

Konstantin Bogdanov

## 'Negroes'<sup>1</sup> in the USSR. The Ethnography of an Imaginary Diaspora

Negroes — they're all black.  
Yakov Ilyin *The Big Conveyor* (1932)

From the very first years of Soviet power, its ideologists stressed the international character of Soviet society. In the press and media more generally, the Soviet state and the future that it was creating — right up to the collapse of that future at the end of the 1980s — was invariably depicted as free from ethnic distinctions and open to ethnic mixing. Even the political repressions from the end of the 1930s to the middle of the 1940s, which were directed towards the suppression and persecution of a whole range of peoples inhabiting the USSR — the deportations of the Koreans, Ingrian Finns, Germans, Crimean Tartars, Kurds, Meskheta Turks, Qaraçays, Kalmyks, Balkars, Chechens and Ingushes, and the unbridled antisemitism during the struggle against 'cosmopolitanism' — were masked by a rhetoric of political, rather than ethnic, motivation: preventive measures against possible collaboration with the enemy during the war (in the case of the Koreans, Finns, Germans and Meskheta), punishment

### Konstantin Bogdanov

Institute of Russian Literature  
(Pushkin House),  
Russian Academy of Sciences,  
St Petersburg, Russia  
konstantin.a.bogdanov@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> This term is now obsolete in Anglo-American usage, but better reflects the attitudes of the Soviet period that is depicted here than the modern 'Africans and African Americans' or 'Blacks', since the former reflects a distinction that was not characteristic of Soviet culture, while the directly equivalent term to the latter, *chernye*, was used for a considerably wider range of ethnic groups. As the discussion makes clear, it is precisely the imaginative function of the 'negro' that is under scrutiny here. [Eds.].

for treachery (in the case of the Crimean Tartars and Caucasian peoples), or the unmasking of a plot against the state (in the case of the Jews). In none of these cases was the propagandist premise of the 'friendship between peoples' placed in question: it was class and political enemies, who had found support among particular ethnic groups, that were being punished, not the ethnic groups as such [Polyan 2005]. Against a background of insistently proclaimed proletarian internationalism, attitudes to other ethnic groups were predictable: the proper attitude to representatives of different ethnicities was determined by their role in the class and geopolitical struggle, and not by ethnic characteristics as such [Matyushkin 1965; Shitov 1974; Kim 1975; Basmanov 1978; Sherstobitov 1982] (cf. [Soviet Nationality Politics 1990]). In this, its general and main respect, Soviet ideology was not only consistent, but declarative: when it depicted ethnic and racial distinctions as markers of social and political segregation, those who were the victims of these had every chance of a sympathetic approach from Soviet propaganda.

This ideologically conditioned sympathy was particularly evident when it came to people from Africa and of African ancestry, or as Soviet usage had it, *negry* (negroes). The perception of negroes in the history of the USSR displays, moreover, both historical and socio-psychological peculiarities which are not irrelevant to our understanding of those mechanisms of rhetorical persuasion which were characteristic of Soviet propaganda as a whole, when it dealt with problems of internationalism. And it seems that the elucidation of this understanding is the more instructive in that it is a question of the perception of peoples and ethnic groups whose relationship to the ethnographic space of the USSR was purely imaginary. This state of affairs was not altered by the existence of a small group of dark-skinned inhabitants with what could be seen as negroid (Ethiopic) facial features in Abkhazia. Although the origin of the 'Abkhazian Negroes' is connected with Africa, their appearance in Abkhazia being hypothetically explained by the import of slaves by the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century, their 'informational' presence in Russian and Soviet culture is practically imperceptible. By the nineteenth century the 'Abkhazian Negroes' had already assimilated and intermarried with the local population and were not perceived as a separate diaspora. The overwhelming majority of people living in the Caucasus (not to mention the country as a whole), simply did not know about them [Pachuliya 1968: 58] (see also [Shaginyan 1932: 298; Smirnov 2002: 542]).<sup>1</sup> It may therefore be asserted that, despite this qualification, negroes as they appear in Soviet propaganda are

---

<sup>1</sup> The subject of the Abkhazian Negroes only became popular after the appearance of Fazil Iskander's story 'The Abkhazian Negroes' in 1989.

the image of an imagined, but imaginary, diaspora which eclipsed the ethnographic diversity of Soviet reality.

The depiction of black people in the pre-revolutionary tradition of Russian culture took for granted a primary stress on the exotic. The Moors in the households of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aristocracy of Moscow and St Petersburg reflected the European fashion of that period for wonders from beyond the seas. Russian culture is indebted to this fashion for the birth of Pushkin, whose black ancestors thus found themselves paradoxically linked to Russian culture itself. 'The first Russian poet' frequently called himself the descendant of a 'negro', and was so called by his contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> (Later Marina Tsvetaeva would write with typical hyperbole, 'Pushkin was a negro, <...> the Russian poet a negro.') And, although the factual basis for this is, from the point of view of history or biography, debatable,<sup>2</sup> in this case what matters is not how things actually were, but the mythological reputation that bestowed negro features and an African origin on Pushkin [Under the Sky 2006] (see also [Lounsbery 1999: 229–51]). Thus, in the absence of any negro population on Russian soil, Russia acquired in the person of Pushkin a poet that brought her closer to Africa.

Another feature of the way that nineteenth-century Russian culture dealt with the negro theme is the polemical subtext of protest, accompanied on the one hand by the preaching of Rousseauism and the equality of man, and on the other by the assimilation of the slave trade and the image of the black captive to the institution of serfdom at home [Blakely 1986; Kolchin 1987; Peterson 2000]. Such, for example, was the discussion of the differences between people according to the colour of their skin in the Russian translation of Valmont de Bomare's *Physiology* published in 1787 by N. M. Maksimovich-Ambodik. The enlightened author, and, one assumes, his Russian publisher, refuted the opinion of those who saw the negroes' blackness as the result of the curses on Ham and Cain:<sup>3</sup> 'Black people were produced by the climate and the sun under which Noah's

<sup>1</sup> 'I am an idler and a wastrel, | A disgraceful descendant of negroes' (1820). 'My mother's pedigree is even more curious. Her grandfather was a negro, the son of a ruling princeling' [Pushkin 1949: 311]. As Pushkin wrote to Vyazemsky from Odessa in June 1824, 'I am disgusted with the Greek situation. I think one may consider the fate of the Greeks in the same way as that of my brethren the negroes' [Pushkin o literature 1937: 49]. A. I. Delvig wrote of Pushkin's brother Lev Sergeevich Pushkin, 'He looked like a negro who had been painted white' [Polveka russkoi zhizni 1930: 73].

<sup>2</sup> According to the German biography of Hannibal compiled by his son-in-law Rothkirch, the poet's ancestors were 'Abyssinians', that is, from the north of modern Ethiopia (and were thus of Semitic-Hamitic origin — Ethiopian Jews, or Amhara: [Vegner 1995: 109–241; Lurye 2012]). Dieudonné Gnamankou, a Slavist from Benin, takes a different view, and argues (developing Vladimir Nabokov's hypothesis) that Hannibal came from the Kotoko people, who lived in the Sultanate of the Logone, on territory on either side of the border between modern Cameroon and Chad [Gnamankou 1999]. See also [Bulakov 2006].

<sup>3</sup> In fact Canaan, not Cain, but the two were confused in Russian popular tradition. [Transl.].

descendants came to dwell' [Valmont de Bomare 1787: 13].<sup>1</sup> 'There are no rights which allow a negro to be the property of a white man,' exclaimed the freedom-loving Vasily Popugaev in a composition published in the Free Society's Periodical Publications for 1804, and subsequently in the miscellany *Taliya* in 1807 — a transparent hint to the reader that the same words might be applied to serfs [Sbornik materialov 1952: 102]. A manuscript entitled 'The Negro, or Liberty Regained' was confiscated from the literate peasant Andrei Lotsmanov, who had had the idea of creating a secret anti-serfdom society, when he was arrested. (He was imprisoned in the fortress of Bobruisk on the personal orders of Nicholas I.) The hero of this unfinished story is a young negro who denounces the slave-owners and those who were indifferent to the suffering of their black captives and by their 'inhumanity' brought shame upon religion and the equality of man [Baytin, Pugachev 1960: 76–91]. Later, during the American Civil War (1861–1865) between the northern states and the slave-owning South, the same arguments would become politically salient, against the background of Alexander II's reforms. In 1857, after the government's announcement of its intention of carrying out the peasant reform, Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) began to be serialised on the pages of N. M. Katkov's journal *Russkii Vestnik*. The following year N. I. Nekrasov published it in a separate volume as a supplement to the journal *Sovremennik*. While he was getting permission for this publication and trying to avoid any possible problems with the censor, Nekrasov explained his intention in a letter to I. S. Turgenev: 'This question is much discussed among us with reference to our own negroes' [Nekrasov 1967: 245].

There were several more editions of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel in the following years, and it became one of the books read by virtually all children in pre-revolutionary Russia.<sup>2</sup> Any manifestation of racism, even if cloaked in scientific form, was invariably regarded by Russian literary criticism and social commentary in the second half of the nineteenth century as an expression of bad taste and intellectual inadequacy.<sup>3</sup> For example, in 1867 Nikolai Alekseevich Treskin, an

<sup>1</sup> The widespread 'theological' explanation of the servile fate, and the very blackness of the negroes rested upon the biblical tradition of the curse upon Ham and his descendants: 'And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren' (Genesis ix 20–25).

<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive survey of reviews of Mrs Beecher Stowe's novel in Russia and the USSR see [Igolkina 2010: 57–9; Mackay 2013]. Otis Turner's short film *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1913), based on the novel, was shown in Russia, and not only in Moscow and St Petersburg, but in the provinces too: for example, it was shown at the People's Auditorium in Saratov in February 1917 <<http://www.sarrest.ru/tourism/arx/pa032.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> The same applied to anti-Semitism, or certainly in the oppositional press that is described here. [Eds.].

educationalist and censor on the Moscow Censorship Committee, reviewing Aleksandr Pulikovsky's *Textbook of Universal Geography*, published the previous year, reproached the author for his humiliating description of 'the negro race':

*No one will deny that the negro race is at a low level of intellectual development, nor will anyone deny that the negroes have from the earliest times appeared on the wide stage of human relations as slaves <...> But <...> it ought to have been explained that the negro race bears within itself the same germ of self-development as the whole of humanity, of which it is just one form; and that the unfortunate position of the negroes is the result of external conditions <...> not of internal ones [Treskin 1867: 839].<sup>1</sup>*

The sympathetic remarks about 'the negro race' are not only interesting in this case because they were read with a backward glance at the history of serfdom in our own country, and followed a tradition of depictions of black slaves as expressions of opposition to serfdom that went back a long way in Russian literature, but also because in one way or another they invoke the issues of what would come to be known as racial determinism and environmentalism. Even if the past and present condition of 'the negro race' is unfortunate, nothing stops one from supposing that it will change for the better if 'external conditions' alter. The increasing number of writings by Russian travellers in Africa on the whole expressed the same conviction [Kovalevsky 1849; Yunker 1879; Eliseev 1903; Averintsev 1912; Troitsky 1915; Zabrodskaya 1955; Rait 1958; Valskaya 1969; Matusevich 2007]. The fact that Russia had no colonies of her own in Africa meant that for the general public Africa was a continent which to a large extent evoked a scholarly and sympathetic curiosity, and not the repressive or paternalistic attention characteristic of colonial discourse [Curtin 1965; Lorimer 1978; Lively 1998].<sup>2</sup>

Typical of a number of literary examples which suggested to their readership the proper attitude that they ought to have towards the negroes was the position of K. M. Stanyukovich, a convinced democrat and a critic of the regime (which rewarded him with a year's imprisonment, three years of exile and bans on publication). In Stanyukovich's story 'Around the World on the *Kite*' (1895),

<sup>1</sup> The passage that drew forth this criticism was: 'The negro is a coward <...> He is capable of being a cruel despot when he feels himself strong, but in other circumstances he becomes a slave. <...> The negro loves dances and all kinds of metal and glass trinkets more than any other people on earth. They are evidently less intellectually gifted than any other people except the New Zealanders. <...> The negroes' coarseness and passion for shiny objects and drunkenness often leads to children being sold by their father or younger brothers by their elder' [Pulikovsky 1866: 157–9].

