RUSSIAN LITERARY MARKETPLACE:
PERIODICALS, SOCIAL IDENTITY, AND PUBLISHING FOR THE MIDDLE STRATUM
IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA, 1825-1865

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By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines pre-reform Russian periodicals as sources of middle-class culture and argues for the importance of these sources for understanding the fluctuating nature of Russia’s middling groups. It focuses on the private, for-profit newspaper *Northern Bee* (*Severnaia pchela*) and thick-journal *Library for Reading* (*Biblioteka dlia chteniia*) as genres of European middle class culture transposed onto Russian soil that were produced for an audience of the “middle stratum”, composed of gentry in state service, non-noble civil servants, provincial landowners, wealthy merchants, manufacturers, professionals, and some townspeople. In addition to the periodicals, the dissertation uses archival sources and published correspondence and memoirs. The dissertation begins by contextualizing the publishers and editors of these periodicals as the successful products of Catherine II’s social engineering project, who propagated the values of education, work, and individual achievement. It then analyzes the sources for these periodicals, showing that the *Bee* and the *Library* transferred the genres and journalistic practices of European bourgeois publications into a Russian context. The dissertation follows with an examination of how these publishers categorized their middle-stratum audience, arguing that conceptions of Russia’s middling groups were highly flexible, but that a common denominator was the practice of reading secular Russian-language publications. As the thematic chapters illustrate, the practical information contained in these periodicals was suited to the concerns of middle-stratum Russians in Saint Petersburg and Moscow as well as in provincial
towns and country estates. Furthermore, since the middle stratum was diverse in social origin and came from several legal estates, the representations of the middle stratum in these periodicals emphasized behavior, specifically the pursuit of education and individual achievements. Finally, the dissertation examines critical reactions to these publications and traces their decline in the context of generational shifts and the appearance of cheaper, more competitive periodicals. This dissertation contributes to recent scholarly reexaminations of Russia’s middling groups and presents a fundamental reinterpretation of pre-reform journalism. Working at the intersection of Russian literary, cultural, and social history, this dissertation argues that a better method of understanding Russia’s middle stratum is to examine shared cultural behavior.
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Introduction: Reflecting Both Self and Society: The Russian-Language Press and the Middle Stratum before the Great Reforms

Natural history, physics, chemistry, mechanics, agricultural management, technology, statistics, lessons in commerce and political economy. [...] The Government, which is boundlessly concerned with the welfare of its subjects, presents young people the opportunity to acquire this useful information in secondary schools; our adult landowners, merchants, manufacturers, factory-owners, artists and craftsmen themselves have a required need for this information, but to begin education in adulthood is [equal] parts late, difficult, and time-consuming.

From an advertisement in the Northern Bee, 1832, No. 236

The advertisement that ran in the October 11, 1832 issue of the Northern Bee stated that the “productive class” (proizvoditel’nyi klass) of society required certain knowledge that would help its members live their lives in the cities, villages, workshops, manufactories, factories, and sites of commercial transactions. In the same text, this “productive class” was identified as the “middle stratum” (srednee sostoianie), which consisted of “landowners, settlers [poseliane], urban dwellers, craftsmen, artists, traders, manufacturers, industrialists, [and] merchant-traders [negotsianty, from the French négociants]”; the advertisement, which invited subscriptions for a three-part book of useful knowledge, was placed as a supplement to the Northern Bee because that newspaper would be sure to reach the intended middle-stratum audience. The supplement also reflected the Northern Bee’s publishing philosophy of educating readers through commercial print materials, as additions or substitutes to formal schooling. But the Bee did not only publish for a middle-stratum audience, it also transplanted the bourgeois print culture of

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1 Severnaia pchela, October 11, 1832, No. 236, supplement section.
2 Ibid. The title of the proposed book was: Domashnii neizmennyi drug, nadezhnyi sovetnik i skoryi pomoshchnik v khoziaistvennom bytu, sel’skoi Ekonomii i iskustvennoi promyshlenosti, dlia vsekh sostoianii v gorode i derevne. Ili: prakticheskiiia sredstva k umnozheniiu sobstvennago i detei svoikh blagosostoianii, k predokhraneniui i izbavleniiu sebia ot ubytkov, k dobyvaniui i uluchsheniui otechestvennykh proizvedenii, k prigotovleniiu doma raznykh dorogo- prodavemykh priiatnykh veshechei, k bezvrednomu uvelicheniiu naslazhdeniu zhizni, k sokhraneniiu i vozstanovleniiu zdorov’ia, k vspomoshchestvovanii v nechaiannykh opasnostakh i proch. V trekh chastakh. The subscription was 15 rubles in assignations. The printing house of the Third Section published the advertisement.
Europe into Russian conditions and propagated a version of European bourgeois culture that successive Russian periodicals emulated over the course of the nineteenth century.

The following pages outline the aims and methods of my investigation: to examine pre-reform Russian periodicals as sources of middle-class culture and to argue for the importance of these sources for understanding the fluctuating nature of Russia’s middling groups. The dissertation focuses on the private, for-profit newspaper *Northern Bee (Severnaia pchela)* and thick-journal *Library for Reading (Biblioteka dlia chteniia)* as genres of European middle class culture transposed onto Russian soil that were produced for an audience of the “middle stratum”, composed of gentry in state service, non-noble civil servants, provincial landowners, wealthy merchants, manufacturers, professionals, and some townspeople. Both the term “middle stratum” and its fluctuating social composition (discussed extensively in Chapter Three) are taken from the vocabularies of the journalists running the *Bee* and the *Library* as well as other from other contemporary observers.

In following the periodical trail, this dissertation explores the middle stratum in a country where, it has been thought, not much of a middle stratum existed.\(^3\) This assumption has persisted largely due to the writings of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia, who saw no place for ‘bourgeois’ culture in their vision of society – a vision that united them with the people (*narod*) in a single cultural sphere. Until recently, the gravitational pull of the traditional narrative and its historiography had thoroughly obscured the cultural development of the many-layered middle classes (a development that was comparable to processes taking place in Western and Central

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\(^3\) In fact, this dissertation began as an investigation into the polarized and contested nature of Russian journalism in the first half of the nineteenth century. From that seed and from the issues of commercial competition, political protection, and reader preferences that it raised, a much broader question germinated about the periodicals that claimed to publish for the ‘middle stratum’. Yelizaveta Raykhлина, “The ‘Unholy Triumvirate’ Mythologized: Fact and Fiction in Nineteenth-Century Cultural Memory” (Unpublished seminar paper, Georgetown University, 2012). On the ‘missing’ middle classes: *Russia’s Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History*, ed. Harley D. Balzer (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).
Europe, in European colonial communities in North America and elsewhere, and – it has been argued – in non-European states as well), largely because they “lost out” in the Bolshevik Revolution and in subsequent historical narratives and re-imaginings.\(^4\) Departing from this narrative, this dissertation examines the culture of the Russian middle stratum through two periodicals, largely because the practice of reading was one of the unifying traits of the Russian middling groups.

I have chosen to explore Russian society through the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* because these two periodicals were both innovators (the first of their kind: a private daily newspaper and a monthly encyclopedic thick-journal, respectively) and because they served as models for other bourgeois periodicals (during the time of their publication as well as afterwards). Both periodicals were also explicit about publishing for the Russian middle stratum, and both borrowed the form and contents of European bourgeois periodicals to create their own native versions. Traditionally, the *Bee* and the *Library* have had an infamous and contested reputation in the political and literary history of Imperial Russia. The *Northern Bee*, founded by Faddei Bulgarin (a Russified Pole) and Nikolai Grech (a second-generation Russified German), published from 1825 until 1864; it was initially the only private newspaper allowed to print foreign political news, and was a convenient source for reading official decrees and news from the Romanov court. Faddei Bulgarin was a known agent of the Third Section, the Nikolaevan police organ established after the Decembrist Revolt, and this fact alone has done much to delegitimize the study of the *Bee* as a valuable historical resource.\(^5\) The *Library for Reading* was

\(^4\) The global rise of the bourgeoisie has been identified as a feature of nineteenth-century political and economic developments not unique to European societies. I discuss the issue of the middle class later in this introduction.

a monthly thick-journal created by the bookseller Aleksandr Filippovich Smirdin that was published from 1834 until 1865. Its true voice, however, was that of its long-time editor Osip Ivanovich Senkovskii, also a Russified Pole. Both the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading identified with the conservatism of Tsar Nicholas I and were “known” (by their critics, especially) for having a core reading audience that came from Russia’s middle stratum. Looking past the traditional political and literary criticism, however, this study aims to repurpose these “infamous” texts and examine them as sources of middle-class culture before the Great Reforms.

Although this study has rather specific aims, it presents an approach to studying the Russian middle stratum that focuses on culture and behavior instead of economic or legal categories (this approach is borrowed from Jürgen Kocka, and is discussed later in this Introduction). A larger project would incorporate other pre-reform periodicals that published for the middle stratum, such as the Nikolai Polevoi’s Moscow Telegraph, S.M. Usov and P.S. Usov’s Mediator, Grech and Polevoi’s Russian Herald, the satirical and illustrated journals of the 1840s and 1850s, provincial newspapers, as well as advice handbooks and manuals, grammar textbooks and other educational primers, encyclopedias, dictionaries, theater books, serialized fiction, fashion reports, and other print matter.

**Historiography**

A persistent feature of scholarly works about the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading is that they rarely examine these periodicals on their own terms, but instead delve into the polemical battles that Nikolai Grech, Faddei Bulgarin, Osip Senkovskii, and their associates engaged in, as well as their reputations and personal relations with canonical Russian writers. In other words, there has been little scholarly examination of the periodicals, but a plentitude of analysis about the literary and political behavior of the journalists associated with these
publications. The reason for this has to do with the intelligentsia narrative that has preserved a particular version of nineteenth-century Russia.

In the small publishing world of St. Petersburg in the 1820s and 1830s, the journalists involved with the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* had competitive relations with the publishers, editors, and writers of other periodicals. The smallest printing mistake could launch furious polemics (indeed, when Nikolai Alekseevich Polevoi – who would later work with the *Library* and the *Bee* – was still editing the rival *Moscow Telegraph*, a short but intense “journal war” erupted between it and the *Northern Bee*). In the aftermath of the Decembrist Revolt, when commercial competition merged with the ideological struggles of the period, the polemics intensified. The post-Decembrist era added significant moral weight to the Romantic conceptualization of writers as ‘prophets’ by placing the responsibility for the molding of public opinion and the education of readers on their shoulders. As liberal Romantics like Alexander Pushkin, Westernizers like Vissarion Belinsky, and Slavophiles like S.P. Shevyrev all denounced the style (“bourgeois”) and practices (“unscrupulous”) of the *Bee* and later the *Library*, their criticism caught fire among the wider intelligentsia. Pushkin’s clever labeling of Faddei Bulgarin as a police spy (“Vidok Figliarin”, after the French journalist and police agent Eugène François Vidocq) and Belinsky’s coining the term “unholy triumvirate” to describe Grech, Bulgarin, and Senkovskii effectively tarnished these journalists during their lifetimes and for a long time thereafter. As discussed in Chapter Six, writers like Pëtr Andreevich Viazemskii, Vladimir Fëdorovich Odoevskii, Nikolai Gogol, Alexander Herzen, and others too numerous to list here added their own labels, epigrams, and caricatures.

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7 These polemics and the relevant bibliography are discussed in Chapter Six.
With the closing of the *Northern Bee* in 1864 and *The Library for Reading* in 1865, one generation had ended while an entirely new group of journalists and scholars – many of whom had only secondhand knowledge of the Nikolaevan period – came to the fore. Senkovskii passed away in 1858 and Bulgarin in 1859, while Grech went on to live in semi-retirement and relative obscurity until his death in 1867. Articles about development of progressive, utilitarian ideas within literature, and the role of authors and journalists as leaders in the intellectual evolution and advancement of the reading public began to emerge. A representative but by no means unique work in this vein is A.P. Piatkovskii’s 1865 article “The Journalistic Triumvirate”, published in Nekrasov’s *Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*), which depicted “the time between 1835 and 1840 when all of Russian literature was under the oppression of three entrepreneurial journalists: Bulgarin, Grech, and Senkovskii” as a period of “despotic rule.”8 The framework of the “monopoly” of the “triumvirate” persisted well into the late Imperial and early Soviet period, with few exceptions.9 Caricatures and satires about Grech, Bulgarin, and Senkovskii would continue to proliferate, such as the drawing of “The Fall of the First Man in Literature” in the journal *Russkaia Starina* in 1898, which depicted the “triumvirate” in the Garden of Eden with Senkovskii as the snake and Bulgarin (Eve) giving the quill (apple) to Grech (Adam).10 As a political artifact, the *Northern Bee* was particularly discredited at the turn of the twentieth century.

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century, when two studies by M.K. Lemke, one on nineteenth-century censorship, and the other on Nicholas I’ Third Section, solidified the Bee’s infamy as a tool of autocracy.11

Soviet histories of nineteenth-century literature and journalism overwhelmingly echoed the sentiments expressed by Belinsky in the 1830s-1840s and the populists of the 1860s. Maxim Gorky’s comment that Grech, Bulgarin, and Senkovskii were a “troika of silly reactionaries” is particularly characteristic; this interpretation is especially evident in Soviet textbooks and encyclopedias from the 1960s and 1970s.12 And yet, in the 1920s and early 1930s Formalist scholars argued for a re-examination of the so-called “triumvirate” as part of their search for “extraliterary” elements (social groupings, commercial factors, institutions) that contextualized the works of canonical authors like Pushkin.13 Boris Eikhenbaum observed that Faddei Bulgarin and his writing had never received a historically fair and factual assessment.14 V.N. Orlov made a similar case for Nikolai Polevoi (a contributor to both the Bee and the Library) in his 1934 study, arguing in a Marxist vein that Polevoi was the face of the bourgeois camp that struggled, and succeeded, in breaking the grip of aristocratic writers like Pushkin.15 In 1929, writer and critic Venyamin Zilber (pseudonym Kaverin), defended his dissertation on Osip Senkovskii,

11 M.K. Lemke, Ocherki po istorii russkoi tzenzury i zhurnalistiki XIX stoletiia (St. Petersburg: Izd-vo Trud, 1904).
15 V.N. Orlov, Nikolai Polevoi: materialy po istorii russkoi literatury i zhurnalistiki tridisatykh godov (Leningrad: Izd. pisatelei v Leningrade, 1934).
emphasizing his scholarly activities as an Orientalist and fiction writer, and detaching Senkovskii from the “triumvirate”. Kaverin concluded that Senkovskii was talented, but that the disreputable Grech and Bulgarin had tarnished Senkovskii’s image. Curiously, Razumnik Ivanov-Razumnik made much the same point about Grech in his 1930 introduction to Grech’s Notes About My Life (Zapiski o moei zhizni). Ivanov-Razumnik argued that Grech was a talented individual until the Decembrist revolt and Bulgarin’s destructive influence brought the formerly liberal publisher to the side of reactionary conservatism. However, here we can observe that despite the scholarly interest in re-examining these figures, emphasis continued to be placed largely on activities that took place before the Bee and the Library began publication. Additionally, in the case of Kaverin and Ivanov-Razumnik we see the ‘rehabilitation’ of Senkovskii and Grech, but not of Bulgarin, who continued to be a bête noire of sorts. No additional Russian-language monograms appeared for the remainder of the Soviet period, although some articles made mention of the Northern Bee, the Library for Reading, and its associated figures in the context of Pushkin studies, while a handful of Polish-language works examined Bulgarin in the context of his pre-Petersburg days in Warsaw and Vilnius (Vilna, Wilno).

Western scholarship of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading initially echoed the interpretation of the nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia before undergoing a partial revision. The first English-language studies came out in the late 1950s and were written by Nicholas Riasanovsky and Sidney Monas, both of whom drew substantially from M.K. Lemke’s two influential works from the turn of the century. Riasanovsky argued that both periodicals

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16 Kaverin, Baron Brambeus. The 1929 dissertation was only published in 1966.
17 Grech, Zapiski o moei zhizni, eds. R.V. Ivanov-Razumnik and D.M Pines.
were examples of “acid” journalism that served to uphold the monarchy of Nicholas I and S.S. Uvarov’s doctrine of Official Nationality, although he did acknowledge their genuine popularity in the context of a rapid expansion of the periodical press. In both his 1959 study of Official Nationality and his 1976 classic *A Parting of Ways*, Riasanovsky looked at the “notorious trio of Bulgarin, Grech, and Senkovskii”\(^\text{19}\) as journalists who “carried government ideology to a wide audience”.\(^\text{20}\) Riasanovsky interpreted the writings of this trio, and those of Bulgarin in particular, as “moralization and didacticism” that thundered against foreign (especially French) influences, and dismissed the periodicals as not particularly valuable objects of study.\(^\text{21}\) In a similar vein, Sidney Monas’s examination of the Third Section described the *Northern Bee* as a tool that was offered by its corrupt editor, Faddei Bulgarin, to the secret police to help manipulate popular opinion.\(^\text{22}\) While this is indeed true (the circumstances of which are described in Chapter Three), the fact of the manipulation of public opinion is not a dead end, but rather an invitation for further scholarly analysis.

The partial revisionism in the history of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* among Western scholars took place mainly within the realm of literary studies. In 1965 Louis Pedrotti published a biography of Osip Senkovskii’s pre-*Library* years, focusing on when Senkovskii was a student at the University of Vilnius and on his frequent submissions to the Polish-language periodicals of that city.\(^\text{23}\) Parallel to Soviet Pushkin studies, Western comparative literary studies mentioned Bulgarin in the context of canonical writers like Pushkin.

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\(^\text{23}\) Pedrotti, *Józef-Julian Sękowski*. 

\(9\)
and Gogol, as works by Gilman Alkire and especially William Mills Todd III illustrate. Several unpublished dissertations discussed the journalistic rivalries of the 1830s in the context of a growing marketplace. A 1987 article written by historian Nurit Schleifman is worth highlighting for its focus on the Northern Bee as a newspaper publishing for a wide audience, and for inviting scholars to further investigate this periodical. Another notable work by historians is the collected anthology by James Von Geldern and Louise McReynolds, published in 1998, which introduces Bulgarin in the context of popular culture in the first half of the nineteenth century. An attempt to bridge the disciplinary divide between historians and literary scholars was made by Donald Thumim in his 1995 unpublished dissertation on Bulgarin as a proponent of the emerging Russian middle class. Thumim’s work raises critical points about the historical neglect of Bulgarin, but otherwise goes too far in arguing that Bulgarin “inculcated in


his readers the habits of thinking about the world that they later used to reform Russian
institutions in the 1860s”.^{28}

Historian Alexander M. Martin has complicated this narrative in his recent study of
Catherine the Great’s imperial project to socially-engineer Russians of the “middling sort”.
Martin argues that middle groups were successfully created by the mid-nineteenth century thanks
to an authoritarian vision to enlighten and Europeanize Russia, but that this project was
paradoxically too successful because it created a social layer of “new men” who “attacked the
regime by turning its own civilizing rhetoric against it”.^{29} Martin cites Faddei Bulgarin as a
supporter of Official Nationality’s message that “Russia was a stable and happy country”, and as
an example of a member of “a growing press that was politically loyal and intellectually
middlebrow”.^{30} Bulgarin and like-minded journalists appealed to “an expanding readership of
merchants, clerics, and minor officials” who were “generally pious, patriotic, and apolitical”.^{31}
While Martin correctly points out that journalists like Bulgarin and Osip Senkovskii tried to
gloss over the anxieties and complexities of urban pathologies and the social order (by presenting
members of different social strata as happy with their lot in life), a closer examination of the
Northern Bee, in particular, will reveal that Bulgarin and his co-editor Nikolai Grech genuinely
believed in a “middle stratum” and the important role it played in driving “enlightenment” and
“civilization” in Russia. Bulgarin, Grech, and Senkovskii thoroughly fit into Martin’s framework
as supporters of the imperial social project, including making demands for reform that such a
project generated. In the case of Grech and Bulgarin, this included demands for the equal and

^{28} Donald A. Thumim, “In the Spirit of the Government: Faddei Bulgarin and the Formation of the “Middle Class”
in Russia, 1789-1859 (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1995), 11.
^{29} Alexander M. Martin, Enlightened Metropolis: Constructing Imperial Moscow, 1762-1855 (Oxford: Oxford
^{30} Ibid., 264, 265.
^{31} Ibid., 265.
consistent application of the Censorship Decree (leading to frequent clashes with S.S. Uvarov, Minister of National Enlightenment), equal application of the laws, elimination of corruption, changes in the tariff system, and in Bulgarin’s secret reports to the Third Section, statements about reforming urban prostitution, policing criminals, and the abolition of serfdom.

Like Western historians, Western literary scholars have increasingly given serious attention to the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*. A 1994 article by Ronald LeBlanc noted the trend in demythologizing the “evil triumvirate” as well as the challenges that process posed (since doing so would also risk demythologizing Pushkin).32 Paul Debreczeny’s ambitious investigation into reader responses to Pushkin also involved a discussion of the popularization of published texts among the non-noble urban population. Citing the *Bee* and the *Library*, Debreczeny concluded that these readers created a demand for “middlebrow” literature, the pressure of which led to the standardization of published materials.33 In examining the widespread adoption of the feuilleton in Russian journalism and the emergence of a “general reader”, Katia Dianina has pointed to Bulgarin and the *Northern Bee* as the originators of this “social phenomenon”.34 Another literary study, Melissa Frazier’s monograph on the *Library for Reading*, makes a thought provoking case for interpreting Senkovskii’s journal as the primary

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example of Russian Romanticism, with its frequent use of pseudonyms, fragments, and blurring of identities.  

Russian-language scholarship – and to a lesser degree, Belarusian and Polish – began to take a “turn” in the study of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading around 1990, when restrictions on what could be studied eased, and what was formerly considered unworthy of analysis stimulated interest among literary scholars (a trend that only accelerated after 1991). Among Russian scholars, the key figure in this emerging field continues to be Abram Reitblat, whose works put Faddei Bulgarin back in the realm of legitimate literary analysis and stimulated a trend in bulgarinovedeniia, or studies of Bulgarin. Reitblat has published archival materials relating to Bulgarin’s reports to the Third Section, and has re-published memoirs and other primary source texts dealing with writers in the era of Nicholas I. Since Reitblat’s particular sub-field is literary sociology, his interpretive works explore the social context of Russian writers and their publications, focusing on the effects that the marketplace, competition for readers, and professionalization had on canonical writers like Pushkin. Addressing the traditional charge of Bulgarin’s espionage, Reitblat has situated the journalist among many other writers who also reported to the Third Section. Concerning the reading audience of the Northern Bee, Reitblat has argued that Bulgarin wrote for everyone, throwing the net so wide that any literate Russian

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37 Abram Reitblat, ed. *Vidok Figliarin: Pis’ma i agenturnye zapiski F.V. Bulgarina v III otdelenie* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998). See also Reitblat’s many articles in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*.
could find something of interest in the newspaper. In other words, Reitblat does not see a particular social stratum targeted by the Bee, although he concedes that many of the Bee’s readers did in fact come from the middle ranks. Many other Russian-language studies and dissertations have been derivatives of Reitblat’s work, particularly his focus on Bulgarin’s literary reputation and mythology, but a handful deserve acknowledgement. N.N. Akimova has contributed to the growing body of work on Bulgarin by making a case for his efforts in both meeting and shaping the tastes of a “mass” public. Tat’iana Golovina’s work on the “voice from the public” has not only complicated our understanding of Bulgarin’s audience, but has also stimulated studies of the provinces (as have her other works, including her analysis of the reading habits of provincial landowners of the middling sort – srednei ruki).

In this review of the relevant literature (which is by no means exhaustive), several conclusions can be drawn. By and large, the emphasis of scholars continues to be on personalities and reputations, rather than on the periodicals themselves as historical sources. Furthermore, the majority of studies have come out of the discipline of literary criticism and interpretation. These are certainly advances and important additions to our general body of

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scholarship, but they have not delved into the questions of social patterning and transformation that hold the attention of historians. It should also be noted that the works cited in this section have not made use of the methodologies available to scholars in other fields, a point elaborated below.

**Methodology**

**Terminology**

The subject of periodicals and their relationship with society – of which they are an integral part – necessarily pulls in multiple directions. It is difficult to imagine, especially given the historiography above, that one discipline or set of tools could adequately engage with the complexity of this social phenomenon. The approach, therefore, must strive to be interdisciplinary and comparative. In this section, I outline how methods and conceptualizations borrowed from outside the discipline of history – notably sociology – can be applied to the topic of this dissertation. The comparative element is applied throughout the dissertation in two ways: I discuss foreign periodicals (as both models for the *Bee* and *Library*, and as examples of European middle class culture) as well as other Russian periodicals, including provincial papers (my examples are the *gubernskie vedomosti*, or provincial news, from Vologda, Viatka, and Arkhangelsk).

First, however, I would like to discuss the approaches that I am not using, or only using in part. Scholars who study periodicals and the middle classes must refer to the work of Jürgen Habermas, whose interpretation of the role of the bourgeoisie in the creation of the “public sphere” (*Öffentlichkeit*) has been extraordinarily influential.\(^4\) Habermas argued, with clear

\(^4\) Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). The original was published in German in 1962.
Marxist overtones, that “society” in Europe, formerly the feudal domain of the church and the court, had begun to alter during the eighteenth century. The rising bourgeoisie first created a private sphere within the family, but under the influence of capitalism and Enlightenment rationalism, that sphere was extended outward as a unified linkage of the many bourgeois private spheres. With the uses of print (specifically periodicals) and physical sites of sociability such as coffee houses, salons, and voluntary associations, the bourgeoisie expanded their private, independent sphere into a public one that was open to those who had the proper qualifications: educational status and property. In Habermas’s periodization, the bourgeoisie first created a literary public sphere (discussing art and philosophy) that was followed by demands for a political public sphere (representational government, constitutional protections, and so on). This public sphere was eroded with the shift toward “mass” activities, the elimination of educational and property qualifications, the advent of popular leisure, and the development of the mass media (which constructs a false public sphere, according to Habermas).

However, scholars have called into question the application and interpretation of Habermas’s public sphere, particularly as a “prescriptive disciplinary category”, and have pointed out the assumptions that Habermas made regarding the rational and inclusive nature of the public sphere (as well as its singularity – were there not other public spheres?). In his study of British Canada, historian Michael Eamon has recently argued that the society of English-speaking colonists and their local press do not fit the German sociologist’s analysis (Habermas’s study was based mostly on eighteenth-century English periodicals, particularly The Spectator).

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Eamon argues that unlike the American colonial press, which sought to create opposition to the metropole, the British-Canadian press engaged with and affirmed the government in Britain, as well as elite British norms.\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, the community of writers, publishers, and readers – which consisted of a heterogeneous mix of non-nobles – was a “vehicle with the potential to bring sense and cultural unity to this fractured environment”.\textsuperscript{48} The publicists of the \textit{Northern Bee} and the \textit{Library for Reading} also promoted this sort of collective cohesion among disparate social elements through the shared activity of reading and shared loyalty to the Russian tsar.

Cooperation between the middle stratum and the state (as in Eamon’s study of British Canada) was much more common \textit{outside} of Western Europe, as Jürgen Osterhammel has demonstrated in his recent overview of the global nineteenth century. The middle stratum, particularly its commercial layer, “were at first state-protected niche groups” that lacked “the institutional requirements for autonomous systems of private market regulation”; in societies in Asia as well as Eastern and Southern Europe, Osterhammel sees a “dual society” (quoting Ivan T. Berend) in which the material and educational level of the bourgeoisie rose, but political power continued to be held by traditional elites.\textsuperscript{49}

Trying to find Habermas’s public sphere in the context of Imperial Russia had led to disappointing results, inadvertently triggering the issue of Russia’s supposed exceptionalism.\textsuperscript{50} It makes sense, therefore, to approach the problem from a different angle – to look for what existed

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Elise Kimmerling Wirtschafter discusses the Habermasian public sphere within the context of a politically engaged civil society, stating, “But in Russia, prior to the mid- or even the late nineteenth century, it would be misleading to speak of a politically organized civil society independent of the state”. Wirtschafter, “The groups between: raznochintsy, intelligentsia, professionals,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Russia Volume 2: Imperial Russia, 1689–1917}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 245-263; here, 256.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
in society, instead of what did not, and to compare these competing notions. In the context of late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet period, a recent volume edited by Yasuhiro Matsui has made the case for viewing *obshchestvennost’* (sometimes translated as the public sphere, sometimes as civil society, and with similarly broad and contested meanings) as a highly flexible and context-specific term that focuses on the communicative and associative aspects of the people involved.51 I do not rely on the term *obshchestvennost’* because it does not appear in the periodicals in question, but focusing on actual communication, rather than prescriptive categories, is a case that I make further below. It should be noted, though, that the call to shift away from the usage of rigid macro-constructs is not particularly recent. Indeed, it is one of the historical legacies of several generations of the *Annales* school. In their 1990 article in *Annales*, Maurizio Gribaudi and Alain Blum made a case for studying interactions and individuals instead of schematic social models.52 This approach is particularly fruitful, I believe, with a source base such as the periodical press.

Habermas’s identification of periodicals and physical sites of sociability as the incubators of a new collective identity is, therefore, the most that his model can offer in the context of Imperial Russia. A similar case of partial applicability is Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism. Anderson’s classic argument is that in the age of print capitalism, periodicals were


the originators and carriers of the constructed idea of the nation, the imagined community.\textsuperscript{53} But nations were not invented solely on the pages of the press, nor did the press automatically propagate a vision of specifically nationalist cohesion. Nor do scholars universally accept the existence of a single print community.\textsuperscript{54} Although Russian journalists had a remarkable tendency to describe their readers in the singular – the public (\textit{publika}) – this convention belied the fact that multiple reading publics existed (organized along geographic, religious, educational, professional, age, and gender differences, for instance). However, these publics could intersect through the reading of periodicals that had national or imperial scope, such as the \textit{Bee} and the \textit{Library}.

Moreover, Anderson’s example of “nationality” in Imperial Russia equates S.S. Uvarov’s vague \textit{narodnost’} (incorrectly called “\textit{natsionalnost’}, following Hugh Seton-Watson) with the Russification campaigns of Alexander III.\textsuperscript{55} Andrei Zorin, however, has shown that in Uvarov’s triad of “Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality” (\textit{Pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost’}) the concept of nationality had no independent definition (indeed, it was defined through circular logic by the other two elements of the triad).\textsuperscript{56} This meant that writers, critics, and newspapermen like Bulgarin, Grech, and Senkovskii could interpret nationality according to their own beliefs. As this dissertation will explain, the concept of nationality present in the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading was not ethnic but social (and although Bulgarin was


\textsuperscript{54} For criticism of Anderson’s theory, see, among others, Trish Loughran, \textit{The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Loughran makes the case for “a proliferating variety of local and regional reading publics scattered across a vast and diverse geographical space.” Loughran, xix.


famously known to praise folksy Russianness and satirize the French, he tended to be inclusive of the peoples living in the Russian Empire). Nicholas Riasanovsky, in the works cited above, classified the *Bee* and especially Bulgarin as having a “peculiar nationalism” that nonetheless affirmed government ideology. However, in looking for examples of the *Bee’s* support of “Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality”, and to a lesser degree the *Library’s*, Riasanovsky overlooked a larger thread running through these periodicals. This “peculiar nationalism” was in fact a form of middle-stratum *narodnost’,* one that united groups that supposedly had little in common: middle-rank civil and military servants, merchants of the first two guilds, professionals, provincial and lower gentry, and women of respective rank (the rationale for including these groups in the definition is discussed in Chapter Three).

The *Bee* and the *Library* interpreted *narodnost’* as rooted in the middle stratum and as both multiethnic and supra-ethnic. This concept of nationality also fused with Grech, Bulgarin, Nikolai Polevoi, and Senkovskii’s ideas about their readership: both *narodnost’* and the readership of the *Bee/Library* were defined in terms of the middle stratum, as I explain in the dissertation, and these two ideas (*narodnost’* and readership) were often interchangeable. These journalists saw their audience as subjects of the Russian empire, unified under the Romanov crown and bound with the Russian language along with others in an empire-wide community of readers. This figurative community was open to Russians ‘of all estates’ as articles, book

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59 A similar argument has been made in the German context. Kirsten Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation: Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).
advertisements, and brochures so frequently proclaimed (but which reflected the universalizing tendencies of the middle ranks and effectively meant readers from the middle stratum).

Much like Habermas’s notion of the public sphere and Anderson’s ideas about nationalism, the European category of the middle class(es) has been similarly problematic in Russian historiography. In the context of Imperial Russia, historians have investigated segments of what is traditionally considered the middle class in Western Europe (merchants, professionals) and have found them to be lacking in a single cohesive identity. But as Gregory Freeze cautioned in his seminal article, “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History”, the fluid soslovie structure of nineteenth-century Russia did not reflect the four-estate structure of Western Europe; moreover, he argued that it was “necessary to modify the corollary that soslovia were “weak” artifacts without authority, cohesion, or self-awareness, created by the state at its own whim”. In recent years, historians have increasingly adopted Jürgen Kocka’s negative definition of the middle class as a group that gained an identity relationally – that is, by having opponents above and below (typically the nobility, court, and church above, and peasants and manual workers below, but those boundaries were in constant flux) – and through shared culture. This broad definition means “the middle class constituted itself as a social formation that encompassed various occupational groups, sectors, and class positions.”

This relational identity was further bolstered by common interests, experiences, and culture. In his study of the global

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nineteenth century, Jürgen Osterhammel has also urged caution in presuming a fixed definition for what constitutes the “middle class”. Moving outside of Europe, Osterhammel sees significant variation in social categories that were thought to be fixed: in China, in Mexico, and in European colonial communities around the world. To be able to actually see the activities of the middle stratum, Osterhammel suggests looking at “the finer shades of social interaction”. As I explain further below, these “finer shades” can be found by paying close attention to the language used in the Bee and the Library, language that reveals the deliberate engineering and simultaneous reflection of a fluid collective identity known alternatively as the middle “condition” or “legal status group” (srednee sostoianie) or as the middle “estate” (srednee soslovie), but to which I refer simply as the middle stratum.

Frameworks

Having addressed, at least in part, the relevant terminology and conceptual categories, I would like to turn to the overarching frameworks applied in this investigation. Since the central focus of this study is the representation of the Russian middle stratum, it is helpful to apply the insights of both historian Roger Chartier and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, as both French scholars have studied the process of representation (the construction and classification of social reality) from different angles. As Chartier has explained,

…the idea of representation permits the description of three modes of relations vis-à-vis the social world. These are, first, the operation of classification and delineation that produces the multiple intellectual configurations by which reality is constructed in contradictory ways by various groups. Next, the practices that aim at providing for the recognition of a social identity, at exhibiting a specific way of being in the world, at signifying a status or rank symbolically. Finally, the institutionalized objective forms by

64 Ibid., 767.
65 On variations in the terms sostoianie and soslovie, see Freeze, “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History,” passim.
means of which ‘representants’ (collectively or individually) mark in visible and perpetuated fashion the existence of the group, the class, or the community.  

My analysis of the representation of the middle stratum primarily makes use of this first type of description, following the operations performed by the journalists of the Northern Bee and Library for Reading in classifying the social segment they defined as the middle stratum. Here I should stress that I am attentive to Chartier’s reminder about not setting up artificial oppositions “between creation and consumption or between production and reception”.  

Scholars can no longer assume that any text has a single and permanent meaning, and must remember that various reading practices have the potential to change the original message of the author. Since my sources on reading practices (the responses of real readers) are rather limited, I include them whenever possible in clusters within the various chapters. Because of this limitation, I focus on the construction of representations in the periodicals examined in this study, taking care to remember, as Pierre Bourdieu cautioned, that representations are both expressions of reality (as products of internalized social structures) and new creations that have the potential to shape social and cultural perceptions.  

This means that rather than being a one-way reflection of society, a particular representation is a process (a part of Bourdieu’s multifaceted definition of habitus) that not only reveals the classifier’s interpretation of society, but also the classifier’s preferences and values (hence the focus on individual biographies and milieus in Chapter One).  

Representations of society, however, need to be understood in the context of longer social transformations. Here I apply, with some important modifications, the frameworks of the German sociologists Norbert Elias and Niklas Luhmann, whose theories overlap in the

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investigation of the consequences of the functional differentiation of society (differentiation that was due to specific human achievements, such as the use of money to replace the system of bartering). I will first discuss the framework put forth by each sociologist, before discussing how these theories can work together.

In his theory of the civilizing process, Norbert Elias described the transformation of the personal behavior of European elites in relation to the structural transformation of the state. In Elias’s analysis, the monopolization of power and the transition from feudal kingdoms to absolute monarchies in Europe created new demands on the people who served; those who were once knights became courtiers, and the social restraint and order seen at court had a corresponding change in personal behavior. This entailed the refinement of manners (how to eat at the table, how to have a conversation, proper hygiene, etc.), a lowered threshold for shame, filth, and violence, and a modulation of emotions, all of which reflected a process of self-restraint that was inculcated among courtiers. This behavior, Elias theorized, was not accidental, but was directly related to the needs at court. Slowly, this process spread outward, or rather downward, as elements of the rising “middle-class intelligentsia” (as Elias called them) began to emulate courtly behavior. The classic model was the French court, whose social conventions were copied in all other European courts.

According to Elias, this civilizing process took on a new trajectory in the late eighteenth century, as leading members of the middle ranks set themselves in opposition to both the court and the mass of laboring people (an interesting echo of Jürgen Kocka’s discussion of the formation of middle class identity specifically through opposition to those above and below) at

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69 Elias’s framework has been applied outside of Europe as well. See, for example, Susanne Brandstädter, “With Elias in China: Civilizing process, local restorations and power in contemporary rural China,” Anthropological Theory 3:1 (March 2003): 87-105. In the Russian context, see “From the Editors: Gardening Empire as “Civilizing Process”,” Ab Imperio 3 (2008): 11-16.
precisely the same time that these middle ranks developed new terminology for the behavior associated with the court. Using the examples of the elder Mirabeau in France and Immanuel Kant in Germany, Elias described the evolution of counter-concepts meant to legitimize the middle stratum. The court, associated with politeness and good manners, but also insincerity and dissemblance, was contrasted with the middle class “ideal of virtue.” In France the middle ranks set up a contrast between civilization (a process of ‘reforming’ the masses, and later the colonies) and false civilization, but maintained the behavior of the French court nonetheless; in Germany the contrast was between Kultur, which reflected concrete intellectual accomplishments, and ‘civilization’ as the empty emulation of the French nobility. In the German case, this courtly behavior was rejected, which Elias attributed to the isolation of the German courts from one another and the corresponding exclusion of the German middle-class intelligentsia from courtly culture.

A handful of scholars have applied Elias’s framework to Russian history. In a recent book chapter, Alexander Martin has made the case for viewing social developments at the turn of the nineteenth century as part of the civilizing process. Already in the eighteenth century, Martin argues, the (relative) spread of reading, abolition of the death penalty, and partial limitation of corporal punishment reflected the civilizing process at work. The 1812 French invasion of Russia, however, was a turning point; during and after the war, a contrast was set up between the French-speaking aristocracy and the heroic, patriotic Russians of the lower strata who fought in the war. Martin has argued that,

the war accelerated the civilizing process by changing how Russians analysed their world; by disrupting the normal patterns of urban life, it revealed a civilizing process that

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was already unfolding; and, by undermining the domination of society and culture by the aristocratic elite, it *inflected the trajectory* of the civilizing process in Russia.\(^7^1\)

After 1812, Martin concludes, members of the middle stratum entered into fields formerly monopolized by the aristocracy, such as “education, libraries, theatre or fine dining” and in turn made them more “accessible to larger segments of the population”.\(^7^2\) In the context of the transformation of the Soviet citizen, Vadim Volkov has made a case for analyzing “the seemingly unimportant and subtle changes in social organisation of everyday life… because they carry significant structural effects in the long term” in the manner that Elias described.\(^7^3\) In Volkov’s example, the concept of *kul’turnost’* (culturedness) is used to trace “mainly former peasants becoming urban dwellers becoming Soviet citizens”.\(^7^4\) However, literary scholar Catriona Kelly has put forth what I consider a highly practicable interpretation of Elias’s concept in her study of Russian conduct books and advice manuals. She agrees that “Elias’s thesis of a homogenization in behavior patterns directed by the elite” as well as “the rise of bourgeois hegemony” apply to Russia as they do to other countries like Germany and Britain. However, Kelly acknowledges the limitations of Elias’s original framework (its tendency toward modernizing theory; the absence of gender roles), and points out the crucial caveat that “civilization” in eighteenth-century Russia was always merged with “Westernization”, which immediately set up oppositions between native and foreign practices and produced various anti-civilizing movements. With this in mind, Kelly finds that “Rather than a (single and unitary)
‘civilizing process’, then, Russia witnessed a large number of different ‘civilizing processes’ (and ‘anti-civilizing processes’), some of which contradicted each other or ran into dead ends”.

The journalists behind the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading expressed their publishing activities as well as their audience in language that reflected a clear belief in a civilizing process. Their ‘watchwords’, in Elias’s vocabulary, followed the language of the Russian court (and in this way supported the imperial social project described by Alexander Martin in his monograph on Moscow’s modernization, although in that study Martin does not use Elias’s concept): enlightenment (prosveshchenie), education (obrazovanie), literature (either as literatura or slovesnost’), upbringing/education (vospitanie), useful knowledge (poleznye znaniia), orderliness (blagoustroistvo). Like the Russian state, which tried to balance between adopting “enlightenment” from Europe and cultivating a Russian nationalist myth, the journalists in this study were also ambivalent about their relationship with European “civilization” (hence Bulgariñ’s tendency to both mock the French and borrow heavily from French print culture, for instance).

In addition to the (modified) concept of the civilizing process, my study also makes use of Niklas Luhmann’s concept of systems theory as it applies to the periodical press. In Luhmann’s understanding, the press functions as a medium (much like the money that replaced bartering) that enables the construction and differentiation of a system linking producers (journalists) and receivers (audience). Since there is no need for physical interaction between journalists and the audience (although it can occur, it is not necessary), journalists must assume the acceptability of their content and the existence of their audience, which “leads not only to the standardization but also to the differentiation of the programmes […] this, however, is precisely
how individual participants have the chance to get what they want, or what they believe they need to know”. This way, the thorny problem of determining (or even counting) the ‘audience’, common in Russian literary studies, is no longer particularly relevant. Instead, the actual communication – the content of the periodicals – is the focus of analysis.

In Luhmann’s theory, the mass media create a background reality against which individuals can form their identity by making choices in their preferences and opinions. The information produced by the media creates conditions for further communication in the wider environment. Additionally, any socialization or propagation of norms is a secondary effect that depends on the specific organizations involved; the primary role of the media is to generate and process ‘irritants’ in a recursive fashion. The public, for Luhmann, is an environment internal to the system, but it forms the system’s boundaries. The public is the ‘other’ to which the media presents information, and which the media also represents.

A key element of Luhmann’s systems theory is the existence of first-order and second-order observations. In the case of the press, the first-order operations are the communications that exist through that medium, the facts of the matter, so to speak. But journalists know that they are not reporting and publishing the absolute truth (if that were possible); “put in Kantian terms: the mass media generate a transcendental illusion”, Luhmann wittily remarked. Accordingly, the scholar studying the communications of the press must knowingly observe the press’s own construction of reality. This is the second-order observation, and this is what I proceed to do in the span of the dissertation.

Despite their different approaches, we can see Elias’s civilizing process and Luhmann’s systems theory working together. Luhmann’s definition of the mass media begins with Johannes

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77 Ibid.
Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press five hundred years ago: “Only with the printing press is the volume of written material multiplied to the extent that oral interaction among all participants in communication is effectively and visibly rendered impossible.”78 In the process of this communication, we can see the ‘watchwords’ of a civilizing process (enlightenment, useful knowledge, orderliness, and so on) be disseminated within the system of the periodical press. One example of this process, using the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*, is examined in this study.

Synthesis

This dissertation contributes to and is informed by recent scholarly reexaminations of Russia’s middling groups. The collected volume edited by Clowes, Kassow and West, as well as Elise Kimmerling Wirtshafter’s studies of Russia’s legal estates have been important sources for framing questions about the cohesion of the middling groups.79 They have been complemented by Alison Smith’s work on national culture, petitions to change legal estates, and examination of the honored citizenry.80 I would especially like to single out Alexander Martin’s *Enlightened Metropolis* and its explanation of Empress Catherine II’s imperial social project to engineer Russians of the middling sort, since the original founders of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* were very much products of this process (discussed in Chapter One).81 The dissertation also examines representations of the provinces and charity, and therefore relies on the work of

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81 Martin, *Enlightened Metropolis*. 

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Susan Smith-Peter and Galina Ulianoa, respectively.\(^8^2\) Catherine Evtuhov’s exploration of A.O. Karelin’s bourgeois photography, as well as the bourgeois provincial gentry who make up her larger study on the province of Nizhnii Novgorod, have provided important insights into bourgeois Russian culture.\(^8^3\)

In examining the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* as sources of middle-class culture, this study borrows the approach of Jürgen Kocka. Kocka’s negative definition of the middle class has already been cited, but I would like to underline the second component of his definition: shared cultural values. The European middle classes, he has argued, differed in many respects such as “interests and experiences based on occupation and economic status, gender and region, religion and ethnicity”, but they “shared a respect for individual achievement, on which they based their claims for rewards, recognition, and influence”; they also “shared a positive attitude toward regular work”, a “striving for independence, either individually or through associations”, and “emphasized education”.\(^8^4\) As this dissertation will illustrate, the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* propagated these bourgeois values, strongly emphasizing education, work (including that of the provincial gentry), and individual achievement and promotion.

Chapter One explores the backgrounds of the journalists who published the *Bee* and the *Library*, examining their Enlightenment-influenced worldviews, their understanding of publishing and the role of the middle stratum, and the factors that enabled them to see commercial opportunities. Chapter Two examines the European sources and models that were used to shape the *Bee* and the *Library*, as well as how these publications sourced information


\(^{8^4}\) Kocka, “The Middle Classes in Europe”: 788, 786-87.
intended for the Russian middle stratum. Chapter Three delves into how the *Bee* and the *Library* classified their audience, how classifications of the middle stratum were highly flexible, and how reading emerged as a common denominator among middle-stratum Russians. Chapter Four analyzes the information published for the middle stratum, focusing on practical and applied knowledge that served readers in the provinces and the cities. Chapter Five examines how the *Bee* and the *Library* represented their middle-stratum audience, and how behaviors – specifically education and individual achievement – were emphasized. Chapter Six explores the critical reactions to the *Bee* and the *Library*, focusing on charges of commercialism and bad taste. Chapter Seven traces the decline of the *Bee* and the *Library* amid the rise of cheaper periodicals.
Chapter One: Profiles: Retailers of the Press

How did the publishers and editors of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* – whom I will refer to as ‘retailers of the press’ – come to transpose the middle-class culture of European periodicals onto Russian soil? As this chapter will explain, the backgrounds of these newspapermen were a significant factor in shaping their perceptions of education, the role of the press, and the importance of Russia’s middle stratum. The original founders of the *Bee* and the *Library* were the children of Russia’s Enlightenment – or at the very least, the successful products of Empress Catherine II’s project to create an enlightened “middling sort”. The original journalists here were Nikolai Grech (b. 1787), Faddei Bulgarin (b. 1789), Nikolai Polevoi (b. 1796), and Osip Senkovskii (b. 1800). Although their educations and upbringings varied, they nonetheless grew up imbued with the spirit of Catherine II’s understanding of enlightenment, which emphasized “rationality, sincerity, humanitarianism, critical self-reflection, cultural cosmopolitanism, a love of learning, and concern for civic and economic improvement”. These journalists also understood the role of the middle stratum in the way that Catherine II had intended: as a supporting base for the autocracy’s enlightened aims to educate and gradually modernize Russia.

