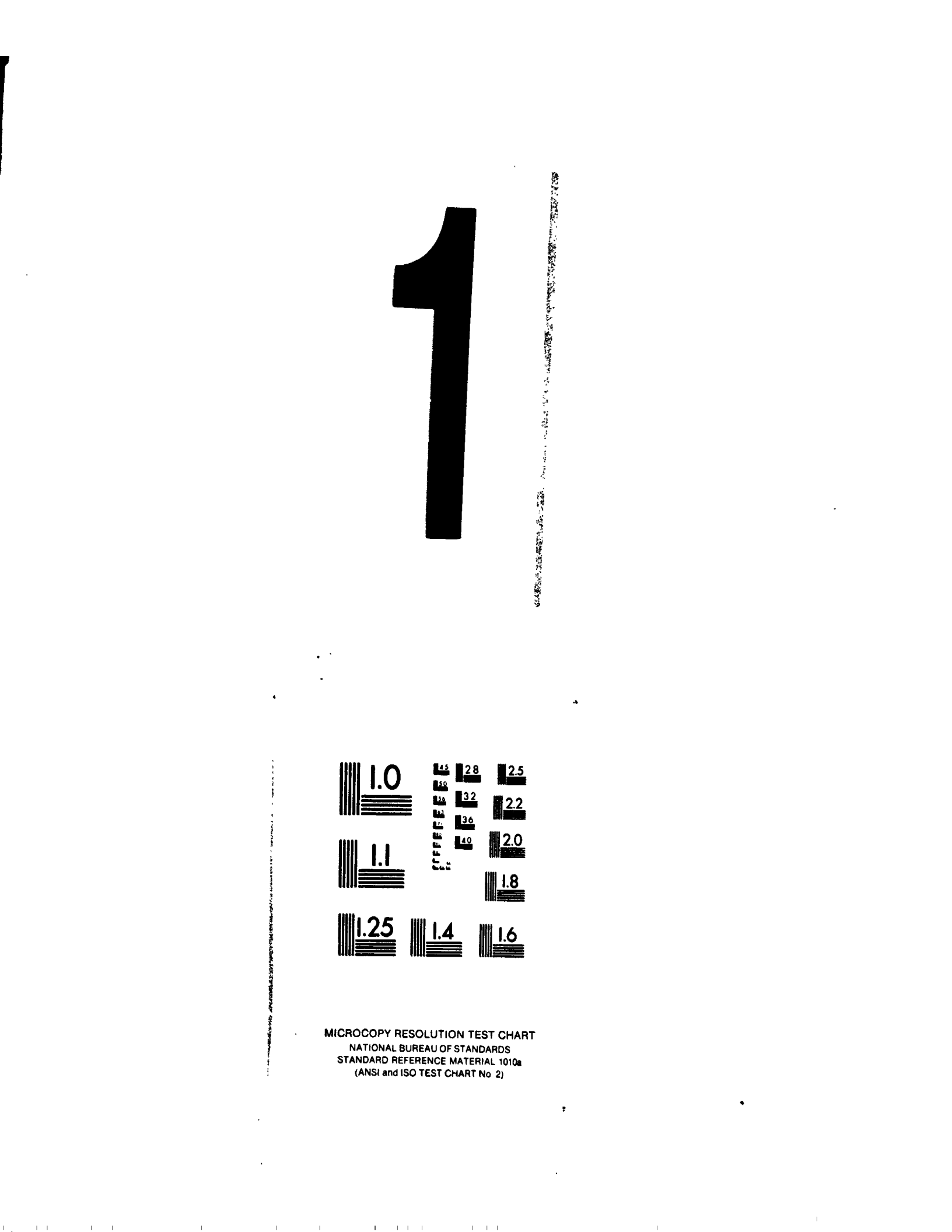

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A Doll's House or the House of the Dead:
Political Exiles in Northern Russia and Siberia, 1880-1917

by

Gaby Donicht, B.A.

A thesis submitted to

the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

September 1990

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ISBN 0-315-60506-5

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis

"A DOLL'S HOUSE OR THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD: POLITICAL EXILES IN NORTHERN RUSSIA AND SIBERIA, 1880-1917"

submitted by

Gaby Donicht, B.A. Honours

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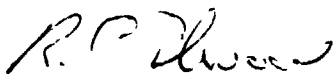

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of History

Carleton University

14 September 1990

Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine the phenomenon of domestic exile in tsarist Russia from 1880 to 1917. It discusses the experiences of political exiles in Siberia, as well as Northern Russia, in an attempt to determine the scope and detail of exile life during the late tsarist period.

The questions of greatest concern to this study were the lifestyle of the exiles, their ability to adjust to this life and their ways of coping. Exile was essentially a traumatic experience. The superficial freedoms of this life, which allowed the exiles to choose their housing and places of work, could not compensate for the disruption of their personal lives and the anguish inflicted on them. The constant worries about finances, health care and their families, as well as the loneliness, took their psychological toll on the exiles. They ultimately overcame these problems through their political, social and economic organizations. However, this is to the credit of the exiles' ingenuity and survival skills, rather than to the system of exile.

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Introduction

This thesis seeks to examine the phenomenon of political exile in the last four decades of tsarist rule. During the period from 1880 to 1917, the tsarist government used internal exile to curtail domestic social unrest by neutralizing political suspects. Thousands of Russian citizens, both men and women, were forced to spend important periods of their lives in the isolated communities of the Russian North or in Siberia. This thesis hopes to investigate the scope and details of this phenomenon. What was exile life like? How did the exiles adjust to it? These are some of the questions the study will address.

The prevailing view of exile in the decades immediately before the revolution has been distorted by two better known exile experiences--that of the Decembrists in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and that of the Stalinist labour camps. It is often assumed that the well-documented atrocities of the Gulag were a direct outgrowth of a similar system of exile under the tsars. Except for sharing the same geography, it can be argued that the two systems and experiences were in fact very different in kind and degree and thus should be studied separately. The exile of the Decembrists a century earlier has been the subject of extensive research. Indeed, the Decembrists have become synonomous with the term exile.

The prominent social position of the Decembrists and the publicity surrounding their revolt, ensured that their

history would be written. Educated Europeans watched their exile with interest and were horrified that such young, educated gentlemen were exiled for advocating democracy and liberty. They were regarded as martyrs. The exiles' own writings, and the sacrifice of their wives who often followed them into exile, contributed in a large measure to that. The Decembrists greatly contributed to the knowledge about that strange and isolated land, since for the first time there was a group of educated, literate Russians in Siberia. Both the contemporary government and future historians delighted in their research and formed their views of exile accordingly.

This romantic interest in the fate of the Decembrists and of their wives meant that little work has been done on tsarist exile in other periods. Indeed there is no comprehensive history of late tsarist exile, although ample material is available for a study of exile in this period. One of the reasons for studying this topic is the virtual lack of research on this topic. Furthermore, the thesis seeks to correct the misconceptions regarding the exile experience in late tsarist Russia. Another reason for this investigation is the large number of people who lived through exile. For the first time there was a significant group of revolutionaries who endured exile. These were the revolutionaries who eventually were to lead the revolution against Tsar Nicholas II. Thus, a study of exile also addresses a specific period in the lives of most

revolutionaries. Domestic exile was a uniquely Russian phenomenon. The cultural and scientific work carried out by the exiles greatly contributed to the knowledge of rural conditions in Northern Russia and Siberia. Their writings also gave a good indication of the administration of the countryside, contributing to an understanding of rural life in Siberia and Northern Russia.

The thesis will first examine the reasons for exile from the point of view of the government. It will detail the social upheaval and the government reaction. Then a profile of the exile community will be discussed, as well as the geographic locations of the exiles. The second chapter entitled "A Doll's House" will examine life in exile from the transport to the exile location, to the initial stages of exile life. Housing and living arrangements, as well as financial ones will be discussed. Special attention will be paid to the exiles in the far North, because of their different living conditions. The third chapter discusses the psychological and social dimensions of exile. This section focuses on the exiles' relations to the local community, the exile colony and the family left behind in European Russia. It also traces the anxieties and worries expressed by the exiles over such issues as finances, medical treatment and the distance to their families. The fourth chapter entitled "*Oni zanimalis'*" describes the exiles' activities. Particular consideration is given to the subject of work, as well as the political and economic organization formed by

the exiles. The last chapter concentrates on the exiles' relations with the authorities and on their only method of protest, i.e. on escape.

This examination of exile will show that the accepted views of tsarist exile are fraught with misconceptions and inaccuracies. Exile was neither a holiday in the country as suggested by Alexander Solzhenitsyn,[1] nor was it as horrible as a Stalinist labour camp. Exile left the individual a large measure of freedom, while at the same time restricting his or her life-style. Exile disrupted the political exiles' private lives, demanding a lot of courage and self-initiative. Although the government paid a small stipend, it was up to the exiles to ensure their own survival. They needed to house, feed and finance themselves during their stay in exile with little outside assistance. Exile was essentially a traumatic experience. The psychological dimension was very important in determining the exile experience.

The most valuable sources for this thesis fall under three categories. Among the literature that can be classified as travellers' reports are the writings of Henry Lansdell and George Kennan, the most prominent figures in

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[1] Alan Wood examines some of the inaccuracies in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago in his "Solzhenitsyn on Tsarist Exile: a Historical Comment," Journal of Russian Sutdies, vol. 42 (1981), p. 39.

the debate on the tsarist exile system. [2] While the former was in favour of the system and saw it as being no different from British prisons at the time, which was not a recommendation, Kennan vigorously opposed that view. Most of the other writers, such as L.F. Gowing, J.Y. Simpson and W. Buel agreed with Kennan's main premise, that the system was scandalous and hurtful to Russia.[3]

These sources have to be read with care, since they were often written by non-Russian speakers and are fraught with inaccuracies. However, they represent a comprehensive body of work and almost the only works on exile in English. As mentioned earlier, almost all works on exile by western historians focus on the Decembrists. Alan Wood is the only historian, who has made a significant contribution to research on non-Decembrist exile in Siberia.

These scant western secondary sources are supplemented by Soviet primary and secondary sources. Because one of my major concerns was the daily life of the political exiles, I have relied heavily on memoirs as my evidence. Only by using such material could I discover how the exiles related to their fellow exiles and the local communities, how they felt about the exile experience, what they did in exile, and how

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[2] Henry Lansdell, Through Siberia, 2 vols., (London, 1882) and George Kennan, Siberia and the Exile System, (New York, 1891).

[3] L.F. Gowing, Five Thousand Miles on a Sledge. A mid-winter Journey across Siberia, (New York, 1890) and J.Y. Simpson, Side-lights on Siberia. Some Account of the Great Siberian Railroad, the Prison and Exile System, (London, 1898).

they were treated by the authorities. Even though most of the memoirs were written many years after the exiles' return to Russia, and sometimes reflect a later political bias, nevertheless they permit rewarding insights into their experiences in exile. One of the more important sources is the journal *Katorga i ssylka*, published by the "Society of Former Hard Labourers and Exiles," from 1924-1931. Each issue of the journal contains a section devoted to the questions of exile in tsarist Russia. Moreover, letters of exiles to their families and friends are an important primary source, because they substantiate the views and events expressed in the memoirs. Of particular interest were the letters of such exiled revolutionaries as V.I. Lenin, Inessa Armand and Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia.[4] These sources were supplemented by numerous other monographs and articles.

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[4] See, for example the letters of V.I. Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaia to his relatives in Polnoe sobranie sochinenii [Complete Collected Works], fifth ed., vol. 55 (Moscow, 1970); and Inessa Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand" [The letters of Inessa Armand], Novyi Mir, 1970, no. 6, pp. 207-214; and Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia, "Correspondence of Exiles: Letters from Mme Breshkovsky while in Exile in Sib. (Copies) 1910-1912," Kennan Collection, Box 3, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

Chapter One

Exile: the View of the Government

Between 1880 and 1917 the tsarist government was faced with different types of social and political unrest. The regime had to contend with both rural and urban disturbances, terrorism and strikes. In an effort to subdue the growing social forces within the empire, the government sought to strengthen the hand of the police. The creation of the *Okhrana* or political police and the enactment of the emergency laws of 1881 and the "Statute on Police Surveillance" of 1882, were designed to enable the police force to deal quickly and efficiently with disturbances. After having arrested the suspect, the police resorted to the various forms of exile to remove the offender from the main centres of the empire. Although exile could be imposed through the courts, exile by administrative order fast became the preferred method of dealing with "subversives." This enabled the police to circumvent legal procedure and to send exiles to Northern Russia, as well as Siberia. Life in these regions was radically different from the lifestyles to which the exiles were used. The quality of life heavily depended upon the region and latitude to which they were sent, since that could vary widely. The exiles themselves were a mixed lot in this period and generally mirrored the make-up of the revolutionary parties. They were more diversified in terms of their socio-economic strata than was

the case with the Decembrists. Throughout this period exiles were increasingly from lower social and economic strata of society.

At the beginning of the 1870s the Imperial government was faced with an unstable social situation and growing dissatisfaction among the educated classes. Alienated with the Emancipation Act of 1861, some groups of the intelligentsia advocated increasing participation in government affairs. These people usually were professionals unable to find a place within the governing system. Some of them turned to the revolutionary parties and were instrumental in the "to the people movement" of the early 1870s. When propaganda failed, a small number of radicals turned to terrorism against government officials later in the decade, culminating in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II.

The governmental response to these movements was to strengthen police powers, rather than to try and determine the cause of this social strife. Indeed few attempts were made to modernize Russia economically and socially during the reign of Alexander III. The initial and most pervasive response to the social unrest was the strengthening of the secret police, the so-called *Okhrana* and the exile of suspected revolutionaries. By establishing a Fifth Department within the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the early 1880s, the government hoped to contain the threat of

the revolutionaries. This department was responsible for the surveillance of suspected revolutionaries, untrustworthy people and former exiles and kept an alphabetical file of 128,790 suspected or known "politicals."[1] These file cards contained a large amount of information regarding the suspect, even if not all correct. A typical card would include the person's age, social status, name of parents and siblings, a personal description, party affiliation and relations with the government. The cards also indicated the proper course of action should the suspect be apprehended. On the reverse side of the card was a picture of the political suspect, if available.[2]

The Fifth Department was allowed to impose administrative exile, although this option was used sparingly.[3] The Fourth Department, or the Secretariat of the Department of Police, handled state crimes and other political disorders. These government agencies gave the regime enough powers to quell disturbances up to the turn of the twentieth century. The legal mechanism used to do so was the "Statute Concerning Measures for the Protection of State

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[1] Fredric Scott Zuckerman, "The Russian Political Police at Home and Abroad (1880-1917): Its Structure, Functions, and Methods, and its Struggle with the Organized Opposition," Ph.D. Dissertation., New York University, 1973, p. 17.

[2] See, for example, the card for Inessa Armand in Vladimir Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada" [Mezen Ballad], Sever, 1971, no., 12, p. 84.

[3] Zuckerman, "The Russian Political Police at Home and Abroad," p. 89.

Order and Public Peace," which became the "de facto constitution of Russia," according to V.I. Lenin.[4] This statute was designed as exceptional regulations and was re-affirmed every three years, by the government until the February Revolution in 1917. Thus, the legislation became the cornerstone with which the government waged war against the revolutionaries.

The powers of the local authorities were broadened to a large degree with this legislation. The Minister of Internal Affairs, the governor-generals of provinces and the governors and mayors of cities could make use of these statues to prevent social disorder as they saw fit. The act re-inforced the supremacy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and set out the steps necessary to declare "reinforced protection." This gave the authorities the power to prohibit public and private meetings, close stores and prohibit the residence of anyone in the area of jurisdiction. They could also remove officials from *zemstvo*, municipal or local legal institutions. The Statute provided for preliminary detention up to two weeks for state crimes or for membership in an illegal society. It also allowed for the administrative imposition of fines and jail sentences. Police officials were allowed to carry out raids, and article thirty-six provided for the trying of police officials who shirked their duties during reinforced

[4] Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile to Siberia," Irish Slavonic Studies, no. 6 (1985), p. 76.

protection. Hence, all opposition, whether from zemstvo or revolutionary sources, was muzzled with this statute during the 1880s and 1890s.[5] "In effect," argues W.G. Wagner, "this meant that for a large number of judicial actions the law and regular legal procedure were suspended in favour of the Minister of Internal Affairs or his subordinates."[6]

This slew of new legislation was successful in curtailing revolutionary activities for the first twenty years.

> The powers granted the authorities by these statutes are awesome....Administrative exile or police surveillance could easily be employed to end or curtail the careers of those in opposition to governmental measures.[7]

In the meantime the rising working class began to threaten the powers of the government. The government's own support for the creation of industry in Russia had contributed to the creation of this group. Though nominally small, the urban proletariat was heavily politicized. Concentrated in the industrial regions of St.Petersburg and Moscow and suffering from the effects of the Industrial Revolution, the

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[5] For a discussion of the Statute see both Wayne David Santoni, "P.N. Dunovo as Minister of Internal Affairs in the Witte Cabinet: A Study in Suppression," Ph.D. Dissertation, (University of Kansas, 1968), pp. 183-90; and W.G. Wagner, "Tsarist Legal Policy," Slavonic and East European Review, vol. 54, no. 3, (1976), pp. 382-84.

[6] Wagner, "Tsarist Legal Policy," p. 383.

[7] Santoni, "P.N. Durnovo as Minister of Internal Affairs in the Witte Cabinet," p. 195.

workers presented the revolutionaries with an excellent opportunity for propaganda.

In the twentieth century numerous revolutionary cells appeared in the major industrial cities and revolutionary committees were formed. This movement intensified after the 1905 Revolution and led to strike waves after 1905 and again prior to the outbreak of World War I. Particularly electrifying were the large Lena Goldfield strikes and the ensuing massacre of the workers in 1912. Strikes were continually becoming more politicized and more and more workers were exiled for political activities.

With the increasing numbers of revolutionaries and the increasing strength of that movement, there were renewed pushes for terrorism by some factions within the Socialist Revolutionary party. The revolutionaries argued that terrorism was necessary as self-defence of the masses. They saw it having an agitational function as well, focusing attention on the movement and stimulating discussion. After 1901 there were renewed assassinations by the terrorist wing of the SRs of important government figures, such as V.K. Plehve and Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich.[8] The rise in revolutionary movements after 1900 and the 1905 Revolution presented the Russian government with a problem which was

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[8] Maureen Perrie, "Political and Economic Terror in the Tactics of the Russian Social Revolutionary Party before 1914," in Social Protest, Violence and Terror in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe, W.J. Mommsen and G. Hirschfeld, eds., (London, 1982), pp. 63-66.

not solved easily. As in the earlier period the government turned to exile as a solution for social problems.

Exile, then, became a way of ridding the main centres of the empire of its undesirables. In earlier centuries exile had been used mainly to colonize the Far North and Siberia, but this beneficial aspect to exile had almost been forgotten by the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1880s the number of exiles was far too large to be settled successfully. At the same time, exile was being used too often to punish and for too many reasons. Exile was used against dissatisfied students, workers and peasants and most disturbances with only a hint of politics would lead to several exilings. Other people on the government "hit list" were, of course, revolutionaries, agitators from different nationality groups and subversives.[9] Any "outside interest" aroused suspicions and during the last four decades of Romanov rule, any suspicion regarding one's trustworthiness was reason enough for exile. The main reason for exile had become *gosudarstvennye prestupniki* or crimes against the state and *neblagodareshnye* or political untrustworthiness.[10] Any individual "suspected of being likely to be detrimental

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[9] Georges Haupt and Jean-Jacques Marie, The Makers of the Russian Revolution. Biographies of Bolshevik Leaders, (Ithaca, New York, 1974), p. 153.

[10] Wood, "Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," pp. 65 and 76 and Alan Wood, "Solzhenitsyn on the Tsarist Exile System," p. 228.

to the maintenance of law and order" was exiled.[11] Another reason for exile was membership in an illegal society, which was used to charge suspected or known revolutionaries in the absence of any real evidence.

Once a person had come to the notice of the secret police it was difficult to be left in peace again. In the haste to exile and judge people, not all administrative exiles were "politicals"--as the political exiles were often referred to-- even when exiled for political reasons. Some of the workers supposedly exiled for quasi-political strikes were in reality exiled for unorganized economic collisions with the factory owners. Once arrested one could be held in detention without trial for up to two years and then exiled administratively without trial. This was used to avoid a trial in which an accused might be found innocent. Throughout this period a conviction was not a matter of course, and guilt had to be proven to the satisfaction of the judge and jury.

People found guilty of political crimes against the state were often banished from specific areas of the empire or exiled to Siberia. According to the *lestnitsa nakazanii* or the scale of punishments, the second hardest punishment available to the courts after execution was exile for life

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[11] Zuckerman, "The Russian Political Police at Home and Abroad," p. 89.

to Siberia.[12] There were four grades of exile which could be imposed by the courts:

ssylka na katorgu	exile to forced labour
ssylka na poselenie	exile for settlement
ssylka na vodvorenie	exile for resettlement
ssylka na zhit'ie	exile for residence[13]

All persons sentenced to exile, except for those exiled to *ssylka na zhit'ie*, lost their civil rights, all degrees, honours and titles. Property was conferred on their heirs and marriages were dissolved, leaving their spouses free to marry someone else.[14] The first three grades of exile usually meant banishment for life to Siberia. The last category theoretically meant exile for a limited number of years. This was the least harsh of the terms of exile and applied to most of the politicals exiled by courts rather than by administrative order. However, once in Siberia the category under which one was exiled became rather unimportant.

The other form of exile, that is exile by administrative order, was harsher in reality, even if not on paper. Administrative order was the process by which the government exiled hundred and thousands of "untrustworthy" citizens. This form of exile was condemned by most foreign

[12] Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," p. 71.

[13] Wood, p. 66.

[14] Simpson, Side-lights on Siberia, p. 347.

travellers to Siberia and Northern Russia. J.Y. Simpson saw this as the darkest blot on the Siberian system.[15] Europeans were shocked by the arbitrariness with which people were accused and shadowed by the large counter-espionage system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Anyone seen by the state authorities as politically and ideologically dangerous could be banished without trial. Hence, this system allowed the police to circumvent the justice system and gave the accused no representation or defense.[16] Although there had been examples of administrative exile going back to the seventeenth century, the practice became enshrined in the 1881 Statute Concerning Measures for the Protection of State Order and Public Peace. Eventually this became the most frequently used measure of the Statute. Articles 23 to 36 laid out the exiling process. The local authorities requested the administrative "sending out" by submitting a dossier to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and explaining the reasons for administrative exile. Naturally it was only their word which provided the examining board with evidence regarding the untrustworthiness of the accused. The panel to decide on these matters consisted of two members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and two members of the Ministry of Justice,

[15] Simpson, p. 331.

[16] D.C.B. Lieven, "The Security Police, Civil Rights, and the Fate of the Russian Empire, 1855-1917," in Civil Rights in Imperial Russia, Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson, eds., (Oxford, 1989), pp. 239 and 244.

being chaired by the Assistant Minister of Internal Affairs charged with police matters. These people held the suspect's future in their hands and had the power to exile anyone to up to five years anywhere in Russia. This gave them more powers than the courts had, which were only allowed for exile to Siberia.[17]

This process can be reconstructed from the documents exiling the Social Democrat Inessa Armand to the Russian North. Armand had been under police supervision since 1905 and had had constant contact with people of extremist parties. She was arrested 7 July 1907 at a railway union meeting and detained in prison. In the meantime her husband Alexander Armand wrote petitions to the Ministry, hoping to use his influence as an "honourary citizen" and an industrialist to free his wife. Eventually Inessa Armand was convicted on the basis of reports of her previous activities, already in the files of the secret police. There had been no direct evidence against her. Her place of exile was chosen as a response to her husband's request that she be allowed to spend her term of exile abroad. The petition was denied and, "the exile Armand is to be exiled to a remote uezd in Arkhangel'sk guberniia under open police surveillance for two years starting 30 September 1907."[18]

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[17] Santoni, "P.N. Durnovo as Minister of Internal Affairs in the Witte Cabinet," pp. 192-93.

