Saunders D.

[An Anglo-Russian Critic of the Abolition of Serfdom.](#)

Slavonic and East European Review 2014, 92(2), 255-283.

Copyright:

This is the author's manuscript of an article published in its final definitive form by the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2014.

DOI link to article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.92.2.0255>

Date deposited:

06/05/2016

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/)

Icebreakers in Anglo-Russian Relations (1914-21)

David Saunders*

Foreign supply to Russia in the First World War is familiar terrain,¹ but although the present paper engages to some degree with the military, diplomatic, and especially economic aspects of the subject, its primary affiliations lie elsewhere. Its principal purpose is to discuss the icebreakers on which it concentrates not only just before but also just after Russia's withdrawal from the First World War, with a view to contrasting the first phase of the ships' history with the second and highlighting the perennially ambivalent character of the Anglo-Russian relationship. On the way, it points out the geographical limitations of the Russian Empire by drawing attention to the fact that it was almost land-locked between 1914 and 1917; ventures into the history of the part of Britain in which the ships were built in order to show that a region which is sometimes thought to be introspective was once outward-looking; makes a contribution to environmental history by speaking of the difficulty of sailing in Arctic and sub-Arctic waters; develops an aspect of the history of technology by focussing on a class of vessel which was relatively new in the early twentieth century; and even engages, towards the end, with a key period in the life of an important figure in Russian literary history. Thus its remit is broad.

Russia had a particular need for icebreakers in the First World War because Germany and the Ottoman Empire prevented it from using its ports on the Baltic and the Black Sea. Since these were the country's principal maritime outlets, 'Contemporaries accurately compared Russia with an apartment block

whose doors and windows had been boarded up, so that the householders had to deal with the outside world via stove-pipes and water-pipes.²

The 'stove-pipes' were Russia's two wartime land routes to the West: via Finland, Sweden, Norway, and the North Sea, and via Karelia and the Kola Peninsula to the Murman coast in the Arctic Circle. The first, the route usually taken by individuals and small groups, was unsuitable for cargoes. Although the second involved fewer international borders and more sea than land, it was not viable at the beginning of the war because Russia had not yet built the Murmansk railroad or Murmansk itself. The Russian authorities understood that these things were necessary and soon began work on them, but they were not to be fully operational until after the tsarist regime fell.

For the conveyance of large cargoes, therefore, Russia had to make best use of its 'water-pipes', the Pacific and the White Sea. Both of these suffered from significant drawbacks. The first was a very long way from the principal theatres of war. Although the Trans-Siberian Railroad connected the Pacific with the heart of the Russian Empire, it was still, at this time, single-track. Consequently, managing the despatch of goods from Vladivostok to the front caused the regime major headaches. By the middle of the war, they were piling up at Cheliabinsk just to the east of the Urals,³ still a long way from where most of them were needed.

This left the White Sea, the gateway to the Arctic, where Archangel on the southern shore was the principal port and Soroka, Kem, and Kandalaksha on the western shore offered additional possibilities for the receipt of goods. Although reaching harbours at such high latitudes from Britain and France was not easy, and although the threat of German mines made getting to them riskier

still, at least they were in the European part of the Russian Empire. Icebreakers would make them accessible for more of the year.

Admittedly, lack of icebreakers had not prevented Archangel from being something of a focus of connections between Britain and Russia prior to the First World War. The early twentieth century was not the first time that Russia had been virtually landlocked. Richard Chancellor had inaugurated the entire modern history of Anglo-Russian relations when, in 1553, he landed in the White Sea near the spot on which Archangel was to be founded.⁴ The late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century British merchant and diplomat Sir John Merrick entered and left Muscovy via Archangel on a number of occasions.⁵ King James I of England contemplated military intervention in the northern part of Muscovy in 1613.⁶ The elder John Tradescant, one of the first great English naturalists, collected plants in the delta of the Northern Dvina in 1618.⁷ The inveterate Cornish traveller Peter Mundy wrote a wide-ranging description of the area after spending a month there in 1641.⁸ Although British merchants were less important than their Dutch rivals at Archangel for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,⁹ by the end of the eighteenth century the port was deriving 20 or 30 per cent of its turnover from dealings with Britain.¹⁰ After enlisting on a British ship at Archangel in 1804, Ivan Spekhin, a peasant from Archangel province, saw England, the Cape of Good Hope, the West Indies, and Surinam before returning home a decade later.¹¹ The grievances of the merchant who assassinated Britain's Prime Minister in the lobby of the House of Commons in 1812 stemmed from a period of imprisonment at Archangel.¹² By the time Britain opened a consulate at

Archangel at the beginning of the 1820s, British ships were in the ascendancy there.¹³

Although the most striking developments in Russia's external trade in the later nineteenth century took place in the southern rather than the northern part of the Russian Empire, Britain and Archangel did not lose touch with one another. Indeed, by the middle of the nineteenth century elements of a Russian-English pidgin language were being recorded in Solombala, the docks district of Archangel.¹⁴ Joseph Wiggins, one of north-east England's most ambitious mariners, called at Archangel in 1875 in the course of one of his many investigations of the possibilities of the Northern Sea Route.¹⁵ The Archangel-Murman Express Steam Navigation Company ordered new steamers in north-east England and Scotland in the 1890s and just before the First World War.¹⁶ The half-Scottish Eugenie Fraser grew up in Archangel at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁷ The British traveller Stephen Graham brought the city to life in a travelogue of 1912.¹⁸ Thus Britain knew something of Russia's European north long before the First World War began.

The British may have known the region almost as well as the tsarist authorities, for, to judge by the fact that Sergei Witte, the Russian Minister of Finances, had not succeeded in his attempt to promote the use of the Murman Coast in the 1890s,¹⁹ St Petersburg had been unenthusiastic about the north prior to 1914. When war broke out, however, the tsar's ministers realized that the White Sea and the Arctic would have to play a much larger part in their plans. On 30 July / 12 August 1914 they decided to buy coal in England and procure an icebreaker to lengthen the period of time when it could be imported via Archangel,²⁰ acknowledging, then and in the next few months, that

Vladivostok needed more ships if it was to deal effectively with North America, that getting to the west via Scandinavia involved multiple difficulties, and that communicating with Britain via Karelia and the Murman coast could not become a realistic possibility until Russia had built a continuous railway line in that direction.²¹

But where were the tsarist authorities to get the icebreakers they needed? The first thing they did was buy *Earl Grey* and *J. L. Horne* in Canada, renaming them *Kanada* and *Solombala*.²² Unfortunately, this initiative was not immediately successful, for the first of the two ships broke down in January 1915 and the second took longer than expected to cross the Atlantic.²³ These ships had anyway been built for service on the Great Lakes of North America, which meant, to quote Russia's Navy Minister, that they were 'not really icebreakers in the full sense of the word but steamers with a capacity to smash ice'.²⁴ The Minister accepted, however, that equipping Archangel with effective icebreakers was essential. 'With every day,' he confided to his diary,

the question of Archangel becomes so serious that it necessitates taking immediate steps to secure the capacity of this port to accept the cargoes coming to us – for us [the navy] basically coal for future voyages, but mainly cargoes for the War Department, which is placing huge orders abroad, since, although [they said] they 'were prepared for war', in reality they have turned out to be unprepared in every respect.²⁵

The Council of Ministers shared the Navy Minister's view of the urgency of the situation. To repair *Kanada*, to get important military cargoes into Archangel in January and February 1915, and to open navigation there as early as possible in the spring of the coming year, at the end of December 1914 it granted

