part of a settlement of Anglo-French colonial differences remaining after the agreement of 1904, which laid the ground for the Entente. It included French recognition of British interests in Egypt and British recognition of French interests in Morocco. The Anglo-French understanding on the New Hebrides condominium was met with deep displeasure in Australia.

Minister for External Affairs,¹⁰⁰ before being asked about this, informed the British Government that the most desirable solution for the Federal Government would be the complete and unconditional annexation of these islands to the British Empire. This would evidently have been followed by an announcement that the islands had been annexed to the Federation.

Many more Frenchmen than Englishmen live on the islands of the New Hebrides, which lie in the immediate vicinity of New Caledonia, which belongs to France, so French interests there are greater than British interests.

The French Government flatly refused the idea of British annexation, nor did it accept an offer to share them, and an agreement was signed on 20th October 1906 on the principle of Condominium. This settlement must be considered a success for British diplomacy. Australia, however, was very displeased by it and the Federal Government, in the person of its Minister for External Affairs, openly voiced its displeasure to the British Government.

Thus the Australian socialists, as the ruling political party, without yet having peopled its own country and, on the contrary, having surrounded it by its own kind of Chinese wall of most exclusive, anti-liberal and provocative legislation, are already dreaming of taking possession of certain islands of the Pacific Ocean, i.e. of colonising activities. In this respect, however, their scope is not particularly wide, since everything around them is already occupied. The United States of America possess the Sandwich Islands,¹⁰¹ the Philippines and part of Samoa. Germany has settled part of New Guinea,¹⁰² New Britain, the Carolina and Marshall islands. It shares the Mariana Islands and Samoa with America and the Solomons with Britain. All the rest belong to the latter; French possessions in this part of the Pacific Ocean, with the exception of New Caledonia, are insignificant.

Nevertheless, Australia's longings in this sphere are extremely characteristic.

100 In 1905, the post of Minister of External Affairs was held by two successive prime ministers concurrently with the office of Prime Minister: until 5 July, John Reid; after that date by Alfred Deakin.

101 Sandwich Islands: now the Hawaiian Islands.

102 Germany controlled the northern part of New Guinea from 1884 to 1914.

The information set forth can perhaps provide some idea of Australia's importance at present, and about the significance it might have in the eyes of foreign powers in future.

Concluding my report, and setting out on the slippery path of political conjecture, I present only those opinions which are heard here at present.

The first among those countries which have designs on Australia is Japan. Fear of a Japanese invasion is universal here,¹⁰³ and even such authoritative people as the two former federal Prime Ministers Deakin and Watson do not conceal it. Japan's population is increasing annually by several hundred thousand, they say; the Japanese have no money; their navy constitutes an imposing force; because of Germany's naval armament programme, the British navy cannot leave Europe; a war at sea costs much less than one on land; Australia is defenceless; by virtue of its coastline, it presents no strategic obstacles to a landing force; the country is wealthy and could provide not a bare minimum, but plentiful resources for tens of millions of people. Obviously it must arouse the desire to invade it in any power capable of doing so. The only obstacle that the Australians can see at present is the Anglo-Japanese alliance.¹⁰⁴ They therefore believe that the desire to conquer Australia will be one of the reasons this alliance will not be renewed.

The Australians' conviction that the Japanese intend to invade their country has turned their instinctive aversion to the yellow races into unconcealed and implacable hatred.

Another enemy is seen by Australians to be the Chinese, not in a military sense, but as a source of peaceful domination. Here, the fear is of dangerous competition, rather than of military power.

I, however, have had occasion to meet people who are extremely interested in the military achievements of the Chinese and believe that with time China may become a formidable land and sea power, but any fear of a Chinese threat refers to a more distant future.

In Europe the only enemy that Australia sees is Germany.

103 On the evolution of Australian attitudes to Japan, see Documents 91 and 95.

104 The Anglo-Japanese treaty concluded in 1902 was essentially anti-Russian in intent. Its terms effectively granted Japan freedom to expand in the Far East. The inevitable conflict with Russia suited Britain, which could thus see its principal foreign policy rival, Russia, weakened by the efforts of Japan.

It is well known that the population of Germany is increasing annually by more than 800,000 people. The United States of America, the original destination for German emigrants, are making it more and more difficult for them to gain admission. The German Government is obliged to take most energetic measures to find markets and countries for both the overproduction of its industries and for its surplus population. Over the past four years 600,000 Germans have emigrated to Brazil. This fact has been noticed not only by the Brazilian Government, but also by that of the United States. Connected with this is the construction in England of three of the most powerful battleships of the Dreadnought class for Brazil;¹⁰⁵ moreover, payment for them is guaranteed by the United States Government. In this Australians see the wish of the United States – by virtue of a broad interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine – to enable Brazil to offer some resistance, if necessary, to the German fleet, at least in the first stage.

In its search for unoccupied land, the eyes of the German Government naturally turn to a wonderful, wealthy and uninhabited country, which, moreover, belongs to their European rival. There are already several colonies in the south of Australia populated entirely by Germans.

In the alignment of Germany and Japan, noticed by the Australians, they perceive a twofold threat in the form of a possible seizure of their country through a mutual German–Japanese agreement.

Australian public opinion hardly mentions any role the United States might play in their future. The American fleet's visit to Australia,¹⁰⁶ which resounded throughout the world, has already been forgotten and the impression left by it is that the Americans are indifferent to Australia's future.

Not having any direct interests here, the role of the Russian Government in developments taking shape is entirely favourable. It will probably consist of calm observation of the fact that the eyes of our Western and Far-Eastern neighbours are turning away from our borders in an entirely different direction. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1300, ff 83–152. Author's copy. In Russian. First published in abridged form in *Sbornik konsul'skikh donezenii*, 1/1909, pp. 80–90. Translated by Maria Kravchenko.

105 In 1907, the Brazilian Government ordered two, not three, dreadnoughts from Britain: the *Minas Gerais* and the *São Paulo*. Some countries, above all Germany, were of the view that Brazil was acting merely as a screen and in fact ordering dreadnoughts for the US navy.

106 See Document 100.

103. Hedenstrom to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
28 (15) August 1909
No. 96

[...] I have the honour to submit herewith a copy of my dispatch to the Second Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning 'The Mood of Australian Public Opinion in View of Germany's Naval Armaments Programme'. [...]

Melbourne,
20 (7) August 1909
No. 94

[...] The mood of alarm noted in British Government and public spheres as a consequence of Germany's intensified naval preparations has naturally been echoed in Australia.¹⁰⁷

The disclosures in certain serious newspapers concerning German naval armaments have convinced a substantial section of the Australian population that Germany's real naval programme is significantly broader than its apparent programme, that is, the one made public in official government communications.

As soon as these somewhat disturbing reports began coming in from London, perhaps deliberately exaggerated, the New Zealand parliament resolved to donate a first-class ship of the line to the British Admiralty, that is, to donate the amount required for its construction and complete armament.¹⁰⁸ Australia followed suit, but here things did not proceed quite so smoothly.

107 In March 1908, Germany adopted amendments to its *Naval Act 1900* to make provision for a further increase in naval capacity and speed the construction of new warships. In Britain and her colonies, this gave rise to alarm and led to calls for reciprocal measures to step up the naval power of the British Empire.

108 The proposal to raise funds and present them to the British Government for the construction of a new, modern warship was made in 1909 by the New Zealand Prime Minister Sir Joseph George Ward (Prime Minister 1906–1912 and 1928–1930). The project was successful and the cruiser *New Zealand* was launched in 1911.

At that time the Labor-socialist party formed the Federal Government, represented by Mr Fisher, the Prime Minister.¹⁰⁹

These circumstances presented an opportunity for the loyalty of the colonies to their mother country to be put to the test, as I mentioned in my dispatch of 5th/18th June 1908, No. 20.¹¹⁰

A proposal tabled in Parliament to allocate the funds required to present the British Admiralty with a first-class ship of the line on the same terms as in New Zealand met with a firm rebuff from the government.

In a lengthy speech on this matter, the Prime Minister Mr Fisher stated that this was not because of any unwillingness to answer the mother country's appeal to patriotism, but rather because assistance in the form of one or even two capital ships would be insubstantial. In his view it would be much more practical if Australia considered establishing its own navy, sufficient to repel any attack on the country. With these arguments the Prime Minister endeavoured to deflect the reproach that his party was lacking in loyal sentiments.

It must be noted that the adult male population of Australia is only 1,500,000. Such a small population is insufficient in number as in material resources to offer any serious independent naval defence.

It is superfluous to say that Mr Fisher and his party are perfectly well aware of this, and that their rejection for the reasons stated of the bill tabled in Parliament on offering the mother country a capital ship is nothing more than camouflage for the absence of those principles which we customarily call patriotism.

The other political parties immediately seized the convenient opportunity to overthrow a government inimical to them, and by combining forces won a vote of no confidence by only nine votes.

Mr Fisher's government resigned, after some resistance, and Mr Deakin is now federal prime minister again. The proposal to support a warship has been accepted by the new government, and at present the only question

109 Andrew Fisher was Labor Prime Minister from November 1908 to early July 1909, and again from 1911 to 1913.

110 See Document 97. The date given here is incorrect. That dispatch was prepared on 28/15 July 1908.

is whether the British Admiralty wishes to have a battleship or a cruiser of equivalent value.¹¹¹ Thus the British navy will be increased by two first-class vessels.

By this decision the ground has been laid for more effective participation by Australia and New Zealand in imperial defence.

In my dispatch of 1st/14th December 1908, No. 44 (part II),¹¹² I mentioned that the question of the defence of Australia is central to mutual relations between Britain and Australia, and that this question demands a speedy settlement.

At that time (November 1908) it was assumed that this question would be one of the main items for discussion at the next Colonial Conference in 1912, but owing to the disclosures on German naval armament the Government of the mother country deemed it essential to expedite the resolution of the broad question of imperial defence, and a conference involving Australian and New Zealand delegates is now taking place in London with this special aim. Colonels Foxton and Bridges and Captain Creswell, who commands Australia's naval forces, have been sent as representatives of the Australian Commonwealth. The New Zealand delegate is the Prime Minister Sir Ward.¹¹³ The first Australian delegate, Foxton, though a former defence minister, now retired, is a secondary figure in prestige here, and the other two have been sent as advisers, each in his own field.

We do not know what decisions the conference on imperial defence will arrive at,¹¹⁴ but, judging by the public mood in Australia, the Government of the mother country will hardly be able to extract as much benefit from its colony as it might seem entitled to expect.

111 In 1911, the battle cruiser *Australia*, built by funds raised in Australia, was launched. In 1913, she was transferred to the Royal Australian Navy.

112 See Document 102.

113 This refers to the 1909 London conference on defence matters at the level of ministers and military experts. The Australian politicians and defence experts Justin Fox Greenlaw Foxton, Sir William Throsby Bridges and William Rooke Creswell played an active part in preparing the doctrinal and practical foundation of the Australian army and navy. Sir Ward: Sir Joseph George Ward (see note 108 above).

114 At the 1909 defence conference, the British Admiralty acknowledged the right of the dominions to build their own navies. These would be subject to the control of their own governments, but in time of war they would come under the command of the Admiralty. As a result of negotiations with the Australian delegation, the British Government undertook to assist Australia in the training of naval personnel and to provide subsidies to maintain the Australian squadron's combat readiness. (See also Document 102.)

I mentioned above that the Labor Government was compelled to resign having refused to offer the British Admiralty a warship, but that it was defeated by only nine votes. This insignificant majority, achieved only because the other parties united against it, shows how strong the Labor Party is. It opposes any expenditure on principle, most of all those on defence needs. Among the members of other parties are very many who are more favourably inclined to the idea of establishing Australia's own navy than to that of reinforcing the Royal Navy, showing far more inclination to local patriotism than to the imperial variety.

The Labor Party cannot be accused of lacking a certain consistency in its actions. Pursuing one single aim, that of constantly increasing wages at all costs, it bends its efforts to that alone. It is natural, therefore, that it should be averse to all expenditure which does not result directly in increased wages for Australian workers. Among the latter the view is even quite widespread that they do not really care who Australia belongs to as long as their pay keeps going up.

The viewpoint of those who do not belong to the Labor Party and dream of creating an Australian navy is less easy to understand.