The publishing activities of these ‘retailers’ were informed by this understanding of enlightenment as well as by another source: bourgeois European periodicals that blended commercial content with ideas emphasizing education and individual achievement (the specific models are discussed in the following chapter). With domestic enlightenment and foreign bourgeois periodicals as their intellectual foundations, these journalists produced a wide array of published works in multiple genres that borrowed from European models and that targeted a

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middle-stratum audience in Russia. They understood their publishing activities as independent work (living by their pens) that extended enlightened values to the middle stratum and that transferred these values from one generation of Russians to the next.\(^8^6\) The inclusion of entertainment features such as ‘light’ literature, fashions, anecdotes, and satirical feuilletons was part of the transfer from European models and was not considered to be mutually exclusive of enlightening materials, such as articles on language, literature, science, technology, agriculture, medicine, and the like.

Other reasons that explain why these particular Russians created middle-stratum publications have to do with geography and social origins. Middle-class culture, as Jürgen Kocka argues, can only be created in cities due to requirements for social contact with peers.\(^8^7\) Although not all of the ‘retailers’ were born in cities, they moved to cities like Vilnius or Moscow, and all eventually made it to St. Petersburg (if they were not from there originally). From St. Petersburg, they published and disseminated the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* to provincial towns and country estates, thereby extending middle-class culture outward to non-urban areas of the Russian empire. Additionally, as discussions of their social origins will show, the original ‘retailers’ grew up knowing multiple foreign languages (including Polevoi, who taught himself French and German), which facilitated their transfer of European bourgeois models. Their middling social origins, moreover, enabled them to approach publishing from a commercial angle and not a purely aesthetic or intellectual one.

The publishing histories of the ‘retailers’, discussed below, overlapped and crisscrossed in ways that may require a brief explanatory note to avoid confusion. Faddei Bulgarin and Nikolai Grech launched the *Northern Bee* in 1825 as co-editors (Grech was the publisher). The

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\(^8^7\) Kocka, “The Middle Classes in Europe”: 787.
Library for Reading, launched in 1834, was initially co-edited by Nikolai Grech and Osip Senkovskii; Senkovskii took over as sole editor in 1836. Grech and Bulgargin edited the more sophisticated literary and political journal *Son of the Fatherland* during the 1820s; in the late 1830s, Nikolai Polevoi would come to briefly co-edit the *Northern Bee* and *Son of the Fatherland*, as well as contribute articles to the *Library*. Senkovskii became co-editor of *Son of the Fatherland* in 1841 while still working at the *Library*. Senkovskii’s assistant A.V. Starchevskii, who took over day-to-day operations at the *Library* between 1848 and 1856, bought the rights to *Son of the Fatherland* and turned the journal into a cheap newspaper that was published between 1856 and 1868. P.S. Usov, who was a long-time employee at the *Northern Bee* and editor of the paper from 1861 until 1864, came to work for Starchevskii’s newspaper *Son of the Fatherland* in 1864. Starchevskii then briefly resurrected the *Northern Bee* as an expressly ‘middle class’, cheap newspaper between 1869 and 1870.88

As these biographical profiles will illustrate, the ‘retailers’ came to think of periodicals as supplements or even substitutes to formal education. Every journalist in this chapter grew up reading European and early Russian periodicals (not through personal subscriptions, but through sharing with other students or young people). This early understanding of periodicals is seen in the *Bee* and the *Library*, particularly in discussions of the importance of periodical literature in self-education (as in the opening quote in the Introduction), and that reading was a necessity and not a luxury. This view of reading-as-education was manifested in the *Bee* and the *Library’s* popularization of scholarship and in the serialized encyclopedias and guidebooks published by the ‘retailers’. Again, this was not a didactic enforcement of education, but a belief in the gradual spread of enlightenment through ‘useful and entertaining’ reading (as it was often described).

Another common thread running through the biographies of the ‘retailers’ is their social, ethnic, and religious heterogeneity. Although this is discussed more extensively at the end of the chapter, the German Lutheran (Grech) and especially Polish Catholic backgrounds (Bulgarin, Senkovskii, Starchevskii) of the ‘retailers’ goes some way in explaining their ability to identify opportunities in Russian publishing and transplant European models. The non-noble (Polevoi, Usov) and commercially minded Russian Orthodox ‘retailers’ also saw the field of Russian publishing as open to expansion.

Finally, these biographical profiles illustrate the link between the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when Russian publishing expanded thanks to an increase in middle stratum readers and periodicals, and the late nineteenth century, when thoroughly bourgeois periodicals like Rodina and Niva, as well as mass-circulation newspapers came to dominate the market. Starchevskii and Usov are the particular links here; having received their training and experience in the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading, they later worked at periodicals catering directly to the Russian bourgeoisie.

Nikolai Ivanovich Grech (1787 – 1867)

Nikolai Ivanovich Grech’s literary career came about through his fascination with the printed word, interest in language, and effective disqualification from the Russian bureaucracy. Having outlived most of his contemporaries, and having left a widely read memoir, Grech had a distinct advantage in shaping the narrative later used by scholars. Grech was born in St. Petersburg in August of 1787. The Grech family name had been well known among the service elite of the capital for several decades thanks to Grech’s grandfather, Johann Ernst Gretsch, who had come to St. Petersburg in the 1730s from Königsberg on the invitation of Ernst Johann von Biron (Buehren), Empress Anna’s right-hand man. Johann Ernst Gretsch’s story was reflective of
the success that many Germans found in Imperial Russia: Gretsch secured a professorship at the Noble Land Cadet Corps run by the Count von Münnich, where he taught history for nearly twenty years. By the late 1750s, the Prussian scholar of very modest origins had become a tutor to the future Catherine the Great, as Nikolai Grech proudly recounts in his memoirs. Johann Ernst’s son Ivan Ivanovich Grech (Nikolai’s father) worked in the Russian civil service, advancing to chief secretary (ober-sekretar’) at a chancellery within the Senate. His wife Katerina Iakovlevna Freigol’d (Freyhold) also descended from two generations of russified Prussians who had been in the Russian military or civil service. Thus, there was a clear indication of what sort of career was expected for Nikolai Grech.

In his memoirs, Nikolai Grech recounts that his interest in literature came as a surprise to his family. His father Ivan Ivanovich did not enjoy leisurely reading, and his frequent mismanagement of the family finances meant that there was nothing to buy books with. Reading material in the Grech household appeared by the good grace of Nikolai’s first cousin Pavel Khristianovich Bezak, a successful and high-ranking civil servant. Grech attributed his interest in literature to his mother, who instructed her son to read in Russian and German, and who herself loved to read books and tell stories to her children. Due to his family’s unstable financial fortunes, Grech had irregular and generally poor quality tutoring (by unqualified French émigrés, or friends of his father’s) with long breaks in between until the age of fourteen, when he was enrolled in the Junker School, which trained students in jurisprudence. To feed his imagination, he read.

89 N.I. Grech, Zapiski o moei zhizni (Moscow: Zakharov, 2002), 5-37. This edition of Grech’s memoirs is the most complete.
90 Ibid., 34, 43.
91 Ibid., 45, 57-71. Bezak fell from grace in 1812. One of Bezak’s subordinates, P.G. Sarazhinovich, was hired by Grech in 1847 to proofread the Northern Bee. Ibid., 67.
92 Ibid., 45.
93 Ibid., 113-114, 119.
Reading provided Grech with an alternative kind of schooling that, based on his recollections, he valued more than any formal schooling. He learned the Russian translation of Joachim Heinrich Campe’s *Children’s Library* by heart. Later, as an adolescent, his favorite reading became Alain-René Lesage’s pan-European hit *Gil Blas* because, he remembered, it showed him the colors of “the world and people”. Like books, periodical reading satisfied Grech’s need for outside information. During General Suvorov’s Italian and Swiss campaigns in 1799 and 1800, a young and excitable Grech scoured the official newspapers to find out about the outcomes of battles. When Karamzin’s *Messenger of Europe (Vestnik Evropy)* began publishing in 1802, Grech recalled counting the days until the next issue of the journal would come out: “with what impatience did we await the little red books every two weeks!” This was during his enrollment at the Junker School, where the classes he took to prepare for a civil career at the Senate were disappointing and uninspiring. Instead, Grech and his closest classmates turned to periodicals: the *Mercury of Moscow (Moskovskii Merkurii)*, the *Northern Messenger (Severnyi Vestnik)*, and the *Saint Petersburg Messenger (Sankt-Peterburgskii Vestnik)*. There is no indication that these periodicals were obtained though individual subscriptions (indeed, the financial means were absent); most likely, these journals were either shared subscriptions (when multiple readers shared the cost of a single subscription) or borrowed copies.

Alongside reading, Grech began his own literary output while still a child. His first “published” work came at age twelve; his father, on a rare occasion that he had disposable income, bought his son a portable typography set. The letters in the set were for French, but

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94 Ibid., 82.
95 Ibid., 119-120.
96 Ibid., 123.
97 Ibid., 182.
98 Ibid., 153-154, 166-167, 178-179. Although Grech admired a few teachers and the director A.N. Olenin, he lambasted the poor administration of the Junker School.
99 Ibid., 183.
Grech printed his first pages regardless: “Petites Historiettes. St. Petersbourg, 1799, chez N. Gretsch.”100 A few years later at the Junker School, Grech and his adolescent friends had the idea to publish their own journal with the title *Chaos (Khaos)*. Although it never materialized, the friends had prepared enough material to submit to established journals. In this way, Grech published his first work, an analysis of Russian synonyms, in the *Journal of Russian Literature (Zhurnal Rossiiskoi Slovesnosti)* in 1805.101

The sheer influence of printed matter fascinated Nikolai Grech, a point he continually emphasized in his memoirs. Writers, he thought, had a unique role to play in society. Grech remembered one day in the late 1790s when the writer and publisher Fedor Osipovich Tumanskii visited his father on business. Grech recalled observing Tumanskii and thinking: “Here is an author, a writer [...] whatever he concocts, writes, prints, that is what all of Russia reads.”102

Nikolai Grech’s bureaucratic career veered off course while he was still in school. Due to administrative mismanagement, the Junker School was forced to eliminate the fourth and final year of classes, prompting many students to leave. Grech was among them. He was given the fourteenth rank of collegial cadet (*kollegii iunker*) despite not graduating.103 That year his father, heavily in debt, passed away. The failure of the Junker School to matriculate qualified civil servants, as well as his need for income, pushed Grech to find alternative employment. A temporary job as an assistant in the statistical division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs taught Grech to loathe bureaucracy, “this vulgar parasitism called the civil service”.104

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100 *Ibid.*, 121.
Disappointed and disgusted by bureaucracy, Grech turned to teaching. He audited classes at the Pedagogical Institute, but formal education frustrated him yet again. Instead, “conversations with intelligent and educated people, reading good books, [my] own reflections, and [my own] literary experiences brought me more profit.”

For the next few years Grech had steady employment as a tutor at various Petersburg boarding schools. Concurrently, he edited the journal *Geniuses of the Times* (*Genii Vremen*) between 1808 and 1809, and co-published it (after it was renamed the *Journal of the Latest Travels*, or *Zhurnal Noveishikh Puteshestvii*) with Fedor Andreevich Shreder between 1809 and 1810.

The war with France brought on a surge of patriotic publishing. During Napoleon’s invasion of Russia, Grech worked as a teacher of Russian at the distinguished Saint Peter’s School (*Petrishule*, or *St. Petri-Schule*). In his free time, he was a member of the “Bürgerclub [Birger klub], or Civilian meeting [Grazhdanskoie sobranie]”, where “Bureaucrats, merchants, artists, craftsmen and other such people of middle rank [srednego zvaniia], Russians and foreigners, met and informed each other of everything they had heard and learned.” Grech’s identification of a physical site of sociability is particularly interesting. From these discussions Grech concluded that the official periodicals were not satisfying the reading public’s need for information, but opportunity soon arrived. In October of 1812 Grech’s school supervisor I.O. Timkovskii had him do a translation of Ernst Moritz Arndt’s work “The Voice of Truth” (*Glas Istiny*) on the request of S.S. Uvarov, then head of the Saint Petersburg School District. Uvarov proposed starting a new journal; Grech suggested the title *Son of the Fatherland* (*Syn*).

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105 Ibid.
107 Grech, *Zapiski*, 201.
Otechestva) and volunteered himself as editor. Moritz’s work, along with other patriotic materials, was published in the first issue.\textsuperscript{108}

Son of the Fatherland launched Nikolai Grech’s journalistic career and established his reputation. Initially publishing historical materials relating to the war with Napoleon, the journal expanded to include political and literary sections as well. The height of the journal came in the decade after Emperor Alexander I’s victorious return from Paris. However, by 1825, as Grech admitted, the journal “was going sluggishly”\textsuperscript{109}; F.V. Bulgarin became co-editor that year, and in 1829 combined it with his journal Northern Archive (Severnyi Arkhiv). Nevertheless, Son of the Fatherland had unusual longevity: it was published from 1812 until 1852, and was under Grech’s full or partial editorship until 1841. Grech sold the rights to the journal to A.F. Smirdin in 1838, who brought in Nikolai Polevoi as unofficial co-editor; Grech left the editorial board definitively three years later and was replaced by O.I. Senkovskii.

For most of the years between 1825 and 1860, Grech devoted his activities to the Northern Bee – the details of which will unfold in the following chapters – although he also had great success with other types of publishing. In 1835 and 1836 Grech served as editor of the Encyclopedic Lexicon (Ėntsiklopedicheskii leksikon), published by the printer and bookseller Adol’f Aleksandrovich Pliushar. When A.F. Smirdin launched the Library for Reading in 1834, Grech served as co-editor with O.I. Senkovskii for nearly two years. Grech also published and edited the journal Russian Messenger (Russkii vestnik, not to be confused with M.N. Katkov’s later journal of the same name) from 1841 through 1844, frequently with the collaboration of N.A. Polevoi. Grech’s grammar books, travel accounts, and short fiction all brought him commercial success and recognition. His textbooks on the Russian language, particularly his

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 203-208.  
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 269.
Comprehensive Russian Grammar (Prostrannaia russkaia grammatika, 1827-1830), Practical Russian Grammar (Prakticheskaia russkaia grammatika, 1827), Elementary Rules of Russian Grammar (Nachal’nye pravila russkoi grammatiki, 1828), and Textbook of Russian Grammar (Uchebnaia russkaia grammatika, 1851), served as standard texts in state schools for several decades. For his pedagogical work, Grech was inducted into the Academy of Sciences.¹¹⁰

Faddei Venediktovich Bulgarin (1789 – 1859)

Infamous during his life and commonly portrayed as a turncoat, coward, corpulent fellow, police spy, and an avaricious journalist, Faddei Venediktovich Bulgarin was unquestionably the most vilified Russian writer in the first half of the nineteenth century. The causes for his staggeringly negative reputation were manifold, but the crux of the matter concerned commercial competition (and is discussed more extensively in Chapter Six). Still, Bulgarin was guilty of self-inflicted reputational damage: he had the bad judgment to launch literary and personal attacks on Alexander Pushkin, for which he was paid back many times over by Russian writers and scholars who demolished his reputation over the course of the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries. Because of this distorted reputation, as A.I. Reitblat and N.N. Akimova point out, it is rather difficult to study the substance of Bulgarin’s publishing activities. Nevertheless, a distillation of the facts is in order.

Bulgarin was born into a noble Polish family (as Jan Tadeusz Krzysztof Bułharyn, in honor of Tadeusz Kościuszko) in the fateful year 1789 in the province of Minsk. His father Benedict Bułharyn was Polish revolutionary who had been exiled to Siberia in 1794 for the murder of a Russian general, Voronov, and then pardoned in 1796 by Emperor Paul. Bulgarin’s

¹¹⁰ Ėntsiklopedicheskii slovar’ Brokauza i Efrona [hereafter, ĖSBE], s.v. “Grech, Nikolai Ivanovich.”
mother managed to enroll her son in the Noble Land Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg, and his course was set for a long career in the Russian military.\textsuperscript{111}

Bulgarin did well in the Cadet Corps and upon graduation was placed in the lancer regiment of Konstantin Pavlovich. Bulgarin served with distinction (contrary to practically every biographical account, as A.I. Reitblat emphasizes), in the campaigns of 1805, 1806, and 1807 in Prussia, as well as the Finland campaigns of 1808 and 1809. Following his writing of satirical verse directed at the Grand Duke, he was demoted to a dragoon regiment and later dishonorably discharged.\textsuperscript{112} In 1810, Bulgarin left for his family estate in the province of Grodno, then departed for Warsaw and entered the Polish-French service while France and Russia were technically allied under the terms of the Treaties of Tilsit. With the Polish lancers, Bulgarin left for Spain and was made captain, but was captured in France in 1814 and sent as a prisoner of war to Prussia. Following Emperor Alexander I’s amnesty of all Poles after the Russian victory over Napoleon, Bulgarin returned to Warsaw, where his military career came to an abrupt end. In his Memoirs (Vospominaniia), published in the second half of the 1840s, Bulgarin describes his motivations as never having been ideological; rather, he was guided by a need for adventure, a desire to see the world beyond familiar borders, and service under Napoleon was a way of achieving that goal.\textsuperscript{113}

Bulgarin’s rapid transition from a military career to a publishing one occurred in Warsaw. As early as 1815, Bulgarin began writing satirical articles for several Polish-language journals and, according to P.S. Usov’s biographical account, even published his own “uncensored journal

\begin{itemize}
\item Grech, Zapiski, 432-433.
\item A.I. Reitblat, “Vidok Figliarin (Istoriiia Odnoi Literaturnoi Reputatsii),” Voprosy literature no. 3 (1990): 73-101, \url{http://www.philology.ru/literature2/reitblat-90.htm}. The chronology is not very clear: Bulgarin entered Polish-French service in 1810, but was discharged from Russian service in 1811.
\item F.V. Bulgarin, Vospominaniia: otryvki iz vidennogo, slyshannogo i ispytannogo v zhizni (St. Petersburg, 1846-1849; reprint St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2012), 343-344; 354-356.
\end{itemize}
in Warsaw”. While petitioning on behalf of his relatives for a legal case in Vilnius (Wilno), Bulgarin wrote satirical Polish plays for the *Vilnius Weekly* (*Tygodnik Wileński*). At this time he also became a member of the Brotherhood of Scamps (Towarzystwo Szubrawców), established at the University of Vilnius and active between 1816 and 1822. Bulgarin contributed to the Brotherhood’s satirical literary-philosophical journal, *Sidewalk News* (*Brukowe wiadomosci*).\(^{115}\) N.N. Akimova argues that the Brotherhood promoted “European bourgeois values” and tried to shape public opinion, “in particular the part of the public composed of the middle class [*srednee soslovie*]”.\(^{116}\) Tsarist authorities deemed it a cover for revolutionary Polish activities, and banned it in 1822.

Bulgarin came to St. Petersburg in 1819 to continue petitioning his legal case, and stayed for a new journalistic career in Russian publishing.\(^{117}\) Having acquired some publishing experience in Warsaw and Vilnius, in June of 1819 he proposed a Polish-language *Ladies’ Journal* (*Damskii zhurnal*) to be published in St. Petersburg. Bulgarin framed the journal as pleasant and entertaining reading for women; in between its covers women would discover historically famous mothers and wives, morals and instruction for children, music, and fashions presented in a non-didactic manner. The proposed journal was rejected due to the fact that none of the Petersburg censors knew Polish.\(^{118}\)

Undeterred, Bulgarin found other publishing outlets. Between 1819 and 1821, he published pieces in the *Russian Veteran* (*Russkii invalid*), *Son of the Fatherland*, and *Competitor in Enlightenment and Charity* (*Sorevnovatel’ prosveshcheniia i blagotvoreniia*), often on Polish

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115 [F.V. Bulgarin], “Zamechaniia na pis’mo N.N. Novosil’tsova…,”, 136-137.
themes. Through a circle of French émigré writers who met at the home of Bulgari’n’s brother-in-law A.M. Iskritskii, Bulgari’n was eventually brought into contact with Nikolai Grech in February 1820, as Grech recounts in his memoirs. This contact propelled Bulgari’n’s publishing activities. In late 1821, Bulgari’n proposed a historical, geographic, and statistical journal – to be published in Russian – under the title Mnemozina (Mnemosyne), later renamed Northern Archive (Severnyi arkhiv). Its stated purposed was “firstly, the dissemination of useful information […] and secondly, the delivery of pleasant and instructive reading to our domestic public.” It was approved, and in 1822 Bulgari’n began editing the Northern Archive (printed on Grech’s press), which published mostly primary sources. A literary supplement was added – titled Literary Leaflets (Literaturnye listki) – that included Bulgari’n’s first feuilletons. It was well received as a serious journalistic undertaking; more importantly, according to N.N. Akimova, the journal’s publication of European sources as well as materials on Polish-Russian history (and specifically works by Polish and Lithuanian scholars) provided Bulgari’n with “a niche in the journal market”. Akimova also argues that the Northern Archive was an attempt at popularizing hitherto strictly academic materials, and that Bulgari’n’s introductions, explanations, and captions facilitated this process.

Bulgari’n’s publication of the Northern Archive gave him well-respected journalistic standing (which, in the following decade, would undergo rapid deterioration in certain circles) and established a pattern to his publishing activities. Tracing a thread from his earliest Polish works (on the history of Poland-Lithuania, satirical poems and plays), to his proposed Ladies Journal, to the Northern Archive, we see Bulgari’n’s attempt to continually expand the range of

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119 Akimova, “Severnyi arkhiv i ego izdatel’”: 98.
122 Ibid., 102-103.
his reading audience. Even the *Northern Archive* underwent a transformation from a journal popularizing academic materials to one that also engaged in literary criticism (including Bulgarin’s first polemics), discussed morals in a satirical way, and added a “Miscellany” section for content that was not neatly categorized. It is hardly surprising, then, that in 1824 Bulgarin and Grech decided to combine their journalistic activities and publish *Son of the Fatherland, Northern Archive*, and a new periodical – *the Northern Bee* – that would expand their reading audience beyond the relatively small circle of educated Petersburgers and Muscovites.

As his longest-running and most (in)famous periodical endeavor, the *Northern Bee* eclipsed Bulgarin’s other publications and came to be personally identified with him. His other publications, it should be noted, were considerable: his periodicals *Northern Archive, Russian Thalia (Russkaia Taliia, 1825), Children’s Interlocutor (Detskii Sobesednik, 1826-1827), Head of the Household (Ékonom, 1841)*; his novels *Ivan Vyzhigin (1829), The Pretender Dmitrii (Dmitrii Samozvanets, 1830), Petr Ivanovich Vyzhigin (1831), Mazepa (1834), Memorandums of Titular Counselor Chukhin (Pamiatnye zapiski tituliarnogo sovetnika Chukhina, 1835)*; his reference book, ghost-written by N.A. Ivanov, titled *Russia in Historical, Statistical, Geographic and Literary Terms (Rossiia v istoricheskom, statisticheskom, geograficheskom i literaturnom otnosheniakh, 1837)*; not to mention numerous shorter works. After 1825, these publications were evaluated and criticized against the backdrop of the *Northern Bee*.

Ultimately, Bulgarin’s personal reputation fused with his publishing, so that by the turn of the twentieth century the standard encyclopedic summary of the *Northern Bee* described it as a corrupt propaganda organ churning out cheap prose. Brokgauz and Efron’s entry was, in comparison, rather gracious: “beginning in 1825, [Bulgarin] published the newspaper *Northern Bee* […] in which he wrote critical articles and feuilletons dedicated to polemics, advertisements
and the chastisement of literary adversaries for not being benevolent.”\textsuperscript{123} One of the aims of this dissertation is to remove the shadow of Bulgarin’s reputation from the \textit{Northern Bee} and to examine the newspaper on its own terms, focusing on the content, themes, and messaging.

\textbf{Osip Ivanovich Senkovskii (1800 – 1858)}

Like Faddei Bulgarin, Osip Ivanovich Senkovskii was a Pole who had entered the Petersburg publishing world during the journalistic boom of the 1820s. Both Bulgarin and Senkovskii were criticized for their non-Russian origins, accused of holding publishing monopolies, and subjected to extreme reputational demolition. Unlike Bulgarin, however, who was a military man turned pressman, Senkovskii was an Orientalist scholar and professor of languages before making the switch to fiction writing and journal editing. Indeed, much of Senkovskii’s journalistic appeal lay in his ability to popularize scholarly knowledge, particularly about the ‘exotic East’, much of which he knew firsthand from years of study.

Born Józef-Julian Sękowski near Vilnius in 1800 to a minor noble family, Senkovskii received the type of education, steeped in the classical tradition, which Nikolai Grech would have probably envied. Senkovskii’s childhood tutor and uncle-in-law was Gottfried Ernst Grodeck, a philologist and scholar of classical literature who had received his doctorate from the University of Göttingen in the 1780s.\textsuperscript{124} After receiving a Jesuit education at the Minsk Collegium, Senkovskii came to the University of Vilnius to study the classics as well as Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (he also knew Latin, French, English, and later Russian). During his time there, Senkovskii joined the Brotherhood of Scamps and published satirical pieces in the society’s \textit{Sidewalk News}, crossing paths with Bulgarin during the latter’s stay in Vilnius.\textsuperscript{125} After

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\textsuperscript{123} ŽSBE, s.v. “Bulgarin, Faddei Venediktovich.”
\textsuperscript{124} Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 18-19, 22-23.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, v, 5, 7.
\end{flushright}
graduating in 1819, Senkovskii was briefly stationed as an interpreter with the Russian residency in Constantinople, and then spent over two years traveling the Middle East and North Africa, putting his tremendous linguistic abilities to use while learning local history and collecting primary sources. While traveling, Senkovskii sent articles to the Polish-language periodicals *Vilnius Daily* (*Dziennik Wileński*), *Vilnius Weekly* (*Tygodnik Wileński*), and the *Warsaw Journal* (*Pamiętnik Warszawski*). Upon returning to Russia in 1821, Senkovskii accepted a position in St. Petersburg as a translator in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was then appointed Professor of Arabic and Turkish at the University of St. Petersburg in 1822 (after the 1821 purge of professors suspected of spreading western ideas), a position he would hold full-time until 1833 and part-time until 1847.\(^\text{126}\)

Parallel to his teaching and scholarship, Senkovskii began publishing in the St. Petersburg journals in the early 1820s. His entry into the Russian publishing world came via Faddei Bulgarin, who translated Senkovskii’s African travel notes from Polish and published them in the *Northern Archive* in 1822.\(^\text{127}\) Bulgarin also introduced Senkovskii to the most notable literary circles in the capital (which Bulgarin had come to know through Nikolai Grech), and soon Senkovskii was on close terms with A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, translating Oriental stories for the writer’s almanac, the *Polar Star* (as well as occasionally providing articles for Grech and Bulgarin’s *Northern Bee* after 1825).\(^\text{128}\)

Already by this time, Senkovskii stood apart from the typical educated Poles who were steeped in romanticism. This was partially due to Senkovskii’s character, and partially to the intellectual environment at the University of Vilnius, where the currents of Kantian philosophy

\(^{126}\) Kaverin, *Baron Brambeus*, Chapter 1.

\(^{127}\) *Severnyi arkhiv* (1822), Chast’ 1, no. 1: 70-113; no 5: 421-443; Chast’ 2, no. 7: 45-62. Cited in Akimova, “Severnyi arkhiv i ego izdatel’”; 100.

and romanticism competed with rationalism and empiricism. Senkovskii’s clear affinity for the latter made him deeply critical and short-tempered with young people who praised Schelling and later Hegel, which Louis Pedrotti identifies as the origin of Senkovskii’s status as an “alien” and “enigma” among both Polish and Russian societies. However, it is worth noting that in her study of the Library for Reading, literary scholar Melissa Frazier identifies clear instances of Senkovskii-the-writer behaving, through his work, in a manner consistent with the European Romanticism of his day.

Regardless of Senkovskii’s literary and philosophical ambiguity, Polish patriots expressed disapproval with his perpetual criticism and sarcastic nature over Polish affairs. Moreover, they could not comprehend Senkovskii’s disgust for the Polish nationalist movement – although Senkovskii loathed all revolutionary sentiments, not only Polish ones. To Polish contemporaries, Senkovskii appeared to be rejecting his heritage as well as Polish culture in general; one example among many cited by Senkovskii’s Polish critics was his 1826 official report, written after he was sent to inspect Belarusian schools under the jurisdiction of the Vilnius School District. After finding a variety of offences at schools run by the Catholic monastic orders, Senkovskii advised that the government should:

“…stamp out at the schools traces of Polish nationalism, which is improper and contrary to the spirit of the state, and that they instill in the Belarusian youth the loyal… sentiments of Russians who are devoted to the throne and one indivisible fatherland.”

Senkovskii’s support for the Russian government had made him reliable in the eyes of the state, and so he was appointed censor in 1828, examining Polish-language books and periodicals published in the imperial capital, in particular the St. Petersburg Trifler (Balamut Petersburski).

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129 Ibid., v-vi, 19-22.
130 Frazier, Romantic Encounters.
In his personal life, Senkovskii had gained entry into Petersburg high society with his marriage in 1829 to Adelaida Rahl, daughter of Baron Alexander Rahl, court banker under Alexander I. 

Although Senkovskii continued to teach full-time at the University of St. Petersburg until 1833, his role as a censor (from 1828 to April 1833) and his regular submissions to the periodical press signaled a turning away from academia. The reason for this shift in occupation, according to Senkovskii’s Soviet biographer Veniamin Kaverin, is that the professor’s interest in academia was rapidly fading. Senkovskii’s motivations are difficult to reconstruct, as he has left historians few primary sources, but it is likely that he viewed the Russian literary market as a field where he could have greater resonance than in the fairly narrow ‘discipline’ of Orientalism. Being well read in foreign literatures, he saw models of writing that could be introduced into the Russian context. His burgeoning interest in the press during the late 1820s – and catering to a broad public – is evidenced by an idea for a periodical called *The Universal Gazette* (*Vseobshechaia gazeta*) that would cover not only literature, but science and politics as well. Although the idea was never realized, Senkovskii came to the helm of another kind of “universal” periodical just a few years later.

It was Senkovskii’s acquaintance with the bookseller A.F. Smirdin (in whose honor the fiery critic Vissarion Belinsky termed the 1830s “the age of Smirdin”) that led to the orientalist’s full-scale entry into Russian periodical publishing. Smirdin had noticed Senkovskii’s translations of various ‘Eastern’ stories in the early 1830s and, in 1833, asked Senkovskii to assist in the editing of the almanac *The Housewarming* (*Novosel’e*), meant to commemorate Smirdin’s new

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132 ESBE, s.v. “Senkovskii, Osip-Iulian Ivanovich.” This was Senkovskii’s second marriage. His first was annulled.

133 Senkovskii either left or was fired from his post as censor in 1833. Reitblat argues that the reasons are unclear in “Pis’ma N.I. Grecha k F.V. Bulgarinu,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 40 (1999); Shliapkin, however, argued that Senkovskii was fired for permitting the publication of Victor Hugo’s drama *Hernani*. I. Shliapkin, “Grekhopadenie pervago cheloveka v literature (karrikatura 1837-38 gg.),” *Russkaia starina* no. 2 (Feb., 1898): 331.


bookstore/lending library on Nevsky Prospect. Senkovskii performed the task so well that Smirdin hired him as co-editor, together with Nikolai Grech, of *The Library for Reading (Biblioteka dlja chteniia)*. Formally, Senkovskii was the sole editor of the *Library* from August 1836 until 1856. During the height of his abilities in the 1830s and 1840s (before he became ill with cholera in 1848), Senkovskii also worked on several other publications as well. He was editor of A.A. Pliushar’s *Encylopedic Lexicon* from late 1838 until 1841 (the *Lexicon* was never finished), co-editor with Baron Nikolai Vasil’evich Medem of the *Military Library (Voennaia biblioteka)* between 1838 and 1840, and editor of *Son of the Fatherland* during 1841 (thereafter the journal was edited by Konstantin Petrovich Masal’skii until 1856, when A.V. Starchevskii bought it). In 1857, shortly before his death, Senkovskii worked on the satirical journal *The Humorist (Vesel’chak)*, another one of A.A. Pliushar’s publishing endeavors. However, it was in connection with the *Library* that Senkovskii’s name became well known, both to acclaim and to criticism. He published the majority of his stories, criticism, and loose translations (a mid-19th century collection of his works numbered nine volumes), written either under his real name or under his numerous pseudonyms (including Tiutiun’dziu-Oglu, A. Belkin, and his most famous *nom de plume*, Baron Brambeus) in the *Library*.

**Nikolai Alekseevich Polevoi (1796 – 1846)**

At first glance, Nikolai Alekseevich Polevoi may seem to be an unusual journalist to include in this chapter on the ‘retailers of the press’. This is due to the fact that Polevoi’s name has typically been associated with his liberally inclined, Romantic journal *Moscow Telegraph*

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138 ESBE, s.v. “Vesel’chak”.
(Moskovskii telegraf), which was published from 1825 (the same year that the Northern Bee began publishing) until 1834, when it was closed by tsarist authorities on the basis, it was claimed, that Emperor Nicholas I did not like Polevoi’s review of N.V. Kukol’nik’s historical drama “The Hand of the Almighty Saved the Fatherland”. Literary and journalistic histories written after the 1860s generally only focus on this period (1825-1834) of Polevoi’s journalism. The overwhelming majority of Soviet appraisals of Polevoi cut off after 1834, thereby completely ignoring his work from the mid-1830s until his death in 1846. Most contemporary scholarship, unfortunately, does the same, with few exceptions like Richard Stites’ analysis of Polevoi’s theater compositions and Galya Diment’s exploration of Siberian themes in Polevoi’s writing.139

The son of a merchant family, Nikolai Polevoi was born in Irkutsk in June of 1796. Neither he nor his brother Ksenofont and sister Ekaterina, however, would continue the family business, instead choosing to pursue writing. Similar to Nikolai Grech’s use of books and periodicals as a substitute for inadequate schooling, Polevoi read everything that came to hand and, as a child, produced his own compositions, including a newspaper. In 1811 the Polevoi family moved to Kursk, and in 1820, Nikolai Polevoi settled in Moscow. During the intervening years Polevoi had set himself the task of self-schooling, and the autodidact proceeded to systematically study Russian grammar and foreign languages; in 1822 he was awarded a medal from the Academy of Sciences for his analysis of Russian verbs. Already in the late 1810s,

Polevoi had begun sending articles to established Russian journals, and by the early 1820s both Moscow and Petersburg journalists became interested in working with him.\textsuperscript{140}

In 1825, Nikolai Polevoi established his own journal, the \textit{Moscow Telegraph}, which was also managed by his brother Ksenofont Polevoi and Prince P.A. Viazemskii. The bi-monthly journal, which was a proto-thick journal (more encyclopedic than thick), proved popular with its mix of scientific, historical, literary and critical content. For its contributors the \textit{Telegraph} drew from elite littérateurs, including V.F. Odoevskii, A.S. Pushkin, and A.I. Turgenev. Between 1825 and 1827, Polevoi’s journal was embroiled in the so-called “journal war” with Nikolai Grech’s \textit{Son of the Fatherland} and Faddei Bulgarin’s \textit{Northern Archive} and \textit{Northern Bee}. These polemics boiled down to commercial competition – in 1825 the \textit{Telegraph} had 1,500 subscribers; by the early 1830s around 2,500 – and were remarkable for their intensity as well as their sudden halt at the end of 1827. Chester Rzadkiewicz notes that these polemics were an important milestone in Russian journalism:

\begin{quote}
After all, Polevoi, Bulgarin, and Grech were the most successful journalists of the period because they were also among the most innovative and enterprising. Intended for the public at large, \textit{The Northern Bee} and \textit{Moscow Telegraph} reflected the penetration of the entrepreneurial attitudes and values into journalism.\textsuperscript{141}
\end{quote}

From 1828 onward, Grech and Bulgarin were on better, albeit unsteady terms with the Polevoi brothers. They maintained a professional working relationship that alternated with long periods of argumentation between Bulgarin and Nikolai Polevoi, as Grech recounted in his \textit{Memoirs}.

Nikolai Polevoi summed up his relationship with Bulgarin in a letter to Grech’s son, Aleksei Nikolaevich Grech, in 1842: “What kind of villain is this Faddei Venediktovich?... It is

\textsuperscript{140} ESBE, s.v. “Polevoi, Nikolai Alekseevich.”
\textsuperscript{141} Chester M. Rzadkiewicz, “Polevoi’s ‘Moscow Telegraph’ and the journal wars of 1825-34,” in \textit{Literary Journals in Imperial Russia} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 72.
unfortunate that I cannot be angry with him; he really is a coquette: [one] wants to reprimand him, [or] to kiss him!“¹⁴²

The polemics between Polevoi’s *Telegraph* and the “literary aristocracy”, or the “so-called Pushkin pleiad” during the years 1829-1831 had far greater consequences in terms of souring Polevoi’s reputation as a progressive liberal journalist.¹⁴³ The origin of the polemics was a falling out between the Polevoi brothers and Prince Viazemskii over Nikolai Polevoi’s criticism of the last volume of N.M. Karamzin’s *History of the Russian State* (Polevoi respected Karamzin’s work, but criticized him for using an eighteenth-century approach when other models for historical writing were already available). The announcement of Polevoi’s own *History of the Russian People* made his former literary circle suspicious of his motives, and a deluge of critical reviews poured in after the publication of the first few volumes. Polevoi’s disappointment with his literary heroes (Pushkin considered Polevoi to be an “ignoramus”, and called him a “sharp-witted shop clerk”) was transformed into a polemical attack on what he termed the literary aristocracy.¹⁴⁴ While the literary elite stood aloof from the public, Polevoi envisioned himself as a representative of the middle ranks, of which he was an ‘authentic’ member. This idea was often repeated in his writing, but is especially clear in his 1832 address to the Moscow mercantile (Rech’ o kupecheskom zvanii, i osobenno v Rossii), where he stated: “Each of us, as a civil activist [grazhdanskii deiatel’], is a chinovnik; each chinovnik, as a producer [proizvotitel’], whether of material or immaterial goods, is a merchant [kupets].”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Rzadkiewicz, “Polevoi’s ‘Moscow Telegraph’ and the journal wars of 1825-34,” 75.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 76.
¹⁴⁵ N.A. Polevoi, Rech’ o kupecheskom zvanii, i osobenno v Rossii, chitannaia na torzhestvennom akte, posle otkrytykh ispytaniia v Moskovskoi prakticheskoj kommercheskoj akademii... (Moscow, 1832).
Thus the merchant class, along with the rest of the middle stratum, was a point of pride for Polevoi.

The polemics against Polevoi questioned his educational level, his capacity to edit a journal, and even his political leanings (which was deeply ironic, given that the government suspected Polevoi of radicalism, and sought to close his journal at the earliest opportunity). After the closing of the *Moscow Telegraph* in 1834, Nikolai Polevoi became a contributing writer for Senkovskii and Grech’s *Library for Reading*, launched the same year. According to A.V. Starchevskii, Polevoi even wrote anonymous literary criticism for the *Library* in the late 1830s. He also began contributing to the *Northern Bee* in 1835.

Nevertheless, Polevoi found barriers to renewed periodical publishing, especially in the figure of S.S. Uvarov. When A.F. Smirdin bought the rights to the *Northern Bee* and *Son of the Fatherland and Northern Archive* in 1838, he hoped to make Polevoi the literary editor of both of those periodicals. However, Polevoi was denied a named position at the *Northern Bee* by Uvarov, who told Grech and Bulgarin “that Mr. Polevoi’s name cannot appear in the announcements or on the pages of the newspaper, and that he must not sign his name [to articles he writes]”. This injunction apparently also applied to Polevoi’s collaboration with *Son of the Fatherland*, where he was unofficially co-editor from 1838 until 1840. Polevoi’s contributions appeared anonymously in *Northern Bee* until he left in the spring of 1838 following prolonged personal disputes with Bulgarin (although Polevoi would continue to write for the *Bee*, sporadically, until his death in 1846; Polevoi also worked with Nikolai Grech on the journal *Russian Messenger* after 1842).

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Nikolai Polevoi’s fortunes fared much better in the theater, however. In a second twist of irony, Polevoi began writing patriotic historical dramas in the late 1830s, becoming even more popular than Nestor Kukol’nik and having Tsar Nicholas’s royal favor bestowed upon him. As Richard Stites observed, however, “Polevoi did not simply imitate Official Nationalism. A subtheme in his work was the merchant’s support of the monarchy… he continued a struggle against the aristocracy in the name of a Narodnost that was not that of the peasantry but of the class from which he had sprung”.¹⁴⁸ This was not only a feature of Polevoi’s theater compositions, but also his journalistic works, as explored in this study. Nikolai Polevoi passed away in 1846 while co-authoring a story with Bulgarin titled Happiness is Better than Heroism (Schast’e luchshe bogatyrstva); the unfinished story was published in the Library for Reading in 1845 and 1847. In a letter to the Director of the Third Section L.V. Dubel’t (in which Bulgarin asked that Nicholas I grant Polevoi’s widow a pension), Bulgarin described Polevoi as “a useful and active litterateur, loved by the people [liubimyi narodom] because he came from their ranks [vyshel iz sredy ego].”¹⁴⁹

Adal’bert-Voitekh Vikent’evich Starchevskii (1818 – 1901)

Adal’bert Starchevskii’s biography bears remarkable resemblance to that of his fellow Pole Osip Senkovskii. Both men began as orientalist scholars before turning toward journalism; both popularized, with great success, their scholarly knowledge; both edited periodicals that set new records for readership. After Starchevskii left the editorial board of the Library of Reading,

¹⁴⁸ Stites, Serfdom, Society, and the Arts in Imperial Russia, 197.
¹⁴⁹ On Bulgarin’s role in securing a pension for Polevoi’s widow, F.V. Bulgarin, [Letter to L.V. Dubel’t], 24 February 1846, in Vidok Figliarîn, 482.
he transformed *Son of the Fatherland* into a weekly newspaper that “was the first journal in Russia to have a mass circulation (up to 30 thousand)”.

Starchevskii was born in the province of Volhynia to minor Polish nobility in 1818. In Kiev he attended both gymnasium and university, skipping several grades so that by 1837 he was able to transfer to the University of Saint Petersburg to study law. His real interest, however, was in language, specifically translation and grammar. During his studies Starchevskii had learned Latin, French, German, as well as Arabic and Persian. He also spent two years studying at the University of Berlin (sometime around 1840, although his biography is not precise) and travelling throughout Central Europe. In the early 1840s he published two books in Latin dealing with sixteenth-century foreigner’s accounts of Russia, as well as books in French, including a translation of the Russian trade charter and a collection of portraits and autographs of historical figures. In 1843 Starchevskii came to work for the *Journal of the Ministry of Public Education*, writing about history and Slavic ethnography and philology. He also wrote about scholarly topics for the *Finnish Messenger* (*Finskii vestnik*) in 1845, and *Notes of the Fatherland* in 1846.

The late 1840s marked a significant shift for Starchevskii. In 1847 he became editor of the *Reference Encyclopedic Dictionary* (*Spravochnyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar’*); Starchevskii’s work with the *Reference Encyclopedic Dictionary* is not irrelevant here, for it demonstrates a certain attitude toward the function of printed matter. Published by Karl Karlovich Krai (not to be confused with his father of the same name), the twelve-volume *Dictionary* was not the first of

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151 “A.V. Starchevskii,” *Kniga: Issledovanii i materialy. Sbornik XLVII* vol. 47 (Moscow, 1983), 194. The original article is from 1888; no author.
its kind in Russia, but it was the first Russian-language set to be completed (other projects like the *Encyclopedic Lexicon* (Éntsiklopedicheskii leksikon), discussed above, were abandoned due to decreasing writing quality and spiraling costs). In the editor’s preface to the 1847 volume, Starchevskii explained the rationale for the Dictionary: “In the past twenty years, education has penetrated almost all classes of our society so quickly and widely that reading is no longer a luxury, as it was in the past, but has become a necessary requirement of life.” A reference set was needed so that a layperson could look up the entry, for instance, about the Bourbon dynasty or the Bashkirs in order to fully comprehend passages in a newspaper, journal, or book. Its financial success, as Starchevskii mentioned in the editor’s preface to the second volume, was an indication of the real need for such a collection.\(^{156}\)

Starchevskii became the *de facto* editor of the *Library for Reading* in December 1848, a position he would hold until June 1856. Starchevskii was initially brought in by the *Library’s* publisher Viacheslav Petrovich Pechatkin to replace Senkovskii’s assistant V.V. Deriker (who had left, Starchevskii wrote, after Osip Senkovskii became ill with cholera and could no longer manage day-to-day operations at the journal). Senkovskii, however, hired Starchevskii as the informal editor; Senkovskii would contribute as his health would allow, but Starchevskii would decide what got published in the *Library*. This was to be the working relationship in theory; in reality, however, the relationship grew ever more strained as the years went on. As Starchevskii wrote in his memoirs, Senkovskii frequently did not approve of what Starchevskii published in the *Library*, especially when it was an author or an opinion that Senkovskii vehemently disagreed with. This, for example, was the case with Starchevskii’s publication of A.V. Druzhinin’s writing. By the middle of 1856, a long list of grievances had been tallied between

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\(^{155}\) A. Starchevskii, [Editor’s preface] *Spravochnyi éntsiklopedicheskii slovar’*, T. I (St. Petersburg, 1847).

\(^{156}\) A. Starchevskii, [Editor’s preface] *Spravochnyi éntsiklopedicheskii slovar’*, T. II (St. Petersburg, 1849).
Senkovskii and Starchevskii. Senkovskii left the Library to go into semi-retirement; Starchevskii left the Library to pursue other projects, and named A.V. Druzhinin as the new editor of the Library. However, the Library for Reading was qualitatively different under Druzhinin’s editorship (and even more so under the subsequent editorships of A.F. Pisemskii and P.D. Boborykin). After 1857, the new Library for Reading pivoted away from its former identity as reading material for the middle stratum and instead specifically catered to a minority, liberal intelligentsia readership.