Russia's Minister of Trade and Industry nearly a million rubles (about £100,000) to buy and hire additional foreign vessels.²⁶

The tsarist authorities did not make such allocations lightly. Because of Russia's relative poverty, and in order to stimulate domestic production, they had long been in the habit of trying to reduce the country's overseas purchases. In June 1895, for example, Witte had written at length to State Secretary A. N. Kulomzin to complain that the extent of Russia's foreign orders in the year 1894 contravened an edict of 6 October 1866 whose purpose had been to keep foreign orders in check.²⁷ Ministers knew, in other words, that they had to tread carefully when they wanted to buy overseas. Perhaps for that reason, within weeks of the outbreak of World War One the Navy Minister proposed raising foreign currency by exporting timber from Archangel to England.²⁸ Russian exports, however, could not possibly have raised enough to pay for everything the country needed. The story of the tsarist authorities' alternative approach to money-raising in the First World War (which, broadly speaking, took the form of borrowing from Britain), has been told many times.²⁹ In June 1917 the imperial regime's successor, Russia's Provisional Government, summarized the enormous wartime debts incurred by its predecessor.³⁰

P. L. Bark, the last imperial Minister of Finances, spelled out the implications of Russia's indebtedness even as he arranged the loans that increased it. At the ministerial meeting of 17/30 September 1915 at which he reported his most important wartime financial agreement with Britain, he emphasized the need for Russian governmental agencies to minimize their foreign orders. He had raised a great deal of money, but he felt Russia should spend it cautiously. He 'consider[ed] it his duty to insist that, in future, orders

other than those which relate directly to immediate current needs of state defence be distributed within the Empire'. Russia, he said, was rich in raw materials. Although it had shown in the first year of the war that it could produce some of the manufactured goods it needed, it should be producing more. The Ministry of Finances, Bark declared, was ready to make 'all attainable sacrifices' to promote domestic development, because it felt that they would be repaid a hundred-fold in the near future. Fellow ministers responded by pointing out that Russia had been in the habit of placing orders abroad because foreign firms were quicker and cheaper. They acknowledged, however, that ordering abroad created a vicious circle, for the more the country placed orders abroad, the less likely native firms were to invest in the equipment they needed to fulfil such orders at home. Consequently, the war 'demonstrated the backwardness of our industry ... and the many respects in which we are alarmingly dependent on foreigners in such a vital sphere as the defence of the state'. The Council of Ministers concluded that it must do more to encourage domestic industry and reduce the number of Russia's foreign orders.³¹

In these circumstances, buying icebreakers abroad was justifiable only if it was essential. Unfortunately (from the point of view of Russia's balance of payments), it was essential. Buying pre-existing vessels from Canada was not going to be sufficient. Although, by March 1915, a total of seventeen icebreaking vessels of one kind or another were on duty at Archangel,³² Britain still had to risk using *Jupiter*, a guardship from the river Tyne in north-east England, to get through the ice of the White Sea at about that time.³³ Consequently, the tsar's ministers went beyond the million rubles they had voted in December 1914 and showed many further signs in 1915, 1916, and

1917 of their willingness, whatever the cautionary notes sounded by the Minister of Finances, to spend money abroad on the construction, not merely the purchase, of icebreaking equipment.³⁴

For their new icebreakers they turned not, in the main, to Canada, but to north-east England, a heavily industrial region well located for dealings with Russia by virtue of being at the western end of both the maritime arc between Archangel and Britain and the Baltic route between St Petersburg and Britain. The price of energy in the region's capital, Newcastle upon Tyne, had been lower in 1800 than anywhere else in the world.³⁵ Coal had promoted the region's industrial development. By the end of the nineteenth century, its export trade was diverse.³⁶ Its business links with the tsarist empire were numerous. It was no accident that Joseph Wiggins usually set out from north-east England when he embarked for the Russian Arctic between the 1870s and the 1890s, or that the Archangel-Murman Navigation Company ordered ships to be built there. Charles Mitchell of Low Walker near Newcastle began building ships for Russia in the 1850s. In the early 1860s, he sent employees to St Petersburg to establish Russia's first-ever yard for the construction of ironclads.³⁷ Another Tyneside shipbuilding concern, Hawthorn-Leslie, built many of the new vessels in Russia's emerging 'Volunteer Fleet' in the 1880s and 1890s (at one point inclining the British government to take an interest in the potential military uses of these ostensibly civilian ships).³⁸ The foundation and rapid growth of the Tyneside Geographical Society in the 1880s and 1890s showed that, by the end of the nineteenth century, not only the economic but even the cultural life of north-east England had become international;³⁹ Wiggins's lectures to the Society about his voyages in the Russian Arctic attracted particularly

enthusiastic audiences.⁴⁰ The tsar started appointing Russian subjects to be consuls in Newcastle in 1893.⁴¹ The Newcastle press took a keen interest in the fortunes of the locally built *Smolensk* when, in confirmation of the British government's suspicions about the ships of Russia's Volunteer Fleet, it served in a military capacity in the Russo-Japanese War.⁴² In the first few months after the outbreak of World War One, the north-east English press often commented on Archangel's trading prospects.⁴³

Of the many ships that tsarist Russia acquired from north-east England, icebreakers were among the most distinctive. This type of vessel could be said to have originated on the River Tyne, for *Pilot*, the first ship in the class, started life as a tug at Charles Mitchell's Low Walker shipyard in 1862. Although it had to be converted before it could start work as an icebreaker at Kronstadt in 1864, its original builders may have undertaken the conversion, for, having created St Petersburg's first yard for ironclads at the beginning of the 1860s, Mitchell's men went on building ships there until 1867.⁴⁴ His brother-in-law and principal associate, Henry Swan (who lived in Russia between 1862 and 1865), acquired a particular reputation for icebreakers.⁴⁵ In 1895, at Low Walker on the Tyne, he built *Saratovskii ledokol*, 'one of the most powerful Ice Breakers in the world', to go with a railway ferry that the firm was constructing for service on the Volga.⁴⁶ In January 1896 he secured Russia's order for the construction at Low Walker of what became *Baikal*, 'a ferry Steamer for the Trans-Siberian Railway', an icebreaking vessel which, in conjunction with a smaller icebreaker, *Angara* (built at Low Walker two years later), enabled Russia to circumvent the rocky southern end of Lake Baikal.⁴⁷ After visiting St Petersburg at the end of 1897, Swan reported that Admiral Makarov had ordered the construction at Low

Walker of what became *Ermak*, 'a very powerful Ice-Breaker ... which is intended for keeping open the Navigation of the Baltic during winter, and also for service in the Arctic Ocean, but more particularly to maintain the navigation with the rivers of Western Siberia'.⁴⁸ At its launch in October 1898, Swan drew attention to the fact that, 'By a curious coincidence, it had happened that the very first ice-breaker [*Pilot*] was built in that yard, and they had seen launched that day certainly the largest and most important vessel of the kind in the world'.⁴⁹ Responding to a lecture Swan gave about icebreakers to Britain's Institution of Naval Architects in July 1899, Admiral Makarov expressed the view that 'There is no ice so thick that the skill of the English engineer cannot overcome it'.⁵⁰ Although, because of mergers, Swan's firm had by this time changed its name to Armstrong Whitworth, its reputation for icebreakers lived on. When Russia turned to Armstrong's for the largest icebreakers it was to order in World War One, it was acting in the spirit of a relationship which went back more than fifty years.