The fact is that at present the British Empire's main rival – perhaps its only serious rival – is Germany. In the event of an Anglo-German conflict, all the forces of the two countries will be concentrated in European waters and no others, and the fate of Australia will depend on the outcome of war in Europe, and nowhere else. Consequently, any increase in the size of the Royal Navy in Europe will be of assistance to it. The creation of an Australian navy, which alone will never amount to a serious fighting force, will in no way affect the outcome of a struggle between Germany and Britain. If Germany should conquer and wish to appropriate Australia, which is quite probable, the latter will be ceded by treaty to Germany by right of conquest whether or not it possesses a navy. A substantial portion of Australian public opinion, deceived by the idea of Australia's effective independence and intoxicated by their material well-being, is evidently unwilling to consider this.

If we accept that there are grounds for the widely current view here that Japan also threatens to seize Australia, then again an Australian navy will be unable to offer any serious resistance.

The First Imperial Press Conference, recently concluded in London, at which fervent patriotic sentiments were expressed,¹¹⁵ cannot, I believe, give a true picture of the mood of public opinion in Australia. There is no doubt that the representatives of the Australian press in London recently, under the spell of the oratory of such brilliant senior politicians as Lord Rosebery,¹¹⁶ quite sincerely surrendered to their captivating influence, and it is extremely likely that when they return home – at least at first – they will try to convey their feelings to their fellow-countrymen, but it is more than a little doubtful that they will enjoy the success which the central government expects of them. We should not forget that even such a relatively small gift as the construction of one battleship was at first rejected by the Federal Government, and subsequently passed by only a tiny majority. But in this decision too, local political intrigues had a certain role to play.

It goes without saying that the struggle between the political parties in federal parliament continues. The recently defeated socialists have begun to attack the new administration; as a concession the Government found itself obliged to accept the law on old-age pensions allocated from the federal budget.¹¹⁷ According to this Act, any British subject aged 65 or more and resident in Australia for twenty years or more with assets of less than £300 (3,000 roubles) has the right to receive a pension of 10 shillings (5 roubles) a week. Calculations, which at this stage can only be approximate, show that old-age pensions on these terms will involve an annual expenditure of roughly 20,000,000 roubles. The socialists, however, remain dissatisfied with the terms of the act, and want all Australian males at 60 and females at 55, including millionaires, to receive a pension of ten shillings a week, regardless of their financial circumstances. We do not know the annual amount the Federal Government would be compelled to spend to achieve that, but it is apparent that such generosity on the part of the Labor socialists will leave little funding for defence needs.

115 The First Imperial Press Conference was held in London in June 1909.

116 Archibald Philip Primrose, Earl of Rosebery: leader of the British Liberal Party in the 1880s and 1890s, more than once Foreign Secretary, and Prime Minister in 1894–1895.

117 The *Invalid and Old-Age Pension Act* was adopted in Australia in 1908.

Such excessive demands by the Labor Party, coupled with their aforementioned refusal to build a warship for the Royal Navy, give one grounds to suppose that that party will endeavour to introduce laws involving major expenditure in order to have a pretext to say that there is no money for armaments.

Returning to the delicate but nevertheless important question of the loyalty of Australians to the mother country, I permit myself to express the view that this question can only be answered with any degree of reliability here, in Australia. Whatever any delegates may say at any conferences, of any kind, in London, will not always be an accurate expression of Australian public opinion. We should not forget, first, that the delegates themselves belong to a political party, and are therefore apt to reflect the opinion of that party, and second, that their position vis-a-vis the leading figures of the central government, as before the public of the mother country, is such that it is not possible for them to be completely frank. For example, it would be difficult for them to admit that there are limits to the patriotism of the Australian population with regard to the interests of the British Empire, and that, on the contrary, patriotism may perhaps be understood by Australians in a somewhat different way from that which London might wish. This conclusion is exceedingly difficult to prove with hard facts, but there are clear indications. For example, every time the question has been raised of developing a common plan for the organisation of land forces with the mother country – and the last occasion was very recent – the Federal Government has voiced its categorical desire that Australian troops should be under the complete and absolute control of the Australian Government, in other words, that those troops be given assignments conforming to the intentions of the local government, not the central government.

In the matter of Australia's maritime defence, as I have already noted, a considerable portion of the local population, irrespective of political parties, is far more inclined to the idea of creating a navy solely for the defence of Australia, not that of the Empire.

The idea of creating an independent navy would perhaps be reasonable if a sufficiently strong navy could be built for the defence of Australia. That itself would constitute serious support for imperial interests. But the fact

is that, for the reasons indicated above, that task cannot be realised, so the practical consequence of this line of thinking is that Australia avoids any serious participation in the common cause of imperial defence.

There are, however, other factors which help explain this position.

Thanks to Britain's naval power and the self-government granted to Australia, the Australian people, possessing an immense and rich area of land, have achieved an extraordinary degree of prosperity, which they will not willingly renounce. Such conditions clearly do not provide fertile ground for the development of imperial patriotism, which is always bound up with the need to make sacrifices.

There is one further obstacle to a particular and sincere manifestation of that sentiment.

For a long time the British living in the mother country have taken a supercilious, even somewhat contemptuous view of their fellow-countrymen who live in the colonies, especially to those born in them. They appear to regard them as inferior beings, and the residents of the colonies are well aware of this. As for Australia's moral obligations to the mother country, Australians believe that they have long since paid off their debt to Britain for everything they have received, and that they owe their prosperity to nobody but themselves.

In my dispatch of 1st/14th December 1908 (No. 44, part II), I gave precise figures for Australia's land and naval forces.¹¹⁸ These are so negligible that the country's defencelessness is self-evident. Despite this, even the well-intentioned part of the population is not particularly inclined to take the path of preparation for war. Australians hope that Britain will defend its colony against foreigners, and they try to make as few sacrifices for military requirements as possible.

It may be, however, that if the threat to Britain – at present merely a supposition – grows more obvious and immediate, an upsurge of patriotism will come to the fore in the better part of the Australian public, as we recently saw to some degree in the matter of the gift of a battleship to the Royal Navy. But to build up military capability an extended period

118 See Document 102.

of time is essential. However great the upsurge of patriotism in Australia when Britain faces imminent danger, the Australians will be unprepared and their assistance insubstantial.

On the basis of the above, I permit myself to conclude that in the event of conflict between Britain and a major maritime power, Britain can hardly count on serious military assistance from Australia. The Labor socialists will in all probability respond feebly, and the rest of the population will be unprepared. [...]

AVPRI 184 (Embassy in London) -520-1300, ff 153-176. Author's copy. In Russian.

VIII

Alexander Abaza

Alexander Nikolayevich Abaza was Tsarist Russia's last official representative in Australia. He was born on 4 August (OS) 1872 in Tiflis (Tbilisi), a member of an illustrious noble family of Moldavian origin. One of his great uncles was Nikolai Savvich Abaza, a provincial governor and member of the Council of State, and another, Alexander Ageyevich Abaza, was Minister of Finance in 1880–1881. A second cousin, Rear-Admiral Aleksei Mikhailovich Abaza, was influential in political circles in the early twentieth century and a member of the so-called 'Bezobrazov clique'.¹ In 1891, the future consul graduated from grammar school in Kharkov and entered the Alexander Lycée in St Petersburg, after which, in 1895, he joined the Foreign Ministry.² His first diplomatic postings were in Galati in Romania, Jerusalem and Bangkok. Standing out by his vigour and energy, with an ability to express his views clearly and convincingly, Abaza rose quickly through the ranks of the service. In 1905, he was appointed Russian consul in Alexandria, and in June 1910 came his appointment as consul general in Melbourne.

Abaza was married twice. His first marriage, to Yelizaveta Aleksandrovna Mossolova, ended in divorce. In London in November 1910, immediately before departing for Australia, he married a young woman of German

1 Bezobrazov clique: a conservative group of mainly landed gentry, which included Secretary of State Alexander Mikhailovich Bezobrazov, the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich Romanov, and Viacheslav Konstantinovich Plehve, the Minister of Internal Affairs. It exerted influence in foreign policy, especially that concerning Manchuria and Japan in the period leading up to the war with Japan.

2 St Petersburg Central State Historical Archive: 11-1-12436, ff 88–91; AVPRI: 159-749/1-1081, ff 1–5.

origin, Frederica Sophia Sperlich. Together they arrived in Melbourne on 31 December 1910.³ In the wedding notice in *The Times* and later foreign publications, his surname appeared as 'd'Abaza'. This apparently gave rise to groundless assertions that he held the title of 'prince' or 'count'.

As consul general in Melbourne, Abaza travelled widely through Australia, and became the first Russian representative there to visit New Zealand and the islands of Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and the New Hebrides. These journeys were prompted not merely by a love of travel – he had been a member of the Royal Geographical Society since 1899; his primary purpose was a plan which he was devising to expand the Russian consular service in Australia and Oceania. It was his belief that this region, especially New Zealand, could become a new market for Russian wares.⁴ Besides that, owing to a rapid growth in Russian immigration to Australia, he sought to follow the situation in the Russian community, visiting the main centres of Russian settlement. In 1917, he visited Brisbane twice, that being the focus of Russian immigration in Australia and the centre in which, after the February revolution of 1917, the radical revolutionary elements were most active. His journey to Brisbane in October 1917 was closely coordinated with Australian military intelligence, as the Russian radicals stood accused, not without good grounds, of conducting anti-war propaganda. The visit brought little comfort. It became clear that a majority of the Russian residents of Brisbane were sympathetic to the anarcho-syndicalists of the organisation known as the Industrial Workers of the World, and their publications included articles of an 'undesirable nature'.⁵

After the October revolution, Abaza refused to serve the Bolshevik regime; the former consul and his wife left Australia in March 1918. They settled in Alexandria, where he had once served and where his father lived, having been Russia's representative before the revolution in the Egyptian Mixed Court of Appeals. There the last imperial Russian consul in Melbourne ended his days. He died on 6 November 1925. His wife survived him by only five months. Both lie buried in the Greek Orthodox cemetery of Chatby in Alexandria.⁶

3 *The Times*, 17 November 1910, p. 1; *The Argus*, 31 December 1910, p. 12.

4 He spoke of this in an interview with the Wellington *Evening Post*, 21 February 1912, p. 6; V. P. Oltarzhevskii, 'Plany sozdaniia rossiiskogo konsul'stva v Novoi Zelandii', *Rossia i politika derzhav v stranakh Vostoka*, Irkutsk, IGPI, 1991, pp. 72–73.

5 National Archives of Australia: BP4/1, 66/4/2072.

6 V. P. Oltarzhevskii, 'A. N. Abaza: "poslednii iz mogikan" rossiiskoi konsul'skoi sluzhby v Avstralii', *Chelovek na Vostoke i Zapade: vzgliad iz Sibirii*, Irkutsk, IGU, 2012, p. 145; V. V. Beliaikov, 'Rossiiskii nekropol' v Egipte', *Rossiiskii nekropol*, 2001, 11, p. 10.

The archive of the Melbourne consulate has never been found. According to some accounts, Abaza himself destroyed it. If this should prove to be incorrect, previously unknown documents may yet come to light.

104. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
29 (16) April 1911
No. 219⁷

[...] Last Wednesday 13th/26th April 1911 will long remain a memorable day in Australian history for the first defeat meted out to the previously all-powerful Labor Party.

In office for more than a year (the Federal Government consists entirely of Labor members),⁸ the Labor Party has striven unrelentingly to increase and strengthen its influence, openly flaunting the slogan which proclaims that the workers rule Australia.

The ideal of that Party and the present Government with which it is so closely linked is evidently the gradual destruction of capital, the nationalisation of industry and trade, and ultimately the establishment in Australia of a purely socialist system on principles of collectivism or communism.

The first step in the direction of such 'reforms', in the view of the Federal Government, was to broaden the powers of the Federal Parliament at the expense of the more conservative state parliaments and amend the Federal Constitution of 1901 accordingly.

According to Article 128 of that Constitution, any amendment or addition to it must be the subject of a referendum by all the Australian population, and must be accepted by a majority of states with an absolute majority throughout the Commonwealth.