[18] Sanov, p. 86. See also p. 90.

Armand was accompanied by her lover and brother-in-law Vladimir Armand, who followed her voluntarily into exile. This was not a common occurrence. Although according to Article 255 of Speranskii's Exile Regulations spouses had to follow administrative exiles,[19] there is little evidence, that in the nineteenth century husbands followed their wives into exile to Siberia.[20] To the credit of the ministry, all efforts were made to place married exiles into the same community. Of course, this often led to marriages if only for the reason of spending exile with another person one knew. This was so for both Eva and Max Broido and Vladimir Il'ich Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaia.[21]

After an exile was sentenced, he or she usually had several days to order personal affairs before being sent north or east. The two main regions for the exile of political prisoners were Northern Russia and Siberia. As has already been mentioned, only administrative exiles could be sent to provinces other than Siberia. Hence, all exiles in Arkhangel'sk and Vologda guberniias were there by

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[19] Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," p. 73 and Alan Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia: Aspects of the Tsarist Exile System," in Siberia: Two Historical Perspectives, J.M. Stewart and Alan Wood, eds., (London, 1984), pp. 37-38.

[20] Barbara Engel and Clifford Rosenthal, editors and translators, Five Sisters: Women Against the Tsar, (New York, 1975), p. 140, note 17.

[21] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, (London, 1967), pp. 26-27; and N.K. Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, (Moscow, 1959), p. 31.

administrative order. Life in these two provinces was solitary, especially north of the Arctic circle at sixty-seven degrees latitude. In that area of "White Nights", there would be only a few hours of light every day for one half of the year, while the rest of the year the sun would not set until late at night. The exiles had to contend with a harsh climate with early and long winters and extreme cold. One exile sent to the town of Mezen just south of the Arctic Circle, wrote that the temperature upon her arrival was thirty-three degrees frost, but had risen to the melting point the following day.[22] It was difficult to adjust to such drastic and rapid temperature changes. The summers were short, although often quite warm. Because of these climatic conditions, commercial agriculture was not feasible and the local population achieved only a low level of self-sufficiency. The main industries in both of these provinces were logging, reindeer herding and the production of potash, tar and pulp paper. The areas were very sparsely populated with primitive living conditions even in the administrative centres. Those sent to exile colonies close to larger cities like Arkhangel'sk were lucky. However, quite of few exiles were sent to Mezen on the White Sea, or to even more isolated places, such as Koida. This latter village was even further north with a syphilitic population and only one or

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[22] Armand, Stat'i, Rechi, Pis'ma [Articles, Speeches, Letters], (Moscow, 1975), p. 193.

exiles.[23] A large number of exiles were sent to Vologda guberniia. In Sol'vychegodsk uezd of that guberniia, for instance, there were over two hundred exiles compared to a local population of only twelve hundred in 1911. The exile population which comprised sixteen per cent of the population, was a sizable and important part of the community.[24]

Western Siberia also received large numbers of both administrative and court exiles. This region housed mainly first-time exiles generally exiled for minor infractions. For instance, many students seemed to be sent to the West Siberian guberniias of Tobolsk in the north, Semipalatinsk in the south and Tomsk to the east. Living conditions were generally more bearable in these areas than in Eastern Siberia. Firstly, the transport was less arduous than to eastern Siberia, and secondly, few people were exiled to the far north of the region. Hence, the climatic conditions to which the exiles were exposed, ranged from a middle-European to a warm, dry southern climate. Semipalatinsk, for example, had almost desert-like conditions. West Siberian towns were also older and quite substantial by Siberian standards, even if culturally backward. The region had extensive trade with China, being on the great tea route. Further north in

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[23] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 208.

[24] N.N. Ogloblin, "Politicheskie ssyl'nye na Vychegd'" [Political exiles in Vychegd], Istoricheskii Vestnik', no. 6, (1913), pp. 918-19.

Tobolsk guberniia the region became progressively less populated and more isolated.

Eastern Siberia was reserved for exiles accused of more severe "crimes." Often experienced revolutionaries were sent there in the hopes of isolating them from the general population. Exiles, as opposed to hard labourers who were sent to Sakhalin Island and Kamchatka, were sent to either Eniseisk or Irkutsk provinces or to Iakutsk oblast. These areas have the range of climate and temperature observed in West Siberia. The area around Irkutsk and southern Eniseisk guberniia is warm and quite dry and very healthy according to Lenin, who was exiled in Minusinsk uezd, the "Sibirskaia Italia".[25] These southern areas were also the regions of greatest culture in Siberia. Irkutsk had several schools, theatres, libraries and newspapers. Exiles there often worked for newspapers, museums and hospitals, rather than whiling away the time with manual labour. Though a desirable spot, only few exiles were actually permitted to reside in the city. Many more were dispersed in the little villages and hamlets in the south.

The northern areas of both Eniseisk guberniia and Iakutsk oblast presented the exile with a much harsher life. People were usually sent there after fleeing from previous exile or incurring the wrath of local officials during their first stay in exile. This was also the exile locale of

[25] V.I. Lenin to his mother and A.I. Elizarova (17 April 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 31.

choice for the hardened revolutionary. Life in both Verkhoiansk and Kolymsk okrugs in Iakutsk oblast was harsh. Exiles were expected to live among the native Iakuts and to reside in their yurts rather than houses. They chafed under the harsh climatic conditions, which limited summer to three or four months. The inability to communicate with the Iakuts and the general absence of other Russian speakers proved another obstacle, as did the absence of work in these areas. Not surprisingly, these areas were the place from which exiles wanted to escape.

The exiles of the last four decades of tsarist rule were a mixed lot. At the beginning of this period the exiles mainly belonged to the intelligentsia and were of diverse social origin. Since the 1880s, there was a gradual increase in the diversity of the exiles in social origin, profession, party affiliation, ethnic background and age. Suggestive, if not necessarily conclusive evidence of the composition of exile colonies is presented in I.N. Smirnov's discussion of two Arkhangel'sk guberniia surveys of exile colonies.[26]

[26] Information about these subjects comes from different sources. Of particular interest is a survey conducted among exiles of the following exile colonies in Narymsk krai: Chigara, Parabel', Alataevo, Narym, Gorodishche, Il'ino and Kargorsk. The questionnaires were returned by 186 exiles, which is a representative sample. The survey, conducted *circa* 1915, is also compared to a similar 1909 guberniia-wide survey of Arkhangel'sk. Both surveys are examined in I.N. Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii" [Narymsk exile on the eve of the revolution], Katorga i ssylka, no. 34, (1927), pp. 128-51. and no. 35, pp. 142-54.

The make-up of the revolutionary parties was mirrored in that of the exile population. Most of the exiles were male, while the number of women in the tsarist penal system was disproportionally low. According to Alan Wood, the number of exiled women rarely exceeded ten per cent in the last forty years of the tsarist regime.[27] The largest number of women exiles was during the 1880s, because larger numbers of women had been active in Narodnaia Volia than were involved in the socialist movements. According to Barbara Engel, fifteen per cent of arrests for political crimes between 1873 and 1879 were of women,[28] while Amy Knight reports that only three per cent of people charged with political crimes between 1892-1900 were women.[29] There is no proof, however, that similar numbers were actually sent into exile. Most reports agree that approximately ten per cent of exiles were women. According to Smirnov the number of female exiles fluctuated between 9.9 and 10.2 per cent in Narymsk krai, while all of Arkhangel'sk guberniia had a female exile population of ten per cent.[30] While ten

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[27] Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia," p. 39.

[28] Barbara Engel, "Women as Revolutionaries the Case of the Russian Populists," in Becoming Visible. Women in European History, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, eds., (London, 1987), p. 348.

[29] Amy Knight, "The Participation of Women in the Revolutionary Movement in Russia from 1890 to 1914," Ph.D. Dissertation, (London, 1977), p. 65.

[30] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 135.

per cent may have been the average, this number could vary widely among the different areas. Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia stated that Kirensk uezd had only eight to ten female exiles to about 1000 male exiles in 1911.[31] Female exiles remained somewhat of a rarity, although there were a number of prominent women exiles. The experiences of such exiles as Nadezhda Krupskaia, Inessa Armand and Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia are conveyed in their letters and writings.

More diversity is found in the ethnic background of the exiles. Although Russians were in the majority at most times, there were exiles from all corners of the empire. A. Bychkov reported exiles from the Caucasus, Poland, south-western and southern Russia, as well as central and northern Russi[illegible].[32] K.V. Kalmykov's figures for Eniseisk guberniia prior to 1900 place Russians at 47.1 per cent, Jews at 20.9 per cent, Latvians at 9.8 per cent, Ukrainians and Poles at 7.9 and 5.9 per cent respectively and Georgians, Armenians and others at less than four per cent each.[33] For the period 1900-1917 Kalmykov's statistics show an ethnic

[31] Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter to Alice Stone Blackwell, 26 August 1911, Kennan Collection.

[32] A. Bychkov, "Dva pobega. Otryvki iz vospomina[illegible]ii" [Two escapes. Excerpts from Reminiscences], Katorga i ssylka, no. 24, (1926), p. 169.

[33] K.V. Kalmykov, "Politicheskaia ssylka byvshei Eniseiskogo ssylka v tsifrakh" [Political exile in the former Eniseisk guberniia in numbers], Eniseiskaia ssylka. Sobornik Eniseiskogo zemliachestva, V.N. Sokolov, ed., (Moscow, 1934), p. 145.

composition of 44 per cent Russians, 14 per cent Jews, 13 per cent Poles, 12 per cent Latvians, 8 per cent Ukrainians and less than 3 per cent Georgians and Armenians.[34] These fluctuations in nationalities are borne out by Smirnov's findings as well. The largest groups for the years 1913 and 1914-15 were Russians, Latvians, Jews, Poles and Ukrainians, with a tiny number of Belorussians, Armenians, Georgians, Finns and Germans. However, more surprising are the fluctuations within this community on an annual basis. While Russians represented 46.5 per cent in 1913, they made up only 33.3 per cent in the following two years. Jews, who represented 23.2 per cent in 1913, drop to only 8.0 per cent in the following period. Smirnov believed that the percentage change in ethnic composition resulted from an increasing number of workers exiled from different industrial centres. Another reason was the nationality troubles, especially with the Polish nationalists.[35]

The question of social origin is, in the case of revolutionary exiles, an important one. Different social classes often meant differences in education, finances and ability to cope with the physical strains of exile. The first exiles of this period in the 1880s were more akin to the Decembrists in social class, than to the exiles after the turn of the century. The young narodniki were up to

[34] Kalmykov, p. 150.

[35] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," pp. 129-30.

eighty per cent *intelligenty*, according to a sample of twenty-two exiles in Irkutsk in November 1888. Among them were four sons of teachers, one honourary citizen, three sons of the nobility and two of the clergy, two peasants, two merchants, six sons of *meshchanin*, the son of a writer and one person of unidentified origin.[36] This mixed group still had a preponderance from the educated or privileged classes.

Some areas continued to have disproportionate numbers of *intelligenty* even after the beginning of mass exile in the twentieth century. Iu. P. Gaven found that even as late as World War I most of the exiles in Minusinsk were of that class, with only a sprinkling of workers. Only in March 1915 were several revolutionaries of working class backgrounds exiled there.[37] This may or may not have been deliberate policy on the part of the government. Minusinsk had been a place for professional revolutionaries, who were, however, not seen as dangerous by the authorities. The government may also have sent *intelligenty* there, because of the good services previous exiles had performed as museum curators, librarians and doctors.

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[36] A.V. Gedeonovskii, "Iz Peterburga v Sibir'. Vospominaniia narodovoltsa" [From Petersburg to Siberia. Reminiscences of a *narodnik*], Katorga i ssylka, no. 26, (1926), pp. 193 and 197.

[37] Iu. P. Gaven, "Revoliutsionnoe podpol'e v period imperialisticheskoi voiny v Eniseiskoi gub." [The Revolutionary undergrou[illegible] in the period of the imperialist was in Eniseisk provinc], Katorga i ssylka, no. 36, (1927), pp. 114 and 124.

The general trend in the composition of the exiles was a reflection of the increasing diversification of membership in the revolutionary parties. Beginning with the period of mass exile after the 1905 Revolution, both peasants and workers joined the ranks of exiles in larger proportions.[38] In the Narymsk krai survey, the number of honourary citizens remained steady at below eight per cent from 1909 to 1914-15. The rest of the exiles were from peasant and *meshchanin* backgrounds. In all of Arkhangel'sk guberniia exiles from peasant backgrounds made up fifteen per cent of the exile population in 1909. The absence of workers from this list can be explained by the lack of an official social category for workers. Since most of them were ex-peasants, the figure for peasants also includes that for workers.[39]

The Narymsk krai survey also had interesting information about the education of the exiles. The data compiled for the years 1909, 1913 and 1915 testifies that between 43 and 59.7 per cent of the exiles had only primary education. Only 11.8 to 14 per cent had middle schooling, while between 3 and 6.5 per cent had higher schooling. In 1915 17.7 per cent of exiles had had adult education and

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[38] Both Wood and Nikolaev agree that diversification of exiles took place after 1905. Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," p. 73; and V.I. Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia politicheskaia ssylka i izuchenie mestnogo kraia" [Sibirian political exile and the study of a local krai], Katorga i ssylka, no. 34, (1927), p. 91.

[39] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 138.

only 4.3 per cent had a professional education. While most exiles after the turn of the century had not received more than minimum schooling, illiteracy was particularly low among exiles in comparison to the rest of the population. Only twenty to twenty-five per cent of all Russians were literate at the time, but ninety to ninety-five per cent of the exiles could read and write.[40] The high literacy rate can partially be ascribed to the class origin of the exiles, as well as to the literacy classes and reading rooms of the revolutionary parties. The latter wished to foster literacy among the working classes for propaganda and political reasons, and they were quite successful.

All the different revolutionary parties were represented in exile. It it interesting to note the percentage of exiles belonging to specific revolutionary parties in the twentieth century. The statistics seem fairly constant among the areas. Kalmykov's figures state that 30.4 per cent of exiles in Eniseisk guberniia were members of the Bolshevik faction of the RSDRP, while 19.1 per cent belonged to the Menshevik faction in 1915. According to him 30.1 per cent were Socialist Revolutionaries and only 3.6 per cent Bundists. All other parties such as the Latvians and Poles were represented by less than five per cent of the exiles.[41] In Narymsk krai the figures for 1915 were 43 per

[40] Smirnov, p. 138.

[41] Kalmykov, "Politicheskaia ssylka byvshei Eniseiskoi gubernii v tsifrakh," p. 146.

cent for the Bolsheviks, 14 per cent for the Mensheviks, 12 per cent for the right Mensheviks (*likvidatory*), 7 per cent for both the Polish Nationalists and the Bund. In 1915 these proportions had changed to 71.9 per cent Bolsheviks, 12.2 per cent Mensheviks, 2.9 per cent right Mensheviks and 13 per cent without affiliation.[42] There was an increasing move towards the larger, more established parties in the twentieth century, especially to the Bolsheviks, with the increasing radicalization of the urban working class.

The average age of the exiles was fairly constant over this period. Gedeonovskii reported that the large majority, that is 73 per cent of exiles in Butyrka, Iakutsk oblast, were twenty-five to thirty years old. However, there were also some very young exiles. Three exiles aged twenty to twenty-three were exiled to Butyrka,[43] while Mariia Kostiurina was only twenty-two years old when sent into exile. Her exile convoy also contained an entire grade eight class of an Odessa gymnasium. None of these students could have been twenty years old at the time of exile.[44] In Arkhangel'sk guberniia in 1909 the youngest exile was seventeen years old and the oldest forty-seven, with the majority of exiles between twenty and thirty years and an

[42] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 135.

[43] Gedeonovskii, "Iz Peterburga v Sibir'," pp. 195-97.

[44] Mariia Kostiurina, "Molodye gody. (Arest, tiur'ma, ssylka)" [Early years. (Arrest, prison, exile)], Katorga i ssylka, no. 24, (1926), p. 186.

average age of 26.5 years.[45] However, there were much older exiles in other parts of Northern Russia and Siberia. Indeed Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia was sixty-six years old when in exile in Kirensk in 1910. The older exiles were generally exiled to Siberia for life or had been exiled several times already.

This leaves a rather interesting statistic on the length of time exiles had been involved in revolutionary work at the time of their arrest. According to Smirnov, 5.7 per cent of the 186 exiles who participated in the 1913 Narymsk survey had been involved in revolutionary activities for less than six months, 18.5 per cent for less than one year, 20.5 per cent less than two years, 15.5 per cent less than three years and 11.4 and 19.0 per cent had been involved for less than four and more than four years respectively. The majority of the exiles in that region had been involved in revolutionary activities between six months and two years, with a gradual decline in length of participation thereafter. It is possible that the multitude of exiles who had only recently joined revolutionary parties before having been exiled was a result of a large number of new participants or to the inexperience of newer revolutionaries in general.[46]

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[45] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 135.

[46] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 149.

To draw a composite picture of a typical exile, he, for it was most likely he was a man, was around twenty-five or twenty-six years of age and had been engaged in revolutionary work for about one year prior to exile, probably as a member of Narodnia Volia up to 1881 or the Bolshevik or Menshevik parties after 1903. Had he been exiled prior to the turn of this century, he might have been the disillusioned son of a Great Russian honourary citizen, attending Moscow University. Had he been exiled after the turn of the century, he would probably have been a worker or peasant. He would have little education but be literate and have a job in a very large industrial complex in St.Petersburg. He had probably been exiled on a charge of distributing or possessing revolutionary literature or attending an illegal meeting, and been transported to Siberia by exile convoy.

Determining how many people were exiled, rather than who was exiled, is somewhat difficult. In the absence of proper government statistics on the numbers of political exiles, the actual number can only be inferred from ancillary information. Another difficulty is terminology. Contemporary literature referred to all people banished to Siberia or Northern Russia, whether sent as settlers or a hard labourers, as exiles. Another problem is the low number of "politicals" among the large number of exiles and the lack of precision in the statistics.

The average number of political exiles sent annually to Siberia and Northern Russia was about 150-200 throughout the last two decades of the nineteenth century. This number gradually increased towards the end of the century. Kennan, for instance, cited between 88 and 156 political exiles a year in the period from 1879 to 1884.[47] These figures are supported by de Windt's findings. According to him, 183 political exiles passed through the Tiumen *peressylka* or forwarding prison in 1887, 206 exiles in 1888, 223 in 1889 and 447 in the following year.[48] These exiles represented approximately one per cent of the total exile population.[49] After the turn of the century the numbers of exiles, including "politicals" grew rapidly. The average number of political exiles could be up to one thousand exiles per annum in that period. According to M. Fishelev Irkutsk guberniia received a total of 1,513 political exiles in 1911, 1,473 in 1912 and 2,495 exiles in 1913. Between 1905 and 1913 Eastern Siberia alone had received 11,263

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[47] Kennan, Siberia and the Exile System, vol. 1, p. 81.

[48] De Windt, Siberia As It Is, pp. 483-85.

[49] The estimated average annual number of exiles was between fourteen and eighteen thousand exiles for the 1880s and 1890s, which would be approximately 140 to 180 political exiles per year. Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia," pp. 27-28 and Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," p. 76. Watrous, "Russia's Land of the Future: Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia," p. 701.

exiles.[50] Wood also supports these findings. According to him Irkutsk guberniia received 1,057 politicals in 1914,[51] while Smirnov accounted for 300 politicals in Narymsk krai alone in June 1915.[52]

The information is not reliable enough for a precise figure of the total number of political exiles. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that there was a total number of approximately 2,000 political exiles in Siberia up the turn of the century and about 10,000 exiles in Siberia in the last two decades of the Russian Empire. In general exile saw ever increasing numbers of young, socialist exiles. This led to a virtual crisis in some areas, where the authorities could not handle such a large influx of exiles. The exiles needed to be transported to their places of banishment, find housing and work and be supported by government stipends. This strained the capacities of the system, thus creating worse living conditions for the exiles.

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[50] M. Fishelev, "Pol'za zagranichnykh komitetov' v ukreplenii ekonomicheskikh organizatsii ssylki" [The benefit of foreign committees in the work of the economic exile organizations] in Eniseiskaia ssylka. Sobornik Eniseiskogo zemliachestva, ed. V.N. Sokolov, (Moscow, 1934), p. 159

[51] Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," p. 76.

[52] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 133.

Chapter Two

A Doll's House: Life in Exile

Life in exile had a certain mirage-like quality. To the outsider it presented a picture of normalcy and domestic bliss, similar to life in Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House." This image was not shattered until the traveller had experienced life in exile. After a rather harrowing transport to the final exile place, the political exile was virtually on his or her own to find housing, buy provisions and find work. Arriving in a small village, the newcomer had the difficult task to provide for the necessities of life, since he or she was not particularly welcomed in the new community. Only other exiles would extend help and advice. The exile lived under minimum supervision in a system which functioned almost under an honour system, and he or she had the same responsibilities and most of the freedoms of home. However, he or she lacked the same support network of family and community and often money as well.

The exile's "adventure" started soon after his sentence or administrative order was received. If the exile was judged "safe," he or she would be released from the House of Preliminary Detention and given several days to put his or her affairs in order. Otherwise the "political" remained in detention until ready to leave with a regular prison convoy

to Siberia.[1] Exile convoys, composed largely of criminal exiles and hard labourers and their families, could be several hundred persons strong. In each exile party were probably between ten and thirty political exiles. Although they travelled with the criminals, they were treated better and usually kept separate from the former. Arriving with all others in the Moscow *peressylka* or transfer prison, they would remain there until navigation opened in the spring. Some exiles waited up to five months in prison for the opening of navigation. This time was spent relatively interestingly, since it was an opportunity to meet old friends and catch up on all the news.[2] Once navigation opened, the exiles were transported by river barge and rail to Nizhni Novgorod and further to Perm, again by boat. The next leg of the journey was accomplished by rail to Ekaterinburg and from there to Tiumen, either by carriage as in the 1880s or later by rail. From there exiles were either distributed northward or southward into West Siberia or sent further eastward to Tomsk. In the 1880s the journey east from Tomsk was accomplished by carriage or on foot, but by at the end of the nineteenth century, it was possible to make most of the journey by either rail or steamer.[3] The last leg of the journey to the local place of exile was

[1] Prison convoys left only for Siberia. Exiles leaving for Northern Russia had to arrange for their own way there.

[2] Gedeonovskii, "Iz Peterburga v Sibir'," p. 186.

[3] Lansdell, Through Siberia, pp. 43-45.

usually accomplished by boat, on horse-back or on foot, depending on the geographical location. Lenin, for example, had to make the journey from Kansk to Minusinsk and Shushenskoe by horse.[4] Max and Eva Broido's journey was particularly tiresome. Reaching Irkutsk by rail, they were moved by carriage to the river Lena, rowed to Ust'Kut, and finally reached Kirensk by a small flat boat called a *pausok*.[5]

Most nights during their long journeys the exiles stayed in resting stations, called *etapes* or half-way houses called *poluetapes*, usually consisting of barracks surrounded by a stockade. These were unventilated, often without windows. Within the *etapes* were several large rooms, one for female and the rest for male prisoners. Each chamber had a large wooden sleeping platform on which all exiles slept and an open tub for excrement at the end. Since washing facilities were scarce and prisoners did not have a change of clothes, the hygienic conditions in these institutions were horrendous. Political exiles should have stayed in smaller cells, supposedly to prevent them from fleeing. However, several accounts mention that politicals lived in the same room as other exiles.[6] These filthy, over-crowded

[4] Lenin to his mother (2 March 1897), PSS, vol. 55, pp. 22-24.