The first company Russia turned to, however, when it realized in 1915 that it could not solve all its problems in the White Sea simply by buying pre-existing ships from Canada, was not Armstrong's but the next-door company on the River Tyne, Swan Hunter of Wallsend. Charles Swan, the 'Swan' of Swan Hunter, was Henry Swan's brother, and, like Henry, had worked for Charles Mitchell in Russia in the 1860s. When he fell off a ferry into the English Channel to his death in 1879, Henry told the inquest that he had been on his way home from a business trip to St Petersburg, 'where he had resided for years previously'.⁵¹ In the hands of his widow and heirs, his company prospered. An early twentieth-century Russian study of the world's principal shipbuilders

devoted even more space to it than it devoted to Armstrong's.⁵² On occasion, the companies collaborated. When, for example, Henry Swan received an order from Russia in 1900 for a floating dock to go with the icebreaker and rail ferry that his firm had built for Saratov five years earlier, he asked Swan Hunter to execute it, on the grounds that Swan's specialized in this type of equipment and could 'give us a tender at less than our own nett cost would have been'.⁵³

But Swan's also secured Russian orders on its own. Indeed, the reason why Russia turned to it for an icebreaker in April 1915 was probably that, unlike Armstrong's, it was active there in the years immediately prior to the First World War. *The Times* of London reported in 1912 that it was 'superintending the construction of what will probably be the largest floating drydock in the world' at Nikolaev in the Russian south.⁵⁴ In the north, it received an order in December 1913 from the Archangel-Murman Steam Navigation Company for the passenger cargo ship *Kolguev*, which it was on the point of delivering to Archangel when the tsarist authorities accepted that they had to have icebreakers built from scratch.⁵⁵ By then it was already playing an inadvertent part in the creation of Archangel's icebreaker fleet, for it had built the Canadian passenger cargo ships *Lintrose* and *Nascopie*, both of which Russia was using as icebreakers.⁵⁶ Its direct involvement in White Sea icebreaking, however, began in April 1915, when it received the order for *Il'ia Muromets*, Russia's first wartime icebreaker to be built from scratch.⁵⁷ Between then and the end of the following year it received three more such orders (for *Dobrynia Nikitich*, *Koz'ma Minin*, and *Kniaz' Pozharskii*), as well as orders for the floating docks in which it specialized at both Archangel and the even more northerly Kola.⁵⁸

Thus Swan's came to play a significant part in the further development of the White Sea in the First World War. For two main reasons, however, its ships were still not enough to satisfy Russia's requirements. On the one hand, they could not be completed before 1916, which meant that they were not going to be available for the second winter of the war. On the other hand, they were probably never going to be powerful enough to cope with the worst of the ice that faced them, for, whereas, in late 1914, Archangel had benefited from 'a remarkable spell of fine and warm weather just at the time when it was liable to be frozen up',⁵⁹ the northern winter of 1915-16 was severe. A Swan's employee wrote to his family from Archangel in late November 1915 to say that 'We are having very bad weather here just now and it began to thaw but now it is freezing'.⁶⁰ A British official with an interest in the matter wrote in March 1916 that the White Sea had been 'closed considerably longer this winter by ice'.⁶¹ Although, at that point, Maurice Hankey (the Secretary of Britain's Committee of Imperial Defence), Aleksei Polivanov (Russia's Minister of War), and Sir Alfred Knox (Britain's Ambassador in Petrograd) all seemed to be more troubled by the onward despatch of goods from Archangel than by the difficulty of getting them there in the first place, Hankey nevertheless noted that Britain 'decided to build some ice-breakers for Archangel' at this time.⁶² He could have said more, for at the turn of 1915-16 Russia went beyond the orders for newly built icebreakers that it had already placed with Swan's when it bought a substantial Canadian icebreaker which was already on the stocks in Montreal and, above all, by commissioning Armstrong's of Newcastle to build *Sviatogor* and *Aleksandr Nevskii*, the two largest icebreakers of the war.⁶³

Armstrong's made almost no mention of its work for Russia when it summarized its wartime activity in 1919. So far as the White Sea was concerned, it spoke only of 'a Train Ferry Ice-Breaker which was under construction for Canada but which was diverted to Russia and used for keeping open the passage to Archangel'.⁶⁴ When, however, *Sviatogor* and *Aleksandr Nevskii* were being ordered and built, they received close attention. Minutes of Armstrong's Directors' meetings, Executive Committee, Shipyards Committee and Ordnance Committee show that the company pressed to be sure of the orders, negotiated keenly about the vessels with the British Admiralty and Russia's representatives in London, grasped that *Sviatogor* was to be 'an improved "Ermack" ', started work on the vessel even before the contract for it had been signed, asked for and eventually received permission to build *Aleksandr Nevskii* at the new, grand Armstrong Naval Yard at High Walker (rather than at the by this time more modest-looking Low Walker), readied *Sviatogor* for sea trials before Christmas 1916, expected to launch *Aleksandr Nevskii* on 10 November 1916 (but actually launched it on 23 December), and hoped to have the second of the two vessels ready for trial by the end of January 1917.⁶⁵ In short, when the vessels were on the stocks Armstrong's gave them a high priority. Russia rated them highly too, to judge by the fact that, when A. I. Shingarev and V. I. Gurko visited Newcastle in May 1916 on behalf of the Russian Duma and State Council (as part of a larger delegation which was touring Britain and France to assess the extent of the allies' commitment to the war), they called on Armstrong's but not on Swan's.⁶⁶

At the time of the parliamentarians' visit, contacts between Russia and north-east England were more or less at their peak. Not all of them had to do

with shipbuilding, for Russia sent the industrial chemist Nikolai Nikitin to the region in 1916 to learn about poison gas.⁶⁷ Nor were all of them contacts between educated people, for on one occasion interaction between ordinary workers of the two countries saved the émigré Russian-German revolutionary Heinrich Matthäus Fischer from losing his job as a metalworker at Swan's. Because of his German name, and despite the fact that, after thirteen years in England, he had taken out British citizenship, Fischer had been dismissed from Armstrong's soon after the war broke out. Although he got another job at Swan's Neptune Yard, he looked likely to lose that too when hostility to Germans peaked in Britain after a submarine sank *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915. At that time, however, Russian seamen were in Newcastle to take the newly built *Kolguev* from Swan's to the White Sea. When his workmates saw how naturally Fischer got on with the Russians, they accepted he was Russian rather than German and he kept his job at the Neptune Yard when 'other old Germans', some of whom had been working there for more than twenty years, were forced out.⁶⁸

Newcastle had become Britain's principal point of exit and entry for people who had to make their way to and from Russia. Nikolai Bukharin appears to have been arrested in the city in July 1915 for attempting to travel to Russia under a false name.⁶⁹ Aleksandr Shliapnikov, a future Soviet commissar and oppositionist, passed through Newcastle on at least two occasions during the war.⁷⁰ Sir Samuel Hoare travelled via Newcastle to join the British Intelligence Mission in Petrograd in March 1916.⁷¹ At the Anglo-Russian Bureau in Petrograd, Russians were asking 'How much does a ticket to Newcastle cost?'⁷² Having learned within a few days of the outbreak of the war that travelling via

Newcastle was virtually the only way for an individual traveller to get to and from Russia, Bernard Pares, England's leading Slavist, departed and returned via the city several times.⁷³ V. D. Nabokov, one of a group of Russian journalists who toured Britain in February and March 1916 with a view to convincing Russians at home of the depth of Britain's commitment to the war, recognized 'the dimensions and breadth of England's technical means' on entering the River Tyne,⁷⁴ and expressed something like astonishment after touring the massive undertakings of Palmer's on the south bank of the river when he was on his way home.⁷⁵