<sup>2</sup> It should be said that by the late nineteenth century, attitudes in the Russian Empire to what were known as 'the yellow races' were of a different order, as Marina Mogilner and Dmitry Baranov, among others, have affirmed, confirming the point here about the relationship between racist discourse and imperialism. [Eds.].

which is imbued with his impressions of service in the navy and of sea voyages in 1860–63, sketches of the relationships between Russian sailors and black Africans offered the reader mildly ironical and patronising, but by and large uplifting examples of mutual friendship:

*Although the appearance of these half-naked, and sometimes almost completely naked 'moors', as the sailors called the negroes, gave rise to doubts as to whether they were created in the image of God and belonged to the human race at all (one sailor, Kovshikov, with his usual courage, made bold attempts to compare the negroes to apes and even — heaven forgive us! — to devils without tails), the sailors' attitude towards them was nevertheless as friendly as could be, and even touching in some cases, witnessing as it did to the ordinary Russian man's tolerance and even fraternal affection towards all people, even if they were 'moors' and of dubious human origins. <...> One negro, an exceptionally sympathetic young man of about seventeen, who had arrived on the corvette in rags <...> the sailors really took to their hearts. <...> On the very first day they dressed him in a complete sailor's costume. <...> He laughed and skipped, and his kind eyes shone with the deepest gratitude. 'Are you happy, darkie?' laughed the sailors as they looked at him [Stanyukovich 1953: 116].*

In Stanyukovich's description the attitude to the negroes attributed to the Russian sailors has not 'the slightest racial arrogance, nor a scintilla or religious intolerance', while the discussion of the slave trade still serves as an everyday reminder of the Russian past and present. Following the established trope, the writer notes similarities between the history of black African slaves and our own serfs in those 'scenes of cruelty', 'that there used to be in the slave-owning states or on the estates of Russian landowners' [Stanyukovich 1953: 160].

That was not all: the 'negro folksongs' sung by the black inhabitants of Cape Verde turn out to be remarkably similar to 'the mournful songs of Russia':

*It was something monotonous and unusually sad, that tugged at the heartstrings <...> Quiet complaints and a sadness full of submissiveness were poured forth in this mournful song <...> This song breathed a breath of something familiar and familial onto the Russian sailors [Stanyukovich 1953: 119].*

The Russian sailors like the song, but an unpleasant Portuguese who happens to be present does not, and wonders how they could like 'their usual stupid whingeing: complaints against the whites, pity for their enslaved brethren, and that sort of thing' [Stanyukovich 1953: 120]. Thus, Russian tolerance is established by reference to West European intolerance. It also becomes clear that the free negroes are not as slovenly and undomesticated in their everyday life as racists would make out, and their homes are equipped inside in a way quite reminiscent of the living quarters of Russian peasants, the only difference being that the latter might envy the former. Stanyukovich

was not the only one to compare negroes and Russian peasants. In the opinion of many pre-revolutionary publicists the abolition of slavery and serfdom had not abolished the sorry living conditions of the former black slaves and white serfs [Kolchin 1987].

Later, with regard to the education of both groups, Lenin would repeat the comparison in his work 'On the Question of the Policy of the Ministry of Education' (1913), and again unfavourably for the Russians:

*The American negroes are still twice as well placed with regard to 'the education of the people' as the Russian peasants. The American negroes, however repressed they are, to the shame of the American republic, are still happier than the Russian peasants.*

The 'seriousness' of the subject of the American negroes' former servitude and the unfortunate conditions of black Africans did not, at the same time, prevent it from being entertaining. Enlightened writers linked the image of the negro to 'the childhood of man'. These 'noble savages' were contrasted with civilised degeneracy and licence, and personified the clarity of the natural passions, sincerity of feelings and frankness of thought. This was, of course, an old European tradition also. When Robinson Crusoe instructed Friday in the rudiments of Christianity and dissuaded him from cannibalism, he also learnt (and taught the reader) the triumph of the virtues that he preached, the finest example of which was Friday himself. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth an interest in negroes continued to be fed by a demand for the exotic and by the impulse towards humane moralising, which by that time had spread from the sphere of didactic philosophy to literature and art. Beginning with the romantics, 'negro' motifs enliven the literary texts and visual images of European modernity: in English literature the classical models of this sort were the novels of H. Rider Haggard (*King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *Nada the Lily* (1892), *Marie* (1912), *Child of Storm* (1913), *Finished* (1916), *The Ivory Child* (1916)), Joseph Conrad (*The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897), *Heart of Darkness* (1907)) and the 'colonial poetry' of Rudyard Kipling, in French literature the fiction and non-fiction writings of Paul Vigné d'Octon (*Chair noire* (1889), *Au pays des fétiches* (1890), *Terre de mort: Soudan & Dahomey* (1892)), Maurice Dubard (*Fleur d'Afrique* (1894)), Paul Bonnetain (*Dans la brousse* (1895)), Pierre Loti (*Le Roman d'un spahi* (1881)), and the literary duo Georges Athénas and Aimé Merlo (writing under the joint pseudonym of Marius-Ary Leblond: *Le Zézère* (1903), *L'Oued* (1907), *En France* (1909)) [Lebel 1925; Dykes 1942; Hoffman 1973; Fanoudh-Siefer 1980] (see also [The Image 1989; The Image 2012]).

Russian literature also paid tribute to this fashion, though not to a comparable extent with Western Europe. There are Nikolai Gumilev's 'African' poems [Davidson 1992; Ivanov 2000: 287–325], and the chansonnettes of Aleksandr Vertinsky ('The Purple Negro') and Iza

Kremer ('The Negro from Zanzibar' and 'Black Tom') (see the texts and recordings of the songs at <<http://a-pesni.org/cabaret/Cabaret.php>>), and travellers' tales in magazines, particularly those published for children. Arkady Averchenko recalls this literature with nostalgia, as the literature of a departed childhood: regretfully, he describes discovering that the negro circus artist whom he saw at Sebastopol was nothing like the heroes of Mayne Reid or Boussenard ('Smert Afrikanskogo okhotnika [The Death of an African Hunter]', 1914):

*A negro should be naked apart from a bright cotton loincloth. But here I saw a profanation: a negro in a red tail-coat with a ridiculous green top hat on his head. Also, a negro should be frightening. But this one was doing some sort of tricks, running in and out amongst the audience, pulling greasy cards out of everyone's pockets, and behaving obsequiously towards everyone* [Averchenko 1989: 63–65].

In these years the artistic culture of Africa found its apologist in Voldemārs Matvejs (1888–1914), an artist and theoretician of the Russian avant-garde who wrote under the name of Vladimir Markov and was the author of the first monograph on African art published in Russia (*Iskusstvo negrov* [The Art of the Negroes] 1919) [Markov 1919; Koshevskaya 1969].

The historical memory of the Russian peasants' and American negroes' shared servile past was still present in Soviet literature, but by now there were more differences than similarities. In contrast to the pre-revolutionary cultural tradition, in which this sort of attitude was the result of principled anti-serfdom and general humane considerations, Soviet authors were merely following the Party's instructions about proletarian humanism. In the ideological context of Soviet propaganda, the black inhabitants of Africa and America were attractive as the victims of exploitation and racism, and were regarded accordingly as allies in the struggle against global imperialism. The builders of a communist society had every reason to hope that the victims themselves would see the Soviet Union as the promised land and Soviet citizens as their defenders. The poverty and exploitation that characterised colonial Africa were notorious, and it is worth remembering that the presidential administration itself regarded the situation of the black population of the United States in racial (racist) terms. The history of the USA — and particularly the South — in the first two decades of the twentieth century is the history of racial segregation (the Jim Crow Laws), the activity of the Ku Klux Klan and the excesses of Lynch Law. According to official data made public by President Wilson in 1918, there were over 3 000 lynchings (of which 2 472 were of black men and fifty of black women) between 1889 and 1918. The situation came to a head with the mass race riots and disturbances in more than thirty cities over the summer and early autumn of 1919, during

which thousands of negro families suffered and at least forty-three black people were lynched (according to the official report by G. E. Haynes, an official of the Department of Labor). In the eyes of contemporaries these events, which came to be known as the Red Summer, were a perfect demonstration of the mood of a society teetering on the brink of a race war [Erickson 1960: 2293–4; Tuttle 1970; Whitaker 2008; McWhirter 2011]. In some cities the negroes put up resistance in the form of self-defence squads, which led to casualties on both sides and the introduction of martial law.

Against this background of overt discrimination and proclamations of inferiority, the internationalist slogans that accompanied Soviet and pro-Soviet propaganda were taken as a guarantee of racial tolerance in the emerging communist state. Commitments to internationalism and calls to the class war were repeatedly issued in Soviet literature, beginning in the first years after the revolution. In Sergei Obradovich's poem 'A Negro in Moscow' (1922), written under the fresh impression of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, which had taken place in Moscow and Petrograd and had had a number of black delegates amongst its participants, and published in *Pravda*, the negro is an elderly delegate who watches the October parade and ruminates sadly on the fate of his African brethren. But he is encouraged in his meditations by the name of Lenin and the 'dread anthem' of the proletariat, which he imagines he can already hear on the banks of the distant Congo. In the film *The Red Imps* (directed by Ivan Perestiani, written by Pavel Blyakhin), released in 1923, a young negro called Tom Jackson appears on the screen. The action takes place against the background of the Civil War in the Ukraine — the operations of Semen Budennyi's First Cavalry Army against Nestor Makhno's irregulars, in whose rear three partisans are operating: Misha, a Young Communist, and his sister Dunyasha, the children of a worker killed by Makhno's men, and their friend, a black circus artiste who happened to be in the Ukraine by chance. This adventure film, full of daring tricks about the three young partisans who later joined the Red Army, was a colossal success, and in the following years it had the sequels *Savurmogila*, *Princess Shirvanskaya's Crime*, *Princess Shirvanskaya's Punishment*, and *Illan-Dilli*, in each of which the 'Soviet negro' played by the Moroccan actor Kador Ben-Salim performs wonders of resourcefulness, strength and acrobatic skill [Lebedev 1965].

Little children also learnt about Africa from ideologically correct books written for them. One of the first — if not the very first — of these was *May and Oktyabrina*, a story in verse by Lev Zilov about a brother and sister who travel the world and various continents on their bed while asleep. The first stop on their journey is Africa, with a kaleidoscope of verses describing the pyramids, a crocodile chewing bananas under a palm tree, well-fed monkeys and the 'negro folk'

dancing. The exoticism does not last long, though: Frenchmen arrive on a steamer with ‘fat-bellied capital’ in tow, and the Soviet children observe a lamentable scene of forced negro labour.

*They carry stones and rails and sleepers,  
Make telegraph poles of the palms <...>  
The French men flog them,  
Give them no rest*

[Zilov 1924: 12].

Indignant at what they have seen, they threaten the Frenchmen, who pursue them in an aeroplane, but the bed proves more manoeuvrable: May, the pilot, ‘moves their motor with the bed, | The petrol tank blows up, | And the passengers fall | Like weights’ [Zilov 1924: 16]. Their next journey, to India and Japan, convinces them that the best country in the world is the Soviet Union, because only there is there ‘space and freedom for the working people’, and only here do children ‘help the negroes, Indians and Japanese’, which is summed up in the concluding line of the book: ‘Long live the USSR and its global significance!’

Unlike the USSR, exotic Africa is depicted as a place where injustice reigns and perils await the traveller. Soviet children were told about this in 1925 by Kornei Chukovsky in his verse tale about the wicked robber and cannibal Barmalei. Little children learnt how Barmalei caught Tanya and Vanya, who had gone walking in Africa, and threw the kind Doctor Aibolit onto a bonfire, how they were all rescued by the good crocodile, who swallowed the robber, and how after being swallowed the robber was re-educated and came back to Leningrad with Tanya and Vanya, to distribute buns and sweets to the children. The memorable opening of ‘Barmalei’ has become part of folklore:

*Little children!  
For nothing in the world  
Should you go to Africa,  
For a walk in Africa <...>  
In Africa is the robber,  
In Africa is the villain,  
In Africa is the dreadful  
Bar-ma-lei.  
He runs through Africa  
And eats children —  
The nasty, wicked, greedy Barmalei!*

Africa had figured in Chukovsky’s verses for children before — in his equally famous verse tale *The Crocodile* (1917) — and was to appear again, in the sequel to *Barmalei, Aibolit* (1929),<sup>1</sup> and also in his prose

<sup>1</sup> Based on Hugh Loftus’s *Dr Doolittle* [Eds.].

story *Doctor Aibolit* (1936). Chukovsky's name was also connected with the first film for children involving drawn images (animation was combined with live action and studio filming), which also had an African theme: *Senka the African* (1927, dir. I. Ivanov-Vano, Yu. Merkulov, D. Cherkes). It was about a Soviet pioneer who, after going to the zoo and reading Chukovsky's book, dreamt that he went to Africa with Krokodil Krokodilovich, and then woke up safely after his adventures there. Chukovsky made no mention of the people who lived in Africa, but by this time Soviet children and their parents had had the opportunity to see them with their own eyes. Whereas before the revolution any Africans in Russia had usually come as servants, along with a mere twelve as members of sports teams or circus troupes (which is how Kador Ben-Salim, who acted in *The Red Imps*, came to be in Russia), or as entertainers (like the troupe of 'Amazons' from Dahomey who visited Moscow in 1901, and were remembered by Boris Pasternak as one of the most vivid impressions of his adolescence in *Safe Conduct* [Pasternak 2004: 149, 554]),<sup>1</sup> now it was possible to see them among the members of various party, trade union and artistic delegations, which since the beginning of the 1920s had frequently visited Soviet cities. The main events of this sort were the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh congresses of the Communist International, which took place in Moscow and Petrograd (in 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1928 and 1935 respectively), and also five congresses of the Profintern (1921, 1922, 1924, 1928, 1930), the thousands of delegates to which included not a few black people [Adibekov 1971; Baldwin 2002: 32–40; McKenzie 2008; Batlin 2009]. Thus on the pages of the first issue of the journal *Pioneer*, which came out in 1924, the young reader beheld a negro lounging on the imperial throne: 'Here before us,' ran the caption to this photograph, 'is a representative of that most oppressed race, an American Negro delegate, on the tsar's throne in the Kremlin.' 'This will be the fate of all thrones,' was the explanation of this strange