The decades after Starchevskii’s departure from the Library for Reading (after 1856) were marked by a clear attempt to appeal to a mass audience. In 1856 Starchevskii bought the rights to Son of the Fatherland, but it was no longer the same publication that Nikolai Grech and later A.F. Smirdin had produced. Similar in name only, the new periodical was a weekly “cheap” (deshevaia) newspaper with virtually no educational prerequisites – truly a mass publication. By 1860, shortly before the era of the Great Reforms began, it published 16,000 copies. But in his enthusiasm to expand the reach of the newspaper even farther, Starchevskii mismanaged his finances. In 1862 he spent 50,000 rubles to transform Son of the Fatherland from a weekly newspaper into a daily one. This might have brought him financial success, had it not been for a series of unfortunate events: the poor quality of the pages made by the printer Shumacher; the post office tripling the cost of forwarding to subscribers outside of Petersburg (and then failing to ensure timely deliveries!); interest payments on his loans; finally, the breakdown of the printing machine in 1867, after which subscriptions plummeted. Starchevskii had to sell Son of the Fatherland in 1868 to a publisher with deeper pockets, who revived the newspaper.

157 Knizhnyi vestnik no. 16 (1860): 173.
158 A. Starchevskii, “Zametki o prichinakh upadka izdatel’skikh del,” 5 September 1872, IRLI, f. 583, no. 122, ll. 5-5ob.
In 1869 Starchevskii decided to give the *Northern Bee* the same type of makeover as he had done for *Son of the Fatherland*. The *Northern Bee*, which had been closed down by P.S. Usov in 1864, was re-launched between 1869 and 1870 as a “cheap newspaper” expressly “for our middle class” (*dlia nashego srednego klassa*).\(^{159}\) The political, commercial, and literary newspaper initially gained interest and subscribers (bringing in subscriptions from Vitebsk to Kostroma to Tobol’sk), but quickly lost both due to the same problems that plagued Starchevskii in his previous publishing endeavor, particularly problems with the Russian postal service. As the dozens of letters to the editor in Starchevskii’s archive attest, too many subscribers received too few, if any, issues of the periodical.\(^{160}\)

Between the late 1870s and the early 1890s, Starchevskii returned to his initial interest – languages – while briefly editing other periodicals. During this time he published an astonishing number of guidebooks, dictionaries, and translation aids for the lands bordering Russia (for instance, Swedish, German, Persian, Turkish) and within Russia itself (among others: Tatar, the Caucasus languages, Siberian languages) – some two dozen in all. Starchevskii wrote language pocketbooks to guide Russians in newly conquered Turkestan, along the railroad being built in Siberia, and in naval ports in Europe, Africa, and Asia. He continued journalism into the mid-1880s, briefly editing the journal *Modernity* (*Sovremennost’*, later renamed *Echo*, or *Ėkho*), *Beehive* (*Ulei*), and *Rodina* (*Birthplace*), the illustrated journal that was only second to *Niva* (*Field*) in popularity, and first in affordability.

**Pavel Stepanovich Usov (1828 – 1888)**

Pavel Stepanovich Usov’s father Stepan Mikhailovich Usov had an atmospheric rise in social standing in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. He was a highly intelligent serf

\(^{159}\) A. Starchevskii, “Materialy dla istorii Severnoi pchely,” IRLI, f. 583, no. 22, l. 5.

\(^{160}\) Subscriber letters, “Pis’ma i zhaloby (118) ot podpischikov v redaktsiui,” 1869, IRLI, f. 583, no. 61.
who had been allowed to audit classes at the University of St. Petersburg, and later to become a full-fledged student, eventually writing an M.A. thesis in the late 1830s, “On Capital in Agriculture”. S.M. Usov taught classes at his alma mater on agronomy and husbandry, published books for farmers and landowners, and was sent to do official studies of agriculture in several Russian regions. He founded and edited the Farming Newspaper (Zemledel'cheskaia gazeta) from 1834 to 1853 (a paper that was published, on and off, until 1917), and Mediator (Posrednik), a journal of industry, agriculture, and science from 1840 to 1855. S.M. Usov also knew Faddei Bulgarin and Nikolai Grech quite well, and was a regular contributor to the Northern Bee in the 1820s.

Pavel Usov followed in his father’s footsteps by pursuing a scholarly and journalistic career. His first foray into journalism included a translation for the Northern Bee in 1846 (about Native Americans) and an original article on the Samara grain trade for Notes of the Fatherland in 1848. Usov studied natural science at the University of St. Petersburg and completed his dissertation, “Metamorphic Rock Formations” in 1849. That same year Usov accepted an offer from Bulgarin and Grech to become secretary at the Northern Bee; Usov was to take over the position of Grech’s ailing son, Aleksei Nikolaevich Grech, who had developed tuberculosis. However, Usov ended up occupying a position somewhere between that of a secretary and a co-editor: he managed day-to-day operations at the Bee, regularly obtained paperwork and approval for articles from various Petersburg ministries, translated articles, consulted Bulgarin and Grech on questions of natural science, and recommended articles for inclusion in the Bee. In addition to his work at the Bee, Usov became an editor in his own right in 1857 when he resurrected his

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163 Russkii biograficheskii slovar’ A.A. Polovtsova [hereafter, RBS], s.v. “Usovy (P.S. i P.S.).”
164 Usov, “Bulgarin v poslednee desiatiletie ego zhizni (1850-1859),” passim.
father’s journal Mediator (Posrednik), this time around focusing the journal on commerce and industry. After Bulgarin’s death in 1859, Usov bought the rights to the Northern Bee in 1860 and became its editor as well; in 1861 readers were even able to subscribe to both the Bee and the Mediator for the price of just the Bee. Due to the profusion of cheaper newspapers around the turn of 1860, however, Usov’s periodicals suffered from insufficient subscription numbers and he had to close the Mediator in 1863 and the Bee in 1864.

After fifteen years of working at the Northern Bee, Usov embarked on the next phase of his career, which reflected Russia’s new era of mass communication. In the late 1860s and 1870s he worked for periodicals that had thousands of subscribers, like Starchevskii’s newspaper Son of the Fatherland, as well as those that had a specifically industrial and commercial audience, such as the Stock Market Gazette (Birzhevye vedomosti) and the journal Stock Market (Birza), among others. Parallel with his journalism, Usov was director of the International Telegraph Agency between 1872 and 1875, and published its daily information bulletins (titled Telegrammy Mezdunarodnogo telegrafnogo aagentvstva).166

Additional Figures: Employees, Associates, Publishers

Although the ‘retailers of the press’ discussed above had the final say over what was published in the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading, several other figures influenced the content of these periodicals and therefore merit brief attention. For the Northern Bee, such a figure was Nikolai Grech’s son, Aleksei Nikolaevich Grech (1814-1850), who was the Bee’s unofficial secretary from the late 1830s until 1849.167 A.N. Grech worked behind the scenes of the Bee, doing the “unseen work” necessary to keep the daily newspaper functioning. He was

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165 Russkaia periodicheskaia pechat’ (1702-1894), 352.
166 RBS, s.v. “Usovy (P.S. i P.S).”
also concerned with keeping the *Bee* as relevant to as many readers as possible and not letting the newspaper lag behind competitors. For instance, while staying in Riga with his wife (Ėmiliia Timm, sister of the painter and lithographer V.F. Timm), A.N. Grech wrote to Bulgarin in June of 1847 that “I intend to apply various, very simple innovations to the *Bee* that I have noticed in the local [Riga] papers and which make the papers interesting to the entire surrounding vicinity, and for us all of Russia is only a vicinity of Petersburg”. Nikolai Grech intended to have Aleksei inherit his printing shop as well as his stake in the *Bee*, but Aleksei’s untimely passing from tuberculosis in 1850, as well as Bulgarin’s opposition to the inheritance, ended any possibility of keeping the *Bee* a Grech family business.

The *Library for Reading* also had additional figures working behind the scenes, including several editorial assistants (V.A. Solonitsyn in the late 1830s and early 1840s, and Ė.I. Guber and V.V. Deriker in the 1840s); particularly influential, however, was the writer Elizaveta Nikolaevna Akhmatova (1820-1904). Although Akhmatova was not a formal employee of the *Library*, she occupied a position somewhere between staff translator, contributing writer, and assistant to Osip Senkovskii. Akhmatova also served as a liaison between Starchevskii and the bed-ridden Senkovskii after 1848. According to Starchevskii’s memoirs, Akhmatova was frequently responsible for choosing and translating foreign works for the *Library*’s “Foreign Literature” and “Miscellany” sections because Senkovskii trusted her “taste” (Akhmatova was not the sole translator; several other unnamed women also translated works for the journal). It was Akhmatova, according to Starchevskii, who brought Aleksandr Vasil’evich Druzhinin over

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168 Ibid., 291-292.
from the *Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*) to the *Library for Reading* in 1850 as a contributing writer.\(^{171}\) Although Senkovskii came to dislike Druzhinin by 1852 for what he called “unprincipled conduct”, this apparently had no impact on his trust in Akhmatova because he considered her to be family; in a letter to Starchevskii from 1850, Senkovskii wrote, “I have no children; my wife and I chose her [Akhmatova] as our daughter and future support in our old age; I look upon her, indeed, as my own daughter and you, I hope, will show her respect in the same way.”\(^{172}\) Akhmatova objected to the insufficient respect Starchevskii paid her; they did, however, agree on the continuing collaboration of A.V. Druzhinin with the *Library*, against Senkovskii’s wishes.

Besides employees and associates, who influenced content, publishers are also important to mention for the roles they played in the development and ultimate fortunes of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*. The *Northern Bee* was continuously published by Nikolai Grech’s printing shop from 1825 until 1864. In 1838 the publisher A.F. Smirdin bought the rights to the paper (while maintaining Grech and Bulgarin’s ownership of the paper itself).\(^{173}\) Just before Bulgarin’s death in 1859, P.S. Usov bought Bulgarin’s share of the *Bee* (with Grech maintaining his) and the right to be sole editor from 1860 onward.\(^{174}\) A.F. Smirdin was also the publisher of the *Library for Reading* from 1834 until 1840, when financial troubles forced him to start selling his publishing rights for books and journals. Smirdin sold his rights to the *Library* to the journalist and publisher Ksenofont Alekseevich Polevoi, brother of N.A. Polevoi. Ksenofont Polevoi only published the *Library* in 1841 before selling his rights to Matvei Dmitrievich


\(^{173}\) On Smirdin’s purchase, see letter number 18 and the accompanying footnote in “Pis’ma N.I. Grecha k F.V. Bulgarinu,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 40 (1999).

\(^{174}\) Usov’s purchase of Bulgarin’s share of the *Bee* is discussed in Usov, “Bulgarin v poslednee desiatiletie ego zhizni (1850-1859)”: 330-331.
Ol’khin, who published the *Library* from 1842 until 1848. (Ol’khin, it should be noted, was closely connected with Bulgarin and Grech. The offices of the *Bee* were located in Ol’khin’s bookstore in Petersburg for a period in the 1840s. Ol’khin also published many of Bulgarin’s works, and Ol’khin’s two daughters were married to two of Bulgarin’s sons.)\(^{175}\) Ol’khin’s quick slide into debt forced him to sell his rights to the *Library* to the publisher and paper manufacturer V.P. Pechatkin (a fitting surname, indeed), who later sold the journal and its debt (some 30,000 silver rubles as of 1848) to the journalist-turned-publisher Petr Dmitrievich Boborykin in 1863.

The point of this excursion into the series of publishers is to explain the ultimate fate of the *Library for Reading*. Although the transformation of the journal is discussed in Chapter Seven, a brief history is necessary in the context of this chapter on the ‘retailers of the press’.

When Osip Senkovskii retired and A.V. Starchevskii left the *Library* in 1856, A.V. Druzhinin became the *Library*’s next editor on Starchevskii’s recommendation and after negotiations with V.P. Pechatkin. Druzhinin’s biography was rather different from the biographies of the journalists explored earlier in this chapter: he came from an old and wealthy Russian noble family with an estate in St. Petersburg province, was educated by tutors and governesses until he was sixteen (later studying at the Corps of Pages in Petersburg), and displayed what contemporaries called “gentleman-ism” (*dzhentel’menstvo*), or conspicuously good manners.\(^{176}\) Druzhinin worked at the *Contemporary* between 1848 and 1855, where he earned the reputation of a highly intelligent literary critic who, despite his commitment to social reform, was reluctant to enter into polemics with other writers. According to late nineteenth-century sources,

\(^{175}\) On Ol’khin, see RBS, s.v. “Ol’khin, Matvey Dmitrievich.” Also see the entry for Ol’khin in *Vidok Figliarin*, 668-669 and the footnote on Ol’khin’s relationship with Bulgarin in “Pis’ma Bulgarina k R.M. Zotovu,” in *Faddei Venediktovich Bulgari: ideolog, zhurnalist, konsul’tant sekretnoi politii: stat’i i materialy*, ed. A.I. Reitblat (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2016), 407.

Druzhinin was a polite and well-read liberal who was not interested in turning the *Library for Reading* into an arena for bitter polemics in the aftermath of the Crimean War.\(^\text{177}\) Neither, however, did Druzhinin continue the *Library* in its former vein. Under Druzhinin, the journal was mostly dedicated to Russian literature and news about the arts in Europe. As an advertisement for the new *Library for Reading* stated in 1857, the format would be the same, but the contents and writers would change: “These reforms must clearly carry with them certain changes in the main idea and direction of the whole publication”.\(^\text{178}\)

Thus, with the transfer of the editorship of the *Library for Reading* from A.V. Starchevskii to A.V. Druzhinin in the middle of 1856, the journal shifted its goals; over the course of the next few years the *Library* slowly morphed into an entirely different publication. Instead of aiming to provide a large (and sometimes haphazard) selection of information to a broad general audience, under Druzhinin the *Library* aimed to keep up with literature and other artistic productions, both domestic and foreign, and present them to a narrower, aesthetically inclined audience. More changes came in 1858, when the *Library* was allowed to discuss the peasant question and when Aleksei Feofilaktovich Pisemskii joined as co-editor. Like Druzhinin, Pisemskii came from an old Russian noble family; unlike Druzhinin, however, Pisemskii had little family money and had to work as a civil servant and professional writer for a living. Before joining the *Library*, Pisemskii had published in the *Contemporary* and *Notes of the Fatherland*, and had established himself as a writer of realism, depicting the ordinary life of peasants and the corrupt and shameful behavior of provincial gentry and chinovniki. At the *Library*, Pisemskii continued writing about these themes in his stories, plays, and criticism. In November 1860, he became sole editor after Druzhinin left. However, because Pisemskii began publishing satires of

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\(^{177}\) RBS, s.v. “Druzhinin, Aleksandr Vasil’evich.”

\(^{178}\) *Severnaia pchela*, January 15, 1857, No. 12, supplement section.
the radical intelligentsia (written by himself and, among others, the new contributing writer Petr Dmitrievich Boborykin) in 1861, the *Library* was thoroughly condemned by the radical satirical journal *Spark* (*Iskra, 1859-1873*) and the *Contemporary*, with the editors of the *Spark* even challenging Pisemskii to a duel.¹⁷⁹ Disillusioned, Pisemskii arranged for P.D. Boborykin to take over as editor; Pisemskii then moved from Petersburg to Moscow and continued writing, but without much critical success.

In February 1863 P.D. Boborykin bought the *Library* (and its massive debt) from V.P. Pechatkin and became its sole editor. Boborykin was a young man at the time who had come from a wealthy Russian noble family in Nizhnii Novgorod. He hoped to turn the *Library* into “a broadly liberal organ, though without any revolutionary-socialist tinge”, to end the polemics “against nihilists, gradualists and the like”, and to publish new and young authors.¹⁸⁰ Boborykin expanded the foreign politics section, which the *Library* was allowed to publish from 1859 onward, and began including coverage of domestic reforms. In 1864 Boborykin’s *Library* explicitly identified itself with the intelligentsia (the “educated minority”) and made its goal “the union of our society with its own people, and their shared life, which is just beginning and is still poor, weak and young”.¹⁸¹ Soon, however, the *Library* began to unravel due to intense polemical debates and financial problems. Radical critics offended by the publication of Nikolai Leskov’s novel *Nekuda* in 1864 attacked Boborykin and the *Library* for what they perceived to be a satire of their movement (specifically, of Vasilii Sleptsov’s “Znamenskii commune”). The *Library* was condemned, among others, by the *Contemporary, Russian Word* (*Russkoe slovo*), and the radical

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¹⁷⁹ ĖSBE, s.v. “Pisemskii, Aleksei Feofilaktovich.”
critic Dmitrii Pisarev (writing from the Peter and Paul Fortress). Subscriptions suffered, compounding Boborykin’s already excessive debts (first from purchasing the financially unsound Library from V.P. Pechatkin, and then from mismanaging the Library’s finances). The Library was forced to close in mid-1865, with Boborykin continuing to pay off his debts until 1886.

**Conclusion**

The profiles discussed in this chapter have been snapshots designed to convey the remarkable breadth of activity that these ‘retailers’ (Grech, Bulgarin, Senkovskii, Polevoi, Starchevskii, Usov) engaged in, as well as to situate their work with the *Northern Bee* and the Library for Reading in the larger context of Russian publishing in the second third of the nineteenth century. Regarding what was published in the *Bee* and the Library, it is essential to remember that these ‘retailers’ were responsible for choosing the texts. Whether they penned these texts themselves or, more commonly, edited and published what others wrote (including works by many anonymous authors), what ultimately ended up on the printed page reflected the judgment of these journalists.

These profiles are also relevant, I believe, because of what they reveal about the social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds of these ‘retailers’. Surveying their biographies from a bird’s eye view, it is impossible not to take note of their heterogeneity. Osip Senkovskii, Faddei Bulgarin, and A.V. Starchevskii all came from the Polish Catholic szlachta, or nobility. Nikolai Grech was a German Lutheran (as was his son A.N. Grech, and also the publisher K.K. Krai, mentioned earlier) who had served his way up the Table of Ranks to earn hereditary

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182 McNair, “The Reading Library and the Reading Public”: 223-224.  
184 Many writers of Polish background were involved in Russian publishing in the first half of the nineteenth century. See *Poliaki v Peterburge v pervoi polovine XIX veka*, ed. A.I. Feduta (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010).
nobility. Nikolai Polevoi came from the Russian merchantry (as did his brother Ksenofont Polevoi, and of course the booksellers/publishers A.F. Smirdin and V.P. Pechatkin) and held the status of merchant of the second guild. Pavel Usov, the son of a former Russian serf, was technically a raznochinenets, or person of various rank. Two other publishers mentioned above, M.D. Ol’khin and A.A. Pliushar, were Jewish merchants; Ol’khin was a Russian Jew, while Pliushar was the son of French Jews who moved to St. Petersburg in 1805 to set up a printing press for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. E.N. Akhmatova, A.V. Druzhinin, A.F. Pisemskii, and P.D. Boborykin all came from the Russian nobility, with all except Druzhinin (born in St. Petersburg) having been born on estates in the provinces. These Russian nobles owned serfs, as was their legal privilege. As a Polish nobleman, Bulgarin had inherited two estates with manorial serfs in Belorussia (one in Mogilev province, the other in Grodno province), and owned them at least until 1839; he also purchased two estates (Karlovo and Sarakuss) outside Derpt and employed free Livonian peasants. While it is not clear if Grech owned serfs, his memoirs mentioned his father owning at least five domestic serfs over many years. Grech disdained the aristocracy, but wrote to Bulgarin in the 1840s with references to his family as “nobility” and discussed attending the Noble Assembly in St. Petersburg. It is unclear if Senkovskii owned any family estates in Belorussia, but he apparently had both domestic serfs and hired servants after his second marriage to Adelaida Rahl (herself a baroness through hereditary rank).

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185 On Grech’s steady climb up the service ladder, see Grech, Zapiski, 275, 288-289, and passim.
186 N.A. Polevoi’s legal status is mentioned by Bulgarin in letters to the Third Section in Vidok Figliarin, 221.
187 On Pliushar’s father, Grech, Zapiski, 390-391.
188 Bulgarin’s estates are mentioned in the following letters: F.V. Bulgarin to A.F. Orlov, 13 April 1845, in Vidok Figliarin, 472; F.V. Bulgarin to L.V. Dubel’t, 11 May 1846, in Vidok Figliarin, 513-514.
189 Grech, Zapiski, 132-135.
191 Domestic servants are mentioned in A.A. Senkovskiaia, Osip Ivanovich Senkovskii (Baron Brambeus): Biograficheskii zapiski ego zheny (St. Petersburg, 1858), passim.
This heterogeneity goes some way towards explaining the rise and early popularity of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*. The oldest of the ‘retailers’ – Grech, Bulgarin, and Senkovskii – were responsible for the broad appeal of the *Bee* from the 1820s-1840s and the *Library* from the 1830s-1840s (their heydays, respectively). Their social backgrounds could not have been irrelevant to their assessments of the Russian literary marketplace; having non-Russian, non-Orthodox origins and knowledge of more than one language, religion, and culture may well have enabled these founding editors to better identify opportunities within Russian periodical publishing (specifically, opportunities involving an audience composed primarily of the middle stratum of society). As Richard Wortman observed about the relation of a writer to his society, “The writer was also a member of a social estate, and one does not have to indulge in ‘vulgar sociology’ to include social characteristics as well as literary conventions in the analysis of his self-definition”.¹⁹² The social characteristics of the founding editors of the *Bee* and the *Library* placed them at heart of their own definition of the middle stratum (as discussed in Chapter Three): essentially, as neither aristocrats nor peasants. Moreover, their close familiarity with foreign models of newspapers and journals also meant that they could easily import the techniques developed for bourgeois European periodicals. This importation, as well as other methods important to the creation of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*, is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Two: Methods: Selection Criteria

The criteria for selecting materials to be published in a periodical can tell us much about the intentions of its editors, as well as the editors’ understanding of whom they are publishing for. The *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* published articles on a broad array of topics, but this content was actually governed by rather specific guidelines that are examined in this chapter. Guidelines for topics are an important element in the study of the media because, as Niklas Luhmann explained, topics not only serve as the structural coupling of the media to other domains within society, but are also “known to be known about” – that is, there is a prerequisite that the topic is already known among the audience to some degree.\(^{193}\) In other words, if an article on a certain topic was printed, there was some knowledge that the audience already had about it. This is useful to remember in this chapter about topics that were chosen to appear in the *Bee* and the *Library*.

In addition to selection criteria, periodicals also have models on which they are based, to greater or lesser degrees. Although their editors were familiar with the history of Russian periodical publishing since the eighteenth century, the *Bee* and the *Library* were primarily molded on examples of the bourgeois European press from the early nineteenth century, notably French and British middle-class newspapers and journals.\(^{194}\) (Indeed, in his memoirs, Nikolai

\(^{193}\) Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, 13. In his systems theory, Niklas Luhmann underscores that systems perform a constant reduction of complexity through selection criteria. Once “an autopoietic, self-reproducing system is able to emerge which no longer requires the mediation of interaction among those co-present [that is, producers and audience]… operational closure occurs, with the result that the system reproduces its own operations out of itself” (p. 16); once this operational closure occurs, a two-stage process of selection occurs whereby the system determines what actually counts as information. First, there is the information/non-information selection; once something has been recognized as information (which Luhmann identifies as a difference that makes a difference, which can be recursive), a second stage of selection occurs whereby information is classified into fields of selection, such as sports, politics, or accidents, for example. This happens with the three pillars that Luhmann identifies as composing mass media: news/in-depth reporting, advertisements, and entertainment. In each of the three pillars, or programs as Luhmann refers to them, the fields of selection are further organized along topical lines.

\(^{194}\) The general inspiration, of course, was the vernacular European periodical that emerged at the end of the seventeenth century, creating a public outside the court and its designated languages (Latin, French) and spreading
Grech recalled the enormous stacks of European periodicals, including ladies’ fashion journals, regularly delivered to his home.\textsuperscript{195} These European models were periodicals that had a generally middle class readership in their home countries; imported into the Russian Empire, these models influenced the thinking of the journalists behind the \textit{Northern Bee} and the \textit{Library for Reading} and allowed them to introduce innovations in format and content. It could be hypothesized that, under the influence of the European bourgeois press, these journalists attempted to engineer their own version of a bourgeois audience (at a time when this notion was suffused with overwhelmingly positive connotations) with tools borrowed from Western Europe. It could also be argued that European periodicals influenced these journalists to see Russian society through the lens of Western social categories, as when Faddei Bulgarin wrote to L.V. Dubel’t (director of the Third Section) in April 1848 regarding the rights of each estate (\textit{soslovie}): “the nobility, the middle \textit{soslovie}, and the peasantry”.\textsuperscript{196} Notwithstanding the absence of the clergy, which seems to have been grouped with the middle \textit{soslovie}, these classifications reflected social groupings present in Western Europe.

This chapter explores the selection criteria that the \textit{Northern Bee} and the \textit{Library for Reading} deployed. In looking at the topics chosen, we can draw out what was “known to be known about”, that is, what information was assumed to be in circulation among the audience. In addition to selection criteria and European bourgeois models, this chapter also explores some of the formal elements of the \textit{Bee} and the \textit{Library} and how changes in these elements over time reflected changes in the aims of these periodicals.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Grech, \textit{Zapiski}, 259.
\item F. Bulgarin to L.V. Dubel’t, 16 April 1848, in \textit{Vidok Figliarin}, 562.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Models and Sources: Northern Bee

If we examine the documents relating to the Northern Bee’s early existence—the proposals to the Censorship Committee, requests for official sources, and so on—we can trace the clear and straightforward expression of Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin’s interest in a particular layer of society that can be called the middle stratum. This was due to several circumstances that had formed by 1824. First, there was not much that the two journalists could do with their existing publications Son of the Fatherland and Northern Archive in terms of audience expansion. A certain saturation had taken place in the segment for specialized periodicals because the pool of readers was limited; these limitations stemmed from educational prerequisites for understanding the contents, which meant that these readers were overwhelmingly from the upper gentry. Second, Grech and Bulgarin had been accumulating materials that were simply not scholarly enough for their existing journals. As explained in their proposal to the Saint Petersburg Censorship Committee, the Northern Bee was envisioned for the general reader and would gather all the “light” reading that Grech and Bulgarin could not print in their other publications. Third, there was an opportunity to create the first private daily newspaper, since at the time almanacs and small-circulation journals were more in vogue among readers from the upper gentry.

A more specialized publishing arm on the one hand, and a publication for the general reader on the other—that is essentially what Grech and Bulgarin proposed in early 1824. A letter to the Saint Petersburg Censorship Committee dated May 29, 1824 requested permission to consolidate their four existing journals and to launch a newspaper titled the Northern Bee (Severnaia pchela) beginning in January 1825. Grech’s Son of the Fatherland and its literary

supplement were unified into one journal, as were Bulgarin’s *Northern Archive* and *Literary Leaflets* (later, in 1829, both would be unified into the single publication *Son of the Fatherland and Northern Archive*). The proposed tables of contents for their three publications reflected each periodical’s distinct ‘character’ and orientation. While *Son of the Fatherland* had “translations of the best foreign works”, the best of Russian fiction, and discussions of fine art and its theories, and *Northern Archive* featured statistics, foreign history in translation, archival documents, legal cases, and articles about mores, or *nравы* (in the style, it was specified, of the eighteenth-century English journals *The Spectator* and *The Rambler*, and the French *Hermit* series by Victor-Joseph Étienne de Jouy), the *Northern Bee* was positioned as “a news journal regarding history, politics, literature, mores, etc.” that specifically published “light articles”.¹⁹⁸

The *Northern Bee*’s thematic range and publication frequency were novel to Russia in the 1820s. Six general categories were proposed: foreign news, domestic news, “non-political news” (“about new publications and enterprises, about works of sciences, arts and crafts”), bibliography (of contemporary Russian works), literature, and fashion news.¹⁹⁹ The *Bee* promised to deliver foreign and domestic news more frequently than any other private periodical at the time of the proposal in 1824 (until 1831, the *Bee* came out three times per week; after 1831, it came out six times weekly). The *Northern Bee* also incorporated the Saint Petersburg city news that Bulgarin had originally intended for his *City Messenger* (*Gorodskoi vestnik*, a newspaper that was denied publication in 1824 by S.S. Uvarov on the grounds that it would violate the privileges of newspaper published by the Academy of Sciences, of which he was president).²⁰⁰ Altogether, the

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²⁰⁰ Bulgarin’s proposal for *Gorodskoi vestnik* stated that “The purpose of this publication is general benefit and enjoyment”, Bulgarin to general-gubernator graf Miloradovich, April 1824, in “K istorii russkoi literatury”: 566; S.S. Uvarov, then president of the Academy of Sciences, contended that the bulk of the content that Bulgarin wanted to publish was already published by the Academy’s *Akademicheskie Vedomosti* (*Academic News*), and constituted the majority of the information in that paper. Uvarov concluded that Bulgarin could not publish city news “without
Northern Bee collected the ‘light’ material – as stressed by the proposal – that did not belong in Son of the Fatherland and Northern Archive.

It is perhaps necessary to clarify one point here: the Northern Bee’s special privilege to publish foreign political news. This became a matter of controversy and suspicion among critics who, reflecting on the Bee’s loyalty to the monarchy after the Decembrist revolt, believed that the privilege came in exchange for spying for the Third Section after 1826. However, Bulgarin received that right in 1824 after his exhaustive lobbying efforts of A.S. Shishkov and the infamous A.A. Arakcheev, and as an extension of Grech’s existing privilege for Son of the Fatherland.201 When Grech and Bulgarin’s proposal was forwarded by D.P. Runich (superintendent of the Saint Petersburg educational district and head of the Saint Petersburg Censorship Committee) to the Minister of National Enlightenment A.S. Shishkov, Runich noted that Grech was applying his privilege of publishing political news, received in 1812, to a second publication. Runich worried that this additional political periodical would create extra work for the (total of) three censors responsible for reading the capital’s periodicals (since they would have to keep up with “Russia’s relations with foreign powers” and could easily make a mistake “from not knowing the latest political circumstances”).202 However, assessing the content in the Northern Bee as nothing fundamentally new, Runich concluded that the censors’ extra workload did not constitute a legitimate excuse and recommended that the newspaper be approved for publishing on the condition that the censors be particularly careful, to which Shishkov agreed in September 1824.203

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201 Bulgarin wrote about securing approval for the Northern Bee through Arakcheev in F. Bulgarin, “Poezdka v Gruzino v 1824 godu,” Novosel’e (1846): 201-220.
203 A.S. Shishkov to D. Runich, 3 September 1824, in “K istorii russkoi literatury”: 559-591, 576.
It should also be noted that A.S. Shishkov’s decision to allow the publication of the *Northern Bee* was rather remarkable given the circumstances surrounding Nikolai Grech at the time. Grech was on trial from 1824 to 1828 – though eventually acquitted – for having allowed his printing press to be used to publish a Russian translation of Jacob Gosner’s book of German mysticism *The Spirit of the Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, Vol. 1: a Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. Accordingly, Faddei Bulgarin was entirely responsible for obtaining approval for the *Northern Bee*. Bulgarin lobbied for this in a personal manner: he worked through his Polish relative Iu.O. Lobarshevskaja (née Narbut), who later became Shishkov’s second wife, “and wormed his way to the old man through her”, as Grech recalled.\(^{204}\) Considering that Shishkov intended to root out everyone associated with the Gosner case as part of his crusade against the former Minister of National Enlightenment and mystic A.N. Golitsyn, this is a compelling illustration of the personal channels open despite seemingly impossible official obstacles.\(^{205}\)

With their newspaper approved, Grech and Bulgarin set about securing sources from which they could receive regular news and which, upon closer inspection, reveal the kind of middle-stratum audience that the publisher-editors had in mind. A constant stream of news was needed from a wide array of sources. Writing to Saint Petersburg governor-general M.A. Miloradovich in December 1824, Grech and Bulgarin asked that Miloradovich’s office provide information about events happening in the capital. The publisher-editors wanted “to be useful to the Government and to private individuals, especially residents of St. Petersburg” and therefore needed reports on:

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1) Feats of humanity, self-sacrifice, generosity, charity, courage and other virtues rendered to the residents of this Capital.
2) Various unusual events that happened [in the capital], which could be brought to the attention of the public to [provide] a warning, or to present an example.
3) Fires, with an indication of their causes… [to publicize] the feats of policemen who distinguished themselves during the extinguishing [of the fires].
4) Thefts and other crimes, but only when the perpetrators have been discovered and are already in the hands of the government, because otherwise such disclosure could be harmful.
5) Various accidents… [about] those who died suddenly, drowned, etc.
6) The number of births, weddings, and deaths. Among the [deaths], those of particular significance such as chinovniki, merchants, [and] artists with an indication of their title, name, surname and the day of their death. This news could be rather curious and important for readers outside the city, since confusion, losses… etc. often occurs out of not knowing [that someone passed away].
7) Newly opened establishments for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.
8) Future meetings at the Imperial Court and at various other public locations, as well as upcoming people’s [narodnykh] amusements and festivities, for the advance knowledge of the public […] [and] performances, with simply an indication of the titles of the plays.
9) Artists, magicians, etc. visiting the Capital, and the rarities they have brought.
10) At the end of the year: the [total] number of houses and residents in the Capital, [and] the number of houses built over the course of the year.206 [Italics mine.]

The reports requested by Grech and Bulgarin had two defining features: first, they were brief, entertaining news items that could be printed in any issue of the Northern Bee; second, they generally focused on the activities of members of the middle groups – either by writing about them (the deaths of chinovniki, merchants, and artists, for example), or by appealing to their interests (as with the announcements of various events, meetings, and performances open to the public). The concern with readers outside the capital is also worth noting, as it points to the migration flows into Saint Petersburg from various parts of the empire. Miloradovich, who was favorably disposed to Grech and Bulgarin, agreed to supply the Northern Bee with information.207

Domestic news, which was one of the selling points of the Northern Bee, was sourced from official circulars, ministry newspapers, official periodicals, and administrators of regions

206 IRLI, f. 590, no. 173, 23 December 1824 [copy; original date given is 15 December 1824].
207 IRLI, f. 590, no. 84, 18 December 1824.
within the Empire. The ministry newspapers regularly cited in issues of the Bee were the Russian Veteran (*Russkii invalid*, published by the Ministry of War), Commercial Gazette (*Kommercheskaia gazeta*, published by the Ministry of Foreign Trade), Senate News (*Senatskie vedomosti*), Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Zhurnal Ministerstva vnutrennikh del*) after 1829, and the Journal of the Ministry of National Enlightenment (*Zhurnal Ministertva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*) after 1834. Official newspapers included the Saint Petersburg News (*Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, also called *Akademicheskie vedomosti*), Moscow News (*Moskovskie vedomosti*), and, after 1827, the Odessa Messenger (*Odesskii vestnik*). The Bee cited official provincial newspapers (*gubernskie vedomosti*) after 1838 through contacts at the Imperial Public Library; in the 1840s, librarian I.P. Bystroi worked as an employee of sorts for the Bee by sourcing stories from the various provincial papers. Provincial news also came directly from generals and governor-generals; at the launch of the Northern Bee in January 1825, for example, Grech and Bulgarin wrote to General A.P. Ermolov with a “ticket” (*bilet*) for a subscription to the newspaper and a request for any information about “curious events” in the Caucasus that could be published in the paper, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Another key source was the Committee of Charity for Distinguished Civil Servants (*Komitet prizreniia zasluzhennykh grazhdanskikh chinovnikov*), which had been established in 1823. Grech and Bulgarin proposed that, after the first 500 copies (of an unspecified issue) were used to pay for printing costs, five rubles from the sale of each issue above the 500 mark would be donated to the Committee for charitable purposes. In return, Grech and Bulgarin asked that the Committee provide information about:

1) News of the placement, transfer and retirement of chinovniki from the civil service, by Imperial decree and [decrees of] the Governing Senate.

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209 IRLI, f.590, no. 9, January 1825.
2) The establishment of generally all civil [grazhdanskikh] chinovniki in the state. 
3) The awarding of Orders, medals, […], lands, leases and money to civil chinovniki as well as to private individuals. 
4) The awarding of pensions to civil chinovniki during service and after retirement. 
5) News of noteworthy events in Russia. 
6) Notes from Petersburg and Moscow, or accounts about all events in the capitals that are worthy of the public’s attention; the number of births, deaths, marriages and so on. 
7) Donations to benefit the Committee of Charity for Distinguished Civil Servants […] 

Provided that their proposal was approved by the Committee and ultimately Tsar Alexander I (who was directly involved with the organization), Grech and Bulgarin also requested that the Ministry of Internal Affairs be asked to promulgate the Northern Bee in all the Russian provinces.211

Foreign news, another key draw of the Northern Bee, was sourced from the politically reliable periodicals listed in Grech and Bulgarin’s original proposal from May 1824. The Bee would borrow from the Austrian Observer (Der Oesterreichische Beobachter) and the Berlin Gazette (Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats-und gelehrten Sachen), which were the official newspapers of Austria and Prussia, respectively. Additional reporting would come from periodicals already established in the Russian Empire: Riga’s German-language Spectator (Zuschauer) and the capital’s Saint Petersburg Academic German Gazette (Sankt-Peterburgskie akademicheskie nemetskie vedomosti), French-language Impartial Conservative (Conservateur Impartial), and French-language St. Petersburg Journal (Journal de St. Pétersbourg, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).212 This borrowing and translation from the foreign-language press was intended for an audience that, in its majority, could only read in Russian – which was, in turn, already an indication of its social composition.

210 GARF, f. 109, op. 1, no. 1880, ll.1, 1ob. No date is given. A.I. Reitblat has published a separate document from the same file in Vidok Figliarin, which he dates to 1828.
211 GARF, f. 109, op. 1, no. 1880, l. 2.
212 N.I. Grech and F.V. Bulgarin, Letter to St. Petersburg censorship committee, May 29, 1824, in “K istorii russkoi literatury”. 573. The Journal de St. Pétersbourg was not listed as a source but was used once publishing began.
The foreign periodicals cited by Grech and Bulgarin in their original proposal, however, were only a fraction of the newspapers and journals that appeared as sources in the *Northern Bee* over the next four decades. We know from their private correspondence in the 1840s that the two editors of the *Bee* subscribed to bourgeois French periodicals like the *Journal des débats*, *Revue de Paris*, *Revue des deux mondes*, *La Presse*, and the middle-class German *Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Ober-Post-Amts-Zeitung*. Issues of the *Northern Bee* began to regularly cite European periodicals as news sources in 1825, especially the *Journal des débats* and *Allgemeine Zeitung*. In the 1830s, titles such as *Journal des débats*, *Constitutionnel*, *Journal de Paris*, and the British journal *Spectator* (restarted in 1828) appeared particularly frequently. The *Journal des débats* and *Constitutionnel* continued to be regular sources in the 1840s, along with the British *Standard*, *Morning Herald*, *Times*, and *Globe*, and the French *La Presse* and *Courrier Français* (and less frequently, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *New York Tribune*, *New York Herald*, and *Gazette de France*). Interestingly, the *Bee* also cited rather niche and small circulation papers: the *Davenport Telegraph*, *Gibraltar Chronicle*, and the colonial papers *Madras Courier* and *Moniteur Algérien* in the 1830s; the *Phare de Bayonne*, *Phare de Pyrénées*, and *Courrier de Marseille* in the 1840s, and many more. However, these were likely unattributed citations from major European periodicals to which the editors of the *Bee* did actually subscribe. The *Bee*’s sourcing from bourgeois European papers continued until the outbreak of the Crimean War.

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214 These titles are taken from perusing issues of the *Northern Bee* and are by no means a comprehensive listing. Titles in the 1820s also included *L’Oracle* (published in Brussels), *Nouvelliste Vaudois* (a Swiss paper), and *Journal de Francfort*. Titles from the 1830s included *Revue Britannique*, *Siècle*, *Journal du Commerce*, *Sentinelle des Pyrénées*, *Séaphore de Marseille*, *Courrier Français*, *Bon Sens*, *Chronique de Paris*, *Toulonnais*, *Armorician de Brest*, *Mémorial des Pyrénées*, *Temps*, *Echo* (Milan), *Correspondance d’Espagne*, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Franklin’s Journal*, *Courrier*, *Times*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Standard*, *Morning Post*, and *Brighton Herald*. Titles from the 1840s included *Journal de Constantinople*, *Courrier de la Gironde*, *Ami de la Religion*, *Courrier de Marseille*, *National (France)*, *Commerce (France)*, *Bulletin des Lois*, *L’Émancipation* (Toulouse, France), *Rhein-und Mosel-Zeitung*, *Punch*, *Daily News*, *Sun*, *Observer*, *Leith Herald*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Moderator*, *The Mayo* *Castlebar Constitution* (Ireland), *Dublin Evening Post*.
in October 1853; with Britain and France as belligerents in the war, the private Russian press was required to source from the *Journal de St. Pëtersbourg*, the official paper of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although the *Bee* did occasionally quote from the presses of neutral nations like Belgium (*L’Étoile Belge, L’Indépendence Belge*) and Prussia (*Neue Preußische Zeitung*). Still heavily relying on *Neue Preußische Zeitung, L’Indépendence Belge*, and the French-language St. Petersburg journal *Le Nord*, the *Bee* slowly returned to sourcing from British and French papers in the late 1850s, but no longer at the same frequency or with the phenomenally broad range as before the Crimean War.

In its first year of publication, the *Northern Bee* distinguished itself from other newspapers and journals, introducing innovations that would become hallmarks of the paper for years to come. In the context of its long publishing lifespan, the *Northern Bee*’s first year of publication was also its most unusual and was marked by the participation of a broad spectrum of writers and relatively few polemical battles. The *Northern Bee* published works by I.A. Krylov, K.F. Ryleev, and a story by A.S. Pushkin. At the end of the nineteenth century, the journalist P.P. Karatygin noted that had it not been for the *Bee*’s polemics with V.F. Odoevskii’s almanac *Mnemosyne (Mnemozina)*, Nikolai Polevoi’s *Moscow Telegraph*, and A.F. Voeikov’s official *Russian Veteran (Russkii invalid)*, the *Bee* would have been a model periodical.

As editor, Bulgarin introduced the feuilleton to Russian readers (first developed on the pages of bourgeois French newspapers at the turn of the century), a genre that allowed him to write about a wide array of topics in a conversational tone. Although Bulgarin debuted his feuilletons in the early 1820s in *Literary Leaflets (Literaturnye listki, supplement to the Northern*

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216 Karatygin, “Severnaia pchela (1825-1858)”: 257.
Archive), the broad popularity of the Northern Bee brought this style to a wider audience. P.P. Karatygin noted that,

> The title of ‘the first Russian feuilletonist’ basically rests with Bulgarin. In his feuilletons (naturally, those in which he is not recommending pie makers, restaurant owners, café owners and the like, and does not make subtle insinuations) he was always an amusing, witty interlocutor, delivering the reader entertainment from boredom for a quarter hour.\(^{218}\)

This portion of the newspaper, which ran along the bottom half of the first page, became a favorite of admirers of Bulgarin’s writing. The feuilleton created a sense of familiar dialogue between Bulgarin (who always authored that portion of the paper) and his readers, who looked forward to the next issues as a continuation of their conversation.

Another feature of the Northern Bee was its sketches of everyday life and social “types”. As with the feuilleton, these sketches were another one of Bulgarin’s borrowings from French journalistic innovations, primarily those of Victor-Joseph Étienne de Jouy. Jouy’s “Hermit” series of sketches observed the daily life, behavior, and customs of urban dwellers from various classes of society in locations like Paris, Provence, Italy, and London.\(^{219}\) As Al’bin Konechnyi has observed, Bulgarin’s importation of both the format (the observation of daily byt, or way of life) and the style of the urban sketch (which typically involved a fictionalized dialogue between the author and the people he described) provided Russian readers with an entirely new kind of reading, thereby boosting Bulgarin’s popularity as a journalist.\(^{220}\) The detail of Bulgarin’s descriptions was likely to resonate with readers who encountered, on a daily basis, similar behaviors and types of people. The fact that these sketches were mostly fictional did not

\(^{218}\) Karatygin, “Severnaia pchela (1825-1858)”: 250.


\(^{220}\) Al’bin Konechnyi, Peterburgskie ocherki F.V. Bulgarina (St. Petersburg: Petropolis, 2010), 9, 11.
particularly matter; a high degree of verisimilitude was achieved through the simple accumulation of real-life details. For readers outside the capital, the sketches provided a taste of Petersburg life, with all its bustling activity. It is not hard to imagine the appeal of a description of the lively faces and conversations inside a Petersburg restaurant, for example, or a recounting of what one saw at the Gostinyi dvor, or central shopping arcade.\footnote{Bulgarin, “Russkaia restoratsiia”, in Ocherki russikh nравов, ili Litsevaia storona i iznanka roda chelovecheskogo (St. Petersburg, 1843), 31-46. Published in Konechnyi, Peterburgskie ocherki F.V. Bulgarina, 150-172.} For the middle segments of society, the urban sketch was a place (one of several on the pages of the Bee) where they could see their own reflections. Bulgarin’s urban sketches predominantly focused on Russians of the middle stratum (like provincial gentry visiting Petersburg, wealthy merchants, and middling chinovniki), and only occasionally dipped into the life of the lower strata (such as with descriptions of secondhand booksellers and book peddlers in 1831, or the happy water carriers in 1832 and 1842).\footnote{F.V., “Bukinist, ili raznoshchik knig.” Severnaia pchela, January 22, 1831, N. 17. F.V., “Vodovoz, ili istoria moei kvartiry.” Severnaia pchela, June 4, 1832, N. 126. F.V., “Vodonos.” Severnaia pchela, January 15, 1842, N. 11.} Unlike the physiological sketches of mid-1840s (like Nikolai Nekrasov’s Physiology of Petersburg, or Fiziologiia Peterburga), Bulgarin’s sketches of the 1820s-early 1840s either praised or satirized the lower strata, but did not expose the bleak reality of living conditions at the time or ask readers to sympathize. The focus, as it were, remained on the commercial and educational achievements of the middle ranks.

In addition to the feuilleton and the urban sketch, the Northern Bee’s early advertisements – under the guise of personal “recommendations” – were another feature of the newspaper. Bulgarin’s recommendations for shops, restaurants, manufacturers, craftsmen, artists, and performers were aimed at middle-stratum readers who paid for such services. Besides being inherently useful to readers looking for a shop to buy furniture, for example, these
“recommendations” were also valued because they came as Bulgarin’s personal advice to readers. Petersburg residents who engaged in such activities often contacted Bulgarin with the intention of being favorably reviewed on the pages of the Bee. Nikolai Grech later recalled that Bulgarin was commonly perceived as taking bribes for his reviews. Grech clarified that Bulgarin would receive an item or sample of the wares that were being advertised (such as clothing), or would have dinner (with the owner of a new hotel, for example), or would sometimes take nothing at all (Karatygin argued that Bulgarin supported new businesses this way to help them succeed). Since Minister of National Enlightenment S.S. Uvarov consistently refused Grech and Bulgarin’s petitions (from 1839 through 1844) to include personal, or classified advertisements (which were a privilege of official publications, Uvarov claimed), this practice of embedding advertisements continued throughout the second third of the nineteenth century; only in 1863 did the Northern Bee run undisguised personal advertisements.

The six general categories presented in the original proposal from May 1824 evolved from the mid-1820s through the early 1840s to include a proliferation of thematic sub-categories. The domestic news category expanded both physically (taking up more of the first and second pages) and thematically; it not only provided information on court news, civil and military promotions, and Petersburg city news, but also detailed news from the provinces. The foreign news section expanded in size as the Bee sourced from more European and North American papers and allocated more space to foreign events after the 1830s. The “non-political news” category diversified the most and kept up pace with innovations in bourgeois European periodicals: in the 1820s new sub-categories appeared covering theater, music, art, literature.

