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# REFERENCE AUSTRALIA

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# A RUSSIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA

## Description and genesis of the *Bibliografia Australii*

(Editor's note: The translation of Elena Govor's 'Genesis' has been undertaken by Russell McCaskie, who also wrote the introductory essay)

### Introduction

Annual listings of a nation's literary output, ('all books, documents, pamphlets, serials and other printed matter published within the bounds of a single country') are generally compiled and distributed under the rubric of 'national bibliography'.<sup>1</sup> Such bibliographies are familiar resources in most research or academic libraries. Naturally, the subject matter of material listed in such compilations may be as broad as the 'universe of knowledge'. Yet, for area specialists, compilations of the national output of literature devoted to any single foreign country are less pervasive and familiar. Indeed, such lists, if they exist at all, invariably represent the product of a research project or dissertation, are narrow in scope and tend to be limited to a single period or subject.

In the field of regional studies, one of the most important bibliographies on Australia and Oceania compiled abroad is undoubtedly Willem Robert's *Contributions to a bibliography of Australia and the South Sea islands*. While Robert attempts to identify international sources, the value of his compilation is impugned by its limited chronological coverage. A valuable resource such as Borchard's *Australians: a guide to sources* fails to provide any indication that major bibliographies on Australia have been compiled overseas, while Joanna Monie's work suffers from restrictive time and language criteria for inclusion in her listing. On the other hand, Valerie Bloomfield's *Resources for Australian and New Zealand studies* seeks to describe institutions and their collections rather than individual titles. Bolton's brief account of Australian studies abroad suggests that interest in Oceania is somewhat eclectic and dependent on the vagaries of government and private sponsorship.<sup>2</sup> These comments are not intended as criticism of inherently valuable bibliographical and informational resources. Rather, they are cited to indicate that, generally speaking at least, comprehensive listings of the national literature of foreign countries about Australia, or our region for that matter, are uncommon, if not extremely rare.

## Description

Perhaps because of the language barrier, few accounts mention the contribution of Soviet scholars to the study of our region. Yet, in recent years, two bibliographies have been published by the USSR Academy of Sciences which indicate that Russian and Soviet interest in the Oceania region has been both wide-ranging and fruitful. The first publication, *Bibliografiã Australii (1710-1983)* was released in 1985, while the second, *Bibliografiã Australii (1984-1988)*, was issued in 1989.<sup>3</sup> Although both titles were published under the auspices of the Institute of Oriental Studies (*Institut vostokovedeniã*) in Moscow, their compilation was undertaken, largely independently, by Elena Govor, initially in Minsk (Belorussian SSR) and later in Moscow.

Elena Govor, who has been in Australia since August 1990, has commenced research towards a PhD in history at the Australian National University, Canberra. The theme of her dissertation is 'Russia-Australia: the development of mutual perceptions, 1770-1917'. She recently agreed to outline the background to her bibliographic projects. The following remarks which precede Govor's account below are included firstly to provide a broad outline of major western studies of the history of Russian interest in the Pacific and secondly to describe, albeit briefly, the contents of Govor's bibliographies.

Any discussion of Russian activity in the Asia-Pacific region should pay tribute to the invaluable contributions made by a number of western scholars. Dr Glynn Barratt's studies are essential reading for any scholar interested in the history of Russian penetration in the South Pacific. The authoritative bibliographies which accompany his texts provide a wealth of primary, including archival, and secondary sources. Patricia Polansky, the indefatigable Russian bibliographer at the University of Hawaii, published what she described as a 'preliminary' listing of Russian literature on the South Pacific region almost twenty years ago. Subsequently, she has broadened our knowledge and appreciation of Pacific Rim history through a number of studies. Mention should also be made of the *SUPAR report* which is published by the Center for the Soviet Union in the Pacific-Asian Region at the University of Hawaii. The report includes a 'chronicle' of current events and lists meetings, current research and publications of scholars assessing Russian and Soviet activities in the Pacific.