[5] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 27.

[6] Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists. Women and the Revolutionary Movement in the Russia of Alexander II, (London, 1978), p. 158.

and insanitary conditions only debilitated the exile for the further journey. It did not help his or her physical strength that these resting points did not serve any food and the exiles were obliged to buy food from local peasant women. In fact, they mainly ate cold foods, with only limited nutritional value. The daily allowance paid to the exiles while travelling varied according to social origin from about seven to fifteen kopecks a day. This was barely sufficient to feed an adult, especially one who had been walking all day.[7]

The physical exertion and lack of proper nutrition led to illness and exhaustion for many exiles. The hospital wards of the *etapes* were constantly full. The wards were overcrowded with few resources. Medical care was only sporadic, since not all *etapes* had lazarets or were close enough to villages with physicians. Consequently, death rates were high. According to George Kennan, the death rates at the Tiumen forwarding prison were between 23.7 and 44.1 per cent from 1876 to 1886.[8] Exiles and convicts died at alarming rates in these way-stations.

Women political exiles were sometimes placed in prison detention rather than the local *etapes*. This was done if the women's rooms were needed to house an unusually large number

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[7] De Windt, Siberia As It Is, (London, 1892), pp. 286-87.

[8] George Kennan, Siberia and the Exile system, (New York, 1891), pp. 98-99.

of male exiles. Sometimes it was also judged safer for the women to be in solitary confinement in a prison. This happened to Inessa Armand who, upon arrival in Arkhangel'sk, was kept in solitary confinement at the local jail.[9] Exiles also spent time in jail to wait for changes in season or for decisions on where they were to be sent. Quite often an exile arrived at the uezd administrative centre and have to wait for final orders.

Life was difficult on the convoys. The overcrowded conditions were compounded by the vindictiveness of some officers. Many officers placed severe restrictions on the mobility and quality of life of the exiles. One officer, for instance, bought large quantities of food to sell to the exiles, forcing them to buy food from him rather than from the local peasants. This led to constant clashes between the exiles and this officer. This same officer also forbade them to visit other exiles in local exile colonies or to speak to them on landing docks or when arriving in the towns.[10] This irked many exiles and made relations on the transport less than happy.

The further east the politicals went, the smaller their numbers became, as smaller and smaller groups remained. Although conditions were bad, the transport was often a

[9] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 87 and Armand, Stat'i, Rechi, Pis'ma, p. 192. Kostiurina was also confined to a jail rather than remaining in an etape. Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 187.

[10] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 31.

means of seeing long-time friends and receiving news and information from other exiles awaiting them at railway stations and river shores.[11] The exiles often tried to make the best of their situation and some may actually have been excited at the new adventure that lay ahead of them. Several exiles were rather excited at the prospect of exile. Eva Broido wrote:

> It looked bad. But my first feeling was not one of depression--on the contrary, I was elated!...I was even a little proud: the simple fact of being arrested on a political charge gave one a certain prestige in those days; it was a diploma of decency in Russia.[12]

In fact, this elation was retained even during transport. Especially the younger exiles had a fun time in the convoys, spending the time singing, laughing and joking. One of the exiles reported that the younger crowd had their own little corner on the *palube*, where they sang and danced to the accompaniment of the guitar and put on seances at night.[13]

Nevertheless, such trips were lengthy, tiring and demanding. M. Poliakov's journey from European Russia to Iakutsk took two and a half to three months of constant travelling, while some other exiles spent over seven months

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[11] Feliks Ia. Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," [In exile in Iakutsk oblast], Katorga i ssylka, no. 43, (1928), p. 93.

[12] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 24.

[13] Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 186.

in transit.[14] Constant travelling and then waiting for months for the opening of navigation or for further orders regarding destinations, took a physical and psychological toll on the exiles. Many arrived sick and drained at their places of exile. Other exiles needed psychiatric care even before reaching their final destinations.

Not all exiles had to undergo such harsh treatment. Sometimes an exile was given the option of travelling to his or her destination without supervision. This depended upon the exile's financial situation, place of destination and the reason for his or her exile. All exiles sent to Northern Russia were obliged to arrange for their own transport, because there were no exile convicts sent to that part of the country. Usually the convicted would ask to be allowed to make his or her own way to exile, however, there is one recorded instance of a prisoner being told to make the long trip to Eastern Siberia on his own, without having been given the chance to join a convoy.[15] Although there are few surviving accounts of self-transport, it is known that V.I. Lenin, Nadezhda Krupskaia and Inessa Armand all paid for their own transport. Self-transport usually gave the exiles more time prior to their departure to put their affairs in order and allowed them to leave at their convenience.

[14] M. Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke (1889-1896)," [Memoirs of Kolymsk exile (1889-1896)], Katorga i ssylka, nos. 45-46, (1926), p. 159.

[15] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke" [In detention and exile], Katorga i ssylka, no. 15 (1925), p. 203.

Naturally, such a venture required a private income. Many exiles had no choice but to join a state exile convoy for financial reasons.

Inessa Armand, wife of the Moscow industrialist Alexander Armand, had fewer financial worries. She elected to travel with Vladimir Armand to Arkhangel'sk. The trip to that city from Moscow was undertaken by rail and took approximately two days. Being lucky enough to obtain postal sleighs and horses for hire, she travelled the 340 versts[16] to Mezen by horse-drawn sleigh. She did have to wait several times for horses at the postal inns, when these were being used by the postal service or other travellers. Her description of these stations makes the reader, as well as Armand, value train travel. The stations usually consisted of a dirty dining room with a table, chair and divan. The dirt and filth were so great, that she preferred to sleep on the floor, something she would not usually be wont to do. Armand was fascinated, on the other hand, by the large Russian stove in the stations. She had never actually seen one before. This trip, including periods of twenty-four and twelve-hour waits for horses, took the Armands only five days. This was speedy, since it ordinarily was a seven to ten day trip.[17] Travel to the point of destination was a

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[16] A verst equals 1.067 kilometres.

[17] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 83; and Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 208; and Armand, Stat'i, Rechi, Pis'ma, p. 193.

tedious affair regardless whether the exile travelled on his or her own recognizance or in a convoy. The resting stations, as well as the postal inns were filthy and uncomfortable. Travelling conditions often depended upon the weather, navigation and the officers accompanying the convoys. On the other hand, the trips could be quite short.

The exiles' final destination was usually a small village, the common unit of settlement in North European Russia and Siberia. There was a certain consistency to the villages, which were twenty to forty versts apart along the main routes or waterways. They consisted of a double row of log cottages like in Mezen and differed mainly in length. Living conditions in both northern Russia and Siberia were very primitive at the time and must have appeared so to the fairly educated and urban exiles.[18] Most of the villages also had one or two churches, a school and a water well. This description is borne out by the writings of most of the exiles. The administrative town of the uezd usually was somewhat larger and would generally have about two thousand inhabitants and major services. The village of Mezen, for instance, had a school, hospital, post and telegraph office and a saw mill. Located on the Mezen river, the village population lived in sturdy wooden houses, not the yurts one exile had expected to find. Some of the wooden izbas even

[18] Description of a village from: R.E.H. Mellor, Geography of the U.S.S.R., (London, 1966), pp. 163-64; and Paul E. Lydolph, Geography of the U.S.S.R., (New York, 1964), p. 126.

had a second story.[19] Vladimir Il'ich Lenin and his wife Nadezhda Krupskaia were in a similarly primitive village. Lenin sent the following description of Shushenskoe to his sister Mariia:

> You ask me, Maniasha, to describe the village of Shu-shu-shu....Hm, hm! It seems as if I have already described it. It is a big village with several streets, rather muddy, dusty--everything as it should be. It stands in the steppes--there are no orchards or greenery of any kind. The village is surrounded by dung, which the people here do not cart to the fields, but dump outside the village....[20]

This village was also near a river, however, it had few of the conveniences which even Mezen had. It had no stores and only one school. Mail was delivered only as far as the uezd town of Minusinsk, where the stores, museum and school were located as well.

The Russian village did not always have the romantic connotation village life has in the twentieth century. A contemporary of these exiles, Anton Chekhov, had little good to say about Siberian villages;

> [The exiles'] life is dull. Nature in Siberia, compared to what is Russia, seems to them monotonous, poor, flat. There is frost at Ascension, wet snow at Pentecost. The city flats are wretched, the streets muddy, everything in the shops is expensive, the goods are stale and the selection is poor; many articles to

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[19] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," pp. 208-209; and Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 85.

[20] Lenin to M.A. and M.I. Ulianov (19 July 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 48.

> which a European is accustomed cannot be had for any amount of money.[21]

Not all exile places in Siberia and Northern Russia looked like that. Those few exiles lucky enough to be exiled to the administrative town of an oblast, or even of a guberniia, like Arkhangel'sk, Irkutsk or Krasnoiarsk, lived in more civilized conditions. Life in these communities was different because of the increased number of people and diversions available to the inhabitants. Irkutsk, for example, was already the centre of culture and the economy of Siberia by the end of the nineteenth century. By this point Irkutsk contained several stone buildings, housing the administration and schools. Even some of the richer merchants could afford to live in brick buildings. From the accounts of travellers, it is clear that Irkutsk was an elegant town with many of the trappings of life in St.Petersburg or Moscow. At one time, Irkutsk also had had a theatre which had burned down in the big fire of 1873, but the high culture remained. Irkutsk also had a museum, mainly staffed by exiles and former exiles, as well as several newspapers, which also were largely run by exiles.[22]

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[21] Anton Chekhov, "Across Siberia," in The Unknown Chekhov. Stories and Other Writings, transl. and introd. by Avraham Yarmolinsky (New York, 1954), pp. 293-94.

[22] For information about Irkutsk see Helena Crumett Lee, Across Siberia Alone. An American Woman's Adventures, (London, 1914), pp. 69-85; and Knox, Overland through Asia, (Hartford, Conn., 1870), pp. 397-403. Most travellers' accounts of late nineteenth century Siberia include descriptions of Irkutsk.

The quality of life in exile was largely determined by the services a town could provide to make life more like home. Any administrative centre, even the cultural backwater of Iakutsk, was preferable to a smaller town. There, at least, were literate and Russian-speaking officials, the mail arrived regularly and schools were usually already established. By the turn of the century Iakutsk, for example, already had two schools, a women's *gimnasium*, a *real'noe* school and a seminary. This increased the number of educated Russians in the town dramatically.[23] The existence of a museum was often of considerable value to exiles. Many of them found employment there, having been trained in "scientific" methods. For instance, most of the Minusinsk museum employees throughout its history were exiles.[24] Quite often the exiles also took the initiative and established museums or lending libraries themselves. The Kiakhta library established by exiles had an excellent collection on ethnography, religions and history.[25] These cultural endeavours were continued in the field of publishing. During this period, publishing saw a dramatic increase, even in

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[23] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," pp. 136-37.

[24] Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists, p. 171.

[25] I.I. Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoe. Sibir' i emigratsiia. Vospominaniia za 50 let [The past and one's experience. Siberia and emigration. Memoirs of the past fifty years], (Leningrad, 1924), pp. 97-99.

Siberia, and to a more limited extent in Northern Russia.[26] Exiles contributed to various newspapers in the larger cities, such as the *Tobolsk Diocesan Gazette* and the *Sibirskii listok* (*Siberian Leaflet*) of the same city.[27]

More fundamental services were, of course, no less important. There were many things not available in these small villages. In one village it was the postmaster who took a photograph of the exiles, since there was no photographer in town.[28] Although this may seem a minor point, these were the things which made life more bearable in isolation. Another feature of some of the large villages was market day, in which peasants from several nearby villages came to sell their wares and food. Most exiles were not impressed with this institution, but it did afford an opportunity to buy food and meet other people. At the market in Nikitino, near the West Siberian town of Omsk, peasants and hunters sold partridge, hare, goose, fish and caviar to the local population.[29] Other products were vegetables, homespun cloth and manufactured items. In the winter, milk and meat could be purchased frozen as well, so

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[26] V.I. Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia periodicheskaia pechat i politicheskaia ssylka" [The Siberian periodical press and political exile] Katorga i ssylka, no. 41 (1928), p. 116.

[27] Watrous, "Russia's Land of the Future: Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia," pp. 577-79.

[28] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 93.

[29] Knox, Overland Through Asia, pp. 394-95; and Theodor Kroeger, The Forgotten Village. Four Years in Siberia, (London, 1936), p. 123.

that most regions were supplied with the necessities of life year-round.

The administrative uezd towns not only had more variety in the number of services available, but they also contained the only presence of the tsarist government. This was usually the police official or *ispravnik*. Upon arrival in the administrative centre, the exile was to report to the police with his or her exile order. He or she was then given a copy of the surveillance regulations and a *vid na zhitel'stvo* or residency permit for this area. Often an exile would be unaware of the final destination, until he or she reached the administrative town of the uezd. Had the orders for the final exile locale not been received from the governor-general of the guberniia, he or she needed to wait for them prior to proceeding. Once installed in the place of residence, the exile was responsible for registering with the village scribe as an exile under surveillance if applicable and then was left to his or her own devices.[30]

Generally, an exile was expected to find lodgings, once arrived in exile. There is only one recorded case in which an *ispravnik* found housing for an exile with another exile family in Arkhangel'sk. There is no evidence of the motivation of this service and it seems to have been the

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[30] Wood, "Solzhenitsyn on the Tsarist Exile System," p. 230; and Vladimir Vilenskii (Sibiriakov), "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki" [The last generation of Iakutsk exiles], Katorga i ssylka, no. 7, (1923), p. 130.

exception.[31] Finding appropriate housing must have been a daunting task for the newcomer. Faced with dilapidated villages and less than friendly villagers, the exile depended upon the help of other exiles to make suitable arrangements. The political exile's lot was worsened if he or she was sent to a town with few or no exiles. Even in this time there were still places with almost no exiles. When Lenin arrived in Shushenskoe, there were only two other exiles in the village. Even during the period of massive exiling, were there towns with only one or two exiles, such as Koida on the White Sea.

The housing choices fall into two categories. One option was to rent a log-cottage or izba or an apartment, if the money was available and the space needed. The alternative, usually employed by younger and less well off exiles, was to join a co-operative house with other exiles. Sometimes co-operative housing was a must, when there were no other lodgings. Small communities only rarely had extra housing available and there were always some inhabitants reluctant to rent to exiles. Indeed, housing crises could occur when too many exiles were sent to the same place at one time. Armand's experience in Mezen bore this out. There were approximately one hundred exiles at the time of her arrival in December 1907. That number rose to three hundred

[31] Vladimir Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii, (1904-1905gg.)" [Political exile during the time of the first revolution, 1904-1905], Katorga i ssylka, no. 49, (1928), pp. 115-16.

over the next three months and that had led to a housing crunch. There simply were no spare lodgings available, and it was too cold for make-shift arrangements in this cold climate.[32]

Most exiles, especially those arriving with spouses and families, rented houses and flats on their own, according to their resources. The houses were in a generally dilapidated state. Made of logs and moss, most izbas had double roofs and windows, some of which could even be opened. The chimney was made of stone or brick. In Northern Russia the outside of the houses was often decorated with wooden carvings. The izbas were fairly small and traditionally had only one room, where all the cooking, eating and sleeping took place. However, many of the exiles report having lived in two or more rooms. The unheated entrance hall or ceni was mainly designed to cut draughts from the door, but was often used for storage and as a second bedroom in the summers. One exile hoped to convert this room into a bedroom for her children, should they have come to visit her during the summer.[33] Another room on the other side of the ceni, originally designed as a barn, was used as a second living room by the late nineteenth century. At the turn of the century houses already had proper kitchens, that is probably a partition running partway through the living room to the

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[32] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 94.

[33] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 209.

russkii pech' or Russian stove, without which no izba was complete. A typical exile izba was furnished by a few chairs, a bench and a table, a few kitchen utensils and the ubiquitous samovar. This was the usual assortment of furniture, only supplemented by a plate-rail around the living room walls and several shelves. Most exiles also had a wooden strong-box, in which they had probably brought their belongings. Generally there were no beds for either peasant or exile. People slept on top of the Russian stove or on benches. Only very few of the exiles or the locals owned more than a few pieces of furniture;[34] the houses were furnished rather sparsely.

Most of these houses were in very bad conditions, which gave the exiles, who were mainly used to urban housing, many problems. Armand complained that her log hut was so badly put together and caulked, that it was constantly draughty. She called it *veter guliaet* or "wind-goes-for-a-walk."[35] Eva Broido had to contend with ice-covered walls in her first apartment and with a kitchen that was so cold that the ice would not melt in the water buckets, leaving her without water, in the second flat. This must have been a harrowing experience since she was accompanied by her two little

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[34] For a description of furniture and living arragements see Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 93; Grigorii Aleksandrovich Muchnik, ...Chem my zanimalis' v ssylke, (Moscow, 1930), p. 9; and Buel, Russian Nihilism and Exile Life in Siberia, 2nd ed., (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 325.

[35] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 209.

daughters. Almost all exiles complained of water frozen in the buckets, because the houses were kept so cool.[36] On his trip across Siberia, Anton Chekhov found most bedrooms kept unbearably cold in the winter to prevent the bedbugs and cockroaches from "walking."[37] Leon Trotskii's izba was so infested with insects, that he and his family vacated the hut many times, leaving the door open to kill the insects with an outside temperature of minus thirty-five degrees.[38] Generally, the houses needed to be winterized to be liveable in the harsh winters. Even as far south as Shushenskoe, Krupskaia reported doing this. The windows were sealed up with felt, earth was piled around the bottom of the house and small portable stoves put in as many rooms as possible. While in Ufa, Krupskaia even moved into a different apartment for the winter.[39] Moving was a regular feature of exile life in changing family circumstances and bad living conditions.

Other options for living arrangements in exile, included boarding with local residents or forming a co-

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[36] Armand, p. 209; Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 34.

[37] Chekhov, "Across Siberia," p. 275.

[38] Leon Trotskii, My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography, (New York, 1930), p. 124.

[39] N. Krupskaia to Lenin's mother (26 Aug 1898) in "Pis'ma Nadezhda Krupskoi" [The letters of Nadezhda Krupskaia], Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, by V.I. Lenin, 5th ed., vol. 55, (Moscow, 1970), p. 395; and to Mariia (30 March 1900), PSS, vol. 55, p. 417.

operative or commune with other exiles. Boarding was probably the least practiced choice. Many peasants were weary of taking a known exile and revolutionary into their home. However, Lenin did board in Shushenskoe until Krupskaia's arrival. He lived, *na pol'nom pansione*, receiving two meals a day and a room.[40] More often several exiles elected to live together to share costs and work. Krupskaia's friend Lira lived in a commune with nine other exiles in the tiny village of Kazachinskoe, where they had rented a house with a vegetable garden, a cow and a meadow. The young woman did all of the cooking and baking. She also participated in picking berries and making hay. Such arrangements left the individuals with little space and solitude, making it difficult to study or engage in academic work.[41] For male exiles communal houses were the norm. Ia. Belii reportedly used blankets to create a second room for an exile room-mate.[42] P.N. Karavaev lived with seven other exiles in one apartment,[43] while V.N. Katin-Iartsev shared a

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[40] Lenin to his mother and A.I. Ulianov-Elizarova (17 April 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 31.

[41] Krupskaia to Anna (9 August 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 393; and to Lenin's mother (27 September 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 399.

[42] Ia. Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske. (Vospominaniia politicheskogo ssyl'nogo)" [3 years in Verkhoiansk. (Reminiscences of political exiles)]," Katorga i ssylka, no. 15 (1925), p. 212.

[43] P. N. Karavaev, "V dooktiabr'skie gody. Na partinoi rabote, v tiur'me i ssylke [The pre-October years. Party work in detention and exile], (n.p., 1948), p. 121.

house with three other exiles.[44] Broido also took in other exiles and provided both her boarders and several other exiles with food in exchange for services. In her case, the boarders helped supply and split firewood, heat the stove, fetch water and wash the dishes.[45]

More surprising were living arrangements in the summers, when several exiles received permission to rent *dachas* outside their usual areas of settlement. This was done in an effort to escape the summer heat, although there were still the unperturbed swarms of mosquitoes with which to contend. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, for example, came to live with I.I. Popov and his family in their summer house in Ust' Kiran in Selenginsk uezd. This was in an isolated area, with no police supervision.[46] Several of Lenin's friends first had hoped to spend the summer in Shushenskoe with them, however, in the end they decided to rent a *dacha* near Minusinsk.[47] Apparently, some *ispravniki* were amenable to such arrangements if they trusted the exiles.

After having settled in an area, an exile was faced with the daunting task of housework. The daily tasks of housekeeping were very different in the countryside and most exiles had no experience in performing household tasks. The

[44] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," p. 146.

[45] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 29.

[46] Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoi, pp. 86-87 and 105.

[47] Krupskaia to Lenin's mother (4 April 1899), PSS, vol. 55, p. 410.

men had, of course, never participated in household tasks, while many of the women were from the upper classes with only limited experience themselves. As already mentioned, the farm houses were heated by the huge Russian stoves, which used large amounts of firewood. So wood had to be procured and split, the oven cleaned and a fire kindled on a daily basis. The samovar needed to be started by putting burning coals inside and in the winter water had to be melted for drinking and washing. These were all manual tasks, which only a person in good health could accomplish. Both Krupskaia and Armand reported problems with the stove, although Armand let Vladimir take care of preparing the stove and samovar.[48] More physical labour was involved in planting a garden. Many exiles grew vegetables to supplement their diet, because fresh food was unavailable at the market. There were other problems with living in such isolated and small villages. In Mezenskii uezd, there were still places where flour mills were unknown, "and the women, like ancient slaves, mill the grain with a hand mill."[49] Compounding the difficulties of life in remote locations was the general lack of furniture and utensils. Few of the revolutionary exile women were truly great housekeepers and household tasks proved to be a problem. Krupskaia, for instance, had offered to make jam in an effort to be nice to

[48] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 36 and Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand", p. 209.

[49] Armand, p. 210.

her neighbours, though she had no idea how to do so.[50] Similarly, Armand struggled to make *blini* for a Pentecost celebrations with the other exiles. Apparently this was her first attempt at baking with yeast.[51]

Some of the exiles tried to overcome their problems by hiring servants. However, few women were willing to work as servants in Siberia, an area of the empire which had never known serfdom. Some of the exiles were successful in hiring servants. Krupskaia eventually was able to hire a young girl for the winter,[52] while the sixty-six year old Breshko-Breshkovskaia also had a young servant during her stay in Kirensk.[53] However, most exiles were not that fortunate.

Life in exile could be much better and easier with an adequate supply of money. Extra income was required for such luxuries as hiring a servant or buying enough provisions to be well-nourished. In Northern Russia, the diet of the exiles consisted mainly of fish, because it was much cheaper than meat. Wild fruit, mushrooms and honey rounded out the diet. Staples were generally available in the local market and this was supplemented by picking red whortleberries,

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[50] Krupskaia to Lenin's mother (26 July 1900), PSS, vol. 55, p. 418.

[51] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 94.

[52] Krupskaia to Lenin's mother (20 June 1899), PSS, vol. 55, p. 411.

[53] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Letter to Alice Stone Blackwell, 14 March 1912, Kennan Collection.

cranberries and great bilberries.[54] In Siberia, the diet consisted mainly of bread, flour and different meats. Lenin shot rabbits, partridge and grouse, while peasants offered geese and elk meat at the market. Krupskaia and he also went mushroom picking, being successful in finding saffron milk-caps and milk agaric mushrooms. Other local products were honey, wax candles and eggs. Larger villages also had one or two stores, selling everything available in European Russia. Lenin, for instance, found most things he needed in Minusinsk,[55] while both Armand and Chekhov were disgusted with the high prices and bad quality of the products for sale.[56]

Exile life was far better and easier with extra income for better accommodations, food for the occasional trip, as life was notoriously expensive in Siberia. Most exiles were financially not well off. The tsarist regime restricted the professions in which exiles were allowed to engage, providing those with no other source of income with a government stipend.