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poetry, correspondence, new books, obituaries, travel, and feuilleton (under the title “mores”, or
nravy). In the 1830s more sub-sections appeared: history, “contemporary history”, humor,
domestic industry, domestic mores, statistics, “observations in the fatherland”, and miscellany
(the feuilleton also changed from the title “mores” to either “feuilleton” or, when Bulgari
penned it, “Journalistic What-Not”, or Zhurnal’naia vsiakaia vsiachina). The practice of
formally sub-classifying each type of article was scaled back by the early 1840s, with articles
either carrying their own title or appearing under the categories of domestic news, foreign news,
miscellany, feuilleton, or “Russian literature”. The range of themes was still quite broad, but
readers would have to simply read the feuilleton section to find out about the theater, or the
miscellany section to find out about foreign and domestic “non-political” news.

Models and Sources: Library for Reading

We must use evidence of a different sort to reconstruct the original intentions and
selection criteria of the Library for Reading. Unlike the Northern Bee, whose paper trail is
spread across several archives, far less documentation exists for the Library – principally
because no personal archive has survived for A.F. Smirdin, and a very minuscule one exists for
Osip Senkovskii. Many materials pertaining to the Bee were collected in the formerly secret
archives of the Third Section, but the Library rarely makes an appearance in that archive.
Because of these limitations, we must examine the Library’s models and sources through
memoirs, journal announcements, and other materials of an indirect nature.

Publisher A.F. Smirdin’s idea for the Library for Reading was rooted in the bourgeois
French-language press read all over Europe during the first third of the nineteenth century.
According to Brokgauz and Efron’s encyclopedia entry, one of the journals that inspired the
Library was the Bibliothèque universelle, a thick-journal published in Geneva and Paris from
1815 until the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{225} The journal was originally launched in 1796 as the \textit{Bibliothèque britannique} and promulgated English literature and prose, but expanded in 1815 to cover works coming out of other countries as well, hence the shift from \textit{britannique} to \textit{universelle}. The \textit{Bibliothèque universelle} published articles about science, literature, the arts, and a host of other subjects and was itself an echo of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment \textit{encyclopédie} of Diderot and d’Alembert.\textsuperscript{226} Including the name \textit{bibliothèque} (library) in the title of a journal harkened back to an eighteenth-century convention designating “a collection of complete or abridged works that were introduced with brief comments and had the primary task of instructing and entertaining the reader: library of novels, library of the countryside, library of ladies and girls.”\textsuperscript{227} It seems quite likely that Smirdin used this journal as his primary model. To edit this new publication, Smirdin hired both Nikolai Grech and Osip Senkovskii as editors.

It should be noted, however, that A.V. Starchevskii had a different version about which journals influenced the \textit{Library for Reading}, which has in turn influenced the misinterpretation of some contemporary scholars.\textsuperscript{228} In the third installment of his “Memoirs of an Old Littérature”, published in 1891, Starchevskii argued that Senkovskii was concerned about the spread of Pierre Leroux’s socialist ideas through the journals \textit{Revue encyclopédique} (1819-1835) and the \textit{Encyclopédie nouvelle} (1834-1841). Starchevskii claimed that Senkovskii wanted to stop socialism at Russia’s borders and prevent it from spreading, not among the intelligentsia (who already knew Leroux’s writing, he claimed) but among readers who did not know of Leroux –

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{225} ESBE, s.v. “Biblioteka dla chteniia.”
\bibitem{226} Daniel Maggetti, Yves Bridel and Roger Francillon, \textit{La Bibliothèque universelle, 1815-1924: miroir de la sensibilité romande au XIXe siècle} (Lausanne: Payot, 1998).
\bibitem{227} \textit{Ibid.}, 5.
\bibitem{228} For example: Charles Ruud, \textit{Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804-1906} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 74.
\end{thebibliography}
that is, those who could not read French.\footnote{An interesting parallel can be made with W. Bruce Lincoln’s argument that during the revolutions of 1848 in Europe, Nicholas I was more concerned with the spread of revolutionary ideas among the literate and semi-literate populace rather than among the intelligentsia. W. Bruce Lincoln, “The Year 1848,” in Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), 269-290.} Senkovskii, according to this version, decided to copy Leroux’s method of the thick-journal but fill it with content that would keep Russian readers interested so that they would not be attracted to harmful foreign ideas.\footnote{A.V. Starchevskii, “Vospominaniiia starogo literatora,” Istoricheskii vestnik T. XLV (August, 1891): 311-312.} This argument, however, is unlikely on several accounts. First, Starchevskii’s retelling of the early years of the \textit{Library for Reading} is derived from secondhand knowledge and is full of chronological and factual errors. For example, he attributes the idea for the \textit{Library} to Senkovskii rather than to Smirdin. Second, when Starchevskii wrote this part of his memoirs in the late 1880s and published it in 1891, the threat of socialism was much more real (among the radical intelligentsia and workers groups) than at any point in the early 1830s. In all likelihood, Starchevskii was projecting the fear of socialism backwards from the late nineteenth century onto the 1830s, whether deliberately or not. In other words, Starchevskii’s account of the early years of the \textit{Library}, before he became \textit{de facto} editor in 1848, is unreliable.

An article advertising the \textit{Library}’s first issue appeared in the December 29 and December 30, 1833 issues of the \textit{Northern Bee}. Faddei Bulgarin praised A.F. Smirdin for nurturing Russian literature with his efforts, especially with his payments to writers, which enabled them to turn writing into a profession. Bulgarin announced that Smirdin’s new journal, the \textit{Library for Reading}, was the publisher’s attempt to eliminate partisanship in Russian letters by having “all Russian writers, all poets and prose writers” that had achieved some degree of fame contribute to a single publication.\footnote{Severnaia pchela, December 29, 1833, No. 299. Severnaia pchela, December 30, 1833, No. 300. Quote is on page 1187 of the December 30 issue.} The success of the \textit{Library} would determine the future development of Russian literature, Bulgarin concluded, before providing a preview of the
contents in the first issue, indicating some crossover in the reading audience of the Bee and the Library. The first issue was rather exceptional, bringing works from different generations of writers and those of varying skill (I.I. Kozlov, V.A. Zhukovskii, A.S. Pushkin, Baron E.F. Rozen, G.R. Derzhavin, Baron Brambeus (Senkovskii), F.V. Bulgarin, I.N. Skobelev, N.I. Grech, to name the most prominent writers). The Library tried to follow this course for approximately the first three years, which were unusual in the context of its entire publishing history. From 1834 until 1837, authors like A.S. Pushkin, I.A. Krylov, V.F. Odoevskii, and V.A. Zhukovskii occasionally contributed, but eventually stopped by 1837. Pushkin stopped contributing for the obvious reason of his death, but the others had no wish to continue working with Senkovskii, whose editorial practices they disagreed with (notably his brazen abridgement of manuscripts and substantial rewriting of foreign texts). After 1837, writers like A.V. Timofeev, I.I. Kozlov, V.G. Benediktov, N.V. Kukol’nik, M.N. Zagoskin, A.F. Vel’tman, Nikolai Polevoi, and Faddei Bulgarin made up the majority of contributors to the Russian Literature section. This trend continued until 1850, when A.V. Starchevskii and E.N. Akhmatova began attracting younger writers from rival publications Notes of the Fatherland and The Contemporary by offering higher payments per page.232 Besides bringing over Apollon Nikolaevich Maikov, Starchevskii’s most successful ‘poaching’ was of A.V. Druzhinin (Druzhinin’s editorship and his transformation of the Library are discussed in Chapter Seven).

When it began publication in 1834, the Library for Reading was divided into the following seven sections: Russian Literature (subdivided into poetry and prose); Foreign Literature; Sciences and Arts; Industry and Agriculture; Criticism; Literary Chronicle; and Miscellany (Smes’, following the Mélanges section in French models). The Russian Literature section was dominated by the writers mentioned above, as well as by Osip Senkovskii’s stories

under his pseudonym and alter ego Baron Brambeus, whose persona literary scholar Andreas Schönle has fittingly described as “a low-level civil servant with definite ambitions” (the name was taken from a Spanish chapbook, according to A.A. Senkovskaia’s memoirs; literary scholars have identified its origin from the eighteenth-century chapbook *The Story of Frantsyl Venetsiia and His Wife, the Beautiful Queen Renttsyvena*).233

The Foreign Literature, Sciences and Arts, and Miscellany sections drew heavily from middle-class English review magazines and French thick journals (German periodicals only occasionally appeared as sources). Among English periodicals, Osip Senkovskii’s particular favorites, designated by their frequent citation on the pages of the Library, were the *Edinburgh Review, Blackwood’s Magazine, and New Monthly Magazine*; less frequently, the Library published translations from *The Quarterly Review, Fraser’s Magazine, and Mechanic’s Magazine* (however, many translations appeared without attribution to the original author or even the original source).234 Among French-language bourgeois periodicals, Senkovskii borrowed from the *Revue des deux mondes, Revue de Paris, La Chronique de Paris*, and (for fashion news) *Courrier de beau monde*. According to A.V. Starchevskii’s memoirs, E.N. Akhmatova and the unnamed women translators (discussed in Chapter One) subscribed to a variety of unspecified foreign “light journals” through the Library’s office; these were likely French and English bourgeois journals.235 In addition to publishing (sometimes with notorious “edits”) contemporary French authors popular across Europe such as Honoré de Balzac, Alexandre Dumas (père), Eugène Sue, Prosper Mérimée, George Sand (whose identity was

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clarified as “Madam Dudevant”), and Countess Dash, the Library made a particular commitment to providing translations of contemporary British authors like Sir Walter Scott, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Captain Frederick Marryat, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë (under her pseudonym Currer Bell), and William Makepeace Thackeray (as well as pre-nineteenth-century English works by the likes of Samuel Richardson and William Shakespeare).\textsuperscript{236} According to Starchevskii, this was because of Senkovskii’s Anglophile tendencies:

The inclination of the editor toward English literature [and] its calm analysis of the human heart was found in [the section] “Foreign literature”; [this was] in contrast to the French “young school” of the time […] The Library for Reading was the first Russian journal that tried to acquaint Russian society with the best contemporary English writers, who until then had barely been known by name in Russia […] Besides their literary importance, articles of this sort also brought a benefit to Russian readers in that they acquainted [readers] with the spirit, way of life [byt] and customs of the most educated of current societies, which is able to combine freedom with the rule of law.\textsuperscript{237}

It should be noted here that Senkovskii was not alone in viewing the English as world leaders in the fields of arts, sciences (both natural and social), and politics. Writing in his memoirs in the 1850s and early 1860s, Nikolai Grech (who was co-editor of the Library in 1834) proclaimed that only certain nations could have representative government, beginning with England. Other nations capable of this form of government were “the Swedes, Danes, northern Germans (not the foolish Austrians), and North Americans”.\textsuperscript{238} If Grech’s bias could be explained by his Protestant (Lutheran) background, then Senkovskii’s praise of England had more to do with his belief that the English were the most cultivated of the Western European nations.

The foreign sources listed above were a fraction of what Senkovskii and his assistants reviewed for inclusion in the Library. Starchevskii recalled in his memoirs that Senkovskii learned how to write critical reviews from reading the “Journal des sçavans [Savants], Quarterly

\textsuperscript{236} The Library also published contemporary Irish authors like Julia Kavanagh and American authors like James Fenimore Cooper.
\textsuperscript{238} Grech, Zapiski, 307.
Starchevskii also recalled that in early 1854 Senkovskii asked why subscriptions had not been renewed for the scholarly publications *Journal des Savants*, *L’Institut*, *L’Athenaeum français* and, among Russian papers, the *Northern Bee* and *News of the Saint Petersbourg City Police* (*Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi polistsii*) in order to fill the Library’s “empty” Miscellany section. Senkovskii also asked for European newspapers in 1854, despite the ongoing Crimean War: “We surely need some kind of good foreign newspaper, French or German… like the *Journal des débats*, or the *Neue Berliner Zeitung*, but better the *Journal des débats*, where at least there is literary and art news. Something for music is also needed. Do you really not subscribe to any music newspaper?”Senkovskii, bedridden and frustrated with Starchevskii’s selections for the Library in 1854, explained the necessity of having European periodicals:

…there is no possibility of publishing a journal by remaining in all-around ignorance of everything that is done in literatures, in fine and dramatic arts, in society, and what is discussed in Europe, what people are occupied with – what they are surprised by and what drives them wild. [Not to have foreign periodicals] is to deprive oneself of sources of thought, discussion, comparison, even inspiration – to live in emptiness…

Despite Senkovskii’s concerns, however, the Library continued to publish extracts from European periodicals, as evidenced by the contents of the mid-1854 issues (“Chinese acrobats”, “Lion hunting”, “Catalog of the Bodleian Library”, “Academy of Sciences in San Francisco”, and so on), and would continue to do so even after the editorship was transferred to A.V.

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241 Ibid., 577.
242 Ibid.
Druzhinin in 1856 (for instance, an 1858 issue included translations of “Results of the scholarly expedition of the Schlagintweit brothers in India” and “California gold”).

Familiarity with European scholarly literature also informed the sections “Sciences and Arts” and “Industry and Agriculture”. Although I discuss the contents of these sections more thoroughly in Chapter Four, it is important to point out here that these sections generally propagated the view that Russia lagged behind Western European science, art, and technology, but that it could adopt European practices to gradually improve. Dmitrii Potapovich Shelekhov and Grigorii Pavlovich Nebol’sin were frequent authors in the Industry and Agriculture section, which (unlike the Sciences and Arts section) dealt exclusively with Russian issues and contained only original articles. As a ‘model’ provincial landowner, D.P. Shelekhov was a proponent of “scientific agriculture” and of reforming the inefficiency of Russian agriculture through rational methods used in Northern Europe. G.P. Nebol’sin was a high-ranking economist (serving in the Ministry of Finance and leading studies and commissions on a variety of economic questions) who, in addition to editing the official Commercial Newspaper, published many articles on Russian domestic trade in the Library.

The sections of “Criticism” and “Literary Chronicle” followed, rather straightforwardly, new books being published in the Russian language (whether original or translated). These were also the sections that most accurately reflected Senkovskii’s personal voice (versus Baron Brambeus in the Russian Literature section). Rather than providing simple synopses of all published works, however, these sections served as arenas (much like Bulgarin’s feuilletons in the Northern Bee) for Senkovskii to praise, ridicule, and present his opinions on specific titles as

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244 Shelekhov is discussed in the context of his home province Tver’ in Mary W. Cavender, Nests of the Gentry: Family, Estate, and Local Loyalties in Provincial Russia (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 121-132 and passim.
245 ŠSB, s.v. “Nebol’sin, Grigorii Pavlovich.”

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well as a variety of issues concerning literature and the Russian language. These sections were also quite popular with readers because, as A.V. Starchevskii observed,

[…] almost the entire Chronicle [section] turned into a continuous joke […] finally, the joke almost became a farce, and the chronicler forced new books to dance in front of him, play a comedy-vaudeville and present scenes from *A Thousand and One Nights*. But in this bibliographic orgy, which evoked the irrepressible cheer of the reader, in between the dances of *Mazepa* with *The Merchant Zholobov’s Daughter*, *A Course on Russian Grammar* with *Logic for Nobles*, *A Course on Jurisprudence* with *The Art of Taking Bribes*, and so on, suddenly a serious thought, or scholarly remark, or a precise opinion would appear.246

Senkovskii’s criticism, in other words, both informed readers of the contents of new books and, perhaps more importantly, served as entertainment. The minor writer Aleksandr Petrovich Miliukov recalled about his Moscow gymnasium days in the 1830s: “we admired the short reviews that were usually printed in the Literary Chronicle of the *Library for Reading* and which clearly belonged to the witty pen [of Senkovskii]”. Having pitched in with friends for a shared subscription, Miliukov remembered that “when receiving a new issue of the journal, this Chronicle would be cut open before anything else and was not infrequently read aloud in class during hours free from lessons, or even during breaks between lessons”. Miliukov and his fellow students knew that “even thought these witticisms had nothing in common with criticism, we liked them for their originality”247

Although O.I. Senkovskii was officially co-editor with Nikolai Grech in 1834, and with I.A. Krylov in 1835 and half of 1836, the *Library for Reading* predominantly reflected Senkovskii’s vision for the journal, as well as his control over virtually every article and stage of editing until illness from cholera significantly slowed down his activities after 1848. How did

Senkovskii see his duty as an editor? A.V. Starchevskii interpreted Senkovskii’s views based on their professional relationship from 1848 to 1856:

In his opinion, an editor must not simply be a transmitter [peredatchikom] of any randomly collected thoughts, opinions and facts, but a judicious and conscientious transmitter who conveys to the reader the thoughts, opinions and facts that first of all, agree with his own convictions and secondly, are accessible [dostupny] and useful for the spread of education.  

This interpretation of the editor’s role, as recounted by Starchevskii, falls in line with the conventions of eighteenth-century French encyclopedic journals. Some Russian writers criticized Senkovskii for his heavy-handed editing, as mentioned above, but this was the expression of an older European model of journal editing. The cutting, rewriting, and rearranging of texts was hardly unique to Russian journalism. The authors of a study of the Bibliothèque universelle noted that “the amalgam of extracts and summaries renders all critical judgment of the aesthetic value of the novels contained in the Bibliothèque universelle perilous”, an observation applicable to that entire journal and to other encyclopedic journals, French or otherwise. This insight may pose problems for literary scholars, but it does not impede historians in analyzing the Library for Reading as a source for the representation of society.

As for the criteria, or yardstick by which Osip Senkovskii judged something important enough to publish in the Library for Reading, many critics accused him of lacking it entirely (although we have seen in this chapter that there were indeed selection criteria). Literary scholar Anne Lounsbery has observed that “Biblioteka practiced what literary elites tended to see as a thoroughly unprincipled eclecticism, a willingness to serve as what Nikolai Nadezhdin called ‘a storage room for all the wares produced by writers’”. This eclecticism was not unique to the

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249 Maggetti, Bridel and Francillon, La Bibliothèque universelle, 25.
Library, Lounsbury notes, but it was symptomatic of what Vissarion Belinsky considered “provincialism”, or readers’ lack of a “capacity for discernment, their ability to distinguish good from bad, or bad from worse”.251 A.V. Starchevskii also commented:

What was the actual direction of the Library for Reading? Some claimed that it had no direction; that the sharp-witted editor asserts [something] today which tomorrow he will reject, and vice versa; that he laughs at everything and everyone, at knowledge and at science; that one cannot tell with him where the truth ends and the mystification begins, where Baron Brambeus is speaking seriously and where he is joking, and so on.252

But A.V, Starchevskii concluded that Osip Senkovskii’s sarcasm and skepticism served to make readers think independently and form their own opinions.253 Starchevskii also defended Senkovskii’s caustic wit as “a weapon of satire” with which “he castigated scholasticism, vague theories, mysticism, natural philosophers, backward ideas and dreamy speculations”.254 If Osip Senkovskii practiced “unprincipled eclecticism” it was because he was not a strict adherent of any principles per se, save for the idea that nothing escaped questioning or skepticism (his critics, as discussed in Chapter Six, interpreted this behavior as sheer cynicism).

The “storage room” of literary works and Osip Senkovskii’s forcing books to “dance” could be viewed from the standpoint of Niklas Luhmann’s systems theory, wherein the media create a background reality, or potential starting point for the creation of identity through the formation of opinions and preferences.255 Entertainment (one of the three components of the media in Luhmann’s definition, along with news and advertisements) functions as an amplifier of the reader’s existing knowledge and encourages identity formation. Luhmann has explained that

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253 Ibid., 326.
254 Ibid., 319.
the “artistic form of the novel as well as fictional forms of exciting entertainment derived from it posit individuals who no longer draw their identity from their background but who instead have to shape it themselves”. The journalists behind the Library for Reading (and the Northern Bee, for that matter) ran their publications in a manner consistent with Luhmann’s observation about the function of the media since the eighteenth century: “A correspondingly open socialization, geared towards ‘inner’ values and certainties, appears to begin amongst the ‘bourgeois’ classes of the eighteenth century; today it has become unavoidable. No sooner than he is born, every individual finds himself to be someone who has yet to determine his individuality”. It can be argued that this process described by Luhmann, whereby media (in this case the press) encourage identity formation through the expression of preferences, functions as one of the mechanisms of (a) civilizing process described in the Introduction.

**Conclusion**

The materials selected for publication in the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading suggest the kind of middle-stratum readership that the ‘retailers of the press’ had in mind. The Northern Bee chose materials that informed readers of foreign events, official decrees, city and provincial news, new publications (both fiction and nonfiction), and fashions from Paris and Saint Petersburg; its literature column published serialized fiction and extracts from both Russian and translated European works. For domestic news, the Bee selected materials referencing Petersburg city residents of middle rank (merchants, artists, chinovniki) as well as materials that highlighted the promotion of chinovniki across the Empire. Through Faddei Bulgarin’s feuilletons (discussed in more detail in later chapters), a diverse cast of social types appeared on the pages of the Bee, ranging from city merchants to middling civil servants to provincial

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256 Ibid., 59.
257 Ibid.
landowners visiting Petersburg. The *Library for Reading* chose materials for sections that generally functioned as entertainment (Russian and Foreign literature and the feuilleton-like Criticism and Literary Chronicle sections) or information (Sciences and Arts, Industry and Agriculture sections), or both (Miscellany). Being the first Russian thick journal, the *Library* provided abundant reading material that was ideal for provincial landowners and their families.

This chapter has detailed the European models and sources for the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* because, as we know from correspondence, the ‘retailers of the press’ firmly believed in the value, and often superiority, of the Western European periodical press. In a letter to Rafail Mikhailovich Zotov (translator and theater critic for the *Northern Bee* from 1842 to 1858, and writer whose works were “eagerly read by the middle public” according to Brokgauz and Efron) in January 1843, Faddei Bulgarin called on him to give due credit to European literary and theatrical works:

I would ask you, when talking about foreign literature and theater, especially French, not to demean them in favor of foolish Russian literature! What kind of literature do we have, what kind of theater! Have mercy! Our mind is under the heel of Uvarov. Theater – alas! – we only live and breathe France and Germany! For the sake of Jesus and everything holy, do not speak of the immorality [beznравственности] of French literature! We are already hard-pressed, and we are reminding about the harm of literature? That is not our place. That is for priests, gendarmes and censors. We only look for what is elegant [My ishchem tol'ko iziaschchnogo]… The *Bee* must go with this century [iditi s vekom] – everything forward – and not moralize at all. How [can we] not read Sue, Balzac, Dumas, Hugo and others? They are wonderful talents! I confess before you that I am an adherent of the new, improved French literary school! [French] politics is not my business. Let them rage; only give more of these things, like the *Mystères de Paris*.

Considering Bulgarin’s reputation for mocking the French, it is perhaps surprising to see that in private correspondence he expressed great admiration for the cultural products of that nation, like Eugène Sue’s *Mystères de Paris*, serialized in the *Journal des débats*. But in reality Bulgarin shared many of the same value judgments as his educated Russian contemporaries going back to

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258 ESBE, s.v. “Zotov, Rafail Mikhailovich.” “Pis’ma Bulgarina k R.M. Zotovu,” in *Faddei Venediktovich Bulgarin*, 408-409.
the eighteenth century. Bulgarin also echoed the feelings of Osip Senkovskii in his letter to A.V. Starchevskii (discussed above) that not having European periodicals was “to deprive oneself of sources of thought, discussion, comparison, even inspiration – to live in emptiness…”

Bulgarin presented his thoughts on foreign literature in his personal feuilleton column (“Journalistic What-Not”, Zhurnal’naia vsiakaia vsiachina) in the Northern Bee at the end of January 1843, where he objected to the blind Russian nationalism in the journal Lighthouse (Maiak, published 1840-1845):

[We] honestly admit that we find countless treasures for the mind and heart in French, English, and German foreign literature and we even believe that in order to be useful to Russia, we need to be informed of the secrets of all European literatures, follow the success of sciences in the whole world, [and] transfer onto Russian soil everything clean, noble, useful – that is, to act in the spirit of Peter the Great, who wrestled us out of the darkness of ignorance! … *We want to be Russians in spirit and law, but likewise we want to be Europeans in enlightenment and education…* [Italics mine]

Thus, European bourgeois periodicals not only served as sources of information and as technical models, but also as sources of inspiration for both the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading.

The transnational influence of and borrowing from foreign periodicals could not have been insignificant to the way that these journalists envisioned their own publishing activity and their Russian readership. The European journals that these ‘retailers’ relied on the most, like the Journal des débats, Revue de Paris, Revue des deux mondes (for both the Bee and the Library), Allgemeine Zeitung, Constitutionnel, La Presse, Spectator, Standard, Morning Herald, Times, Globe, Neue Preußische Zeitung, and L’Indépendence Belge (for the Bee), Edinburgh Review, Blackwood’s Magazine, and New Monthly Magazine (for the Library) had generally middle class readerships in their home countries (and, it should be noted, varied widely across the political spectrum from the liberal Revue des deux mondes and Constitutionnel, to the deeply conservative

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260 Severnaia pchela, January 30, 1843, No. 24.
Moreover, as these foreign models/sources had popularized and professionalized the press in their home countries (by making standardized formats, regular printing, timely deliveries, and higher payments to writers) so had the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*, learning from their example, done in the Russian Empire. The *Bee*, for example, closely followed the evolution of European daily newspapers and accordingly expanded its columns from two in 1825, to three in 1833, to four in 1859, and finally to five columns in 1860. Beyond formal emulation, however, it can be argued that the journalists behind the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* also absorbed the bourgeois rhetoric found in Western European papers, as Faddei Bulgarin’s classification of Russian society (discussed in...

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On the political affiliations of these periodicals, Christopher E. Guthrie has written that the *Revue des deux mondes* “became one of the most influential liberal journals in France” from 1831 to 1877. Christopher E. Guthrie, “*Revue des Deux Mondes*” in *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 25:1 (Jan.-Mar., 1984): 93. On the subject of *Le Constitutionnel*, contemporary writer Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson) noted in 1830 that “Devoted to the dissemination of liberal politics, and to the interests of industry, it is decried by some as revolutionary; while by others it is accused of tameness. In fact, a prudent moderation reigns over its liberalism…,” Lady Morgan, *France in 1829-30, Vol. II* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830), 77-78. Lady Morgan summarized the position of the *Journal des débats* as “Honest and able, it is now serving the great cause of constitutional liberty…”, *France in 1829-30*, 76-77. The political affiliation of the *Edinburgh Review* is described as “Whig”, the *Globe* as “originally published to promote publishing trade, soon aimed at educated radicals but moved from apolitical to Whig to Tory over the [nineteenth] century”, the *New Monthly Magazine* as “conservative”, *Blackwood’s Magazine* as “Tory”, and the *Standard* as “Old Tory… anti-Reform, anti-Catholic emancipation and anti-repeal of the Corn Laws”, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, eds. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press and The British Library, 2009), x-xii. On the *Neue Preußische Zeitung* in the context of the German press in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Sonja Weinberg, *Pogroms and Riots*: *German Press Responses to Anti-Jewish Violence in Germany and Russia (1881-1882)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2010), 53-70 passim; Stefan Berger, “Building the Nation Among Visions of German Empire,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, eds. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 300-301.

262 In the British context, Linda H. Peterson has observed that “When the major reviews and magazines of the nineteenth century were founded – the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802, the *Quarterly Review* in 1809, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817, the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1821, the *Westminster Review* in 1824, and *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1830, to name the earliest and most prominent – these new publications offered substantial payments to writers and thereby made it possible to pursue authorship as a professional career.” Peterson, “Writing for Periodicals.”
the introduction to this chapter) into the nobility, middle *soslovie*, and peasantry demonstrates.

Bulgarin’s (and others’) elaboration of this social classification and their identification of a middle stratum readership is discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter Three: Dimensions: The “Soul of the Empire”, 1825 – 1847

The *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* have long been identified as textbook cases illustrating the ideology of Official Nationality and Tsar Nicholas I’s scenario of power.263 The *Bee* and the *Library* fully endorsed Count S.S. Uvarov’s tripartite slogan of ‘Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality’, especially the second concept of ‘Autocracy’. Autocracy was the most straightforward of the three concepts; it contained the notion of enlightened monarchy, the continuation of the Petrine myth, and ideas of loyalty to and connection with the Russian tsar. To the journalists editing the *Bee* (Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin) and the *Library* (Osip Senkovskii), autocracy was an obvious and natural concept that had little room for interpretation. Orthodoxy was similarly straightforward, even if these men of the press were not Orthodox Christians (Grech was a Lutheran; Bulgarin and Senkovskii were Catholics). It is the concept of Nationality, however, the *Bee* and the *Library* articulated in a way that has been overlooked by scholars. As Nicholas Riasanovsky highlighted in his classic study of Official Nationality, ‘Nationality’ had no single definition, no commonly accepted meaning, and no consistent articulation. Andrei Zorin, investigating the triad further, found that Nationality was never specifically defined and that Uvaorv explained it (through circular logic) with the other two concepts.264 The journalists and writers of the Nikolaevan age interpreted Nationality according to their own beliefs, which made the concept highly flexible. In examining the correspondence, official reports, and published articles of the journalists behind the *Northern Bee* and *Library for Reading*, we see a variation of the concept of narodnost’ – one emphasizing the middle stratum as the basis of the reading public. In investigating whom these journalists published for – the aim

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263 Riasanovsky, *Nicolas I and Official Nationality in Russia*. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, vol. 1. The *Bee* and the *Library* are sources for Riasanovsky; the *Bee* is a source for Wortman.
of this chapter – we find that not only did they identify the existence of a reading public rooted in the middle stratum of Russian society (though they were hardly alone in doing so)\textsuperscript{265}, but also that they attempted to give this cross-section of society meaning and importance within the structure of Russian society.\textsuperscript{266}

In discovering who the *Northern Bee* and *Library for Reading* published for, this chapter relies on four areas of analysis: a) whom the journalists identified as their readership; b) what limits censorship placed on these periodicals; c) records left by readers of these periodicals; d) who, according to reader-oriented literary theory, the theoretical readers were. A few preliminary conclusions are worth discussing because they help frame the unfolding argument. First, despite the attempts of these journalists to define the identity of their public, we find that there was no consistent definition of the middle stratum. This, as I will argue, was less a discrepancy and more a feature of Russian society. Second, the journalists behind the *Bee* and the *Library* seemingly accepted the ambiguity between addressing their public (*publika*) as a single entity despite knowing perfectly well how sedimentary, in Alfred J. Rieber’s coinage, Russian society really was. Third, there is a noticeable tension between inclusivity and exclusivity in terms of addressing the Russian reading public. This is manifested most clearly in the usage of the phrase “for Russians of all estates”, which served as shorthand to mean all *literate* members of estates, excluding the upper nobility (which preferred to read foreign language texts, usually French and

\textsuperscript{265} This social concept was already in circulation among journalists and publishers by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the *Northern Bee* first began publishing. Its emergence can be traced back to the 1812 war with Napoleon, a critical turning point that historian Alexander M. Martin has identified as the moment of the beginning of the aristocracy’s decline and the middle stratum’s rise in the national culture. Not only had the Francophile aristocracy been ignored by wartime propaganda (in favor of “middling country squires”, peasants, and Cossacks), but its position also suffered in the postwar reconstruction period, when it “did not fully recover its socioeconomic dominance or its cultural hegemony.” Martin, “The 1812 War and the Civilizing Process in Russia,” 238, 237. This is not to say that in the post-1812 period Russian society was suddenly shaped by the middle stratum; the middle stratum did, however, became noticeably more visible in economic, bureaucratic, and cultural life as the empire rebuilt from the ruins of the Napoleonic invasion.

\textsuperscript{266} On how journalists and politicians gave the middle class special importance in British society (a discontinuous, contingent, and non-deterministic process), see the excellent study by Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
German) and the illiterate peasant masses. Finally, whereas these journalists were completely comfortable with embracing the middle stratum as their public, the monarch and the government’s high officials (especially S.S. Uvarov) were never entirely supportive of this development (a factor that contributed to the populist fixation on the narod as much as did the tireless efforts of the intelligentsia).

**Rationale: Why the Middle Stratum?**

Perhaps the clearest explanation of who the ‘retailers of the press’ envisioned as their audience, and why they published specifically for that audience, comes from the formerly secret archives of the Third Section of His Majesty’s Imperial Chancellery, the political police established under Tsar Nicholas I.  

Here we find what is effectively Faddei Bulgarin’s mission statement, as well as comments on the “public” by M.Ia. von Vock [von Fok], director of the Third Section from 1826 until 1831. Faddei Bulgarin’s report was occasioned by his arrest and imprisonment in May 1826. Although Bulgarin was arrested in the wake of a general atmosphere of distrust following the Decembrist revolt, authorities were apparently more suspicious of his record of military service as a French captain during the Napoleonic wars (and thus his possible role as a French agent) rather than any connections Bulgarin may have had with the plotters of the revolt. Bulgarin’s military record, requested by General A.N. Potapov, seems to confirm this interpretation. While in prison, Bulgarin wrote several letters to General Potapov with the intention of having them be passed on to the head of the General Staff I.I. Dibich and ultimately, Nicholas I. In the first letter Bulgarin provided a brief history of his military record, highlighting his participation in the Russian army at the Battle of Friedland in 1807 and the 1808 campaign in

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268 Sidney Monas, too, has argued that Bulgarin’s arrest “had been occasioned not by the panic of December 14 but by his previous service in Napoleon’s army”. Monas, *The Third Section*, 118.
Finland. In explaining why he later entered Napoleon’s army, Bulgarin attributed his desertion to the fact that he “got carried away by the common aspirations of minds [in Warsaw], the desire for travel, [and] the luster of Napoleon’s glory”, concluding that “As apology for this, I cannot offer anything other than my Polish origins and my inexperience”. Chalking up his service as a French officer to the spirit of the times, Bulgarin emphasized that he “preserved brotherly love for Russia and did not participate in the war of 1812”; moreover, in his “ten years” of service to Russian literature, not only had he never “sinned against the established order of things”, but he also had actively “tried to sow love and trust for the Throne” among the public with his writing. Referring to the fact that his official title was “French officer”, Bulgarin stated that he wished to “rip this page from my life” and be “renamed… with a civil rank, for appointment to civil affairs, where I can be useful to the Sovereign Emperor with the little bit of information and experience that I have acquired”.269 (Bulgarin’s request was honored in November of that year, when he was made collegiate assessor serving, nominally, in the Ministry of National Enlightenment.)270

After offering his journalistic services to Nicholas I, Bulgarin wrote an accompanying letter detailing exactly how he could be useful in the sphere of public opinion (obshchee mnenie). Titled “On Censorship in Russia and on book publishing in general” (“O tsenzure v Rossii i o knigopechatanii voobshche”), the letter argued that since public opinion and the spread of ideas could not be realistically eliminated, the government had to embrace the periodical press and use it to its advantage. Specifically, it had to work in tandem with loyal publishers like Bulgarin to guide the opinion of the reading public (which, he pointed out, was the one that read mostly or entirely in Russian). Reflecting on why public opinion was an important factor in contemporary life, Bulgarin observed:

269 F.V. Bulgarin to A.N. Potapov, 12 May 1826, in Vidok Figliarin, 43-44.
270 Bulgarin even published this fact in the Northern Bee on 17 November 1826. Quoted in Vidok Figliarin, 76.
The extraordinary coups in the political world, which have been a consequence of the past thirty years [and] have gradually produced fear and hope in all estates [sosloviakh] of society, have made people curious, attentive to all incidents and have spread a taste for sources that report knowledge, information and news – that is, [a taste for] reading.271

This observation echoes what historian Alexander M. Martin has identified as a consequence of the 1812 war with Napoleon, specifically how the “war inspired a new geopolitical awareness, interest in military operations and patriotic pride – all factors that led people to try to relate their own personal experience to wider forces governing the social and political system.”272 Bulgarin then pointed to two unavoidable aspects of the nineteenth-century: first, that public opinion (which he defined simply as the “majority of voices or opinions”) “exists everywhere, in any state, in any form of government”; second, that is impossible to stop the spread of ideas by force alone. Since “most people, [due to] intellectual laziness, business, [having] insufficient information, weakness of character, innate flexibility of mind, or irritated feeling are more capable of receiving and appropriating someone else’s opinion rather than forming an opinion of their own,” the government had to “accept the obligation to instruct [public opinion] and manage [it] through book publishing [knigopechataniia], rather than give it to the will of malicious people.”273

In order to successfully manage Russians’ opinions, the government needed to know who among the populace read and what they tended to read. Bulgarin proceeded to analyze the reading habits of different segments of the population, which he divided into four categories: noble and wealthy people (znatnye i bogatyie liudi); middle status groups (srednee sostoianie); lower status groups (nizhnee sostoianie); and scholars and writers (uchenye i literatory). Each of

271 F.V. Bulgarin, “O tsenzure v Rossii i o knigopechatanii voobshche,” May 1826, in Vidok Figliarin, 45. This letter has been dated to mid-May, 1826 by N. Dubrovin in Russkaia starina No. 9 (1900) and by Reitblat in Vidok Figliarin, 53.
these groups, he argued, could become loyal and useful if the government took the right approach. In Bulgarin’s view, the nobility – despite their wealth and influence – had very little real knowledge about Russia and could be made obedient to the government in a short amount of time. Having been educated by French tutors and valuing everything French, this segment simply needed to be re-disciplined. The scholars and writers required a different approach. Since any writer, or anyone claiming to be a writer, found instantaneous fame in Russia, Bulgarin suggested that the government create outlets where writers’ energy and efforts could be directed. The ban on theater reviews, Bulgarin argued, was counterproductive to the government because talented writers found political subjects to write about instead. To keep writers away from politics, censorship of social topics – such as the theater – needed to be loosened.

Bulgarin observed that the truly “Russian public” was composed of readers from the middle groups, specifically members of the gentry who were in state service, landowners who lived out in the provinces, impoverished gentry who were educated in state schools, civil chinovniki, wealthy merchants, manufacturers, and some townspeople (meshchane). This group of readers was the most numerous and tended to follow developments in Russian literature. Compared to reading publics in Europe, however, the Russian public was young and easily impressed. It would not take much to convince this segment of society of their devotion to the throne, Bulgarin claimed. Interestingly, Bulgarin pointed out that the lower status groups, defined by him as clerks, literate peasants, literate townspeople, village priests (and the clergy in general), and Old Believers actually read quite a bit. Although they read mostly religious books, pilgrimage guidebooks, and humorous moral tales, other sources of reading were in fact ukasy and random issues of newspapers and journals. Petty traders would often buy old copies of
periodicals in St. Petersburg and Moscow and have them forwarded to their hometowns.\textsuperscript{274}

Bulgarin’s note was, in part, meant to demonstrate his deep knowledge of the publishing industry in an attempt to be useful to the tsar and the Third Section. However, the note also reflected Bulgarin’s genuine views, formed over several years of working on multiple periodicals that an expanding readership was forming out of segments of the population collectively known as the “\textit{srednee sostoianie}”.

Tellingly, these views about the middle stratum were echoed one year later in a secret report nominally written by chief of the Third Section A.Kh. Benkendorf, but actually written by its director M.Ia. von Vock. (Indeed, the opinions expressed hardly squared with Benkendorf’s social views.) The report, titled “A Short Review of Public Opinion for the Year 1827” (“\textit{Kratkii obzor obshchestvennogo mneniia za 1827 g.”}) gave a breakdown of public opinion that is somewhat idiosyncratic, but converges with Bulgarin’s views on the subject of the middle stratum. Based on an investigation of public opinion conducted by the Third Section and his own personal knowledge, von Vock divided all of Russian society into seven segments: 1) the court, further divided into those loyal to Nicholas I and those who preferred the “old order”); 2) high society, further divided into “content” and “discontent” camps; 3) the middle class (\textit{srednii klass}), further divided into landowners living in cities, merchants of the first guild, litterateurs and other educated people, and the youth (specifically, of noble background); 4) chinovniki; 5) the army; 6) serfs; and 7) the clergy. It was von Vock’s conclusion that the contentment of both the middle class (as he defined it) and the army was crucial to the empire’s stability. This was, to

\textsuperscript{274}\textit{Ibid.}, 47.
use W. Bruce Lincoln’s term, “the political base for autocracy”. By contrast, the greatest destabilizing element of the empire came from factions within high society.

M.Ia. von Vock found court society to be mostly trustworthy, despite the existence of some harmless cliques. Among high society, those who were “content” were further divided into supporters of Count V.P. Kochubei and Count M.M. Speranskii. While Kochubei was popular with the nobility, Speranskii was particularly loved by the litterateurs, merchants, and civil servants who composed “the smart and talented people of the middle class”. According to von Vock, this portion of the middle stratum viewed Speranskii as a trustworthy and accessible figure (a point apparently supported by Faddei Bulgarin, who upon learning that his “On Censorship…” letter, discussed above, was forwarded to A.S. Shishkov, immediately penned another letter requesting that Speranskii review it instead). The “discontent” members of high society were further divided into the “so-called Russian patriots”, otherwise known as supporters of Count N.S. Mordvinov, and supporters of Prince A.B. Kurakin. While the latter group was composed of bribe-takers and was effectively harmless, von Vock wrote that the Mordvinov supporters were “the most dangerous part of society” because its watchword was “the salvation of Russia”.

According to M.Ia. von Vock, the middle stratum greatly welcomed Nicholas I’s attention to domestic reform, particularly the issues of trade, abuse of power among the military


278 [fon Fok], “Kratkii obzor obschestvennogo mneniia za 1827 g.”: 144.

and civil bureaucracy, and bribery.\textsuperscript{280} This segment of society still had critics of the government, notably the noble youth, but in general von Vock considered it to be quite loyal. Moreover, “This numerous class, whose heterogeneous elements are soldered together into a single whole constitute, so to speak, the soul of the empire. […] It is precisely among this class that the sovereign enjoys the greatest love and respect”.\textsuperscript{281} M.Ia. von Vock clearly recognized that this swath of society had vast differences among its members in terms of rank, profession, financial worth, and educational levels. What unified these fractured elements, however, was their vested interest in and support for the autocracy.

There were, of course, differences in how Faddei Bulgarin and M.Ia. von Vock defined the middle of Russian society. They overlapped on the inclusion of merchants of the first guild and landowners. Bulgarin’s definition was notably broader than von Vock’s and included groups such as chinovniki, manufacturers, and impoverished gentry. Whereas von Vock included landowners living in cities, Bulgarin singled out provincial landowners instead. Indeed, there was no shortage of alternative definitions for the middle stratum in pre-reform Russia: even in the famous opening paragraph of \textit{Dead Souls}, Gogol provides us with an entirely different definition of “gentlemen of the middling sort”, or “[\textit{gospoda} \textit{srednei ruki}]:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{280} Specifically: “The pursuit of bribe-takers, the promulgation of his handwritten resolutions on various matters in “The Senate News”, the strict measures taken against the slowness of matters and the insufficient accuracy of the execution of decrees, the removal of women and priests from any harmful influence on matters and the fate of individuals, the eradication of harmful mysticism, the family virtues of the monarch, his clear desire to improve the matter of upbringing (\textit{vospitanie}), his patronage of many littérateurs, the superior upbringing of the heir and Tsesarevich [Alexander Nicholaevich], the absence of favorites and viziers, the identical persecution of individuals who are guilty of violating official duty regardless of their position and origins, tireless perseverance in work, the successes of Russia in Persia [in the Russo-Persian War] which should be attributed solely to the strong will of the sovereign-emperor who transferred heavy artillery on the other side of the mountain range, the honorable and magnanimous defense of the Greeks whose fate interests Russia, the elimination of the influence of universally despised Metternich, the revival of the navy which resurrected so many glorious memories, the conviction that the sovereign-emperor works seriously to improve imperfect legislation in Russia, the oversight of the activities of ministers, governor-generals and civilian generals whose despotism was a burden on the provinces, and the endless number of other circumstances that support the love and attachment of the middle class to the person of the monarch and that serve as weapons against those who are unsatisfied in this same class (those who lean toward the party imbued with perverted ideas).” \textit{Ibid.}, 146-147.
\item \textsuperscript{281} \textit{Ibid.}, 146.
\end{itemize}
Through the gates of the inn in the provincial town of N. drove a rather handsome, smallish spring britzka, of the sort driven around in by bachelors: retired lieutenant colonels, staff captains, landowners possessed of some hundred peasant souls – in short, all those known as gentlemen of the middling sort.282

Providing his own third and even fourth definition of the social “middle”, Bulgarin reported to M.Ia. von Vock in 1827 and 1828 on the subject of public opinion. In these reports, Bulgarin eliminated chinovniki from his definition and made clear that average merchants (of the second and third guilds) were also not included. Nevertheless, Bulgarin continued to include them in discussions of the Russian public, such as when he wrote that a “common opinion arose between the merchantry and the educated people of the middle stratum [srednego sostoianiia], chinovniki and scholars regarding the establishment of [noble] musical societies” (they mocked the idea), or when Bulgarin wrote that the “educated middle estate [srednee soslovie], litterateurs and the reading and writing class in general particularly stand out in their current commitment to the Sovereign”.283 When reporting on public opinion during the Russo-Turkish War, Bulgarin discussed the views “Among real Russians, that is, among the middle class [Mezhdu nastroiashchimi russkimi, t.e. v srednem klasse]…”; in a separate report on the same topic, Bulgarin noted the public’s concern over the Tsar’s safety on the battlefield near Brailov, writing that “So says the merchantry and the people [narod]; the middle class says the same thing, only more gently.”284 Writing a few months later about the war with the Turks, Bulgarin re-instated chinovniki into his definition, reporting that the “middle class, such as chinovniki and officers not close to the highest military ranks” were not as upset about Russian casualties in the war as

members of the court appeared to be; Bulgarin concluded that “[m]erchants and literate common people [gramotnyi prostoi narod]” felt the same way as the middle class.  

The common thread running through these descriptions is that there was no standard definition of the middle stratum. Nor did Bulgarin have any consistency in using the terms stratum (sostoianie), estate (soslovie), and class (klass) to describe the social middle. This is less a discrepancy, however, than the reality of the protean nature of the middle stratum in Imperial Russia. In the early 1820s, the Decembrist P.I. Pestel’ observed that, “There exist many different sosloviiia, sostoianiia, and klassy of people in Russia”. Describing cases when individuals experienced rapid upward and downward mobility through the middle stratum, Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter notes that “fluid, changeable careers…were symptomatic of Russia’s limited economic specialization and porous social boundaries – conditions that led many contemporaries to underestimate the dynamism of productive development, urban culture, and the commercial-industrial classes.” Wirtschafter cites several foreign contemporaries who observed this phenomenon, including the Prussian agrarian specialist August von Haxthausen. Having travelled through Russia in 1843, von Haxthausen later reflected that, “In public service, in commerce, in manufacturing, and in the trades large fortunes are quickly amassed but are lost just as quickly”. Focusing on bureaucratic, rather than economic changes, Alison K. Smith has examined the documents of individuals who wanted to transfer from one soslovie to another (usually upward in status), and how largely successful they were in achieving that goal. The one constant of the middle stratum in Imperial Russia was its ever-changing composition. And

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287 Wirtschafter, Social Identity in Imperial Russia, 71.
288 Ibid.
289 Smith, For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being.