7 The first page of this dispatch bears the note 'Excerpt for the Emperor'.

8 Andrew Fisher's Labor Government held power from the end of April 1911 until June 1913.

Such a referendum (the third since federation) was held on Wednesday 13th/26th April on two separate bills proposed by the Government and designed to amend and add to the Federal Constitution of 1901, dealing with (1) the legislative powers of the Federal Parliament, and (2) monopolies.

These draft bills amounted to the following:

(1) Legislative powers

(a) Trade

The Constitution of 1901 granted the Federal Parliament the power to enact laws concerning only 'trade and commerce with other countries, and among the States'. It was now proposed to remove this restriction and make all trade subject to the legislation of the Federal Parliament, that is, to grant it full and unrestricted control over trade, markets and rail communications in all states.

(b) Corporations

According to the 1901 Constitution, the legislative powers of the Federal Parliament include only 'foreign corporations, and trading or financial corporations formed within the limits of the Commonwealth'. It was now proposed to replace this article by another granting the Federal Government power over (1) all corporations, their establishment, liquidation, regulation, and control over them; (2) corporations established within each separate state (except purely religious, charitable, scientific or artistic associations which do not pursue material gain), their liquidation, regulation and control over them; (3) foreign corporations, their regulation and control over them.

This broadening of the powers of the Federal Government would have granted it, *inter alia*, unlimited control over the operations of municipal councils and would have placed all civic administration entirely in its hands.

(c) Labour and industry

The 1901 Constitution granted the Federal Parliament an arbitration tribunal for 'conciliation and arbitration for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes extending beyond the limits of any one State'. Instead of this, it was now proposed to subject to the exclusive regulation of Federal Parliament 'labour and remuneration, including (1) pay and working conditions for all industries and trades,

and (2) averting and resolving all industrial disputes, including those connected with conditions of service or work on the railways, whichever state those railways may belong to.”⁹

The aim of this bill was plainly to strip the separate states of all control over their own railways in favour of the Federal Parliament. In addition to this, the Federal Government, i.e. the Labor Party again, would obtain the legislative power to set wages in literally all industries.

(d) Unions

It was proposed to add to the 1901 Constitution an article subjecting to Federal parliamentary control ‘all unions and monopolies involved in production, manufacture or delivery of goods and offers of employment’.

The intention of this poorly drafted addition was utterly unclear, as it apparently gave Federal Parliament no new powers beyond those already enumerated.

(2) Monopolies

Concerning government monopolies it was proposed to add the following article to the 1901 Constitution:

‘If in one and the same session both chambers (of Federal Parliament) decide and declare the production, manufacture and supply of an item or the offer of employment a (Government) monopoly, Parliament may by means of legislation convey the said production, manufacture and supply or employment offer to the Federal Government or place them under Government control, thus acquiring for this purpose any private property required for such production on fair terms.’

Such power in the hands of the ‘workers’ government would have been an eternal sword of Damocles hanging over all private industry and independent labour, and would have offered unlimited scope for arbitrary Labor rule over people who are not members of various trade unions.

Fortunately the result of the referendum showed clearly that far from all Australians are so enamoured of socialist theories as to entrust the fate of their country to the Labor Party, or more precisely to a group of Party

⁹ Here and below, in order to preserve any nuances or possible bias in the interpretation, the wording of proposed amendments to the Constitution derives from Abaza’s Russian.

bosses (the Caucus) who, with high-sounding promises of a universal golden age, lead the working class onward while in fact pursuing their own personal aims, or at best their narrow Party interests.

Contrary to the Federal Government's expectations, the amendments to the Constitution proposed in the referendum were rejected by all the states except Western Australia, and moreover by a substantial majority, as may be seen from the following table:

The States

	Legislative Powers		Monopolies	
	For	Against	For	Against
New South Wales	130,061	228,903	129,377	225,478
Victoria	167,379	266,219	168,279	264,422
Queensland	60,239	82,890	61,264	81,569
South Australia	48,508	77,637	49,044	77,477
Western Australia	32,323	26,557	32,865	25,932
Tasmania	23,902	32,564	23,934	32,139

The Commonwealth

Legislative powers	Monopolies
For: 462,412	For: 464,863
Against: 714,770	Against: 707,017
Majority against: 252,358	Majority against: 242,254

The failure of the Government proposals was to a considerable degree due to the splendid organisation of the Democratic Party (which calls itself liberal but is really conservative),¹⁰ and the influence of the press, which from the first day of the campaign spoke with rare unanimity against the proposed amendments to the Federal Constitution.

It is also interesting to note that the principal opponents of the Labor Party's desires were not only the affluent classes, but also almost the entire rural population and all women.

10 Abaza is referring to the Commonwealth Liberal Party, or 'Fusion Party' (1909–1917), formed when the Australian Protectionist Party and the Anti-Socialist Party merged, to counter the influence of the Labor Party.

In conclusion one can only say that the Australian Commonwealth, having spent over £50,000 for the referendum, has at very low cost freed itself from the Labor Party's oppression, which was already becoming quite intolerable. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1194, ff 1-4. In Russian.

105. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
26(13) May 1911
No. 301

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that the new Governor of Victoria, Sir John Michael Fleetwood Fuller, who has replaced the previous Governor Sir Thomas David Gibson Carmichael, appointed Governor of Madras, arrived in Melbourne on 11th/24th of this month and in a solemn session of the Victorian Parliament the same day took the oath of office and immediately took up his duties.¹¹

Sir John Fuller was most cordially welcomed by the authorities and the population of the state and evidently promises to become just as popular here as his predecessor, Sir Thomas Carmichael, who, unlike Lord Dudley, the Governor-General,¹² was able to win the universal love and respect of the entire population during his three years in Victoria. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1194, f. 11. In Russian.

11 Carmichael held office as Governor of Victoria from 1908 to 1911, Fuller from 1911 to 1913.

12 William Humble Ward, Second Earl of Dudley, was Governor-General from 1908 to 1911. Among the political elite of Australia he was not popular, on account of his dubious moral qualities and questionable business acumen.

106. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
10 October (27 September) 1911
No. 520

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that the day before yesterday Egerton Lee Batchelor, the Federal Minister for External Affairs,¹³ died of a heart attack at Warburton.

Born in Adelaide in 1865, the late Minister was for some time a schoolteacher in his youth. In 1891 he became actively involved in the then newly-created Labor Party. In 1893 he was elected to the South Australian Parliament, and seven years later to the first Federal Parliament, as a South Australian representative. In 1894 he was granted the portfolio of Minister for Home Affairs in Watson's cabinet, and in 1898 that of Minister for External Affairs in Fisher's first cabinet,¹⁴ which, however, held office for only seven months.

When the Labor Party returned to office in April 1910 and Mr Fisher formed his second cabinet, Mr Batchelor was again entrusted with the Ministry for External Affairs and headed it from that date.

Thanks to his exceptional mind, his tact and moderation, the late Minister won universal respect and his premature death is a great loss to the Federal Government. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1194, f. 17. In Russian.

¹³ Batchelor was a political figure in South Australia and the Commonwealth. He served as Minister for External Affairs in Fisher's Labor administration in 1908–1909 and 1910–1913.

¹⁴ These dates are incorrect, perhaps as a consequence of a scribal error. Batchelor was appointed federal Minister for Home Affairs under Watson in 1904 and Minister for External Affairs under Fisher in 1908.

107. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
18 (5) October 1911
No. 540

[...] Further to my dispatch of 27th September last (No. 520),¹⁵ I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that the executive council of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia has appointed Mr Josiah Thomas, formerly Postmaster-General, to the office of Minister for External Affairs, left vacant by the death of Mr E. L. Batchelor.¹⁶

From the point of view of the foreign representatives here, this seems quite a felicitous choice, as the new Minister for External Affairs is known for his broad horizons – rather uncommon in Australia – and has none of that narrow Australian exclusivity, owing to which international interests are usually seen by the local government as something barely worthy of attention.

It may be worth adding to the above that Mr Thomas is an old friend of Mr H. C. Sleight,¹⁷ whom I recommended for the post of Honorary Consul in Melbourne (in my memorandum to the Second Department, No. 425, 15th August last),¹⁸ and to whom he is much indebted in his private life. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1194, f. 16. In Russian.

15 See Document 106.

16 Josiah Thomas was a New South Wales and Commonwealth politician and Minister for External Affairs under Fisher from 1911 to 1913.

17 Harold Crofton Sleight: Melbourne shipowner and merchant. In 1905, he acquired a timber concession in Siberia and began importing timber to Australia. Honorary Russian Vice-Consul in Melbourne 1912–1917.

18 The memorandum has not been traced.

108. Abaza to Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
27 (14) June 1912
No. 292

[...] I have the honour to enclose herewith, for appropriate processing by the Department, a bank cheque drawn on the local branch of the Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris as No. 2650,¹⁹ in the name of the Director, Second Department,²⁰ for £80, 5 shillings and 3 pence. This represents a total of £80, 17 shillings and 3 pence, with banking fees, collected by a subscription fund opened by the Melbourne *Age* for those affected by famine in Russia (the Russian Famine Relief Fund).²¹

I have the honour to respectfully request that receipt of the said bank cheque be acknowledged. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1227, f. 14. In Russian.

109. Abaza to Director, Personnel and Management Department²²

Melbourne,
14 (1) November 1912
No. 625

[...] While on leave in May 1910 and awaiting my appointment as Consul General in Melbourne, I felt it my duty to avail myself of the presence in St Petersburg of State Councillor Hedenstrom in order to learn from him some details concerning my future service in Australia. When I chanced to enquire about our honorary consuls in Australia, State Councillor

19 Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris (CNEP): in the early twentieth century, the third most important French bank, with a network of branches in the major industrial and financial centres of the world.

20 i.e. to A. K. Bentkovsky.

21 The Russian Famine Relief Fund was established in London to raise funds for the starving in Russia in the winter of 1911–1912 as a result of the failed harvest of 1911.

22 In 1910–1914, the Director of the Foreign Ministry's Personnel and Management Department was Vladimir Antonovich Artsimovich.

Hedenstrom replied as follows: 'Most of them are of no practical use to us, and I would advise you to get rid of them as soon as possible. The one exception is Lubrano di Negozio, the Italian I appointed as consular agent in Newcastle.²³ He is a thoroughly respectable and capable man. He was exceptionally helpful to me in the complicated matter of the steamer *Sungari*,²⁴ and I advise you, whatever you do, to keep him on as our agent.'

Upon my arrival in Melbourne, from my correspondence with Mr Lubrano I was very quickly able to confirm that State Councillor Hedenstrom's report was fully accurate. My Italian colleague Mr Mercatelli's favourable opinion of him and my personal acquaintance with him since meeting him in March 1911 further confirmed my impression of him as the ideal honorary consul: he is honest, efficient and truly conscientious in his work.²⁵

On the other hand, I have learned from experience that our Consul in Sydney, Mr Paul, who is now over 87, is in no state to cope with the consular work placed upon him, which, incidentally, has never been of interest to him.

It was awkward for me to compel an old man with so many years' service to retire, and Mr Paul on principle still refuses to understand my numerous hints on that score.

On learning that Mr Lubrano was spending three days a week in Newcastle and three in Sydney, I decided that it would be best to let Mr Paul keep the title of Honorary Consul in Sydney, while passing all the actual work to Mr Lubrano, as the one person ready and able to selflessly serve the interests of the Russian community in Sydney.

In June 1911, the death of our Honorary Vice-Consul in Sydney Mr Rougier, who had been seriously ill since 1908 and no longer fit to work, provided the opportunity I sought. In my memorandum of 20th September 1911 (No. 503)²⁶ I requested that the Imperial Embassy in London appoint Mr Lubrano our Honorary Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle.

23 Francesco Lubrano di Negozio: a port agent at Darling Point, Sydney, who from 1909 acted as honorary Russian consular agent in Sydney and Newcastle, and from 1912 was honorary vice-consul in those cities.

24 *Sungari*: this refers to Hedenstrom's efforts to obtain the release of the steamship *Sungari*, which was impounded in Sydney by the Australian authorities in 1909 for non-payment of debt. Hedenstrom was able to find a cargo for the vessel, thus enabling it to pay the debt and sail for Europe.

25 Luigi Mercatelli: Italian consul general in Melbourne since 1908.

26 The memorandum is not reproduced here.

At the same time, in my memoranda of 2nd February (NS) 1912 (Nos 81 and 82) I informed the Federal Government and the Government of New South Wales that I was provisionally appointing our Consular Agent in Newcastle Mr Lubrano di Negozio Vice-Consul, 'pending the confirmation of his appointment by H.I.R.M. Foreign Office.'