Whereas Nabokov was in transit, the budding Russian writer Evgenii Zamiatin spent eighteen months of the war in Newcastle working as a naval architect. He had acquired some first-hand knowledge of Russia's northern problems in the summer of 1915, when the tsarist Ministry of Trade and Industry sent him to the White Sea to conduct a review of harbour facilities at Soroka (Belomorsk). Unable to get a hotel room in Archangel on that occasion, he had spent a few nights aboard *Kanada*.⁷⁶ In the spring of 1916, his superiors sent him to north-east England to join the supervisors whom they had been sending there since May of the previous year.⁷⁷ In the early 1930s he was to speak of the icebreakers with whose construction he was involved in England in terms of Anglo-Russian symbiosis. On the one hand, the ships were quintessentially Russian ('An icebreaker is as Russian as a samovar ... its nose is Russian, heavy, broad, like the nose of a peasant from Tambov or Voronezh'⁷⁸); on the other, they owed their existence to British expertise ('Grandfather *Ermak*' was still in service, 'so strongly and reliably did the English build in those days when their pound sterling was still strong and reliable'⁷⁹). His English period had

allowed him to combine his two greatest pleasures, shipbuilding and literary creation. 'At night,' he wrote, 'at home, when checking the plans of the *Lenin* [at that time *Aleksandr Nevskii*], I would listen to the explosions of the bombs, sometimes far off, sometimes near, and write my novel about the English, *Islanders*.'⁸⁰ A decade and a half after his return to Russia, in Leningrad, he told a visitor from north-east England that when he was in Newcastle he had 'liked the people very much'.⁸¹ At first sight, it seems that his time in England was a high point in his life.

It could also be said to have been a high point in the history of the Anglo-Russian relationship, for towards the end of 1916 everything was apparently in place to improve the passage of war goods from the West to Archangel. The programme of icebreaker construction that Russia had initiated in north-east England was coming to a head. Britain and Russia looked to be on the point of conquering the ice that cut them off from one another. Can it be argued, therefore, that Russia's British icebreakers were a success? Apart from bringing British and Russian subjects together in the course of their construction (and so helping to allay Russian suspicions that the western partners in the wartime alliance were not fighting Germany and Austria-Hungary to the best of their ability), they seem to have played a part in the considerable improvement of supply at Archangel, which, having exported ten times as much as it imported in 1913, imported twenty times as much in 1917 as it had imported four years earlier.⁸²

Unfortunately, these conclusions are too sanguine. Even the dramatic improvement of supply at Archangel was a mixed blessing, for getting the goods out of the Russian north to the places for which they were intended never

became easy. Writing from Archangel in January 1917, Major B. M. Hallward of the British army pointed to:

the natural difficulties of the port and a realisation of the impossibility of procuring in war time the equipment for the expeditious handling of four millions of cargo [*sic*] in a port which before the war contained one full sized berth and two smaller quays.⁸³

Although Hallward believed that ‘the system which the work of the last two years has evolved is in the main the best suited to cope with the problems that present themselves’, he admitted that ‘persons who have not had to do directly with the conditions at Archangel’ might think that ‘more efficacious methods [of onward delivery] might be found’.⁸⁴ Although, according to an estimate of early 1917, Archangel’s capacity for the onward despatch of imports was more than twice as great as the combined capacity of all three of Russia’s alternative import routes (Vladivostok, Finland-Sweden-Norway, Murman),⁸⁵ it was still clear, at the time the British officer wrote his report, that the improvements which had taken place in respect of supply at Archangel in the first two and a half years of the war were insufficient to meet Russia’s needs.

One reason why they had not been more substantial was the way in which the Anglo-Russian alliance operated in Britain. Finding money to buy goods in the West was only one of the many issues which Russia had to resolve when trying to maintain its effort on the eastern front in World War One. Another was putting procedures in place to spend the money which it raised. The complicated way in which Russia organized its foreign orders via London in World War One has been recounted elsewhere,⁸⁶ but the mere names of the bodies which vetted the orders – the Anglo-Russian Committee of 1914-15

(chaired by a Grand Duke who had been exiled from Russia for marrying beneath himself), its successor, the Russian Governmental Committee (which Petrograd brought into being after realizing that the body chaired by the Grand Duke had not been very energetic), and the London-based *Commission Internationale de Ravitaillement* (to which the Russian Governmental Committee reported) – strike fear into students of Russian bureaucracy. Whilst battle raged in Petrograd about whether Russia's wartime Unions of Towns and Zemstva should be allowed representation on the country's London purchasing agency,⁸⁷ the agency itself grew in size rather than efficiency. In February 1918, a Russian official in London told the British Treasury that, at its maximum extent in September and October of the previous year, the Russian Governmental Committee had employed 738 staff.⁸⁸ One of its employees recollected that, because it was 'heavily overstaffed', he and his colleagues

worked in a leisurely fashion, with plenty of time for gossip, newspapers, and discussions on the subject of the war ... We wrote minutes to the War Office asking for struts and cocoa, boots and aluminium, silk and guns; these we shipped to Archangel and felt that we had done our bit. How were we to know that the Archangel Railway was breaking down and that expensive munitions were, for lack of sheds, dumped down anywhere and were sinking under their weight into the marshy ground? Our power of self-suggestion was still unimpaired, and because life in London was so calm, we believe that things at home were gradually getting better.⁸⁹

When, in the case of orders for ships, one adds to Russia's London officials the procedures of the British Admiralty (which decided the uses to which British shipyards were to be put), and, in the case of the orders for *Sviatogor* and its

predecessors, the procedures of the companies in Newcastle which built them, it becomes easy to see that the construction of Russia's icebreakers did not take place as quickly as it might have done. Although the records of Swan's and Armstrong's in Newcastle provide only a few indicators of the fact that shipbuilders in north-east England sometimes felt they were at the end of a rather long chain, they do show, for example, that the Admiralty did not give Armstrong's a free hand in determining which of its shipyards was to be employed for the construction of *Aleksandr Nevskii*, and that it put pressure on Armstrong's to finish its share of the work on the icebreakers sooner than it easily could.⁹⁰

In view of its size, furthermore, Russia's programme of icebreaker construction would have been demanding in any circumstances. The ships in the present paper were only the most important parts of it. When the Russian Governmental Committee was being wound up in 1918, an official said that the final report of the 'Commercial Ports Section' was going to speak of an 'icebreaker construction programme which comprises 9 icebreakers with a total value of roughly £1,000,000, and orders for 82 shore cranes and spares, 3 floating cranes, 30 lorries and spares and various other orders with a total value of approximately £1,500,000. In this connection 180-200 applications were made and about 300 orders placed which spread over the period from 1915-1918'.⁹¹ Such a programme would have been difficult to complete at the best of times.