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yet, both the government and Russians themselves continued to hold onto the imperfect vocabulary of the *soslovie* system. As Simon Dixon has recently summarized, “Even as Russia’s social structure became increasingly complex, plastic and amorphous – the characterizations now most commonly adopted by historians – *sosloviia* remained useful not merely as an administrative convenience but also as a means of self-definition.”

Nevertheless, precisely who composed the middle stratum was not an issue, so long as it continued to be both substantial and dependable. This stratum, or *soul of the empire* in von Vock’s poetic rendering, was identified as the majority of the Russian reading public. In the middle of 1828, M.Ia. von Vock concluded that Bulgarin had succeeded in capturing the affection of this stratum. Von Vock wrote the report to his superior, A.Kh. Benkendorf, as a defense of Bulgarin against the insinuations of N.N. Novosil’tsov (who rather preposterously claimed that Bulgarin was a Polish rebel), arguing that “[Bulgarin], being raised in Russia, knowing the language and the spirit of the people, has gained the love of the Russian public with his compositions and has become its favorite writer […] all of his compositions are done with Russian patriotism that is based on dedication to the Throne.”

To keep the affection of the middle stratum, however, Bulgarin maintained that a certain level of openness (*glasnost’*) was necessary in publishing. The alternative – printing heavily redacted or even “false news” [*lozhnymi izvestiiami*] – would only disenchant and repel the populace. This is a point that Bulgarin stressed over many years’ worth of reporting to the

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Third Section, beginning with his “On Censorship…” letter in 1826, which he requested not be
given to the Minister of National Enlightenment A.S. Shishkov. If it was necessary that someone
in that Ministry read his letter, Bulgarin wrote in a separate note, he requested that it be M.M.
Speranskii. Nevertheless, the letter was forwarded to A.S. Shishkov. Shishkov did not disagree
with Bulgarin’s breakdown of the social composition of the reading public, but bristled at the
notion that the middle stratum needed to be told about the workings of the government and
military:

Regarding the glasnost’ of government resolutions, it is my opinion that this glasnost’ should by no means be unconditional, but be prudent and be based on direct knowledge of the features and moral requirements of the people. [...] Moreover, by] allowing [its] subjects to inappropriately reason about [the government’s] intentions, [the government] makes itself somewhat dependant on [its subjects’] conclusions and in a way obliges itself to an account before [its subjects], so in case of failure [the government] certainly creates conditions for idle gossip and perverse judgments;“

Bulgarin clearly believed the opposite – the absence of information would inevitably lead to
“idle gossip”. Bulgarin persisted with this point, writing in early 1828 about the role of private
periodicals, and in particular the Northern Bee:

The public is the same everywhere, albeit with some variations. It believes only [the news about] establishments, decrees and meaningless events [published] in the official newspapers. Everything that is called opinion is derived by the public from private publications. The Northern Bee, one of the private newspapers in Russia, is the favorite reading of the Russian public. It is read by all strata sostoianiai. It is published with the best intentions. Out of all the journals published in Russia, the Northern Bee alone uses all the slightest circumstances to present the Government in a good light and to rouse public love toward the reigning House. Upon the publication of the article about Emperor Alexander’s passing, more than 600 copies were snapped up in the printer’s shop, where there was a throng. The publishers gave out the copies for free.

Bulgarin continued his report by pointing out that the restrictions on what could and could not be
published were depriving the reading public of news that would make it more sympathetic to the

293 F.V. Bularin to A.N. Potapov, 3 June 1826, in Vidok Figliarin, 56.
294 Quoted in Altunian, “Politicheskie mnenia” Faddeia Bulgarina, 186.
295 GARF, f. 109, op. 1, ed. khr. 1880, ll. 5, 5ob. Also in Vidok Figliarin, 245.
throne. Here, of course, there were competitive considerations as well. Bulgarin complained that private periodicals could only reprint news about the royal family and about military maneuvers that had first been published by the Russian Veteran, an official periodical of the Ministry of War that was edited by Bulgarin and Grech’s personal and professional adversary, Aleksandr Fedorovich Voeikov. Another concern of Bulgarin’s – and a recurring criticism of his – was the restriction on reporting about the theater. Bulgarin considered the ban illogical and inconsistent, especially given that plays could be printed in journals, and that reviews were allowed in foreign language-periodicals (as with the Journal de St. Petersbourg, which reviewed Russian plays, in French). Bulgarin wrote that the public “does not have any topic for common discussion”, but the theater would provide excellent common ground.

Nikolai Grech evidently shared Bulgarin’s view on the necessity of limited glasnost’ and the important function of the private periodical press in acting as a medium between the government and the majority of the Russian reading public. Grech began writing to the Third Section in 1826, following in the next two decades with occasional reporting but regular in-person contact. Two letters written by Grech to M.Ia. von Vock warrant attention. In the first, dated March 1826, Grech made the case that the government needed to allow private periodicals “to judge and write about the subjects of public discussion”, a sentiment that Bulgarin would echo in his May 1826 letter. Grech stated that this was a practice common to all “enlightened lands” and was used by foreign governments as an effective method for the “direction of public opinion [obshchago mneniia]” and to combat rumors and unfounded criticism. The government should set the boundaries of discussion, but within those boundaries private periodicals needed to

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297 GARF, f. 109, op. 1, ed. khr. 1880, l. 60b.
be able “to act freely [deistvovat' svobodno]”. Grech concluded that if the government should adopt this proposition, the *Northern Bee* would be pleased to become “an instrument” of the government.

In his second letter to von Vock, dated June 1826, Nikolai Grech addressed the causes, in his view, of the Decembrist conspiracy and provided his recommendations for reform in order to prevent future unrest. Grech’s analysis of the failed revolt was tied to his understanding of the function of periodicals. Much like Bulgarin, Grech thought of periodicals as a medium, but Grech also insisted that periodicals were an outlet. To avoid a repeat of the Decembrist revolt, Grech wrote that young men needed “healthy, innocuous, invigorating nourishment” in the form of literary activity. Grech also listed several key areas of administrative and tax reform, addressing the corruption and oppressive practices in governing apparatuses in a remarkably bourgeois insistence on the codification of laws, the equal and consistent application of laws, proper administration, and the extermination of corruption:

“The correction of legislature [zakonodatel’noi chast’i] by means of the publication of the civil and criminal code”; “The correction of court proceedings by means of open courts, selection of worthy people [as judges], punishment for extortion, giving chinovniki the means to feed themselves without bribes, the extermination of the heinous tribe of clerks who commit malfeasance and steal in the name of the government”; “The curbing of the whims of those who govern in the provinces and districts [and] subjecting them to strict responsibility. This should be combined with the monitoring of land owners...”; “The gradual elimination of certain burdensome taxes [and] endeavoring not to introduce new [taxes], or at least no new forms [of taxes] since [this] creates new abuse and harassment on the part of the chinovniki”.

With these reform measures, Grech concluded that future revolutionary ideas (“all the Dumas and Directories”) would lose their appeal because, he implied, there would be no...

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298 GARF, f. 109, op. 1, ed. khr. 1881, l. 1.
299 *ibid.*, l. 1ob.
300 GARF, f. 109, op. 1a, ed. khr. 4, ll. 3ob-4.
301 GARF f. 109, op. 1a, ed. khr. 4, ll. 5-5ob. Geoff Eley discusses bourgeois ‘behavior’ in the introduction to *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 5-6.
overwhelming grievances to serve as fertile ground for revolutionary sentiments.\textsuperscript{302} Writing several decades later in his Memoirs, Grech looked back on the Decembrist revolt with much the same analysis, pointing to stifling censorship and domestic discontent as a potent brew. The social origins of the Decembrists was another point that Grech stressed in explaining why the revolt failed, which curiously serves as a connection to his explanation of the Northern Bee’s readership. In his view, poorly understood ideas from the West combined with naïveté and a tendency toward fanaticism (and in the case of P.I. Pestel, hunger for power, he claimed) had overtaken the aristocratic Russian youth who had good intentions for the fatherland. Grech recounted an episode from 12 December 1825, when Bulgarin had passed on a message from the Decembrist A.O. Kornilovich regarding Grech’s effusive article about Tsar Alexander I: “according to Kornilovich, “the entire second army is indignant at [the Northern Bee].” I replied that Kornilovich judges that way based on the words of some extravagant braggart and aristocrat, and that my article was liked by the entire Russian public, which I know completely”.\textsuperscript{303} Here Grech made a clear distinction between aristocrats (associated with liberalism) and his reading public. Grech made a similar distinction between the aristocrats responsible for the revolt and the middle stratum of Russian society:

\textit{Among the conspirators and their accomplices, there was not a single non-noble; there was not a single merchant, artist, craftsman, or retired officer or chinovnik.} All were the descendants of Riurik, Gediminas, Genghis Khan, or at least boyars and dignitaries ancient and new. This fact is very important [because] it indicates that, at that time, the people who rebelled against abuse and oppression were precisely the ones who suffered least from them. [It also indicates that] there was not an ounce of narodnost’ in this revolt; that the suggestion for these bloody, foolish diversions originated from German and French books that were in some measure poorly and stupidly translated; that these notions were foreign to Russian minds and hearts and that, in case they succeeded, [these notions] not only would not have made the people happy, but also would have subjected

\textsuperscript{302} GARF f. 109, op. 1a, ed. khr. 4, l. 6.  
\textsuperscript{303} Grech, Zapiski, 352.
them to a yoke incomparably more severe than the former one, and would have brought Russia disasters the likes of which one cannot imagine.  

Again, Grech created a set of associations linking the aristocracy with liberalism and foreignness. Conversely, the Russian public was identified as emphatically non-aristocratic (that is, not of the upper nobility): the merchants, artists, craftsmen, retired officers, and chinovniki. For Nikolai Grech, this was the genuine, domestic audience, one that read in Russian and one that rejected foreign “notions” (echoing, most obviously, the idea in Nicholas’s ‘scenario’ that revolutions and constitutions were fundamentally alien to Russians).  

Even in the 1850s, when he was writing his memoirs, Grech maintained that *narodnost’* was most naturally defined by the middle stratum.

It is important to track if there were changes, over time, to the ‘rationale’ given by the journalists of the *Bee* as to who they were publishing for. (It should be noted here that no comparable sources exist for the *Library for Reading*, which rarely makes an appearance in the formerly secret archives, and whose paper trail is disappointingly scarce for the time period covered in this chapter; however, the *Library’s* run-ins with the censors, as detailed in the *fondy* of the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee, do give us an indication of its audience, as discussed below). The definitions of the reading public discussed above concerned the 1820s. After S.S. Uvarov’s announcement of Official Nationality in 1833, we see a noticeable decrease in overt references to the middle stratum and to identifying the Russian public with the middle stratum in the letters written to officials of the Ministry of National Enlightenment and the Third Section. In its place we find more generalized descriptions, referring simply to the importance of public opinion or the reading public. The lack of significant editorial changes, however, and the occasional letters and reports linking the Russian public with the middle of society confirm that

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305 Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, vol. 1.
these journalists continued to see their public as one that was centered around the middle stratum.

We find the clearest expression of the continuation of this concept in an 1846 report from Faddei Bulgarin to A.F. Orlov, chief of the Third Section from 1844 to 1856. Titled “A Few Truths, Offered for Constructive Discussion” [Neskol’ko pravd, predlagaemykh na blagorassuzhdenie], the report contains surprisingly forceful criticism of several aspects of governance, notably the inability to report wrongdoing (at risk of being attacked by several different bureaucratic offices) and the evil of “ministerial despotism” across the length and breadth of Russia.³⁰⁶ Bulgarin’s criticism of these bureaucratic ills was prefaced by an explanation of his sources of public opinion – the same sources being his readers:

Fate has placed me in such a position that, over the course of 25 years, I meet with people of various estates on a daily basis who come to me… for advice and for a reference. It is the rare respectable landowner, provincial merchant or chinovnik who visits the city and does not drop by to chat and introduce himself. This is to say nothing of city residents. There are days when, from 8 to 2 o’clock I am visited by up to 50 people!³⁰⁷

The people who visited Bulgarin knew of him from reading, for the most part, his feuilletons in the Northern Bee. In a note to Orlov the year before, Bulgarin had boasted: “I dare to suggest, Illustrious Count, that you decree to ask the first literate Russian person if he knows of me – you will hear the people’s opinion!”³⁰⁸ The only difference in Bulgarin’s writing in the mid-1840s from his writing in the mid-1820s was the contrast he drew between the majority Russian public and the destabilizing minority public. If in the mid-1820s the contrast was between the middle stratum and the aristocratic liberals, in the mid-1840s the contrast was between the middle

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 483.
³⁰⁸ Faddei Bulgarin to A.F. Orlov, 13 April 1845, in Vidok Figliarin, 472.
stratum and the new generation of university students reading ‘dangerous’ German philosophy and the journal *Notes of the Fatherland* (*Otechestvennye zapiski*).\(^{309}\)

**Limits: The Effect of Censorship**

Despite propagating Official Nationality and their status as loyalist publications, the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* found themselves constrained by remarkably stringent censorship (remarkable if only because these periodicals have been represented as semi-official in the historiography). That is not to say that these periodicals tried to be subversive in any way, or that the journalists who ran them were anything other than politically conservative. Rather, these periodicals were sometimes unintentionally subversive in trying to write about subjects, especially for the middle stratum, that censors and high-ranking officials considered unacceptable. In other words, what these retailers of the press considered appropriate and necessary did not always match the government’s view.

By a very wide margin, the *Northern Bee* had more run-ins with the censors, and was more strictly controlled, than the *Library for Reading*. The fact that Tsar Nicholas I read the newspaper was more often a source of worry than of pride. In addition to the whims of the multi-ministry censorship apparatus, the *Bee* had to contend with the effects of its articles even after censors had cleared them. Writing to A.Kh. Benkendorf in 1837, Faddei Bulgarin protested: “We have always edited the *Northern Bee* in the spirit of the government [*v dukhe pravitel’stva*] and have sought to guide the public’s opinion toward a good purpose… However, for some time now, censorship is depriving us of the opportunity to work in this regard”. The *Bee* had worked around this problem by increasing the number of article manuscripts submitted to the censors “since we can never be sure that out of ten [articles] even one will pass through the

Bulgarin and Grech wrote to Benkendorf two years later on the same topic, this time protesting the fact that they were personally liable for potentially offensive articles cleared by censors—which went against the statute that made censors responsible for published materials. In addition to this, the *Bee* faced multiple hurdles in publishing each daily issue:

The *Northern Bee* is examined by 5 censors: domestic articles are examined by the Third Section of His Majesty’s Imperial Chancellery; foreign [news articles] by the Ministry of Internal Affairs; theater [reviews] by the Minister of the Imperial Court; the remainder—by two censors of the Ministry of National Enlightenment. On top of that, we forward articles that deal with any other [government] section to the heads [of those sections].

The “other” government sections that Bulgarin referred to were emphatically unwilling to share news from their jurisdictions, as Bulgarin explained to A.F. Orlov in 1846:

News has spread that the Sovereign Emperor is pleased to peruse the *Northern Bee*—and so all the ministers decided between themselves that nothing gets published in the *Bee* without their wish! It seems that even without this, there is plenty of silence in Russia, but it was necessary to drown out the last legal voice, and they have drowned it out!

Bulgarin pointed out the absurdity of the ministries’ behavior, and that he could not print news of a new building or event without permission, or reprint news from government journals (particularly the *Russian Veteran* and the *Journal of the Ministry of National Enlightenment*).

And this, Bulgarin argued in yet another note to Orlov, was happening while “ideas are swirling in the world and when everyone is comparing the state of affairs here and there!” (ideas, Bulgarin implied, criticizing the class structure of society). The *Library for Reading*, in comparison, had significantly less trouble, although it had its share of censorship battles. It had two censors from the Ministry of National Enlightenment reading its contents; its editor Osip Senkovskii was also given special permission by S.S. Uvarov to edit two periodicals (the *Library for Reading*, in comparison, had significantly less trouble, although it had its share of censorship battles. It had two censors from the Ministry of National Enlightenment reading its contents; its editor Osip Senkovskii was also given special permission by S.S. Uvarov to edit two periodicals (the *Library

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310 Faddei Bulgarin to A.Kh. Benkendorf, November 1837, in *Vidok Figliarin*, 434.
and Son of the Fatherland) in 1841. Nikolai Grech complained about the barriers of publication that the Bee faced in 1847 in a letter to the head of the Saint Petersburg Censorship Committee, Prince M.A. Dondukov-Korsakov. The Library for Reading, Grech wrote, could publish whatever it wanted, while the Bee’s articles were constantly being flagged down by censors. This discrepancy is predominantly explained by the fact that the Library did not contain a political news section, and that it came out as a monthly thick journal instead of a daily newspaper. Another reason, however, was a certain personal antipathy that heads of ministries and sections, notably S.S. Uvarov, had towards the men that ran the Northern Bee (as well as towards contributing authors like Nikolai Polevoi). The published letters between Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin, as well as Grech’s memoirs, allude to this personal irritation. In private correspondence, Grech called Uvarov a “leech” and ridiculed Uvarov’s promotion to “Count”; in his memoirs, Grech described the Count as “vain”.

In analyzing the ‘limits’ that the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading faced in publishing for the middle stratum, I have chosen to focus on two instances when censors struck down articles for specifically targeting this social segment during the period 1825-1847. These types of materials form the minority of censorship cases since, at a time when social issues where expressly forbidden on the pages of periodicals, the vast majority of censorship dealt with literary polemics, instances of disrespect toward specific individuals (lichnost’), passages appearing to undermine the empire’s territorial integrity (usually concerning Poland), and unpredictable reactions from government officials to innocuous published passages (a fairly

314 RGIA, f.777, op. 1, d. 1638, ll. 1-1ob.
315 RGALI, f. 156, op. 1, ed. khr. 8, ll. 1-2ob.

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frequent occurrence). The *Northern Bee*, long considered to be in-step with the government, was threatened with closure on at least two occasions (once in 1830, for a poor review of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, and once in 1846, for publishing poetry that was interpreted as criticism of Russia’s annexation of Poland). Additionally, it was temporarily shut down in January 1841 for publishing un-censored articles.

Besides being a daily newspaper, the *Northern Bee* was also a venue for unofficially advertising certain goods, especially new books written by Bulgarin, Grech, and their associates

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The *Northern Bee* had many instances of running afoul of the censors with its articles. This includes occasions when (censor-in-chief) Tsar Nicholas I showed disfavor towards the journalists for maligning, in print, compositions or authors that he personally liked, such as when Grech, Bulgarin, and Aleksandr Fedorovich Voeikov (editor of the *Russian Veteran*) spent a night in the guardhouse in January 1830 for their polemics over M.N. Zagoskin’s popular novel *Iurii Miloslavskii*, or when Bulgarin was reprimanded in 1839 for his review of I.I. Lazhechnikov’s historical novel *Basurman (The Infidel)*. Regarding Zagoskin’s 1829 novel *Iurii Miloslavskii*, set during the Time of Troubles, Grech recalled how “It was read everywhere, in drawing rooms, in workshops, in the circles of simple folk, at the Imperial Court”, and how he was thrown in jail because of Bulgarin, who could not stand the competition to his own novel *Dmitrii Samozvanets*. Grech, *Zapiski*, 449-450. On the issue of Lazhechnikov’s novel, set during the so-called Judaizer heresy of the fifteenth century, Bulgarin received the reprimand from Nicholas I via Benkendorf. Faddei Bulgarin, [Letter to A.Kh. Benkendorf], 10 March 1839, in *Vidok Figliarin*, 436-437. On the Judaizer topic see: Mikhail Weisskopf, *The Veil of Moses: Jewish Themes in Russian Literature of the Romantic Era* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 85-86. The reprimand prompted Grech and Bulgarin to write a note to Benkendorf and the Tsar explaining the importance of literary criticism, and asking for clarification “as to precisely where personal insult prohibited by law begins”. Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin, “Zapiska o ‘Severnoi pchele’,” 10 March 1839, in *Vidok Figliarin*, 440. We can recall here that maligning a composition favored by the Tsar was how Nikolai Polevoi’s *Moscow Telegraph* was shut down – for criticism of N.V. Kukol’nik’s drama “The Hand of the Almighty Saved the Fatherland”.

Similar to disrespect of specific individuals was the disrespect of the royal family. For instance, in 1844 the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee refused to allow the publication of Nikolai Polevoi’s article about the fate of the Dolgorukii family during the reign of Anna Ioannovna in the *Northern Bee*. Grech wrote to Bulgarin about the decision, exclaiming “Terrible! And we say that we live in Europe!”. Grech’s exclamation comes from RGALI, f. 2591, op. 1, ed. khr. 169, quoted in “Pis’ma N.I. Grecha k F.V. Bulgarinu,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 42 (2000), 264. Grech’s discussion of the Dolgorukii article is found in: N.I. Grech to F.V. Bulgarin, 1 June 1844, in “Pis’ma N.I. Grecha k F.V. Bulgarinu,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 89 (2008): 198.

It is worth noting that the censors, the Third Section, and the Tsar were not the only potential obstacles to publishing. The *Bee* had reason to fear the long-serving and notorious St. Petersburg Chief of Police (ober-politsmeister) S.A. Kokoshkin. In May 1846 Grech’s son Aleksei – a writer and sometimes-manager for the newspaper – was arrested for printing a supposedly offensive article about Kokoshkin. “Pis’ma N.I. Grecha k F.V. Bulgarinu,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 42 (2000): 278-279.


320 RGIA, f.777, op. 1, d. 1636, ll. 1-8, especially ll. 6-60b.
(and sometimes rivals), such as Polevoi and Senkovskii. One such publication was the multi-volume reference book titled *Russia in Historical, Statistical, Geographic and Literary Terms* (*Rossiia v istoricheskom, statisticheskom, geograficheskom i literaturnom otnosheniakh*), a title that made for easy mockery of Bulgarin “selling Russia”, as Lermontov wrote in an epigraph. Nicholas Riasanovsky has analyzed its passages as examples of Official Nationality, despite acknowledging that the book was actually written by Professor N.A. Ivanov (who taught at Derpt and then Kazan’ University, according to Grech) and only carried Bulgarin’s name. Because of this ‘ghost-writing’, I have instead chosen to focus on the booklet that Faddei Bulgarin published in 1835 announcing the forthcoming volumes. As he was co-editor of the *Northern Bee*, it is his authorship of the booklet (rather his false authorship of the actual volumes) that is important to this chapter, as is the fact that variations of this text appeared in the newspaper. Announcing that it was a “handbook for Russians of all estates [dlia Russkikh vsekh soslovii]” intended “to give our dear compatriots reading that is entertaining, as well as instructive and easily-understood for everyone”, the book’s audience consisted of “the father of the family, the military man, the landowner, the merchant and even the litterateur”. The first published version of the booklet, cleared by the *Bee*’s regular censor V.N. Semenov and attached as a supplement to the October 30, 1835 issue of the *Bee*, ran afoul of Minister of National Enlightenment S.S. Uvarov for its planned discussion of laws, foreign powers, and the relationship between the government, the Church, and the estates - and the *rights* of each,

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respectively. Uvarov wrote to the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee on 31 October with obvious displeasure:

The censor […], having examined this announcement, was obliged to have realized that the aforementioned book [by Faddei Bulgarin] discusses the relationship between the Sovereign Power and the State, the rights of the Sovereign Power, the relationship of the Church to the State; that attention will be drawn to the political weight of the State among other powers [and] to existing treaties with an indication of the degree to which they favor the political and economic advantage of the State, and so on. Neither the censor nor the censorship authorities may allow a private person to expound all of this for Russians of all estates.\(^\text{324}\)

Uvarov’s letter to the Censorship Committee boiled down to asking, in essence, why ‘Russians of all estates’ (read: the middle stratum) would need such knowledge (knowledge that was, in his view, clearly inappropriate for anyone outside the realm of government). Bulgarin settled the issue by removing sentences that Uvarov had deemed inappropriate and republishing the booklet as a supplement to the *Bee*.

In addition to censoring text on subjects deemed inappropriate for a wide audience, the Nikolaevan censorship apparatus flagged down articles that could be construed as insulting the nobility. The *Northern Bee* had its share of such offences,\(^\text{325}\) but a case in 1841 involving the *Library for Reading* put it under threat of closure – which S.S. Uvarov advised, but Nicholas I ultimately rejected.\(^\text{326}\) The case involved a scientific review article titled “Glowworms” [*Svetiašchiesia cherviachki*], published in the 43\(^\text{rd}\) volume of the *Library* in 1840. The chief of the Third Section, Count A.Kh. Benkendorf, alerted Uvarov of the hidden meaning in the following passage by Osip Senkovskii at the end of the short article:

One naturalist from Montpellier took a female *Lampyridis noctilucae* and held it out the window towards the garden at night. After several minutes, a male flew near, apparently with the same intention that, according to the words published in its program, the St.

\(^{324}\) RGIA, f. 735, op. 1, d. 620, l.5-l.5ob.

\(^{325}\) Among other cases, the *Northern Bee* was reprimanded twice in 1846 for appearing to insult Livonian nobles. “Pis’ma N.I. Grecha k F.V. Bulgarinu,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 42 (2000): 281-282, 287.

\(^{326}\) RGIA, f. 777, op. 1, d. 1625, ll. 11-11ob. RGIA, f. 777, op. 1, d. 1183, l. 8-8ob.
Petersburg Noble Assembly was founded for, that is, for the unification of individuals from both sexes. As soon as these insects finished their program of venerable union, the light of the female immediately diminished..."

The conspicuously positive view that the Library – as well as the Bee – held about provincial gentry, as opposed to (and at the expense of) Petersburg gentry, indicates that the offensive passage cited above would not have bothered the readers of the Library.

**Reception: The Real Reader**

Can we measure the distance between the imagined reading public – the one rooted in the middle stratum, according to documents discussed above – and its reality? How much of what Bulgarin, von Vock, and Grech claimed was actually true? Outside the content of the Bee and the Library and beyond the censorship, did other sources corroborate the middle stratum as the Russian public?

Accounts of the Northern Bee’s social reception continually emphasized its popularity among Russians of the middling sort. In his memoirs recounting St. Petersburg in the 1820s, former publisher of the Polish journal Tygodnik and censor Osip Antonovich Przhetslavskii recalled that the Bee had “an enormous number of subscribers” and that “the public, especially the middle stratum [publika, osobenno srednei ruki] – that is, the majority – eagerly awaited” issues that included Bulgarin’s feuilletons. Although Przhetslavskii was quick to point out that “people of the upper stratum [vysshego kruga] did not disdain it either”, the Bee had a core audience rooted among the middle stratum. “The newspaper itself became an urgent necessity for this public”, Przhetslavskii wrote, as “merchants, chinovniki, and men of business necessarily began [their day] by reading the “Pchelka”. The major restaurants and cafes in Petersburg had

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subscriptions for multiple copies in order to satisfy the impatience of their visitors.” Bulgarin’s reports corroborate this reaction to his newspaper. In 1828, when A.S. Shishkov was replaced by Prince K.A. Lieven as Minister of National Enlightenment and the 1826 “Iron” statute on censorship was replaced with a less restrictive version (one that Nikolai Grech wrote a draft of, no less), Bulgarin described the popular reaction in a report to M.Ia. von Vock. The first two theater reviews to appear in the Northern Bee in January 1828 (one about an Italian opera, the other about Friedrich Schiller’s drama The Robbers) had the following effect: “The public only talks about the theater; high society [bol’shoi svet] about the Italians, the Russian-speaking world [russkii mir] about the Robbers”. Bulgarin claimed that, “clerks and merchants have forgotten everything for the time being, and talk only of the theater”; he even took credit for the increase in ticket sales: “There was a throng at the doors of the theater, and... the distributor of the tickets said, “This is what the Bee did! They shout: It was written in the Bee; hand over the tickets!”.

Indeed, historian Richard Stites identified the significance of the theater to the Bee’s readership: “Bulgarin... had a feel for the demands of the urban middle class of officials, lower gentry, clerks, merchants, and teachers... He pioneered a continuous conversation that gave the reading and theatergoing public of the middling layers of the capital a sense of collective identity...”.

But the northern capital was not the only place where the Northern Bee resonated with the middle stratum. Writing to Bulgarin from Naples in 1846, Countess Evdokiia Rostopchina stated, “Yours is the most popular [narodnyi] journal; it is in Petersburg drawing rooms, in

329 N.I. Grech, “Proekt (dva varianta) ustava o tsenzure 1828 g.,” RNB OR, f. 218, N. 6, ll. 16-39.
330 [F.V. Bulgarin], “Slukhi i vesti,” 1 February 1828, in Vidok Figliarin, 250.
331 Stites, Serfdom, Society, and the Arts in Imperial Russia, 165.
district crannies, and in isolated villages” (this flattering appraisal was published verbatim in the *Bee*). Countess Rostopchina wanted a wide audience for her poetry, which she received, but in the process created a minor scandal with her poem (alluding to, the Third Section believed, the annexation of Poland by Russia) that nearly shut down the *Bee*. Rostopchina’s assessment was not off the mark, however, as voices from the provinces confirm. In 1830, provincial chinovnik P.G. Ozerskii from the Chernigov *guberniia* wrote to Bulgarin that one of his articles was “a masterful work of your fiery quill” and that he had “decided, with all my heart, to save the sheet from this little bee *[pchelka]* that has your golden touch”. Bulgarin and Grech received letters from provincial institutions requesting the placement of local news in the national paper, even after the 1838 decree creating the provincial press. One such letter came from the city of Smolensk in 1832, in which the Smolensk merchant and townspeople society (*Smolenskoe kupecheskoe i meshchansko obshchestvo*) asked the *Bee* to publish its speech to the governor, Nikolai Ivanovich Khmel’nitskii. Letters from the provinces appeared on the pages of the *Bee*, describing provincial Noble Assemblies, regional trade and manufacturing, and local statistics, as discussed in the following chapters. Provincial landowners, a key part of the middling audience, praised the *Bee* for bringing information to the countryside. Andrei Chikhachev, a landowner from the Vladimir *guberniia* whose entire family had the means to subscribe to several periodicals, including the *Bee* and the *Library* (and were thus admittedly exceptional), wrote to his brother-in-law that Bulgarin’s newspaper needed to be read slowly and savored, “without haste, not on postal horses, not on the railroad by steam, no, but rather on one’s own horses.

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332 Evdokiia Rostopchina (grafina) to F.V. Bulgarin, 1846, in “Iz arkhiva F.V. Bulgarina,” *Russkaia starina* No. 2 (February 1901): 407-408.
335 GARF, f. 109, op. 1a, ed. khr. 1903, l. 4-4ob.
making two stations each day.” Readers like Chikhachev even felt encouraged to write to these periodicals offering their own literary works for publication. We find similar letters written to the Library for Reading, which was associated with the provinces even more than the Northern Bee. In December 1837 Osip Senkovskii received a letter from Evprakiia Godovnichenkova, a provincial girl in her teens (writing from Aleksandrovsk-on-Dnepr, once a small provincial town and today’s Zaporozh’e in Ukraine) who presented poetry for publication in The Library for Reading. The following year, her poem “Vow of a Woman” (Obet zhenshchiny) appeared in the 26th volume. In 1839, seminary student V.I. Krasnov wrote to Senkovskii from Kiev, asking for his submissions to be published (and also, as it were, for a small loan to cover moving to St. Petersburg).

The Library for Reading was especially suited to provincial life, with its practical articles about animal husbandry, beekeeping, agriculture, and household experiments, but we should not forget that the journal was also read in St. Petersburg and Moscow. A.V. Starchevskii (using the language of the 1880s) claimed that the famous first issue of the Library “attracted not only the attention of Petersburg’s middle-class intelligentsia, but even [that of] our aristocracy.”

Aleksandr Petrovich Miliukov, who had been “born into a traditional family of Moscow textile industrialists”, recalled how during his school days at the Moscow gymnasium in the 1830s, “We pitched in to buy [my pokupali v skladchinu] wonderful new books, subscribed to journals, read them in turn, and before vacations [we would] usually raffle off through a lottery all of the titles

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336 Quoted in Antonova, An Ordinary Marriage, 213.
337 RGALI, f. 1162, op. 1, ed. khr. 2
338 RNB OR, f. 688, N. 7
acquired in the course of a year. Especially happy was he who got an issue of the *Library for Reading*…”  

**Reception: The Implied Reader**

A variety of literary theories exist for interpreting published texts. For the purposes of this study, however, I rely on the work of two scholars from the German school of reception theory, Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser. In the following thematic chapters analyzing ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Identity’, I apply these theories to texts from the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*. In this section, I lay out the general guidelines of the theories and apply them to a few examples.

Hans Robert Jauss’s idea of a ‘horizon of expectations’ grounds the reading of any text in the values and experiences of the time it was originally written; later readings judge the same text within a necessarily different horizon of expectations and may add or lose meaning; by staying within the original horizon of expectations, however, scholars can attempt to approximate the original interpretation (if that is the goal) and the intended meaning of the work for its intended audience. For clarification of the latter – the intended audience, or the ‘implied reader’ – we turn to Wolfgang Iser, whose theory holds that in the act of reading, the reader ‘concretises’ the text according to his or her lived experience and held set of values. Iser’s theory, of course, makes the act of reading highly personal, as each reader interprets each text according to his or her predisposition. The key element of Iser’s theory, however, is to imagine

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the reader’s experience based on cues in the text.342 Historian Daniel R. Brower utilized Iser’s theory in his short study of the Russian penny press in the late nineteenth century, with a convincing argument about the responsiveness of audiences to feuilletons (human-interest stories about daily life), mild sensationalism, stories of abuse and wrongdoing, and moralizing columns like the one titled “Advice and Answers”.343 We can try to image, however, the shared ‘horizon of expectations’ among the collective readership of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*, bearing in mind issues that affected individuals based on cues in the text.

Two examples from the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* demonstrate the function of reader-response theory. The first feuilleton to run in the *Northern Bee* on January 1, 1825, titled “Cheap and Expensive” (*Deshevo i dorogo*), dramatized a conversation between Bulgarin and a certain Mr. and Mrs. N. The married couple is conspicuously wealthy; they go abroad, buy foreign-made things, and sprinkle their speech with French phrases. In speaking to the couple, Bulgarin’s character asks them to donate almanacs to a boarding school; the couple refuse, saying 10 to 12 rubles per *Russian* almanac is very expensive (*dorogo*). Conversely, the couple boasts to Bulgarin’s character of the Italian marble they are having installed in their residence, which was quite cheap (*deshevo*), but complain about having to pay Russian craftsmen to install it, saying their labor is quite expensive (*dorogo*). The wife also comments on buying a few cheap (*deshevo*) English and French goods for their residence and for their young son – so cheap in fact, that she got multiples.344 This perspective drew upon reader’s tendencies to sympathize with the boarding school students and Russian marble-installers instead of the

344 *Severnaia pchela*, January 1, 1825, No. 1.
kopek-pinching Petersburg nobility. This approach also relied on existing associations and contrasts in the reader’s mind, even if they were stereotypes: nobility/foreignness, foreign-goods/expensive, Russian-goods/cheap. The moral dimension of the article, urging readers to denounce the behavior of the wealthy couple and sympathize with the students and craftsmen, also suggests that readers were expected to have seen this behavior before and instantly recognize its perpetuation. The unspoken conclusion is that this behavior denigrating Russian publications, goods, and labor needs to change, and is already in the process of changing.

The Miscellany section of the *Library for Reading* often contained social commentary in passing that is fascinating to read through the prism of reader-response theory. In the 24th volume for 1837, an article titled “History of the Current Men’s Suit” described the modern evolution of men’s fashions popular in Europe. Osip Senkovskii began article by stating that, “Since all of us, sinners, dress in the English style (*po-Angliiski*), that is, we walk around in these cursed black tailcoats, then it would not be bad to investigate by what fate, by what disastrous steps, England arrived at this tasteless invention”. Senkovskii briefly traced popular fashions, from Spanish in the seventeenth century to French in the eighteenth to finally English in the nineteenth. He arrived at the end of his short history with the following observation of contemporary Russia:

But alas, in our time when all fashions are similar to one another, when all classes intermingle [*kogda vse rody smeshchivaiutsia*], when simplicity inexorably makes its way into the highest classes of society, is it possible to create at least a somewhat strong reputation for oneself with these weak, insignificant shades? Based on a suit, how do you distinguish a valet [*kamerdiner*] from his master? It often happens that the former is better dressed than the latter. In the present corruption of minds, we even see that many people who consider themselves gentlemen are not embarrassed to say that, allegedly, “a respectable person is allowed to go around in worn out clothes”!! Recently at the opera, one of these fops [*odin iz etikh frantov*] came up to another and said, “Allow me to ask, would you happen to be the bartender?” – [The other replied] “I wanted to ask you the same thing?” *O tempora, o mores!*  

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346 Ibid., 66.
A great deal of anxiety is reflected in this passage. This anxiety emerges from the accelerating changes visible in the daily life of St. Petersburg, as a) classes intermingled and b) it was increasingly difficult to tell individuals apart. Unlike in previous generations, when dress corresponded with social status, a blurring of lines was taking place at the time of writing (1837), aided by “the cursed black tailcoats”. Senkovskii’s question about how to distinguish a valet from his master is left without an explicit answer. However, his sarcastic comments about how valets often dress better than their masters, while these masters consider it acceptable to wear worn out clothing, provides cues to the reader to judge the masters for not dressing better (rather than reproach the valets for daring to dress well). A larger, more amorphous question hangs in the background of the passage, though: what sets men apart anymore? Senkovskii stays silent on that, of course, but the question stays in the reader’s mind.

Since its emergence in the 1970s, reception theory has received criticism from scholars who argue that the framework makes too many assumptions about texts and readers. Roger Chartier, discussing reception aesthetics, has pointed out “the inadequacy of the approaches that consider reading as a transparent relationship between the ‘text’ (given as an abstraction and reduced to its semantic content, as if it existed outside the written objects that present it for decoding) and the ‘reader’ (also an abstraction…).” 347 Gary Saul Morson, writing about the ‘implied reader’ in the Russian context reasoned that, “One might say that an “implied reader” of every Russian work is the censor… Texts became decoys, and the socially defined relationship between writers and readers often became conspiratorial, elusive, dangerous”. 348 This dissertation does not presume that the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading were fixed texts, or that readers were an abstract entity, or that the intentions of authors matched the

understanding of readers. This study does, however, seek to understand the construction of representations and messages contained in the *Bee* and the *Library* as they related to the idea of the middle stratum. How these messages were appropriated and altered by real readers is a question for a separate study, one that would need sources such as marginal notes written on copies of the periodicals, or journals and correspondence reflecting on the contents of the periodicals over a long period of time. Instead, this dissertation explores the *Bee* and the *Library*’s interpretation of society, and the concept of the ‘implied reader’ helps us understand who the ‘retailers of the press’ had in mind – as an imagined ideal audience – when publishing their periodicals.

**Conclusion**

Writing about theater in the early nineteenth century, Richard Stites observed how the content of spectacles and the composition of the audience had changed from the theater’s eighteenth-century origins:

> [T]he unfolding drama of society gradually produced for the consumption of a wide public a panorama of sites and personalities, both familiar and new… [T]he social exploration and representation of Russians on stage awakened curiosity about “the other country” that lay within the borders of the Russian state, particularly those of the semi- or nonprivileged estates.\(^{349}\)

The process of reading newspapers and journals such as the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* produced similar results; texts cued readers to ask questions about the society around them and invited – and sometimes demanded – that they form opinions about their fellow Russians. Although the structure of society could not be openly interrogated, the behavior of individuals certainly could. The audience relied upon by the *Bee* and the *Library* to make these judgments came from the middle stratum of society, a constantly shifting and evolving social

\(^{349}\) Stites, *Serfdom, Society, and the Arts in Imperial Russia*, 220.
mass that even the journalists behind these publications had trouble pinning down precisely. This ambiguity of Russian “public” and its imprecise dimensions, however, did not bother the journalists too much, as Faddei Bulgarin wrote in a feuilleton titled “Readers and writers” (Chitate i pisateli). Instead of judging readers, Bulgarin concluded, let readers be the judges:

Who is this reader? Why does it matter? It does not matter who he is; he rules over literature if he fulfills one of two necessary conditions: if he pays for a book (but does not read it) and if he reads a book (but does not pay for it). Whether he is smart or foolish, educated or ignorant, an academic or somewhat educated, prominent or unimportant, rich or poor – this is not your business. He is your reader – and that is final! 350

As theater had transformed from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century to include non-courtiers in the audience and in the stories told on stage, so did the periodical press. Both the content and the audience of newspapers and journals expanded during the second third of the nineteenth century. Frequently, these two public arenas – the theater and the press – overlapped, as with the Northern Bee’s regular theater reviews.

The social segment identified in this chapter as the middle stratum was regularly and prominently featured on the pages of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading. The following two thematic chapters explore how these periodicals represented the middle stratum. The themes of Knowledge and Identity were chosen because, in the process of examining issues of these periodicals, these were the thematic areas that most clearly encompassed questions of society, classification, and representation. The next chapter picks up the first of these themes – Knowledge – and explores the materials that were published for readers.

Chapter Four: Knowledge: Informing Readers

Over the course of the second third of the nineteenth century, the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading covered a truly encyclopedic range of topics in their issues. As discussed in Chapter Two, both periodicals had selection criteria guiding what sort of information made its way into issues; the encyclopedic range of the articles, in other words, was not the result of arbitrary selection, but of deliberate borrowing from European bourgeois press models that targeted broad audiences. This chapter explores the sort of information these periodicals presented to their readers, focusing on practical and applied knowledge as well as travel (which functioned as both knowledge and entertainment). The chapter omits official decrees, foreign diplomatic and military news, theater and literary reviews, religious information, information for women, information about children, and other specialized topics. The focus of this chapter is on generalized, practical knowledge for the generalized, practical, middle-stratum reader.

Surveying the issues of the Bee and the Library, we see that the topics presented – as discussed in detail below – indicate that the intended audience was one that owned modest estates in the provinces, engaged in manufacturing, participated in the trade of various goods, worked in regional or capital offices, taught in gymnasiums, or often did a mixture of the above. The intended audience, in other words, was the middle stratum as defined in the previous chapter. As this chapter will explain, the articles published in the Bee and the Library had several aims: to inform readers of theoretical and practical aspects relating to their livelihoods; to inform readers about various Russian regions, the capitals, and the empire in general; and to inform readers about the world beyond Russian borders. These aims, it should be emphasized, were transplanted from European bourgeois publications and elaborated for Russian life; the methods developed in European bourgeois publications, such as statistical descriptions and travel
narratives, were also applied to articles in the Bee and the Library. Accordingly, the structure of this chapter reflects these aims. The chapter begins with a discussion of information relating to the provinces before moving on to information about the capitals, the empire, and the world beyond.

Knowing the Provinces

Although the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading were published in St. Petersburg, both allocated a great deal of space to discussing various facets of life in the provinces. The attention devoted to the provinces, which steadily increased from the 1830s onward, had both practical and intellectual grounds. A major practical consideration was that most of the imperial economy was based in the provinces, so information and descriptions of agriculture, industry, and commerce naturally focused on provincial regions. Intellectually, the provinces provided abundant material for the nineteenth century’s fascination with all manner of descriptions. The economies, lands, and people of the provinces were written about extensively; this was not simply to satisfy the curiosity of residents in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but also to provide residents in the provinces with information about their own regions as well as neighboring regions. Importantly, this tendency continued after the creation of the gubernskie vedomosti; indeed, the proliferation of official provincial newspapers after 1838 provided the Northern Bee with expanded and reliable sources for provincial news, which was printed in the Bee’s Domestic News or Miscellany sections.

Economic Activity

In publishing about provincial economic activity, the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading had areas of common concern – notably industry and commerce – as well as areas of specialization. The Library for Reading devoted ample space to discussing the theoretical and
practical elements of farming and animal husbandry, unsurprising for a journal widely acknowledged as the preferred reading of provincial gentry. Most of the agriculture articles appeared in the Library’s dedicated “Industry and Agriculture” section, which was dominated by the voice of Dmitrii Potapovich Shelekhov from late 1836 until 1841. Shelekhov’s articles were dedicated to a rational approach to estate management, which he and other writers in the 1830s and 1840s called domovodstvo and/or khoziaistvo (domestic science, or estate management). Shelekhov used a general theoretical approach rather than specific case studies, although an exception was his discussion of a ‘model’ estate in the 1837 article “Russian farmer Aleksei Ivanovich” (“Russkii fermar [sic] Aleksei Ivanovich”). Shelekhov’s articles explained estate management as a science (“Nauka domovodstva”, 1836) and a teachable subject (“O prepodavanii nauki sel’skago khoziaistva”, 1837). His articles also approached questions of estate management from two different angles: saving bankrupt estates (“Popravlenie razstroennago imeniia”, 1836) and perfecting estates in good condition (“Ob uluchsheniakh i usovershenstvovaniakh v sel’skom khoziaistve”, 1838). Shelekhov and other contributors in the 1840s also discussed a range of related topics such as comparative agriculture (focusing on England, but mentioning France as well), new equipment (like steam-powered plows), and potash (penned by S.M. Usov who, as discussed in Chapter Two, published widely about agriculture). Articles about raising sheep appeared rather frequently, and the landowner-

journalist Fedor Borisovich von Ungern-Sternberg even devoted a twelve-part article to the topic of sheep in 1841 (Ungern-Sternberg also published in S.M. Usov’s *Mediator* and in the *Northern Bee*).\(^{355}\) Other writers, often appearing only once and usually anonymously, wrote about specific topics like growing grains (barley, oats, rye, wheat), keeping bees, or even starting vineyards.

Although Shelekhov’s articles tended toward the theoretical and the general, he did make a point of emphasizing the importance of local knowledge, particularly the knowledge of soil. This suggestion to focus on local ecology was repeated in a three-part article in 1843 by “V. Adamovich” (likely a pseudonym), which explicitly linked detailed knowledge of local ecology to the mastery of farming. In “Notes of a Russian Farmer” (*Zapiski russkago zemledel’tsa*), Adamovich provided a general outline for how to transform crop cultivation from haphazard work into a higher art and, eventually, into an exact science. First and foremost, a farmer (or plowman, *pakhar’*, in the text) had to understand variations in “soils, climate and other local circumstances”.\(^{356}\) Only then could he proceed to apply Adamovich’s general advice on proper fertilization and tilling, always keeping in mind the specificity of his region. For instance, Adamovich advised that top-soils should be plowed at different depths depending on their type: loamy soil (*dernina*), soil left over from forest clearing (*shchishchoba*), and soil created by drained swamps (*osushennoe boloto*). Loamy soils like those found in Malorossiia and across the steppe needed relatively shallow plowing; soils located where there were once forests needed to


be plowed a bit deeper; soils created by drained swamps needed very deep plowing to bring valuable peat to the surface. The formation of furrows in the soil was also specific to local conditions and varied depending on elevation and rainfall; an illustrated example of how to space furrows on a sample desiatina (1.09 hectares, or 2.7 acres) was included in the text. Adamovich also attempted to correct popular misconceptions, writing that, “For a long time there has been a myth among our simple farmers that a plow wheel [plug] ruins the soil. It would be very useful to draw the reader’s attention to this. A plow wheel is made from the same materials as a wooden plow [sokha]; therefore a plow wheel should not ruin the soil, just as a wooden plow does no harm”.