<sup>1</sup> 'Yesterday at the Zoological Gardens there began the spectacle by the Dahomeyans, who will exhibit their dances and military exercises three times a day on weekdays, and five times on holidays' (*Novosti dnya*, 29 April 1901). The painting *In the Zoological Gardens* by Nikolai Kasatkin reflects this trend. The painting's subject, and what happened to it, were related by Ya. Ya. Minchenkov: 'They brought the negroes and put them on show like animals at the zoo. A lady carrying a child went up to the railings behind which the negroes were situated. One of the negro women, seeing the child, stretches out to him to give him a kiss. The conclusion is that maternal feelings know no racial barriers, for them all people are equal, and kin. Kasatkin sent the picture as a gift to the President of the United States in connexion with the negro problem. Kasatkin always tried to solve the social problems of his time in his pictures' [Minchenkov 1961: 163]. These Dahomeyans were the subject of craniometric measurements by A.D. Elkind, who published an article entitled 'Towards the Anthropology of the Negroes: the Dahomeyans' in the *Russkii antropologicheskii zhurnal* [Russian Anthropological Journal], vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 20–35. The demand for negro exoticism led to some curious incidents: 'Last Sunday in the town of Roslavl there began the exhibition of two negroes with remarkably curly hair dressed in multicoloured clothes. They ate raw meat, danced wild dances, and so on. The negroes were a success with the public, but a few days ago one of the spectators recognised one of the negroes as his acquaintance Semen Drotov, a peasant from the village of Grenki, Epischevo Region. During the confusion that followed, the "negro" escaped. Measures have been taken to discover and identify him' [Kak budto iz Chekhova 1909].

scene. One such delegate in 1922–23 was the Jamaican poet Claude McKay, a communist sympathiser who participated in the work of the fourth congress of the Comintern, where he was ‘much in demand’, as he wrote later, ‘at lectures by poets and journalists, and at factory workers’ and soldiers’ meetings.’ McKay met Trotsky, Bukharin, Radek, and the writers Evgeny Zamyatin, Samuil Marshak, and Kornei Chukovsky [McKay 1923; Tillery 1992: 64–70].<sup>1</sup> A collection of McKay’s essays on racist atrocities in America, *Trial by Lynching*, was published in Russian in 1925 [McKay 1925; Baldwin 2002: 28–33]. In 1928 the American communists were represented at the fourth international congress of the Profintern, which took place in Moscow, by the black politician James Ford, the head of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, founded that year. The following year, Ford’s successor the American communist George Padmore, a descendant of the Ashanti, came to Moscow, where he headed the Negro Bureau of the Profintern [Hooker 1967]. Padmore, who wrote pamphlets and articles for the English-language *Moscow Daily News*, became a popular figure in the Soviet press. In 1930 he was elected to the Moscow Soviet, and stood on the platform of the Mausoleum among Stalin’s entourage during the May Day parades [Matusevich 2003: 26]. Also active were Padmore’s colleagues, the Zulu Albert Nzula (the General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa), and the Kikuyu Jomo Kenyatta (a trade union leader and the future president of Kenya), who were prominent in the social life of Moscow in 1931–1933.<sup>2</sup>

Another reason for the appearance of negroes on the streets of Soviet towns in these years was the economic depression in the United States, which forced Americans to seek work abroad, and the agitation of Soviet recruiters, who invited foreigners and Americans in particular to organise the agricultural and industrial production of the USSR [Margulies 1968; Graziosi 1988: 35–59].

It is in this industrial context that the negro is mentioned in Yakov Ilyin’s novel *The Big Conveyer* (1932), which deals with the construction of the Volga (later Stalingrad) Tractor Factory and fully reflect the fevered atmosphere of industrialisation. The negro appears on the first page of the novel — the reader sees him through the hero’s eyes just after his return from America, where he had been to study technology, during the May Day parade on Red Square:

*The negro, with a red neckerchief, was sitting on the shoulders of some foreigner, waving his cap about and shouting something excitedly. The*

<sup>1</sup> McKay published an extensive essay, ‘Soviet Russia and the Negro’ (*The Crisis*, December 1923) about his stay in the Soviet Union and the friendly attitude of Soviet people towards negroes. See [Tillery 1992].

<sup>2</sup> On the activities of the Negro Bureau of the Profintern, see [Trehwela 1988: 64–9; Weiss 2010]. Nzula, under the pseudonym Jackson, was the author and co-author of books published in Russian: [Dzhekson 1932; Zusmanovich, Potekhin, Dzhekson 1933].

foreigner smiled at Bobrovitsky and said, loudly and gaily, in English, 'Hello! Moscow is Moscow, after all!' [Ilyin 1934: 11].

Compositionally, the English greeting serves as the germ of the plot, which adumbrates the creation, not only of a factory the like of which had not been seen before, but of a whole new world. 'Nimble Fords, stretched Lincolns and solid, spacious Buicks' dart about the streets of a changed Moscow in front of the hero [Ilyin 1934: 11]. Then, at the factory building site, amongst the foreigners (the instructors and fitters initially responsible for the new technology), he meets Richardson, a negro, or the 'little black', as the kind old toolmaker, whose apprentice he is, describes him ('Negroes — they're all black,' as his interlocutor comments on this description) [Ilyin 1934: 65]. The author's portrait of Richardson is more complex: 'He had the intelligent, finely cut face of a man who has suffered.' At a general meeting of the foreigners involved in the production, 'he sat by himself, with no one beside him', underlining the contrast between Soviet internationalism and capitalist racism [Ilyin 1934: 294].

In this case the literary sketch — the vague hint at some sort of traumatic events in Richardson's past and his involuntary isolation amongst his colleagues from abroad — had a documentary basis. Ilyin's contemporary readers who followed the Soviet press might have remembered an event which took place at the Stalingrad Tractor Factory at the end of June 1930, when two white Americans beat up their black colleague Robert Robinson. This event was the subject of newspaper articles on American racism, Soviet internationalism, and the inadequacy of educational work amongst foreign proletarians, as well as a court case that led to one of the accused being sent back to the USA. At the trial, which was broadcast by radio into the homes of the workers at the tractor factory and widely covered in the press, Robinson described racist violence in the USA and declared that the American authorities connived at it.<sup>1</sup>

The following year, 1931, the Soviet cinemagoer was presented with a film with a plot reflecting Robinson's story: it had the eloquent title *Black Skin* (directed by Pavel Kolomoitsev, written by D. E. Urin), and depicted the 'ulcers of capitalism' through the stories of three American workers who had come to the Soviet Union after being sacked from the Ford factory. One of them was a negro, Tom (played by Kador Ben-Salim, who had become famous in the 1923 Georgian adventure *The Red Imps*),<sup>2</sup> and this irritates his racially prejudiced

<sup>1</sup> In 1933 Robinson returned to the USA, but, unable to find work there, came back to the USSR and got a job at a ball-bearing factory, and even became a deputy of the Moscow Soviet. Robinson was to remain in the USSR until 1973, when, after vain attempts to leave the country, he finally obtained permission for a holiday in Uganda, and eventually to have his American citizenship restored and return to the USA. See Robinson's autobiography [Robinson 1988], and also [Carew 2008: 168–71; Keys 2009: 31–54].

<sup>2</sup> *The Red Imps* [*Krasnye diavolyata*, also known as *The Little Red Devils*], directed and co-scripted by Ivan Perestiani, was one of the few real triumphs for the early Soviet cinema in terms of viewer numbers at

colleagues. The white American Sam is particularly hostile towards him, treating him as a man from an 'inferior race', and even driving him out of the hostel. But the Soviet workers will not let Tom be mistreated: they boycott Sam, and eventually persuade him to re-evaluate his racial prejudices and beg his black comrade's pardon.

Five years later the condemnation of racism reached its apogee in an unsurpassed hit of the Soviet cinema. In Grigory Aleksandrov's film *The Circus* (1936), the foreign racist von Kneischitz's attempt publicly to humiliate the white American Mary (played by Lyubov Orlova) for her liaison with a negro and her black child in front of a Soviet circus audience is an instructive fiasco. Soviet citizens sing an internationalist lullaby over the mixed-race baby, and the ringmaster (played by Vladimir Volodin) delivers an amiable homily to future parents: 'All children are loved in this country. Have as many as you like, black ones, white ones, red ones, sky-blue ones if you like, with pink stripes and grey polka-dots too, by all means!'<sup>1</sup> The film's 'Song of the Motherland' (alternatively known by its first line, 'Broad is my Motherland'), a setting by Isaak Dunaevsky of words by Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, afterwards one of the key songs of Soviet musical culture, reminded the listener that 'there are no black or coloured people for us.'

Another anti-racist film intended to be made in the same period, *Blacks and Whites*, never actually reached production. However, a group of twenty-two negroes headed by the black writer Langston Hughes did come to the USSR as consultants and actors for this film, and were duly paid, even though the plans to make the film were shelved.<sup>2</sup> Hughes and several of his comrades made a journey across

---

home. It is set during the Russian Civil War of 1918–1921 and follows the adventures of a teenage brother and sister and a Black acrobat who volunteer as scouts for the Red Army. [Eds.]

- <sup>1</sup> The child cast as Mary's son was Jim Patterson, the son of Lloyd Patterson, who had come to the USSR in 1932 after finishing drama school, and a Soviet girl called Vera Arapova. He stayed in the USSR, graduated from naval college and became a submariner. Then, after graduating from the A. M. Gorky Literary Institute, he became a poet and prose writer and in 1967 a member of the USSR Writers' Union. In 1994 Patterson moved to the USA. See the reminiscences of him, 'Our James Patterson', collected at the site <<http://flot.com/blog/historyofNVMU/352.php?print=Y>>. ['Broad is my Motherland' was effectively the Soviet national anthem in the late 1930s, as the 'Internationale' had fallen out of favour, and the official anthem of 1943 was still some years away: see Caroline Brooke, 'Changing Identities: The Soviet and Russian National Anthems', *Slavonica*, 2007, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 27–38. — Eds.]
- <sup>2</sup> Published archival documents show that in 1932 Molotov and Kuibyshev sent Stalin a coded telegram telling him about their conversation with the American businessman Cooper, who was then in the USSR. When Cooper found out about the making of *Blacks and Whites*, he tried to convince Molotov and Kuibyshev that the arrival of a group of black actors in the USSR, 'and especially the making of the film as an example of anti-American propaganda, would be an insuperable obstacle to the recognition' of the USSR by the United States. Molotov and Kuibyshev suggested 'not giving any answer about the negroes' and 'politely refusing' Cooper's request for a meeting with Stalin. Stalin approved this proposal. The Politburo's agenda for 1 August 1932 contained an item, proposed by Kuibyshev, 'about the negroes', after the discussion of which the Politburo instructed the Party secretary Pavel Postyshev and Osip Pyatnitsky, a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, to act in accordance with the opinions expressed. Two days later Kaganovich, writing to Stalin on behalf of the Politburo, was already

the USSR, through Central Asia and Uzbekistan; later, in his memoirs, Hughes described what he had seen in Uzbekistan as the realisation of a nationalities policy which could be a model for the emancipation of the American negroes and the creation of an autonomous negro polity in the American South [Hughes 1934; 2008].

Cinema was followed by light music, theatre and literature in condemning — and at the same time evoking — racism. An example of this was the gramophone record of the 'Negro Lullaby' (1932) played by the jazz band conducted by Ya. B. Skomorovsky and inviting the listener to name a country where there was no slavery or racism:

*The black negro, the black slave waits for his girl <...>  
 You know, somewhere in the world there's a land of free people.  
 The azure moon shines there between dark branches.  
 In that country, the neighbour said, there've been no slaves  
 for many years.  
 He brought us greetings from there.<sup>1</sup>*

Leonid Utesov sang of 'negro love' to the tune of 'The Moon Was Yellow' and in words by Anatoly d'Aktil:

*Beneath black skin  
 Blood is redder,  
 Tears more transparent.  
 Dreams brighter  
 And love more tender.*

At the same time Eugene O'Neill's play *All God's Chillun Got Wings* was performed by the Chamber Theatre, and Ren Maran's *Journal sans date* published (about the dramatic love between a black man and a white woman [Maran 1928]).<sup>2</sup> In Aleksandr Belyaev's fantasy novel *The Man Who Lost His Face* (1929), the racist governor, poisoned by an endocrinological mixture, turns into a negro and experiences all the delights of racial discrimination. The children's magazine *Yozh* [The Hedgehog] informed its young readers in 1931, on the first page of its first issue, that in America 'they burn negroes

---

inclined to think that 'we could do without this film.' Finally, on 22 August, at Pyatnitsky's suggestion, the Politburo decided '(a) not to announce a complete refusal to release' the film *Blacks and Whites*, and (b) to instruct Postyshev and Pyatnitsky 'to examine the scenario of the film with a view to introducing serious changes in accordance with the opinions expressed'. In the event, the film was shelved [Kremlevskii kinoteatr 2005: 190–1].