To cut a long story short, only one of the icebreakers in the present paper, *Sviatogor*, reached Russia in time to be included on the official shiplists of the tsarist empire.⁹² Nor was its inclusion really justified, for at the time of the tsar's

abdication the vessel was still in England, where its sea trials were continuing because its rudder was not obeying the wheel.⁹³ *Aleksandr Nevskii*, meanwhile, became ready for active duty only after Russia's withdrawal from the First World War and was commandeered by the British Navy early in 1918 without ever having served pre-Bolshevik Russia.⁹⁴

By the time Russia's British-built icebreakers were nearing completion, war-weariness in Russia was overtaking the allies' best efforts. Indeed, if *Sviatogor* had arrived in Russia before the abdication of Nicholas II, it would probably have made a negative rather than a positive contribution to the tsarist war effort, for, according to Heinrich Matthäus Fischer (the émigré Russian-German metalworker who was working in the shipyards in Newcastle upon Tyne when it was being built), its Russian crew had been radicalized even prior to the ship's departure from England.⁹⁵ Shortly after it departed for Russia, a British official involved in the repatriation of Russian subjects from Britain under the Anglo-Russian Military Service Convention of July 1917 attributed a delay in the despatch of eleven hundred Russians from Newcastle to Russia in early October 1917 partly to 'certain trouble ... from the Russian crews' which were manning the ships earmarked for their deportation.⁹⁶ It looks as if the dissident sentiments which so distinguished Russian sailors in 1917 were in evidence even among those of their number who were far from home.⁹⁷

It is also possible to present Zamiatin's Newcastle phase in a less than attractive light. The writer's apparently fond memories of his Newcastle period may have improved with the passage of time, for, to judge by some of the letters he wrote in 1916, he was not always content when he was in England, and he certainly did not represent the country positively in some of the fiction he

completed after returning to Russia. When resident in Newcastle, he found the city 'repulsive' and 'big but impenetrably boring'; 'All the streets,' he wrote, 'all the dwelling-places are identical, imagine – completely identical like the grain barns by the Alexandr Nevskii Monastery in St Petersburg'.⁹⁸ *The Islanders*, a novella he wrote in Newcastle and published in 1918 shortly after returning to Russia, satirizes the drab uniformity of the suburb in which he lived and the local priest's 'Testament of Compulsory Salvation' (a timetable for living from which deviation was a sin).⁹⁹ His novel *We*, a futuristic 'anti-utopia' of 1920 which appeared in print for the first time in 1924 (in an English translation in New York),¹⁰⁰ may have drawn its sense of regimentation from what, to Zamiatin, was the ghastly world of Newcastle's ordered terraced houses and industrial gloom.¹⁰¹ Zamiatin was no Bolshevik,¹⁰² but he may not have been a very committed Anglophile either.

If Zamiatin's career is anything to go by, it might be argued that, far from bringing Britain and Russia closer together, Russia's orders for icebreakers from England in the First World War actually drove the two countries further apart. This can be argued in material as well as metaphorical terms, for, in a sense, the ships not only did not do all the good they were supposed to have done, but did Russia harm. In the Civil War in the Russian north of the years 1918-20, they fought mainly for the Western powers rather than the country which had ordered their construction. The British brought *Aleksandr Nevskii* with them when they arrived at Archangel in August 1918. Revolutionaries sank *Sviatogor* in the mouth of the Dvina in the hope of slowing them down, but did so ineffectively, with the result that, after some disagreement between the British and the French, the former were able to add the ship to their forces.¹⁰³

Alongside *Aleksandr Nevskii*, and with the assistance of *Koz'ma Minin* and *Kniaz' Pozharskii* (two of Swan's icebreakers), *Sviatogor* spent the year 1918-19 expediting Western maritime activity between Archangel and Murmansk.¹⁰⁴ In view of the fact that this was perhaps the one year in the icebreakers' pre-Soviet history that they performed the tasks for which they had been commissioned, it is ironic that they did so not on behalf of Russia's central government, but in opposition to it.

Because, in the Russian Civil War, the British icebreakers and their Canadian precursors at Archangel still appeared from time to time in north-east England (for repair, to take on supplies, to convey troops to the Russian north), they still exemplified the operation of the northern maritime arc between England and Russia to which this paper has referred. Some strange conjunctions resulted, most remarkably, perhaps, Russia and influenza, for the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918-19 arrived in Archangel in September 1918 when American soldiers disembarked there at the end of a voyage from Newcastle upon Tyne.¹⁰⁵ Nikolai Gubskii, the Russian official who had whiled away his time at the Russian Governmental Committee in wartime London, moved to the tsarist consulate in Newcastle after employment in London came to an end (for tsarist consulates went on being recognized by western countries until the early 1920s), and there became a close friend of Captain Mukalov of *Kanada*. Newcastle's climate, Gubskii observed, had an unfortunate effect on the crews for which Mukalov was responsible; 'They were all men from Archangel and Murmansk, used to temperatures of twenty, thirty and forty below zero, yet in Newcastle they went about shivering and complaining of the cold. "This is far worse than the frost at home," they said.'¹⁰⁶ Heinrich Matthäus

Fischer, Newcastle's émigré Russian-German, began thinking about returning to the land of his birth soon after icebreakers made their last voyage from north-east England to north Russia at the end of the Western involvement there.¹⁰⁷

The first phase of the icebreakers' lives, when they were ordered and built with the object of promoting the Anglo-Russian war effort, had illustrated the fact that, for the sake of trade or security or harmony, Britain and Russia have sometimes worked together. At the local level, it was one of the last significant chapters in the long story of business connections between north-east England and Russia.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the second phase of the ships' lives, when they served under British command in the Russian Civil War, exemplified the antipathy that has also been a prominent feature of the Anglo-Russian relationship. Thus the two phases reflected the principal facets of the dealings Britain and Russia have had with one another. Shifts from friendship to enmity and back again have been a perennial feature of their interaction.

The end of the Russian Civil War was not, of course, the end of the lives of Russia's British-built icebreakers. *Koz'ma Minin* and *Il'ia Muromets* became the French vessels *Castor* and *Pollux*. A subordinate purpose of the present paper has been to provide the early history of *Sviatogor* in order to contextualize the much better-known story of its later fame. After the Russian Civil War, Britain used it in boom clearance at Scapa Flow and subsequently loaned it to Norway for use on a rescue mission in the Russian Arctic,¹⁰⁹ before returning it to Russia in the wake of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Treaty of 1921.¹¹⁰ Re-named *Krasin* in honour of the Russian negotiator of that treaty, the ship became world-famous when it rescued some of the crew of the Italian balloonist Umberto Nobile after the failure of his attempt to over-fly the Arctic in 1928 (an

attempt which led to the death of Roald Amundsen, who had also been looking for the expeditionaries).¹¹¹ One of the characters in *The Foundation Pit*, Andrei Platonov's novel of 1929-30 about collectivization, asked: 'Which is better – the ice-breaker *Krasin* or the Kremlin?'¹¹² Thus the ship achieved fame in literature as well as in life. In World War II it was part of the celebrated Atlantic convoy PQ-15.¹¹³ It is now probably the third or fourth most famous of all Russian ships, after the little boat which Peter the Great found on the lake at Izmailovskoe in north-east Moscow in the 1690s (the centrepiece of the Navy Museum in St Petersburg), the cruiser *Aurora* (which fired blanks on the Winter Palace in St Petersburg at the point of the Bolshevik takeover in October 1917), and perhaps the battleship *Potemkin* (whose mutiny at Odessa in 1905 was celebrated in film by Sergei Eisenstein). Today, as a tourist attraction by the Mining Institute on the River Neva in St Petersburg, it sometimes puts people from Russia and Britain in touch with each other and so at last fulfils the purpose of promoting international harmony for which it was designed.

*Email: d.b.saunders@ncl.ac.uk. I am grateful for assistance from Dr Scott Ashley, Dr Ian Buxton, John Dobson, Professor David French, Professor Julian Graffy, Dr John Gurney, Professor Tony Heywood, Professor Alexander Hill, Dick Keys, Professor Donald Raleigh, and two anonymous reviewers.