The agricultural information published in the Library for Reading was written in an accessible, non-specialized language and was aimed at provincial landowners who wanted to bring rational management to their estates. By the mid-1840s, generalized knowledge like the kind presented above gave way to articles about agriculture in specific regions. This provincial “turn” was not unique to the Library, but with it came the opportunity for readers to compare and contrast their provinces with those described in the journal. Articles penned by anonymous or little known authors examined the agriculture of Crimea in 1845, Tver’ and Iaroslavl’ provinces in 1849, and Khar’kov province in 1851.

Despite the broader mix of topics published in the Northern Bee, it too addressed issues that pertained to the provinces and to agriculture in particular. The Bee’s editors certainly had

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357 Ibid., 13.
provincial readers in mind; in a letter to Faddei Bulgarin in September 1850, Nikolai Grech wrote that no provincial subscribers had complained about delivery problems ever since the Bee’s new employee (Pavel Lazarev) had been placed in charge of overseeing deliveries.\textsuperscript{359} Information about agriculture and life on the estate took many forms, including book reviews of agricultural manuals, announcements for new periodicals devoted to estate management, and advertisements for books (about veterinary medicine, constructing houses, managing estates, and so on). Beginning in late 1837, Faddei Bulgarin began writing book reviews of manuals and guides to estates, likely due to the fact that he had spent 1831 through 1837 living exclusively at his Livonian estate Karlovo (while still writing for the Bee) and so felt that he had some expertise on agricultural topics.\textsuperscript{360} A review of Iulian Osipovich Karpovich’s 1837 \textit{Household Practices from Thirty Years of Experience, or Instruction for the Management of Estates} (\textit{Khoziaistvennye opyty tridtsatiletiy praktiki, ili Nastavlenie dlia upravleniia imeniами}) by Faddei Bulgarin praised the book’s practicality for Russian landowners. The book was based on Karpovich’s study of agricultural conditions in some two-dozen provinces of the Russian empire, a fact that Bulgarin commended while also criticizing unnamed foreign translations (which were not applicable to Russia, he wrote) and Russian theoretical treatises. Bulgarin also praised Karpovich (a member of the Imperial Free Economic Society) for not exclusively endorsing the practice of rational crop rotation. Bulgarin urged landowners to use “common sense” instead of theories: “It is asked: what am I going to do with the clover, with the peas, when I have so much hay that [I cannot] do anything with it? What benefit does an abundance of potatoes give me, when there is no where to sell it… Sow that, which sells faster and better. That’s all the

\textsuperscript{360} Reitblat, ed. \textit{Vidok Figliarin}, 21.
Bulgarin disagreed with Karpovich over how to cultivate potatoes; based on his own experience in Livonia, Bulgarin argued (without directly addressing the peasant question) that there were more efficient means of cultivation in Livonia (i.e., with free peasants) than on a “Russian property” (i.e. with serf labor). Nevertheless, Bulgarin concluded that “Mr. Karpovich’s book is currently the best, in practical terms, for the provinces of northern [Russia] and the temperate zones of Russia, excluding however the Baltic provinces…”.  

Bulgarin’s take on provincial topics continued to appear in the *Northern Bee* from the late 1830s into the mid-1840s. He published additional reviews of advice manuals; one review of the 1838 compilation *The practical proprietor, or a book for all estates (Prakticheskii khozaiain, ili kniga dlia vsekh soslovii)* severely criticized the publisher for collecting scraps of nonsense and presenting the result as practical information: “What arts, what technology, what agriculture does the title speak of? We searched but we did not find! This is a collection of old hocus pocus [fokus-pokusov]…”.  

Another review, this time of a house-building manual written by Aleksandr Rudol’skii, advised landowners to read the book in order to familiarize themselves with the principles of architecture:

> How many magnificent buildings do we have that were erected at the expense of an entire estate’s wealth, [and now] stand in ruins… How many very grand or enormous buildings [do we have] that are a burden to the proprietor…[and] are uncomfortable for the family life of the landowner! All of this will be prevented, when every educated person will know enough about architecture, to be able to account for materials and to know what makes each building sturdy and comfortable.

Bulgarin even created a new journal, *Ėkonom (Head of the Household)* to continue providing advice to landowners; signed articles about the journal ran in several issues of the *Northern Bee*, including one where Bulgarin introduced *Ékonom* as a necessary new publication, since “the

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361 *Severnaia pchela*, October 28, 1837, No. 244.
362 *Ibid*.
363 *Severnaia pchela*, October 3, 1838, No. 222.
364 *Severnaia pchela*, September 29, 1838, No. 219.
attention of the agriculturalist, the manufacturer and the artisan must continually be turned to new and useful [information] appearing in the common circle of industry and manufacturing.”

Although Bulgarin moved the bulk of his agricultural advice from the Northern Bee to Ékonom (which ran from 1841 through 1853, despite criticism of its inaccuracy), information for landowners continued to appear in the Bee in the form of announcements and advertisements of new books.

The “Industry and Agriculture” section of the Library for Reading presented articles about the processing of raw materials and the manufacture of various goods. A trickle of articles in the 1830s (notably about beet sugar production and logging) gave way to a steady stream by the mid-1840s. Book advertisements on the last pages of the Library’s issues also introduced information about industry and agriculture; one such advertisement was for an 1844 book on gold and silver plating, sold at the bookstore of M.D. Ol’khin.

In 1846 the Library brought in Grigorii Pavlovich Nebol’sin to write about a wide range of industrial and commercial information. From 1846 until 1851 Nebol’sin wrote about topics (under his pseudonyms N-“, N-n”, or N-n) such as growing fiber crops for making textiles, manufacturing paper, processing

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365 Severnaia pchela, November 7, 1840, No. 253.
366 Criticism of Ékonom came from, among others, Otechestvenye zapiski and Zapiski dlia khoziaev. The latter was, according to Alison K. Smith, “an alternative to Bulgarin’s Ékonom. It appeared with the same frequency and covered the same sorts of material; and the voice of Doctor Puf [V.F. Odoevskii] – often mocking, occasionally overblown and self-satisfied – could easily be read as a parody of Bulgarin’s style”. Alison K. Smith, “National Cuisine and Nationalist Politics: V.F. Odoevskii and ‘Doctor Puf,’ 1844-45,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 10:2 (Spring 2009): 239-60; here, 242.
367 Polnoe izlozhenie gal’vanoplastiki, gal’vanicheskoi pozoloty i serebreniia (St. Petersburg, 1844).
leather, metalwork and metal plating, and even the curing of pork fat (salo). Along with the provincial “turn” in the mid-1840s on agricultural topics (moving from the theoretical to the specific) came an emphasis on provincial industries. In 1849 and 1850 a series of anonymous articles were published about provincial industries in Tver’, Iaroslavl’, and Bessarabia.

In addition to informing readers about regional resources and industry, the Northern Bee (and to a lesser degree, the Library for Reading) published information about provincial commercial activity. For instance, an article from 13 January 1836 titled “A Glance at Irkutsk” (Vzgliad na Irkutsk) under the rubric “Observations of the Fatherland” discussed Irkutsk primarily through the lens of commerce. The author “Al… K…” set a scene of bustling economic activity, describing the town’s shopping arcade (gostinyi dvor), small shops selling all manner of goods (“equally attracting the flamboyant dandy, the simple village resident and the coarse Buriat”), and the winter fair that began in December. The fair was especially impressive, with merchants from neighboring Eniseisk province as well as convoys from Kiakhta all converging in Irkutsk. Indeed, news about the status of the Kiakhta trade was periodically announced on the Bee’s front page, such as the March 4, 1832 announcement that Chinese tea


shipments to Kiakhta had decreased since the previous December due to bad weather near Kalgan (Zhangjiakou, in northern China) impeding water transport. The author discussed the merchants of Irkutsk in particular detail, and highlighted their enterprising nature: “Among useful establishments started by merchant companies [kompaniiami kupechestva] are various factories; among them is the Tal’tsinskaia [glass factory] 40 versts from Irkutsk”. If the trade, industry, and crafts of Irkutsk continued such successful development, the author concluded, Irkutsk “will take one of the first places among Russian towns”.

Irkutsk was one of many important trading centers that received regular attention on the pages of the Northern Bee. For example, in 1828 the Bee published a letter from an anonymous reader in Irkutsk who listed prices for goods sold during the summer fair, although he lamented that prices were higher than in previous years:

Here rye flour is cheaper than in Petersburg, specifically: 1 ruble; wheat flour is worse than our Pskov type, 2 rubles per pud; fine-milled wheat flour [krupchatka] from 20 to 26 rubles; copper 22 rubles per pud; good tea [from] 7, 6 ½ and 6 rubles, commercial [torgovyi] tea (that is not taken to Petersburg) from 4 to 4 ½; sugar from 55 to 60 rubles; jams for 2 rubles per funt; coriander, raisins, dried plums, dried apricots and so on for 30 kopeks; coffee 2 rubles 50 kopeks; noodles [makarony] 1 ruble 50 kopeks; calico from 80 kopeks to 2 rubles 50 kopeks; broadcloth from 22 rubles up to 70 rubles…

Once the gubernskie vedomosti began to be published after 1838, however, the Northern Bee simply republished information about regional fairs that had taken place in the provinces (instead of relying on reader-correspondents to send letters to the Bee’s editorial office in Saint Petersburg). The result was that provincial fairs were mentioned with more regularity in the Bee in the 1840s. For example, the January 11, 1846 issue of the Bee quoted a portion of an article taken from the Orenburgskie gubernskie vedomosti. The quoted portion focused on the goods exchanged between Russian merchants and Bukhara, Khiva, and Kirgiz traders. The article

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371 Severnaia pchela, March 4, 1832, No. 51.
372 Severnaia pchela, January 13, 1836, No. 9.
373 Severnaia pchela, October 9, 1828, No. 121.
stated that in exchange for Russian grain and manufactures, and more recently for Russian currency, the Kirgiz traded livestock and “felt rugs [koshmy], rawhides, wolf and fox hides, camel fur, as well as printed cotton or linen cloth [vyboika], coarse calico [biaz’], robes, sashes and other Bukhara and Khiva goods that they received for transporting on their camels”. The traders from Bukhara and Khiva conducted their business in the trading hall (menovoi dvor) of Orenburg and brought “printed cotton or linen cloth, various coarse calicos, robes, sashes, rice [Sarachinskoе psheno], Sultana grapes [kishmish], dried apricots, pistachios, dried plums [al’-bukhara] and other fruits” in exchange for “various sorts of grain, iron and steel wares, treated leathers, sugar and other factory products”. More luxurious goods, like “cashmere shawls, cotton [paper] and spun paper, Bukhara and Kirgiz foxes, red foxes [karaganki], Corsac foxes [korsuki], lambskin and silk wares [were] sent to the Nizhnii Novgorod fair and to Moscow”. In addition to detailing the types of goods traded, the quoted article also named the Russian merchants Deev and Putolov, who directly sourced goods from (and sent goods to) Bukhara and Khiva through their agents, as well as the merchant Zaichikov, who went “from aul to aul” in the Little and Middle Horde, selling Russian goods.374

In addition to publishing information about fairs in Irkutsk, Orenburg, and even larger towns like Khar’kov and Nizhnii Novgorod, the Northern Bee also publicized commercial opportunities in other parts of the empire. As a free port and international trading center, Odessa was touted as a place to buy goods cheaply. One article in the Bee from June 1836 (published over four issues) acclaimed Odessa as a city of abundance with opportunities for everyone.375 By way of proof, author “G. Shostak” (likely a pseudonym) included a long table listing “average prices for the main necessities of life in Odessa”, with notes on comparable prices in Petersburg.

374 Severnaia pchela, January 11, 1846, No. 9.
375 Severnaia pchela, June 20, 1836, No. 139; June 22, 1836, No. 140; June 23, 1836, No. 141; June 24, 1836, No. 142.
Among other goods, there was “Baked wheat bread and rye bread twice as cheap as in Petersburg” (8 kopeks per funt), “Butter, which in Petersburg is imported [kolonistskoe]” (35 kopeks per funt), “Strong Greek and Messina [Sicilian] wines, no worse than average Petersburg Madeira” (4 rubles 50 kopeks per bucket [vedro]), hay at 30 kopeks per pud, apricots (fresh) at 3 rubles per pud, plums (fresh) at 2 rubles per pud, sour cherries at 2 rubles per pud, Spanish sour cherries at 3 rubles 50 kopeks per pud, and grapes at 2 rubles per pud. Shostak was clearly exaggerating the ‘necessity’ of items like wine and stone fruit, but listed them in order to further his argument that luxuries in other parts of Russia were entirely accessible in Odessa.

Shostak publicized both Odessa’s goods and its opportunities for Russians of various social strata, using the language of investment, profit, and capital. To those with capital, he urged investing in real estate: “Capitalists who think about increasing capital for their children and grandchildren through percentages – turn to purchasing lands in New Russia [v Novorossiiskom krae]! This will give you a yearly revenue of no less than four percent…” To those interested in establishing agriculture in the region, Shostak advised utilizing the plow wheel to cultivate “gardens and forests in the steppe!” To people (presumably free laborers) looking for work on estates, Shostak provided actual directions:

The working class of people! [Rabochii klass liudei] Do not go to Crimea through the wild steppe via Perekop… go there the way that is shortest and most populated, through Odessa, from where you will be transported in a few hours to Evpatoria, Sevastopol’, to the southern shore ([that is] those who do not stay in Odessa, where various work is always in demand) not only on steamboats but on other sea-going vessels… There are two roads from Great Russia to Odessa, one through Kremenchug and Elisavetgrad, the other from Moscow to Kiev via stagecoaches.

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376 Severnaia pchela, June 24, 1836, No. 142. On conversions, Charles Clark, The Russia Trader’s Assistant, Containing Practical Information Concerning Russian Monies, Weights and Measures; The Course of Exchange; Bills of Exchange; The Commercial Guilds; The Trade of Foreigners Settled in or Travelling to Russia (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1841).
377 Severnaia pchela, June 23, 1836, No. 141.
378 Ibid.
379 Severnaia pchela, June 24, 1836, No. 142.
This address to the “working class of people” went beyond the parameters of the Bee’s usual middle stratum audience; however, the encouragement of various “classes” to settle in Odessa fit entirely within the government’s plan to incentivize demographic and economic growth in New Russia, and in all likelihood “G. Shostak” was the pseudonym of a chinovnik in New Russia. As historian Robert Weinberg notes, in the first half of the nineteenth century “the state offered inducements to promote settlement and investment in Odessa. Runaway serfs were assured their personal freedom and leaseholding status was promised to peasants resettled in New Russia by their landlords”.

Weinberg also notes that, “the government provided incentives to foreign and Russian merchants by offering generous land grants and tax exemptions”. Shostak’s article reflected these incentives by highlighting different sectors of the economy in New Russia (trade, farming, transportation) in order to appeal to a very wide audience; indeed, it is likely that readers would have read the article both silently and aloud (to those not literate). Besides merchants and free laborers, Shostak also appealed to provincial gentry by arguing that Odessa was unlike other Russian towns: “There is no burdensome etiquette and gossip of provincial towns; any resident does as he wants, and a small income is sufficient; if he has spare capital, there is no better place in Russia to use it…”.

Unlike the Northern Bee, which published articles about commerce beginning in the late 1820s, the Library for Reading began publishing information about commerce only in the mid-1840s. Most of these articles were, again, written by G.P. Nebol’sin, and covered topics like wool fairs (“Sherstianyia iarmarki v Rossii”, 1847), the lumber trade (“O torgovle lesnym tovarom”, 1847), the fur trade (“Torgovlia miagkoiu rukhliad’iu”, 1848), the tea trade (“O

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381 Ibid.
382 Severnaia pchela, June 23, 1836, No. 141.
chainoi torgovle v Rossii”, 1848), the sale of grain (“Statisticheskiia izsledovaniia o khlebnoi torgovle”, 1848-49), and the trade in salt (“O torgovle sol’iu”, 1849). Nebol’sin’s articles provided generalized information but focused on specific regions, like Khar’kov in the article about wool fairs, or Kiakhta in the article about the tea trade. The articles took varying approaches, sometimes discussing existing problems (like the negative effects of middlemen traders on wool prices), other times discussing topics in a straightforward and informative manner (like the mechanics of the tea trade, including what Russian goods were bartered for tea and the differences between Chinese green and black teas). The cues in Nebol’sin’s texts indicated an intended audience that ranged from landowners to factory owners (fabrikanty) to merchants.

Land and People

The information published in the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading was not only of the practical kind, relating to livelihoods, but also of the descriptive kind, concerning geographical and ethnographic observations. Frequently these practical and descriptive articles were one and the same. For instance, the article about commerce in Irkutsk, discussed above, introduced its topic with a description of the physical setting of the city: “From Lake Baikal, the majestic Angara [River], rolling its fast waters between the cliffs of mountains and beautiful valleys, connecting with the Irkut [River], washes both sides of the shores of the town of

Irkutsk…". The point of these ‘natural’ descriptions was to inform readers about certain parts of the Russian Empire, especially the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, Finland, Siberia, the Far East, and Russian America (Poland, on the other hand, rarely appeared in descriptive articles) and, beginning in the mid-1840s, to suggest that readers examine their own provinces for the sake of pure knowledge as well as for practical economic improvement. Whether practical or descriptive, however, these articles implied and often directly named a middle-stratum audience.

Nineteenth-century writers were particularly concerned with studying the provinces through geographical descriptions and travelogues. The anonymous author of an 1849 two-part article in the Library for Reading explained that geographical descriptions were necessary because they filled in some of the blanks overlooked by official information gathering. Indeed, the author claimed that there were so many blanks, in fact, “that currently we do not yet have geography nor statistics in Russia”. While the collection of accurate statistical information fell under the auspices of government ministries, the author argued, geographical descriptions of the provinces could be taken up by nearly anyone. The collection of firsthand observations of the provinces, from locals and travelers alike, would amount to “views from various points on the same subject”. Thus, while the central government ministries worked slowly to collect data, individuals could speed up the process – a process necessary for better administration as well as for knowledge’s own sake – by writing and publicizing their firsthand observations. The author even envisioned a not-too-distant future when a central statistical depot would coordinate all information-gathering: “This depot would detect local needs [and] would show the direction that various social forces and institutions take [with their activities]; it would establish rules for the collection of statistical information that is useful to the landowner, the merchant, and factory

384 Severnaia pechela, January 13, 1836, No. 9.
386 Ibid.
The author’s article presented his own contribution to “the supply of geographic information about the fatherland, the supply of which is extremely poor”.

The category of analysis put forward by the author was the province itself. “It seems to us,” he wrote, “that the best order for notes on Russia [is] to describe her by provinces”. Even provinces within the same region, such as the Upper Volga, could not be described identically; each province – in this case Tver’, Iaroslavl’, and Kostroma – deserved a separate analysis. Describing Tver’, the author found that geography was the determining factor in the province’s economic activities. Accordingly, he set about detailing the geographic features of Tver’ – its hills, forests, swamps, lakes, and rivers – to provide context for the province’s main economic functions, which were shipping and the transport of goods on river systems that flowed out to the rest of Russia. The layout of the hills was an important factor in the location of trade routes; the soil composition of the hills (clay, clay-sand, or sand), as well as the types of forests that grew on them determined the locations of human settlement and agricultural activity. One hill range in particular, the Valdai Hills, was described in detail as it extended through several districts. Although no map was included, the author listed the settlements and roads that were found along the way, as well as where the elevation of the Valdai Hills fluctuated. Swamps received the author’s attention since they made up nearly ten percent of the province. Most swamps became passable for human movement and transportation during the summer, although areas with sinkholes did exist, as was discovered during the construction of the Moscow-Petersburg Railroad. The most important feature of the swamps, however, was the existence of peat. After the forests covering the swamps would finally be cleared for use as wood-fuel, the author

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387 Ibid., 199.
388 Ibid., 197.
389 Ibid. On the province as a category of analysis, see Evtuhov, Portrait of a Russian Province, especially Chapter 1 “Imagining the Russian Provinces”.
predicted, the peat in the swamps would become an important source of energy. Until that time, however, lumber would remain one of the most important resources of the province, both for local use, such as wood-fuel in the glass and soap factories in the town of Tver’, and for sale in neighboring provinces and in St. Petersburg, which received shipments of the province’s limestone.

It was the system of rivers, however, that was most important to the province’s economy. The Volga River, which began in the district of Ostashkov and connected numerous smaller tributaries, was the province’s connection to other major Russian towns, to the Caspian Sea, and to the Baltic Sea – and thus to the entire economy of European Russia. The Volga also bound together the life of the province, as the author observed:

The farmer [zemledelets] and the manufacturer take their goods to the piers of these rivers [flowing into the Volga]; people from all over the province flock here to earn money [nazhit’ kopeiku] for paying off their taxes [podat’] and quitrent [obrok]; here there is an exchange of capital [and thus] the expansion of education and debauchery; here along the shipping systems peasant life is, so to speak, in full swing.390

The author observed that the province’s location as a center of trade and water transportation went back centuries, but was stimulated by the construction of the Vyshnii Volochêk Waterway (during the reign of Peter the Great, and reconstructed several times later), which connected the Volga to the Baltic Sea.391 More recent infrastructure projects completed or underway in the 1840s, like the Verkhnevolozhskii reservoir and the removal of navigation obstacles such as submerged sandbanks in the Volga by the Ministry of Ways of Communication (Ministerstvo putei soobshcheniia), allowed for more ships to pass through. The extensive portage network connecting water transport in the province was described in minute detail, including intervals at

390 Ibid., 214.
which ships needed to be hoisted via cogwheels and horses, and the types of ships that different sections of the route could accommodate.

How did such a detailed examination of Tver’ province relate to the author’s aim to increase knowledge, especially of the kind useful to the landowner, merchant, and factory owner? By describing the geography of Tver’, particularly the river systems, the author made the case that the economy of Tver’ was in fact too reliant on shipping and carting. So many residents were involved in transportation, the author concluded, that the development of industries lagged behind. There were, the author conceded, historically important industries like hemp spinning in Rzhev, tanneries in Ostashkov, and metal works in the town of Tver’. But the trade and transport of grain, hemp, and lumber in Tver’ province made investment in industries less crucial. Landowners did not have enough capital to invest, while merchants were not interested in investing their profits. The author’s article was a means of examining and explaining that investments should be put into industries – investments that would enrich landowners, merchants, and factory owners.

Descriptions of geography and the environment could also serve as a point of comparison and contrast for readers. Irkutsk, which appeared with some regularity in the Northern Bee, was described in a letter to the publishers by “N. Shch-n” in the 10 February 1832 issue. The author was in fact Nikolai Semenovich Shchukin (1792-1883), an Irkutsk kраeved (scholar of regions) who had moved to Petersburg to attend university. Shchukin wrote about Siberia in several books and in leading periodicals, including N.A. Polevoi’s Moscow Telegraph and the Library

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In his article for the Bee, Shchukin wrote about experiments with thermometers and pieces of mercury, severe winters, short days, fierce winds, and the various methods that people used to stay warm. The focus of the letter was squarely on the power of nature: “The stronger the frosts, the thicker the fog; sometimes it is so great that walking down the center of a street [one] cannot see the houses on the sides, and riding on a horse [one] cannot see in front by one sazhen’ [2.13 meters] because the steam and breathing of the animal increases the twilight.” Shchukin’s purpose, based on his geographical references, was to inform readers in European Russia of the physical conditions in Irkutsk and how it was possible to adapt to living there. With preparation and experience, Russians could get used to the climate (although Shchukin expressed incomprehension at how Yakutian and Tungusic people stayed warm in “their short dress”). Shchukin explained how living in Irkutsk was manageable by referencing clothing that readers, at least in Petersburg, would recognize: “At 40 degrees [below zero, Celsius] we deliberately left for a walk in a Petersburg cotton overcoat [v Peterburgskoi shineli na vate] with a beaver collar and in ordinary boots without galoshes.” After thirty minutes of walking, Shchukin reported being warm with the exception of his eyelashes, which froze from his breath.

Voices from the Provinces

Information about the provinces also appeared on the pages of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading in the form of letters from provincial readers, travel notes, and articles sent to the Petersburg editorial offices from various points in the Russian empire. The authors of these materials were provincial landowners, chinovniki, gymnasium teachers, kraevedy (scholars of

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394 Severnaia pchela, February 10, 1832, No. 33.
regions), and less frequently, urban residents who wrote about their visits to the provinces. They wrote to inform other readers of their region’s innovations, or to dispute incorrect information, or to discuss ongoing developments and improvements in their provinces. Their letters attest to the spread of the *Bee* and the *Library* throughout the provinces, as well as to the types of readers who read these periodicals.

Provincial innovations were a source of pride for readers who wrote to the *Northern Bee*. In 1829 a letter-writer, who signed as “landowner from Kazan’,” proudly announced that a thresher-winnowing machine had been developed in his province. Stating that “I know from experience how your *Northern Bee* delights provincial readers every time [they find] some sort of news serving the glory or benefit of humanity”, the author asked that the *Bee* “inform gentlemen farmers [*sel’sikhail khoziaev*] of the gift given to them by A.P. Veshniakov, landowner from Kazan’ province, with the invention of a thresher-winnower [*molotilo-veialka*]”. The stated benefits were manifold: the machine could replace the laborious hand threshing of rye by working five times faster than a human laborer, needed only six workers to operate it, did not take up much space, and had a very simple design. The machine would be produced and sold both on Veshniakov’s estate in Kazan’ province and in St. Petersburg “so that people of all estates [*liudi vsiakago sostoianiia*] who engage in farming could have it for the most moderate and insignificant price.” Most likely, the letter was written by Veshniakov himself to promote his new machinery.

Provincial readers also wrote to the *Northern Bee* to present new or more detailed information about the provinces, both in the form of letters and articles. Borderland and frontier regions were particularly well represented, perhaps because they were naturally interesting for readers in the capitals and across European Russia. In February 1825, a letter-writer informed the

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395 *Severnaia pchela*, July 20, 1829, No. 87.
In 1829, another letter-writer (who signed as “Visitor of the Caucasus waters”) described the infrastructure improvements in the settlement of Goriachevodsk (soon renamed Piatigorsk) for people visiting the mineral waters of the Caucasus. Since 1825, dozens of new, clean houses had been built, along with new baths for men (and separately, women), and so the author asked the Bee “to inform our fellow countrymen [sootchichei] that Goriachevodsk is improving from year to year”. New roads and a central boulevard had been constructed, and a two-story stone residence was being built to house ailing military officers free of charge. Goriachevodsk was described as being cheaper and more effective than foreign sanatoriums: “for example, I (a bachelor) live here in Goriachevodsk in a clean and neat cottage; there is a small room for my servant; there is a Dutch oven in my cottage, firewood… for this I pay 65 rubles per month; a table with three meals [a day] does not cost more than 35 rubles”. The author’s comparison of prices for sugar, tea, and coffee with prices in the capitals (“[they] are only a few kopeks higher than prices in Petersburg and Moscow”) gives an indication of the intended audience.

A less effusive account of Piatigorsk and its mineral waters was the subject of a reader’s travel letter published in the Library for Reading in 1841 (which also mentioned the death of Lermontov that same month). Although letters from readers were far from a regular feature of the Library, the journal occasionally printed excerpts from the correspondence of readers of some distinction. The author “Arkadii Andreevskii” (evidently Arkadii Stepanovich Andreevskii (1812-1881), head of the treasury in Ekaterinoslav’), cautioned that the journey to Piatigork was an arduous one, through uninspiring steppe, complete with flies that “accompany you from the

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396 Severnaia pchela, February 24, 1825, No. 24.
397 Severnaia pchela, July 6, 1829, No. 81.
398 Ibid.
Don almost to Piatigorsk”, and that Piatigorsk itself was terribly boring. However, travelers suffering from rheumatism would be welcomed by a newly constructed town, clean air, and medicinal waters made available in clean and comfortable baths. The author named the various mineral springs in Piatigorsk, and indicated which were most popular and what treatments were available. He also cautioned that counterfeit mineral waters and “acidic” waters (carrying the names of the popular Piatigorsk wellsprings) were being sold in Moscow. This warning was accompanied by a reminder that a visit to Piatigorsk was effective not only because of the therapeutic waters, but also because of the change in climate, diet, and rest that visitors experienced.

Readers also wrote to the Bee to correct information published about their provinces. One reader –evidently a chinovnik – from Iaroslavl’ wrote to the Bee regarding incorrect statistical information published about his province in a book reviewed in an earlier issue. The letter writer, who signed as “Iaroslavl’ resident S. S…v”, disputed the information in the Calendar for 1832 (Mesiatsoslov na 1832 god) published by the Academy of Sciences. Having read the Mesiatsoslov, he then consulted local sources for verification: “I take my map, examine it, and see that our Province has an area larger than that of Moscow and Estland…I look for my geographic, topographic and statistical table of Iaroslavl’ Province, compiled in 1823”. According to the map and table, he found that the area of Iaroslavl’ province in the Mesiatsoslov was too small, while the population figures were too large; the Iaroslavl’ resident politely asked the Bee to publish his letter and thereby set the record straight.

[^400]: The earlier issue was Severnaia pchela, January 5, 1832, No. 3.
[^401]: Severnaia pchela, February 6, 1832, No. 30.
Another provincial reader, this time from Kremenchug on the Dniepr River, wrote to the *Northern Bee* in 1846 to dispute information that had been reprinted from his local *Poltavskie gubernskie vedomosti*. In 1845 the *Bee* had quoted an article from the official Poltava newspaper in which the author, “N.A.,” discussed his discovery of fairways (*farvatery*, or navigable channels) in the rivers Sula and Psel, tributaries of the Dniepr, in September of 1844. Having done experiments with “the public rafts of state peasants”, N.A. claimed that when the rafts were set off from the Sula and Psel, they landed in spots in the Zolotovotsk district and Kremenchug district, respectively.\(^{402}\) The letter writer from Kremenchug, who signed as “Village resident, by the nickname of Pravdukhin [“Truthful One”]”, wrote that the prospect of shipping in these tributaries “could not fail to stir the common interest” and would be very important indeed (especially since the Sula and the Psel “converge at the town of Kremenchug, which has the most important trading pier in the entire system of Dniepr rivers, and which is the center of the most important highways and transport roads”).\(^{403}\) If shipping could replace the expensive and time-consuming overland transport route, especially for wood construction materials, that would be a significant development, “But as the old adage says, ‘All that glitters is not gold’, and unfortunately this article, notwithstanding the alluring title, does not contain anything remotely resembling the truth. Having…known this region, I consider it my duty to lead others out of [this] misconception.” The Kremenchug resident presented a number of arguments against N.A.’s article, such as that the depths of the Sula and Psel in September of 1844 could not be representative because of unusual flooding that year, and that residents already knew of N.A.’s “discovery” and conducted irregular one-way shipping when the waters were very high.

\(^{402}\) *Severnaia pchela*, November 5, 1845, No. 250.

\(^{403}\) *Severnaia pchela*, January 11, 1846, No. 9.
“Pravdukhin” also disagreed with N.A.’s claim of shortening the land route by 30 verst with this method and in the process gave some indication of his social standing:

Some fifty years have passed since I learned arithmetic. In so many years it is no wonder to forget something without [arithmetic] exercises, especially in the village way of life [v sel’škom bytu]… however, I remember that the rules of subtraction require that the smaller sum be deducted from the larger.

Most likely a Kremenchug landowner, “Pravdukhin” also warned against the publication of provincial geographical descriptions by unqualified “travelers” – an important note of local protest, particularly when compared to the endorsement of casual provincial descriptions by the author of the article on Tver’ in the Library for Reading, discussed above.

Readers’ information also concerned the study of the provinces. Numerous articles appeared in the Northern Bee (as well as other contemporary publications) from provincial scholars who would later become major figures in their own provinces. One article sent to the Northern Bee from Saratov in 1839 described the town’s Alexander-Nevsky Cathedral. The author, Andrei Filippovich Leopol’dov (1800-1875), described the history, construction, and architecture of the building. Leopol’dov was a kraeved and a provincial chinovnik, and he would go on to edit the Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti in the 1840s. Another local scholar, Stepan Ivanovich Verebriusov (1819-1884) from Ekaterinoslav’l’, described his 1844 ascent on the Chatyr-Dag massif, part of the Crimean Mountains. Verebriusov served as both a chinovnik in the Odessa office of the governor-general and as a gymnasium teacher in Ekaterinoslav’l’ and Feodosiia. He would go on to write several directories and guidebooks about Crimea, and was the director of the Feodosiia Museum of Antiquities (Feodosiiskii muzei drevnostei) between

404 ibid.
405 Severnaia pchela, April 28, 1839, No. 93.
406 Severnaia pchela, January 11, 1846, No. 9.
1869 and 1878. His article for the *Northern Bee*, published on 11 January 1846, reflected an obvious appreciation for the land and people of Crimea. Verebriusov described the Tatar communities he saw on his way to the mountains and commented on their mores (*nravy*) compared to inland Tatar communities. The Tatar women were described as being without head coverings and quite helpful to Verebriusov and his companions. The Tatar men were also exceedingly helpful: a guide led Verebriusov up the treacherous path, and a shepherd gave him and his companions plums and milk with water (*ar’ianom*) while on the mountain. The flora and natural rock formations were described with admiration and a great degree of awe. The view from Chatyr-Dag, however, was the focus of the article, with a wide panorama opening up before the author from which he saw rivers, the cities of Simferopol’ and Karasubazar, part of Bakhchisarai, the bay of Sevastopol’, and glimmers of the Black Sea.

Readers in the provinces not only wrote letters presenting information, but also letters requesting information. A reader’s letter published in the *Library for Reading* in 1838 requested more detailed information from Fedor Borisovich von Ungern-Sternberg, whose article on managing the estate of Countess Iu.S. Bobrinskaia had been published in the previous issue of the journal. F.B. von Ungern-Sternberg had written about introducing rational crop rotation (*sevooborot*) and new infrastructure on the estate. The reader, who signed as “Kolomna landowner” (*Kolomenskii pomeshchik*) I. Fonvarlov, asked a series of questions, such as how many souls lived on the estate, the terms of Ungern-Sternberg’s lease of the Countess’s estate, the standard used to measure a *desiatina* on that estate (the official “treasury measure” or the

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“household” measure), the details of mechanically extracting oil from rapeseed in the large amounts claimed by Ungern-Sternberg, the amount and price of wool sold from the estate, and so on. F.B. von Ungern-Sternberg replied a few issues later with detailed answers to all of Fonvarlov’s questions (including politely declining an offer to manage Fonvarlov’s second estate in Tambov province).\footnote{409}{I. Fonvarlov, “Zaprosnye punkty pochtenneishemu baronu Ungern-Shternbergu,” in “Promyshlenost’ i Sel’skoe Khoziaistvo,” Biblioteka dlia chteniia 29 (1838): 60-62.}

As stated above, the Northern Bee benefited from the creation and proliferation of the gubernskie vedomosti; the Bee could reprint articles originally published in official provincial newspapers and thereby save expenses and possible payments to writers. The Bee frequently praised the utility of the provincial papers; in one issue from 1839 the Bee declared that,

Of the many truly useful and national establishments (istinno poleznykh i narodnykh uchrezhdenii), the Provincial News [ranks] among the top… these vedomosti contain highly important and curious news for each Russian… Many of our readers do not have the means to use [i.e. read] all the provincial newspapers, so the editorial board of the Northern Bee has set out to report short excerpts…\footnote{411}{Severnaia pchela, January 23, 1839, No. 18.}

The same issue of the Bee quoted from three different provincial newspapers: statistical and historical information about the towns of Kirzhach and Gavrilovskii Posad in Vladimir province; triplets being born in Podolia province; and that 162,545 rubles worth of goods were brought to the Nizhnii Novgorod fair from Simbirsk province in 1838.\footnote{412}{Ibid.}

The articles republished by the Bee came, as a rule, from the unofficial sections of provincial papers (also called the supplement sections). Comparing issues of the gubernskie vedomosti from Vologda, Viatka, and Arkhangel’sk – although vedomosti from any other provinces could be used – we see that the types of articles printed in the unofficial section were
precisely the sorts of articles that made it into the \textit{Bee}: articles about local history, statistics, trade, industry, charity events, curiosities and even strange weather.\footnote{Excerpts from provincial newspapers stayed in the \textit{Bee}'s Miscellany section until 1850, after which a dedicated “Provincial News” subsection was created under the general Domestic News. This subsection appeared every two or three issues, reporting extracts from official provincial newspapers as well as translated snippets from independent German-language Baltic papers. But provincial readers did not cease writing letters to or articles for the \textit{Northern Bee} after the establishment of the provincial newspapers; landowners wrote in to discuss the details of planting grains, regional \textit{kraevedy} wrote articles about developments in their provinces, and in the late 1850s readers debated questions of economic development in their provinces such as the construction of railroads (this transformation of the \textit{Northern Bee} in the 1850s is discussed in Chapter Seven).}

\textbf{Knowing the Capitals}

While information about the capitals did not usually appear in the \textit{Library for Reading}, it was a constant feature of the \textit{Northern Bee}. True to its publishing proposal, discussed in Chapter Two, the \textit{Northern Bee} regularly printed information about events and establishments in Saint Petersburg and, intermittently, Moscow. The \textit{Northern Bee} published information that told readers about theaters, concerts, charitable events, public lectures, bookstores, fashions, restaurants, shops, train times, currency exchanges, curiosities, and even the weather. The range of information revealed a two-fold purpose: 1) to inform residents of St. Petersburg, and to a lesser degree Moscow, about various aspects of their cities; 2) to paint a portrait of city life for

provincial readers, who could maintain a connection to the events and developments without actually being there.

The earliest types of city information published in the *Northern Bee* were notices of upcoming events in St. Petersburg. Theater announcements gave the day, theater name (the Bol’shoi (Kamennyi), Malyi, and Novyi; later the Bol’shoi, Aleksandrinorskii, and Mikhailovskii), and title of the performance in every single issue of the *Bee*, from 1825 until its closure in 1864. Theater reviews were published at least once a week, and typically discussed the artistic performances of the singers, dancers, actors and actresses. In the late 1820s, the *Bee* added announcements about upcoming masquerades, philharmonic concerts, solo musical performances, and academic lectures open to the public, which were frequently organized for charity. The *Bee* published both announcements and reviews of public amusements like sledding, swings, and festival entertainment (like *balagany*, or sideshows in wooden booths) occasioned by religious holidays, as well as of curiosities like exotic animals, circuses, and magicians who came to St. Petersburg. These sorts of reviews received their own regular subsection in the *Northern Bee* (called Petersburg Notes, or *Peterburgskiia zapiski*), which included the occasional feuilleton penned by Faddei Bulgarin. One such feuilleton appeared in the April 9, 1827 issue and described the public amusements organized during Holy Week. Bulgarin conveyed the excitement of the crowds that had gathered at Palace Square to enjoy the *balagany*, swings, and music. Besides generally recommending the puppet booths and “dog comedies”, Bulgarin directly recommended seeing foreign performers like the horse rider Turnier, the tightrope walker and animal handler Leman, and a French magician named “Sober” (Sobière?).

Commercial and transportation information began to appear on the pages of the *Northern Bee* in the late 1820s. A table indicating the exchange rate for promissory notes (or bills of change) began to appear in the *Northern Bee* in the late 1820s.

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414 *Severnaia pchela*, April 9, 1827, No. 43.
exchange) and currency, titled *Veksel’nyi i denezhnyi kurs*, appeared in 1829 (it was published every three or four issues in 1829 and 1830, and resumed again in 1838). After the inclusion of a permanent announcement section on the last page of the *Bee* in 1838, a table listing the value of stock shares (*aktsii*) on the St. Petersburg stock market (*birzha*) also appeared regularly.\textsuperscript{415} Beginning in September 1847, a “Telegraph” subsection ran in almost every issue of the *Bee*, listing hours of operation for Petersburg shops and public establishments, performance times for additional theatrical and musical performances, and other immediate announcements relevant to the day the issue was published (as well as information for the following day).\textsuperscript{416} Occasional supplements advertised horse carriages for hire in St. Petersburg. Train schedules appeared in January 1838 for the railroad connecting Saint Petersburg, Tsarskoe Selo, and Pavlovsk (five rubles for first class, three rubles 75 kopeks for second class). Additional schedules were added with the slow expansion of the Russian rail network; schedules for the St. Petersburg-Moscow line appeared in November 1851 (nineteen rubles for first class, thirteen for second class, seven for third class), and schedules for the first completed section of the St. Petersburg-Warsaw line appeared in 1853.\textsuperscript{417} In 1857 a regular column titled “News of the weather, harvest, prices, movement of shipping, and so on” (*Izvestiia o pogode, urozhae, tsenakh, dvizhenii sudokhodstva, i proch.*) was introduced, which primarily provided information about market demand in St. Petersburg and the going prices of goods like grain, seeds, hemp, linen, plant oils, butter, flour, sugar, bread, and potash in the capital (but the section also mentioned brief agricultural news from other parts of the empire as well as market prices in Europe). The section was renamed “Commodity, money, [and] stock market” (*Tovarnyi, denezhnyi, aktsionernyi rynok*) in 1860.

\textsuperscript{415} The first stock shares table listed two fire insurance companies, one steamship company, a life insurance company, a gas lighting company, and the Russian-American company. *Severnaia pchela*, 1 January, 1838, No. 1.
\textsuperscript{416} *Severnaia pchela*, September 1, 1847, No. 196.
\textsuperscript{417} *Severnaia pchela*, January 7, 1838, No. 5. *Severnaia pchela*, November 2, 1851, No. 245. *Severnaia pchela*, November 2, 1853, No. 243.
Commercial information of a different sort appeared in the *Northern Bee* in the form of light-hearted “recommendation” articles, often written by Faddei Bulgarin himself, about small businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and specialty stores (for flowers, clothing, furniture, musical instruments, sheet music, accessories, and more). These were essentially undisclosed advertisements for goods and services in and around St. Petersburg; nevertheless, advertisements still served as information for readers looking for such services. Bulgarin wrote about a wide array of topics: which confectionary stores, bakeries, and bookstores had good presents for children; which eating establishments to visit; which hotels to stay at, and so on. In a feuilleton from January 1846, for instance, Bulgarin described an outing to the hills of Krestovskii Island for sledding. Bulgarin observed that families on Krestovskii Island needed to eat after sledding, which conveniently led to a “recommendation” for a *traktir* (an eating and drinking establishment much like a tavern). This *traktir*, however, was of a respectable caliber: “We were surprised by the order, cleanliness and good arrangement of the *traktir* (which has not existed in a while) and we rejoiced that the keeper was a Russian person. He has comprehended the great secret [behind] the prosperity of restaurants outside the city and does not accept revelers with credit sales [*zapisnykh guliak*].” The same feuilleton also enthusiastically praised the blooms and bouquets of Mr. Sim’s flower shop on Karavannaia street (in the house of Tatishchev, should readers wish to visit).

In addition to “recommendations”, the editors of the *Northern Bee* had also hoped to print classified advertisements. Faddei Bulgarin and Nikolai Grech attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain permission for classified advertisements from Ministers of National Enlightenment Count

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S.S. Uvarov from 1839 through 1844, and from Prince P.A. Shirinskii-Shikhmatov in 1850. One letter from Bulgarin and Grech to officials at the Third Section in 1844 explained that,

The publishers of the *Northern Bee*, wishing to give diversion and benefit to their newspaper in the eyes of the Russian public, believe that it would be very useful to add private announcements to [the newspaper] about various subjects of common living, about sales and purchases, about the return of loans, about disappearances, and so on. […] Other newspapers will not suffer from this at all because [a person] who wants to spread news about something will eagerly publish [this news] anywhere possible.  