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[54] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand", p. 209 and Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 83. The local population also searched for edible and medicinal roots and plants. James H. Bater and R.A. French, eds., Studies in Russian Historical Geography, vol. 1, (London, 1983), p. 24.

[55] Krupskaia to Lenin's mother (26 August 1898), p. 394; and Lenin to his mother, (12 October 1897), PSS, vol. 55, pp. 54-55; and Kroeger. The Forgotten Village, p. 123;

[56] Both Armand and Chekhov rate the stores and markets rather poorly. Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 216; Chekhov, "Across Siberia," p. 294.

The rate of the allowance depended upon the recipient's social status, the latitude of his place of exile and the number of dependents. People belonging to the privileged classes received from fifty to one hundred per cent more aid than non-privileged exiles. In the case of Armand, this was 12 rubles 20 kopecks a month, compared to only 8 rubles for non-privileged exiles. The higher rate for the members of the privileged classes was instituted originally because these exiles were not expected to have had a profession. The range of payments prior to the turn of the century was approximately 6 rubles 20 kopecks a month in the southern locales and up to 12 rubles in the North. After the turn of the century, allowances were increased to 8 rubles in the south and up to 16 or 18 rubles a month in Iakutsk oblast. This increase was necessitated by rising prices.[57] Most agreed that even with the increases, the stipend was not enough to survive on. In Alexandrovsk, the *ispravnik* was quoted as saying that the "existence on seven rubles a month is almost impossible," In the same area, several exiles sent a telegramme to the governor, urging him not to wait for authorization to increase their stipends, because "we can no longer stand the slow, hungry death through the

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[57] For information on government stipends see Simpson, Side-lights on Siberia, p. 337; Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 88; Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast, Katorga i ssylka, no. 45, (1928), p. 131; and Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii," p. 124.

current allowance."[58] The 1909 survey of exiles in Arkhangel'sk guberniia determined that the minimum monthly expenditure in that guberniia was sixteen rubles a month, whereas government subsidies ran at only thirteen to fifteen rubles. This judgment is borne out by the Narymsk krai survey. Of eighty-nine exiles who responded to questions on income, 47.8 per cent received some kind of financial assistance from the self-help fund, a clear indication that the exiles could not subsist solely on their stipends.[59]

The monthly stipend was supplemented with an annual twenty-two ruble clothing allowance. This money provided for clothing repairs and the annual purchase of undergarments, pants and a jacket or a dress. The purchase of overclothes, boots and felt boots was proposed only every two years. The Narymsk krai survey, however, showed that estimated expenditures for these items would come to thirty-six rubles per annum in that area of the country. Hence it was very difficult for most exiles to live comfortably on the government stipends. Prices varied significantly among the areas,[60] and local prices determined

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[58] Trapeznikov, pp. 124-25.

[59] Information about Arkhangel'sk and Narymsk in Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," pp. 147 and 150.

[60] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 148. By comparison, the prices reported by Protopopov are much higher than Smirnov's. K. Protopopov, "Poslednii s"ezd ssyl'nykh Priangr'ia" [The last conference of Priangar'ia exiles], Katorga i Ssylka, no. 39, (1928), p. 134, note 1.

whether stipends covered expenditures. Lenin and Krupskaia, for example, mostly subsisted on their stipends, although Lenin did receive some money for home.[61] The stipend had to cover everything, from rent to fuel, food, clothes, laundry and darning and miscellaneous items. Lenin spent most of his money on magazine subscriptions and books, while others preferred to invest it in writing materials or vodka.[62] While the allowance may have covered normal expenditures, it did not take care of extraordinary circumstances, like a rise in rent during the housing crisis in Mezen, or shortages during wartime. Medical expenses strained budgets, especially since many exiles were continually sick. There was also constant financial pressure on the exiles through the low stipends and government restrictions on work. As will be explained later, the exiles were not allowed to work in certain professions. In theory this curtailed their ability to provide for themselves.

Many of the exiles suffered from financial instability during exile. In the last two decades of the tsarist regime they had mainly been workers, minor civil servants, and peasants, with few savings to take into exile. With little outside income, owing to the work restrictions while in exile, the exiles were subjected to almost "enforced

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[61] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 36.

[62] Gedeonovskii, "Iz Peterburga v Sibir'," p. 206.

penury."[63] Sometimes the lack of money was so severe that an exile was unable to leave his or her place of exile and return home to European Russia. Although in earlier times the government had provided enough money for the return journey, the state treasury was finding this rather prohibitive during the years of mass exile. Since this practice had not actually been anchored in the exile regulations, it was quietly dropped.[64] Kostiurina, for instance, was forced to stay an extra year in Iakutsk, because her father could not send her enough money for the return journey.[65] In another instance, Belii could not move to his new place of residence in Iakutsk from a distant *ulus*, for a lack of money. Only when two friendly merchants, Nikolai Borisovich and Ana Fedorovna, drove to the market in Iakutsk that summer, was he able to leave. The couple, grateful for his medical services for the past three years, offered to convey him for free.[66] Armand was also troubled by the household economy and started giving lessons to supplement her stipend,[67] while another exile

[63] N.I. Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina" [Inimical guillotine], Katorga i ssylka, no. 10, (1924), p. 184; and Wood, "Solzhenitsyn and the Tsarist Exile System," p. 230.

[64] Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists, p. 170.

[65] Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 194.

[66] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske. (Vospominaniia politicheskogo ssyl'nogo)" [Three years in Verkhoiansk. (Reminiscences of political exiles)], pp. 221-22. The last name of the couple is not given.

[67] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 93.

was convinced, that without extra work or income, they would have died.[68] Some of these hardships were overcome by work and by the added financial help of friends and self-aid societies. Since the *ispravnik* could withhold the monthly stipend if the exile had outside income, many exiles kept any money received from outside sources a secret. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, for instance, received sizable amounts of money from her friends in the United States. Her letters reveal that she received 100 and 190 rubles from the U.S. in addition to a monthly sum of fifty rubles conveyed to her in secret by her American friends.[69] But even less famous exiles occasionally received funds from outside sources. D. Puzanov reported that at one time a group of St. Petersburg workers sent thirty rubles to aid the exiled.[70] Other exiles were forced to refuse job offers, which would have supplemented their income, for fear the police would curtail their allowance. However, there are few accounts of *ispravniki* doing so. This may have been from a lack of knowledge, since most villages where exiles lived did not

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[68] Vilenskii, "Pose'ednee pokolenie iakutskoi ssylki," p. 133.

[69] N.W. Tchaykovsky to A.S. Blackwell, in "Correspondence of Exiles: Letters from Mme Breshkovsky while in exile in Siberia (Copies) 1910-1912," Kennan Collection.

[70] D. Puzanov, "Minusinskaia ssylka 1910-1917gg.," [Minusinsk exile, 1910-1917, Katorga i Ssylka, no. 39 (1928), p. 91.

actually have their own police chief, or simply a gesture of kindness.[71]

Exile to the far North merits a separate discussion, because life in Iakutsk oblast was very different from other exiles locales for both local residents and exiles. Instead of existing in even remotely similar conditions to their lives at home, exiles in the far North were subjected to an even harsher and more severe existance than exiles in the other regions of Northern Russia and Siberia. The exiles had to endure extreme climatic conditions, "White Nights" and almost complete isolation. In fact, some exiles did not meet Russian-speaking people for periods of several months. Thus, these exiles did not have the support of other exiles. In the North there was an almost complete absence of medical and educations services. There were no stores outside of Iakutsk and no markets at which to while away the time. The only diversions and cultural events were those organized by the exiles themselves.

Iakutsk oblast was divided into different okrugs like the other areas of Siberia, which were subdivided into *naslegs*. These were large expanses of territory which only had very few yurts, that is about one or two tents for every

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[71] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," p. 114, and Marie Antoinette Crispine Czaplicka, My Siberian Year, (New York, 1916), p. 265.

ten versts or so.[72] The area was so thinly settled that the villages were several hundred versts apart and had only a few inhabitants. In fact, the village of Sredne Kolymsk was 2,350 versts from its administrative centre Iakutsk, but only 2,500 versts from North America. When M. Poliakov arrived there in March 1889, he found only four or five yurts and several izbas, as well as a church.[73] Belii, exiled to Verkhoiansk, where he finally arrived after seven months of travel, found a church, yurts, a police station and only a handful of other exiles. Although Iakutsk had contemporary services and wooden izbas, conditions changed dramatically once outside the immediate area of the adminstrative centre.

This region received a large influx of exiles in the late 1880s and from then on was used theoretically as a dumping-ground for politically "dangerous" revolutionaries, repeat offenders and escaped exiles. Sometimes, however, the selection process was flawed. When the very young Kostiurina was sent to live 250-300 versts from Iakutsk in Zhiksagonsk ulus, her new home only had a few yurts and a church and could only be reached by a hunting trail.

Life was harsh in these areas and normal life almost non-existent. Most of the exiles lived in yurts. Yurts, the tents of the native Iakuts, were made of a light wooden

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[72] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," p. 142.

[73] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," pp. 158 and 165.

frame, which could be taken down, and were covered with felt and animal furs. At the centre of the yurt was an opening to let the smoke from the daily fire escape. This was covered at night. The average yurt was about 1.70 meters high and 4.80 to 5.70 metres in diameter. There was no furniture except a wooden box for clothes and the household goods consisted of several pots, jugs, bottles and basins, as well as a few blankets and mats to sleep on.[74] If exiled to a village with other exiles, the exile would most likely join in a co-operative living and working arrangement. In Verkhoiansk, for example, the exiles lived in two yurts. Belii was given two days in which to recuperate from his strenuous journey before participating in the communal work effort. They all took turns at logging, sawing firewood, hunting and preparing meals.[75]

Those exiles sent to extremely isolated areas lived with native Iakuts because of an absence of other exiles or Russians. "P.A.", one of the exiles forced to live with Iakuts, found this a terrible hardship. Fearing that he would escape were he left alone at all, the Iakuts followed him everywhere. Despite the lack of privacy he was terribly alone. There was no one for many versts who spoke any Russian. Getting up one morning and seeing not one soul, he realized the beauty of the area, but also that he was "far

[74] Knox, Overland Through Asia, pp. 87-88.

[75] Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 192; Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 14 (1924), pp. 205-207.

from freedom, far from life." Among the Iakuts, he found "not one bright idea, not one illuminated soul."[76] Life in such an area without other exiles, was terribly stifling.

Even those lucky enough to be closer to Iakutsk and to meet other exiles did not have the opportunity to socialize often. Thus, the only opportunity for escaping the isolation was to have the use of transportation to reach Iakutsk to purchase provisions. There the exiles stayed in the *ulusnaia kvartira*, an apartment reserved just for such purposes.[77] Any goods which needed to be purchased were very expensive in this area, because of the long and difficult transport to Iakutsk oblast. In fact these exiles received the largest government stipend in Siberia, generally eighteen rubles per month, to offset the extreme prices. Nevertheless, some items, like bread were still not available to most exiles. The total lack of agriculture in an area where the ground thawed only one and half months each year, led to the very high price of fourteen rubles a pood for imported dark flour and up to sixteen rubles for white flour.[78] The price for sugar and tea was also quite high, while local meat was relatively cheap. Meat and milk could be bought frozen most of the year. The price of thirty-five to forty rubles for

[76] P.I., "Pis'ma Petra Alekseeva iz ssylki, s vstupitel'noi stat'ei P.I." [The letters of Peter Alekseev from exile, with an introductory article by P.I.], Katorga i ssylka, vol. 13, (1924), pp. 170-72.

[77] Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 191.

[78] One pood consists of 36 pounds or 16.3 kilogrammes.

a vedro or bucket of vodka, led to a high rate of alcohol consumption. What else was there to do in the long, dark and cold winters?[79]

There was little escape from the solitude and horrid living conditions of this area. Attempts at escape were rare because of their uselessness. If an escapee was seen by Iakuts, he or she would be reported for a reward. Unorganized escapes were useless, because of a lack of food, proper clothing, maps and compasses to flee from the area. The only possible escape was by boat in an attempt to reach the Arctic Ocean and the Bering Straits. Exile to Iakutsk oblast had a certain finality.

The first experiences with exile were usually mixed for the exiles. Suddenly separated from family and friends, the political exiles were conveyed to their places of residence together with criminal exiles. After long months of travel they arrived in their exile community exhausted. Immediately upon arrival they were required to procure housing and provisions. However, there was no government interference in their choice of accommodation or other domestic arrangements. The exiles were confronted with similar problems as at home. They had to do housekeeping, shop and cook. Although some of these tasks were more difficult and

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[79] Poliakov, "Vospominanii o Kolymskoi ssylke," p. 166; Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 33; and Belii, "Tri goda o Verkhoianske," no. 17 (1925), p. 221.

time-consuming, their life in exile superficially emulated their home life. It was as if they were playing "house"--they were acting out their appointed roles in their play-house exile existences. But, like in "A Doll's House", the dream life came to an abrupt end. The exiles' relations with the local communities, the pain of separation from friends and family and the constant anxieties soon shattered that mirage-like existence.

Chapter Three

The House of the Dead: The Social Dimension

The apparently peaceful and comparatively free exiles had to contend with the isolation and anguish of the their situation. The extreme geographical isolation of most exiles was compounded by precarious links to the local community. The exiles' relations with local citizens were initially coloured by the latters' distrust and only tempered by the exiles' usefulness to the population as craftsmen and professionals. The lack of links to their former lives also took its toll, especially in extremely isolated areas like Iakutsk oblast. These difficulties were only overcome by the co-operative and communal aspects of exile life. The exiles became each other's support and family. They visited each other, lived together and spent their working and social hours together. But even this support group could not overcome all the anguish and psychological effects of exile. The anxiety about medical care and the worries about family and friends back home, combined to make life unbearable for most exiles. Life was as if in the "House of the Dead": lifeless and horrid. There seemed to be few normal or legal ways out of exile; only escape, mental illness or suicide offered respite.

The exiles generally were not part of the local communities to which they were banished, even though integration had been one of the original intents of the

exile system. The exiles and local inhabitants were of such different social and cultural backgrounds, that the former found it difficult to get along with the latter. Breshko-Breshkovskaia said, in assessing the local Kirensk population, that "the culture is very low [here]."[1] Few of the exiles had anything good to say about local society. One exile expressed her view thus:

> The town of Mezen has a lifeless and deathlike air; there is nothing startling or terrible here, like, for instance, in hard labour. But here is no life and the people wither like plants without moisture. Civilized people from the great cities with their intensive lives and interesting wealth cannot get along with the quiet Mezen swamps and the spiritually decaying people....Here is nothing interesting, no living relations with the population....[2]

Both the uncouth behaviour and the illiteracy of the local population, made them unlikely social companions for most exiles. In Eastern Siberia only between 6.5 and 11.2 per cent of the population were literate in the 1890s, while 9 per cent of the Siberian urban population was literate. This compares to a rural literacy rate of 22 per cent for the empire.[3] This contrasts with a very high literacy rate among the exiles, as has already been mentioned.

The exiles also had to contend with the general apathy of the population. Caring for little else than food and

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[1] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Letter of 4 February, Kennan Collection.

[2] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 213.

[3] Watrous, "Russia's Land of the Future: Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia," p. 598.

drink, the local inhabitants could not be roused by the social issues, which meant so much to the revolutionaries and had led to their exile. Even the village teachers were often only interested in socializing with the local "aristocracy", i.e., with the priest and shopkeepers, by spending their free time playing cards and drinking with them.[4] Exiles found few educated or cultured people with whom to talk, and were often lonely as a consequence. V. Trapeznikov noted, that no one in the little village of Emetskoe in Arkhangel'sk guberniia was interested in politics. He was friendless for the first time in his life.[5] Exile life, then, was almost universally quiet and lonely, especially in regions with few other "politicals". Not less important, of course, was the language barrier. Those sent to the very reaches of Iakutsk oblast generally did not see a Russian-speaking person for many months and had no way of communicating with their Iakut keepers.

In the rural areas exiles were sometimes invited drinking by the local residents:

> Out of boredom an exile drinks with him. At first he makes a wry face, then he gets the habit, and in the end, of course, he becomes an alcoholic. In the matter

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[4] Lenin in particular found this apathy disturbing. See Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 34 and Bruce I. Burnett, "Lenin Exile Community now Shrine," The Globe and Mail, (20 January 1990), p. C15.

[5] Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii," p. 126.

> of drinking it's the natives who demoralize the exiles, not the other way around.[6]

Alcoholism was a persistent problem for all in Siberia, the exiles not an exception. The boredom and hardships of life and the constant drinking by the local population finally corrupted many exiles.

Relations between the two communities were relatively harmonious despite the cultural differences, after some initial fears and mistrust were overcome. Although there are some reports of hostility,[7] which was sometimes expressed in a refusal to rent lodgings or employ the exiles, relations seem to have been relatively agreeable. In most places both local residents and exiles lived in two different communities, with little social interaction. Many exiles had in fact almost no contact with the local community. Most inhabitants also kept to themselves, preferring not to get involved with the exiles at all.[8] Armand only once reported having contact with a local Mezen resident during her ten-month stay in exile; the storeowner Riakov allowed her to play the piano in his store. Although this is not extensive contact with the local population, it does show a peaceful co-existence between the two groups.[9]

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[6] Chekhov, "Across Siberia," p. 294.

[7] Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia," pp. 27-28.

[8] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," no. 16 (1925), p. 137.

[9] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 96.

After the initial distrust, the exiles commanded a certain respect among the population, because they represented culture and moral integrity. Local merchants extended credit to exiles for their respectability, because exiles certainly were not good at making the necessary money to repay these loans.[10] Another reason for peaceful relations between the two groups was the exiles' general willingness to help the local population.[11] This led to an absence of antagonisms between the exiles and the residents, regardless of the sharp boundaries between the two groups.[12]

This limited contacts with the local population mainly to the exiles' usefulness to the local residents. This quite often meant that doctors and sometimes lawyers were well-regarded among the local population. Doctors were usually invited to local social gatherings. Ia. Belii described the events he attended with all of the village's "beau monde", because everyone in the village was keen on meeting him. This was not only for the ulterior motive of medical service, since this particular locale already had a doctor and a *feld'sher* or intern, but also because of his stature as a doctor. From this first meeting he was in

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[10] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," no. 47, (1928), p. 115.

[11] N.I. Teterin, "Politicheskaia ssylka v narodnoe poezii Kirenskogo uezda," Katorga i ssylka, no. 13, (1924), p. 200.

[12] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," no. 16 (1925), p. 137.

continuous demand at social functions. He was even asked to teach some of the village children by the same person who refused to hire another well-qualified exile recommended by Belii.[13] It seems that the trustworthy profession of doctor carried enough authority to make him socially acceptable.[14] Non-professional exiles had fewer contacts with the residents and opportunities for work. They did not have the same social stature accorded to doctors. However, there were some exceptions. Sometimes exiles were even visited by residents against the wishes of the gendarmerie. Breshko-Breshkovskaia was often visited for her medical and agricultural knowledge. The local inhabitants were not scared by the "grandmother of the revolutionaries" and respected her for her age and knowledge.[15]

At times, the exiles were seen also as eligible bachelors. Exiles were better educated than local youths, had better manners and were gentle by Siberian standards. N.I. Teterin saw such emotions in various popular rhymes about the exiles.

Parokhodskikh liubit'--	To love sailors,
nado chisto khodit,	One must become clean,
politicheskikh liubit',	To love politicals,
nado bezhlivoi byt.	One must be polite.

And;

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[13] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 14, (1924), p. 217.

[14] For his social engagements see, Belii, pp. 208-13.

[15] Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoe, p. 105.

And;

Pered zerkalom stoiu--	I stand before the mirror
sama sebia vizhu,	And see my very self,
ia politika liubliu--	I love the political--
muzha nenavizhu.	And my husband I do not see.

The young Siberian women were also impressed with the exiles' proper attire:

Ia politika liubliu--	I love a political--
On nariadno khodit,	He got all dressed up,
Ego chernen'kii kostmiumchik	His black outfit
Iz uma vyvodit.	Driving me crazy.[16]

These popular verses show a certain admiration for the very different exile men by the local women.

To compensate for the lack of social acceptance by the local population, the exiles often welded themselves into one big family. This was not easy since the exiles themselves came from such diverse social and political backgrounds. One exile called the Iakutsk exile colony "an illustrated history of exile in Russia."[17] All streams and factions of revolutionary thought were represented among the exiles, such as various socialist factions, Bundists, narodniks and Finnish nationalists. Such political differences meant little in the face of need for help and company. Another exile explained it this way:

> He is a social-democrat, but the difference of creeds (of the programmes) here into the exile, as well as into the prisons is very often annihilated by the

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[16] Teterin, "Politicheskaia ssylka v narodnoe poezii Kirenskogo uezda," pp. 201-202.

[17] Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 191.

> necessity of sympathy and friendship. The use of personal capacities and often the want of what one would desire--make the people less fanatical, less dogmatique.[18]

Most exiles agreed that political affiliation was less significant in exile. The necessities of life and the help the exiles were able to provide for each other became much more important.[19] Exiles sought each other's company and to provide companionship. When Katin-Iartsev arrived in Krasnoiarsk with an exile convoy, he was invited to dinner by the local exiles. This provided his hosts with company and enabled him to collect information about exile life.[20]

The close co-operation into which exiles were forced through local social conditions, led them to establish societies in an effort to stabilize their existence in the communities and eke out a meagre living. These co-operative societies regulated behaviour, were responsible for exile finances and sometimes represented the social unit of the exiles. Generally exiles asked the governor of their area for permission to set up such a society and then drafted a constitution that laid out the rules and responsibilities of

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[18] Breshkovskaia wrote in often broken English, which has been reproduced from the original. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Letter to Miss Starr of Hull House, 11 January 1922, Kennan Collection.

[19] M. Samsonov, Kommuny ssyl'nykh, (Moscow, 1929), p. 7.

[20] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," no. 15 (1925), p. 208.

its members.[21] Not all co-operative ventures were officially created. Often these were only private arrangements for the equal benefit of all participants. This was particularly true for housing communes. There are numerous examples of this. Armand, for instance, reported cooking for many of the exiles. Other groups collected the financial resources of all participants and divided household tasks.[22] M. Samsonov belonged to a frightfully organized commune. In this venture everyone had a different task. Samsonov was responsible for making breakfast and tea, Kanaev baked bread and prepared meat and potatoes, Vlasov cut firewood and Mel'nikov cleaned the floor and fetched water from the river. Laundry was everyone's own responsibility, because there was too much of it. These attempts at co-operation show the necessity for the exiles to organize and the apparent benefits: a lightened work load and companionship.[23]

Exiles generally were happy to assist other comrades without expecting anything in return. One example of this is the help given to Breshko-Breshkovskaia while in Kirensk exile. She gratefully reported to her American correspondents that other exiles helped her maintain her house, since many tasks--such as stoking the stove, fetching

[21] Czaplicka, My Siberian Year, p. 270; and Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," p. 129.

[22] Gedeonovsky, "Iz Peterburg v Sibir'," p. 193.

[23] Samsonov, Kommuny ssyl'nykh, pp. 18-19.

water and buying food--were already too much for her. Exiles also translated for her and took her for walks. On the other hand, she was quite willing to give away a portion of the money, books and clothes sent to her from abroad.[24] Some of the self-help associations established by the exiles also extended aid to exiles who did not belong to them. According to K. Protopopov, the Priangar'ia Self-aid Society helped non-members on the recommendation of a member.[25] This demonstrates the general philanthropic spirit among the exiles.