<sup>1</sup> Another popular 'negro lullaby' of those years was recorded by the jazz ensemble of the Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre, conducted by V. Kandelaki, a translation of a song with words by G. H. Clutsam: 'Oh, my baby, my curly-headed baby, | We'll sit below da sky and sing a song | To the moo- oo-oo oo-oon.' [The Russian version of the text, however, bears only a tenuous relationship to this English original. — Transl.] Another well-known 'negro lullaby' was written round the same time by Yuliya Weisberg (for voice and piano, op. 33, 1934), setting words by Tikhon Churilin.

<sup>2</sup> Soviet criticism regarded Maran's novel as lacking in class-consciousness, moving the 'problem of the relations between races to a purely sentimental level' [Rykova 1933: 42].

on bonfires and execute communists in the electric chair,’ and two years later the same journal published Samuil Marshak’s poem *Mister Twister*, which immediately became one of the most popular poems in Soviet children’s literature. The story of the American millionaire visiting Leningrad with his family and doing his best to avoid meeting any negroes (or indeed other non-white ethnic groups) reminded children about racism in the USA and the hospitable attitude towards people of any colour in the USSR. In later printed editions of the poem Marshak made some minor alterations, but its central didactic idea was taken as ideologically relevant by several generations of Soviet children.<sup>1</sup>

Racial inequality remained a constant theme of Soviet propaganda, literature and cinema in the ensuing years as well [Roman 2012]. At the same time, there were fewer actual negroes on the streets of Soviet cities. Once the activities of the Soviet Comintern and Profintern had been wound up, there was a sharp fall in the number of foreign delegations visiting the USSR, and the struggle against racism, though it continued as before to assume that its victims were primarily black, was in a sense banished to the virtual realm [Baldwin 2002]. The Soviet citizen knew that negroes in Africa and America had a hard time of it, but this knowledge was from now on to a great extent mediated ideologically and through the media.

Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov drew the Soviet reader an image of black people as seen by racists in their notes on their American travels, published in 1935:

*Negroes are talented. Well, the whites are happy to applaud them while continuing to regard them as an inferior race. Negroes are kindly permitted to appear on stage. Obviously, when the black man is on the stage and the white man is in the box, he can look down on the black man without injury to his amour-propre.*

*Negroes are impressionable. The whites are ironical about this and think the negroes are stupid. Indeed! You don’t need to be at all impressionable to be a good businessman <...> Negroes have a powerful imagination. For example, they like to bear the names of famous people, and sometimes some porter, lift attendant, or farm labourer called Jim Smith will give*

<sup>1</sup> Among the more important changes are the presence in the early editions of two negro children who feel sorry for Twister and the doormen’s plot to keep him out of the hotel. In later editions these lines are omitted. (There are different opinions on the value of these changes. B. Galanov thinks that they improve the poem [Galanov 1970: 5–27], and V. V. Smirnova that they are detrimental [Smirnova 1973: 22].) In 1963 there was a sequel to *Mister Twister* in the form of *Mister Twister’s Trip to Africa*, in which the ex-minister dreams that he has to go to Africa, ‘to the homeland of Othello’, on business. He is overcome with confusion, imagining staying in the same hotel as black people, but he is unexpectedly refused a visa: ‘So much offensive irony | Hidden in this polite but firm refusal | By the government of the former colony.’ The same year the Soyuzmultfilm studio made a cartoon of ‘Mister Twister’ after Marshak’s own scenario, from which he wisely omitted Mister Twister’s daughter’s remarks that in the USSR she would ‘feed on caviare, catch live sturgeon, ride a troika along the banks of the Volga and pick raspberries at a collective farm.’

his full name as *Jim George Washington Abraham Lincoln Grant Nebuchadnezzar Smith*.

*'But of course,' says the Southern gentleman, whose imagination contains only one delightful image all day and all night long — a million dollars — 'he's a complete idiot.'*

*In all films and vaudevilles negroes are comic characters and play foolish but well-meaning servants.*

*Negroes love nature. As is normal for artistic natures, they are contemplative. The Southern gentleman has his explanation for this too. 'You see, negroes are lazy and incapable of systematic work.' <...>*

*Finally, negroes are emotional. Ah! At this point the Southern gentleman gets seriously worried. He gets out his Colt, his rope, his bar of soap. He sets the bonfire. He suddenly becomes remarkably noble and suspicious. 'You see, negroes are sex criminals. They ought to be hanged.'*

*Negroes are inquisitive. The Southern gentleman has thousands of explanations for this. 'Obviously — they are unpardonably impudent people. They won't mind their own business. They stick their black noses in everywhere' [Ilf, Petrov 1961: 420].*

Ilf and Petrov's book does not contain overt propaganda or ideological clichés, and has some of the detachment and informational depth of ethnography. But a point of striking interest is that the extensive passage devoted to the negroes is presented in reverse. The readers of these reflections put forth by racists could imagine real-life negroes for themselves *e contrario* — as *not* being like what racists were saying about them — and, in principle, give him whatever features they liked. The only rule limiting the reader's fancy here was, in the words of the hero of Ilyin's *The Big Conveyor*, that 'Negroes — they're all black.' In his guesses about what the negroes themselves must think about themselves, other people, culture and politics, Aleksandr Belyaev went furthest when he made Jim, a black worker, one of the main narrator-heroes of his science fiction novel *Beneath Arctic Skies* (1938). The reader learns that Jim, 'like many of his comrades', had 'long dreamt' of visiting the USSR to find work, since the economic crisis and social chaos continued to reign in his native Florida, as in the rest of the USA. Jim finds his new work in the Far North, where he becomes a concrete pourer, then a miner, and where associating and working together with Soviet people in their successful transformation of the severe landscape changes him too in his attitude to work and to his plans for the future.

*Jim thought as he walked. He had worked all his life, since his earliest childhood. But there, where he came from, work gave him no satisfaction. It was one of the necessities of life. <...> But here for the first time in his life he felt that the work that he had finished did not leave him. There remained a firm connexion between Jim and the work that he had done [Belyaev 1939].*

At the end of the novel Jim goes back to Florida, but twenty days later he returns with four more comrades to live and work in a place 'where work is so meaningful and full of relevance to life':

*Behind him stood four more Jims. Perhaps they were not all Jims, but all four of them were negroes who looked very like him [Belyaev 1939].*

The negroes that appeared in the Stalin-era Soviet media were always drawn as victims, or else as fortunate individuals who had miraculously escaped from slavery and the caprices of racism. Soviet readers and cinema-goers received little to no information about the history of abolitionism, the prohibition of the slave trade, or the American Civil War. In other words, they were totally unaware that there was a history of opposition to racism within the United States. The main thing they knew was that negroes had had a bad time in the past and that their lot had not improved in the present. In 1945 there was yet another reminder of this in the form of the film *The Fifteen-Year-Old Captain* (dir. Vasily Zhuravlev), based on Jules Verne's *Un capitaine de quinze ans*. In the course of the story — the adventures of passengers aboard the whaler *Pilgrim*, commanded by the young sailor Dick Sand, diverted from its course through the machinations of the cook Negro and arriving in Africa instead of South America — the spectator could admire the kindness and strength of the good negro Hercule (played by Weyland Rodd),<sup>1</sup> the devotion of the old negress singing a lullaby to a white baby, and at the same time be horrified by their dreadful fellow-tribesmen from Angola, black savages with rings through their noses, obedient to the slave-trading villains. Some phrases from the film came to circulate independently of it — 'Africa. Angola. The land of slave-traders and their captives. The land of chains.' 'Negroes are a valuable commodity.' 'No, I am not Negro! I am Sebastião Pereira, a dealer in ebony!' (Curiously, this sentence does not occur in Verne's novel, nor does the name Sebastião Pereira.) 'Mganga! Here comes the great Mganga!' 'What scoundrel would dare to buy a white woman?' This harmonised with the general context in which the history of Africa and the people who lived there evoked on the part of the Soviet spectator not so much ethnographic curiosity as specific ideological emotions.

The deterioration in relations between the USSR and the USA, which was already making itself felt at the beginning of 1946, resulted in a sharp increase in reports of the social disadvantage suffered by

<sup>1</sup> Weyland Rodd, who played the part of Hercule, had come to the Soviet Union in 1938, graduated from the directing department of the State Institute for Dramatic Art in Moscow, and worked under V. É. Meierkhold in the theatre. In 1947 Rodd played the part of Ur, a black native in Aleksandr Razumnyi's film *Miklukho-Maklai*. Like the few other negroes in the USSR, Rodd often figured in the press as a living example of Soviet internationalism. The press's attention later switched to his black daughter Victoria, noting, for example, her first day at School No. 179 for Girls in Moscow. They printed photographs of her as a new-born baby (she had been born on 27 May 1945) and in the company of her classmates [Polyanovsky 1952: 9].

the black population: *Pravda*, followed by every other newspaper in the country, published articles about the resurgence of the racist Ku Klux Klan (*Pravda*, 15 August, 20 August, 24 December 1945, 6 January, 13 April 1946; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 4 October, 7 October, 14 October, 16 December 1945; *Trud*, 4 October, 22 December, 23 December 1945).<sup>1</sup> The informational arsenal of the following years of the Cold War was augmented with many scenes of racial violence in literature, cinema and mass, 'folk' culture.

For example, in Mariya Prilezhaeva's story *Your Comrades are With You* (1949), intended for a teenage audience, a whole chapter is taken up by the harrowing tale of a black Second World War hero after his return to his native Alabama, told to her class by a Soviet teacher. The negro Joe discovers that a documentary about a battle in which he took part, winning a medal, is being shown in a white part of town. Taking his little son Sam, he goes to the cinema, but is not allowed in, and his innocent attempt to reason with the whites ends in tragedy. Sam is thrown aside, and his father seized by the enraged racists. As he lay on the ground, 'Sam saw a howling mob in the distance. They were taking his father, a black soldier who had fought under the flag of the United States, to hang him on a tree.' The teacher's story is motivated by the subject of the lesson — a study of article 123 of the Soviet constitution, which establishes 'the equality of citizens of the USSR irrespective of their ethnicity or race', and is vivid evidence of the sort of atrocities that are committed where there is no such constitution.<sup>2</sup> The Russian translation of Alexander Saxton's novel *The Great Midland*, published the same year, acquainted the Russian reader with the story of the negro worker Pledger McAdams, who returned to Chicago after the First World War. Here Pledger joins the Communist Party, but it murdered by one of the railway company's spies. The last thoughts of the dying negro turn to the Soviet Union and the soldiers of the Red Army resisting the Nazis.

Poetry lovers did not have to do without such stories, either. In a volume of verse published in 1951, Viktor Goncharov told in rhyme the story of an old black loader, made redundant and beaten to death

<sup>1</sup> See also [Demidenko 1954]. On the history of Soviet-American relations and anti-Western propaganda in those years, [Fateev 1999] (unfortunately, the author of this valuable monograph does not pay any special attention to the subject of racism, but mentions it only in passing); [Rukavishnikov 2000; Pechatnov 2006].