Professor Basil Dmytryshyn of the Portland State University has tended to focus on medieval and early modern Russian history. His recent studies of Russian expansion into Siberia, Asia and the Northern Pacific regions are of fundamental importance for an

understanding of Russian activities in the East. The North Pacific Studies Center which is based in Portland Oregon is also a major focus of Russian activities in the East with a newsletter, *Pacific channels*, monograph series and the journal *Siberica* deserving special praise.<sup>4</sup>

These scholars alone by no means exhaust the list of western scholars in the field. They have, however, had an enormous impact on our understanding of Russian eastward expansion during a period when access to Russian historical material has been restricted. Only in the Gorbachev period (since early 1985) have opportunities arisen to establish useful contacts between Soviet researchers and their western colleagues, including the possibility of travel.<sup>5</sup>

As we shall see, Govor's account identifies many of the inherent problems which traditionally have confronted research endeavours in the Soviet Union, accounts of which are legion to western scholars with only a modicum of knowledge of Soviet research practices. If the removal of restrictions on travel to and from the Soviet Union continues, contact between Soviet and western scholars should facilitate the further development of what appears to be burgeoning Soviet interest in Australia. The multifaceted nature of these studies is alluded to by A.S.Petrikovskaia in the Foreword to Govor's 1985 text and in fact the bibliographies alone speak of the diversity of interests by listing topics ranging from Aboriginal studies to Russian maritime expeditions, the work of the anthropologist N.N.Miklouho-Maklai and the waves of the Russian emigration.<sup>6</sup>

Govor's 1985 bibliography contains 5925 entries while the 1989 text has 1046 entries. The more substantial 1985 text is divided into eleven major sections, beginning with the inevitable party-political notes which are de rigueur in the Soviet Union:

1. Basic texts of Marxism-Leninism
2. Reference works
3. General works
4. Geography
5. Population
6. Ethnography and physical anthropology of Australia and Tasmania [sic]
7. Economy
8. History
9. Government and law
10. Culture
11. Australia in world literature (belles-lettres).

Many of the sections are divided into one or more sub-sections. The following subdivisions occur for history:

## 8. History

1. General works
2. Australia 1788-1918
  - a. History of Australia 1788-1901  
N.N.Miklouho-Maklai in Australia
  - b. History of Australia 1901-1918  
Russian revolutionary emigration to Australia
3. Australia 1918-1983
  - a. Australian history 1918-1939
  - b. Australian history 1939-1945
  - c. Australian history 1945-1983
    - Political parties
    - Communist Party of Australia
    - Socialist Party of Australia
    - Australian Labor Party
    - Liberal and Country Parties
    - Other political parties...

It is obvious from the contents that all aspects of Australian historical, cultural and social development, as seen through the eyes of Russian and Soviet observers, have been considered - albeit through party political glasses.

The bibliography is accompanied by an author index which is divided into Cyrillic and English sections. In fact users of the bibliography will require some familiarity with Russian pronunciation in order to use the indexes. A number of the English entries include *see* entries (in Russian *sm.*). For example,

Hardy, F. *sm.* Khardi, F.

where 'Khardi' is the Russian version of the English name. In this case, the Russian version is straightforward and logical for a reader barely familiar with Russian. However, some Russian entries reveal rather interesting renditions of the English original:

Squires, E.F. *em.* Skvairs, E.F.  
Casey, G. *sm.* Keisi, G.  
Hughes, W.M. *sm.* Kh'iuz, U.  
Hetherington, J. *sm.* Khezerington, Dzh.

Such idiosyncracies are of relatively minor consequence and should not affect adversely our appreciation of the meticulous detail of the bibliography which, incidentally, includes annotations, and the inherently useful nature of the indexes. Govor comments in

the introduction to the 1985 text that she actually sighted the majority of the items in the bibliography. Consequently, annotations are added to clarify the contents of entries which appear obscure on the basis of citations alone.

These comments are intended to provide a broad description of the nature of the bibliographies. Govor's account which follows is a personal reflection on the background to her project and is a vivid example of some of the frustrations which confront Soviet scholars. Her compilation is an eloquent testimony to her admiration for Australian literature and society and the singleness of purpose which culminated in a remarkable bibliographic achievement. The value of her endeavours as a contribution to Australian studies is enhanced by the difficult circumstances she endured during her many years of dedication to her chosen task.

RUSSELL McCASKIE

### The genesis of the *Bibliografia Australii*

The idea for compiling a bibliography of 'absolutely everything' written in Russian about Australia captivated me from the age of about eighteen. Such foolhardy projects are possible only in one's youth. If it were not for my boundless affection for Australia which developed in my childhood through her literature and history, I doubt that I would have succeeded in achieving my plan in my late twenties. The only person who believed in my project at the time was my grandmother. Her experience of Stalinist goals and camps of which she had been a prisoner for many years, no doubt convinced her of the limitless potential of an individual.