The contacts between exiles were not solely limited to helping each other. Many actually liked each other or were at least able to suppress their real feelings for the benefit of company. The preferred method of entertainment and of meeting with other people was for dinner. Most exiles wrote that they often had company for dinner and that a kettle of soup was always on the stove for those who preferred dropping in unannounced.[26] It was usually the house of one such hospitable exile that became the centre of and focus for the whole exile colony. In Mezen it was the Armand residence, in Emetskoe it was the Trapeznikov, and in

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[24] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter of 10 November 1910 and letter to Helen Dudley, 17 February 1922, Kennan Collection.

[25] Protopopov, "Poslednii s"ezd ssyl'nykh Priangar'ia," p. 134.

[26] Armand, Stat'i, Rechi, Pis'ma, p. 200 and Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," pp. 92 and 95.

Iakutsk the Broido residence. There the exiles would drop in any time of day and night to sing, debate, read or to play with the children.[27] At night they gathered to read socialist tracts and debate recent developments on the revolutionary front. Often they just gathered to tell stories and sip tea.[28]

The exiles also organized themselves and the local population into clubs or circles. Some of these clubs met in local libraries to discuss books or current events. Other clubs put on theatre productions, literary evenings or exhibitions of their own paintings. Generally, after the long years of *katorga* or exile in an isolated locale, exiles were desperate for culture and freedom. According to Feliks Kon, "life literally pulsated, not with revolution, but daily life."[29] Some of the exiles tried to combine social events with exercise and spent the days outdoors, using the short summers and the occasional mild winter days to their fullest advantage. During the summer favourite events were swimming in a local river, picnics, boat tours, walks and picking mushrooms and berries. Hunting was another favourite pastime of many of the male exiles, especially V.I. Lenin.

[27] Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii," p. 127 and Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 29.

[28] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 15 (1925) p. 214.

[29] Kon, "Na Poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 49 (1928), p. 83. This statement is supported by Muchnik, ...Chem my zanimalis v ssylke, p. 11.

In the long winter months the activities were reduced to skating and walking or possibly sledding.[30] Again, such activities were much rarer in the north. In the north of Iakutsk oblast, winter temperatures were often so cold that people wore knitted face masks and it was possible to stay outside for only very short periods. Hence, much of the local winter-time entertainment there took place around a card table with large quantities of vodka. In Verkhoiansk the local exiles even engaged in hazardous games in their imbibed state, to while away the time.[31] The geographic realities of Northern Russia and Siberia made the few diversions enjoyed by the exiles more precious.

The loneliness and solitude were particularly poignant during the major religious holidays, which abounded in Russia and had a very large significance for most families. In an effort to overcome the feeling of isolation and loss, many exiles staged elaborate dinners and feasts during the holidays and spent the time with friends. During shrovetide week one group of exiles organized a dinner and an amateur theatre performance of Anton Chekhov's *Brak po raschetu*.[32] Lenin and Krupskaia had out-of-town guests for shrovetide, while they celebrated May Day with the other two local

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[30] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, pp. 38-40.

[31] On drinking and card playing see Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," no. 47 (1928), p. 116 and Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 15 (1925), p. 222.

[32] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 94.

exiles, I.L. Prominski and Oscar Engberg.[33] For St.Liudmila Day on 16 September, I.I. Popov and a few other exiles put on a big feast. They played cards, ate all night and even drank champagne. This celebration, which undoubtedly had music, lasted until the morning.[34] These feasts enlivened exile life, although they could not cover up the isolation and loneliness of exile. These feelings were never stronger than during *rozhdestvo Khristvo* or Christmas, the most difficult time to be away from home and loved ones. Those exiles away from spouses, could not be consoled by the presence of other exiles. Inessa Armand was very homesick during the holidays and missed her children greatly. In Minusinsk uezd this opportunity was used to congregate in the administrative town over the holidays and catch up on all the news and fun and laughter. Lenin reportedly spent the whole time playing chess, although he did learn a few new skating figures as well.[35] So the holidays were usually passed as pleasantly as possible under the circumstances. These special days allowed the exiles to meet with comrades from other places and exchange news and gossip.

Contact and communications between the exiles was very important. It gave them a feeling of belonging and

[33] Lenin to his mother and Anna (23 February 1899), PSS, vol. 55, p. 142, and Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 37.

[34] Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoe, p. 88.

[35] Krupskaia to Mariia (24 January 1899), PSS, vol. 55, p. 408.

reinforced friendships with other exiles. One way of keeping in touch with other exile communities was visits and travel. There was a considerable amount of travelling done by the exiles. Usually this was for relocation or medical trips, or the return trip to Russia at the end of exile. All of these various excursions were remarkable opportunities for visiting friends and catching up on all the gossip. Most of the exiles tried to combine necessary trips with pleasure by stopping off with comrades and friends for several days. A prolonged absence did not arouse suspicion among the local *ispravnik*, since there was no reliable way of travelling.[36] Lenin, for instance, had several opportunities to leave Shushenskoe. At one time he asked permission from police to conduct a geological examination of a nearby mountain. This cover-up was used as a chance to visit the comrades F. Lengnik and E.V. Baramzin. Another time both Lenin and Krupskaia visited those exiled to Ermakovskoe. They attended the funeral of A. Vaneev, who had died of consumption, which allowed them to meet many of the exiles from neighbo[illegible]ing colonies. Being lucky to receive leave for medical treatment, Lenin spent one week in Minusinsk for dental work in September 1898. The Minusinsk *ispravnik* was a reasonable officer, and Lenin was given permission to leave quite frequently. He even managed to attend Basil Starkov's and

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[36] Haskett, "The Decembrists in Siberian Exile," Ph.D. Dissertation, (Ohio State University, 1962), p. 59.

A.M. Rosenberg's wedding as best man.[37] Not all police officials were so accommodating. Lenin's comrades from Tesinskoe were not allowed to visit him, so once again Lenin and Krupskaia went to visit.[38]

Reading the exiles' memoirs, it seems as if visiting was their regular "profession." However, the prominent place reserved for travels in the memoirs is probably less related to the frequency of visits than to the importance of them in the exiles' lonely existences. Most exiles described such visits. Breshko-Breshkovskaia was regularly worn out from all the exiles who came to visit the "babushka," as she called herself.[39] In the *ulussy* of Iakutsk oblast visiting was an infrequent but welcome interruption from the monotony and the hard life most exiles led there.[40] Many exiles had to travel over 120 versts to distant *ulussy* to visit anyone. This usually meant several days walking and staying over night with native Iakuts. Hence, a visit was a fairly major undertaking.[41]

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[37] For information on Lenin and Krupskaia's travels see Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, pp. 42-43; Krupskaia, to Mariia (11 September 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 396; Lenin to his mother and M.I. Ulianova (19 July 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 47.

[38] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 42.

[39] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter to Helen, 11 January 1911, Kennan Collection.

[40] Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 192.

[41] Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 48 (1928) pp. 85-87.

The isolation experienced by the exiles was not simply social. Many of the exiles were in geographically very isolated spots and their isolation was compounded by the difficulties and frustrations experienced regarding mail. In the northern volosts of Kirensk okrug the next postal station could be 120 to 300 versts away, making the receiving of mail a rather frustrating adventure. In the southern areas and in most administrative towns mail delivery was more frequent and regular. Both Lenin in Minusinsk and Armand in Mezen received mail two to three times a week. In the north mail was delivered by reindeer-drawn carriages or sleds to the main administrative centres. From there it might or might not be delivered to the intended destination. One enterprising exile colony in Eniseisk uezd organized a mail delivery in the area, which even included a delivery of money for ten per cent of the sum sent.[42] This was possibly used to deliver their government stipends as well. In other areas, like Verkhoiansk, for instance, mail was delivered only every two to three months, while the residents of Kolymsk okrug received mail only three times per year. This made any attempts at regular correspondence meaningless and effectively cut these exiles off from their families and friends.

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[42] Vodolazskii, "Bel'skaia ssylka. (Iz vospominanii)" [Bel'skaia exile. (From the Memoirs)], Katorga i ssylka, no. 44 (1928), p. 151.

The infrequency of the mails and the further delays on account of the weather and official censorship or perlustration were maddening and frustrating. Answers to questions were often out of date by the time they arrived in European Russia or Western Europe. It took thirty to thirty-five days to receive an answer to a letter in areas where mail delivery was relatively frequent. Even more frustrating must have been the inability to receive information requested, especially for the impatient Lenin. He could not elicit an answer from P.B. Struve even after several letters and inquiries.[43] It was rather easy to ignore someone thousands of miles away from European Russia. Regardless of the delays, mail service was fairly reliable. Most letters and parcels did arrive eventually, to the delight of the recipient and his or her friends, for it seems that everyone read everyone else's mail.[44]

The mail was frequently used to keep in touch with events in Russia. Exiles obtained journals, periodicals and recent books through the postal system. A prolific user of the postal service was V.I. Lenin, who sent long lists of books he wanted to read to his sister Anna. These included economic surveys or handbooks, some literature, a German grammar and dictionary and other socialist classics. Once

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[43] Lenin to his mother, 6 September 1899, PSS, vol. 55, p. 175.

[44] Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 51 (1928), p. 93.

finished with them, he would return those checked out of a lending library to his sister. Although this arrangement worked several times, the books often were returned late on account of the mail delays. From then on he ordered books directly from a bookseller.[45] However, even mail and journals could not alleviate the neverending boredom. The attempts to read mail slowly, to make it last longer, were useless, since no newspaper could last more than two or three days.[46]

The slow mails and the continuous lack of news must have been particularly infuriating to such informed and educated people. Since mail was fairly old upon arrival, the exiles were dependent on other sources of information. Unfortunately for them, Siberian newspapers printed relatively old information. All proof sheets for newspapers had to be censored first--in St. Petersburg. This meant that most news was about three weeks old. For those exiled to areas with weekly mail delivery, it was almost faster to receive news through European papers by mail, than to read Siberian ones.[47] Lenin, for instance, received newspapers

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[45] See, for instance, Lenin to his mother and A.I. Elizarova (25 May 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 42; and to his mother and M.I. Ulianov (19 October 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 57.

[46] Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 51 (1928), p. 93.

[47] Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists, p. 171.

only fourteen days after printing.[48] Many of the exiles received journals by mail, for which they were quite grateful.

Another method of receiving news was by way of newcomers. Any traveller was pumped for information. Nikolai Sabancheev was overwhelmed with questions regarding events in Europe and party work upon arrival in Siberia in 1912.[49] Another exile excitedly wrote to her family about the "latest invigorating news" brought to her village by a newcomer.[50] Frequently visitors would bring news of other exiles and conditions elsewhere in Siberia. This was how most exiles found out about the lives of their comrades in prison and exile. Lenin and Krupskaia, for instance, found out from their visitor, V.M. Kurnatovskii, that their friends had had a son, that Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sil'vin had been found fit for military service and that A.A. Yakubova had disappeared from Ermakovskoe.[51] In most areas news was habitually out of date. This was especially so in Iakutsk oblast, where news could be anywhere from six to twelve months old. For instance, over the winter of 1880 the

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[48] Lenin to M.A. Ulianov and A.I. Elizarova (12 December 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 118.

[49] Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki," p. 130.

[50] Armand, Stat'i Rechi. Pis'ma, p. 197; and Gedeonovskii, " Iz Peterburga v Sibir'," p. 203.

[51] Krupskaia to Lenin's mother (17 Oct 1899), PSS, vol. 55, pp. 413-14.

exiles in Verkhoiansk had heard rumours about Loris-Melikov's proposed changes, but had been unable to confirm it as fact or fiction.[52] Visitors would also pass on old newspapers and exchange books with the exiles. International news was occasionally received upon meeting European and American travellers or explorers. The surviving members of the Jeanette expedition, for example, spent some time with the exiles in Verkhoiansk. However, this "personal" system of communication could be devastating when private matters were conveyed by a stranger. One exile learned from the local *ispravnik* that his wife was sick in an Irkutsk mental hospital. The poor woman had undergone the deprivations of an exile convoy to join her husband in Verkhoiansk. Upon nearing Irkutsk, she had recovered from her physical sickness, only to fall psychologically ill upon hearing that Verkhoiansk was still several thousand versts away. She had confused Verkhoiansk with Verkholensk and thought her husband was quite near. This, of course, was an unpleasant way of receiving such drastic news.[53]

If no diversions were to be had from letters or news, the exiles feasted on gossip, rumours or scandals. I.I. Popov was amazed at the capacity of his fellow exiles for rumours. They seemed to live and thrive on scandals. He, for

[52] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 15 (1925), pp. 210-11, and no. 17, pp. 198-99 and p. 207. And Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," p. 171.

[53] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 17 (1925), pp. 198-99 and 207.

example, cited the report of the arrest of Alekseev, the head of the Chita convict camp, for the theft of mail and money. Of course, news and gossip about officials and other potentates must have been particularly interesting information.[54] Gossip spread rapidly, even to usually isolated areas. Since usually all concerned were known, at least by reputation, to the other exiles, these rumours could be detrimental to those concerned. Malicious gossip was indeed to blame for several suicides. In a letter to his sister Anna, Lenin referred to one such case. Apparently, he had received a letter from a doctor regarding N.E. Fedoseev's suicide. The poor man shot himself with a revolver, presumably because of a rumour started by the scandal-monger I.A. Iukhotskii.[55] Another time a scandal split the Minusinsk uezd exiles along political lines. At the heart of the matter was S.D. Raichin's escape from the area, for which none of the exiles was prepared. Raichin had been so excited at receiving money for the escape, he told no one about his plans. This did not leave the exiles an opportunity to prepare for the inevitable police search of their homes. As a consequence, the old *narodniki* accused the Social Democrats of having known about the escape and not

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[54] Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoe, p. 106.

[55] Lenin to his mother and A.I. Elizarova (24 January 1898), p. 71, and to A.I. Elizarova (15 July 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 93.

informing them thereof. Lenin wrote to Krupskaia of this rift:

> There is nothing worse than these exile scandals. They get people terribly worked up. These Old Men have had enough nerves, as it is after what they've been through, and all the convict prisons they've been in. We mustn't let ourselves get mixed in such scandals--we have all our work ahead of us, we mustn't waste our selves on such affairs.[56]

These consuming quarrels could, of course, make life a hell for all exiles within a colony.[57]

Gossip most often was a means of escaping the harshness of life and inventing news, where there was none. The great majority of exiles suffered from constant boredom most of the time. Although the aforegoing description of exile activities points to an active life-style, these periods of work or entertainment were interspersed with much longer periods of inactivity and boredom. The high unemployment rate and lack of comrades in some communities compounded these problems. Armand, for example, was disgusted with the inactivity and the lack of intellectual stimulation in Mezen. Similarly, she abhorred the lack of any physical work. Krupskaia and Lenin expressed similar sentiments in a letter to Lenin's sister Mariia in Brussels: "From this description you can get some idea of the way we pass our time and will realize that there is not a great deal of

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[56] Lenin quoted in Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 44. Information about the affair, pp. 43-44.

[57] Krupskaya, pp. 48-49.

material here for letter-writing."[58] Nevertheless, most of the exiles put on a cheery face in their letters to their relatives.

A much more serious problem for the exiles was that of illness and medical care. The exiles were often sick with ailments related to exile. Many arrived ill in Siberia or Northern Russia, having suffered from malnutrition and exhaustion during the long months of travel. Illnesses were also the result of the extreme climatic conditions to which they were not used, as well as malnutrition, exhaustion and anxiety. Even starvation were not uncommon among the exiles.[59]

This high incidence of disease in exile caused the "politicals" much anxiety, because there was little they could do to prevent falling ill or to get better. The exiles were exposed to frequent epidemics in many parts of Northern Russia and Siberia. Most northern communities were infested with syphilis and venereal disease. Small pox, typhus and typhoid fever were also common.[60] Malnutrition was also a common problem among the exiles. Although this condition could be overcome with better nourishment, that was not

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[58] Lenin to Mariia (7 March 1899), PSS, vol. 55, p. 147.

[59] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 185.

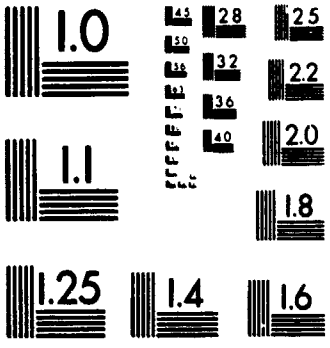
[60] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," pp. 158 and 165; and Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia," p. 41.

available to most exiles for lack of funds. Unfortunately, there was little help for those inflicted with these ailments. Treatment was rare and haphazard. When one exile petitioned the governor of Arkhangel'sk with the demand to be allowed to move to that city, her request for treatment was denied even though her petition was accompanied by a medical certificate recommending life in a milder climate and a cure at a spa. Although her chronic malaria, gastric catarrh and malnutrition were certified, treatment was denied to her.[61] Another exile, who had contracted rheumatism and a catarrhal condition in detention, did not receive treatment until he became ill with emphysema and a cold eight years after his arrival in exile. He petitioned the authorities for medical treatment in Iakutsk and was finally allowed to leave one year after the decision to allow treatment was made, leaving Kolymsk fifteen months short of the completion of his ten-year exile term. Although he received treatment in the end, he had been sick ever since arriving in exile nine years earlier.[62] This is a blatant example of government inactivity in the health care field.

The lack of medical treatment was mainly a result of a lack of resources. There was not enough money or enough people willing to work in the far north or east. The outer

[61] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," pp. 90-91.

[62] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," pp. 119-20.



regions of the empire were particularly dependent upon *feld'shers* or quasi-interns, as well as medical students, who had not yet finished all of their exams. In such northern locales as Iakutsk oblast, there was a chronic shortage of doctors. Poliakov reported that in the eight years he was in Kolymsk he had not seen a doctor.[63] This also explains why Belii was welcomed with open arms in the community of Verkhoiansk, since the regular doctor was ready to retire.[64] Some communities were better off than others. Popov's exile community was supplied with five doctors, if of doubtful skills. Apparently one of the surgeons prescribed quinine and castor oil, regardless of the ailment.[65]

More disturbing was the ability of the authorities to deny access to health care, even if available. A doctor was only allowed to treat exiles with the express permission of the local authorities. Hence, medical treatment became an issue of power. This was blatantly obvious when the *ispravnik* forbade Dr. M.O. Ol'shvaner to treat those exiles wounded by the local gendarmes.[66] In another instance, an

[63] Poliakov, p. 119

[64] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 14 (1924), p. 209.

[65] Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoe, p. 92.

[66] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," pp. 94-95. Approximately forty exiles met in February 1908 to discuss the housing shortage in Mezen, Arkhangel'sk gub. The meeting was broken up by police, who beat and wounded many of the exiles.

exile in Kirensk uezd was denied access to a hospital for a chronic stomach ulcer and arrested without cause the next day.[67] Armand, was yet again denied access to medical treatment, while in Mezen. She had petitioned for dental care, but her heart-wrenching petition to the governor was practically denied by the *ispravnik*. The latter had pencilled in "otk" for "refuse" on the top of the petition, even though he had officially written a letter supporting her petition.[68] Lenin was more lucky with the Shushenskoe authorities. When he petitioned for dental care, "for a toothache long gone," he was allowed to remain in Minusinsk one week.[69] Basically treatment was determined both by the availability of medical facilities and the willingness of the authorities to allow treatment.

Mental illness did not spare the exiles either. The deprivations, anxieties and physical hardships pushed some exiles over the edge, and everyone seemed to know at least one exile who had gone mad. Teterin, for instance, wrote of the exile Fofanov, with the "slow laugh of exile."[70] The fact that most major cities in Siberia, like Krasnoiarsk and Irkutsk, had mental hospitals speaks for itself. The psychological effects of the whole exile experience were

[67] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 183.

[68] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 88.

[69] Krupskaia to Mariia (11 September 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 396.

[70] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 193.

tremendous. The constant deprivations, inactivity and isolation took their toll on the politicals. Breshko-Breshkovskaia wrote that after the years of deprivation the exiles were happy at every trifle, especially at receiving visits from the village children. In the same letter she confided that she was scared of isolation. She feared being sent to the village of Bulum on the Arctic Ocean, "where people are sent for complete isolation."[71] Such threats were often used by the local authorities to enforce compliance with the rules, thus putting even more psychological pressure on the exile.

It was the opinion of most active exiles that only intellectual activity could save a person's sanity in exile. Trotskii argued that only Marxists, involved in their "faith", could survive this ordeal. It was true that an active revolutionary could change the whole outlook of an exile colony.[72] An excellent example of this was Inessa Armand. Saul Moiseevich Zubrovich, one of Armand's Polish exile pupils, wrote that "with her arrival, exile returned to life at once--meetings, courses, and lectures began; Inessa directed them and conducted them herself."[73] She was so successful because she accepted life and therefore exile

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[71] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter, 10 Nov 1910, Kennan Collection.

[72] Trotskii, My Life, p. 126.

[73] S.M. Zubrovich quoted in Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 85.

as well. Armand became one of them and took on the role of mother to the exiles.[74] Her arrival was good for the other exiles, because activities and moral support were vital in the struggle against despondency. Almost all exiles eventually succumbed to depression; it was only a matter of time. Even the lively Armand was affected. After only two months in exile, Armand wrote that life went on as usual. The days did not pass, but "somehow they glide away imperceptively--like pale bloodless shadows....All we can do is trick ourselves into believing that we are still living, that there is life here also, and so on."[75] Armand had to admonish herself to be patient, which did not come easily in exile. However, it did not work, since she escaped after ten months in exile. Part of the despondency in many exiles was caused by the absence of their families. This was especially so with Armand, who missed her children greatly and sent them concerned letters from her isolation. [76]

Often the one thing that kept the exiles alive was the thought of returning home and the ability to plan certain events. For instance, one exile was consumed all winter with the hope that her children would visit her in the summer, when navigation to Northern Russia was possible through the White Sea. Her gloom increased with the

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[74] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 85.

[75] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 211.

[76] Armand, Stat'i, Rechi, Pis'ma, p. 194.

realization that Northern Russia was no place for children. Similarly, Lenin wrote, that only in November 1898 could he look at the black dots on maps again. With only four months until his term of exile was over, both he and Krupskaia had something to which to look forward.[77] The anticipation and expectation of change had a beneficial psychological effect on the exiles.

However, when even optimism and planning failed, or when all hope was lost, suicide seemed the only way out. Although there are no statistics, a fair number of exiles became alcoholics and a large percentage committed suicide, while the largest number of exiles just sank into uselessness.[78] While in Verkhoiansk, Kon had known exiles who committed suicide because they had no hope of returning home. Even escape was not an option from that part of Siberia.[79] "Freedom could be bought through only one way--suicide," as one exile put it.[80] The examples of this are numerous. One of the co-defendants in Eva Broido's trial committed suicide upon hearing his place of exile was Nizhne

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[77] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 209; and Lenin to M.I. Ulianova (11 November 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 107.

[78] Feliks Ia. Kon, "V Minusinske," in Eniseiskaia ssylka. Sobornik Eniseiskogo zemliachestvo, V.N. Sokolov, (Moscow, 1934), p. 56.

[79] Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," p. 84.

[80] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," p. 159.

Kolymsk. The name of this community on the Arctic Ocean invoked enough terror to condemn a man to death even before arriving in exile.[81] However, even in other areas of Siberia and Northern Russia suicides were not uncommon. In 1912 there were the suicides of the exiles Shevchenko in Irkutsk and Sorokin and Brinev in Tulune, Irkutsk guberniia.[82]

It seems that the freedoms which exile afforded could do little to overcome the real problems and effects of this institution. The real effects of exile lie much deeper in its social and psychological milieu. Exile truly was a "House of the Dead", as even the most committed and lively exiles grew despondent and weary. The severed links to family and friends and the superficial links with the exile community compounded the pain of separation, the despondency and the inactivity, to which all but the most steadfast succumbed. The lack of links to the community and the hostility of local inhabitants and the police, who continued to harass the exiles, contributed to these feelings. Eventually, this led many exiles to the conclusion that suicide or flight were the only way to escape the confinement of exile.