On 14th February 1912, the provisional appointment of Mr Lubrano was announced in the *New South Wales Gazette*, and on 6th March in the *Commonwealth Gazette*.²⁷ I feel duty bound to observe that, as a general rule, before appointing any honorary agent, I make private enquiries as to the extent to which that appointment will be agreeable to the state government in question and the Federal Government. In the present case, I did not consider this necessary, as Mr Lubrano was appointed Consular Agent by my predecessor in 1909 and I naturally assumed that State Councillor Hedenstrom had made all the necessary enquiries at that time.

On 17th/30th May 1912, in memoranda of that date (Nos 250 and 251), I notified the Federal Government and the Government of New South Wales that Mr Lubrano had been confirmed by the Imperial Ministry in the post of Honorary Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle. From the New South Wales Government I received no reply, but the Federal Government informed me on 7th August 1912 that the definitive appointment of Mr Lubrano had been announced in the *Commonwealth Gazette* of 3rd August.

By this time I had had the opportunity to become even more convinced of the degree to which Mr Lubrano justified the expectations I had placed in him: a more efficient, sensible and conscientious agent I could never have imagined.

On 30th September last, Mr Hunt,²⁸ Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (that is, a colleague of the Minister for External Affairs), invited me to the Ministry and informed me that the New South Wales Government had learned that our Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle, Lubrano di Negozio, was identical with another Lubrano, who, it seemed, enjoyed a most unenviable reputation in Sydney and had been convicted in 1905 for the illegal importation of cigarettes and fined £50, for non-payment of which he had been sent to prison.

27 The proper titles are *New South Wales Government Gazette* and *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*.

28 Atlee Arthur Hunt: lawyer and senior public servant, in 1901–1916 Secretary of the Department of External Affairs.

‘A person of this sort,’ Mr Hunt added, ‘cannot be tolerated as a consular representative, and the New South Wales Government intends to dismiss him immediately from his post.’

In reply I told Mr Hunt that I was very surprised by this news, as Mr Lubrano had been warmly recommended not only by my predecessor State Councillor Hedenstrom, but also by my former Italian colleague Mr Mercatelli, who personally knew him well; that I had always been very satisfied with Mr Lubrano, and that I knew from the documentation that his full surname was Lubrano di Negozio. Furthermore, even if he was guilty of an improper action in 1905, one would think that the New South Wales Government should have protested against his appointment in 1909 and not now, after his approval and the official announcement not only of his appointment as Consular Agent in Newcastle in 1909 but also his provisional appointment as Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle in February of this year.

In conclusion I nonetheless promised Mr Hunt that I would immediately investigate the matter and, if need be, take any necessary steps with regard to Mr Lubrano. Here, however, I drew Mr Hunt’s attention to the fact that a Russian Consular representative, even in an honorary capacity, can be dismissed only by the Imperial Russian Government.

I communicated the above to Mr Lubrano in a private letter and at the same time advised him that if the information I had received about him was really true he should resign, without awaiting further developments. I have the honour to include herewith a copy of Mr Lubrano’s reply, received on 3rd/16th October.

In the meantime Mr Hunt, in a memorandum dated 7th October 1912 (No. 16 721) informed me that the New South Wales Government had announced ‘the cancellation of the recognition of Mr Lubrano (di Negozio) as Vice-Consul for Russia in Sydney and Newcastle’ in the *New South Wales Gazette*, as early as 16th September, that is, fourteen days before my conversation with him.

I immediately set out for the Department of External Affairs and told Mr Hunt that the action of the New South Wales Government was completely inappropriate because the dismissal of Mr Lubrano was a matter for the Imperial Russian Government alone, not that of New South Wales, which had not even taken the trouble to forewarn me of its intentions concerning an agent on my staff. Mr Hunt agreed with me but

began insisting forcefully that Mr Lubrano should resign. I replied that not only did I lack the authority to dismiss Mr Lubrano, but also that I did not even have the right to accept his resignation if he were to offer it, and that all I could do was temporarily suspend him from duty and report the incident to the Imperial Ministry.

On the same day I wrote to the Department of External Affairs requesting to be informed of the extent to which the Federal Government approved of the action of the New South Wales Government. I received the reply that an announcement in the *New South Wales Gazette* was of no consequence to the Federal Government, that is, in the eyes of the Federal Government Mr Lubrano remained Russian Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle, and in my memorandum of 27th September/10th October (No. 562) I informed the Department of External Affairs that I had temporarily suspended Mr Lubrano from duty until such time as the matter was clarified.

In a personal interview with Mr Hunt, I informed him that, in view of the circumstances surrounding the case, I did not undertake to give Mr Lubrano definite advice as to whether he should resign or not, and that I had asked him to come to Melbourne to see me in person. I promised that I would promptly inform Mr Hunt of the outcome of that meeting.

Owing to certain private circumstances of his own, Mr Lubrano was unable to come to Melbourne until 21st October/3rd November last. When he arrived, after a long conversation and prolonged reflection he decided that, in order to pre-empt any unpleasantness, the best course of action would be for him himself to resign, which he did in a declaration to me on 20th October 1912 (No. 58), a copy of which is enclosed herewith. At the same time, however, Mr Lubrano expressed the hope that the Imperial Government would not accept his resignation, and I must admit that I share this hope.

On 22nd October/4th November 1912 I informed the Department of External Affairs in a statement (No. 615) that Mr Lubrano had tendered his resignation and that I was notifying the Imperial Embassy of this, and on 24th October/6th November I followed this with a statement (No. 620, copy enclosed herewith)²⁹ of my emphatic protest against the high-handed and inappropriate conduct of the New South Wales Government in this matter.

29 Abaza's statement is not reproduced here.

This conduct is, incidentally, utterly typical of the contemptuous attitude of all the Australian states (and of the Federal Government, though to a lesser extent) to foreigners in general and foreign representatives in particular.

In almost two years in Australia I have often had occasion to see how any trifle, which in any other country would be of no consequence at all, here has to be contested with all one's might against people who have not the slightest notion – and wish to have none – of international law, and on principle have no wish to take account of any foreign laws at all. Furthermore I have concluded that good manners and courtesy will achieve nothing in Australia; these qualities are not appreciated here. This means that every foreign consul in Australia is compelled to stand up for his official interests most energetically and never accept the slightest attempt to ignore his official position and his rights, which in any case have here been reduced to a minimum.

Returning to the case of Mr Lubrano, I am of the opinion that two completely separate and independent questions arise: first, Mr Lubrano's suitability for consular service, and second, the action of the New South Wales Government, which high-handedly permitted itself to dismiss a Russian consular agent.

Concerning Mr Lubrano's suitability, I can only say that I will never be able to find such a good agent for Sydney and Newcastle, and that his suspension from duty is already proving a source of great difficulty for me, in view of the size of the Russian community in Sydney and the Russian (Finnish) ships which call at Newcastle.

Mr Paul, our Sydney consul, is absolutely incapable of discharging any consular duties at all, and has no wish to.

To what extent Mr Lubrano's past, that is, the unfortunate episode in 1905, is compatible with the dignity of an honorary Russian vice-consul or otherwise, I do not presume to judge. I leave that decision to the Imperial Ministry. For my part, I can only reassert that many honorary foreign consular representatives have worse records, and it is my belief that this question would never have been raised had Mr Lubrano been a British subject rather than an Italian one.

As for Mr Lubrano's dismissal by the New South Wales Government, I can find no words to describe the impertinence of this action, and sincerely dare to hope that the Imperial Ministry, for the sake of its own prestige, will find it in its power to endorse my protest.³⁰ In my humble opinion, to accept Mr Lubrano's resignation at the present time would be tantamount, so to speak, to sanctioning the high-handedness of the Australian Government, and we would then have no guarantee that any one of our honorary consuls in Australia would not be dismissed at any moment, and even without our knowledge, in spite of prior official recognition of his appointment.³¹ [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1441, ff 5-9. In Russian.

110. Appendix 1 to Abaza's Dispatch No. 625 Lubrano di Negozio, Honorary Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle, to Abaza

14 October 1912

Dear Mr d'Abaza,

Your sincere mark of friendship shown to me in your private letter of the 10-th instant will never be forgotten by me.

I am a man of very limited means, but I can work and if ever my services may be of any use to you and to the Imperial Russian Government you can dispose of me as your most humble servant.

The allegation brought against me is true. I was on the 18-th of September 1905 charged with smuggling cigarettes, and on the advice of my solicitors I pleaded guilty and was sentenced to pay £50 fine, or in default conviction for two months. Although I had no money at the time, a friend of mine bailed me out, and I succeeded in time, within the ruling of the court, by working to make enough money to pay the fine.

30 The archive materials point to the conclusion that the Russian Foreign Ministry did indeed protest to the British Government.

31 In April 1913, Lubrano was stood down from the office of vice-consul 'at his own request'.

The smuggling had not been effected by me, but by the buyer of provisions of the Austrian man o'war *Panther* then on a visit to Sydney,³² and I, in the anxiety of securing the contract, to supply all that the *Panther* wanted in the way of provisions, materials and coal, acted as mediator for this buyer to sell the smuggled cigarettes, which were sold. On the cigarettes being sold to the public a custom house officer traced that the cigarettes had been smuggled, and seized them from the persons who were selling them, and as the Austrian man o'war had left Sydney the vendor of the cigarettes gave my name to the customs and that is why I was prosecuted. As I have already stated, on the advice of my solicitors I pleaded guilty, as they expected that being the first offence and as I had never been in court before, the Judge might have acquitted me, and save a long debate by pleading guilty, otherwise the matter may be worse. This is the fact pure and simple.

On your advice I am enclosing to the present a blank Consular letter-heading signed, being sure that any decision you will take will be for my best, which letter-heading, after reading the present, you can fill in type writing in whatever way you like and to my full satisfaction. But I have no hesitation in saying that I am fully qualified to fulfil the great honorary position that you so kindly conferred upon me, especially in Australia, and I call upon you as a friend and to the Imperial Russian Government to defend me, even if I have to sustain expenses to the extent of £500, and even all that I am worth, as I am not ashamed of my past.

May I add: 1) that my wife is the niece of Mr John Baxter late Collector of Customs for N.S.W., who was in office at the time of my prosecution, 2) that I have been for several years a member of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, 3) that many consular elective officers in N.S.W., deceased and in active service, have committed embezzlement and been bankrupt – offences of more serious character than mine, 4) that some of the members of the N.S.W. Parliament, past and present, of very prominent position, are in office although the public think that they ought to be somewhere else, 5) that the only reason of the cancellation of my appointment by the N.S.W. Government, which today I have found to have been published on the 18-th of September, is that someone, who is evidently not a friend

32 *Panther*: a torpedo cruiser of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, built in Britain by the Armstrong yards, completed in 1885.

of mine, has gone to the Government and laid information against me. I am sorry to say that this someone is undoubtedly an Italian, and he did the same thing with the Consul General for Italy, Signore Mercatelli.

From the enclosed letter of Signore Mercatelli to me of various dates you can form an opinion as to what the Italians of Sydney are capable of doing in the way of envying a person. You would rather believe that the Italians would be glad to see a countryman (who, though I say it myself, has always helped Italians and who by giving money to poor Italians and lending it to those of better conditions has lost more than £500), representing as Vice-Consul a big country like Russia; instead of which they go and lay information against him. But I am glad to say that Mercatelli cares more for me now than he ever did before, and that before leaving Australia he promised me that the next Chevalier of the Crown of Italy to be appointed in N.S.W. would be Lubrano. He also wrote privately to Dr Marano,³³ Consular Agent for Italy in Sydney, that 'Near Lubrano and away from him I shall do for him always my best in order to improve his position'.

I must also say that the N.S.W. Government have acted in the most undiplomatic manner, first by not acquainting you or me of the fact, so that an explanation could have been given, and secondly by having published in the cancellation my name as Francesco Lubrano (di Negozio), in brackets, as if I had used it to escape recognition. No! My name is Francesco Lubrano di Negozio, and my captain's certificate of service that I have in my possession and other Government papers can prove it. If I shortened it since I arrived in Australia, it was because of the simplicity of these people who do not know any other language but their own, and who do not attach any importance to the 'di Negozio'. Was I not going to have my full name registered, when a nation like Russia was giving me the honour to represent her? Certainly I was, even if all Australia should have objected. And on this point I am very strong against the Government, and on the settlement of this affair I am going to have it out with them.