¹ See, for example, Keith Neilson, 'Russian Foreign Purchasing in the Great War: A Test Case', *Slavonic and East European Review* 60 (1982), 572-90; idem, *Strategy and Supply: The Anglo-Russian Alliance 1914-17* (London, 1984); idem, 'Managing the War: Britain, Russia, and *Ad Hoc* Government', in Michael Dockrill and David French (eds), *Strategy and Intelligence: British Policy During the First World War* (London and Rio Grande, 1996), pp. 96-118; Dale C. Rielage, *Russian Supply Efforts in America During the First World War* (Jefferson, NC, and London, 2002); and A. J. Heywood, 'Russia's Foreign Supply Policy in World War I: Imports of Railway Equipment', *The journal of european economic history* 31 (2003), 77-108.

² A. V. Ignat'ev, *Russko-angliiskie otnosheniia nakanune Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii (fevral' - oktiabr' 1917 g.)* (Moscow, 1966), p. 68.

³ A. A. Shevel', 'Anglo-russkii pravitel'stvennyi komitet v 1914-1917gg.', *Voprosy istorii* 2014 № 11, p. 104.

⁴ Lloyd E. Berry & Robert O. Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1968), p. 17.

⁵ Geraldine M. Phipps, *Sir John Merrick: English Merchant-Diplomat in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Newtonville, MA, 1983).

⁶ Inna Lubimenko, *Les Relations Commerciales et Politiques de L'Angleterre avec La Russie avant Pierre le Grand* (Paris, 1933), pp. 135-40; Chester S. L. Dunning, 'A Letter to James I concerning the English Plan for Military Intervention in Russia', *Slavonic and East European Review* 67 (1989), 94-108; T. A. Labutina, *Anglichane v dopetrovskoi Rossii* (St Petersburg, 2011), pp.94-111.

⁷ Dr. J. Hamel, *England and Russia: Comprising the Voyages of John Tradescant the Elder, Sir Hugh Willoughby, Richard Chancellor, Nelson, and Others, to the White Sea, etc.* (London, 1854), pp. 243-98.

⁸ Sir Richard Carnac Temple (ed.), *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608-67* (5 vols in 6 books, London, 1907-36 [The Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, vols 17, 35, 45-6, 55, and 78]), iv. 135-54.

⁹ See Ian Villem Veluvenkamp (Jan Willem Veluwenkamp), *Arkangel'sk: Niderlandskie predprinimateli v Rossii 1550-1785* (Moscow, 2006 [1st published in Dutch in 2000]).

¹⁰ Herbert Kaplan, *Russian Overseas Commerce with Great Britain During the Reign of Catherine the Great* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995), p. 259.

¹¹ 'Raznye izvestiia', *S.-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 1 September 1867, p. 3.

¹² 'Bellingham's Memorial', *The Times*, 14 May 1812, p. 2.

¹³ London, The National Archives (TNA), Public Record Office (PRO), FO 264/1 ('A statement of the number and tonnage of vessels, distinguishing the countries to which they belonged which entered the port of Archangel in each

year from 1821 to 1836 both inclusive', in a bundle marked '1820-1825 letters from Foreign Office, Embassy and Local to Consul Jenkins').

¹⁴ Ingvild Broch, 'Solombala-English in Archangel', in Ernst Håkon Jahr and Ingvild Broch (eds), *Language Contact in the Arctic: Northern Pidgins and Contact Languages* (Berlin and New York, 1996), pp. 93-8.

¹⁵ Henry Johnson, *The Life and Voyages of Joseph Wiggins, F.R.G.S.* (London, 1907), p. 63.

¹⁶ St Petersburg, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA), fond (f.) 97, opis' (op.) 1, dela (dd.) 51, 104.

¹⁷ Eugenie Fraser, *The House by the Dvina: A Russian Childhood* (Edinburgh, 1984).

¹⁸ Stephen Graham, *Undiscovered Russia* (London, 1912), p. 11.

¹⁹ S. Iu. Vitte, *Iz arkhiva: Vospominaniia* (2 vols, St Petersburg, 2003), i. 395-8.

²⁰ B. D. Gal'perina (ed.), *Osobyie zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii 1909-1917 gg.: 1914 god* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 245-6; B. D. Gal'perina et al. (eds), *Sovet ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny: Bumagi A. N. Iakhontova (zapisi zasedanii i perepiska)* (St Petersburg, 1999, hereafter Iakhontov, *Bumagi*), p. 26.

²¹ Gal'perina, *Osobyie zhurnaly: 1914 god*, pp. 441-2, 462-3, 571-2, 660 (№ 74); Iakhontov, *Bumagi*, pp. 84, 108, 112; RGIA, f. 97, op. 1, delo (d.) 204, listy (ll.) 90-1 (minutes of the management board of the Archangel-Murman Steamship Company for 3 January 1915).

²² Rielage, *Russian Supply Efforts*, pp. 16-17; V. G. Andrienko, *Ledokol'nyi flot Rossii, 1860-e – 1918gg.* (Moscow, 2009), pp. 393-7; T. I. Troshina, *Velikaia*

voina i Severnyi krai: Evropeiskii Sever Rossii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (Archangel, 2014), p. 109.

²³ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 21 January 1915, p. 6; RGIA, f. 97, op. 1, *delo* [d.] 204, l. 12 (a letter from an official of the Archangel-Murman Navigation Company, St Petersburg, 24 October 1914, asking, among other things, 'whether the second icebreaker has arrived').

²⁴ I. K. Grigorovich, *Vospominaniia byvshego morskogo ministra* (Kronshtadt and Moscow, 2005), p. 98.

²⁵ Loc. cit.

²⁶ Gal'perina, *Osobyie zhurnaly: 1914 god*, pp. 632-3.

²⁷ St Petersburg, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv voenno-morskogo flota (RGAVMF), f. 427, op. 1, d. 208, l. 175 (a packet of documents), internal ll. 2-5.

²⁸ Iakhontov, *Bumagi*, p. 53 (19 August/1 September 1914).

²⁹ Alexander M. Michelson et al., *Russian Public Finance During the War* (New Haven, 1928), pp. 288-320; A. L. Sidorov, *Finansovoe polozhenie Rossii v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny, 1914-1917* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 259-83; Ignat'ev, *Russko-angliiskie otnosheniia*, pp. 60-84; A. L. Sidorov, *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 252-332; S. G. Beliaev, *P. L. Bark i finansovaia politika Rossii 1914-1917gg.* (St Petersburg, 2002), pp. 365-404.

³⁰ A. L. Sidorov et al. (eds), *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi Sotsialisticheskoi Revoliutsii: Dokumenty i materialy* (3 vols, Moscow and Leningrad, 1957-67), ii. 541-5.

³¹ B. D. Gal'perina (ed.), *Osoby zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii 1909-1917 gg.: 1915 god* (Moscow, 2008), pp. 414-17; Iakhontov, *Bumagi*, p. 283 (emphasizing that Russia's 'fundamental mistake' had been to believe that the war would be short).

³² Troshina, *Velikaia voina*, p. 115.

³³ Sir Julian S. Corbett, *Naval Operations* (in the series *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents By Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence*), 5 vols in 9 books (London, etc, 1920-31), iii. 48.