When I commenced my project I was a second year student in the library faculty of the Institute of Culture in Minsk. My financial resources were limited to a monthly stipend of forty rubles which was the equivalent of the price of a pair of shoes.

The compilation of so-called area studies bibliographies has a long tradition in the Soviet Union. As a rule, research groups of the Institute of Asian Peoples, now the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Institute of African Peoples worked on such bibliographies. They have compiled bibliographies of Russian publications on India, Japan, China, Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, Africa and other areas, basing their work on the rich tradition of Oriental research in Russia and the Soviet Union, as well as bibliographies of early scholars. In a number of cases they enjoyed unfettered access to the rich collections in Moscow and Leningrad libraries.

As far as bibliographies on Australia were concerned, I was something

of a pioneer as there was little experience of a complex listing of the literature on any western country, of which Australia was considered a part. In the Soviet Union, pre-revolutionary Russian studies on Australia were almost completely repudiated and forgotten, while post-revolutionary Soviet studies on Australia only really began in the mid-seventies. My task was made even more difficult by the fact that I lived in Minsk where generally speaking most library collections had been destroyed during World War II. Furthermore, being a student, I could order no more than three titles from the State Library of Belorussia per day. After graduating, my right of access increased to ten titles per day, which still necessitated a visit to the library almost every day. I could hardly demand more of my heroic colleagues who carried mountains of books from the stacks to the reading room.

From the very beginning in 1975 I planned to present a comprehensive coverage of Russian writing on all aspects of Australian life: geography, geology, ethnography, history, economics, politics, law, literature and culture. I also sought to identify world literature on Australia in Russian translation. Subsequently, I also identified materials in Ukrainian and Belorussian. I rejected the notion of listing materials in other languages of the Soviet Union because of language difficulties.

I decided not to limit myself to books, journal articles and reviews as other bibliographers had done, but to include major newspaper articles and official publications, reports and surveys, dissertation abstracts and conference papers. I also decided not to limit myself to scholarly research publications, but to include textbooks, children's texts and belles-lettres, as such publications influenced the public's perception of Australia. In addition to their intrinsic value as sources of information, such texts are of historical interest in that they provide an insight into officially sanctioned Soviet views on Australia.

My easiest task was the identification and description of postwar literature because since the forties and fifties all general national bibliographies have included a geographic index to their listings. Additional material was obtained from a variety of broad subject-oriented lists including references in books, articles and dissertations. Personal contact with scholars and writers at conferences on Australia and Oceania in the Institute of Oriental Studies also helped.

One of the basic sources of Soviet information on Australia from the twenties and thirties was the publications of the Comintern

and Profintern. For the war and early postwar years, a major source was the weekly *Britanskii soiuznik* ('The British ally'), published by the British Embassy in the Soviet Union. It was for many of its readers their only window on the western world.

The Soviet period was then left behind and I waded into the endless ocean of pre-revolutionary literature. There were neither maps nor compass to guide me on this journey for treasured references to Australia. My first contacts with pre-revolutionary journals, however, were blessed with unexpected discoveries. Suffice it to note, for example, the publication of materials of members of the First Fleet in Russian two to three years after their arrival in Australia. I also discovered a Russian translation of *Tales of the colonies* by Charles Rowcroft which appeared shortly after the publication of the first English-language edition as well as sketches by Russian travellers who visited Australia.

In this way, I happened upon my most important 'discovery': Australian materials were not limited to isolated islets, but included the rocky heights of enormous undiscovered archipelagos. Pre-revolutionary Russia was in no way less interested in events in far off Australia than its European counterparts. The press had systematically introduced readers to all facets of the Australian way of life. So, contrary to the intention of the system which had educated me, I ceased to believe the basic postulate that the genuine development of science had begun only after the revolution of 1917.

The most difficult and satisfying aspect of my search began at this stage. My estimation of the value of some of the periodicals was proved correct as a year's issues of every journal brought one or two, and then five to ten references to Australia. Recognising that one person alone could not peruse *de visu* all pre-revolutionary periodicals, I concentrated my efforts on a core list of the most important titles. Generally speaking, these titles were concerned with geography, travel, geology, mining, economics and agriculture as well as basic literary-political and children's journals. Most of this work had to be undertaken during my holidays in Moscow and Leningrad.