You can understand that I would never have accepted the high honour of a Consular office if I thought that I could have been debarred from it, and a fine surely ought not to have been made such a strong allegation when the fine was paid [*sic*]. I love my work as a Consular officer and I shall be

33 Dr Vincenzo Marano was appointed Italian consular agent in Sydney in June 1880, served for 42 years and retired as consul in August 1922.

very sorry to leave it, but in the event that you will advise me to do so, I shall always do my best for any Russian subject that you might like to address to me.

I really do not think it necessary to give any further reference as to my character, but should you like to have those of the leading people in Sydney I shall be only pleased to forward them to you.

I am extremely sorry for the unpleasantness and sorrow that I have caused you, and I thank you very, very much for the good words you have written about my work as a Consular officer. I have not yet handed over to Mr Paul all that belongs to the Vice-Consulate, as I want to go through everything again and see that it is in order, but I give you my word of honour that nothing will be used by me.

If you wish to have a personal interview with me, I shall come to Melbourne any time you like.

Thanking you again for your sympathy, and asking you to forgive my way of writing, as I feel quite excited, with respects and kind regards,

Yours faithfully

(signed) Lubrano di Negozio.

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1441, ff 2, 15. Copy. In English. Previously unpublished.

111. Appendix 2 to Abaza's Dispatch No. 625

Abaza to Secretary, Federal Department
of External Affairs,

Melbourne,

6 November (24 October) 1912

No. 620

[...] In continuation of our correspondence re the Honorary Vice-Consul for Russia in Sydney and Newcastle, Mr Lubrano di Negozio (now resigned), and referring particularly to my letter of the 27th ultimo No 562 I have the honour to draw the attention of the Commonwealth Government to the following facts in connection with the attitude taken up by the Government of New South Wales in this matter:

(1) On the 18th of September 1909 Mr Lubrano was appointed, by my predecessor Mr Hedenstrom, Consular Agent for Russia at Newcastle, vice Mr Eugene Boivin, deceased. No objection to his appointment was made, at the time, by the New South Wales Government, and the appointment was duly gazetted in the *New South Wales Government Gazette* of the 6th of October 1909.

(2) On the 20th of January (2nd of February) 1912 I informed the Premier of New South Wales that I had provisionally appointed Mr Lubrano to the office of Honorary Vice-Consul in Sydney and Newcastle.³⁴ In his reply, dated the 7th of February 1912, No. 12/626, the Premier raised no objection whatsoever to the appointment, which was duly gazetted in the *Government Gazette* of the 14th of February 1912.

(3) On the 17/30th of May 1912, I informed the Premier of New South Wales that the Imperial Russian Foreign Office had confirmed the appointment of Mr Lubrano as Imperial Vice-Consul for Russia in Sydney and Newcastle. Receiving no reply to my communication, I naturally concluded that there was no obstacle to the appointment, and that it would be gazetted in due course, as it was gazetted in the *Commonwealth Gazette* of the 3rd of April 1912.

(4) The refusal of the New South Wales Government to recognize Mr Lubrano di Negozio in his Vice-Consular capacity is, on their own showing, not based on anything having happened since his first appointment as consular officer, but on certain events which took place in 1905 – viz., 4 years prior to Mr Lubrano's first appointment as consular agent. It would seem to have been the duty of the New South Wales Government to have taken those events into consideration before Mr Lubrano's appointment was gazetted in October 1909, or, at least, before gazetting his subsequent appointment in February 1912.

The sanction of a Government, once given, cannot be withdrawn arbitrarily, especially after it has been given not only once, but twice during an interval of 4 years.

(5) Once made, the appointment of a Consular Officer can be only cancelled by his own Government. According to Russian law, I myself, as Imperial Russian Consul General in Australasia, have not got the

³⁴ The Premier of New South Wales in February 1912 was James McGowen.

power of dismissing a subordinate Consular Officer, or even of accepting his resignation. This rests entirely with the Imperial Foreign Office in St Petersburg, to whom it is my duty to refer the matter.

There is, of course, not the slightest doubt that every Government has, on sufficient grounds, the right to oppose, or object to, the nomination of any particular individual as Consular Officer within the limits of its territory; but there is only one way in which such an objection should be made – viz., by making friendly representations to his Government for the removal of the officer in question. In the present instance, however, I regret to say that the Government of New South Wales have not only acted ultra vires in cancelling the appointment (or recognition of, which practically amounts to the same thing) of a foreign Vice-Consul, which may only be cancelled by his own Government, but have also been guilty of a most discourteous and unfriendly act towards the IMPERIAL Russian Government, in as much as its official representative – myself – was not even informed beforehand of the steps the New South Wales Government proposed to take, and still less asked to investigate the matter and to take the necessary steps himself.

In consequence of the above, I am reluctantly compelled, while protesting most emphatically against the unwarranted attitude of the New South Wales Government, to ask the Commonwealth Government to take the necessary steps in order to prevent, in future, the recurrence of similar unfortunate incidents. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1441, ff 3–4. Copy. In English. Previously unpublished.

112. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
18 (5) April 1913
No. 267

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that on 12th March last (NS) the official opening took place of the new capital of the Australian Commonwealth, which has been named Canberra.

In spite of the solemnity accompanying this notable event in the history of Australia, to which all the senior Federal and state authorities were officially invited, none of the foreign representatives in Australia was favoured with an invitation to attend, with the sole exception of the Consul General of the United States of America in Sydney.³⁵ [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1253, f. 9. In Russian.

113. Abaza to Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador in London

Melbourne,
2 June (20 May) 1913
No. 432

[...] I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that in the past two years the town of Port Pirie in South Australia has become the centre of a quite significant and still increasing Russian community, already numbering over 500 people, mainly Orthodox Ossetians, natives of the Caucasus.

All are employed at the smelting works of Broken Hill Pty. Ltd, a major concern here, and they differ so markedly from Australian and British workers that the management has more than once expressed to me his readiness to take on, if possible, all the Russian workers who seek employment with him.

Furthermore, I am aware from private sources that the Russian community in Port Pirie lives in close harmony and unison and does its best to maintain proper ties with the homeland by founding a Russian club, a Russian library and a Russian school, all very worthy enterprises in their own right, but in my view they ought, if possible, to be placed under the supervision of my consulate.

As I am in Melbourne, a distance of forty-eight hours travel by train from Port Pirie, whither I can travel no more than once a year for a brief period, I would consider it highly desirable to have at least an honorary consular agent appointed there, who might keep me constantly informed about everything that happens in the Russian community there.

35 In 1908–1915, the consul general of the US in Sydney was John Bray.

Should Your Excellency see fit to concur with my view, I would permit myself to suggest one Montague Lewes Warren as a most suitable candidate for the post of Honorary Consular Agent in Port Pirie.³⁶ He is a highly respected man and occupies a prominent public position in Port Pirie, evidence of which in standard form is attached herewith, with his signed declaration that he is not a member of any secret societies.³⁷ [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1441, f. 80. In Russian.

114. Abaza to Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,

5 August (23 July) 1913

No. 568

[...] In accordance with the instruction of 17th June last (No. 8066),³⁸ I have the honour to forward to the Department in a separate package a copy of *The Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia* for 1911,³⁹ containing the most complete information on the question of the transfer of the federal capital to Canberra (pp. 1134ff).

It is as yet impossible to add anything to the information provided, as work on the construction of the capital itself and of communication routes to it is proceeding extremely slowly, so slowly that the transfer of government agencies from Melbourne is unlikely to occur sooner than the next five or six years.⁴⁰ All Federal Government agencies and the residence of the Governor-General are to be transferred to Canberra.

As for Sydney, it will retain all its importance as capital and government centre of a state, and as a vital commercial and industrial city. The same may be said of the other capital cities of the separate states, i.e. Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1253, f. 11. In Russian

36 Montague Lewes Warren: a bank employee in Port Pirie, later an accountant and manager of a smelting works. At the end of 1913, he was appointed honorary Russian consular agent there.

37 The attachments are not reproduced here.

38 The instruction is not reproduced here.

39 The first *Official Year Book* was published in 1908.

40 In fact, the transfer was effected only in 1927.

115. Abaza to Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
6 January 1914 (24 December 1913)
No. 1008

Further to my report of 23 July last, No. 568,⁴¹ I have the honour to forward to the Department in a separate package the book, *Canberra*, published by the Federal Government.⁴² [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1253, f. 12. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

116. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴³

Melbourne,
23(10) February 1914
No. 138

[...] As Your Excellency is probably aware, all children born in Australia are considered Australian citizens and British subjects under Australian law, regardless of the nationality and citizenship of their parents. Since I have been in Melbourne, I have on several occasions discussed this matter with the Federal Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs and have pointed out to them that this principle is not only archaic from the standpoint of international law, but also entails practical inconveniences for the child and parents owing to the conflict between Australian law and, for example, Russian laws on citizenship. The only reply I have received is that 'It's our law and anyone who doesn't like it does not have to come here' – a fairly rude reply, but one which perfectly illustrates Australian indifference to the rest of the world.

41 See Document 114.

42 The original document bears a note acknowledging receipt of the book: 'Received for the library, 4 February 1914'. Signature; date 4 February 1914 (NS: 17 February 1914).

43 This document is a copy of a 'confidential dispatch' from Abaza to Bentkovsky, sent by Abaza to Benckendorff, the ambassador in London.

Until now I have taken a mainly theoretical interest in this question. Now, however, I am expecting an addition to my own family in a few months, and the matter of the citizenship of a Russian child born in Australia has become one of personal interest to me. Beside the fact that I have no wish to have my child regarded as a foreign national wherever that may be, it seems to me impermissible that the child of a Russian official in Australia in the course of his duties as representative of Russia should be subject to Australian citizenship laws and regarded as a British subject.

In communicating this, I most respectfully entreat Your Excellency not to refuse me your gracious advice, and if possible secure the assistance of the Imperial Ministry in contacting the British Government to ensure that, in view of my official position, Australian citizenship laws are not applied to me. If absolutely necessary, I have the honour to most respectfully seek permission to depart from Australia in June or July this year for six weeks, not as leave of absence, to take my wife to New Caledonia, the closest foreign colony, where Australian law does not apply. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1506, f. 55. Copy. In Russian.

117. Appendix to Dispatch No. 109

Abaza to Director, Personnel and Management Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
18 (5) February 1914
No. 108

From the attached table, Your Excellency will be able to observe how much the work of the Imperial Consulate in Melbourne has increased in all respects in recent years, and how it continues to increase owing to the ever-increasing rate of Russian emigration to Australia.⁴⁴ I take the liberty of adding that the attached figures are far from a true indicator of the Consulate's work, but merely reflect the number of cases the Consulate is able to handle in the course of a year with its limited staff. With increased

⁴⁴ The table is not reproduced here. On the increase in the work of the Consulate General in Melbourne owing to increased Russian emigration to Australia, see Document 121.

staffing, the Consulate would be able to double, at least, if not treble, the amount of work done, and above all would be able to perform its functions promptly and without delay.

On the other hand, the greater the increase in consular correspondence, the less time I am able to devote to it, as I am obliged to spend more time receiving guests and speaking to petitioners, on personal contact and negotiations with the Australian authorities, on official visits and travel, etc.

Finally, I would like to request that in the second half of 1915 the Imperial Ministry grant me five months' leave, on the basis of Articles 158–164 of the Foreign Ministry regulations, but must admit that I see no possibility of entrusting the Consulate and care of Russian interests in Australia either to the Honorary Vice-Consul in Melbourne or to any other foreign colleague, as used to be the practice. At present the matters in the care of the Consulate are too weighty and important to permit such a course.

In view of the above, I make so bold as to most respectfully draw Your Excellency's kind attention to the urgent need to establish the office of secretary in the Imperial Consulate in Melbourne as soon as possible, and I dare to hope that Your Excellency will not ignore my request. A salaried appointment is absolutely essential here to assist me in my routine daily work and to replace me during my absence.