<sup>2</sup> In the course of the story the children return to the story of little Sam to illustrate it at a Pioneer meeting with pictures, using an epidiascope ('the epidiascope, in a glow of light, projected on picture after another onto the wall'), with a continuation of their own invention: a revolutionary uprising of the negroes on the screen and collective singing of the Soviet anthem by the children. ('The city burns. A daring black boy has climbed up onto the roof of the tallest building and tied the pole of the red flag to the chimney. Hoorah! <...> All the workers on the plantation of Mr Evenson and the other Misters rose up. They knew about the Soviet Union <...> A strong, high voice carried the tune <...> It was a stern, restrained and happy feeling of love of one's country' [Prilezhaeva 1949].

in a tram by a racist crowd for sitting in a place reserved for whites, and also of his son, a poet, greeting Stalin in verse:

*Not long ago an envelope arrived at the Kremlin.  
From New York. A letter. A negro poet  
Writes to Stalin, writes in verse  
About his children, about life in rotten attics.  
About how sadly the wind whistles there,  
That often he and his brother lie awake at night.  
'Just to take one look, just with one eye  
At the city they know from stories. <...>  
Great and immortal, of light and steel,  
I have heard that you once wrote verse.  
I send you my greeting in verse!  
Mac Stone, son of John, homeless poet*

[Goncharov 1951: 88–91].<sup>1</sup>

A persistent commonplace of anti-American rhetoric was the comparison of racists to fascists, and America to Nazi Germany. A country which had been an ally during the war years was depicted in journalism of the second half of the 1940s and early 1950s as a bulwark of Hitlerism, anti-communism and racism. A typical example of this is Mikhail Sholokhov's book of articles *The Hangmen Shall Not Escape the Peoples' Justice* (1950), in which the classic Soviet writer depicted President Truman himself as a Klansman, not only avid for violence against black people, but even physically similar to the Nazi criminals:

*Look at him, people, at the American fascist in his white robe! He knows how to lynch a negro, and he will kill you just as easily. He hides his eyes behind little slits in his hood, but his eyes are as shameless and remorseless as Hitler's, Goering's and Himmler's [Sholokhov 1950: 13].*

The resemblance of American racists to fascists did not end with their militarism or hatred of black people. David Zlatopolsky's book *The Formation and Development of the USSR as a Union State* (1954) informs the reader that besides the black population of the USA,

---

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that Mac Stone, who was invented by Goncharov, thus not only displays his awareness of the 'immortal' Stalin's poetical experiments, but also bestows upon him the title of poet, in addition to the other manifestations of his genius. The same collection reminded Soviet lovers of poetry that negroes' life was hard not only in the USA, but also in colonial Africa, particularly Nigeria, where a number of black miners in Enugu had been shot during the suppression of a strike. Cursing the perpetrators of the crime — the Dutch and the British with their 'Labour government' — the poet also expressed his confidence that 'The year and the hour are not far | When the people will throw you out of Nigeria.' It is interesting that the story of old John told by Goncharov anticipated an event that took place in December 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, and, receiving wide publicity, set off a wave of the mass movement for racial equality. An 'elderly' African-American woman, as she was described in the Soviet press (she was in fact forty-two), Rosa Parks, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger in a bus and was arrested. This arrest provoked a boycott of the transport system by the black population, and a year later a recognition by the Supreme Court that racial segregation in buses was unlawful, and the abolition of places reserved for white passengers.

'American racists persecute Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and other Slavonic nationalities' [Zlatopolsky 1954: 42].

The cinematographic culmination of these already existing stereotypes came in Abram Room's film *Silvery Dust* (1953, based on the Estonian writer August Jakobson's play *The Jackals*), which, although a fantasy thriller, horrified its spectators with a realistically presented plot in which American militarists, in their efforts to produce a deadly chemical weapon, conduct inhuman experiments on negroes in secret laboratories, and, as the viewer may guess, would not flinch from conducting them on Slavs either [Kovalov 2003: 85].

Such examples could be multiplied. There can be no doubt of the kindly and sympathetic attitude in these years to negroes, who were not to be found on the streets of Soviet cities, but were present in the hearts of Soviet citizens. Further evidence of this sympathy was provided in 1952 by the film *Maksimka* (dir. Vladimir Braun), based on K. M. Stanyukovich's *Sea Stories*, and relating the touching friendship of the Russian sailors of the corvette *Bogatyr*, and a negro boy whom they had picked up from the wreckage of an American slave-trading ship that had gone down in a storm. In contrast to the scheming, greedy Americans, who had been preparing a life of slavery for the boy, the Russian sailors took good care of the boy they had saved, to whom they had given the name Maksimka (played in the film by a white boy blacked up), and he returns their love: he helps his friend, the sailor Luchkin (played by Boris Andreev) to give up the drink with which the latter drowns the pain of his peasant humiliation, and then, together with the crew, rescues him from the hands of American gangmasters. In the finale Maksimka joins the crew of the ship and becomes a cabin boy in the Russian navy.<sup>1</sup>

In his speech at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers in 1954, Sergei Mikhalkov recounted an incident that had taken place in the regional theatre in Kalinin. During a staging of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (the stage adaptation by the director Aleksandr Aronov) the young spectators became so emotionally involved in the action that first, during the auction scene, when kindly whites were trying unsuccessfully to buy Tom out of slavery, a little girl ran out of the audience to offer them three Soviet roubles, and then, in the finale, when the planter addressed the players and the audience declaring his intention to annihilate people of colour — black, yellow or any other — somebody shot at him with a catapult. 'The person who had done so, an eleven-year-old boy, calmly declared that he hated all bourgeois and the actors who played them. His friends were in perfect

<sup>1</sup> The film came fifth in the ratings for 1953, having been watched by almost thirty-three million people [Sovetskie khudozhestvennye filmy 1961: 471]. After the film's release, Tolya Bovykin, who played Maksimka, became the idol of his generation, receiving groups of visitors, giving interviews, etc. See, for example [God tridtsat sedmoi 1954: 37].

agreement with him, and, armed with similar catapults, supported him in his attempt' [*Vtoroi vsesoyuznyi syez*d 1956: 236].

Mikhalkov's story (which he later wrote up as a poem, 'Watching *Uncle Tom's Cabin*', and published in *Pravda*, 1 June 1955), judging by the stenographic record of the congress, excited the audience and provoked sympathetic laughter; it is easy to believe that this was genuine. But it is remarkable that the presence of real, and not fictional negroes in the Soviet propaganda discourse of those years is limited to a few individuals. One of these was Paul Robeson, the singer, who first visited Moscow with a concert tour in 1934, and afterwards made several more visits to sing in the USSR in the 1950s and early 1960s. Robeson, who openly welcomed and approved both the home and foreign policies of the USSR, was a valuable find for Soviet propaganda — a black American who spoke, as it were, for all ideologically 'correct' negroes on the planet. Robeson played this role with great success, never failing to praise the USSR, never tiring of criticising the USA [Robeson 1950; 1958]. In 1952 he was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize. At the same time his outstanding vocal talent and willingness to sing Russian songs made him an attractive image for the widest possible Soviet public.

The example of Robeson, singing post-war Russian hits in his deep bass voice, symbolically Russified, or rather Sovietised, negro culture itself, described as it was by Soviet critics in an undefined manner, but at the same time acknowledged as being 'of the people'.

*All Robeson's art has deep roots in the masses of the people, is fed on the sap of life and as it were crystallises that priceless quality that the talented, joyful, singing, vivacious and unfortunate negro people has created and accumulated over the ages* [Polevoi 1978 (1958)].

In the wave of late anti-cosmopolitanism, and in particular the war on the *stilyagi*,<sup>1</sup> even jazz, which had traditionally (including Soviet criticism of the thirties) been traced back to the musical traditions of American negroes, was henceforth declared to be alien not only to Soviet, but even to negro culture, and Robeson, whose Soviet repertoire did not include any jazz, was yet another proof of this:

*What can sound less like our music, our Soviet songs, the rich folklore of the Soviet peoples, than a saxophone howling or moaning like the toothache, trombones roaring with all their might, muted trumpets squealing or the dull, monotonous beat of the whole percussion family, forcing the mechanically repetitive rhythm of the foxtrot or the rumba into the listener's consciousness? No! We are resolutely against combining our music with the jazz band, and people who try to force it into jazz, mutilate it, distort it. <...> Once upon a time bourgeois musicology created the*

<sup>1</sup> A post-war Soviet counter-culture characterised, among other things, by an enthusiasm for American fashion. [Transl.].

*legend that jazz is a popular form, and jazz is presented as the genuine negro folk band. In fact this was a shameless lie, the malicious invention of 'white' lovers of 'black exoticism'. <...> When motifs from negro folklore were taken up by the restaurant jazz band, they not only lost all their popular, ethnic character, but they were completely perverted, they were 'lynched', mocked by the American musical Ku Klux Klan. The way these savages and gangsters deal with the art of the oppressed negro people cannot but provoke the indignation of Soviet people, with their loving and careful attitude to the popular art of all ethnicities. People who know and value the wonderful art of Paul Robeson <...> hate and despise jazz, that 'American art form'!* [Sokolsky 1952].<sup>1</sup>

Not only that, the reader learnt from the versified report of his visit to Oklahoma by the Ukrainian poet Andrei Malyshko (translated into Russian by Aleksandr Prokofyev in 1957) that the negroes there used to sing Mikhail Isakovsky's 'Katyusha':

*As at a party in my father's house,  
I heard it here afar.  
<...> Two negroes in a field in Oklahoma  
Sang our dear song*

[Prokofyev 1957: 425–6].<sup>2</sup>

The high point, one could say, of Soviet-Negro friendship in the history of the USSR came in 1957, the year when the fourth World Youth and Student Festival was held in Moscow. The two weeks of the festival (28 July — 11 August), the biggest in its history (34 000 people from 131 countries) coincided with the most liberal period of Khrushchev's 'Thaw'. It is remembered in documentaries and memoirs as a holiday period, ideologically open in a way that had never been known in Soviet politics in preceding years. Moreover the African delegates, who were received as representatives of a continent that was just beginning to free itself from colonial dependency, were given special attention. Seven countries had become independent by the time the festival began — Libya (1951), Egypt (1953), the Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco (1956), and Ghana (1957). Sixteen more would join them over the next three years. The ideological hopes that the USSR placed on Africa were acquiring an every more marked political and institutional character [Africa and the Communist World 1963; Stevens 1976; Charles 1980; Davidson 2002; Natufe 2011]. The Africa Institute of the Academy of Sciences was founded in 1959, headed by I. I. Potekhin, whose teaching career had begun in the 1930s at the Communist Workers' University of the East [Stanovlenie oteche-

<sup>1</sup> On the history of jazz in the USSR, the role of negro performers as examples of virtuosity in they eyes of Soviet apologists for jazz music in the 1930s, and the criticism of it in the 1950s and early 1960s, see [Starr 1994].

<sup>2</sup> The same year Americanist scholars and the interested public received the first study of progressive negro literature: [Bekker 1957].

stvennoi afrikanistiki 2003]. The Peoples' Friendship University was founded in Moscow the following year; it had six faculties (Engineering, History and Literature, Medicine, Agriculture, Physics, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Economics and Law), where several score black students had studied by the time of the first graduations in 1965. The total number of African students in the USSR in 1959 was 114; by 1961 this had risen to 402. This trajectory was to be preserved in the future [Tunkara 2009: 98].

The Soviet mass media called 1960 'the year of Africa', and 1961 was marked by an event that gave Soviet propaganda even more of an 'African' direction. This was the murder on 17 January 1961, during the 'Congolese Crisis', of Patrice Lumumba, the Soviet-leaning prime minister of the Congo. The Soviet press (and not without reason) presented this murder as inspired by the former colonists, the Belgian government, and supported by US special forces, and the murdered prime minister's name eventually became a symbol of the ideological impulse of Soviet-African collaboration. His name was attached to that of the Peoples' Friendship University as early as 22 February of the same year, and he would later have streets named after him in at least forty cities of the USSR.

Wide coverage was given in the same year to the visit to Moscow of Kwame Nkrumah, the President of Ghana, and of his meetings with Khrushchev and Brezhnev. The black president explicitly declared himself a follower of Lenin and compared his policies to the experience of the USSR.<sup>1</sup> Nkrumah's devotion to socialist ideas was appreciated, and a Russian translation of his autobiography was published in 1961, from which the Soviet reader could learn not only that 'the sons and daughters of Africa now have their places in the governments of the countries of Africa and are fulfilling their duties with remarkable skill and success' [Nkrumah 1961: 17], but also such exotic details as might have required ideological censorship, but in this case were passed without comment. For example, the reader was free to peruse the president's sympathetic reasoning regarding the legality of polygamy and its physiological justification:

*It is quite in order for a man to have as many wives as he can afford. In fact the more wives a man can keep the greater is his social position. However unconventional and unsatisfactory this way of life may appear to those who are confirmed monogamists, and without in any way trying to defend my own sex, it is a frequently accepted fact that man is naturally polygamous. All the African has done is to recognise this fact and to legalise it [Nkrumah 1961: 13].*

---

<sup>1</sup> In particular, at a meeting to celebrate the friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and Ghana on 21st June 1961, Nkrumah declared: 'We have been inspired by history and by our own glorious past, and, like Lenin and the other great leaders of your country, we took a stand against colonialism and imperialism in Ghana and destroyed them with great resolve' (*Ogonek*, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1962, p. 22).

The reader also learnt that the President of Ghana considered himself a Christian, though not belonging to any particular denomination, and at the same time a Marxist socialist, and did not find 'any contradiction' between the two [Nkrumah 1961: 13]. In his memories of the past the author mentioned a ruler of the Ashanti, the Kumasihene, who was exiled by the British governor 'because of alleged participation in human sacrifices', and that he owed his predilection for political leadership to his mother, who told him of his 'claim to two stools or chieftaincies in the country, those of Nsaeu in Wassaw Fiase, and Dadieso in Aowin' [Nkrumah 1961: 21, 31]. His political biography was full of names of places and persons and various events amounting very nearly to an adventure story: he studied in America, crossed the Atlantic on a steamer, lived in England, went back to Africa, took an active part in the agitation against colonialism, was imprisoned, triumphantly liberated with a 'customary expiation' which involved sacrificing a sheep and stepping in its blood with bare feet seven times, became president, pacified warring tribes and through all this never forgot his dream of the creation of a 'Union of West African Soviet Socialist Republics' [Nkrumah 1961: 85].