Asking again for classified advertisements later the same year, Faddei Bulgarin argued that this used to be a privilege of official publications, “but when industry in Russia spread, then based on the foreign example there was a demand for more places [i.e. periodicals] for publishing [classified advertisements]”. One last attempt at obtaining permission for private advertisements was made in 1850, when Faddei Bulgarin and Nikolai Grech wrote a detailed note to the Third Section reiterating their argument about advertisements being a privilege of the past: “when trade, industry and all sorts of mutual commercial relations spread [between] city and village residents, the multiplication of newspapers with advertisements became necessary”. The editors of the *Northern Bee* were again refused; only in mid-1862 was the *Bee* (along with other private papers) allowed to print classifieds. The first issue of 1863 included the following classified advertisements: sale of tickets for a family ball (*semeinyi tantsoval’nyi vecher*) organized by the Office of the Russian Merchant Society for Mutual Aid (*Kontora russkago kupecheskago obshchestva dlia vzaimnago vspomozheniia*); an announcement from an attorney inviting people to stop by a private litigation office (*Kabinet chastnago sodeistviia k primireniu tiazhushchikhsia i dlia soveshchaniia i zaniatii po iskovym i tiazhebnym delam*) on

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419 [F.V. Bulgarin and N.I. Grech], *Proshenie o razreshenii pechatat’ ob’iavleniia v Pribavleniakh k “Severnoi pchele”*, in *Vidok Figliarin*, 463.
420 F. Bulgarin, Letter to L.V. Dubel’t, November 1844, in *Vidok Figliarin*, 466.
Bol’shaia Koniushennaia street; a landowner’s advertisement for the lease and sale of lands; and an advertisement for Turkish and American tobacco.\textsuperscript{422}

Information about the capitals was not only reserved for city residents; Faddei Bulgarin knew that provincial readers read up on city news to stay informed about what was “new”. Bulgarin addressed this curiosity in his feuilletons, including one from April 1839 titled “Letters from Petersburg about Petersburg. I. What is new?” (\textit{Pis’ma iz Peterburga o Peterburge. I. Chto novago?}) where he wrote:

\begin{quote}
Each visitor from Petersburg is greeted with this question in the provinces, and each letter either begins or ends with this same question. What is new! Much [is new] – but where, and in which department? ... Each department of administration has its own activities, work, awards, hiring and retirement, promotion and transfer. This is all very entertaining [and] interesting for everyone serving in the same department, and is completely alien to others who have no relationship to that department of administration. Stock market news, which sometimes causes sleeplessness among wholesale merchants, is not at all interesting to non-trading people. News [about] factories, manufacturing, contracts, leases [and so on] is only important for speculators.\textsuperscript{423}
\end{quote}

Bulgarin sarcastically concluded that residents of Petersburg only had the weather, marriage gossip, and talk of career placements in common. Perhaps to avoid news that was “completely alien” to provincial readers, Bulgarin’s other feuilletons addressed an issue that crossed estate and occupational boundaries: getting to Petersburg, and what to do once one arrived in the capital. Beginning in the late 1830s, the number of published directories of Petersburg increased significantly; the \textit{Northern Bee} published book advertisements for these publications, such as the \textit{St. Petersburg Address Book for 1837 (Kniga Adresov S. Peterburga na 1837 god); Directory of St. Petersburg by I.I. Pushkarev (Ukazatel’ S. Peterburga);\textsuperscript{424} Pocket Directory of St. Petersburg (Karmannyi ukazatel’ S. Peterburga);\textsuperscript{425} Address-Directory of Saint Petersburg (Adresnyi plan}}
Sanktpeterburga);\textsuperscript{426} and All of Petersburg in your pocket by Aleksei Grech (Ves’ Peterburg v karmane), which was expanded into a second edition by Nikolai Grech in 1851.\textsuperscript{427} If the directories provided maps and addresses, Bulgarin’s feuilletons provided information about what to do and where to stay in Petersburg. For instance, in a feuilleton from October 1842 titled “Directory of Petersburg for out-of-towners” (Ukazatel’ Peterburga dlia inogorodnykh), Bulgarin described the pros and cons of a range of hotels in Petersburg. The best value for a visiting provincial landowner or provincial chinovnik, he suggested, was an unpretentious establishment near Obukhovskii Bridge:

There is also a very good hotel in which [they] care about the cleanliness of all the rooms because it does not have excessively rich and expensive apartments. This hotel also has something like domestic servants for visitors, that is, an attendant in the corridor. This is a stagecoach hotel. It is a pity that [the hotel] is far from the city center! This hotel is located in the house of Mr. Serapin, past the Obukhovskii Bridge. A decent person without big demands can live there very comfortably.\textsuperscript{428}

Bulgarin mentioned more expensive hotels (with French owners) that were worth visiting for their affordable restaurants or traktiry. This advice on eating establishments appeared in a paragraph addressed to people of more modest means: “We now have an enormous number of [hotels] for all estates and strata [dlia vsekh soslovii i sostoianii], and since the Northern Bee has readers of all estates and all strata, then we will discuss all [hotels] in the future.”\textsuperscript{429} Bulgarin concluded the feuilleton with recommendations for specific dentists and doctors to visit while in the capital. More feuilletons appeared under the rubric of “Petersburg for out-of-towners” in 1842 and 1844.\textsuperscript{430}

\textsuperscript{426} Severnaia pchela, March 26, 1842, No. 67.
\textsuperscript{428} Severnaia pchela, October 28, 1842, No. 241.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{430} Severnaia pchela, 1842, No. 247; 1842, No. 254; 1842, No. 266; 1842, No. 284; 1844, No. 284; 1844, No. 67; 1844, No. 68.
Existing correspondence corroborates that provincial readers followed the information published about Petersburg with interest. The letters of the writer, translator, and high-ranking official of the Ministry of National Enlightenment Ivan Vasil’evich Roskovshenko (1809-1889) to the famous Slavic philologist Izmail Ivanovich Sreznevskii (1812-1880) illustrate how, in the early 1830s, educated provincials of the middle stratum made use of information found in the *Northern Bee*. Roskovshenko and Sreznevskii grew up in Khar’kov province, attended Khar’kov University, and co-edited the *Ukrainian Almanac* in 1831; upon Roskovshenko’s placement in the Ministry of Justice and his move to the northern capital at the end of 1831, he began writing to Sreznevskii in Khar’kov and later Ekaterinoslav. Roskovshenko’s descriptions of Saint Petersburg conveyed sheer amazement at the sights and tastes of the capital: the satisfaction of smoking genuine Zhukov tobacco, the illuminations of the street lamps on Nevsky Prospect, the shops selling tea, porcelain, clothing, and other goods, the noise of carriages, and the unexpectedly large crowds of people everywhere.\(^{431}\) Roskovshenko detailed which pastry shops/cafes he frequented, which journals were interesting to read, what was playing in the theaters (and which actors played which parts), where public promenades (gulian’e) took place – in short, the information that the *Northern Bee* also published. Indeed, parts of Roskovshenko’s letters read as issues of the *Bee*.

Roskovshenko directly referenced the *Northern Bee* in several letters to Sreznevskii. One letter mentioned a highly knowledgeable secondhand bookseller that Roskovshenko had met: “If you have not read the 1831 Secondhand Bookseller articles in the *Northern Bee*, then do so;

\(^{431}\) “Peterburg v 1831-1832 gg. (po pis’mam provintsiala),” *Russkaia starina* No. 2 (February 1900): 477-490; here 479, 480, 481.
[although] there they skip over some of his virtues". Roskovshenko directed Sreznevskii to read the Bee in another letter discussing life in the capital:

Should I tell you about the amusements of [Petersburg’s] maslenitsa, about the balagany constructed in the square of the Winter Palace and the ice slides constructed there as well as on Elagin Island? Read about the balagany in the Northern Bee; “balagany” is an insulting word for these magical castles.

Elsewhere in his letters to Sreznevskii, Roskovshenko described events that had been written about in the Northern Bee, like the illuminations for the centennial jubilee of the First Cadet Corps. He also mentioned other periodicals like the Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti and expressed an interest in writing for journals; in fact both he and Sreznevskii would go on to publish in the Library for Reading in 1841 and 1850, respectively (Sreznevskii was even censor for the Library for Reading in 1847-1849).

Knowing the Empire

Information about the Russian Empire came in many forms. Regular updates on the Northern Bee’s first and second pages announced the appointment, promotion, and retirement of those serving in the military and civil bureaucracy in all corners of the empire. Official decrees proclaimed infrastructure projects, new laws, criminal punishments, and other news concerning the various provinces. Lists of people’s names and their place of origin, from newly created honorary citizens to charitable donors, appeared in the Domestic News section. The immense size of the empire was implied from the short news items of accidents, fires, shipwrecks, earthquakes, floods, pirate attacks, heroic deeds, and curiosities in various regions. Articles in both the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading that presented historical and military

\[432\] Ibid., 484.
\[433\] Ibid., 486.
\[434\] Roskovshenko published a translation of Shakespeare in the Library for Reading in 1841 (T. 45), and Sreznevskii an article in 1850 (T. 99).
information (and military-historical information) discussed the empire as a whole. Domestic travelogues described the land and people of the empire. Book reviews and advertisements for transportation directories and maps of Imperial Russia appeared with increasing regularity after the late 1830s. These transportation titles included the *Directory of Provincial and District Postal Roads in the Russian Empire* (*Ukazatel’ gubernskikh i uezdnykh pochtovykh dorog v Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 1836), which the *Bee* enthusiastically recommended by writing that, “No matter who you are, reader! [In] military service, civil service, an artist, an official of special assignments or a composer of novels and stories, it is all the same: you need the Directory of postal roads…”; other titles advertised in the *Bee* included the *Schedule of Roads from St. Petersburg and Moscow* (*Rospisanie traktov ot S. Peterburga i Moskvy*, 1842) which listed postal stations and the cost of transportation by horse; *Description of the Russian Empire* (*Opisanie Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 1845) which came with maps of the provinces; and the *Hydrographic Map of European Russia* and *Hydrographic Atlas of the Russian Empire* (1846).435

One of the most consistent ways that the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* presented information about the empire, however, was through the method of statistical description. The use of statistics in these periodicals was part of a broader European practice of using numbers to describe and analyze information. According to historian of science Theodore M. Porter, statistics “was in many ways the characteristic social science of the mid nineteenth century… Between about 1830 and 1850, it came to be defined in terms of its use of numbers, as the quantitative science of society”.$$^{436}$$ Although statistics originated in eighteenth-century

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436 Theodore M. Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, from the Enlightenment to 1890,” in *The Cambridge History of Science, Vol. 7 The Modern Social Sciences*, eds. Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge, UK:
Germany as an extension of state administration (hence Statistik), by 1830 the usage of statistics was extended to the social sciences; essentially, statistics “emerged as a tool for managing as well as for understanding the problems of this new era”.\footnote{On the origins of statistics in eighteenth-century Germany, Theodore M. Porter, “Statistics and Statistical Methods,” in The Cambridge History of Science, Vol. 7 The Modern Social Sciences, eds. Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 239. On the evolution of statistics after 1830, Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, from the Enlightenment to 1890,” 14.} Porter emphasizes that at this time, “statistics” meant “empirical data over theoretical or mathematical formulations” and that statistical descriptions were “ideally calculated for bureaucratic users and for a politically engaged middle-class audience”.\footnote{Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, from the Enlightenment to 1890,” 28.}

The use of statistics in Russian periodicals began in the eighteenth century. Official Petersburg and Moscow newspapers began publishing statistics during the reign of Catherine the Great, who had decreed that population statistics be collected and publicized (building on the tradition that Peter the Great initiated with his decrees that governmental bodies collect information and that the Sanktpeterburskie vedomosti publish that information).\footnote{Alison K. Smith, “Information and Efficiency: Russian Newspapers, ca. 1700-1850,” in Information and Empire: Mechanisms of Communication in Russia, 1600-1850, eds. Simon Franklin and Katherine Bowers (Cambridge, UK: OpenBook Publishers, 2017): 185-211; here, 191. On the development of population statistics in pre-reform Russia, see Susan Smith-Peter, “Defining the Russian People: Konstantin Arsen'ev and Russian Statistics before 1861.” History of Science 45:1 (March 2007): 47-64.} With the creation of several new ministerial journals and newspapers during the reign of Alexander I and the early years of Nicholas I, statistical information about the empire expanded to cover not only demographics, but also commerce, industry, and agriculture. The Northern Bee regularly reprinted this information (either in abridged form or as part of original articles), while the Library for Reading provided reviews of books that discussed statistics.

If official periodicals were required to publish certain types of information, however, the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading could choose what they published – so what
information did these two private periodicals select? By and large, the statistical descriptions
chosen from official sources were easily understandable figures, charts, and articles. Both the
*Bee* and the *Library* chose statistics that measured aspects of trade, industry, agriculture, and
demographics (the *Bee* also specialized in reporting on charity, medicine, mining, and
education). The first statistics printed in the *Northern Bee* in 1825 reported the population
numbers of residents in Riga, broken down by confession; another issue that year reported the
Orthodox population of the empire, as counted by the Orthodox Church.\(^{440}\) Statistical reports
from charitable organizations also appeared in 1825, such as the numbers of patients treated and
donations collected by the St. Petersburg Eye Hospital.\(^{441}\)

As charity and demographic statistics continued to be published year after year in the
*Northern Bee*, they were joined by statistics measuring domestic development (sourced from the
yearly reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and economic statistics that listed customs
revenue, the number of Russian and foreign ships in St. Petersburg, details on imports and
exports passing through Petersburg, and the amount of goods exported by Russia (ranging from
agricultural goods to natural resources such as metals). For example, an 1833 three-part article
about the Petersburg stock market and customs house (*Peterburgskiia zapiski: Birzha i
tamoszhnia*) by V.P. Burnashev included a large chart comparing imports and exports in the years
1802, 1820, and 1831 (sourced from the official *Commercial Gazette*).\(^{442}\) Statistics on mining
figured prominently in the *Bee* as well. One article titled “Statistics: On Ural Gold Mining”
(*Statistika: Ob Ural’skikh zolotykh promyslah*) discussed the importance of mining both in the

\(^{440}\) Severnaia pchela, August 8, 1825, No. 95. Severnaia pchela, November 21, 1825, No. 140.

\(^{441}\) Severnaia pchela, November 19, 1825, No. 139.

\(^{442}\) Severnaia pchela, July 17, 1833, No. 158; July 20, 1833, No. 161; July 21, 1833, No. 162. The chart appears in
the third installment (No. 162). Vladimir Petrovich Burnashev signed as “Vl. B-shev”. ĖNI “Slovar’ psvdonimov,
provinces and in the empire.\textsuperscript{443} The opening paragraph declared, “Gold mining in the Urals… is, without a doubt, one of the most important sources of Russia’s state wealth”. Citing statistics of the weight of gold mined from the years 1827 through 1834 (taken from the official \textit{Mountain Journal, or Gornyi zhurnal}, the anonymous author (who signed as “S.”) likened the increase in extracted gold to Russia’s rising imperial power: “…let the numbers speak for themselves – their eloquence is more convincing than any other kind of eloquence. We can only rejoice that Russia’s wealth is growing together with her glory and power!”\textsuperscript{444} Statistical descriptions like these encouraged readers to compare measurements – to “let the numbers speak for themselves” – and to arrive at the conclusion that Russia’s commercial and industrial position was improving year by year.

By the 1840s, however, statistical descriptions were not only being used to speak positively about the empire’s development, but also to advise readers to follow certain advice. One issue of the \textit{Bee} from 1849 advised readers not to increase their exports of hemp, citing information from one of the public lectures given by the merchant Ivan Savvich Vavilov (titled “Conversations of a Russian merchant about trade: A practical course of commercial knowledge”).\textsuperscript{445} Citing figures for the weight (not value) of exported hemp from Russia since 1797, the article quoted Vavilov’s conclusion: “These figures clearly demonstrate to us the situation [regarding] the trade of this Russian good. The almost uniform export over the course of 50 years proves that this branch [of industry] is weakening, [especially] if we take into account the figures representing the total size of Russian exports.”\textsuperscript{446} While total value of Russian exports had increased some two and a half times between 1834 and 1847 (from over 66

\textsuperscript{443} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, May 28, 1836, No. 119; May 29, 1836, No. 120; May 30, 1836, No. 121.
\textsuperscript{444} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, May 28, 1836, No. 119.
\textsuperscript{446} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, January 20, 1849, No. 15.
million rubles in silver to over 164 million), the amount of exported hemp remained flat; this was due to the replacement of hemp with other materials worldwide. Vavilov was again quoted:

“Having understood this, it is possible to see clearly that there is no perspective to increasing the export of this product. […] It would be very desirable if Russian manufacturers tried to improve the quality [of hemp]… If the West will not buy Russian hemp in finished form, then at least it can be used in Russia in various products…” Following the figures listed in the article, readers would also come to the same conclusion.

This subtle transformation in the application of published statistics encouraged readers to actively use information published about the Russian empire. By the beginning of the reform era, the Northern Bee was publishing ever more detailed versions of the above-mentioned government statistics; issues from 1861, for instance, reported statistics regarding the holdings of the state bank accounts. But by the 1860s, statistical descriptions were being issued by private organizations as well as ministries and various government offices. An issue of the Bee from April 1861, for example, reported statistical information about the Russian Steamship and Trade Society (Russkoe obshchestvo parokhodstva i torgovli), a stock company, and introduced the figures with the following observation: “The appearance of the report of this society for 1860 has been eagerly awaited among the public. From rumors, everyone hoped that the result for the past year will be much more favorable…”. After detailing the company’s finances and comparing yearly revenues and profits, author Nikolai Pavlovich Perozio concluded that stockholders had reason to worry about the management of the company and needed to “immediately take the

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447 Ibid.
448 Severnaia pchela, January 4, 1861, No. 3.
most decisive action”.\textsuperscript{449} Stockholders reading this report in the \textit{Northern Bee} were encouraged to change the company’s administration.

\textbf{Knowing the World Beyond}

The \textit{Northern Bee} and the \textit{Library for Reading} presented information about the world beyond Russian borders in a variety of ways: descriptions of foreign antiquities and archaeological findings; articles on foreign languages, literatures, and arts; descriptions of flora and fauna around the world, and reviews and recommendations of maps, atlases, and encyclopedic handbooks containing information about the world (for instance, Nikolai Grech’s 1844 \textit{General Instructional Geography} (\textit{Uchebnaia vseobshchaia geografiia}), containing entries about various countries, animals, plants, and more, was heavily advertised in the \textit{Northern Bee}). Of course, the \textit{Northern Bee} had obtained the privilege to publish foreign political news (as explained in Chapter Two), which took up an ever-increasing proportion of the newspaper as the years went by.

Perhaps the most frequently used method of presenting information about the world, however, was through the genre of the travelogue. Travelogues, as defined in recent scholarship, are “predominantly factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator” that include “ethnographies, maritime narratives, memoirs, road… literature, travel journalism and war reporting”.\textsuperscript{450} Travel writing was not new to the nineteenth century, of course, but it gained popularity in Western Europe, and particularly Britain and France, thanks to the steamship and the railroad. Tim Youngs, a scholar of English literature and travel writing, has explained that, “The first regular cross-Channel steamer began in 1820 and in the decades

\textsuperscript{449} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, April 29, 1861, No. 94.
that followed, rail networks spread across Europe… Meanwhile, huge increases in literacy rates and book production facilitated the circulation of travel narratives”. In the Victorian period, travel writing came to be associated with middle class travelers, whose accounts were published in many of the British journals that the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading sourced from.

Russian travel writing was also not a nineteenth-century innovation; the first travel accounts date to the late seventeenth century, and eighteenth-century Russian nobles wrote extensively about their travels to Europe and the Near East. But by the time the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading began publishing, it was the popularized version of travel writing that they were excerpting from European periodicals. Much like the importation of periodical formats and journalistic genres described in Chapter Two, popularized travel narratives were imported into Imperial Russia, translated (from the English, French, and sometimes German), and published on the pages of periodicals like the Bee and the Library. The Northern Bee published a mixture of original and translated travelogues from 1825 onward; the Library for Reading began with publishing translations in the 1830s, and it was only around 1840 that the Library published accounts of Russian travelers to Europe, the Near East, and North Africa. These travelogues served as both information and entertainment, and provided Russian readers with a vastly expanded worldview.

Travel writing began appearing on the pages of the Northern Bee in its first year of publication. Translated articles announced “The Latest news about the island of Tahiti” and the adventures of Lady Stanhope in the Near East; readers followed French explorers to the Antilles (taken from the Journal des voyages) and read about attempts to find the vanished La Pérouse.

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452 See, among others: Sara Dickinson, Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006).
expedition in Oceania (from the *Journal des débats*).⁴⁵³ Virtually every major travelogue written by a European scholar, doctor, imperial bureaucrat, naval captain, soldier, or self-proclaimed explorer became news in the *Northern Bee*. But the *Bee* also published original travel writing beginning in the late 1820s in the form of Russian sailors’ letters written from ports of call in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Sea. The accounts of Russian travelers through Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Near East appeared in the late 1830s, and included Faddei Bulgarin and Nikolai Grech’s own travels through Europe.⁴⁵⁴

Although the *Northern Bee* often published travel pieces, travelogues of one kind or another appeared in virtually every issue of the *Library for Reading*. When the *Library* launched in 1834, translated travelogues were already being published in other Russian periodicals; the *Library* naturally incorporated this popular genre into its Sciences and Arts, Criticism, and Miscellany sections. The translated articles covered every single continent and followed European (and in a few cases, American) exploratory and imperial missions. For instance, readers saw South America through the lens of Eduard Friedrich Poeppig’s journey through Chile, Peru, and the Amazon (an expedition also reported by the *Northern Bee*).⁴⁵⁵ The *Library* took readers to the Rocky Mountains, Mexico, and several regions in South America.⁴⁵⁶

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⁴⁵⁴ Excerpts from Faddei Bulgarin’s trip through Sweden and Russian Finland were published in *Severnaia pchela*, 1838, No. 184-186, No. 202-204. Excerpts from (and advertisements of) Nikolai Grech’s numerous travelogues also appeared in the Bee (excerpted books included N.I. Grech, *28 dnei za granitsei, ili Deistvitel’naia poezdka v Germanii* (St. Petersburg, 1837); *Putevye pis’ma iz Anglii, Germanii i Frantsii*, Ch. 1-3 (St. Petersburg, 1839); *Pis’ma s dorogi po Germanii, Shevisarii i Italii*, Ch. 1-3 (St. Petersburg, 1843); *Parizhskie pis’ma s zametkom o Danii, Germanii, Gollandii i Bel’gii* (St. Petersburg, 1847)).


up with the nineteenth-century’s fascination with the Arctic and Antarctica, the Library translated the expeditions of British naval captains to the Arctic and the voyage of the French captain Jules Dumont d'Urville to Antarctica.\textsuperscript{457} South and Southeast Asia were seen through the lens of British colonial bureaucrats;\textsuperscript{458} Australia was also seen through the travelogues of British writers, usually military officials or doctors.\textsuperscript{459} China was presented through accounts written by European missionaries and other observers who frequently adopted the stance that they were describing something ‘exotic’.\textsuperscript{460}

The Near East and North Africa received special attention in the Library for Reading due to Osip Senkovskii’s scholarly background as an orientalist.\textsuperscript{461} The Library published both translated European travelogues (describing Syria, Egypt, Algeria, and neighboring regions) and,


\textsuperscript{458} “Vid Bombeia,” in “Smes’,” Biblioteka dlia chteniia 42 (1840): 26-33.


beginning in the late 1830s, accounts from Russians travelers. Senkovskii expressed special interest in the travelogues of Avraam Sergeevich Norov (who would serve as Minister of National Enlightenment from 1853 to 1858). Norov’s 1838 book *Journey to the Holy Land in 1835 (Puteshestvie po Sviatoi zemle v 1835 godu)* and 1840 *Journey to Egypt and Nubia in 1834 and 1835 (Puteshestvie po Egiptu i Nubii, v 1834-1835 g.)* received positive reviews in the *Library’s* Criticism section, which published large excerpts from the books. Reviewing Norov’s *Journey to the Holy Land in 1835*, Senkovskii wrote that his only criticism was the book’s brevity, and that lengthy digressions and descriptions of “more color, activity and variety” is what readers looked forward to in travelogues. Later issues of the *Library* reviewed and excerpted additional Russian travelogues to the Near East and Africa, including E. Kovalevskii’s travel to inner Africa, A. Umants’s journey through Palestine and Egypt, and A. Rafalovich’s journey down the Nile River.

Travelogues describing voyages around the world were also enthusiastically reviewed in the *Library for Reading*. In an 1837 issue of the *Library*, Osip Senkovskii reviewed Nikolai Polevoi’s translation of the first three volumes of *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*, written by the French explorer Jules Dumont d’Urville. The book was Dumont d’Urville’s compilation...

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of expeditions undertaken by “Magellan, Tasman, Dampier, Anson, Byron, Wallis, Carteret, Bougainville, Cook, La Pérouse” and others, and supplemented by his own experiences on the voyage of the Astrolabe between 1826 and 1829. Senkovskii’s review covered Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Maldives, Sumatra, the Philippines, and Singapore. The review quoted harrowing accounts (like killing a shark in the southern Atlantic, shooting monkeys in Mauritius, and shooting and capturing orangutans in Sumatra) as well as Dumont d’Urville’s ecological and ethnographic observations (coconuts and coral reefs of the Maldives; “wild tribes” and “black savages” in the Philippines). Senkovskii compared some of Dumont d’Urville’s observations to locations in the Russian empire in order to give readers a sense of scale. When discussing the British free port of Singapore, for example, Senkovskii wrote:

“Singapore is the Odessa of those countries, the difference being that Singapore is an extremely important location for the largest trade in the world”. Quoting Dumont d’Urville, the review conveyed the bustling activity and multiethnic character of the city:

The entire embankment, which is called the Merchant [Embankment], was strewn with people; some rolled barrels [and] carried crates, others watched [and] hung goods [to sell]… At first glance it was impossible to recognize tribal and national differences, but [one] could understand that a strange intermixture of peoples reigned in this commercial Babylon.

Senkovskii discussed Singapore rather extensively, covering its ethnic composition, geography, and history. Senkovskii’s review also mentioned that Polevoi’s Russian translation would be met with eager commercial demand, and advised Russian publishers to perhaps switch from publishing translations of French novels to publishing translations of travelogues, which readers found both exciting and informative.

467 Ibid., 32-33.
468 Ibid., 34.
469 Ibid., 36. Senkovskii wrote with clear admiration of the British, and quoted Dumont d’Urville’s observation: “For me, Singapore was a place that I looked upon as a model city, where in the span of ten years the conclusions of Adam Smith and his disciples came to fruition and were proven in practice.” Ibid., 36.
Conclusion

The information presented on the pages of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* was a mixture of the theoretical, the practical, and the entertaining. In discussing the provinces, the capitals, the empire, and the world beyond, these periodicals remained faithful to the readership identified in the previous chapter as the ‘middle stratum’. Not discussed in this chapter was a wealth of other information relevant to the middle stratum: the performing and literary arts, fashions, medicine and ideas of health, and much more. Articles on science and technology alone could form a chapter in their own right, since the *Bee* and the *Library* devoted extensive space to these topics (indeed, articles covered telescopes, planets, Pulkovo Observatory, electricity, magnetism, gases, minerals, chemistry, biology, zoology, geography, general medicine, cholera, animal magnetism, anatomy, blood circulation, galvanism, electrification, steamships, railroads, telegraphs, and more). This chapter has emphasized the importance of the geographic principle in how the *Library* and especially the *Bee* organized and presented information. If the *Library* has traditionally been identified with the provinces, the amount of information in the *Bee* about the provinces and from the provinces has been an unexpected finding. The next chapter is similarly guided by the geographic principle, and examines the representation of the middle stratum in the *Bee* and the *Library*, first in the provinces and then in the capitals.

This chapter has focused on the types of information published in the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* during the second quarter of the nineteenth century because changes in content during the 1850s and early 1860s represented a gradual evolution and, in some cases, a dramatic departure from earlier published content. For instance, the *Northern Bee* began to devote significantly more space to foreign political news after 1848, which limited space for
other types of articles. But the *Bee* also published more provincial readers’ letters, and created new columns relevant to the empire’s expanding economy. While the *Bee* did not fundamentally change its orientation, however, the *Library* effectively became a different journal. The *Library for Reading* eliminated its Industry and Agriculture section in 1854; in 1856, after Osip Senkovskii and then A.V. Starchevskii left the *Library*, editor A.V. Druzhinin reoriented the journal to discuss literature and questions of the *narod*. These changes are analyzed and placed in a broader historical context in Chapter Seven.
Chapter Five: Identity: Social Narratives of the Middle Stratum

Across multiple reports, letters, and extracts from memoirs, the editors of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* asserted that their readership came mostly from the ‘middle stratum’ of Russian society. The definition of this ‘middle’ was ever changing: in a report to the Third Section in 1826, editor Faddei Bulgarin defined the middle stratum, and therefore the *Northern Bee*’s readership, as the service gentry, provincial landowners, impoverished gentry educated in state schools, civil chinovniki, wealthy merchants, manufacturers, and some townspeople (*meshchane*);\(^{470}\) Bulgarin’s 1846 note to the Third Section insisted that the *Bee*’s readers were provincial landowners, merchants, and chinovniki;\(^{471}\) co-editor Nikolai Grech interpreted the *Bee*’s readers through the prism of a middle stratum *narodnost’*, stating in his memoirs that merchants, artists, craftsmen, retired officers, and chinovniki composed the genuine, domestic Russian public.\(^{472}\) While the *Library for Reading* never provided such an explicit breakdown of its readership, it too published for its version of the middle stratum. Rather than use a social classification like the *Northern Bee*, the *Library* stated that its readers had certain educational qualifications that, effectively, meant the service gentry and provincial gentry, or in co-editor A.V. Starchevskii’s words, the “middle-class intelligentsia”.\(^{473}\) Based on the *Library*’s non-fiction sections, however, the audience addressed was generally the provincial gentry. The *Library* characterized its readers as being educated and knowing French, which was likely a method of lending them greater dignity and respect. Claiming so could also serve to make censorship easier, even if it was not necessarily true; in an 1845 letter to A.V. Nikitenko,

\(^{472}\) Grech, *Zapiski*, 359.
one of the Library’s longtime censors, editor Osip Senkovskii argued that a supplement translation of Eugène Sue’s The Wandering Jew should be allowed because the Library, “as you know, is read only by the educated class of Russian society, which at the same time reads French books” and, Senkovskii claimed, would have read Sue in French anyway.474

If the middle stratum was the intended, model readership of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading, how did these periodicals represent this social segment in print, and what can this representation tell us about pre-Reform Russian society? In answering this question, this chapter analyzes the contents of the Bee and the Library using the language and categories put forth by the journalists who ran these periodicals. The chapter begins with an examination of how the Library addressed its provincial gentry readership. The chapter then moves to a discussion of the Bee’s much broader conception of the middle stratum, and analyzes how provincial gentry, chinovniki, manufacturers, and merchants were represented; the chapter also explores why only some meshchane counted as middle stratum, and how additional groups – the professionals and honored citizens – were added to the Bee’s conception of the middle stratum. In exploring how the Library and the Bee classified their readers and, in turn, society, the chapter looks at how different criteria were used to create these classifications, as well as what the act of classifying meant in the context of mid-nineteenth-century Russia.

**Provincial Gentry**

Both the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading considered the provincial gentry to be an essential part of their respective readerships. Mentions of the provincial gentry could be found in the Library’s Criticism and Miscellany sections, but more often than not, it was in the Literary

Chronicle section that the provincial gentry was addressed, referred to, and invoked. The Literary Chronicle provided short reviews of all manner of new books, from novels and poetry to religious books, books for children, textbooks, address directories, medical and scientific books, and books on manufacturing, trade, and agriculture. Books deemed too low for the Library’s readers to consume were also, in a sense, reviewed; for example, the Literary Chronicle for July 1839 listed four books (with titles like *Wizard, or an Enchanting root*) and commented on them with a single sentence: “None of these four works have anything to do with educated Russian readers”.

The Library’s recommendations for various non-fiction handbooks and manuals indicate what sort of audience the journal imagined. Vladimir Burnashev’s *Description of a crown land agricultural school* was recommended as “extremely interesting for farmers” who wished to give their peasants an education in agronomy. The two-volume *Popular Manual in Farming*, written by the Library’s longtime contributor Dmitrii Shelekhov, was enthusiastically recommended since it explained scientific methods of agriculture, estate manufacturing, estate and household management, accounting, and “peasant management”. The Library recommended Al’brekht Blok’s *Instructions on the Valuation of Village Properties*, stating that, “this book must receive the full attention of farmers”. Numerous other non-fiction titles on agriculture, estate finances, and land measurement were recommended to a provincial gentry audience.

476 O.I. Senkovskii, review of *Opisanie udel’nago zemledel’cheskago uchilishcha* [sic], by V. Burnashev, in “Literaturnaia letopis’,” *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* T. 32 (1839): 32.
Indirect references to the provincial gentry could be found in reviews and miscellaneous articles in the Library. An 1839 review of Boris Volzhin’s *Village Elder Miron Ivanov, a Folk tale for Russian commoners* stated that Volzhin’s book was a commendable effort, but that it was too complex for unschooled Russian commoners (*prostoliudiny*). The review then directed readers to run an experiment with their valets, thereby giving a clear indication of the intended audience:

Do an experiment: you need only to go into your reception room; your valets are literate people; their intellectual capabilities are relatively developed… they are immeasurably higher than those to whom Mr. Boris Volzhin intended his work. Give them a novel in four volumes; they will split up the volumes and everyone will suddenly start to read, one the first volume, another the second, another the third or fourth.479

References to domestic servants and therefore gentry households could be found in the Library’s scientific articles as well. An 1846 article in the Miscellany section addressed the growing awareness of the toxicity of arsenic green dye. Citing a German newspaper report, the article concluded that, “green wallpaper, green lacquers and mainly the brightest grass-emerald color contains poison” and recommended that “Servants who clean these wallpapers and workers who affix or strip off [wallpaper] must cover their nose and mouth with a wet sponge”.480

There was little doubt that the target audience was the provincial gentry, and not the gentry living in the capitals (particularly St. Petersburg), because so much of the Library’s satire was directed at the urban gentry. One of the clearest indications that the Library’s model readership was not the Petersburg gentry came from the satirical pen of editor Osip Senkovskii. Senkovskii’s January 1843 Literary Chronicle departed from its usual format and presented a satirical story titled, in English, “New Year Nigt’s [sic] Dream”. Senkovskii told the story of a the “Sensible Reader”, a Petersburg gentleman (*barin*) who, living off money sent from his

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estate, lay around all day and demanded to be entertained by literature. The story’s protagonist was the Literary Chronicle itself, which came to speak with the gentleman and, at the risk of being torn to pieces, entertained him with reviews of Russian publications (or more specifically, about the reprints of older works, reissued collections, and old volumes republished with portraits). When the Literary Chronicle refused to opine about the humorous True and Untrue Tales (Byli i nebylitsy) of Ivan Balakirev (a pseudonym of Nikolai Polevoi, which he took from the name of Peter the Great’s court jester), the gentleman complained, “Why should I keep you critics in my service, if I must judge about books myself?” Such depictions of capricious urban gentlemen (and their “sentimental” wives) continually appeared in the Library as contrasts to the provincial gentry, who could presumably judge for themselves, and did more than just read novels all day.

Both the Library for Reading and the Northern Bee published copious amounts of information for and about the provincial gentry. Both periodicals acknowledged a certain crossover in their audiences, with the Bee writing reviews of issues of the Library (initially in a friendly manner, but by the late 1830s in a polemical tone), and the Library making references to articles published in the Bee. Whereas the Library presented its provincial gentry readership as more educated and discerning, the Bee presented this same group as more genuine and sincere (and more culturally ‘Russian’) than the Petersburg gentry. This was done through Faddei Bulgarin’s regular feuilletons, published letters from the provinces, and, after 1838, extracts from official provincial newspapers (gubernskie vedomosti), which remained a regular feature of the Bee until its closure in 1864. With these last two methods, the Bee allowed the provinces to speak for themselves. The picture that emerges from these materials is one in which gentry

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482 Ibid., 11.
provincial life was shown in the best possible light, filled with frequent social gatherings, generous charity, and various educational pursuits.

The provincial gentry first made its appearance in Bulgarin’s feuilletons in 1825, when the *Northern Bee* began its publication. Two of the earliest issues carried fictional stories of provincial landowners coming to St. Petersburg and experiencing culture shock. In “A Provincial in the Capital. First Adventure. Dinner in a French Restaurant” (*Provintrial’ v stolitse. Pokhozhdenie pervoe. Obed vo Frantsuzkoi Restoratsii*), Bulgarin presented the story of a landowner who comes to the northern capital for the first time to oversee his children’s placement in the civil service. Two former colleagues who have “entered into society” (vyshli v liudi) agree to be guardians for these children, and the landowner thanks them by treating them at a French restaurant. The dinner party apparently orders without first checking the prices, and finds itself with the following bill:

4 portions of soup (à la tortue), 6 rubles; 4 portions of beefsteak, 6 rubles; 4 portions of fish (saumon à la gêneviéenne), 10 rubles; 4 portions of pâté (pâté [sic] aux truffes) 10 rubles; 4 portions of sauce, 8 rubles; 4 portions of a roast, 6 rubles; a pie and jelly, 8 rubles; 4 bottles of wine, 40 rubles; coffee and liqueurs, 6 rubles.

The landowner is baffled, and remarks that in the provinces that bill would have been enough to buy “a whole bull, four sheep, twenty geese, thirty-seven chickens, fifteen turkeys, and two bags of wheat flour and six bags of rye flour”. In Petersburg, the landowner says, a portion of an animal cost more than the entire animal back in the provinces; the takeaway from the feuilleton was that Petersburg was illogical, while the provinces observed common sense.

The follow-up feuilleton (in the character of Akhip Fadeev, Bulgarin’s fictional provincial landowner and frequent pseudonym from 1825 into the early 1840s), attempted to debunk the alleged superiority of St. Petersburg high society over the provincial gentry. In “A

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483 *Severnaia pchela*, January 8, 1825, No. 4.
Arkhip Fadeev writes to his neighbor out in the provinces to describe the emptiness of Petersburg social evenings. Having been invited to a certain N.N.’s house, Fadeev makes several ‘typically’ provincial blunders: at first, he is dreadfully overdressed in a provincial uniform (and on his nephew’s orders immediately changes into trousers and a simple frock coat); he speaks Russian to the other guests (who are speaking French almost exclusively); he naively expects to hear about Russian literature from knowledgeable people. However, the guests who have gathered do not want to discuss literature; they can only pass criticism (and never praise) – something they learned from French tutors “who from our childhood repeated that perfection in everything can only be in Paris, and all other capitals shine with a borrowed light”. A Frenchman, whom the guests shower with praise, gives a reading that evening full of nonsense (Fadeev secretly knows French, which he does not reveal). Arkhip Fadeev leaves early and dreams that night,

that I am home in the village, in the circle of my family and several kind friends; that we are sorting through new books and journals received from the capital, and are preparing to hear a reading at the tea table – to rejoice at the good, laugh at the humorous and reprove the reproachable.

Petersburg, with its cold foreignness and slavish imitation of everything French, could not compare to the warmth of the provincial family table and good conversations with old friends. This idea – that genuine Russian life was actually out in the provinces, and not in Petersburg – received its fullest expression in Bulgariin’s 1838 feuilleton, “Autumn in the Village” (Osen’ v derevne). Here Bulgariin detailed the ways in which provincial life was in

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485 Severnaia pchela, January 24, 1825, No. 11.
486 Ibid.
487 Severnaia pchela, September 28, 1838, No. 218.
fact better than life in Petersburg. For example, having a large family in the capital was a hassle (finding housing, calling for carriages, squeezing everyone into the theater); however, “In the village, the more numerous the family, the more diverse it is, the better and merrier it is”.

Without easily accessible entertainment, village residents had to be more individually creative and “invent fun”. They treated music and literature with more sincerity, and were therefore true consumers of the arts.

Just who were these village residents? Bulgarin was explicit: the gentry of the middle stratum. “It is understood,” he wrote, “that I am speaking of an educated and not poor family, that of the middle stratum [sredniago sostoianiia], that is, [one that lives] between affluence and necessary frugality”. Bulgarin proceeded to sketch out the ideal version of this provincial family: the family of the middle stratum “reads, performs music and painting or drawing”. Moreover, it did these activities “not like in the capital, not for appearances” but (quoting Griboedov) “With feeling, with purpose, with composition!” If members of provincial families studied music, they did so to genuinely understand notes and compositions, and not simply to show off. They also had fewer demands: “in the capital, you demand a sea of harmonies in order to shake your deadened feelings, but in the village we are content with the melody”.

The ideal family also had ideal readers. Indeed, reading was a focal point for the provincial gentry, as interpreted by Bulgarin. “If they read,” he wrote, “then it is from cover to cover, and having read, they recount and discuss what was read [instead of] forgetting it the next day, like in the capital”. Unlike residents of Petersburg, who had been spoiled by an abundance of reading material and were therefore less interested, members of the provincial gentry eagerly awaited every newspaper and journal issue:

Almost every educated family receives the newspapers and journals SPb Academic [Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti] or Moscow News, Northern Bee, Library for Reading,
Son of the Fatherland, Russian Veteran (of course, without the soporific Supplement) to find out about the promotion and decoration of military men dear to their hearts; the postal day is an important day in the village! Everyone peeks with impatience through the windows [to check] whether the [person] sent to the post office for newspapers has come back.

Because of their purported genuineness and lack of urban apathy, provincial residents had more correct opinions about literature (“v provinstii gorazo pravil’nee sudiat o Russkikh pisateliakh”). Bulgarin insisted that unlike readers in the capitals, who joined literary camps and accepted the word of critics, provincial readers judged for themselves. In instances when provincial readers did become engaged in literary polemics and participated in ink warfare – what Bulgarin called “ambition” (chestoliubie) – they were no longer “real” provincials. This loss of authenticity was described with medical language (infection, illness, disease): “Ambition is disease [for which there is] a vaccine, but who falls ill with it is not a real landowner; the village wind has not yet blown the capital’s dust off [that person]!” The provinces were supposed to be a bastion of healthy common sense, in contrast to unhealthy Petersburg.

Bulgarin not only extolled the readers of the provincial gentry in his feuilleton, but also presented himself as a defender of the provinces against the pretentious assumptions of certain Petersburg writers. Bulgarin’s idealization and defense of provincial readers conveniently merged with his criticism of literary rivals, both unnamed (Vissarion Belinsky) and named (Nikolai Gogol). Identifying himself with the provinces, Bulgarin chastised these writers for presenting the provinces in an unflattering light, despite allegedly not really knowing anything about them:

But who is simpler, you or us? You, dear friends, by God, you! You have believed mister Gogol, as if in Russia there are such pretentious [people] like the ones he portrays in his Inspector General, who, inspecting everything, did not look into the house of common sense! And you took the petty Belorussian and Malorossian shliakhta for Russian landowners, and the judges from fon-Vizin’s time for a contemporary judge! Gogol does
not know us, just as neither do you, but you must remember that the cities hold onto the villages, and without our participation there would be neither literature nor journals.”

Bulgarin’s defense of the provinces against the satirical descriptions found in Gogol’s *Inspector General* came from the point of view of a middling Russian landowner living in a village. This was despite the fact that Bulgarin was a petty Belorussian *shliakhtich* by birth, a Petersburg writer by choice, and a landowner in Livonia by virtue of his income as a journalist. Bulgarin’s personal credentials would not have really mattered to his actual readers living in the provinces, however, because he took on a defense of their provincial identity (and his own popularity among those readers). As Katherine Pickering Antonova observed about the Chikhachevs, middling landowners in Vladimir province and subscribers to the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*, “Provincial readers like the Chikhachevs liked to read about people like themselves, yet no doubt disliked being talked down to about their lives by urban ‘experts’ ”.488 Even though Bulgarin presented an idealized stereotype of the provincial gentry reader, it was a positive one, and it was likely to resonate with families like the Chikhachevs.

Portrayals of the lives of provincial landowners not only came from the pen of Faddei Bulgarin, but also from provincial residents. One genre type was the “letter from the provinces”, which usually provided a description of social events. These social events (balls, masquerades, dinners), in turn, provided convenient opportunities to describe both gentry refinement and a celebration of provincial officialdom. One letter from a Kursk landowner (a certain “P-v”) published in the *Northern Bee* on March 5, 1832 described a ball that the governor Pavel Nikolaevich Demidov held for about 2,000 people of the Noble Assembly.489 The letter, titled “Letter from Kursk to the capital” (*Pis’mo iz Kurska v stolitsu*) was framed as correspondence to an unnamed friend living in St. Petersburg. Having been invited to the ball, the author wrote, he

489 *Severnaia pchela*, March 5, 1832, No. 52.
felt it necessary to describe its splendor, including the decorations, “illuminations”, and the beauty of the women. Preparation for the ball consumed the commercial life of Kursk for weeks, with “one-hundred and fifty people [working] without sleep for about five weeks”, adding to the fact “there is not a day on which there are not several lavish invitation dinners and dances. The seamstresses do not have time to sew all the outfits, [nor] the merchants [time] to order materials; jewelers, wine dealers, and fashion stores have flocked from nearby provinces…”.

Regarding the food and drink offered, the author wrote, “I will only say this: everything that the most lavish gastronomy can invent …, everything excellent that the broad nature and subtle art of Italy and France produce in the form of sweets and liqueurs was concentrated here.” More gastronomic delights were promised, with preparation for the annual Korennaia fair (Korennaia iarmarka, one of the largest fairs in Imperial Russia, named after the famous nearby monastery and pilgrimage site) already underway.

Beyond the inflated language describing the lavishness of the event, however, was a passage that betrayed the author’s purpose in writing the letter for publication:

“But how I would wish that the hateful enemies of Russia, who do not cease to spew their bile on her, could see this picture of her greatness and wealth! How surprised would they be, finding in a province distant from the capital… called a steppe, a society so exquisite, decorations so luxurious, and taste, and grandeur so refined! How ashamed would they be in their own eyes!”

To these unnamed “enemies”, the author presented a picture that asserted Russia’s greatness by virtue of the splendor of its provincial gentry. The spectacle put on display in Kursk province – in the steppe, the author emphasized – was extraordinarily sumptuous and beautiful. But this was presented as an ordinary occurrence, one of many that took place in Kursk province. The gentry were also presented as keeping the local merchants and regional artisans in business. The best of European goods and the best of St. Petersburg could be found in a city in the steppe; this, the

\[490\] Ibid.
author implied, was evidence of Russia’s distinction. (Crossing into the realm of literature, it was most likely this hyperbolic article that inspired Nikolai Gogol to write in his short story, “The Diary of a Madman”, the following passage about the thoughts of his protagonist, the lowly chinovnik Poprishchin, who slowly descends into madness: “I read the little _Bee_... I also read a very pleasant portrayal of a ball there, described by a Kursk landowner. Kursk landowners are good writers”. Gogol wrote the story in 1834, and published it in 1835.) ⁴⁹¹

Similar descriptions of social events for the provincial gentry appeared in the “Correspondence” or “Miscellany” sections of the _Northern Bee_ rather frequently. There were geographic variations, however, depending on whether the event took place in a province of central Russia or in a borderland province. One letter from a certain “N.I.” published in the _Bee_ on January 12, 1833 described a ball that was held for the Noble Assembly of Simferopol’. ⁴⁹² Unlike the letter from the Kursk landowner, where the emphasis was on the ordinariness of lavish events in the province, the ball in Simferopol’ was described as an oasis of Europeanized civilization in an otherwise “Tatar kingdom”. Addressed (as was generally the convention) to an unnamed friend in St. Petersburg, the letter set a scene of uncultivated surroundings:

> In our distant region, the rarer the social pleasures, the more remarkable they are. A social evening, a ball – [these are] ordinary, even frequently boring things for you residents of the capital. But I ask you to now transfer your imagination to that region that began to be populated by Russians practically from the beginning of this century, where the road runs through boundless naked steppe, where having reached the town you must still _search_ for houses because they are hidden behind fences, in between which the roads bend incorrectly... ⁴⁹³

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⁴⁹² _Severnaia pchela_, January 12, 1833, No. 9.
⁴⁹³ _Ibid._
Among these supposedly barren surroundings, the ball for the Noble Assembly arose with glittering splendor, boasting illuminations of various sorts, garlands of plants (laurels, myrtles, cypresses), and brilliant women.

If the Kursk landowner considered the provincial gentry to be models of refinement, and therefore a standard of measurement by which Russia was successful, the observer of the ball in Simferopol’ considered the gentry to be bearers of refinement in areas where it supposedly did not exist. Tellingly, the only mention of the Crimean Tatar population came in a passage discussing the Europeanization of the Russian gentry:

Only here and there among the crowd can you see curious murzas [murza; a Tatar title of distinction] in richly sewn robes [chekmeniakh] – all the rest… speak our native Russian language, or even half-native [ili dazhe polurolnym] French. Will you not be amused by the idea that the sons of Russia, due to the desire of benevolent Tsars and the firm will of the guiding authorities, have arranged for themselves a fatherland even here, have transferred their mores [nravy] here, and prospering, have carefree fun! 494

While dancing the French quadrille before the curious “murzas”, the members of the Noble Assembly were extending Europeanized refinement to the “Tatar kingdom”. By doing so, they were symbolically reinforcing imperial administration and its associated cultural values in Crimea; the provincial gentry, in other words, were presented as models of Europeanized refinement in the Russian frontier regions.