My methodology proved fruitful because several years later, after I moved to Moscow and was without permanent work for seven years, I was able to survey a much wider selection of journals for separate bibliographies of Oceania and New Zealand. At the same time I also made several additions to my *Bibliografiâ Australii*, even though the number of serious omissions appeared to be small.

A western bibliographer would find it hard to imagine the difficulties I had obtaining adequate resources to prepare the bibliography. The shortage of paper products meant I had to make my own index cards, cut from sheets of paper, while access to a typewriter was not guaranteed when typing the final draft.

The long awaited moment arrived in 1981 when I finally submitted the manuscript to the Australia and Oceania Department of the Institute of Oriental studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Thanks to the efforts of the head of the department, Kim Malakhovskii, two years later my bibliography was accepted for publication by Nauka.

The so-called stage of 'work with the publishing editor' then began. This was intended ostensibly to ensure my entries conformed to standards of description. However, this stage also fulfilled the function of preliminary censorship - as if one can censor such a bibliography of published works! Our first confrontation amused me greatly: the editor swooped on references to pronouncements by Stalin and Khrushchev about Australia and crossed them out. Then she raised her pencil over Brezhnev, but muttered pensively, 'There is no instruction yet', and allowed references to him to remain. (This was in 1983, when no instruction had been received from the censor to remove references to Brezhnev from literature. Normally, a leader's death or loss of status was followed by the name being expunged from official literature.) In Stalin's case, the only references to him in connection with Australia consisted of his signature on intergovernmental documents. I was ultimately successful in restoring these references in my bibliography. As for Khrushchev, a curious interview with an Australian newspaper completely disappeared from the bibliography in a Soviet version of Orwell's *Ministry of truth*.

Matters were even more complicated when Australian communists and writers such as Frank Hardy were involved. Hundreds of their articles and sketches filled Soviet serials in the fifties and sixties and I regarded my bibliography as an objective reflection of this aspect of Soviet-Australian relations. However, by the time I completed my listing, the Communist Party of Australia had been pronounced 'revisionist' and all its publications were condemned to disappear ingloriously in the bowels of the very same *Ministry of truth*. A similar fate threatened articles from *Britanskiĭ soĭuznik*. Fortunately, in the Central Committee of the Party, there were sensible people to whom I could turn and who were able to provide the necessary certification that neither *Britanskiĭ soĭuznik* nor Soviet publications of our former communist friends contained sedition.

There also existed an unambiguous directive that all publications of former Soviet citizens who had emigrated from the Soviet Union be expunged. I assured the editorial board that nothing of that ilk was in my work, and thereby preserved successfully my entries for the valuable work by L. Rozina (Leningrad ethnographer who emigrated to the United States) and a number of other scholars. Although I was able to preserve I. Broskii's translations of Australian poetry, an important article of Ogibenin, an emigré specialist on semiotics, was unceremoniously removed from the proofs just hours before permission to go to press was granted.

In the autumn of 1985, *Bibliografiã Australii* was released with a print-run of 1050 copies. In its final form, it covers the years 1710-1983 and contains almost 6000 entries. Its contents are, broadly speaking, consistent with the plan which I developed originally. Each section is in chronological order which provides the opportunity to observe the evolution of perceptions about various aspects of Australian life. Annotations are included for traveller's sketches and for works the titles of which do not adequately reveal the nature or content of the material. Annotations also accompany rare publications which are not accessible to researchers from outside Moscow or Leningrad.

In 1989, Nauka published a continuation of my bibliography for the period 1984-1988 which was compiled according to the same methodological principles and contains information about 1000 titles. On this occasion, I worked without an editor while the censor, to whom I sent the manuscript for 'insurance', promptly told me that bibliographies were no longer subject to censorship. This was one of the first indications that *perestroika* had reached the field of librarianship.

To sum up, I would say that the two issues of *Bibliografiã Australii* represent a unique attempt to present as comprehensively as possible all Russian and Soviet publications about Australia over a period of more than two hundred years. The lists are of interest not only to Soviet researchers, but to western (including Australian) specialists as well. Historians, economists, geographers, anthropologists and literary specialists, among others, should benefit from the access to the works of their Soviet colleagues which the bibliographies provide. Furthermore, a bibliographer will discover the works of Australian scholars, political activists and writers which have been translated into Russian.