I consider it my duty to add that in order to be of real value, such an assistant should meet the following criteria: he should know English, be single, and ready, as the English expression has it, to 'rough it' everywhere and at all times.⁴⁵

Hoping that Your Excellency will see fit to attend to my request,⁴⁶ I have the honour to remain ever most respectfully etc.

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1491, f. 3. Copy. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

45 'To rough it': in English in the original.

46 In late 1915, a vice-consul, Leonid Alekseyevich Bogoslovsky, was posted to the Russian Consulate General in Melbourne to assist Abaza.

118. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
25 (12) February 1914
No. 151

[...] Having spent more than three years in Australia and in that time quite thoroughly studied the composition of the Russian community in this remote part of the world in terms of both quantity and quality, as well as the duties of the consulate entrusted to me, I now consider it my duty to respectfully report to Your Excellency that our consular representation in Australia no longer comes close to meeting modern requirements and is no match for ever-increasing everyday needs. Leaving aside the honorary consulships, which are of great value though in reality restricted to very close limits, it is impossible to ignore the fact that a Russian population of many thousands scattered across the two land-masses of Australia and New Zealand has only one place – the consulate in Melbourne – to turn to for advice, assistance and protection. Here we should not forget that the journey from Sydney to Melbourne takes 17 hours, from Adelaide 20, from Hobart 24, from Brisbane 55, from Oodnadatta four days,⁴⁷ from Perth and New Zealand a week, from Cairns two weeks and from Darwin three.

The result is that, deprived of any possibility of timely support from the authorities of their own country, and sometimes even against their will, many Russians take Australian citizenship, while others – and there are hundreds! – fall under the baneful influence of political criminals who have fled from Russia, and soon cease to be loyal, peaceable settlers and become rabid socialists and anarchists.

On the other hand, for our fellow-countrymen in distant parts to appeal to my consulate involves postal expenses and much expenditure of time, sometimes in the most urgent matters, and means excessive correspondence for me, demanding too much of my time and distracting me from more serious matters. Since Australia and New Zealand are self-governing and

⁴⁷ The settlement of Oodnadatta, 1,000 km north of Adelaide, was at the time the last station on the railway line towards the north of the continent.

almost completely independent of Britain, the work of a Consul General here should *ipso facto* be of a largely diplomatic nature, that is, it should be directed as much towards political and general matters as towards the protection of petty private interests – protection which, incidentally, in most cases here in Australia is dependent on the successful resolution of those same general questions (for example, citizenship, military service, guarantees of justice, payment of inheritances and the like). It is plain that if the Melbourne consulate has to devote all or almost all its time to petty, routine day-to-day work, it is very difficult and sometimes even impossible to deal promptly with its broader general tasks.

To return to the honorary consulates, I must say that to me they are most useful, even essential as, on the one hand, intermediaries between me and the authorities in the separate states, and on the other as conduits for information on various commercial and statistical matters. But owing to their ignorance of the Russian language and Russian law, not to mention their entirely natural lack of interest and initiative, the honorary consuls remain utterly alien to the Russian community and unable to instil in it any confidence.

My general conclusion from all the above is the belief I have arrived at, that in the interests of both the service and the Russian community in Australia our consular representation here should be substantially expanded and reorganized, to wit, by the total separation of that in Australia and New Zealand, with the establishment of the following:

(A) In Australia:

- (1) a Consulate General for the Commonwealth of Australia, with primarily diplomatic functions, initially in Melbourne but eventually in the Federal capital, Canberra: to be staffed by a Consul General, a secretary, and an honorary clerk,
- (2) a Consulate in Brisbane, with Consul and secretary. Brisbane should also have a Russian priest in permanent residence,
- (3) a Consulate in Sydney (without secretary),
- (4) a Consulate in Melbourne (without secretary), to include Tasmania in the Consul's jurisdiction,
- (5) a Consulate in Adelaide (without secretary),
- (6) a Consulate in Perth (without secretary).

(B) In New Zealand:

- (1) Consulate in Wellington, with Consul General and secretary, and
- (2) Vice-Consul in Auckland, such that the New Zealand consular establishments are completely autonomous, that is, not subordinate to the Consulate General in Australia.

Further, I would consider it worthwhile to include the islands of Fiji, the Solomons, the condominium of the New Hebrides, the French colony of New Caledonia and the German part of New Guinea in the jurisdiction of the Consulate General in Australia, and the independent islands of Tonga, the British, German and American parts of Samoa and the French colony of Tahiti in that of the Consulate General in Wellington.

I fully realise that the Imperial Ministry may very well disagree with what I regard as absolutely essential in the interests of the Russian community and the success of the cause of Russia in Australasia, and that even in the best case it will take at least several years to expand our consular representation here. But I would consider myself at fault if I failed to express to Your Excellency my frank opinion on this matter, the more so since in 1915 I intend to seek the Imperial Ministry's permission to take leave of five months with subsequent transfer to a new posting, but do not seek in any way to reduce my own burden of work in Australia and am not pursuing any personal interests. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1274, ff 1-3. In Russian.

119. Abaza to Imperial Russian Embassy, London

Melbourne,
21 (8) March 1914
No. 254

[...] I have the honour to most respectfully request that the Imperial Embassy graciously assent to approach the Imperial Ministry concerning the appointment of a British subject, Thomas Archibald Welch, to the vacant position of Honorary Consul in Sydney.⁴⁸ I have the honour

⁴⁸ Thomas Archibald Welch served as honorary Russian consul in Sydney from March 1914 until April 1917, when he retired.

to append his details herewith, in the customary format, as well as his signature attesting to his declining any monetary remuneration and to the fact of not belonging to any secret societies.

Mr Welch is well known to me personally, is of high social standing in Sydney, and is well liked in the Russian community, as he has spent several years in Russia (the Baltic region) and not only speaks Russian well, but – most importantly – is very well disposed to all things Russian and always most readily comes to the aid of any of our fellow-countrymen who are in need of it. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1473, f. 14. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

120. Abaza to Imperial Russian Embassy, London,

Melbourne,
22 (9) May 1914
No. 447

[...] In view of the relatively frequent visits by Russian (Finnish) vessels to the port of Newcastle in New South Wales, and the consequent desirability of having a consular representative in that city, I have the honour to most respectfully request that the Imperial Embassy appoint one Luigi Leopold Ferrari,⁴⁹ an Italian subject, as our Honorary Consular Agent in Newcastle. I append his details in the customary format, with his signature attesting that he is not a member of any secret societies.

I consider it my duty to add to the above that Mr Ferrari is known to me in the very best light, has rendered great service to the masters and crews of our ships and is very popular with them. [...]

AVPRI 184 (London Embassy) -520-1473, f. 18. In Russian. Previously unpublished.

49 Luigi Leopold Paolo Ferrari, a Sydney entrepreneur, held office as Russian consular agent in Newcastle from 1914 until all Russian consular staff in Australia were dismissed at the beginning of 1918.

121. Abaza to Bentkovsky, Director, Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
13 June (31 May) 1914
No. 526

[...] In accordance with Your Excellency's instruction of 1st April last (No. 5217),⁵⁰ I have the honour to report that, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the number and distribution of Russians in Australasia at present is as shown in round figures below:

(A) Distribution by state:

Queensland: 5,000
New South Wales: 2,000
Victoria: 1,500
South Australia: 1,100
Western Australia: 1,200
Tasmania: 100
Northern Territory: 50
New Guinea and Pacific islands: 50
New Zealand: 1,000
Total: 12,000

(B) Distribution by centre

Brisbane: 3,000
Sydney: 500
Melbourne: 400
Adelaide: 200
Perth and Fremantle: 300
Hobart and Launceston: 30

50 On receiving Abaza's dispatch No. 151 (25 February) 1914 (see Document 118) at the end of March, Bentkovsky sent him a special instruction on 14 April. Noting the 'timeliness' of Abaza's proposed improvements to the consular service in Australia, he asked him to 'convey the most detailed information, and if possible statistical data' on the number and composition of the Russian community, and its regional distribution, and to clarify the 'nature of the consulate's work to take care of Russian nationals'. (See AVPRI 155 [II Department, 1-5] -408-1274, f. 4.) This dispatch is Abaza's reply.

Cairns: 150
Rockhampton, Maryborough, Bowen, Townsville: 300
Wallumbilla:⁵¹ 200
Broken Hill: 200
Port Pirie: 200
Other Australian centres: 450
Scattered through Australian townships and farms: 5,020
Wellington and Auckland: 200
Other New Zealand centres: 300
Scattered through New Zealand townships and farms: 500
New Guinea and islands: 50
Total: 12,000

I feel compelled to add that the above figures may be considered only approximate, and I am inclined to think that they are somewhat lower than the true figures. I have not so far succeeded – and am unlikely to succeed – in obtaining from the Federal Government any remotely satisfactory statistical information on this matter, and in any case such figures could have only relative meaning for me, since they would not show Russians who have illegally taken Australian citizenship or children born in Australia to Russian parents. Moreover, the nationality of immigrants is judged here according to country from which they arrived; they are not asked their country of birth unless there is a particular reason to do so.

In view of this, the figures cited above represent only my final conclusion from (1) my consular practice and observations; (2) my enquiries of various people, both in Melbourne and in the course of my various official travels; (3) dispatches from honorary consuls under my jurisdiction; (4) figures communicated to me by various shipping lines; and finally (5) incomplete and fragmentary data which I receive from time to time from the Australian and New Zealand governments.

Nonetheless, as I have already had the honour to mention, I believe that the true total number of Russians in Australia is more likely to exceed that quoted than fall short of it, because even the official statistics show that as early as the beginning of 1911 there were 4,456 Russians in Australia and 778 in New Zealand, and an increased rate of Russian immigration began only after that date.

51 Wallumbilla: a small stock-rearing settlement (meat and dairy) in Queensland, 440 km west of Brisbane.

As for the growth of the community, owing to the fact that the great majority of our immigrants here are unmarried, the natural increase by births is utterly insignificant. I do not think that in all the time I have spent here more than 100 to 150 Russian children have been born in Australasia. However, this does not apply to those Russians (predominantly Jewish) who came here many years ago and (illegally) took out Australian citizenship. Their second- and third-generation descendants are, of course, extremely numerous. I mention them because I have on occasion chanced to observe that such people do not always lose their ties to Russia, and often come to the consulate seeking advice and assistance concerning some matters of their own.

On the other hand, the increase in the Russian population by immigration is very marked. Without exaggeration one can state that every month 90 to 150 people arrive in Australia from Siberia and Manchuria, and from European Russia 20 to 30, which means that the community increases by 120 to 150 per month.⁵² To this number must be added Russians arriving directly from Canada or the United States, although, as far as I can tell, these are not numerous – barely 20 or 30 a year. Lastly, I consider it my duty to note that the crews of Finnish sailing vessels which call here (eight to ten a year) almost always desert in Australian ports and stay here.

Concerning the composition of the Russian community, I unfortunately have no definite statistical information, but in broad terms can say that the dominant proportion are native Russians, mostly from Siberia. Then come, in descending order, Jews, Poles, Finns, Letts, Estonians, Baltic Germans and natives of the Caucasus (Ossetians and Georgians). The latter number up to 300 and are concentrated in Port Pirie and Broken Hill, where they work in the mines and smelters of Broken Hill Pty Ltd.

With the exception of the Jews, who live in cities and, as everywhere else, are engaged in trade and artisan work (as tailors and cobblers), almost the entire Russian population in Australia makes a living exclusively by manual work. Artisans (fitters, turners, joiners, painters) find it relatively easy to earn a wage in government employment or in private workshops and factories. Others are obliged to take manual work of various kinds: at the construction of railway lines, in mines, as dockside porters etc. Few of them work on the land, and then only as farm labourers, except in North Queensland, where large numbers of Russians work permanently on the

52 Faulty arithmetic as given in Abaza's original.

sugar-cane plantations. Here and there one meets Russians who have their own farms, but these are still few in number, scarcely 300 in the whole country, including the Russian settlement in Wallumbilla.

The Russians who come here are quite unsuited to white-collar work, mainly because they do not know English. I know many educated and cultured Russians (ex-officers, teachers, accountants, telegraph workers etc.) who have absolutely no opportunity to apply their knowledge and are obliged to earn their living by the hardest of manual labour.