Kwame Nkrumah's subsequent political biography was typical of African political leaders who came to the fore in the 1960s. In 1964 he prohibited all political parties except for the National Convention Party, of which he was the leader, and proclaimed himself president for life. The socialist orientation of the country proclaimed by Nkrumah, his stress on the preferential development of the state sector and reliance on foreign loans (not least on financial aid from the USSR) led to raging official corruption, acute inter-tribal hostilities, financial and economic chaos and in the end to the military coup of 24 February 1966 (the first in a series of many). Nkrumah, who was visiting Peking at the time, was deposed and found political asylum in Guinea, where found refuge with another life president, Ahmed Sékou Touré, until his death in 1972. There was, however, some time before all this would happen, and in the early 1960s the President of Ghana was a favourite hero of the Soviet press: he was not only educated, charming, and an exotic combination of president and tribal chief, he was also a fearless politician whose life was exposed to daily risk. (On 4 August 1962 the main national newspapers published a 'Telegram from the leaders of the USSR to the President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah on the assassination attempt against him of 1 August 1962' signed by Khrushchev and Brezhnev.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Soviet reader could also form an impression of Ghana from the travel diaries I. I. Potekhin (the head of the Africa Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, founded in 1959), which had been published by this time: [Potekhin 1959]. A large delegation from the Academy of Sciences had been sent to Ghana in 1964 in order to draw up a realistic plan for the development of the sciences. On the results of these contacts, and on the hopes placed in Ghana, see [Potekhin 1965].

The years of the World Youth and Student Festival, the foundation and early years of the Peoples' Friendship University, the activation of research in African Studies, media coverage of friendly visits by African politicians to the USSR and the return visits of Soviet politicians to African countries, and the 'Russification' and 'folklorisation' of Lumumba's name in the informational space of Soviet ideology and culture, were the outward and most visible elements in the expansion of Soviet people's 'background knowledge' about negroes. To the extent that this knowledge was supported by the efforts of propaganda, it obliged them not only to be friendly towards negroes, but also gave negroes a sort of ideological priority over other ethnic groups. For example, in the big 'Pioneer book' *Hello! We're from the Two-Year Plan*, published in 1962 (the title refers to the first Pioneer two-year plan, confirmed in 1961) there are letters from Soviet schoolchildren in answer to the question of what their chief dreams were and what they would do if they could do magic: to meet Paul Robeson, to meet the widow and children of Patrice Lumumba, who had died the previous year, and make 'black people and white people' live together in freedom and harmony [Zdravstvuite! My — iz dvukhletki 1926: 23, 27]. Later the late fifties and early sixties would be remembered as the time when the first mixed-race children were born in Moscow — 'the children of the Festival' as they were popularly known. But this period also marked the threshold when sympathetic, internationalist, but fairly abstract ideas about negroes began to be complicated by everyday — and therefore more realistic — notions of the people whom Soviet propaganda had put forward as the black friends of the USSR.

In 1963 the sunny ideological picture of Soviet-African relations was clouded by an event that took place at about one o'clock in the afternoon of 18 December in the very middle of Moscow. It was a demonstration by over four hundred African students on Red Square in response to the death of a student from Ghana. The demonstrators, who were convinced that the student had been killed because of the colour of his skin, carried home-made placards accusing the Soviet authorities of conniving at racism: 'Moscow is another Alabama', 'Russians are well liked in Africa', 'We want a humane attitude' and so on. The police surrounded the square and dispersed the demonstrators, but that was not the end of the incident. On the evening of the same day a delegation of ten African students went to the Kremlin, where they were received by Vyacheslav Elyutin, Minister for Higher Education, and thence to the Ghanaian Embassy, where they were received by John Elliott, Ghanaian Ambassador to the USSR. At the press conference that followed, both the Soviet side and Elliott explained the student's death as the result of an accident [Rasovyie manifestatsii 1963]. On 21 December this version was repeated in *Pravda* and the other main national

newspapers, while the many articles printed in the Western press about the demonstration that had taken place in Moscow were dismissed as an 'ill-intentioned hubbub' aimed at denigrating the USSR in the eyes of potential students from Africa and Asia:

*In recent days many of the bourgeois newspapers of the West, as if to order, have published slanderous articles about the position of African students studying in the Soviet Union. Reactionary circles in the West, wishing to hinder the development of a native administrative class in the young states of Africa and Asia, have been spreading absurd allegations about Soviet people's 'unfriendly attitude' towards these students. In this case these circles are attempting to use an accident which recently befell a student from Ghana as the occasion for their campaign of slander. <...> Edmondo Assare-Addo, a student at the Kalinin Medical Institute, froze to death while intoxicated. His body was found in the early morning at the roadside not far from Moscow. <...> Certain people are attempting to make use of this accident for clearly nefarious purposes, hoping by their incitement to create disturbances amongst the Ghanaian students, and to present a distorted picture of their life and work in our country [Ob odnoi zlonamerennoi shumikhe 1963].*

The everyday life of society during the last decades of the Soviet Union's existence served as a corrective to the slogans of propaganda, which had attributed to Soviet citizens feelings of proletarian internationalism, and to black visitors to the country a grateful response to the hospitality that they had received. In repeating the established clichés about Soviet-African friendship and the struggle against racism and colonialism, ideological culture would continue to be consistent: sociologists would denounce racism in Western countries and the USA and apartheid in South Africa [Net! — rasizmu 1969; Rasizm — ideologiya imperializma 1973; Perlo 1978; Gubin 1979; Sovremennyi rasizm 1985]; the newsreels shown before the feature films in cinemas would show negroes listening raptly to Russian folksongs, refer to Ku Klux Klan meetings,<sup>1</sup> and report on the strengthening of ties with African countries; toy factories would produce black dolls (a favourite cartoon for children in the late sixties and early seventies was Fedor Khitruk's *Bonifatsy's Holidays*, about a circus lion who goes to visit his grandmother in Africa and entertains the black children there),<sup>2</sup> and the figures of dark-skinned friends of the USSR would continue to adorn the façades of buildings in the cities.

By the beginning of the 1970s economic co-operation between the USSR and African countries had acquired a theoretical as well as

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the documentaries *Rasskazat o Moskve* [Tell about Moscow], dir. I. Gutman, and *Tretyego ne dano* [One or the Other], dir. L. Tuseeva.

<sup>2</sup> F. S. Khitruk's *Bonifatsy's Holidays* was awarded several prizes at international animation festivals, and a set of picture postcards with stills from it was issued by the 'Office for the Propaganda of Soviet Cinema Art' in Moscow with a print run of 300 000. The price of a set was sixty copecks.

a practical basis: developing the Marxist concept of a succession of stages of socio-economic development, Soviet Africanists demonstrated 'scientifically' that in the circumstances where such a social structure as socialism already existed, the world no longer had the objective conditions for the genesis and development of the capitalist society which had previously been the precursor of socialism. The pre-capitalist societies of Africa could 'skip' capitalism and proceed directly to socialism, and the Soviet Union would support them in their leap. (The leading role in establishing this innovative thesis was V. G. Solodovnikov, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR: [Solodovnikov 1970: 131; 1973]).

Black builders of the socialist future became more accustomed visitors in Soviet cities: in the early 1980s there were already tens of thousands of African students in the USSR [Tunkara 2009: 98], and the once exotic and at the same time rather abstract image of the negro, as drawn in the discourse of Soviet culture from the thirties to the fifties, was rapidly brought down to earth. As early as Leonid Gaidai's film comedy *Operation Y and Shurik's Other Adventures* (1965), which broke all records immediately on release (69 600 000 viewers), the laughter when the negro appeared was no longer all that tolerant. In one scene in the film the hooligan Fedya (played by Aleksei Smirnov) appears in the guise of a black-skinned savage with a string of beads round his neck, brandishing a spear, having run naked through a cloud of soot to a horrid 'cannibal' soundtrack. And in the same film the site foreman (Mikhail Pudovkin), who vainly tries to put Fedya right and speaks in quotations from propaganda, is the possessor of a 'colonial' pith helmet, which he declares to be 'a present from Africa'. The episode with 'Fedya the negro' ends with the ne'er-do-well wrapped in a roll of wallpaper while the student Shurik gives him a good hiding, muttering 'I must, Fedya, I must.'

At the beginning of the 1970s a prominent media figure in Soviet propaganda was the black American Angela Davis, civil rights campaigner and communist activist. Arrested in 1970 as an accessory to murder, she spent eighteen months in custody and was the occasion for a slogan that appeared constantly in the Soviet press: 'Free Angela Davis!' [Davis 1978]. It is, however, typical that the propaganda image of Davis, intended as a symbol of the struggle against racism and American imperialism, was accompanied and demeaned by a folklore tradition which made her the heroine of scabrous and not exactly politically correct jokes.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> An example still doing the rounds on the Internet pairs Davis with Chapaev, Civil War hero and protagonist of countless narrative jokes: Chapaev shouts 'Back to the wall!' and when his adjutant does a double-take ('Vasily Ivanovich, what do you mean? We can't shoot an activist, a campaigner for exploited and suffering negroes!'), barks, 'Back to the wall, I say! — I get cold when I have to lie next to the window myself.' [Eds.].

The urban folklore of Moscow turned the buildings of the Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University (known to the locals as Chernograd<sup>1</sup> or the Lumumbarium) from a model centre of internationalist youth to the topographical butt of racist remarks. The name of the Congolese prime minister also figured in student camp-fire songs in a context that did not greatly honour his memory:

*The Congo is in Africa,  
The Congo is in Africa,  
The Congo is a country in Africa <...>  
Lumumba lived in the Congo.  
Lumumba lived in the Congo,  
Lumumba was the ruler of Katanga.*

*But wicked Mobutu,  
But wicked Mobutu,  
Wicked Mobutu killed Lumumba.*

*Lumumba was killed,  
Lumumba was killed,  
Lumumba was eaten and only his shinbone was left*  
[Beletsky 2000].

*The hero Patrice Lumumba is slain  
And the Congo is orphaned without him.  
His wife, the fair Pauline,  
Would not live with another man.*

*He was killed by the people's villain Tshombe,  
Dag Hammarskjöld set him to work.  
And the news, like a bomb, in an instant  
Went all the way round the world.*

*There was a meeting at the Likhachev factory,  
And at the 'Red Proletarian':  
'Shame on you, people's villain Tshombe,  
And your mate Mobutu with his ugly black mug!'<sup>2</sup>*

By the end of the 1980s the image of the negro was at best an ordinary feature of everyday Soviet life. In the eyes of the 'ordinary Soviet man' of the years before perestroika Africa had lost its former exoticism and social attractiveness (but see [Emenka 2008]). It became a common notion that black students were beggars and black marketeers who could profit by their opportunities to travel abroad.

<sup>1</sup> 'Black City'. [Transl.].

<sup>2</sup> Transcription of a sound recording made by Aleksei Kozlov, his album 'Pionerskie blatnye 2' (Moscow Windows Ltd, 1998). According to Kozlov ('Ships used to put in at our port', television programme of 28 September 2008), this song was written down by a woman of his acquaintance in the train between Moscow and Mytishchi. It is sung to the tune of 'Albanian Tango' by Baki Kongoli <<http://a-pesni.org/dvor/patrislumumba.php>>.

They were accused of making improper addresses to white girls. The image of the ‘Soviet’ negro, the ‘children of the festival’, the now grown-up generation born of racially mixed unions, also became commonplace. The classic films of the perestroika era, Sergei Solovyev’s *Assa* (1987) and Vasily Pichul’s *Little Vera* (1988), contain types of this sort: in *Assa*, Bananan (played by Sergei Bugaev, aka ‘Afrika’)<sup>1</sup> has a black friend Vitya, who hums songs by Bobby Darin and Sting, and in *Little Vera*, Lena Chistyakova’s black brother is seen watching the cartoon *Doctor Aibolit* (1984, dir. David Cherkassky) on television, as the pirates sing ‘Little children! For nothing in the world | Should you go to Africa...’.

The results of Soviet nationalities policy, which had projected ideological mirages of the friendship of the peoples, demonstrated in the 1990s how deeply buried the real problems that had needed solving over previous decades had been. The role in which this policy cast Soviet-Negro friendship proved to have been a remarkable exercise in demagogic self-deception which made up for the shortcomings of the political response to the nationalities question inside the country. The history of the real, and not imaginary, contacts between blacks and whites in the USSR demonstrated overall the ideological norms of any nationalities policy that appeals not to what is necessary and sufficient, but to what is imaginary and desired. The effectiveness of this rhetorical compensation was supported by the absence of any negro diaspora in the USSR, and its appearance was marked by the collapse of internationalist abstractions. The symbolic culmination of this collapse may be thought of as the song by the band The Forbidden Drummers, which became very popular in 1999 and remained so for several years.