Writings which have little or no scholarly significance, such as extravagant ideological sketches of Australia, drawn by Soviet journalists and other 'comrades', are included in my lists. I

have done so deliberately with the future in mind as such accounts provide access to a method of writing which may be studied for its intrinsic value. They represent a comprehensive collection of stereotypes of the cold war, and clearly show the official Soviet perception of Australia in its historical context and as it was packaged and conveyed to Soviet citizens.

The bibliography is of greatest importance for its coverage of Russian pre-revolutionary works on Australia. In the absence of any comprehensive bibliography on Australia prior to the middle of this century in English or any other language, these lists provide access to a selection of materials which appeared from the eighteenth-century onwards. Furthermore, the bibliographies provide a unique opportunity to appreciate the perception of Australia from continental Europe and aspects of Australian life which attracted greatest attention during this period.

The history of Russian-Australian contacts naturally has special interest and is accessible in the sections 'Russian naval expeditions', 'N.N.Miklouho-Maklai in Australia', 'Russian revolutionary emigration', 'Soviet-Australian relations', and 'The history of the study of Australia in Russia and the USSR'.

The University of Queensland is planning work on the transliteration and annotation of the two *Bibliografiā Australii*, copies of which are held in the National Library of Australia and some other major institutions. These are to be kept on a local data-base. The bibliographies will also be the basis of a collection of Russian publications on Australia which are being acquired from abroad.

ELENA GOVOR

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3. Govor, E.V. *Bibliografiã Australii (1710-1983)*, Moscow, Nauka, 1985; Govor, E.V. *Bibliografiã Australii (1984-1988)*, Moscow, Nauka, 1989.

4. Although this is not the place to undertake a listing of all studies of the region, the following titles provide detailed analyses of Russian interest in the Pacific. Dmytryshyn, Basil "Russian expansion to the Pacific, 1580-1700: a historiographical review", *Siberica*, 1: 4-37, 1990. This survey is an expanded version of a paper which was written over ten years ago and provides a useful analysis of English and Russian language studies. See also *Russian penetration of the north Pacific Ocean, 1700-1799: a documentary record*, Portland, Oregon Historical Society, 1988, and *The Russian American colonies, 1798-1867; a documentary record*, Portland, Oregon Historical Society, 1989 under the editorship of Basil Dmytryshyn and others.

Polansky, Patricia, *Russian writings on the South Pacific area: a preliminary edition*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii, 1974, (Miscellaneous Work Papers, No. 5, Pacific Islands Program). Polansky's articles include 'The Russians and Soviets in Asia', *International library review*, 14: 217-262, 1982 and 'The bibliographic work of the State Public Scientific-Technical Library of the Siberian Section of the USSR Academy of Sciences', *Libri*, 33: 274-288, 1983. Govor and Polansky currently are preparing a bibliography of Russian sources about Hawaii (with English transliteration) as well as a similar listing on Oceania in general.

Glynn Barratt's studies include *Russia in Pacific waters, 1715-1825: a survey of Russia's naval presence in the North and South Pacific*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1981; *The Russians at Port Jackson, 1814-1822*, Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1981; *Russia and the South Pacific, 1696-1840*. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1988. (v.1, *The Russians and Australia*, v.2, *Southern and eastern Polynesia*)

C.M.Hotimsky's early study of Russians in Australia should be acknowledged. His brief and lucid account provides a valuable insight into the experiences of Russian immigrants. See H[otimsky], C.M. 'Russians in Australia' in *The Australian encyclopaedia*, Sydney, Grolier, 1965. v.7: 526-528.

5. For a discussion of recent developments in Soviet studies on China, see Jacobs, J.Bruce, 'Soviet sinology: a report', *Asian studies review*, 14: 127-132, 1990.

6. A note accompanying a new series of monographs published in Moscow, simply entitled *Russkie za rubezhom* (*Russians abroad*), suggests that accounts of the experiences of Russian emigrés in Australia will be among the topics of future issues. Sources for the series will include official and private archival material and personal reminiscences. A series of brief essays entitled *Russians in Australia* has been published by the Department of Russian Language and Literature at the University of Melbourne under the editorship of Nina Christesen since 1988.

The *Bibliografiã Australii* includes a special section on Miklouho-Maklai; this is a reflection of the Soviet perception of his significance in the history of the region. Despite the tragic loss of many of his papers, several books and articles have been written in recent times about this itinerant anthropologist in both the Soviet Union and Australia.

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