From a political point of view the Russian community in Australia can be divided into two groups: (1) those who have come with the best of intentions, in the hope of better earnings; these are the great majority; and (2) felons, political criminals and people of extreme socialist views who have fled Russia. This latter group is relatively few in number,⁵³ but presents a great danger because it consists of comparatively educated people who spare no effort to acquire the greatest possible influence over all our fellow-countrymen who come here. It is extremely difficult to combat the influence of this group, given our insufficient consular staff and the lack of a Russian church or Russian priest in Australia.

Turning to the matter of the extent to which the consulate is involved in taking care of Russian subjects, I make so bold as to most respectfully draw Your Excellency's attention to the fact that this matter is so complex that it is very difficult to answer in any detail. Summarising, however, as much as possible, the work of this consulate over the past three and a half years and dividing it, so to speak, into categories, I believe that the synopsis below may give a fairly clear idea of its variety:

(A) General business

- (1) Consultation and correspondence with Russian nationals on matters of concern to them (judicial, family, religious, financial etc.; too numerous to list),
- (2) Combating by direct consular influence the influence of socialist and social-revolutionary elements in the Russian community,

53 The group of Russian political emigrants who belonged to a variety of political tendencies and continued their agitation and propaganda in Australia numbered approximately 500. In 1910, they united in a Union of Russian Emigrants, which, in 1914, changed its name to the Union of Russian Workers and adopted a pro-Bolshevik position.

- (3) Supporting our settlers' spiritual links with Russia, mainly by consulting with them and distributing printed materials from the homeland,
 - (4) Establishing and maintaining relations with the Australian authorities of a kind to ensure that the Russian community in Australia is spared official malfeasance and enjoys the greatest possible protection by the consulate and the local authorities.
- (B) Particular business
- (I) Judicial
 - (1) Protection of the interests of Russian nationals charged with criminal acts, by
 - (a) preliminary correspondence and prison visits,
 - (b) engaging good lawyers to represent them, and when necessary competent interpreters,
 - (c) the presence in person of the Consul General or his consular delegate in court. It was only thanks to the intervention of the Imperial Consulate that the Russian nationals Boris Zenkevich (in Sydney in 1911) and Evka Fridman (in Ballarat in 1912) were spared capital punishment when charged with premeditated murder.⁵⁴ In 1913 I succeeded in having the sentence on one Grigory Monakov quashed when he was wrongly sentenced to prison by a Port Darwin court on a false and malicious accusation by an Australian Government official of slander.⁵⁵

54 In September 1909, a young man named Boris Zenkovich (not, as Abaza has it, 'Zenkevich') killed the companion with whom he was travelling to Australia, Alexander Eismond, while resisting his sexual advances. His sentence of death was commuted to life imprisonment with hard labour. He was released after serving eleven years. Evka Fridman (in Australian sources, John Fridman), an immigrant of Jewish background from Russia, was employed at seasonal work on a farm in Victoria. On 18 May (NS) 1912 he quarrelled with Charles Nunn and killed him with a knife.

55 Grigory Monakov was a Siberian peasant who had come to Australia with his wife and daughter and worked on a farm in the Northern Territory. His wife was employed as a cook, and their daughter worked in the home of the property manager, Mr Woolley. When Woolley tried to take advantage of Monakov's daughter, the Monakovs went to Darwin in March 1913 to lodge a legal complaint. This gave rise to the Monakov–Woolley case, in which Monakov was accused of slandering the property manager.

- (2) Defending the interests of Russian nationals involved in civil cases, explaining Australian law to them and seeking suitable legal representation (e.g. the case of Danilchenko v. the Queensland Government in 1911; Grigory Saporov and the Russian Cossacks v. the Bud Atkinson Circus; and the Russian glass-blowers v. Glass Bottle Works Ltd in 1913).⁵⁶
- (3) Gaining Australian Government approval and transferring to Russia the estate of Russian nationals who have died intestate in Australia. (To date I have sent 15 inheritances, worth a total of £950-3-4, to the Imperial Ministry and the office of the Finnish Governor-General.)

(II) Immigration

- (1) Assisting in landing Russian immigrants who are undesirable from the Australian Government's point of view due to (a) ill health, or (b) Asian origin.
- (2) To the extent possible, helping Russian immigrants to find employment.
- (3) Translating their documents and certificates into English and certifying the accuracy of the translations.
- (4) Assisting with the exchange of Russian currency in Australian banks, and with the transfer of funds from Russia (from banks, savings banks and private sources).
- (5) Issuing visas, passports and travel documents back to Russia for persons without passports for foreign travel.
- (6) Cases involving renunciation of Russian citizenship and naturalisation in Australia; explaining Russian and Australian law in this area.
- (7) Protecting Russian nationals against conscription for military service in Australia.
- (8) Correspondence with the Russian authorities, trading companies and private individuals in Russia about Russians in Australia.

⁵⁶ The American Bud Atkinson Circus troupe, with some Russian Cossacks performing equestrian acts, toured Australia in 1913. An Australian court upheld the case of the Russian artistes, who had sued for unpaid wages. The court case between the Russian glass-blowers and the Glass Bottle Works in 1913 was related to demands for improved working conditions. No further detail has been located on Danilchenko's case against the Queensland Government in 1911.

(III) Navigation

- (1) Shipwrecks (the wreck of the barque *Glenbank* in 1911).⁵⁷
- (2) Accidents.
- (3) Sale of vessels (the sale of the *County of Anglesea* to Scott, Fell & Co. in Sydney in 1911).⁵⁸
- (4) Drafting maritime protests.
- (5) Correspondence with Australian authorities concerning deserters from Russian ships.
- (6) Investigating misunderstandings arising between ships' masters and crew.
- (7) Maintaining observation of sailors who are ill or in hospital in Australia.
- (8) Changes in crew manifests and presentation of ships' documents.

(IV) Trade

- (1) Replying to questions and supplying information to commercial companies in Russia about Australia and vice versa.
- (2) Corresponding with the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

(V) Notarial

Drawing up and witnessing deeds of civil status, letters of attorney etc.

(VI) Sundry

Assisting tourists, scholars and artists visiting Australia.

Corresponding with private individuals in Russia with a scholarly interest in Australia, sending them books, statistical data, samples etc.

From the synopsis above, which incidentally also applies to New Zealand, though to a lesser extent, Your Excellency may easily see how broad and varied are the functions of the consulate entrusted to me. I will go further: in view of the colossal size of a jurisdiction which covers Australia and New Zealand, and the very small consular staff, the consulate cannot

⁵⁷ The Russian barque *Glenbank* (1,481 t) was wrecked on 6 February 1911 on the coast of Western Australia.

⁵⁸ According to Australian sources, the sale of the barque *County of Anglesea* (1,590 t) to the Australian company Scott, Fell & Co. did not, in the end, go through.

satisfactorily discharge its functions, that is, it cannot deal promptly with all the matters which come before it, and as a result the interests of the Russian community inevitably have to suffer.

The community is constantly increasing in number and its interests are therefore becoming increasingly complex, thus adding to and complicating the work of the consulate. On 31st December 1911 I had 722 items in the 'out' register, and no items pending in the consulate. Today, on the other hand, 31st May 1914,⁵⁹ I have 526 outgoing and several dozen still pending for lack of time. In other words, one can say that the amount of consular work usually doubles every three years, although in my personal opinion the increase will proceed much faster, owing firstly to the proportionate rise in immigration, and secondly to the established trust in the Imperial Consulate on the part of the Russian community, which a few years ago looked on it with extreme mistrust, not to say hostility.

I am profoundly convinced that if the Imperial Ministry succeeds in establishing new salaried positions in Australasia, in accordance with the proposal I set out in my dispatch of 12th February last (No. 151),⁶⁰ this will serve to greatly assist our Russian community, raise our national prestige and thus be of benefit to Russian statehood by retaining thousands of our respectable fellow-countrymen, who will otherwise in the second generation, if not the first, lose all connection with Russia and become loyal Australians.

No consul appointed here would consider his duties a sinecure, because in spite of the relatively small jurisdiction proposed there is no doubt that many Russians who at present have no opportunity to contact the Melbourne Consulate General, because of the distance, limited literacy, and postal expenses, would begin to visit the consulates.

On the other hand the Consul General, freed from the burden of everyday routine work, would be fully able to devote himself to serious matters of importance and observe the extremely interesting progress of the country's political life. The present state of affairs being what it is, I have absolutely no time for this. [...]

AVPRI 155 (II Department, I-5) -408-1274, ff 5-10. In Russian.

59 The dates given here are Old Style.

60 See Document 118.

122. Secret telegram from Abaza to B. E. Nolde,⁶¹ Head, Legal Advice Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
6 May (23 April) 1916

[...] I refer to my dispatch of 18th February (No. 263).⁶²

Following the practice of consuls in the Near East, I am issuing to Czechs and Dalmatians who seek Russian citizenship temporary certificates placing them under the protection of the Consulate and requesting that the Australian authorities free them from the restrictions placed on citizens of hostile powers, exception being made for permission to leave Australia.⁶³ [...]

AVPRI 135 (Special Political Department) -474-355, f. 5. Copy. In Russian.

123. Abaza to Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Melbourne,
27 (14) April 1917
No. 941

[...] Aware that it is impossible to discharge satisfactorily the obligations placed by the times on this consulate to serve Russia's commercial interests in the area of this consulate's jurisdiction, I have taken it upon myself to implement the idea of establishing a special body which, as it

61 Boris Emmanuilovich Nolde: eminent legal scholar and specialist in international law, diplomat and historian, who served in the Foreign Ministry from 1899 to 1917 and headed the Legal Advice Section from 1914 to 1916.

62 This dispatch has not been traced.

63 During the First World War, consular protection for 'Austrian Slavs' – Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Slovenes, Croats and Serbs – became a topical matter for the Russian consulate in Melbourne. Being subjects of Austria-Hungary, which was at war with Australia, they were threatened with internment. Abaza provided them with temporary certificates of consular protection and appealed to the Australian Government to release bearers of these from the restrictions placed on citizens of hostile powers. However, the Australian Government took the view that this practice might lead to confusion in the registration of citizens of enemy states, and urged the consul general to discontinue it.

includes people involved in the world of trade, might meet the increasing need to develop trade between Russia and distant Australia. For many historical and political reasons, and also because of insufficient mutual knowledge of the products of the other country, trade between the two countries has so far remained at the initial stage, and efforts by individual merchants have left hardly any trace. Both in Australian Government circles, and among the public, the idea of setting up such a body was most sympathetically received, and in a telegram addressed to the Minister on 24th January/6th February,⁶⁴ I had the honour to report to the Ministry that a Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau had opened here.

I consider it my duty to submit a summary of the history of the founding of the Bureau for the consideration of the Second Department, and to outline its first steps.

From the Australian side, people who are most influential in society and know the country from a commercial perspective were invited to join the organising committee called to establish the Bureau. Thus the committee included Mr Pratt, a well-known press columnist and personal friend of the current Federal Prime Minister, Mr Farr, formerly army Paymaster and now Lieutenant-Colonel in the Reserve, and Mr Driffield, who has a business of his own and is well-known to me for his excellent qualities.⁶⁵ The Russian representatives on the committee were: M. Kliachko, a Russian doctor now with the Australian army, who has won great popularity here, Mr L. Bogoslovsky, who is attached to the Consulate,⁶⁶ and I myself.

In accordance with the plan developed by the committee, the idea of the need to establish a Russian–Australian trading body here was widely popularised first of all in the Australian press. Local literary talent was drawn in to the task of arousing interest in the idea of founding such a body, and in addition, I personally thought it necessary to place appeals in the newspapers, asking readers to take a sympathetic view of it. When

64 The telegram has not been found. From 30 November (OS) 1916 until the February revolution in 1917, the Russian Foreign Minister was Nikolai Nikolayevich Pokrovsky.

65 Abaza is referring to the well-known Australian journalist Ambrose Goddard Hesketh Pratt. The Prime Minister in 1915–1923 was William Morris Hughes. Albert George Farr, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Reserve (Pay Corps), was a veteran of the Boer War and First World War. Lancelot Driffield: a prominent agricultural entrepreneur.