*A dead snake don't hiss,  
A dead goldfinch don't twitter,  
A dead black man don't go and play basketball,  
Only a dead black man  
Don't go and play basketball.*

*Aiaiaiaiai,  
They've killed the black man,  
They've killed the black man, they've killed him,  
Aiaiai,  
For nothing, for no reason,  
They've done him in, the bastards.*

Despite the intentions of the authors of this song, which were precisely anti-racist and satirical, they soon had to recognise that it was not being properly understood by its rapidly growing ‘strange and frightening’

---

<sup>1</sup> That is, the well-known Leningrad conceptual artist (b. 1966). [Eds.].

audience, as one of the band members called it.<sup>1</sup> The catchy tune ominously anticipated the awakening of the nationalist and racist mood in Russia after perestroika, where manifestations of racism and ethnic intolerance have become a deciding factor of social reality.<sup>2</sup>

### References

- Adibekov G. M., *Krasnyi internatsional profsoyuzov* [The Red International of Trades Unions]. Moscow: Profizdat, 1971. (In Russian).
- Africa and the Communist World*, Z. Brzezinski (ed.). Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963. (Hoover Institution Publications).
- Averchenko A. T., *Krivye ugly. Rasskazy* [Oblique Angles: Stories]. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1989. (In Russian).
- Averintsev S. V., *Po poberezhyyu Chernogo kontinenta* [Along the Shores of the Dark Continent]. St Petersburg: Priroda, 1912. (In Russian).
- Baldwin K. A., *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain. Reading Encounters between Black and Red. 1922–1963*. Duke: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Basmanov M. I., *Proletarskii sotsialisticheskii internatsionalizm. Traditsii, sovremennyyi opyt, tvorcheskoe razvitiye* [Proletarian Socialist Internationalism: Traditions, Contemporary Experience, Creative Development]. Moscow: Mysl, 1978. (In Russian).
- Baitin M. I., Pugachev V. V., 'Politicheskie idei Andreya Lotsmanova' [Andrey Lotsman's Political Ideas], *Uchenye zapiski Saratovskogo yuridicheskogo instituta im. D. I. Kurskogo*, 1960, vol. 9, pp. 76–91. (In Russian).
- Bekker M., *Progressivnaya negriyanskaya literatura SShA* [The Progressive Negro Literature of the USA]. Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel, 1957. (In Russian).
- Beletsky S. V., 'Zametki k istorii pesen v arkhologicheskikh ekspeditsiyakh. Pesni Pskovskoi ekspeditsii Ermitazha' [Notes on the History of Songs on Archaeological Expeditions: the Songs of the Hermitage Pskov Expedition], S. V. Beletsky (comp.), *Dalekoe proshloe Pushkinogorya, issue 6, Pesenni folklor arkhologicheskikh ekspeditsii*. St Petersburg, 2000. <<http://folklore.archaeology.ru/ONLINE/belezkiy.html>>. (In Russian).
- Belyaev A., 'Pod nebom Arktiki' [Under Arctic skies], G. P. Fitingof (ill.), *V boi za tekhniku!* 1938, no. 4–7; 9–12; 1939, no. 1, 2, 4. <<http://bookmate.com/books/BLv13to1>>. (In Russian).
- Blakely A., *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1986.

<sup>1</sup> 'Then, when we got our inflated, noisy popularity with a certain song, our public expanded, and became strange and frightening <...> At that time, the end of the nineties, playing with this was provocative. That was why the people who came to us sometimes were completely deficient and so unpleasant that we felt like packing it all in.' (Interview with Viktor Pivtorypavlo, *Novaya gazeta*, 2007, <<http://old.novayagazeta.ru/data/2007/24/30.html>>. The story of the song is told in detail in the Wikipedia article 'Zapreshchennye barabanshchiki'.

<sup>2</sup> There is a growing literature on this subject: see e.g. Amandine Régamey, 'Representations of Migrants and Migration Policy in Russia', *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, 2010, no. 6. [Eds.].

- Bromlei Yu. V., *Bratskoe sotrudnichestvo narodov Sovetskogo Soyuza — internatsionalizm v deistvii* [The Fraternal Co-operation of the Peoples of the Soviet Union: Internationalism in Action]. Moscow: Nauka, 1978. (In Russian).
- Bukalov A., *Pushkinskaya Afrika: po sledam 'Romana o tsarskom arape'* [Pushkin's Africa: following the 'Romance of the Tsar's Moor']. St Petersburg: Aleteiya, 2006. (In Russian).
- Carew J. G., *Blacks, Reds, and Russians. Sojourners in Search of Soviet Promise*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2008.
- Charles M., *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1980.
- Curtin P. D., *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action 1780–1850*. London: Macmillan, 1965.
- Davidson A. B., *Muza stranstvii Nikolaya Gumileva* [The Muse of Nikolai Gumilev's Wanderings]. Moscow: Nauka, 1992. (In Russian).
- Davidson A. B., *SSSR i Afrika. 1918–1960. Dokumentirovannaya istoriya vzaimootnoshenii* [The USSR and Africa: a Documented History of their Relations]. Moscow: IVI RAN, 2002. (In Russian).
- Devis A., *Avtobiografiya*. Moscow: Progress, 1978. (In Russian). [Davis A. *Angela Davis: an Autobiography*].
- Demidenko A. I., *Rasizm na sluzhbe imperializma* [Racism in the Service of Imperialism]. Moscow: Gos. izd-vo politicheskoi literatury, 1954. (In Russian).
- Dykes E. V., *The Negro in English Romantic Thought*. Washington: Associated Publishers, 1942.
- Dzhekson T., *Strana almazov i rabov* [The Land of Diamonds and Slaves]. Moscow: TsK MOPR SSSR, 1932. (In Russian).
- Eliseev A. V., *Po belu svetu* [Through the Wide World]. St Petersburg: RGO, 1903. (In Russian).
- Emenka U. F., *Obraz Afriki v russkom yazykovom soznanii* [The Image of Africa in the Russian Linguistic Consciousness]: PhD abstract. Volgograd, 2008. (In Russian).
- Erickson A. J., 'Red Summer', *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*. New York: Macmillan, 1960, pp. 2293–4.
- Fanouh-Siefer L., *Le mythe du nègre et de l'Afrique noire dans la littérature française (de 1800 à la 2e guerre mondiale)*. Paris: Nouvelles éditions africaines, 1980.
- Fateev A. V., *Obraz vraga v sovetskoi propagande. 1945–1954 gg.* [The Image of the Enemy in Soviet Propaganda, 1945–1954]. Moscow: In-t ros. istorii RAN, 1999. (In Russian).
- Galanov B., *Knizhka pro knizhki* [A Book about Books]. Moscow: Detskaya literatura, 1970. (In Russian).
- Gnammanku D., *Abram Gannibal: chernyi predok Pushkina* [Abram Hannibal: Pushkin's Black Ancestor]. Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1999. ('Zhizn zamechatelnykh lyudei'). (In Russian).
- God tridsat sedmoy. Almanakh* ['37: an almanac]. Moscow: Literaturnaya gazeta, 1954, vol. 16.

- Goncharov V., *Stikhi* [Verse]. Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1951. (In Russian).
- Graziosi A., 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia, 1920–1940: Their Experience and Their Legacy', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 1988, no. 33, pp. 35–59.
- Gubin V. F., *Rasovaya diskriminatsiya — reaktsionnaya sushchnost i mezh-dunarodnaya protivopravnost* [Racial Discrimination: its Reactionary Nature and International Illegality]. Moscow: Nauka, 1979. (In Russian).
- Hoffman L.-F., *Le Nègre romantique: Personnage littéraire et obsession collective*. Paris: Payot, 1973.
- Hooker J. R., *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1967.
- Hughes L., *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*. Moscow: Co-Operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *I Wonder As I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey*. New York: Paw Prints, 2008.
- Igolkina D. I., 'Roman G. Bicher-Stou "Khizhina dyadi Toma" v russkoi kritike i literaturovedenii' [Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Russian Criticism and Literary Studies], *Vestnik TGPU*, 2010, vol. 8 (98), pp. 57–9. (In Russian).
- Ilf I., Petrov E., *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collected works], in 5 vols. Moscow: GIKhL, 1961, vol. 4. (In Russian).
- Ilyin Ya., *Bolshoi konveer* [The Big Conveyor]. Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1934. (In Russian).
- The Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol. 4, part 1: H. Honour (ed.), *Slaves and liberators*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- The Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol. 4, part 2: D. Bindman (ed.), *From the American Revolution to World War I. Black Models and White Myth*. New York: Belknap Press; New edition, 2012.
- Ivanov Vyach. Vs., 'Dva obraza Afriki v russkoi literature nachala XX veka: Afrikanские stikhi Gumileva i «Ka» Khlebnikova' [Two Images of Africa in Russian Literature at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Gumilev's 'African Poems' and Khlebnikov's 'Ka'], Ivanov Vyach. Vs., *Izbrannye trudy po semiotike i istorii kultury*. Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kultury, 2000, vol. 2, pp. 287–325. (In Russian).
- Junker W., 'Puteshestvie v Tsentralnyu Afriku v 1875–1878 gg.' [A Journey to Central Africa in 1875–1878], *Doklad na zasedanii Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva, Izv. RGO*, 1879, vol. 15, no. 1–2. (In Russian).
- 'Kak budto iz Chekhova' [Straight Out of Chekhov], *Utro Rossii*, 26 November 1909. (In Russian).
- Keys B., 'An African-American Worker in Stalin's Soviet Union: Race and the Soviet Experiment in International Perspective', *The Historian*, 2009, vol. 71, pp. 31–54.
- Kim M. P., *Sovetskii narod — novaya istoricheskaya obshchnost lyudei: stanovlenie i razvitie* [The Soviet People: a new historical community of people: its genesis and evolution]. Moscow: Nauka, 1975. (In Russian).

- Kolchin P., *Unfree Labor. American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Koshevskaya N. V., 'Markov (V. I. Matvei) i ego kniga "Iskusstvo negrov"' [Markov (V. Matvei) and his Book *Art of the Negroes*], *Strany i narody Vostoka*, 1969, vol. 9, pp. 261–7. (In Russian).
- Kovalevsky E. P., *Puteshestvie vo Vnutrennyuyu Afriku* [Journey into the Interior of Africa]. St Petersburg: Tip. E. Pratsa, 1849. (In Russian).
- Kovalov O., 'Amerika v zerkale sovetskogo kino' [America as reflected in Soviet Cinema], *Iskusstvo kino*, 2003, no. 10, p. 85. (In Russian).
- Kremlevskii kinoteatr. 1928–1953: Dokumenty* [The Kremlin Cinema, 1928–1953: Documents], K. M. Anderson, L. V. Maksimenkov, L. P. Kosheleva, L. A. Rogovaya (comp.). Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005. (In Russian).
- Lebedev N. A., *Ocherki istorii kino SSSR. Nemoe kino: 1918–1934 gody* [Sketches of the Cinema History of the USSR: Silent Films, 1918–1934]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1965. <<http://www.bibliotekar.ru/kino/13.htm>>. (In Russian).
- Lebel R., *L'Afrique Occidentale dans la littérature française*. Paris: Larose, 1925.
- Lively A., *Masks. Blackness, Race and the Imagination*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1998.
- Lorimer D. A., *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978.
- Lounsbery E., "'Krovno svyazannyi s rasoi": Pushkin v afro-amerikanskom kontekste', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1999, no. 37, pp. 229–51. (In Russian). [Lounsbery A., "'Bound by Blood to the Race": Pushkin in African American Context'].
- Lurye F., *Abram Gannibal. Afrikanskii praded russkogo geniya* [Abram Hannibal: the African Great-Grandfather of the Russian Genius]. St Petersburg: Vita Nova, 2012. (In Russian).
- McKay C., 'Soviet Russia and the Negro', *The Crisis*, 1923, December, pt. 1, pp. 61–5.
- Makkey K., *Sudom Lincha. Rasskazy o zhizni negrov v Severnoi Amerike*, A. M. & P. Okhrimenko (trans.). Moscow: Ogonek, 1925. (In Russian). [McKay C., *Trial by Lynching: Stories about Negro Life in North America*].
- Mackay J., *True Songs of Freedom: Uncle Tom's Cabin in Russian Culture and Society*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.
- Makkenzi K., *Komintern i mirovaya revolyutsiya. 1919–1943*, G. G. Petrova (trans.). Moscow: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2008. (In Russian). [McKenzie K., *Comintern and World Revolution*].
- McWhirter C., *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2011.
- Maran R., *Roman negra*. Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928. (In Russian). [Maran R., *Journal sans date*].
- Margulies S. R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924–1937*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968.