³⁴ Gal'perina, *Osoby zhurnaly: 1915 god*, pp. 412-13; B. D. Gal'perina (ed.), *Osoby zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii 1909-1917 gg.: 1916 god* (Moscow, 2008), pp. 646 (№ 241), 654 (№ 330), 656 № 363), 657 (№№ 373-5); idem, *Osoby zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii 1909-1917 gg.: 1917 god* (Moscow, 2009), pp. 29-30, 116-17.

³⁵ Robert C. Allen, *Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2011), p. 25.

³⁶ Norman McCord, *North East England: An economic and social history* (London, 1979), pp. 111, 122, 130.

³⁷ David Saunders, 'Charles Mitchell, Tyneside and Russia's First Ironclads', *Northern History* 48/1 (2011), 75-95.

³⁸ M. Iu. Poggenpol', *Ocherk vozniknoveniia i deiatel'nosti dobrovol'nogo flota za vremia XXV-ti letnego ego sushchestvovaniia* (St Petersburg, 1903), esp. the pull-out table between p. 234 and p. 235; TNA, PRO, FO65/1523, f. 226, E. C.

Hertslet of the British Foreign Office to Russia's London Ambassador, 3 March 1896.

³⁹ Michael Barke and Peter J. Taylor, 'Newcastle's long nineteenth century: a world-historical interpretation of making a multi-nodal city region', *Urban History* 42 (2015), 67-8.

⁴⁰ 'The Anglo-Siberian Enterprise,' *Journal of the Tyneside Geographical Society* 1 (1887-91), year 1889-90, 2nd pagination, pp. 42-6; *ibid.*, 3 (1894-7), pp. 44, 123.

⁴¹ TNA, PRO, FO65/1455, f. 213, Russia's London Ambassador to the British Foreign Secretary, 6 September 1893 (informing him of the Newcastle consulate's elevation).

⁴² *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 25 August 1904, p. 7, and 2 September 1904, p. 9.

⁴³ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 17 September 1914, p. 7, 16 October, p. 6, 26 November, p. 6, 2 December, p. 6.

⁴⁴ TWAS, DS.VA/2/5296 (designer's drawing of the vessel prior to its conversion); V. G. Andrienko, *Ledokol'nyi flot Rossii, 1860-e – 1918 gg.* (Moscow, 2009), pp. 51-3 (a discussion of *Pilot's* origins which overlooks its English origins); Saunders, 'Charles Mitchell', p. 91 (for the date when Mitchell's shipbuilding in St Petersburg came to an end).

⁴⁵ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 26 March 1908, p. 4 (obituary).

⁴⁶ TWAS, DS.VA/2, item 5680 (designer's plan of the vessel); *ibid.*, 130/1265, pp. 404, 408, 441, 450-1 (company minutes, quotation from p. 441); 'Launch of an Ice Breaker', *Shields Daily Gazette*, 9 May 1895, p. 4; N. A. Vinogradov,

Nepreryvnye paromnye perepravy v primenenii k zheleznym dorogam (Saratov, 1912); V. M. Tsybin, *Imia "Saratov" na borty* (Saratov, 2001), pp. 67-74; L. G. Kolotilo and V. G. Andrienko, *Transbaikalskii perekrestok: problemy transportnykh putei i zheleznodorozhnoi paromnoi perepravy cherez pzero Baikal na rubezhe XIX-XX vv.* (St Petersburg, 2005), pp. 107-8, 489-90.

⁴⁷ TWAS, 130/1265, p. 471 (quotation); 'Russian Railway Enterprise', *The Times*, 18 August 1896, p. 3; Kolotilo and Andrienko, *Transbaikalskii perekrestok*, esp. pp. 165, 167, 195-213.

⁴⁸ TWAS, 130/1266, p. 145.

⁴⁹ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 31 October 1898, p. 5.

⁵⁰ H. F. Swan, 'Ice-breakers', *Transactions of the Institution of Naval Architects* 41 (1899), p. 330.

⁵¹ *Newcastle Courant*, 2 May 1879, p. 2.

⁵² N. I. Dmitriev and V. V. Kolpychev, *Sudostroitel'nye zavody i sudostroenie v Rossii i za granitsej* (St Petersburg, 1909), pp. 368-89 (Swan's), 425-39 (Armstrong's).

⁵³ TWAS, 130/1266, pp. 337-8; Swan's were indeed specialists in the construction of floating docks (Dmitriev and Kolpychev, *Sudostroitel'nye zavody*, p. 382).

⁵⁴ *The Times*, 15 July 1912, p. 15.

⁵⁵ TWAS, 1826/3/4 (Swan Hunter, Neptune Yard Contract Ledgers, 1913-20), ff. 26-7; *ibid.*, 1826/2/2 (Swan Hunter, Private Journal № 2, 10 Jan 1913 – 31 December 1923), pp. 28, 37, 38, 43; RGIA, f. 97, op. 1, d. 187.

⁵⁶ Andrienko, *Ledokol'nyi flot*, pp. 386, 395;

<http://www.tynebuiltships.co.uk/index.html> (last accessed 10 May 2015).

⁵⁷ TWAS, DS/SWH/1/3, p. 16, Swan Hunter Directors' minutes of 6 April 1915.

⁵⁸ TWAS, 1826/3/4, ff. 54, 66, 72, 73; DS.SWH/4/5/3/1011/1;

DS.SWH/4/PH/4/1011/1-38; DS.SWH/4/1/8/27. *Dobrynia Nikitich* was built for Vladivostok rather than Archangel (Andrienko, *Ledokol'nyi flot*, p. 388, n. 3).

⁵⁹ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 2 December 1914, p. 6.

⁶⁰ TWAS, DS.SWH/4/5/3/1011/1, John William Henderson to his family, Harbour Works Offices, Solombala, 22 November 1915.

⁶¹ E. C. Wyldbore Smith, 'The Transport of War Material to Russia', memorandum of 2 March 1916 for the President of the Board of Trade, Runciman Papers, Special Collections, Robinson Library, Newcastle University, WR 99, folio (f.) 4 (copy).

⁶² Lord Hankey, *The Supreme Command 1914-1918* (2 vols, London, 1961), ii. 503-4; A. A. Polivanov, 'Deviat' mesiatsev vo glave Voennogo ministerstva (13 iyunia 1915 g. – 13 marta 1916 g.)', *Voprosy istorii*, 1994 № 11, p. 134; Alfred Knox, memorandum on the condition of the Russian railways, Petrograd, 20 June 1916, Runciman Papers, WR 146, f. 28 (copy).

⁶³ Gal'perina, *Osobyie zhurnaly: 1915 god*, p. 703 (№ 1057, 22 December 1915 / 4 January 1916); George Bolotenko, 'The Icebreaker *Mikula Selianinovich* (1916-1937): To Russia and Back', *The Northern Mariner* 12 (2002), № 3, pp. 17-42; Andrienko, *Ledokol'nyi flot*, pp. 427-30.

⁶⁴ Anon, *The War Work of Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth & Company Limited* (n.p. [London], n.d. [1919], available at TWAS, D.VA/52), p. 38.

⁶⁵ TWAS, 130/1268, p. 472; 130/1269, pp. 2, 6; 130/1290, pp. 60 (quotation), 62, 63, 66; 130/1291, pp. 220, 225, 236, 239, 245, 249, 253, 261, 267; 130/1295, minutes of 12 and 19 January, 2 and 16 February, and 26 April 1916.

⁶⁶ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 18 May 1916, p. 7.

⁶⁷ N. I. Nikitin, *Na puti nauchnogo rabotnika-khimika (oчерki iz proshlogo)* (Leningrad, 1969), pp. 34-42.