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[81] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 23.

[82] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 185.

Chapter Four

Oni zanimalis'...

The need to feel busy and occupy the day was deeply developed among these exiles, just as it had been among the Decembrists before them, not only for financial reasons, but also for emotional and psychological support. The need to occupy themselves at all times, as the title of this chapter suggests, was very important for most exiles. Having been exiled in the first place for their political activism, the exiles wanted to feel busy and accomplish something to avoid drifting into uselessness and oblivion. Working in many different professions and jobs, the exiles made a small contribution to Siberia and the local communities, just as the Decembrists had done before them. Those exiles, who against regulations provided medical services to residents and exiles alike, took large risks to provide these services. Others, who investigated aspects of Siberia, produced knowledge of use to both regionalists and the government. Not all of their activities however, were directed towards the locale. Many exiles continued their revolutionary activities, which had led to their exile in the first place. They organized themselves into the socialist groups and held discussions, lectures, classes and recruiting drives. They wrote party literature and propaganda, and they organized the exiles into the self-help

societies for their own benefit. These activities then, had therapeutic, as much as financial value.

Work was a necessity for the survival of most exiles. This became painfully aware to most of them, soon after their arrival. Anton Chekhov, for instance, wrote that upper-class exiles had a "stunned look" about them upon arrival in exile. After selling their linens and other valuables and becoming destitute, they were forced to make a living.[1] This was not the only reason for work. "Comrade" Lenin wrote on the subject that," it is better to have a job; without it you go under in exile."[2] Most exiles were eager to work, but mere willingness was not good enough in exile. Most pursuits which brought the exiles into contact with other people were prohibited to them, as well as most intellectual occupations. They were not allowed to publish, hold public office, enter an institution of higher learning or belong to a private society or company without the consent of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This rule also prohibited membership in a guild, which prevented exiles from becoming merchants, although they were allowed to carry out a trade. Prior to the turn of the century, when most exiles were still intellectuals or upper class, finding work proved to be a difficult task. According to Alan Wood, the

[1] Chekhov, "Across Siberia," p. 293.

[2] Lenin to A.I. Elizarova (15 July 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 94.

exiles were excluded from most gainful employment and reduced to almost enforced penury.[3]

Many of the exiles suffered from chronic underemployment or unemployment. Work was often temporary or of the odd-job variety, rather than permanent full-time employment. For instance, one exile explained that his fellow exiles and he did not work more than fifty days in six months, making only ninety rubles among them. This worked out to only three rubles each per month, a rather meagre income.[4] Another exile took in laundry, earning only four or five rubles a month. Unemployment was not rare either. Of the thirty exiles in Selenginsk uezd in Zabaikalsk oblast none worked and starvation set in. Thus, the exiles tried to earn money any way they could. Once it became known, that there was work anywhere in a region, all exiles with passports hurried thither to apply for the work. They were, however, dependent upon the authorities to issue passports and travel documents.[5] Most local officials supported the working of exiles. It kept them busy, quiet and solvent--always useful in a local community. Iakutsk governor Ivan Ivanovich Kraft, for example, was willing to support this *poleznomu obrazu zhizni* or useful kind of life

[3] For information on the professions exiles were forbidden to enter, see Simpson, Side-lights on Siberia, p. 337; and Wood, "Solzhenitsyn on the Tsarist Exile System," p. 230.

[4] Samsonov, Kommuny ssyl'nykh, p. 41.

[5] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 186.

of the exiles, by not insisting that they live in the communities assigned to them. V. Vilenskii pointed out that to their good luck his generation of Iakutsk exiles easily adapted to this "usefulness factor", because of their social consciousness and *intelligent* ideals.[6] It seems that quite a few exiles received permission to move in the first two decades of this period, if they were friendly with the local *ispravnik*. Among Lenin's circle of comrades, G.M. Krzhizhanovskii was given permission to move to the railway and work as an engineer, while Anatoly Vaneev went to live and work in Krasnoiarsk.[7] The power to grant or refuse permission to move in search of work allowed the *ispravnik* to control the exile. He could control the future and well-being of the exile.

The struggle for work and a livelihood was a constant one in Siberia and Northern Russia. Several writers charged, that this struggle for survival was so consuming that many revolutionaries even lost their ideological commitment and connection to their comrades. Exiles became interested only in labour, performing a variety of tasks while in exile. Samsonov's artel', for instance, performed general labour, usually working for individuals. Once they milled wheat for a woman, who needed three men to help; at other times they

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[6] Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakytskoi ssylki," pp. 132-33.

[7] Lenin to his mother and Mariia (7 August 1899), PSS, vol. 55, p. 168.

went hunting with a peasant for six days or performed odd jobs around the church for the *starost* or church elder.[8] G.A. Muchnik reports working as a logger for some time,[9] while the jobs in N.I. Teterin's place of exile ranged from launderer, photographer, agricultural labourer, to a locksmith and a watchman at a school.[10] In Kirensk, the exiles worked for various workshops. They were bootmakers, furriers, locksmiths and carpenters. Others made furniture or worked as general labourers.[11] One *intelligent*'s story from Kachugsk shows the desperation and difficulty with which the exiles took these jobs:

> Never before had I tin-plated a samovar, but I had to do it in exile. There was no work. There was no money. And this peasant brought this samovar to be tin-plated. I undertook [this job]. For three days I walked around the samovar, not knowing how to begin. At the very end I finished plating it.[12]

Some local people, however, liked hiring exiles and were responsible for the survival of these exiles. This was particularly true of employers who valued the exiles' work habits. The local employer Gromov only hired "politicals". When accused of this by governor-general A.D. Goremykin,

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[8] Samsonov, Kommuny ssyl'nykh, pp. 19 and 23-30.

[9] Muchnik, ...Chem my zanimalis' v ssylke, p. 8.

[10] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 186.

[11] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter, 10 November 1910, and letter to her "daughter" [Helen Dudley], 29 December 1910, Kennan Collection.

[12] Quoted in Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 186.

Gromov answered that exiles made good workers and were very trustworthy.[13]

Those in the northern reaches of the empire often did not have the possibility of entering trades. In Northern Siberia, exiles fished and hunted for self-sufficiency rather than for profit. Most fished and salted salmon, if they worked for money at all. According to the "Report of the City Trade Branch, London, to the Canadian Exhibition Commission", British ships went up the Amur river in Eastern Siberia to buy salmon from exiles and Natives.[14] In the far North few exiles actually worked for other people, and when they did, they were often paid in kind rather than currency for the work they performed.

Most of the people with professions among the exiles, though officially not allowed to work, carried out their occupations in exile. This may seem contradictory in light of the difficulties often created by the *ispravniki*. However, local officials were quite happy to let the exiles practice, if the locality needed their skills. In one instance, the governor of Eniseisk even inquired at the First Department whether a locality in his jurisdiction might allow professionals to work. In general the administration remained no obstacle to the practicing of a

[13] Popov, Minuvshee i perezhitoe, p. 118.

[14] Hawes, In the Uttermost East, pp. 61-63; and National Archives of Canada, Ministry of Agriculture, RG 17, volume 2756, document 198150, "Report of the City Trade Branch (London)," 25 January 1909.

needed profession.[15] But, the exiles practiced even without permission or knowledge of the authorities. Lenin, for instance, knew he had no right to dispense legal advice, "but those were liberal times in Minusinsk. Practically, surveillance did not exist." Hence, Lenin dispensed legal advice on Sundays. In one instance, he even helped a gold-mine worker win a suit against wrongful dismissal. His reputation was supposedly so good, that peasants came from afar for his legal wisdom.[16] The exile Trapeznikov, also a lawyer, gave legal advice every market day and in an unusual move even received permission to do so from the Department of Police.[17] These "arrangements" between the police and the exiles benefitted both sides by providing needed services and some income and work for the exiles.

Among the exiles with professions, doctors were most often able to work. They also received the least resistance from residents and the authorities, because medical personnel was needed so very urgently in all parts of the empire, but especially in the north. This gave these exiles an opportunity to play a larger role and have lasting influence.[18] Belii's experience supports this. Upon arrival

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[15] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 190.

[16] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, pp. 34-35.

[17] Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii," pp. 126-27.

[18] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 190; Katin-Iartsev, " V tiur'me is ssylke," no. 16 (1925), p. 136.

in Verkhoiansk, he was told by the local doctor, Aleksei Mikhailovich Brilliantov, that he would not hinder Belii from practicing medicine. In fact, Brilliantov was very supportive of his practice with advice, medicine and in allowing use of the hospital. This enabled Belii to have a career in this outlying community. He gained the trust of the local elite to the point that he tutored their children and was a well-liked guest at social gatherings.[19]

Support of a local official or doctor was a requirement for a useful practice. The exile doctors needed contact with the community for "collaboration". Since in theory exiles were not allowed to practice, they needed counter-signed or pre-signed prescription slips to dispense drugs. Sometimes their supporter would be the local state pharmacist, who at some risk dispensed drugs on an exile doctor's prescription. In Minusinsk the *ispravnik* sanctioned such arrangement, so that the pharmacy dispensed medication without registration or official signature.[20] In another instance, the need for a medical practitioner was so great, an exile was encouraged to practice by the medical inspector, V.A. Vongrodzskii. The latter tried to attract exiles to the medical profession. He determined that the exile in question was in fifth year of medical school, that is the last year, which qualified him

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[19] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," vol. 14 (1924), p. 208 and vol. 17 (1925), p. 215.

[20] Puzanov, "Minusinskaia ssylka, 1910-1917 gg.," p. 88.

to practice in the inspector's eyes. He was even given the opportunity to work in the local hospital, because of his previous experience with mental cases. He and several other doctors set up an ambulatory medical service, in which they drove to nearby rivers and examined patients inside a carriage. This proved particularly effective, because the Iakuts were uncomfortable visiting a doctor's office.[21]

In Iakutsk oblast there were several exile doctors allowed to practice during the early 1890s, such as S.I. Mitskevich in Nizhne Kolymsk and L.A. Kuznetsov in Stepnom krai. However, not all *ispravniki* were accommodating, regardless how great the need for the service was. In 1883 the student doctor N. Dolgopolov was forbidden to practice in his exile village. When he was asked by the local doctor to extract a bullet from the leg of the wife of the mayor, he operated without first having received permission form the Minister of the Interior. When the telegramme with a refusal was received, the local *ispravnik* arrested the youth against the outrage of the local population.[22] Such intransigence by an *ispravnik* was rare in most exile locales.

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[21] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," no. 16 (1925), pp. 139-41.

[22] V.I. Nikolaev, " Sibirskaia politicheskaia ssylka i izuchenie mestnogo kraia" [Siberian political exile and the study of a local krai], Katorga i ssylka, no. 34 (1927), p. 88.

The other educated exiles established their own niches in which to work. Often they established or worked in museums, publishing catalogues, articles and new findings in the academic press. One of the better museums in Siberia at the time was the Minusinsk museum, established and operated by exiles. Its ethnographic and anthropological collection afforded the exiles a good opportunity for research and intellectual work.[23] The Arkhangel'sk museum was similarly successful. The museum curator, the *narodnik* Dr. Martynov, was particularly active. He headed special expeditions, published a book, *Pechorskii Krai*, and contracted exiles to undertake special research projects. Some of the studies commissioned through the museum were V.N. Forfanov's look at shipbuilding and navigation, engineer Shapiro's study on electrical lighting for Arkhangel'sk, N.V. Romanov's examination of marine life in Mezenskii uezd, and two economic studies by A.S. Rozanov and N.N. Sukhanov. In Arkhangel'sk the local authorities took advantage of the educated exile population and supported them in these kind of endeavours.[24]

Many of the exiles had their own research interests and acted upon them. This gave them some sense of accomplishment, a hobby for long winter nights and sometimes

[23] Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 49 (1928), pp. 85-86 and Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia ssylka i izuchenie mestnogo kraia," p. 99.

[24] Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii," p. 116.

the opportunity to use private or public libraries. The interests were generally along folklore, ethnographic and anthropological lines. The projects included an Iakut-Russian dictionary by the Pole E.K. Pekarskii (Edouard Piekarskii), a map of all overland routes by V.F. Troshchanskii, and ethnographic studies by Pekarskii. There were statistical studies, a study of the literature and the economy of Iakutsk oblast, and a study of the local peasantry and agriculture. Shvetsov worked on taxation in rural society and published "Materialy po issledovaniiu krest'ianskogo i inorodcheskogo naseleniia Tomskogo Okruga," while the administrative exile I.E. Ovsiankin wrote "K voprosu ob altaiskoi obshchine" among other works.[25] V. Vilenskii also managed to create a library in Iakutsk through his research. Needing information for his study of the local housing and construction industry, he was allowed to receive books from the local library and local residents.

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[25] Information about research and studies undertaken during exile in: Kostiurina, "Molodye gody," p. 192; Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia politicheskaia ssylka i izuchenie mestnogo kraia," pp. 111-13; R.D. Samoylovitsch, " L'activite scientifique des revolutionnaires polonais en Siberie," in Towarzystwo geograficzne we Lwowie, ed. Eugenjuszowi Romerowi, (Lvov, 1934), pp. 61-64; S.P. Shvetsov, "Kul'turnoe znachenie politicheskoi ssylki v Zapadnoi Sibiri" [The cultural importance of political exile in Western Siberia], Katorga i ssylka, no. 40 (1928), pp. 63-68 and p. 83; Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki," p. 136.

This library was prized by the exiles and viewed as a notable achievement on Vilenskii's part.[26]

Some of the exiles also went on expeditions to collect data for their studies. A wide variety of subjects were under consideration. I.A. Mikhailov, for instance, travelled across Siberia to examine the principles of plant selection, Galanov studied aspects of agriculture, Levental' examined the economic existence of the Iakuts, Vitashevskii, Ionov and Pekarskii wrote on the life of Iakuts. Other exiles collected meteorological information during their travels and Jean Czarski explored the geological and historical formation of the Lake Baikal basin. The latter also made a detailed map of the area. Several people worked on scientific studies of Narymsk krai, Arkhangel'sk guberniia. There were also several large scientific expeditions, such as the 1882 expedition by M.O. Marks, the 1889 one by D.A. Klements and A.I. Ventskovskii, and the 1901-1902 Russian polar expedition. The exiles were also given permission to participate in some of the foreign expeditions. They often spoke European languages and had, through their stay in exile, acquired a smattering of native languages. Studies to be completed by the exiles were also commissioned by the Russian Academy of Sciences. According to N.I. Teterin, there were ten political exiles below seventy-one degrees

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[26] Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki," p. 136.

latitude empowered to carry out geographical observations for the academy.[27]

Those educated exiles with less scientific ambitions or interests often tutored the children of the local elite or of the Russians in Iakutsk oblast. Although again prevented from teaching legally, there seems to have been no opposition to these activities. Maybe this was seen as a fairly harmless occupation, which provided the exiles with enough money to survive. Generally, the exiles had no trouble finding employment as teachers, because they were cultured and Russian-speaking.[28] The exiles' commitment to improve literacy was well-known in these areas. Teaching was particularly important in supplementing the government stipend. Armand, for instance, started tutoring to improve the household economy. Her lessons included teaching two illiterate Polish Jews reading and writing in Russian, as well as preparing three comrades for the fourth class of the gimnasium. Meanwhile, Vladimir Armand taught simple arithmetic.[29] Most exiles, however, taught children rather

[27] See Puzanov, "Minusinskaia ssylka 1910-1917 gg.," p. 90; Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 51 (1928), p. 100; Samoylovitsch, "L'activite scientifique des revolutionnaires polonais en Siberie," pp. 54-58; Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 191; Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia politicheskaia ssylka i izuchenie mestnogo kraia," pp. 94-98; Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," no. 16 (1925), pp. 153-157.

[28] Teterin, "Politicheskaia ssylka v narodnoe poezii Kirenskogo uezda," p. 200.

[29] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," pp. 85 and 92; Armand, Stat'i. Rechi. Pis'ma, p. 200.

than adults. Krupskaia gave lessons to four little girls of the local magnate, which she enjoyed very much. She was also busy with some translation work and taking language lessons in both French and German.[30] Even the physician Belii was called upon to tutor, having earned the trust of the local population. According to Eva Broido, the exiles had no trouble finding work among the very rich, as tutors, accountants, engineers and technical staff, because of their education.[31]

One of the most important professions which exiles occupied was that of journalists. In that capacity they were able to shape the opinion of educated, urban Siberians and northern Russians. There was an increase in the number of papers printed in those areas in the 1880s. Some of these papers, like the *Sibirskaia Gazeta*, which published from 1881 to 1888 in Tomsk, were almost completely staffed by exiles. These papers reported current events, wrote about life in Siberia, analyzed the political situation and published *feuilleton*. Most papers included a literature or poetry selection as well.[32]

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[30] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 48; and letter to Mariia (26 July 1900), PSS, vol. 55, p. 419.

[31] Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists, p. 171.

[32] Trotskii, My Life, pp. 126-127; and I.V. Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia periodicheskaia pechat i politicheskaia ssylka," [The Siberian periodical press and political exiles], Katorga i Ssylka, no. 41 (1928), p. 114.

Probably the most influential newspaper of Eastern Siberia was the *Eastern Review* or *Vostochnoe Obozrenie*, established in 1882 by N.M. Iadrintsev in Iakutsk and later taken over by the former political exile Ivan I. Popov. The latter was convinced his paper had an impact on the local population.

> In the course of twelve years I actually guided Siberian public opinion and managed a newspaper that was authoritative and recognized by everyone as an interpreter of Siberian trends and of the percepts of Yadrintsev and Potanin. I, a non-Siberian, became an ideological leader of Siberian public opinion and an interpreter of Siberians' worldview, and no one disputed this right with me.[33]

Vostochnoe Obozrenie was written with the Siberian intellectual or regionalist in mind and had a reputation for being the principal radical paper of Eastern Siberia. For the exiles who were smarting in the cultural backwater of Siberia, this was a chance to write interesting and political articles. They also had a genuine interest in Siberia, for as much as most of them hated the area, in the end it had become like a second home to them. A few exiles were allowed to move to Irkutsk to work for the paper. Although a handful had previously contributed from afar, this gave them the opportunity for greater control over their work. The editorial board of the paper was made up of several prominent exiles: V.A. Oshurkov, D.A. Klements, V.V. Dem'ianovskii and E.I. Iakovenko. Their articles were

[33] Popov quoted in Watrous, "Russia's Land of the Future: Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia," p. 481.

supportive of Siberian separatists and the non-colonial development of Siberia.[34]

However, there were also less refined efforts at journalism. The exiles of Bel'skii, for instance, produced three issues of the illegal journal *Taiga* in 1909. This gave exile a literary-social character. Rather than simply confining itself to the political sphere, this journal contained articles, literary narrations and local chronicles. It published drawings and anecdotes on the humorous side of exile, while also concentrating on the less desirable aspects of the institution. Unfortunately, only three issues were published before the journal was shut down by the authorities several months after its first issue.[35] Another illegal paper of note was the *Vestnik Ssylki* [The Exile Herald], published by A.M. Ginzburg (L. Naumov), N.L. Meshcheriakov and B. Tseitlina. This journal is more interesting for its mission than for the actual edition. It was to educate exiles in Social Democratic questions, including printing excerpts from *Iskra*. News regarding the Bund, Polish Social Democrats, the RSDRP and other socialist parties, was also to be reported. Secondly, it reported on interesting activities of the revolutionary struggle in Western Europe; and thirdly, it was to discuss

[34] E.I. Iakovenko, "Iz Vospominanii o sibirskoi ssylke (K istorii sibirskoi zhurnalistiki)" [From the reminiscences about Siberian exile. (To the history of Siberian journalism)], Katorga i Ssylka, no. 37 (1927), pp. 100-103.

[35] Vodolazskii, "Bel'skaia ssylka," pp. 161-62.

the viability of revolutionary struggle in exile.[36] This shows that some exiles were still interested in the revolutionary struggle and willing to support it. However, it is difficult to know what effect they had on Siberian public opinion, so far as it can be said to have existed.

The majority of exiles, on the other hand, did not actively support party work. According to one exile writer:

> it is unfortunate to see, how the comrades arrive cheerfully and full of energy here and afterwards waste away, dangerously observing the process within themselves. Of course, the more energetic and active the person, the longer he holds out and on. Thus, despite favourable external conditions, we are choked by the surrounding milieu...[37]

This also points to the necessity of an energetic and active person to rouse the other exiles from their stupor. A prime example was Mezen, where Armand cheerfully organized lectures, debates and literacy classes. Poliakov similarly described the enormous effect the arrival of the Social Democrat Gukovskii had on the Kolymsk exile colony. Apparently the revolutionary mood and party-mindedness increased astronomically with the arrival of this marxist. He set realistic goals for them, organized illegal literature and worked to combine the differing factions.[38]

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[36] Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia periodicheskaia pechat i politicheskaia ssylka," no. 43 (1928), p. 100.

[37] Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 213.

[38] Poliakov, " Vospominaniia of Kolymskoi ssylke," p. 117.

This gave them enough energy to participate in party work once again.

Most of the illegal socialist parties were represented in exile. After 1900 there were always a large number of Social Democrats, fewer Socialist Revolutionaries, several Bundists, anarchists and members of splinter parties. There were also a good number of *narodniki* still in exile. These factions generally spent less time opposing the tsarist regime than fighting each other. If there were several exiles adhering to the same political party in a specific area, they created local party organizations to continue the fight, agitate locally and pass the time in exile. These groups organized speeches, lectures and study groups, as much for themselves, as for the local population. These discussions could be on specific topics or books everyone had read. Armand, for instance, reports having read Kautsky's *The Course of Social History* and discussing it with friends. Discussions between representatives of the different parties were organized and these could lead to rifts and disputes. The discussions centered around the latest controversies in European Russia or on general political questions. According to the survey reported by Smirnov, exiles were most interested in the latter, while war, the workers' movement, history and literature ranked high as well. During exile there also was a marked increase in interest in elementary subjects such as math or geography

while interest in history and foreign languages waned once in exile.[39]

The exiles did, however, have a never-ending need for articles and books. They generally requested material on socio-economic questions, in form of articles, reports and statistical analyses. They also wanted current writings on the cardinal questions of the day, for instance, World War I and participation therein, the procurement committees, the Zimmerwald conference or participation in the Duma. Articles by Lenin and even Stalin were read according to P.N. Karavaev, as well as any party literature they could get their hands on. In Iakutsk both *Das Kapital* and Eduard Bernstein's *Die Agrarfrage* were passed from exile to exile and discussed, while in Verkhoiansk someone had received a whole trunk full of books on philosophy, economics, natural science and law. This material became the basis of lectures, which were read in the long, cold and dark winter months.[40]

The individual exile groups did not get along just because of their isolation in exile. Most of the time the SDs and SRs had separate political existences and interests. However, there was a communal aspect to their life. The common experience of exile drew them together as people, if not as political parties. In Iakutsk the groups were not

[39] Smirnov, "Narymskaia ssylka nakanune revoliutsii," no. 34 (1927), p. 142; no. 35, pp. 142-43.

[40] Karavaev, V dooktiabr'skie gody, p. 129. Karavaev's publication date of 1948 might be responsible for his thinking he had read articles by Stalin when in exile.

delineated according to party lines, but rather followed individual thinkers. They formed into "Trotskiist," "Martovist," and "Leninist" factions instead.[41] In Mezen there was also competition among the groups. Once Armand and others had organized a SD faction, the SRs were not far behind. This factionalism often disintegrated into gossip mongering, which weakened their efforts to present a united front against the authorities.