- Markov V., *Iskusstvo negrov* [The Art of the Negroes]. Petrograd: Izdanie Otdela izobrazitelnykh iskusstv narodnogo komissariata po prosveshcheniyu, 1919. (In Russian).
- Matusevich M., *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe. Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960–1990*. Trenton, NJ; Asmara: Africa World Press, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters*. Trenton, NJ; Asmara: Africa World Press, 2007.
- Matyushkin N. I., *Patriotizm i internatsionalizm sovetского naroda. Istoricheskii opyt i sovremennaya deyatelnost KPSS* [The Patriotism and Internationalism of the Soviet People: Historical Experience and the Contemporary Activity of the CPSU]. Moscow: Izd-vo MGU, 1975. (In Russian).
- Minchenkov Ya. D., *Vospominaniya o peredvizhnikakh* [Memoirs of the Peripatetics]. Leningrad: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1961. (In Russian).
- Natufe O. *Igho. Soviet Policy in Africa: From Lenin to Brezhnev*. Bloomington: iUniverse, Inc., 2011.
- Nekrasov N. A., *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collected Works]. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1967, vol. 8. (In Russian).
- Net! — rasizmu. Rasizm v stranakh 'svobodnogo mira' i novyi etap borby protiv nego* [No to Racism! Racism in the Countries of the 'Free World' and a new Stage in the Struggle against it], A. V. Efimov (ed.). Moscow: Nauka, 1969. (In Russian).
- Nkrumah K., *Avtobiografiya*. Moscow: Izd-vo inostrannoi literatury, 1961. (In Russian). [*Ghana: the Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*].
- 'Ob odnoi zlonamerennoi shumikke v burzhuaznoi presse' [About a Case of Malicious Hubbub in the Bourgeois Press], *Pravda*, 21 December 1963. (In Russian).
- Pachuliya V. P., *V krayu zolotogo runa* [In the Land of the Golden Fleece]. Moscow: Nauka, 1968. (In Russian).
- Pasternak B., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii s prilozheniyami* [Complete Works with Appendices], in 11 vols. Moscow: Slovo, 2004, vol. 3. (In Russian).
- Pechatnov V. O., *Ot soyuza — k kholodnoi voine: sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniya v 1945–1947 gg.* [From Alliance to Cold War: Soviet-American Relations, 1945–1947]. Moscow: MGIMO, 2006. (In Russian).
- Perlo V., *Rasizm v ekonomike SShA* [Racism in the US Economy]. Moscow: Progress, 1978. (In Russian).
- Peterson D. E., *Up from Bondage: The Literatures of Russian and African American Soul*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Polevoi B., 'Pol Robson (1958)' [Paul Robeson (1958)], Polevoi B., *Siluety*. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1978. <<http://maxima-library.org/component/maxlib/b/36648/read>>. (In Russian).
- Polveka russkoi zhizni. Vospominaniya. 1820–1870* [Half a Century of Russian Life: Memoirs, 1820–1870]. Leningrad: Academia, vol. 1. (In Russian).
- Polyan P. M., 'Deportatsii i etnichnost' [Deportations and Ethnicity], *Stalinskie deportatsii. 1928–1953*. Moscow: MFD, Materik, 2005. (In Russian).

- Polyanovsky M., 'Viktoriya prikhodit v klass' [Victoria Goes to School], *Ogonek*, 7 September 1952, p. 9. (In Russian).
- Potekhin I. I., *Gana segodnya. Dnevnik. 1957* [Ghana Today: Diary, 1957]. Moscow: Gos. izd-vo geogr. literatury, 1959. (In Russian).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Stanovlenie novoi Gany* [The Genesis of the New Ghana]. Moscow: Nauka, Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoi literatury, 1965. (In Russian).
- Prilezhaeva M., *S toboi tovarishchi* [Your comrades are with you]. Moscow; Leningrad: Gos. izd-vo detskoj literatury, 1949. <<http://www.litmir.net/br/?b=155358>>. (In Russian).
- Prokofyev A., *Sochineniya* [Works], in 2 vols. Moscow: GIKhL, 1957, vol. 2, pp. 425–6. (In Russian).
- Pulikovsky A., *Uchebnik vseobshchei geografii* [Textbook of Universal Geography]. St Petersburg: A. A. Ilyin, 1866. (In Russian).
- Pushkin A. S., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Complete Works], vol. 12: *Kritika. Avtobiografiya*. Moscow; Leningrad: Akademiya nauk SSSR, 1949. (In Russian).
- Pushkin o literature. K stoletiyu so dnya gibeli A. S. Pushkina. 1837–1937* [Pushkin on Literature: on the Centenary of Pushkin's Death]. Leningrad: Academia, 1937. (In Russian).
- Rait M. V., *Russkie puteshestvenniki i uchenye v Afrike v XV — nach. XX v.* [Russian Travellers and Scholars in Africa, 1400–1900]. Moscow: Geografiz, 1958. (In Russian).
- Rasizm — ideologiya imperializma, vrag obshchestvennogo progressa* [Racism, the Ideology of Imperialism and the Enemy of Social Progress]: Sbornik dokladov konferentsii, sostoyavshcheisya 14–16.12.1971 goda v Moskve, P. N. Fedoseev (ed.). Moscow: Nauka, 1973. (In Russian).
- 'Rasovye manifestatsii v Moskve' [Race Demonstrations in Moscow], *Russkaya Mysl* (Parizh), 21 December 1963. (In Russian).
- Robeson P., *Here I Stand*. London: Dennis Dobson, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Negro People and the Soviet Union*. New York: New Century Publishers, 1950.
- Robinson R., *Black on Red: My Forty Four Years Inside the Soviet Union*. New York.: Acropolis Books Inc., 1988.
- Roman M. L., *Opposing Jim Crow: African Americans and the Soviet Indictment of U.S. Racism, 1928–1937*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2012.
- Rukavishnikov V. O., *Kholodnaya voina, kholodnyi mir* [Cold War, Cold Peace]. Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000. (In Russian).
- Rykova N., 'Kolonialnaya tematika v literature na Zapade' [Colonial Subject Matter in Literature in the West], *Literaturnaya ucheba*, 1933, no. 8, p. 42. (In Russian).
- Sbornik materialov k izucheniyu istorii russkoi zhurnalistiki* [A Collection of Material for the Study of Russian Journalism], V. D. Kuzmina (comp.). Moscow: Vysshaya partiinaya shkola pri TsK VKP(b), Kafedra zhurnalistiki, 1952, vol. 1. (In Russian).

- Shaginyan M. S., *Dnevniky. 1917–1931* [Diaries, 1917–1931]. Leningrad: Izd-vo pisatelei v Leningrade, 1932. (In Russian).
- Sherstobitov V. P., *Internatsionalizm sovetskogo naroda. Istoriya i sovremennost* [The Internationalism of the Soviet People: History and the Present Day]. Moscow: Nauka, 1982. (In Russian).
- Shitov N. F., *V. I. Lenin i proletarskii internatsionalizm (1917–1924 gg.)* [V. I. Lenin and Proletarian Internationalism, 1917–1924]. Moscow: Politizdat, 1974. (In Russian).
- Sholokhov M., *Ne uiti palacham ot suda narodov! Statyi* [The Hangmen Shall Not Escape the Peoples' Justice: Articles]. Moscow: Pravda, 1950. Biblioteka 'Ogonek', no. 41. (In Russian).
- Smirnov R., *Lyudi, lvy, orly i kuropatki* [People, Lions, Eagles and Partridges]. St Petersburg: Limbus-Press, 2002. (In Russian).
- Smirnova V. V., 'Samuil Yakovlevich Marshak', S. Ya. Marshak, *Stikhotvoreniya i poemy*. Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel, 1973. (Biblioteka poeta). (In Russian).
- Sokolsky M., 'O dzhaze' [On Jazz], *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 16 February 1952. <[http://retrofonoteka.ru/zal/o\\_djaze.htm](http://retrofonoteka.ru/zal/o_djaze.htm)>. (In Russian).
- Solodovnikov V. G., *Afrika vybiraet put* [Africa Chooses its Way]. Moscow: Nauka, 1970. (In Russian).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Problemy sovremennoi Afriki* [Problems of Contemporary Africa]. Moscow: Nauka, 1973. (In Russian).
- Soviet Nationality Policies: Ruling Ethnic Groups in the USSR*, H. R. Huttenbach (ed.). London: Mansell, 1990.
- Sovetskie khudozhestvennye filmy. Annotirovannyi katalog* [Soviet Film, an Annotated Catalogue], vol. 2: *Zvukovye filmy (1930–1957)*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1961. (In Russian).
- Sovremennyyi rasizm kak on est'* [The Real Face of Contemporary Racism], N. F. Nozhnova, Yu. S. Oganisyan. Moscow: Politizdat, 1985. (In Russian).
- Stanovlenie otechestvennoi afrikanistiki, 1920-e — nachalo 1960-kh* [The Beginnings of African Studies in our Country, 1920s — early 1960s]. A. B. Davidson (ed.). Moscow: Nauka, 2003. (In Russian).
- Stanyukovich K. M., *Vokrug sveta na 'Korshune'. Sseny iz morskoi zhizni* [Around the World on the 'Kite': Scenes of Naval Life]. Moscow: Gos. izd-vo geograficheskoi literatury, 1953. (In Russian).
- Starr S. F., *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union*. New York: Limelight, 1994.
- Stevens C., *The Soviet Union and Black Africa*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1976.
- Tillery T., *Claude McKay: A Black Poet's Struggle for Identity*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.
- Treskin N., [Review of:] *Uchebnik vseobshchei geografii* [Textbook of Universal Geography]. Sostavil Aleksandr Pulikovskiy, v dvukh chastyakh. St Petersburg, 1866, *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniya*, 1867, ch. 135, p. 839. (In Russian).
- Trehwela P., 'The Death of Albert Nzula and the Silence of George Padmore', *Searchlight South Africa*, 1988, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 64–9.

- Troitsky V. V., 'Poezdka v Tsentralnuyu Afriku v 1912–1914 gg.' [A Journey to Central Africa in 1912–1914], *Ezhegodnik Zoomuzeya Akad. Nauk*, 1915, vol. 20. (In Russian).
- Tunkara A., 'Afrikanskoe soobshchestvo v Sankt-Peterburge' [The African Community in St Petersburg], *Afrikanskii sbornik — 2009*. St Petersburg: Nauka, 2009, pp. 97–101. (In Russian).
- Tuttle W. M., *Race Riot. Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970.
- Under the Sky of My Africa. Alexander Pushkin and Blackness*, C. T. Nepomnyashchy, N. Svobodnyi, L. A. Trigos (eds.). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006.
- Valmont de Bomare J.-C., *Fiziologiya ili Estestvennaya istoriya o cheloveke, kasatelno ego zachatiya* [Physiology, or The Natural History of Man, concerning his Conception]. Dlya polzy rossiiskogo yunoshestva trudami i izhdiveniem Nestora Maksimovicha-Ambodika. St Petersburg: Tip. Imp. AN, 1787. (In Russian).
- Valskaya B. A., *Vklad Russkogo Geograficheskogo obshchestva v izuchenie Afriki* [The Russian Geographical Society's Contribution to the Study of Africa]. Moscow: Nauka, 1969. (In Russian).
- Vatlin A. Yu., *Komintern: Idei, resheniya, sudby* [The Comintern: Ideas, Decisions, Fates]. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009. (In Russian).
- Vegner M. O., 'Predki Pushkina' [Pushkin's Ancestors], *Rod i predki A. S. Pushkina*. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1995. (In Russian).
- Vtoroi vsesoyuznyi syezhd sovetskikh pisatelei* [The Second All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers]. 15–26 dekabrya 1954 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1956. (In Russian).
- Weiss H., *Framing a Radical African Atlantic. African American Agency, West African Intellectuals and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers*. Brill: Brill Academic Pub., 2010.
- Whitaker R., *On the Laps of Gods: The Red Summer of 1919 and the Struggle for Justice that Remade a Nation*. New York: Random House, 2008.
- Zabrodskaya M. P., *Russkie puteshestvenniki v Afrike* [Russian Travellers in Africa]. Moscow: Geografiz, 1955. (In Russian).
- Zdravstvuite! My — iz dvukhletki* [Hello! We're from the Two-Year Plan], A. A. Agapov (ed.). Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izd-vo detskoj literatury, 1962. (In Russian).
- Zilov L., *May i Oktyabrina* [May and Oktyabrina], Vl. Orlov (ill.). Moscow: Mospoligraf, 1924. (In Russian).
- Zlatopolsky D. L., *Obrazovanie i razvitiye SSSR kak soyuznogo gosudarstva* [The Formation and Development of the USSR as a Union State]. Moscow: Gos. izd-vo yuridicheskoi literatury, 1954. (In Russian).
- Zusmanovich A. Z., Potekhin I., Dzhekson T., *Prinuditelnyi trud i profdvizhenie v negriyanskoj Afrike* [Forced Labour and the Trades Union Movement in Black Africa]. Moscow: Profizdat, 1933.

*Translated by Ralph Cleminson*