⁶⁸ A. Fisher, *V Rossii i v Anglii: Nabliudeniia i vospominaniia peterburgskogo rabocheго (1890-1921 g.g.)* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 93-4 (quotation); G. Fisher, *Podpol'e, ssylka, emigratsiia: Vospominaniia bol'shevika* (Moscow, 1935), pp. 168-9; 'Lichnoe delo Sotrudnika I.K.K.I: Tov. Fisher, Genrikh Matveevich', Moscow, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 495, op. 65a, d. 12746, l. 8 (a questionnaire of 27 May 1921 in which Fischer gives the names of the plants at which he worked, which he did not include in either version of his memoirs).

⁶⁹ John Slatter, 'Bukharin in Britain', *Sbornik* 5 (1980), 44.

⁷⁰ A. G. Shliapnikov, *Kanun semnadtsatogo goda; Semnadtsatyi god, t. 1* (Moscow, 1992), pp. 88-9, 96.

⁷¹ Sir Samuel Hoare, *The Fourth Seal* (London, 1930), pp. 34-5.

⁷² K. I. Chukovskii, *Angliia nakanune pobedy* (Petrograd, n. d. [1916]), p. 116.

⁷³ Bernard Pares, *My Russian Memoirs* (London, 1931), pp. 272-3, 334, 387, 561.

⁷⁴ V. D. Nabokov, *Iz voiuushchei Anglii: putevye oчерki* (Petrograd, 1916), p. 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁷⁶ L. I. Buchina and M. Iu. Liubimova (eds), 'Rukopisnoe nasledie Evgeniia Ivanovicha Zamiatina', in *Rukopisnye pamiatniki* 3 (St Petersburg, 1997), 191-2.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 193-4, and RGIA, f. 23, op. 15, d. 378, l. 14 (despatch of Zamiatin); RGIA, f. 40, op. 1, d. 72^a, ll. 53-4, V. N. Shakhovskoi (Minister of Trade and Industry) to the tsar, 17 October 1916 (asking for pay rises for two other Russian shipbuilding supervisors in Newcastle).

⁷⁸ Evgenii Zamiatin, 'O moikh zhenakh, o ledokolakh i o Rossii', in idem, *Sobranie sochinenii* (5 vols, Moscow, 2003-11), iv. 348.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 352.

⁸⁰ Zamiatin, 'O moikh zhenakh', pp. 352-3.

⁸¹ Harold Heslop, *Out of the Old Earth* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1994), p. 206.

⁸² Troshina, *Velikaia voina*, pp. 116-17.

⁸³ Major B. M. Hallward, 'Sorting and Despatch of Artillery Materials at Archangel', Archangel, 31 January 1917, TNA, PRO, MUN4/5498.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ A. L. Sidorov et al. (eds), *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi Sotsialisticheskoi Revoliutsii: Dokumenty i materialy* (3 vols, Moscow and Leningrad, 1957-67), ii. 437-8.

⁸⁶ D. S. Babichev, 'Deiatel'nost' russkogo pravitel'stvennogo komiteta v Londone v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914-1917)', *Istoricheskie zapiski* 57 (1956), 276-92; Shevel', 'Anglo-russkii pravitel'stvennyi komitet'.

⁸⁷ Gal'perina, *Osobyie zhurnaly: 1915 god*, p. 499; *1916 god*, pp. 52-3, 129-34, 159; RGIA, f. 1276, op. 11, d. 1272, ll. 90-2, 94, 96-8, 111-13, 115-20, 129-32, 148, 194.

⁸⁸ TNA, PRO, T1/12184/7294.

⁸⁹ Nikolai Gubsky, *Angry Dust: An Autobiography* (London, 1937), p. 228.

⁹⁰ Company minutes of 2 February and 26 April 1916 in TWAS, 130/1295, show that it took Armstrong's nearly three months to get permission to use the yard they had in mind for the construction of *Aleksandr Nevskii*, and a minute of 8 August 1916 in TWAS, 130/1290, reported that 'a letter dated 2.8.1916 had been received from the Admiralty urging the importance of completing [*Sviatogor*] during the coming autumn.'

⁹¹ TNA, PRO, T1/12184/10569, f. 9.

⁹² S. P. Moiseev, *Spisok korablei russkogo parovogo i bronenosnogo flota (s 1861 po 1917g.)* (Moscow, 1948), pp. 367-8.

⁹³ RGAVMF, f. 378, op. 1, d. 9, ff. 218-20.

⁹⁴ TNA, PRO, T1/12184/10569, f. 9 (a memorandum of 13 March 1918 in which a Russian official in London refers to *Aleksandr Nevskii* as having been 'recently requisitioned by the British authorities').

⁹⁵ A. Fisher, *V Rossii i v Anglii* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 94-5.

⁹⁶ TNA, PRO, T1/12203, J. F. Henderson of the Home Office to a certain Hurst of the Treasury, 30 October 1917.

⁹⁷ On sailors in the Russian Revolution see, for example, Norman E. Saul, *Sailors in Revolt: The Russian Baltic Fleet in 1917* (Lawrence, KS, 1978).

⁹⁸ Buchina and Liubimova, 'Rukopisnoe nasledie Evgeniia Ivanovicha Zamiatina', i. 196, 198.

⁹⁹ Zamiatin, 'Ostrovitiiane', *Sobranie sochinenii*, i. 389-441.

¹⁰⁰ Eugene Zamiatin, *We*, tr. Gregory Zilboorg (New York, 1924).

- ¹⁰¹ Alan Myers, 'Zamiatin in Newcastle: The Green Wall and The Pink Ticket', *Slavonic and East European Review* 71 (1993), 424-5.
- ¹⁰² Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (London, 2000), p. 327.
- ¹⁰³ G. E. Mymrin (ed.), *Bor'ba za torzhestvo sovetskoi vlasti na severe: Sbornik dokumentov (1918-1920)* (Archangel, 1967), pp. 44-5; Louis de Robien, *Journal d'un diplomate en Russie 1917-1918* (Paris, 1967), p. 328.
- ¹⁰⁴ The ship's 1918-19 logbooks are at TNA, PRO, ADM 53/61905-61909.
- ¹⁰⁵ Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* (2nd edition, Cambridge, 2003), pp. 146-7; Robien, *Journal*, pp. 327, 341.
- ¹⁰⁶ Gubsky, *Angry Dust*, pp. 249 (quotation), 279-83 (sketch of Mukalov's life).
- ¹⁰⁷ Fisher, *V Rossii i v Anglii*, p. 101.
- ¹⁰⁸ Parson's of Newcastle constructed 'the lens of the largest refracting telescope in the world' for Russia in 1925 (*The Times*, 11 September 1925, p. 7).
- ¹⁰⁹ TNA, PRO, ADM 53/61911; *The Times*, 5 July 1920, pp. 15-16.
- ¹¹⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 November 1921, p. 9; B. P. Dimitrichenko, *Mekhanik "Sviatogora"* (St Petersburg, 2013), p. 28; C W Willis, 'Service in a Russian icebreaker', *Sea Breezes*, new series, 15, № 87 (March 1953), 170-8.
- ¹¹¹ R. L. Samoilovich, *S.O.S. v Arktike: Ekspeditsiia "Krasina"* (Berlin, 1930).
- ¹¹² Andrey Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*, tr. Robert Chandler and Geoffrey Smith (London, 1996), p. 65.
- ¹¹³ Richard Woodman, *The Arctic Convoys 1941-1945* (London, 1994), p. 119.