A small number of exiles was also involved in the wider arena of politics. There were several congresses among the different local organizations. Most colonies, however, maintained contacts outside of formal congresses. For instance, Lenin and Krupskaia attended one informal political meeting. The "conference" adopted a resolution on the "Credo" issued by the "economists" S.N. Prokopovich and E.D.Kuskova, which was later published as *Protest of the Russian Social Democrats*. Such contacts were particularly fruitful when there were recently arrived revolutionaries. These exiles brought with them news about the contemporary situation in Russia, as well as friends and comrades.[42] Armed with such information, they wrote articles, held debates and passed political resolutions. For instance, "He who is for the war, is for the tsarist autocracy and for the

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[41] Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki," pp. 134-38.

[42] Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia periodicheskaia pechat i politicheskaia ssylka," no. 43 (1928), p. 100.

slavery of the people," became the war-cry for some factions during the First World War.[43] The 1915 resolution of the Chadobets exile community in Eniseisk uezd, calling for the sharpening of the class struggle after the end of the war, was in fact initiated by recently arrived worker-revolutionaries. They had knowledge of recent party directives and current issues, which enabled them to assume a leading role in the local political arena.

The socialist organizations were not only concerned with national issues, but also hoped to convert the local population to socialism. Although there is little evidence that any of this was effective, the political exiles "in their social-political view, all were people-propagandists, and often even cultural workers in the countryside."[44] The most effective way to get local citizens involved was the illegal educational activities of the local groups and co-operatives. The exile-educators were particularly interested in stamping out illiteracy in Russia and adopted the slogan, "Not one illiterate!" for their cause. They tutored local illiterates or held classes. Having numerous students, since Russia's illiteracy rate was staggering, the exiles then advanced to lectures on farm implements, local production and the economy. Another strategy was to publish

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[43] Gaven, "Revoliutsionnoe podpol'e v period imperialisticheskoi voiny v Eniseiskoi guberniia.," pp. 112-14.

[44] Belii, " Tri goda v Verkhoianske," p. 217.

newsletters and pamphlets expressly for the information of the local inhabitants. Armand was again in the forefront of this movement in Mezen and actively collected material for the leaflet. Written for the non-party audience, it was to have had a popular propaganda character.[45] A similar publication, the *Minusinsk krai*, hoped to develop the "revolutionary class-consciousness of local workers."[46] Hence, according to Soviet historiography, the exiles were fulfilling their "cultural-historical role" by preparing the local society for cultural work, political reaction and class struggle.[47]

The exiles and their organizations were also able to engage in a very limited amount of agitation and propaganda while in exile. When the typesetters of the Siberian newspaper *Eniseiskaia Mysl'* went on strike at the end of 1915, the exiles informed the workers of the exploitation to which the latter were subjected. Their propaganda activities were not confined only to exile. Some of the exiles, such as V.I. Lenin, continued their propaganda writings from exile. While in Shushenskoe he wrote *The Economic Development of Capitalism in Russia*, "The Heritage We Renounce", and "The Handicraft Census of 1885-95 in Perm Guberniia and General

[45] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," pp. 88 and 95; and Armand, "Pis'ma Inessy Armand," p. 213.

[46] Puzanov, "Minusinskaia ssylka 1910-1917gg.," pp.98-99.

[47] Nikolaev, "Sibirskaia politicheskaia ssylka i izuchenie mestnogo kraia," p. 88.

Problems of Handicraft Industry," among other works. During his last year in exile, Lenin also laid the plans for *What Is To Be Done?* and "Letter to a Comrade". Meanwhile, Lenin and Krupskaia translated Webbs' *The History of Trade Unionism* into Russian. Since exiles were not supposed to publish political works, Lenin and others had to use assumed names.[48] These activities provided the exiles with extra income, kept them occupied and in touch with the revolutionaries in Russia.

The exiles not only organized politically, but also economically. Finding that life in exile was too difficult to deal with single-handedly, the exiles lived in communes, worked in *artels* and received money from reciprocal aid societies. The sharing of work in the form of a traditional Russian *artel'* was probably the simplest form of organization. Its members usually shared all work and profits equally. An *artel'* also made the exiles economically more viable. Usually, people wanted to hire several labourers at the same time. The *artel'* members hired themselves out for the simplest of tasks. Poliakov shared such work as farming, fishing, cutting firewood and preparing meals with other members. Even establishing such simple organizations was fraught with problems. Fearing the exiles' escape, the police periodically liquidated a co-

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[48] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, pp. 45 and 38.

operative, if the organization had accumulated too much money.[49] Since the regulations demanded that exiles receive permission from the local police to organize, it did occur, that the required permission was denied.[50] Some *ispravniki* demanded that the exiles sign in every day, so that the latter only had twenty-three and a half hours for travel and work, or as a headstart for an escape.[51] From this rather simple form of organization, the exiles developed the reciprocal aid society. In its simplest form, it was an organization where everyone contributed all their earnings to the common *kassa* and received an equal share of the money.[52] These organizations rapidly became more complicated, involving ever-larger numbers of people, money and geographical areas. Sometimes, like in Iakutsk, such *kassa vzaimopomoi* came under the control of a political faction, which greatly increased the latter's power in the area.[53]

One of the larger and more complex reciprocal aid societies was the "Self-help Corporation of Political Exiles of Priangarsk krai." It was designed to serve the material

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[49] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," p. 166.

[50] Vodolazskii, "Bel'skaia ssylka," pp. 157-58.

[51] Muchnik, <u>...Chem my zanimalis' v ssylke</u>, p. 17.

[52] Muchnik, p. 10.

[53] Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylke," p. 137.

and cultural needs of the exiles in the regions of Tybinskii, Pinchugskii, Boguchanskii, Chadovskii and Kezhemskii. Both "politicals" and their families were members. Sixty-eight per cent of all exiles in the region belonged to the organization. Its structure was rather bureaucratized, each region being served by a three-member bureau responsible for finances and a library. In the first eighteen months of its existence, 294 people registered, of which 273 were exiles. Of this number the majority were Social Democrats, with the Socialist Revolutionaries coming in second. Some ten per cent of the members belonged to the Polish Socialist Party while the anarchists and Populists had a very small following. The society was set up so that every month each member paid a minimum of ten kopeks into the fund. The pay scale was graduated by a percentage of income, so that those earning one to three rubles paid two per cent and those earning five to eight rubles paid five per cent, up to a total payment of twenty per cent of an income of over twenty-five rubles per month. Naturally, they did not receive money from the unemployed. The payout depended upon the circumstances of the recipient.[54] Another source of income for this and other societies came from foreign organizations. The New York Aid Society sent money every year between 1911-1917. The fund received 6,095

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[54] All the information on this society is taken from Protopopov, "Poslednii s"ezd ssyl'nykh Priangar'ia," pp. 123-27.

rubles from the New York Society over the six-year period. This money was then subdivided into the four funds of the reciprocal aid society: seventy per cent into the self-aid fund, and ten per cent into each of the library, reserves and emergency funds. In 1916, the Priangar'ia self-aid fund received a total of 3,071 rubles 68 kopecks. This money was then distributed among twenty per cent of the society's subscribers.[55] The advantage to the society was that it gave the exiles some financial security, as well as a major sum of capital.

Another type of organization was the co-operative. The West Siberian co-operative to which Muchnik belonged had signed up approximately one thousand people in the first two to three months of its existence. Having collected three thousand rubles from the members, the co-operative was able to purchase wares totalling twelve thousand rubles. Later in the same year the society was able to buy another thirty-five thousand rubles worth of materials. Undoubtedly impressed by their ability to save so much money, the merchants acted upon the integrity of the exiles by

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[55] Protopopov, "Poslednii s"ezd ssyl'nykh Priangar'ia," pp. 127-29. The Information about the New York Aid Society in K. Protopopov, "Ssylka Priangar'skogo krai v 1915-1917 godakh," [Exile in Priangarsk krai from 1915 to 1917], Katorga i ssylka, no. 31 (1927), p. 133, note 2.

extending them up to seventy-five per cent credit on their money.[56]

These large amounts of money allowed the society to lend money to exiles to open handicraft establishments or other businesses. The exile Strostin, having received a credit of fifteen hundred rubles for tools and materials, opened a blacksmithy and a carpenter's workshop. This money gave the exiles some power among the local community which wanted their business. The money was also used to establish libraries and to organize escapes. In 1916, for instance, the Priangar'skaia krai society spent 366 rubles 56 kopecks to fund organized escapes.[57] This was responsible for the skittishness of local officials and the frequent closure of such societies.

The question of the exiles' influence on Siberian development is difficult to answer. Certainly, they had less influence than some Soviet sources would like the reader to believe.[58] On the other hand, the exiles had an immediate impact on a local community. Working either as doctors, lawyers or as craftsmen, the beneficial influence

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[56] Muchnik, ...Chem my zanimalis' v ssylke, pp. 30-38; Poliakov, p. 115.

[57] Vodolazskii, "Bel'skaia ssylka," pp. 153-54; and Protopopov, "Poselednii, s"ezd ssyl'nykh Priangar'ia," p. 134.

[58] Shvetsov, "Kulturnoe znachenie politicheskoi ssylki v Zapadnoi Sibiri," no. 48 (1928), pp. 102-105.

on a local community is clear. The exiles increased the cashflow in some of the more remote communities, since they were paid the government stipend in cash and some had independent income to spend as well. The exiles also made a small difference, again on the local level, to the literacy and general educational and cultural level of the community. Exile Vilenskii, for instance, believed that because of the work of his comrades, Iakutsk "grew and blossomed."[59] Ivan Belokonskii also believed that the exiles made a cultural contribution to Siberia.

> One must say that the high educational level of these newcomers could not but have a favourable effect...at least on a significant percentage of the residents of Minusinsk and the district[...] It is difficult, of course, to undertake a strict analysis of the influence of those elements on the every day milieu, but one thing is clear: that they created a certain atmosphere which at least was not opposed to cultural undertakings by regarding them rather sympathetically.[60]

The exiles also had an interesting effect on the Siberian regionalists. Whereas in previous decades the exiles had contributed to the creation of the regionalists precisely because of their educational and cultural achievements, the regionalists came to see rivals in the exiles after 1880. The large number of revolutionary exiles arriving in Siberia after that time brought with them revolutionary, socialist, anti-autocratic and centralist

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[59] Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki," p. 132.

[60] Belokonskii quoted in Watrous, "Russia's Land of the Future: Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia," p. 596.

ideas. These sentiments were in opposition to those of the regionalists.[61] This led the latter to call even more vigorously for the abolition of exile. They saw it as contributing to the colonization and exploitation of Siberia by the central government. Hoping that the end of exile would also mean an end to colonial status and some of the social problems related to exile, the regionalists became a vocal voice of opposition to exile and so, strangely enough, allies of the revolutionaries.[62]

Some of the writers believed, of course, that exile greatly contributed to the revolutionary movement in Siberia. According to Eva Broido, "not infrequently these settlers exercised a highly dangerous political influence on the local population."[63] And while it may be true that there was some agitation among the local population during the Russo-Japanese war, there is little evidence of a working class or working-class consciousness during this period in Siberia. The evidence of revolutionary activity among railway workers, for instance, can hardly be applied to the general population because of the special conditions under which railway workers operated.

On the whole, the exiles showed a determination to survive and succeed. They generally stayed true to their

[61] Watrous, p. 609.

[62] Wood, "Solzhenitsyn on the Tsarist Exile System," p. 227.

[63] Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists, p. 167.

principles of helping the people, if not to their political convictions. The exiles generally tried to keep their days occupied, whether through work or political activities. Even though not all of them were still interested in politics, they were nevertheless willing to share their knowledge and income with their fellow exiles. The exile life was markedly different from their previous existence, but they managed as well as could be expected. It was difficult to work and stay alive in exile, but even these obstacles were overcome with ingenuity, hard and persistent work and co-operation.

Chapter Five

The Relations with the Authorities and the Culmination of Exile: Escape

No matter how much the exiles attempted to control their own lives and better their conditions while in exile, their lives could be made hell by the local authorities, generally the *ispravnik*. The general absence of a governmental presence in the Russian countryside, especially in such remote areas as Northern Russia and Siberia, meant that there was often no other representative than the police official. This situation gave the *ispravnik* immense powers to control the lives of the residents, as well as of the exiles who had no recourse against him. It was very important for the exiles to establish friendly relations with him, because a sympathetic police officer could be very useful and helpful in their struggle for survival. He could, for instance, allow them to reside in a different area to work or could support a petition for transfer. The only recourse to a decision by this person, was a petition to the governor of the guberniia. However, the inefficiency of the local administration would not guarantee that even a revised decision would reach the condemned person. The exiles, though powerless, did not acquiesce in their position and opposed the administration when possible. More often, however, the exiles found life in exile unbearable and reached the only possible conclusion, that is to flee. Elaborate escape plans often ended in capture, although the

rash of escapes in the twentieth century left officials extremely worried and watchful.

One of the main problems in exile, as well as the rest of the Empire, was the underadministration of Russia. In the countryside the *ispravnik* was responsible for "gathering statistics, distributing famine relief, supervising Russian veterinary science, and guaranteeing mail delivery, all above and beyond [his] natural concern with police matters."[1] The *ispravnik* did not have a chance to fulfill all his duties justly and carefully, considering the monumental tasks required of him. For example, Narym uezd in Tomsk province had only one police official for an area of 300,000 square kilometers. This was not an isolated case. Eniseisk province with a population of over half a million, an area half the size of European Russia, and the city of Krasnoiarsk with 32,000 people, had only thirty-eight police men and twelve *ispravniki*. Similarly, Kainsk in Tomsk province had only two police inspectors for a population of 5,850, of which 3,112 were exiles.[2] According to Wood;

> Similar figures could be adduced to demonstrate the obvious impossibility of maintaining any kind of close supervision over the exile population, as the regulations actually required, or indeed of carrying

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[1] Santoni, "P.N.. Durnovo as Minister of Internal Affairs in the Witte Cabinet," p. 74.

[2] Statistics from Wood, "The Use and Abuse of Administrative Exile in Siberia," p. 33.

> out even the minimum procedures of registration, or investigating of reported crime.[3]

In an effort to carry out his duty to control the exiles and supervise them, the *ispravnik* required the exiles to sign the attendance sheet at the police station. Although the regulations demanded this be done daily, only the smallest number of exiles reported having done so. It was more common for an exile to sign in once a week or even once a month. In the later stages of exile, especially in the higher risk areas for escape, the exiles were required to sign in more often. As has already been mentioned, Muchnik and the other members of his *artel'* were required to sign the register every twenty-four hours if they left the village to work. This, of course, curtailed their fishing activities but it did allay the fears of the authorities.[4] The exiles, who were not allowed to leave their place of exile without a passport, depended upon the goodwill and co-operation of the *ispravnik* if they wanted to make a living. Those desiring permission to leave the uezd to find work, for instance, needed to obtain a passport and an official transfer authorization. Had the exile been unable to secure permission, he or she could not accept the new work. Many of the *ispravniki* did support the "useful kind of life" for the

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[3] Wood, "Sex and Violence in Siberia," p. 33.

[4] Muchnik, <u>...Chem my zanimalis' v ssylke</u>, p. 17.

exiles, giving them the opportunity to work by not carrying out the rules to the letter.[5]

The police officials had the right to punish exiles for infractions of the rules without outside interference. They were allowed to dispense up to one hundred lashes with the plet', a practice that was continued for both sexes until 1893. This was not used on political exiles very often.[6] A much more pervasive form of punishment was sending exiles further and further east and north. One of the exiles in Verkhoiansk during Belii's time was the young medical student Bat'. He had been exiled successively to Tikhrin, Novgorod guberniia, Kherson, Krasnoiarsk and finally Verkhoiansk. Armand was similarly threatened with exile in Koida, even further north than Mezen. Apparently there were several communities to which exiles were sent for complete isolation, as Breshko-Breshkovskaia fearfully wrote to her American friends. Exile in Iakutsk oblast could also be very "liberating."[7] According to Eva Broido:

> Here in Siberia, on the other hand, to the east of Irkutsk, we could throw all caution to the winds, since this was the furthest they could send us to.[8]

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[5] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," pp. 179-80; and Vilenskii, "Poselednee pokolenie Iakutskoi ssylki," pp. 132-33.

[6] Information on punishment from Wood, "Solzhenitsyn on the Tsarist Exile System," p. 224.

[7] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 17 (1924), p. 202.

[8] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 27.

Naturally, these punishments seem mild compared to the ones inflicted on Soviet exiles several decades later. It is, however, too easy to dismiss the psychological impact of these measures on a pre-World War I society. The punishments and harassment endured by the exiles were significant in their context.

To some extent the exiles were powerless. The exile administration could change the rules without consulting any higher authority, leaving the exiles with little recourse. The administration in the provinces was fairly autonomous and used its powers to change rules arbitrarily. For instance, the police forbade exiles to be in public buildings after two o'clock in the afternoon in the village of Biriulsk in Verkhoiansk uezd.[9] In Iakutsk a new policy to distribute exiles to surrounding *ulusy* immediately upon arrival in the town proved an hardship because the exiles were not allowed to rest or buy provisions for their new homes.[10] All of this sorely tested the goodwill and patience of the exiles and left them at the mercy of the authorities. The large degree of control which police officials had over their charges also meant that exiles were treated very inconsistently. Some of the *ispravniki* used their large powers to the advantage of the exiles, while others used them to harass their charges. The "political

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[9] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 181.

[10] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 33.

climate" in an exile locale varied mostly with the personality of the *ispravnik*.[11] N.N. Ogloblin wrote of one *ispravnik* in Vychegd uezd who treated the exiles lawfully, not infringing on their freedoms or "leaning" on them. He was well-liked by the local exiles and there were no escapes reported from his area. In a different uezd the *ispravnik* often dealt with the exiles roughly, putting them under arrest at the slightest provocation. There the exiles reciprocated with "war", making life as difficult as possible for this official and in the end escaping.[12] The most effective way to maltreat the exiles was to deny them the opportunity to make a living. Naturally, this could be done by enforcing the restrictions concerning professional activities by the exiles. Since the exiles were prohibited from performing most intellectual forms of employment, the *ispravnik* could follow the letter of the law to harass the exiles. This happened in the before-mentioned Dolgopolov affair.

Another measure of harassment was to liquidate the co-operatives or artels of the exiles, making it more difficult for them to earn a living. Occasionally *ispravniki* also delayed the paying of government stipends to the exiles, who were waiting for them desperately. This was particularly

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[11] General information on treatment of exiles in Wood, "Solzhenitsyn on the tsarist exile system," p. 229 and Vera Broido, Apostles into Terrorists, p. 170.

[12] Ogloblin, "Politcheskie ssyl'nye na Vychegd'," pp. 921-22.

effective upon arrival of an exile, when he or she needed even more money to pay rent and buy provisions, furniture and household goods. Even Lenin fell victim to this ploy, when his allowance was inexplicably delayed several times. He was lucky to be able to cable home for more money.[13] Many of the exiles did not have that option.[14]

The continuous exiling to other places of exile and the search of houses were other effective methods of harassment. Broido recalled a rather harrowing time moving to the small isolated village of Nizhne-Ilinsk with her husband Max and their two small girls. Having been given almost no notice, they had to pack fast to leave on a very difficult trip by horse. Once they arrived in the village and had arranged for housing and nets against the ubiquitous mosquitoes and had unpacked, they were informed by the police that they were to go to Ust'Kut on the river Lena. Broido was convinced that they had been sent there deliberately as a punishment for their outspokenness.[15] A regular feature in some exile places was the searches conducted of the exiles' homes. Krupskaia's home was searched on a minor pretext,[16] while in Kazachinsk, Eniseisk guberniia, the police searched all exiles twice in the days

[13] Vodolazskii, "Bel'skaia ssylka," p. 157.

[14] Lenin to his mother and Mark T. Elizarov (14 February 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 76.

[15] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 30.

[16] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 45.

following Christmas.[17] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, also a frequent victim of police harassment because of her stature in the exile community, reported that during one search the officer tore up every letter he had read because he was unable to find any evidence of revolutionary activity.[18] These personal forms of harassment were the most annoying for the exiles.

Personal forms of harassment could take many forms. For example, the *ispravnik* "K." in Icher', Kirensk uezd, addressed the exiles in the familiar form "ty", while demanding to be greeted by them with respect.[19] Particularly effective was the ability to instill fear in exiles by threatening to lengthen their term of exile. Until an exile received his travel order, usually on or after the day his term of exile expired, he or she could never be sure to be going home. Krupskaia, for instance, lived in constant fear that she would have to stay even longer in Ufa.[20] Another form of harassment was the practice of keeping family members separate. Officially all efforts were made to place spouses together in exile. However, if convicted at different trials, it was often months until spouses located

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[17] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," pp. 181-82

[18] E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Hidden Springs of the Russian Revolution. Personal Memoirs of Katerina Breshkovskaia, (Stanford, 1931), p. 232.

[19] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," pp. 181-82.

[20] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 46.

each other. Then it was up to the local ispravniki to recommend that the spouses live in the same locality.[21]

Those exiled by administrative order to surveillance, also had more contact with the authorities than some of the other exiles. Surveillance severely limited a person's rights and freedoms. It was a legalized form of harassment. For instance, a person under surveillance had to report at regular intervals to the police, was subject to raids and confiscations at any time and needed to present the police with exact itineraries in case of travel. Furthermore, he or she was forbidden to teach, give lectures or attend public meetings. Exiles were not allowed to engage in theatrical presentations, work in publishing or book selling, serve in public institutions or found private societies. Also, exiles in this category were restricted to submitting personal petition only, concerning either immediate family or their own persons. They were also prohibited from sending or receiving uncensored correspondence.[22] This statute gave the *ispravnik* extensive rights to supervise the exiles' every movement. Again, this was used to harass and pressure the exiles. Breshko-Breshkovskaia reported constant supervision. During the searches, the gendarmes read her mail and confiscated all her photographs. This left her very little privacy. As a consequence, the exiles would not keep

[21] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoiansk," p. 209

[22] Santoni, "P.N. Durnovo as Minister of Internal Affairs in the Witte cabinet," pp. 193-95.

letters or keep diaries, for fear the information would be used against them.[23] The *ispravniki* also carried out surveillance of other exiles and townspeople known to Breshkovskaia. In their effort to harass her, the police periodically interrogated the local people in contact with her. There were several police officers stationed outside her home at all times and two policemen would accompany her everywhere she went. In the end she did not want to go to any public events, such as the theatre, because the policemen would attend without paying.[24] This type of psychological pressure was applied rarely, but to maximum effect.

Surveillance became even more prevalent after 1900, in an effort to curtail escapes. The *ispravniki* used every possible means to curtail such endeavours.[25] Puzanov, for instance, portrayed supervision of the exiles in the Minusinsk of 1911 as rather strict. Exiles were invited to the *ispravnik*'s house to be pumped for information, while agents and spies collected more particulars. With every escape, the local authorities became more nervous and

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[23] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter to Alice Stone Blackwell, 26 August 1912. Kennan Collection.

[24] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter, 10 November 1910 and Letter, 1 November 1911, Kennan Collection.

[25] Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p. 35 and Czaplicka, My Siberian Year, p. 268.

supervised the remaining exiles more closely.[26] This regime had its effects. Breshko-Breshkovskaia expressed her extreme disquietude:

> My awkward writing has a part of its excuse in the state of inquietude which never cease. In our position we must wait every minute some disaster coming from the foes. Every week there is some catastrophe into the life of the exiled: searches, arrests, imprisonment, exportations and even worse. The mind is / and always watching for some mischief.[27]

The exiles also had to suffer a further invasion of their privacy, that is the perlustration of their letters. The Fifth Secretariat of the Department of Police had set up the *Chernyi kabinet* or Black Cabinet, named after the black cupboard through which the agents had to step to reach the offices of this department. It employed highly skilled coding and decoding experts, specialists on invisible ink and those with a "sixth sense" for finding important letters. Once a letter had been tagged to be opened, it was carefully opened and copied if useful to the anti-subversive network. When invisible ink was suspected, an exact copy was made of the letter to be sent on, while the ink was then heated or chemically treated to show the hidden text. All letters were carefully catalogued and coded for future reference. This counter-revolutionary tactic changed the

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[26] Puzanov, "Minusinskaia ssylka 1910-1917gg.," pp. 94 and 97.