66 Mikhail Emmanuilovich Kliachko: Russian army doctor, captain. While in Egypt during the First World War, he served with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC). On arriving in Australia, he was assigned to the Russian Consulate General in Melbourne.

public opinion had been prepared, it was decided to set about convening a founding meeting. Representatives of the Australian Government were invited to participate, such as the well-known Prime Minister Mr Hughes, the Premier of Victoria,⁶⁷ and others, and the chairmen of chambers of commerce and representatives of the largest companies. I sent out up to 700 invitations to attend the inaugural meeting. In a circular on the subject I indicated the obstacles which have to date stood in the way of the establishment of closer trading relations between Russia and Australia, to wit: (1) well-established trading relations between Russia and Germany, at the expense of such relations between Russia and other countries, (2) Australian and Russian ignorance of each other, (3) inadequate transport links. As the historical moment is now propitious, I called on the Australian public to establish closer trading relations between our two countries, pointing to the foundation day of the Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau as the first step towards the development and strengthening of such desirable commerce.

On 24th January/6th February, a well-attended meeting took place in Melbourne Town Hall, under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor.⁶⁸ I will summarise the speeches of the more important speakers. In his opening address, the Lord Mayor said that he was glad to welcome the founding, on the initiative of the Russian Consul General, of a Russian–Australian trading body. He went on to say that the Russian people have earned the closest attention of the Australian people and that when the efforts of the allies were crowned with success they must be prepared to make the best use of the fruits of victory. Here in Australia, he said, one hears voices saying that the workers cannot find an outlet for their strength owing to the insufficient number of enterprises, and that there is deep enmity between the affluent classes and the proletariat. The reasons for this, he went on, may lie in a deliberate stalling in the development of relations between the countries concerned in the past. Pointing out that in Russia, which was friendly to Britain and united with it by a common aim, the need for industrial products would lend impetus, given a normal state of affairs, to the development of the forces of production in Australia, Mr Hennessy expressed the certainty that this would lead to an easing of the struggle between employers and employees here. In this way

67 The Premier of Victoria in 1914–1917 was Sir Alexander James Peacock.

68 The Lord Mayor of Melbourne in 1912–1917 was Sir David Valentine Hennessy.

prosperity, which is the true fruit of victory, is created. At its basis lies a true trading relationship, the development of which is the aim of the trading body now being founded.

It was proposed that the first resolution be moved by the Federal Prime Minister, Mr Hughes, who said that with the aim of establishing closer trading links a Russian–Australian trading body was being established, with the title of the Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau. Australia was proud, he said, to have the honour to fight shoulder to shoulder with Russia. Awareness of the danger to their nation had awoken in the Russian people an enthusiasm which by its nature recalled the era of the crusades. The Russians were going into battle literally under the sign of the cross. Australians had come to know the Russian people better. Although Russia had suffered defeats – part of its territory was occupied by the enemy – the struggle could end in only one final outcome: Russia would march across Germany from the East, just as France and Britain would march across it from the West. We were gathered here, he went on, to form the nucleus for an improvement in our commercial and national relations. Until now, Russia's economic organisation was shaped by Germany. Like Italy, Russia had become a commercial vassal of Germany. At the Paris conference the allies had formed a tight trading circle, which, when victory came, would carry the wartime alliance into peacetime. We must reap the fruits of victory, he said, and it was essential to create organisations through which the peoples of the allied nations could get to know one another better in peacetime. Even the difficult obstacle of the Russian language could be overcome by developing close trading relations. Mr Hughes concluded his speech by saying that he welcomed the founding of the Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau.⁶⁹

One of the subsequent resolutions, that those present express their readiness to be members of the Bureau, was moved by Mr Peacock, the Premier of Victoria. Referring to the Prime Minister, who had indicated the brilliant fighting qualities of the Russian people, Mr Peacock developed the idea that a people who had demonstrated such qualities on the field of arms could naturally succeed equally well in peaceful work. The talents

69 Hughes is referring to the Paris conference of the Entente states in June 1916 on economic matters. Its decisions made provision for the all-round development of trading relations between the Allied powers and aimed to reduce as much as possible the volume of Germany's industrial output on world markets. The British paid particular attention to expanding the export opportunities of their colonies and dominions.

of the Russian people, their enthusiasm, energy and strength now turned towards the military defeat of the foe, would later be applied to building economic power. And just as Russia and Australia marched shoulder to shoulder in war, so they would enter peacetime together, mutually enriching each other by trade, and thus fostering the improved welfare of the two friendly nations.

The next resolution, on establishing an executive council under the chairmanship of the Russian Consul General, who would have the right to appoint Russian representatives to the council, was proposed by the President of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce.⁷⁰ As a businessman, he was able to foresee all the advantages of the proposed trading association between Russia and Australia. The allied countries would undoubtedly use the moment to their advantage, and Germany was profoundly mistaken if it thought that after the war it would again be able to occupy the exclusive trading position it had held before the war. Was it not vital that Australia should play its part in the new order of things?

It was proposed that I personally bring into the Executive Council some persons previously nominated. In my speech I pointed out that the newly-formed trading body had as its purpose, from the Russian point of view, the negotiation of contracts at first hand. The role of Germany as an intermediary in this field must be terminated once and for all. One of the primary aims of the Bureau was to eliminate the lack of mutual understanding which arose mainly because of mutual ignorance of the other's language. I mentioned that in Russia the study of English was gradually becoming compulsory in schools, and that here the Bureau might introduce courses in Russian for those who wished to study it. They would then understand the extent to which their fear of the language was unfounded.

The wealthiest and most influential individuals in the world of commerce were elected to the Council.

A total of seventeen speakers addressed the meeting. I should note, incidentally, that the meeting also set the membership fee at one guinea a year.

70 The President of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce in 1916–1916 was William Warren Kerr.

Closing the meeting, the chairman proposed that in view of its success a telegram should be sent announcing the formation of the Bureau to Petrograd: to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Chairmen of the State Council and the State Duma.⁷¹

The meeting concluded with the playing of the Russian and British national anthems on the organ.

The local newspapers, both in Melbourne and beyond, all reported the founding of the new Bureau and pointed out its significance in the history of relations between Russia and Australia. Not wishing to detain the Department's attention by setting forth the content of those articles, I will only note that their tone is one of the greatest good will towards Russia and hope that the two countries separated by such a great distance will draw together, and they point to the Bureau as the best and surest factor in this rapprochement.

From the attached translation of the 'Rules' of the Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau, drafted by the Executive Council on the basis of the resolutions tabled and examined at the founding meeting, the Second Department will discern that, in accordance with my intention, the consulate in my charge will always have a position of primary importance in the new body (Rules 3, 13, 16, 28), thus guaranteeing that its work will be to the benefit of Russia. Those I nominated for election to the Council, as well as the appointed members, a list of whom is attached, are by inclination the most devoted friends of Russia.⁷² The Bureau's office is situated in one of the consulate's rooms, so is close at hand. It has thus been placed almost under the consulate's complete control.

According to its stated aims, the Bureau's task is not only to establish purely commercial links between Russia and Australia, but also 'to break down the barriers of ignorance and misunderstanding which have

71 In February 1917, when the founding meeting of the Russian–Australian Commerce and Information Bureau was held, the Chairman of the Russian Imperial Council of Ministers was Nikolai Dmitriyevich Golitsyn, the Foreign Minister was Pokrovsky, the Minister of Trade and Industry was Vsevolod Nikolayevich Shakhovskoi, and the Chairman of the State Duma was Mikhail Vladimirovich Rodzianko.

72 The Rules and list of Council members are not reproduced here. According to the Rules, the Chairman of the Bureau, ex officio, was the Russian consul general, who also had the right to appoint five Council members from the Russian side at his own discretion. Thus, of a total of eleven members, six represented the interests of Russia.

hitherto restricted commerce between the two countries' (Rule 2 (c)). In accordance with this aim, and also in view of the interest shown in the study of Russian at the opening of the Bureau, it was decided to inaugurate courses in the language under its auspices. When this matter had gathered impetus, I personally delivered the first lecture on the Russian language in Melbourne Town Hall. The room allocated for the lecture turned out to be far too small. There were so many people wishing to attend that for want of seats several hundred people had to leave the building before the lecture began. In my talk I spoke of the general principles of Russian culture and explained some particular features of Russian etymology compared to that of English. Those who spoke after me – a Supreme Court judge and expert in Russian literature and history who speaks Russian well,⁷³ and Generals Foster and Cuscaden – warmly advocated the Australian public's need to gain a more detailed knowledge of Russia's cultural riches, to which the Russian language was the key.⁷⁴

The Russian courses thus inaugurated were held in this consulate, in the room adapted for the office of the Bureau. At present there are up to fifty Australians studying Russian in Melbourne. The fee per term is two and a half guineas for members of the Bureau and two guineas for non-members; three lessons per week. The instructor is a Russian lady who completed high school in Russia.⁷⁵ From time to time I personally give lectures on the language and literature, so as to consolidate the students' knowledge and give them a general understanding of Russia.

Further, in accordance with the Bureau's Rule 2, on the initiative of Mr Pratt, a journalist and member of the Bureau, a description of Australia for Russian readers is now being published on behalf of the Bureau. The Australian Government, for its part, has eagerly taken part in this venture, allocating £2,000 for the publication and engaging specialists

73 The reference is to Sir Isaac Alfred Isaacs, who knew Russian, having been born to a Jewish immigrant family from the Russian part of Poland. In 1905–1906, he was Commonwealth Attorney-General, in 1906–1931 member of the Supreme Court, which he headed in 1930–1931, and Governor-General 1931–1936.

74 Brigadier-General Hubert John Foster: Chief of Staff of the Australian Army in 1916–1917. George Cuscaden: in 1914–1921 principal army doctor of the Third Military District (Victoria).

75 It is possible that Abaza is referring to Yulia Grebina, a Russian émigrée of good education who by this time was already giving lectures on Russian culture in Melbourne. However, it has not proved possible to locate any evidence in Australian sources of any lectures delivered by Abaza himself, except the first (mentioned in his dispatch), or of any Russian courses in consular premises. The possibility cannot be excluded that he is overstating his case when he speaks of success in teaching Australians Russian.

in all spheres of learning. The material assembled will then be presented to Mr Kliachko, the Bureau's representative who is soon departing for Petrograd and will take it with him for translation into Russian and publication in Russia. The planned volume will contain accounts in as much detail as possible of the political, economic, and social life of Australia, with numerous illustrations pertaining to all the areas treated by the book. It would be desirable, if the Department finds it possible, to publish a corresponding book about Russia for Australians; Mr Kliachko might be able to undertake work towards such a publication.

In accordance with Rule 7, the organisation has now begun of branches of the Bureau throughout Australia. The aforementioned Mr Kliachko was sent to establish branches in Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia. With his customary skill he attracted the attention of the business world in those states. At meetings in them, branches were set up and the required representatives appointed. In the near future it is planned to open branches in New South Wales and Queensland.

I cannot fail to note that, in the short period of its existence, the Bureau has already been beneficial to the cause of Russia here. Besides awakening in the Australian public an interest in the fundamentals of Russian culture, it has in the brief period of its existence achieved its primary purpose: providing information of a commercial nature about Russia. It has supplied several dozen items of information.

The Bureau now has up to 700 members and a fund of £900, accumulated from membership subscriptions.

The interest awakened by the Bureau has not gone unnoticed beyond Australia's shores. Mr Manson, the New Zealand trade agent, has proposed that the Bureau should extend its operations to the other British colony nearby, whose trade representative he is.⁷⁶ Accordingly, a meeting of the Council decided to include New Zealand in the Bureau's jurisdiction, on condition that that colony can raise at least 150 members.

Concluding this dispatch, I cannot fail to mention the exceptional services rendered in the founding of the Bureau by Mr Kliachko, the doctor mentioned several times in this report, who is in Melbourne temporarily, or Mr Farr of the Australian Army, Lieutenant-Colonel in

76 Henry James Manson was appointed Trade Commissioner for New Zealand in Australia in March 1914, having previously served as New Zealand's representative in Victoria.

the reserve. For the success of the venture the consulate is much indebted to Mr Kliachko's ability to influence people and win broad popularity quickly, and Mr Farr's gift for clerical work.

I most humbly beg the Department, if possible, to forward a copy of this dispatch to M. V. Rodzianko, the Chairman of the State Duma, who has been elected Honorary Vice-President of the Bureau, and the Minister of Trade and Industry. [...]

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