[27] Breshkovskaia wrote in often broken English, which has been reproduced as in the original. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Letter to Miss Wald, 1 September 1912, Kennan Collection.

habits of revolutionaries and hampered the quick transfer of information.[28] There are several surviving letters by V.I. Lenin referring to letters in code. Other letters contained chemical messages or letters hidden in the spines or under the covers of books.[29] Lenin also used circumspect language, in an effort to warn his brother-in-law Mark to be more careful when writing letter. Lenin reminded him not to forget Ivan Andreich[30], the postmaster in Gogol's *The Inspector General*, who reads all letters. The Kennan Collection also contains a letter that was physically censored. The letter, stamped in Mezen on 11 December 1880 and addressed to one Ivan Ivanovich Zevedeev, was completely illegible. The *ispravnik* had circled out every word except the greeting and closing remarks.[31] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, however, noted that she did not think that letters were read after 1910.[32] Apparently this practice was curtailed after the institution of the Basic Law of 1906.

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[28] Zuckerman, "The Russian Political Police at Home and Abroad," pp. 48-85.

[29] Lenin to his mother (7 February 1898), p. 74; and to his mother and M.I. Ulianova (24 February 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 80; and to his mother and Anna (4 April 1899), p. 155; and to P.B. Axelrod (16 August 1897), PSS, vol. 55, p. 41, note 3.

[30] He means Ivan Kuznich.

[31] "Letter to political nearly all crossed out by police," item number 160, Box 2, Kennan Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

[32] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, letter, 29 December 1910, Kennan Collection.

Although in constant contact with the local police, the exiles' relations with the bureaucracy were infrequent. Generally, the only contact they had with the government, outside of the ispravnik, was limited to the writing of petitions to ask for changes in their status. The petitions were usually to the governor or governor-general of the province. During the 1880s transfer requests in Iakutsk oblast were quite readily approved. Kon, for instance, thought that transfers were easy to obtain. By the time that Armand petitioned the governor in 1908, it had become more difficult to obtain a transfer request. She wrote petitions continuously, hoping she would be allowed to leave Mezen. Her requests were denied, because travelling and moving had become a prime opportunity for escaping by this time.[33] Armand continued to petition the governor several times throughout her stay in exile to no avail. This usually encompassed all forms of contact with the authorities.[34]

Though not in direct contact with the bureaucracy, the exiles did have to contend with the bungling inefficiencies of the tsarist regime. The civil service was hopelessly inept and slow, often to the exile's chagrin. Armand was a prime victim of the system. While still in detention, her husband Alexander Armand petitioned the Ministry of Internal Affairs to let her spend her exile abroad, rather than in

[33] Kon, "Na poselenii v Iakutsk oblast," no. 45 (1928), p. 138.

[34] Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," pp. 87-88.

Arkhangel'sk guberniia. Although this petition was approved, it was lost in the paper shuffle on someone's desk, rather than passed on.[35] Inessa Armand spent ten months in internal exile.

In another instance, Lenin and Krupskaia were the victims of the system. After Lenin had spent almost one year in Shushenskoe, the *ispravnik* had not yet received his *stateinii spisok* or exile papers. These were to have come from the forwarding prison in Krasnoiarsk. Without these papers the *ispravnik* knew nothing about Lenin and could not allow any changes in his status. In Lenin's case this meant that he could not marry Nadezhda Krupskaia as planned. To further complicate the issue, Krupskaia was told she would have to return to exile in Ufa, if they did not get married immediately. It took over two months to collect all the necessary information and forms for this nuptial, which finally took place 10 July 1898.[36]

Police business was usually conducted in the form of circulars. When the Ministry of Internal Affairs wanted to change some of the regulations, officially or unofficially, a circular outlining this new policy was sent to the appropriate office or person. This had the distinct disadvantage that it produced pronounced inconsistencies, contributed to the paper mess and left most officials

[35] Sanov, p. 90.

[36] Lenin to his mother (7 June 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 90; and to his mother (10 May 1898), PSS, vol. 55, p. 88.

unclear as to which policy to follow. This also led to ruling on a case to case basis, as things occurred in exile.

The exiles' reaction to this administrative bungling and local administrative policies, ranged from unrest to uncooperativeness. There was also a certain amount of retaliation in the form of agitation among the exiles. Occasionally, the treatment of some exiles by the authorities led to a protest of the conditions by the other exiles. For instance, when several exiles were beaten in Emetskoe for attending a meeting to collect money for the repair of Kuznetsov's bed, the other exiles protested.[37] Another issue of resistance to the government was the taking of the oath of loyalty to Tsar Alexander III. Most exiles refused to do so, feeling hypocritical to swear allegiance to a regime they had opposed and which had sent them to the edge of the empire for that resistance. This insubordination resulted in the exiling of scores of West Siberian exiles to Iakutsk oblast.[38]

One of the biggest exile protests was probably the "Iakutsk Affair" of March 1904. The governor-general of Eastern Siberia, Count Kutaissov, had sent a circular informing local officials that the government would no longer pay for the return of exiles to Russia after the

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[37] Trapeznikov, "Politicheskaia ssylka vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii," pp. 122-23.

[38] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," no. 17 (1925), pp. 204-207.

expiry of their term of exile. This outraged the exiles, few of whom could afford the return journey. Hence, they saw this announcement as condemning them to a life-time in exile. This announcement followed other inimical and restrictive actions by the authorities and so the exiles demanded the government pay for the return and allow travelling exile convoys to meet with other exiles along the way. The exiles also wanted to be able to leave the assigned *ulusy* in Iakutsk oblast for short visits and be punished only by court trial. When this petition was refused, the protesters barricaded themselves into a house and did not emerge until the soldiers' superior fire power forced them out. The protesters were punished with *katorga*, by court trial, but some of the offensive regulations were rescinded.[39] Concerted exile action did accomplish something, even it at a very high cost.

The majority of the exiles did not reach the point of protest. Life in exile was depressing and boring. Exiles were subject to hunger, loneliness, a feeling of powerlessness and despondency. After a short while in exile almost all of them thought only of fleeing and emigrating from Siberia. Samsonov explained that he was depressed after only eight months in exile, asking himself, "how can we live here longer?"[40] Even Belii, who was part of Verkhoiansk

[39] Max Broido as quoted in Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, pp. 37-47.

[40] Samsonov, Kommuny ssyl'nykh, p. 45.

society and able to pursue his profession, was depressed after only one year in exile. The thought of escape became the mainstay of some exiles' thoughts while remaining in exile. It became their consuming passion.[41]

Most exiles did not want to escape upon arriving in exile, because flight would have meant a permanent life in the underground or in emigration away from their families. Once conditions in exile became unbearable, some took the obvious route and sought to flee. Some exiles just left one night or did not return from a visit to a distant village. Others made preparations for their escape. Among the problems encountered by those hopeful to abscond, were a lack of money, maps and help in escaping. Those lucky enough to obtain the necessary funds were still faced with the problem of buying provisions without attracting attention, hiring a guide and transportation, and arranging for an opportune moment. In these isolated areas the vastness of Russia was an ally, as well as an enemy. Although it was easy to escape and not be caught, it was just as easy to drown or freeze to death unnoticed.[42] In the end many exiles had to return to their villages for lack of warm clothes or food. Other exiles were given away by the peasants hired as guides, or by the native peoples, who received money for turning in escaped exiles.

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[41] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," p. 221.

[42] Trotsky, My Life, p. 132.

There were as many ingenious escape plans as there were escaping exiles. They all hinged on the ability to deceive the local authorities or guards and get a head start. Although very few exiles were closely watched, unlike their Soviet counterparts, most escapes went unnoticed for some time. Since the exiles usually were in isolated villages, it might take weeks until their absence was noticed. And even then it sometimes was a matter of months until a circular initiating a search was telegraphed to higher authorities or the *Okhrana*.[43] Those exiles who were watched closely, established a certain daily routine of absence to lull the authorities into a sense of security. When Breshko-Breshkovskaia was exiled to Barguzin in 1880, she and a group of three others regularly left the town for outings or picnics. For the first while the *ispravnik*, a very correct and conscientious man, followed them everywhere. After a while, he began to trust them. When they acquired a farm so that the purchase of horses and the receipt of more money would not be questioned by the authorities, it did not arouse suspicions. Once they had collected enough provisions and money, they hired a guide and set out into the wilderness. They had, however, been unable to account for the human factor: the guide deserted them, when he did not know the way any further, and a Buriat, who had seen them

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[43] Armand escaped in October 1908 and the circular regarding a search for her is dated 22 April 1909. Sanov, "Mezenskaia ballada," p. 84.

several days earlier, reported their presence. Once caught, their exile sentences were prolonged.[44]

During the twentieth century many exiles left European Russia determined not to spend any time in exile. They often went into exile hoping to flee during the transport to Siberia. Lev Deutsch, for instance, already planned his escape while in transit to Eniseisk guberniia. Trying to give his guards the impression that he was going to settle in the area, he bought 150-200 rubles worth of provisions in Eniseisk. After buying things in several stores, he escaped through the back door of one store on the pretense of going to the washroom. Then he made his way to the house of a pre-arranged contact, only to find that he had been given the wrong address. He did find the right house eventually and received assistance from sympathetic local residents. He then travelled by horse carriage, pretending to be a provincial actor. His comrades, on the other hand, went through with their original plan. The first night outside of Eniseisk the exiles invited the police guards and other locals for a drink and then escaped after the policemen had fallen into a drunken sleep.[45] These plans required a large amount of cash, as well as courage.

In the last two decades of tsarist rule many exiles arrived in exile already prepared for flight, only waiting

[44] Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Hidden Springs of the Russian Revolution, pp. 229-45.

[45] Deutsch, Viermal entflohen, pp. 179-96.

for an opportune moment to slip away. Those revolutionaries expecting the heaviest sentences at a trial would hide money and obtain false passports for their time in exile.[46] Trotskii revealed he had kept a false passport in the sole of his boots and gold in the heel for an eventual escape.[47] Stalin, on the other hand, seized the right moment for his escapes. He managed to escape seven time before the February Revolution.[48]

Those exiles sent to the far North were not so lucky. It was generally believed that escape from the North was hopeless, ensuring that very few of the longtime exiles attempted to flee.[49] Although disappearing was easy in northern Russia and Siberia, finding a way to leave the area was not. Few people escaped from such areas as Iakutsk oblast, because it was too far from anywhere. This was the main reason that Max Broido escaped on the way to the north, rather than waiting until he reached Verkhoiansk.[50] Those who attempted escape, often became disoriented and were found by the authorities. Since there were very few and only inaccurate maps of northern Siberia, it was difficult to

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[46] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, p. 47.

[47] Trotskii, My Life, p. 192.

[48] Robert McNeal, Stalin: Man and Ruler, (New York, 1988), pp. 12-26.

[49] Poliakov, "Vospominaniia o Kolymskoi ssylke," no. 47 (1928), pp. 113-14.

[50] Eva Broido, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, pp. 35-36.

know where to go. The safest route was to follow a river and hope to be picked up by a foreign fishing vessel in the Kara Sea.

The only chance the exiles in the far North had, was to organize escapes. With enough outside funds and co-operation among the exiles, those exiled to Iakutsk oblast could attempt to reach the arctic ocean and be picked up by a foreign vessel. One group of exiles had arranged with a foreign captain, a certain Mel'vil', help them flee. He was returning to Verkhoiansk with his ship for a further exploration and would supply the exiles with a small boat. Although the exiles reached the ocean and the search party ran aground, the exiles had to return because they became disoriented and winter was approaching.[51] Such large-scale endeavours required much preparation and money. The money was sometimes supplied by local party units, but most often came from the exiles' self-aid societies. The Priangar'ia society spent approximately twelve per cent of its expenditures for 1916 to fund escapes.[52] This is the main reason the authorities dissolved the societies so frequently. Vodolazskii's *artel'* with only seventy-two members was shut down because the authorities feared they would fund escapes.[53]

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[51] Belii, "Tri goda v Verkhoianske," pp. 215-21.

[52] Protopopov, "Poslednii s"ezd ssyl'nykh Priangar'ia," pp. 133-34.

[53] Vodolazskii, "Bel'skaia ssylka," p. 155.

The last two decades of tsarist rule, saw a large increase in the number of attempted escapes. Although many exiles tried to flee, the majority stayed behind. Of those exiles who decided to escape, many had to turn back for lack of money or guidance. Nevertheless, the authorities took this threat seriously. With each escape the surveillance became stricter. Rules, such as signing the register, were more strictly enforced in many areas. Indeed, after Iu. M Nakhamkes' (Steklov) escape from Iakutsk the local *ispravnik* started spying on the exiles. They were required to sign the register and their apartments were checked for books and letters.[54] Contacts with the local population were also supervised and curtailed. This was rather pointless by the twentieth century. According to Trotskii, the "epidemic" of escapes grew drastically with a change in the social climate. Peasants who had been influenced by the older revolutionaries helped the "politicals" to escape and passed them to other peasants who would help. A regular network of escape was created, leaving the Siberian police somewhat helpless.[55] Supervision became constant, as *ispravniki* became more worried. One exile was not allowed to walk on the ice of the local river without permission, for fear she would escape. The same exile had money from overseas sent to St.Petersburg rather than her place of exile, fearing the

[54] Katin-Iartsev, "V tiur'me i ssylke," no. 16 (1925), p. 150.

[55] Trotskii, My Life, p. 131.

authorities would suspect her of planning an escape.[56] The only recourse left to the government to stem the enthusiasm for escape was to sentence escapees to up to four or five years of further exile or katorga. However, this had little deterrent effect, because the exiles were already desperate when they contemplated flight.

The exile experience had come full circle. After their escape the exiles lived under an assumed name or in the underground in Russia or emigrated to Western Europe or the United States. There many continued to support the revolutionary causes, which had sent them to exile. Their zeal strengthened through the exile experience, they continued to be active opponents of the tsarist regime.

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[56] Letter from N.W. Tchaykovsky to Miss Blackwell, 20 Jan 1912, Kennan Collection.

Conclusion

Exile was a strange experience, but all who had been in exile understood what it meant when the word was mentioned. Exile was an array of set experiences, an ordeal which united former exiles. This can be seen in the creation of such groups as the Association of Former Hard Labourers and Exiles, which published the journal *Katorga i ssylka*. There was immense interest in the exile question in the early Soviet Union, not least because of the large number of revolutionary leaders, who had spent some time in exile.

One of the most difficult questions to address regarding exile, is the incongruity between the freedoms and restrictions placed on the exiles. On the surface exile was a rather attractive system. The influx of large numbers of educated Russian, could have proved a successful method of colonization of the area. Exiles were largely free to live and work in a specified area, with few other restrictions. However, such argument dismisses the real effects of exile life. Only through a study of exile as a unique historical phenomenon, can the lives of the exiles be fully understood.

An examination of the real "exile experience" presents a much harsher picture of the institution. The so-called freedoms of exile were much more restrictive and harming than freedoms should be. Exile only emulated real life. The "freedom" to choose housing and provide for work was not a

right, but a difficult necessity. Teterin even preferred detention to exile:

> Now, I not infrequently compare detention and exile and come to the terrifying conclusion: detention, please, rather than exile. There they feed at least balanda [thin vegetable soup] and a ration of bread, but here there is none of that. Here, instead of of "balanda" is a little hot water, real cranberry bushes, together with tea and bread, which must still be found....And you don't always find it....[57]

Had the government wanted the exiles to integrate successfully into their new communities, they would have provided them with assistance in finding accommodations and employment.

The system itself condemned this experiment to failure. The restrictions and realities of exile were designed to prevent real success for the individual and as a consequence for the empire. The government used the exile system to suppress political movements. Having fostered the creation of new social classes, the government was unwilling to give these people a place within the Russian social system and share even a modicum of power. In an attempt to save the regime, the government ignored the social problems causing the disturbances and hoped to send the problem out of Russia. The option of exile was attractive to the regime, since it was a century-old method for deporting undesirables to the edges of the empire. This was to achieve the double aim of settlement and isolation of the revolutionaries.

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[57] Teterin, "Sukhaia gil'otina," p. 185.

The government's aims were illusory, since the realities of exile precluded any meaningful development of Northern Russia and Siberia. The transport to the place of exile was often so exhausting, that exiles arrived there sick and depressed. Upon arrival the exiles were expected to provide for their own food and housing in a rather inimical atmosphere and on a meagre allowance. The government restrictions on employment and the withholding of the meagre government stipends reduced exiles to poverty. This lack of money had an impact on most facets of their exile existence. Many exiles could not afford proper nourishment and there was little cash for miscellaneous items such as mail, ink and paper, books or travel. Some exiles did not even have enough money to return to Russia after their exile term was over. They were forced to live under very trying conditions, often in co-operatives with virtual strangers and there was no legal opportunity for intellectual work. Since their professions were practiced only illegally, their expertise was not harnessed to the state's advantage. Only local exile initiatives were responsible for the large numbers of practicing exile professionals. By providing few legal opportunities to make a living and paying rather low allowances, the government also defeated its other purpose of keeping the exiles out of politics. Although some exiles naturally continued their political activism, the existence of reciprocal aid societies led to political activities in exile as well.

Yet, exile was not completely black. Many of these conditions were tempered by benign officials and occasionally by friendly residents. The exiles themselves formed groups and associations for companionship, as well as monetary gain. This allowed them to make new friends and to hone their organizational skills. In the self-aid societies they put the principles they preached into practice. And, of course, life is often brighter than external factors can suggest. The memoirs and writings of former exiles show a great love for nature, their special projects and other exiles. The accounts of discussions, trips, feasts and diversions show the pleasure most of the exiles felt at some point of their exile. Although these brighter moments were part of the exile experience, they were in no way an integral part of the exile system. Thus, the exiles, not the government, were responsible for these happier hours.

The psychological dimension to exile was particularly poignant. While these good days existed, most exiles felt despondent after only a short while in banishment. Although many portrayed a happy face to the outside world, despondency and a feeling of uselessness overcame most exiles in the end. Even the most active, like Inessa Armand or V.I. Lenin, had to admit that exile was a difficult time. Psychologically exile was severely debilitating. The exiles were taken from their normal environment, often leaving family as well as friends behind. Having been deposited in a strange, isolated place with an inimical local population,

the exiles were required to support themselves without the traditional support network to which they were used. Furthermore, their usefulness was limited in a world where most of the exiles' professions were closed to them while there. The continual worry about money and friends, as well as harassment by officials, drove many exiles to suicide, madness, or more likely to escape.

Nevertheless, the experience of the exiles suggests that the government restrictions were not tough enough to subdue them. Unlike Soviet exile where exiles were psychologically broken and where all contacts between the exile and the outside world were forbidden, tsarist exiles were allowed to communicate with their families and each other. This was indeed a good opportunity for further agitation and socialist activities. Some exiles furthered their revolutionary skills while in exile, which were then used against the government with renewed vigour. Maybe the regime did not rid itself of the revolutionary problem as effectively as it had hoped.

Exile eventually became the school for revolutionaries, as most of them had spent at least one stint in exile. Although an examination of how exile affected the revolutionaries is beyond this study, exile was a specific set of experiences. The exiles were all exposed to the difficulties of life in such isolated areas as Northern Russia or Siberia. They were asked to fend for themselves under trying circumstances without any support networks, and

they were exposed to the often malicious harassment of local officials. There was only one way out for the exiles: suicide or escape. Many exiles escaped, creating almost an "epidemic" by the last years of tsarist rule. These exiles returned to the Russian underground or emigrated from Russia even more convinced of their beliefs, for which they had just spent harrowing years in exile.

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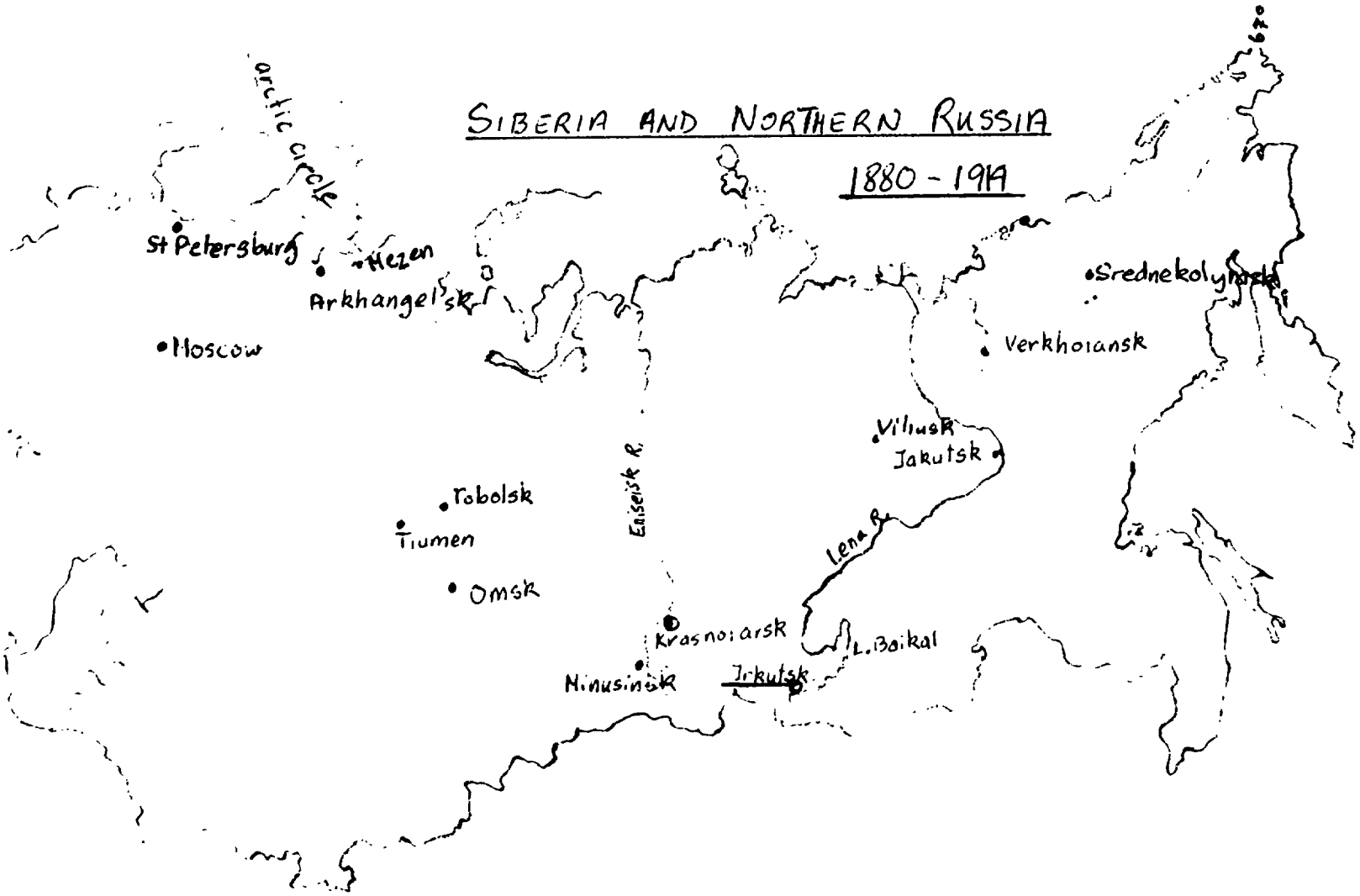

Source. V. V. Tochenov et. al, Atlas SSSR (Moscow, 1984) p 172.

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