If the societies of the provincial gentry could serve as models and bearers of refinement, they could also, some authors argued, serve as alternatives or even improvements to what St. Petersburg could offer. Published on January 26, 1833 in the Northern Bee, the “Letter to the Publisher from Kostroma” by “A.Z.” gave a description of a ball held in honor of the former governor, Sergei Stepanovich Lanskoi. After providing obligatory remarks on the tasteful decorations, music, lighting, and attire of the women, the author wrote, “[you] could forget

494 Ibid.
yourself and think that you are in one of the sumptuous capitals of vast Russia". A different description of the provinces, also published in 1833, presented what that author saw as an improvement to St. Petersburg. In “A Letter to a friend (From Viatka)”, the author “E. Glukhoi” wrote that, having been sent from Petersburg to Viatka on official business, he was thoroughly surprised by the society that he found there. Instead of a distant place that had not seen “enlightenment”, the author found Viatka to be full of educated chinovniki, engaging and lively noblewomen, and regular social gatherings both large and small. On Wednesdays men gathered to play the card game Boston; on Sundays all “honorable” families gathered to play cards and dance until well past midnight. The author wrote, “In two weeks I forgot the melancholy and noise of Petersburg, and here in the distance, in perfect tranquility, I divide my time between service and pleasant acquaintanceship.” In short, Viatka had all the cultural trappings of St. Petersburg, including a theater that the author praised, with none of the emotional despondency and hassle of the capital. “I admit,” the author wrote, “I was afraid to lose my heart here and afterwards return to your Petersburg with… sorrow. Do not be surprised, dear friend, that I say your, and not our Petersburg: I like Viatka so much that I already consider myself a native resident.”

The 1830s issues of the Northern Bee printed many such letters that expressed a Petersburg resident’s surprise upon visiting one provincial town or another and discovering life in full bloom. Indeed, this was a recurring theme. In “A Tver’ resident’s letter to a Petersburg friend” (Pis’mo Tverskago zhiteiia k priiateliu, v Peterburge), author “S. Zavolzhskii” (a pseudonym possibly inspired by the Zavolzhskii raion in Tver’) described the transformation that

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495 Severnaia pchela, January 26, 1833, No. 21.
496 Severnaia pchela, January 5, 1833, No. 4.
497 Ibid.
Tver’ had undergone over the course of a few years. Do you remember how we once complained about the emptiness and dull monotony of Tver’ life?” the author asked his friend. “It has been close to four years that I have lived in Tver’ and this emptiness was as monotonous as the view of the houses on the main street and [river] embankment… which blended into one wall, smeared in yellow paint.” At best, Tver’ had been “a pretty postal station” on the road between Moscow and Petersburg. But even Tver’ could not escape “the current beneficent movement of Russia toward perfection [yneshem blagomysliashchem dvizheniiRossii k usovershenstvovaniu]” and the efforts of the Head of Tver’ Province, Count A.P. Tolstoi. “Visit us now, and you will not recognize Tver’,” the author wrote. Infrastructure and beautification projects had given the town a new look: “Instead of an unsightly wasteland across from the governor’s house, [all the way] to the Volga, a beautiful English garden has been planted which now connects with the Palace [garden]; sidewalks have been installed on the main roads, and Haymarket Square [Sennaia ploshchad’], on which the carts of poor villagers were drowning, has been paved.”

The most important changes in Tver’, however, concerned the social and educational aspects of the gentry. “Our civil life [zhizn’ obshchestvennaia] has been completely renewed,” the author stated. So many noble families were moving into town that there was a shortage of apartments. At the numerous “social evenings, gatherings, dinners, [and] balls”, gentry society displayed a noticeably more refined and educated taste. People no longer spoke only of careers and uniforms, but “the works of Russian and foreign literature, spiritual subjects, the lives of our great-grandfathers and contemporary [life]”. Tver’ had even become a destination for raising children:

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498 Severnaia pchela, January 16, 1835, No. 13.
Fathers and mothers of families show up in Tver’ whose goal is the upbringing of their children. They already understand that... under the current attention of the Government, they do not have to put their children in private boarding schools. The Gymnasium is filling up, for the most part, with students from the nobility... There is talk of a public library, a bookstore and a Noble Boarding School at the Gymnasium.499

As in the other letters of this sort discussed above (from Kursk, Simferopol’, Kostroma, and Viatka), the fullest expression of the vibrancy of the provincial gentry (and by extension, as was always implied, the Russian Empire) was demonstrated through a conspicuous display of luxury and splendor. Predictably, the author from Tver’ included such an account, describing in detail the ball held by the governor of Tver’ province. The ball was held in connection with the celebration of the name-day (tezoimenitstvo) of Nicholas I, which had also included a military parade of the local cavalry, a service held at the Church of the Ascension of Christ that included all estates, and a dinner for military and civil chinovniki and distinguished merchants. These other events, however, were eclipsed by a lengthy description of the gentry ball in the governor’s residence (its illuminations, decorations, food, and drink) and the associated sleigh rides and outdoor singing.

This particular genre of letters appeared in issues of the Northern Bee from 1832 until around 1839, after which letters from the provinces emphasized different topics, discussed below.500 This transformation was directly connected with the appearance of official provincial newspapers in 1838. The official portions of these newspapers provided a new space to express gratitude (on the part of the governor, or Noble Assembly, or Chief of Police, or other official provincial institutions), and thereby absorbed one of the functions of the earlier types of letters.

499 Ibid.
500 It is also interesting that these types of letters, which celebrated the provincial Noble Assemblies, began appearing after the 1831 decree, which increased property qualifications for the Assembly, and thereby restricted participation to the wealthier gentry members. Frederick S. Starr, Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830-1870 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972 [reprint 2015]), 18.
The other function that these letters had – to display the splendor of the provincial gentry, and thereby the Empire itself – seems to have gone out of fashion by the late 1830s.

With the decline of these types of letters came an increase in another type of letter about the activities of the provincial gentry: charity. Charity had, of course, been discussed in the letters from the early and mid-1830s. The letter-writer from Viatka, mentioned above, cited charity in the context of the town’s civic activities. The “chinovniki and citizens” of Viatka had collected money to pay for the medical treatment of poor patients, and had a charity theater in town that raised money for orphans, the sick, and the poor.501 Another letter in this genre, from a member of the Noble Assembly in Orël (Vypiska iz pis’ma Orlovskago zhitelia, k izdateliu Severnoi Pchely, from January 24, 1835), reported on a charity masquerade held in the town, and the 1400 rubles collected for the poor (charity events, the anonymous author emphasized, were not uncommon in Orël).502 As the various gubernskie vedomosti began publication, however, the Northern Bee increasingly quoted news of charitable activities in the provinces. Of the stories taken from the provincial presses came examples such as the 4,362 rubles raised by the Smolensk Ladies Charitable Society (Smolenskoe Blagotvoritel’noe Obshchestvo Dam) in 1838-39 to directly benefit 252 impoverished families in the province; the 1,597 rubles raised directly benefiting the Children’s Orphanage in the province of Poltava in 1842 (raised through the initiative of the wife of the governor, A.A. Averkieva, by organizing theatrical plays in Russian and French); and, also in 1842, the efforts of members of the Noble Assembly in Kaluga to help collect money for the Women’s Charitable Society, which included “three charity spectacles, a bazaar, lottery and masquerade” that raised 5,000 rubles and fourteen kopeks in assignats.503

501 Severnaia pchela, January 5, 1833, No. 4.
502 Severnaia pchela, January 24, 1835, No. 20.
503 Severnaia pchela, July 25, 1839, No. 164. Severnaia pchela, March 26, 1842, No. 67.
When the provincial gentry wrote to the *Northern Bee* about their social activities around the turn of 1840, it was no longer about luxurious decorations and opulent tables. When not discussing infrastructure or some scholarly aspect of local life, provincial letter-writers discussed charitable activities. One letter from Chernigov, published in January 1846, explained important charitable work relating to the town’s Children’s Orphanage. The author, who had come to Chernigov on unspecified business, described hearing a children’s choir in the parish church and visiting their clean and orderly orphanage. The person responsible for this successful charitable initiative was the wife of the Head of Poltava, Dar’ia Alekseevna Gesse, who established and also ran the orphanage that housed ten boys and thirty girls from four to twelve years old.⁵⁰⁴ These sorts of charitable activities were organized in connection with either provincial Noble Assemblies or voluntary associations, such as women’s organizations, established in the late 1830s.⁵⁰⁵ With the shift from provincial splendor to provincial charity also came a shift in how provincial gentry women were represented. Instead of appearing as beautiful ornaments at opulent balls, they appeared as agents of social improvement whose work earned mention in the *Bee*, a national newspaper. In the 1850s, charity continued to be the focal point of representations of the provincial gentry, with the added variation of charity benefitting wounded troops fighting in the Crimean War.⁵⁰⁶

Not all provincial gentry were praised in the *Northern Bee*, however. In an installment of his “Livonian Letters” (published while summering in Karlovo, near Derpt) in July 1846, Faddei Bulgarin scolded Baltic German nobles for claiming to have knightly ancestry and for forgetting about the contributions of the middle stratum. While the “estate of the nobility deserved

⁵⁰⁴ *Severnaia pchela*, January 10, 1846, No. 8.
⁵⁰⁶ *Severnaia pchela*, March 9, 1854, No. 55.
particular respect”, Bulgarin wrote, the “precedence of the estate of the nobility is determined by laws, and not by personal opinion, which is quite frequently either incorrect or confused”. 507 Bulgarin claimed that “Here in Russia, every Baltic [resident] is esteemed as an ancestor of local knights, and is arbitrarily called a baron”; however, noble registers and other scholarly materials (cited in the article) demonstrated that the majority of Baltic German families in the Russian empire had become ennobled relatively recently. Having cleared up this myth, Bulgarin then explained what actually made the Baltic German nobility so accomplished: the middle stratum. “Every nobility and even the English aristocracy is replenished from the middle estate [popolniaetsia litsami iz sredniago sosloviia],” Bulgarin wrote, “otherwise no nobility could exist. For its strength and power, the nobility should add the best of everything to itself. That, at least, is what is done in England. On this basis, the merit and talent of the middle estate opens the door to the edifice of the fatherland’s chosen sons.” Bulgarin argued that under Swedish rule, the Livonian nobility had increased in number due to intermarriage with Swedish bureaucrats; under Russian rule, the Livonian nobility had grown due to four reasons: first, the Russian nobility; second, the “Russian chinovkini of German descent, or natives of Livonia and Estland who came from the middle estate”; third, “the people of the middle estate from the Baltic provinces, who distinguished themselves with achievements in Russian service”; and fourth, “the clergy or wealthy citizens who have been favored by the nobility”. The Baltic provinces benefited from enlightenment and economic growth thanks to the “pastors, scholars, doctors, teachers, merchants and manufacturers belonging to the middle stratum, who have the closest and strongest influence over the people”. 508

507 Severnaia pchela, July 10, 1846, No. 152.
508 Ibid.
It is possible that Faddei Bulgarin felt he could criticize the Baltic German nobility because it was not his core readership (German-language newspapers predated the *Northern Bee* and had an established readership in Courland and Livonia), but the tsarist authorities did not approve of this criticism in the slightest. Six days after the aforementioned issue of the *Bee* was published, Nikolai Grech wrote to Faddei Bulgarin to explain what a stir the article had caused: “Yesterday L.V.D. [Dubel’t] invited me over and announced on behalf of Count O [Orlov] his displeasure with your latest “Livonian letter”. The Count had said: they write as if they are in foreign lands, where there is no censorship; tell them that this will be bad for them.” Grech concluded in his letter that, “We will start writing about potatoes and cabbage… We should be even more careful, because if Uvarov finds out about this displeasure with us, he will use all of his power to kill the *Bee* in favor of the *Academic newspaper* [Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti].” The following year, Grech wrote to Bulgarin again about refraining from criticizing the Baltic German nobility in print (despite not having warm feelings toward Baltic Germans himself; indeed, in an 1848 letter to Bulgarin, Grech called Baltic Germans “snakes behind the oven”). In an obituary for the poet Nikolai Mikhailovich Iazykov in January 1847, Bulgarin had quoted one of Iazykov’s poems (“Livonia”) that depicted Baltic German nobles as the timid descendants of once-fierce knights. Grech explained in his letter that this obituary led to a visit from L.V. Dubel’t, who stated that Grech and Bulgarin had again received displeasure from the Third Section. It appears that this second reprimand kept Bulgarin from printing any further comments on the Baltic German nobility, because no further reprimands appear from either the Third Section or the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee.

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510 Ibid.
512 *Severnaia pchela*, January 25, 1847, No. 20. The obituary appeared in the “Feuilleton” section.
Chinovniki

The ‘retailers of the press’ had a complicated view of tsarist bureaucracy. On the one hand, they were all technically chinovniki of one kind or another (whether affiliated with the Ministry of National Enlightenment or the Ministry of Internal Affairs). As detailed in Chapter Three, Faddei Bulgarin generally, but not always, considered chinovniki to be part of the Northern Bee’s readership. This was a view shared by government officials as well; in 1839, Chief of the Third Section A.Kh. Benkendorf noted that many chinovniki received only the Northern Bee and no other periodicals.513 Moreover, the Bee published information that was clearly of interest to chinovniki in various ministries and departments, such as the hiring, promotion, and retirement of specific individuals; speeches given by civil servants at the opening of provincial institutions were published in their entirety (such as the speech given by the director of the newly opened Vinnitsa Gymnasium in 1832).514 On the other hand, the Bee ran afoul of the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee in 1832 for insulting the “soslovie” of the chinovniki with an article (which was never published, and no copy appeared in the censorship file).515 The Bee did not always depict chinovniki in a flattering light, and published articles had an ambivalent attitude, sometimes praising chinovniki, yet oftentimes stereotyping and satirizing them.

This ambivalent attitude is demonstrated in one of Faddei Bulgarin’s feuilletons published in 1831. The five-part feuilleton, titled “Mores: Excerpts from the Private Notes of a Station Supervisor on the Petersburg Road, or a Portrait Gallery of moral portraits” (Nravy: Otryvki iz tainykh zapisok stantsionnago smotritelja na Peterburgskom trakte, ili kartinnaia galereia nravstvennykh portretov), was written from the point of view of a postal station

514 Severnaia pchela, January 23, 1833, No. 18.
515 RGIA, f. 777, op. 1, d. 1146, l. 1.
supervisor who had seen many different people come and go through that station. These “Private Notes” narrated the station supervisor’s encounter with three different types of chinovniki. The first was a formerly high-ranking civil servant (addressed as “His Excellency”) who had just returned from visiting a sanatorium abroad and was travelling with a French companion and a French valet. “His Excellency” had recently lost his post in the civil service, however, and complained to the station supervisor about how “everything is bad, everything is broken” in Russia. Losing his post had made “His Excellency” unfairly disparage everything good in the fatherland, according to the station supervisor. The station supervisor stated, “In general, I dare to report to Your Excellency, I notice more joy than dissatisfaction… True, it happens that some chinovnik, having lost his place and undergone punishment, grumbles – but every family has its black sheep”; disgruntled with the station supervisor’s view, “His Excellency” immediately left the post station. The second and third types of chinovniki (one was a Petersburg chinovnik, while the other an unspecified provincial chinovnik) happened to meet at the station and have a conversation with the narrator. The Petersburg chinovnik was affable, but admitted that he did not spend enough time at work because he attended friends’ dinners, played cards late into the night, and overslept. He held onto his civil service post thanks to nepotism, while doing the bare minimum at work (“So time passed until I received my rank of Titular Counselor!”). To get promoted from the ninth to the eighth rank (Collegiate Assessor), the Petersburg chinovnik was transferred to the Caucasus for three years, where he ate, drank, and played whist. The provincial chinovnik, on the other hand, had been active in his post, but

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516 Severnaia pchela, April 8, 1831, No. 78; April 9, 1831, No. 79; April 10, 1831, No. 80. May 1, 1831, No. 95; May 16, 1831, No. 108.
517 Severnaia pchela, April 10, 1831, No. 80.
518 Ibid. The literal translation is “but no family is without its freak [no v sem’e ne bez uroda].”
519 Severnaia pchela, May 1, 1831, No. 95.
had been fired; the Petersburg chinovnik observed, “Until now, I have lived peacefully with my inaction, while you found yourself under investigation and fired [thanks to] your activity”.

Although no explicit verdict was given, the tone of the feuilleton made it clear that Faddei Bulgarin (in the character of the station supervisor) considered the formerly high-ranking chinovnik (“His Excellency”) to be the only destructive type out of those described in the narrative. “His Excellency” suffered from “ambition” and “selfishness”, which were “typical paroxysms of spiritual fever”. Having been fired from his post, “His Excellency” both figuratively and literally became foreign: his entourage was made up of Frenchmen, who concurred with “His Excellency” that things in Russia were indeed bad. The indolent (yet harmless) Petersburg chinovnik and the overactive provincial chinovnik, however, were representative of typical Russian civil servants. To Bulgarin, these two types represented the reality of Russian bureaucracy:

If you compare the world to a postal cart, the so-called enterprising people are the axles and wheels that need to be greased so that matters go successfully, while protected idlers are the same as superfluous bands on the body of the cart. They are completely unnecessary for travel, but the owner of the cart leans and rests on them; sometimes they are painted, and they harmlessly live out their existence while the greasy axles and wheels frequently break down during a gallop.

Rather than paint an idealized picture of uniformly diligent and effective civil servants (which ran the risk of appearing inauthentic, and could lose the Bee its readers), Bulgarin represented Russian chinovniki as adhering to a spectrum of acceptable behavior (being a lazy or poor worker was acceptable; criticizing the fatherland, as in the case of “His Excellency”, was unacceptable). Even bribes were mentioned in a knowing, humorous manner; addressing the provincial chinovnik, the Petersburg chinovnik explained that he learned to give the right bribes

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520 Ibid.
521 Severnaia pchela, April 10, 1831, No. 80.
522 Severnaia pchela, May 16, 1831, No. 108.
at the right moments: “Bribes!, objected the provincial chinovnik, “do not say that word; it has long ago gone out of use. Say gratitude [blagodarnost’]”.\textsuperscript{523}

This ambivalent attitude to chinovniki, as illustrated in the abovementioned feuilleton, may explain why Faddei Bulgarin vacillated between sometimes including and sometimes excluding chinovniki in his definition of the middle stratum. Clearly, Russian civil servants formed a part of the \textit{Northern Bee}’s readership, and this ‘pool’ of readers only kept increasing through the 1830s and beyond. Much of this readership was also provincial; as Frederick S. Starr observed in his classic study of local administration, the apparatus of provincial civil servants expanded dramatically after 1829: “Taking the entire period of Nicholas’ reign it appears that there was a two to eightfold growth of the total staff of provincial and district governments with the greatest expansion occurring in the provincial offices”.\textsuperscript{524} But Bulgarin appeared to be speaking to a specific layer of civil servants: not to those who ranked high enough to be called “Your Excellency”, and not to lowly scribes and clerks either; indeed, scribes were mocked and crudely stereotyped in many other feuilletons written by Bulgarin, who gave his fictional scribes names like Miron Bul’bul’kin and Pankrat’i Fomich Tychkov.\textsuperscript{525} As Frederick S. Starr observed regarding the problems of provincial bureaucracy, “Among these problems none was more serious than the backwardness and incompetence of the green-uniformed army of clerks and scribes and “executive” police”;\textsuperscript{526} evidently, Bulgarin felt that this “army” was not part of his readership.

The chinovniki addressed by the \textit{Northern Bee} appeared to be those with rank (\textit{chin}), but not particularly high ones. In an 1833 feuilleton titled “Address of the Northern Bee to fathers,

\textsuperscript{523} Severnaia pchela, May 1, 1831, No. 95.
\textsuperscript{524} Starr, Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 13.
\textsuperscript{525} Miron Bul’bul’kin featured in, among other issues, Severnaia pchela, September 2, 1831, No. 196. Pankrat’i Tychkov was in Bulgarin’s feuilleton in Severnaia pchela, April 18, 1833, No. 84.
\textsuperscript{526} Starr, Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 19.
tutors and young chinovniki (Poslanie Severnoi Pchely k ottsam, nastavnikam i molodym chinovnikam)”, Faddei Bulgarin gave an idea of which cross-section of chinovniki he was speaking to. Comparing the government to a machine, Bulgarin called chinovniki its “wheels, screws and springs”.\(^{527}\) To function more effectively chinovniki needed more education, but according to Bulgarin most chinovniki treated education as a deviation from faster promotion: “Who is to blame that young people enter service without having glanced inside a university? Certainly not the Government! ... You yourselves shy away from the burden of learning, and think to \textit{win time} by entering service earlier”. Bulgarin then addressed the fathers of young chinovniki who held the same beliefs: “These fathers think that for a good chinovnik it is enough to know the order of managing cases and to be able to write an official document. This is necessary, but it is not enough”. Bulgarin spoke directly to chinovniki in this article, and explained that civil servants with diplomas had much more successful careers.

Chinovniki needed the general knowledge of arts and sciences that a university education provided, but Bulgarin admitted, “Not everyone is in the condition to take university courses, or even to be educated in gymnasiums. That is the truth! The children of poor fathers [and] orphans, barely leaving childhood, must already work by the sweat of their brow to obtain a livelihood”. For those who could not even attend a gymnasium, Bulgarin’s advice was to read anything and everything: “Read, gentlemen, read! ... You can read and write in Russian, and that is enough to begin with. Read!” Curiosity would naturally lead these autodidacts toward more knowledge: “I will not tell you what to read… Begin with novels, end with histories; start to diligently read journals, and you will want to familiarize yourselves with the subjects they mention, and you will naturally proceed to statistics, government economy [i.e. political economy] and so on”.\(^{528}\)

\(^{527}\) Severnaia pchela, December 27, 1833, No. 297. 
\(^{528}\) Ibid.
The *Northern Bee* was, conveniently, one periodical that chinovniki of lesser means could read, but Bulgarin also mentioned other social groups who could benefit from such informal instruction, groups that also composed his idea of the middle stratum: “I am not only speaking to chinovniki, but also to you, honorable members of the Russian merchantry, to you, hardworking manufacturers, to you, gentlemen landowners living in the villages!” Bulgarin concluded by stating that the *Bee* would “buzz” about the same subjects as before, and certainly not “foreign political theories or obscure philosophy. We have enough to read without that”. 529

**Manufacturers**

Unlike chinovniki, Russian manufacturers were represented in a consistently positive light in the *Northern Bee*; one method of representing manufacturers was through descriptions of industry exhibitions and awards. An article from May 30, 1829 described the opening (two weeks prior) of the first-ever exhibition of Russian manufactured goods, held in the Stock Exchange building in St. Petersburg, where manufactured goods from state and private factories were on display. The *Bee* noted that private Russian factories (as opposed to factories opened by foreigners) “could be divided into two categories: 1) belonging to landowners and 2) owned by private individuals, with the hiring of free workers. The second of these categories gives a true measure of the capabilities of our good, clever, quick-to-adopt people”. 530 A continuation of this article appeared in July 1829; the follow-up article listed the winners of the aforementioned exhibition, taken from the official *Commercial Newspaper*. The quoted portion listed the medals awarded by the Manufacturing Council (*Manufakturnyi sovet*), which had been established in 1828 as part of the Ministry of Finance. “Large golden medals” went to sixteen individuals, including “Guards Cornet Iakovlev, for excellent quality sheet iron and sheet metal”, “Moscow

529 Ibid.
530 Severnaia pchela, May 30, 1829, No. 65.
manufacturer, merchant Kolokol’nikov, for excellent brocades \textit{[parchi]}, brocades embroidered with gold and silver thread \textit{[glazety]} and frieze textiles \textit{[frizei]}”, “Major Mal’tsov, for excellent crystal”, and “Merchant Botenin, for good and cheap porcelain”. “Small golden medals”, “Large silver medals”, and “Small silver medals” also went out to manufacturers (identified by civil or military rank, or as merchants or landowners) making various textiles, paper goods, metal goods, glass, porcelain, rugs, wine, eating utensils, clocks, furniture, musical instruments, sewing needles, tobacco, and more. The list featured many Moscow merchants, a significant number of Riga merchants, and some women as well.\footnote{Severnaia pchela, July 16, 1829, No. 85.} Two Moscow merchants, the hat-maker Stuzhin and the glove-maker Poliakov, received the right to use the imperial coat of arms on their products, which were described as comparable or even equal to foreign-made goods.\footnote{Severnaia pchela, July 20, 1829, No. 86.} Indeed, in these articles, parity with foreign-made goods was the highest form of praise for a Russian product.

Manufacturers were not only presented as producers of goods for the domestic market, but also as symbols of Russia’s status in the world. This aspect of Russian manufacturing – as freedom from dependence on imported goods and a measure of Russia against foreign nations – was consistently highlighted in the \textit{Northern Bee}. One of Faddei Bulgarin’s feuilletons from 1839 explicitly stated this message; in the feuilleton titled “From what point of view should one view the exhibition of manufactured and factory products of Russian industry” (\textit{S kakoi tochki zreniia dolzhno smotret’ na vystavku izdelii manufakturnoi i fabrichnoi russkoi promyshlenosti}), Bulgarin argued that an exhibition was neither a bazaar showing off goods nor a competition between manufacturers, but an answer to a question: “to what extent does the state, marching [at the lead] in the field of industry, free itself from dependence on other states regarding
The strength of Russian manufacturing was a proxy for the strength of the Russian state, and an exhibition demonstrated “in what [products] the government is equal, in what [products] it has excelled, in what [products] it is lagging behind, what is needed, what is not needed, what we should pay special attention to, and so on”. Additionally, Bulgarin maintained that the quality of products on display reflected the strength of education and, in turn, sensibilities of taste: “The more education in a state, the more exquisite [goods] are produced”.

The *Northern Bee* also presented manufacturers and industrialists as initiators of economic and social development in ‘remote’ places. This was the case with an article from January 1836 about the private gold mine with the highest yield in Russia, at Verkh-Isetsk outside Ekaterinburg, also famous for its iron mining and smelting. Under the rubric of “Observations in the Fatherland”, the author (known only as “S.”) described visiting the Verkh-Isetsk Metal Works during his stay in Ekaterinburg for several days. The author provided a layman’s view of the operations inside the Metal Works as well as its history, and bookended his account with a description of the road to the Works and the scenery around it. Only one *verst* separated the town from the Works, and the connecting highway struck the author as especially pleasing: “…along both sides of [this highway] there are boulevards for pedestrians with planted birches, which, having been planted more than ten years ago, are now completely grown and form two shady alleys.” During summer days “one can meet those who are walking contentedly along these two boulevards. The residents of Ekaterinburg, who have no public space other than this one, consider it a pleasure that they can sometimes spend time here, in the open air, in the shade of thick birches.”

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533 *Severnaia pchela*, June 5, 1839, No. 123.  
534 Ibid.  
535 *Severnaia pchela*, January 25, 1836, No. 20.  
536 Ibid.
The author of the article considered the Verkh-Isetsk Metal Works to be a boon to the region on several accounts. The Works made “use” of the region’s resources; they indirectly created public spaces for residents; they amplified the existing natural beauty of the region. The Works also served as a model and a measure of success for other mining operations in the Urals. In a three-part article published a few months later that year titled “On Ural Gold Mining” (*Ob Ural’skich zolotykh promyslakh*, also mentioned in Chapter Four), the author “S.” again discussed the benefits of the mining industry for local residents, such as higher wages for artisans who worked at the mines.  

In addition to explaining how manufacturing and industry benefitted Russia as a whole, the *Northern Bee* dedicated articles to specific manufacturers, sometimes as obituaries, sometimes as unofficial advertisements. One article written by V.P. Burnashev in 1832 was an obituary for Onisim Ivanovich Golovkin, “the first Russian tobacco manufacturer [*tabachnyi fabrikant]*”. Tobacco consumption in early and mid-nineteenth-century Russia was, according to scholars, “associated with the educated people of the upper and middle classes who adopted the habits and mores characteristic of Western-style secular society”. Burnashev wrote that “If you, reader or female reader [*chitatel’ ili chitatel’nitsa*], have in your beautiful Bolevskii snuffbox good Russian tobacco, then of course it is no other than that of Golovkin, which is famous across all of Russia”. Burnashev wrote that many counterfeits existed that claimed to be Golovkin tobacco, but the genuine article could only be bought at the store in St. Petersburg.

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537 *Severnaia pchela*, May 28, 1836, No. 119; May 29, 1836, No. 120; May 30, 1836, No. 121. However, the author suggested not hiring so many “free” workers (*vol’nomaennye*), or peasants from nearby villages, in order to prolong the operational capacity of mines.  
539 *Severnaia pchela*, February 3, 1832, No. 27.
carrying the imperial coat of arms; Burnashev invited readers to come and visit the store whose products were exported “to South and North America, to England, to Germany and to France”.\textsuperscript{540}

But Burnashev’s article was more than a thinly disguised advertisement. The obituary for Golovkin explained his significance not only as a producer of quality tobacco, but also as a “patriot” who founded his tobacco business specifically to replace foreign tobacco sellers: “Until 1795 only foreigners conducted tobacco manufacturing in Russia. Once, [Golovkin] seriously quarreled with a then-famous tobacco seller who had told him that \textit{foolish Russians can only live by another’s mind, and that… they will never be able to make tobacco}”.\textsuperscript{541} Burnashev claimed that Golovkin personally told him the story of how he exclaimed to his fellow tobacco workers, “They eat our bread and humiliate us! We will tackle this, friends, and do it just like these foreign artisans [\textit{zamorskie mastera}]; let them see what Russian meshchane, Russian craftsmen are!”\textsuperscript{542} If in 1802 imports and exports of tobacco registered at St. Petersburg were 49,330 rubles and 5,221 rubles, respectively, then by 1830 imports were 4,534,612 rubles (of mostly raw tobacco, unlike before), and exports had grown to 615,347 rubles (of mostly processed tobacco); this was because “Golovkin provided true benefit to Russia: a breed of Russian tobacco manufacturers multiplied after him”.\textsuperscript{543} This obituary, as well as the other articles mentioned, represented manufacturers as one of the driving forces for Russia’s economic growth, aesthetic refinement, and independence from foreigners.

\textbf{Merchants}

Although merchant-manufacturers were generally praised on the pages of the \textit{Northern Bee}, the newspaper had an ambiguous attitude to the merchant estate as a whole. Articles written

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{540} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{541} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, February 4, 1832, No. 28.
\textsuperscript{542} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{543} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
with merchants as the target audience mingled with articles that spoke of merchants in a mildly condescending manner (pointing out the merchantry’s need to be more educated, to learn foreign languages, and to be more like foreign merchants). This mixture of praise and patronization in the *Bee* reflected the large degree of variation among members of the Russian merchantry, from large-scale industrialists and merchant-traders to medium-sized merchants to petty traders, and the gulf in education, behavior, and outlook that these merchants had.

There is no doubt that the *Northern Bee* had merchants in mind when it published highly specialized reviews and announcements of books and periodicals. For instance, in a review of Petr Ivanovich Ivanov’s 1826 *Review of the Rights and Obligations of the Russian Merchantry and the Entire Middle Estate in General*, Faddei Bulgarin declared the book “as necessary for every merchant and meshchanin as a passport or a ticket [i.e. certificate] for a shop”, because familiarity with laws and regulations could “serve as a defense against unjustified legal complaints”.544 Speaking of the merchantry, Bulgarin also opined that the book “will give this venerable estate very pleasant and educational reading”.545 The *Bee* also ran in-depth previews of periodicals that Bulgarin and Grech recommended. An article in an 1832 issue of the *Bee* previewed the new weekly journal *Merchant (Kupets)*, edited by Vikentii Kishkin-Zhgerskii (Wincenty Kiszka Zgierski), which contained information such as guidelines for starting merchant companies, logistics for how to ship goods (including overseas), instructions for improving factories, legal advice, and the addresses of Russian companies, factories, and artisan workshops, as well as the addresses of international trading companies.546 Books for merchants were announced as either supplement advertisements or announcements in the bibliography

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544 Obozrenie prav i obiazannostei rossiiskago kupechestva i voobsche vsego sredniago soslovija. Severnaia pchela, October 19, 1826, No. 125.
545 Ibid.
546 Severnaia pchela, February 13, 1832, No. 36. The journal *Merchant (Kupets)* was published between 1832 and 1835. Kishkin-Zhgerskii also wrote several commercial guidebooks to St. Petersburg in the first half of the 1830s.
section. An 1831 supplement advertised *Accounting, in two parts (Schetnaia nauka, v dvukh chastiakh)* “composed by the Riga merchant K.K. Klark, with the assistance of the Russian Accountant G.P. Nemchinov”; the publication was advertised as giving “the Russian merchantry an easy, native way to maintain order and clarity in [ledger] books and accounts, on which the well-being of the merchant often depends”, as well as being a textbook for the children of merchants.\(^{547}\) Other books included Ivan Savvich Vavilov’s 1844-1845 public lectures *Conversations of a Russian Merchant about Trade (Besedy russkago kuptsa o torgovle)*, the merchant V. Vasil’ev’s 1848 *Book for Merchants (Kniga dlia kuptsov*, “containing commercial correspondence, rules and forms of written commitments”), and N. Emel’ianov’s 1854 *Practical Commercial Accounting (Prakticheskaia kommercheskaia bukhgaltierii)*.\(^{548}\) The *Bee* occasionally published reviews of non-commercial books written by merchants and praised the authors for venturing into scholarly fields; in fact, the very first issue of the *Bee* reviewed the book *Experience in old Russian diplomacy, or a method of recognizing on paper the time period in which old manuscripts were written, with illustrations*, published by the Vologda merchant Ivan Laptev in 1824.\(^{549}\) Faddei Bulgarin noted that this was a useful book because it explained how to determine the age of manuscripts by the factory markings (images or pressings) on the paper.

The *Northern Bee* praised the activities of merchants through articles about merchant events (such as meetings held by merchant societies), overviews of specific merchants and their businesses, and obituaries reflecting on the legacies of merchants. The *Bee* did not pass up opportunities to report on royal attention bestowed upon the merchant estate, either. One article

\(^{547}\) *Severnaia pchela*, March 11, 1831, No. 55, supplement section. *Severnaia pchela*, March 17, 1851, No. 61.  
*Severnaia pchela*, December 31, 1854, No. 293.  
^{548}\) *Severnaia pchela*, January 3, 1845, No. 2.  
^{549}\) *Severnaia pchela*, January 1, 1825, No. 1.
in the January 7, 1826 issue of the *Northern Bee* announced that, three days prior, the Emperor and Empress had visited the hall of the St. Petersburg Stock Exchange (*Birzha*); the article stated that “The merchantry, rejoicing at this unexpected visit, greeted and walked with the Most August Pair with expressions of the most vivid delight and with shouts of Hurrah! The attention given by the Sovereign Emperor to this venerable estate [*soslovie*] overwhelmed it with feelings of the most vivid gratitude and tenderness.”*550* Articles discussing specific merchants explained how they served as models for other merchants. One obituary of the merchant Stepan Kondrat’evich Savin (from Ostashkov, in Tver’ province), written by Faddei Bulgarin in 1845, put Savin’s legacy in the context of the entire middle stratum:

> Our paternal Government acts by all means at its disposal to establish and consolidate a middle estate among us [*dlia osnovania i uprocheniiia u nas sredniago sosloviia*]. The merchantry has its privileges, its protected rights, its highest estate in the honorable citizenry [i.e. merchants with the status of honored citizens], occupies places in elections [and] in the general administration, is awarded honors, and even has separate specialized schools while having free entry to all institutions of higher education. From the side of the Government, *everything* has been done to develop the activity, endowment and intellect of the middle estate, which is so important in the balance of the state, [but] only if this estate has the mass of virtues that give it weight in civil society [*v grazhdanskom obshchestve*].*551*

Bulgarin explained that Savin had been an example of a “useful member of civil society” who, at forty-one, had passed far too early, but who had managed to become “a first-class merchant and honored citizen”. Savin had come from an old merchant family and had become a merchant-trader (*negotsiant*) thanks to the “European education” he received, which consisted of learning foreign languages and studying aspects of commerce. Taking over the family businesses in Ostashkov (sugar processing and the production of a type of leather called *iuft’*), Savin increased production and began exporting the leather to countries in Europe; with the profits, he opened a paper mill in Ostashkov and bought six ships, which he used for trade with the West Indies and

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*550* *Severnaia pchela*, January 7, 1826, No. 3.
*551* *Severnaia pchela*, August 22, 1845, No. 188.
North America. Bulgarin emphasized the importance of Savin’s business in keeping some seven hundred local residents employed, as well as “thousands of coachmen” who transported products to the port of St. Petersburg. Savin’s civic engagement was also highlighted, such as the fact that he was elected to serve as town head in Ostashkov, that he directed the Savin Bank for fifteen years, and that he helped open “a public library, a school for young girls, a charity home for invalids and a theater” in Ostashkov. Savin had earned widespread respect in Ostashkov and the surrounding region, which Bulgarin likened to “English and French aristocratic commercial families, [which] maintain their brilliance from generation to generation!” In concluding, Bulgarin wrote that Savin was “in all respects a model of a Russian merchant-trader of the 19th century” because of his intelligence in business affairs and his exceptional charitable work.^^552

Indeed, another method of positively representing the merchanty in the Northern Bee was precisely through mentions of charity. One article from November 1825 reported news of an urgent meeting of the St. Petersburg Merchant Society to donate money to the St. Petersburg Commerce School for building repairs and aid to pupils in need, stating, “The St. Petersburg Merchantry’s honorable zeal for the common good proves its brilliant status and high moral qualities”; twenty-five thousand rubles were immediately donated, with additional funds promised.^^553 Inspired by this article, an anonymous Moscow author (“Pr.P.”) wrote an article for the Bee about the charitable activities of the Moscow Commerce School, explaining that “The spread of information about the patriotic donations of citizens for the enlightenment of the youth of their estates could, without doubt, inspire competition in societies in other towns for the establishment of similar institutions”.^^554

^^552 Ibid.
^^553 Severnaia pchela, November 7, 1825, No. 134.
^^554 Severnaia pchela, November 28, 1825, No. 143. This was the issue, incidentally, that announced the death of Alexander I.
In a similar vein, an unsigned article from 1832 titled “Miscellany: About a private educational institution for craftsmen in Moscow” explained that the merchant brothers Prokhorov (Ivan, Timofei, Konstantin, Iakov), owners of a Moscow kerchief factory, had “founded a school for 50 boys from the meshchanstvo in order to teach them the craft, educate their minds in useful information, put morality in their hearts that is founded on faith, and in this way to ennoble [oblagorodit ’] the person and the craft”. The school had a public inspection attended by the Moscow town head I.M. Iartsov, Moscow University professor D.M. Perevoshchikov, technical experts, and various merchants and manufacturers. The skills displayed by the students led the author of the article to declare that “[the students] will serve as the foundation of a new generation of enlightened craftsmen in Russia, comparable to German, French and English artisans” and that “the example of these craftsmen will influence the entire estate”. The charity of the Prokhorov brothers should also, the author wrote, serve as an example to other merchant-manufacturers, who could benefit both themselves and “the common good” by establishing such private educational institutions.555

Besides publishing practical information for merchants and presenting merchants as a “venerable estate”, the Northern Bee spoke in defense of the merchantry’s commercial interests, both in print and privately to the Third Section. One such defense was occasioned by the revised 1846 tariff, which allowed the importation of “certain hitherto prohibited items” and which decreased existing import duties on other foreign products.556 According to Walter Pintner, the most significant reductions were on British chinaware, and the tariff was a largely diplomatic gesture on the part of Russia to ensure good relations with Britain (after Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel’s announcement that Britain intended to repeal import duties on grain, i.e. the Corn

555 Severnaia pchela, March 4, 1832, No. 51.
556 Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii, sobranie vtoroe, tom 20, otdelenie pervoe, no. 18932 (April 17, 1845), 332.
According to reports and private correspondence from Faddei Bulgarin and Nikolai Grech, however, the tariff had disastrous effects on the Russian merchantry. Bulgarin believed that the tariff had come about due to lobbying from English commercial interests, and he dedicated one of his reports to the Third Section to this very issue, writing on April 25, 1846:

The tariff must surely be changed… But there is a Commercial Council at the Ministry of Finance! True, but foreigners have the say there, while Russian merchants who attend, like the current town head, old man Ponomarev, are such ignoramuses that an English horse is smarter than them! Not long ago they questioned me about what Peel and his system means! They have no understanding of anything! The only smart muzhik among them is Kharikov! Now that’s a mind! To create a plan for the new tariff, a committee needs to be composed of merchants from all Russian ports (Petersburg, Riga, Odessa, Arkhangel’sk and others) and of manufacturers, [all] under the chairmanship of the minister of finance, and with at least the presence of the minister of internal affairs and the minister of state domains, who have a direct interest in trade. Several well-known individuals from various offices and several chemists, technologists and machinists could be added to the committee… The rule should be that there should be no merchant or manufacturer not born in Russia and who has no real estate. The English would buy off the devil himself!

Bulgarin may have lamented the merchantry’s alleged ignorance of Sir Robert Peel’s “system” because he had dedicated an article to that very topic in the *Northern Bee* in March 1846, concluding that the repeal of the Corn Laws was about domestic British politics and not about the theory of free trade, and that the repeal would benefit grain exporters from the plains of North America and Australia more than Russian landowners, who were told to keep their focus on the domestic Russian market.

Nikolai Grech also expressed concern over the tariff, albeit privately. In a letter written to Bulgarin in July 1846, Grech wrote (evidently in reference to merchants importing English goods) that many merchants had in fact been ruined by the new tariff because “the change in the tariff took effect in the summer, when many merchants had already paid the duties based on the earlier tariff”, although Grech appeared to take certain

559 *Severnaia pchela*, March 21, 1846, No. 65.
delight in punishing some Moscow merchants, who he called “drunkards and swindlers”, for advertising quality imported goods but selling items of questionable production; the lowered tariff would mean that people could more easily buy the genuine article.\textsuperscript{560} Both Bulgarin’s report to the Third Section and Grech’s letter to Bulgarin displayed, simultaneously, concern with the welfare of the merchantry, as well as a degree of disdain for the ignorance or deception of certain merchants.

This ambiguous attitude toward the merchantry appeared not only in private correspondence and reports, but also on the pages the \textit{Northern Bee} itself. One article written by Faddei Bulgarin in October 1840 titled “Conversation in the Gostinyi Dvor” (\textit{Beseda v gostinom dvore}) openly stated that Russian merchants were losing out on profits and commercial opportunities because they lacked sufficient education.\textsuperscript{561} Bulgarin argued that while the Gostinyi Dvor in St. Petersburg and Moscow reflected the expansion of Russian manufacturing and the strength of Russian commerce, the Gostinyi Dvor also displayed the weaknesses of the Russian merchantry: “…the strength and life of manufacturing and commerce, that is, stock market activity and the keys to foreign trade, are not yet controlled by the Russian merchantry”. Bulgarin also claimed, “we do not know of a single Russian merchant house that has offices [kontory] in foreign lands, whereas all educated peoples have their offices in Russia, and even the half-savage Asians [poludikie Aziiattsy] themselves come to us for their needs”. The reason for this situation, according to the author, had to do with the mentality of the Russian merchantry, which he illustrated with a conversation that he supposedly had with a merchant at the St. Petersburg Gostinyi Dvor. Seeing a twelve-year-old boy in one of the shops, Bulgarin asked the boy’s father why he was not enrolled in school. The merchant replied, “He, sir, is


\textsuperscript{561} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, October 15, 1840, No. 233.
literate, reads and writes, and we are accustoming him to counting the tabs”; elaborating, the merchant added, “What else does he need! After all, he will not be a chinovnik or a scholar”.

Bulgarin found this answer unsatisfactory, and asked the merchant where he sourced the coffee he sold; the merchant stated that the coffee came from a German trader at the stock market, and before that, somewhere “from overseas”. In responding to Bulgarin’s suggestion that he directly source the coffee and thereby eliminate the middleman, the merchant replied,

We are not people who write, we do not know foreign languages, and we do not understand where to write and to whom we must write. Our business is simple: buy goods from the stock market, [i.e.] sugar, coffee, spices, various dry groceries [*bakaliia*, or *bakaliia*, from the Turkish *bakkal*], dispatch in lots to out-of-town merchants, while selling in small amounts, by the *pud*, to *traktiry* and cafes [*kanditerskiia*].

Bulgarin pointed out that while this approach may have served merchants in the past, additional skills were needed such as “foreign languages, accounting – that is, the art of managing merchant account books in the foreign manner – geography, commercial statistics – that is, the wealth and production of each region, and some additional things”, otherwise, the merchant’s son “will be ashamed before his comrades, that he knows how to read and write only in Russian, which even coachmen and bakers know today”. This comparison to members of the meshchanstvo, i.e. the coachmen and bakers, was intended to make the merchant understand that literacy alone was not enough to distinguish the between members of the middling urban population – a distinction that was necessary, according to Bulgarin’s tone. Bulgarin’s article also took a stroll around the entire Gostinyi Dvor, where he found merchants and merchant women who “read ads for sales”, “tease with anecdotes about [Peter the Great’s jester] Balakirev, [from] a little book sold by a peddler”,

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*562* Ibid. On “*bakaliia*”, see: *Tolkovyi slovar’ zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka Vladimira Dalia* [hereafter TSD], s.v. “Bakaleia”.
and who told Bulgarin it was not their business to know Russian history or geography.\textsuperscript{563}

Sending the twelve-year-old merchant’s son to school, Bulgarin implied, would distinguish him both from the meshchanstvo and from merchants who simply “drink tea and count [their] income”; the message was clear: the young generation of Russian merchants needed to strive upward, expand their merchant houses, and increase profits, or in short, to emulate merchants and traders like those in “England, Holland and North America”.

Faddei Bulgarin’s conversation with the merchant in the St. Petersburg Gostinyi Dvor also touched on the concern that with an education, the sons of merchants tended to leave the family business. The merchant in Bulgarin’s article cited examples of merchant sons who, having been educated, “not only came to detest the merchant calling, but even became ashamed of their close relatives, and what is even worse, got involved with primitives [\textit{s motygami}, literally: primitive farm hoes], card players and directionless people, entered into debt, and having received their inheritance, spent it down to the kopek”.\textsuperscript{564} Bulgarin countered that this was not the fault of education, but the lack of a moral upbringing. Nevertheless, Bulgarin did return to the issue of how merchants’ sons spent their leisure time in another article in November 1841.\textsuperscript{565} The article, titled “Gas lighting of the Gostinyi Dvor in Petersburg”, concerned an upcoming meeting of the Merchant’s Guild to decide on the installation of gas lighting. Bulgarin put forth a number of reasons explaining why merchants should be in support of gas lighting, one of which was that merchant sons would stay at their shops until ten in the evening (instead of closing up at four in the afternoon, hiring coaches, and going to “such places where they leave their health, [and] their morality”). Gas lighting would also bring in customers were busy at work

\textsuperscript{563} A review (possibly of this very printing) of the anecdotes of Balakirev appeared in the \textit{Northern Bee} in 1836. The reviewer (“P.”) criticized the publisher for misleading provincial landowners by advertising “four volumes” but sending one small book in four parts. \textit{Severnaia pchela}, August 19, 1836, No. 188.
\textsuperscript{564} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{565} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, November 12, 1841, No. 254.
during the day and would extend hours of operation, which in turn would significantly increase
the revenue of shops and make them competitive with foreign-owned stores. Bulgarin also told
merchants not to fear the possibility of fire from gas lighting; as long as people were careful, gas
posed no threat, and would bring comfort to customers (much like the heating of Gostinyi Dvor
not long ago, Bulgarin added, and “Heating goes hand in hand with lighting, and gas lighting
[goes hand in hand] with enlightenment!”).566

Conditional Members: Meshchane

The extent to which the meshchanstvo constituted a part of the middle stratum was an
open question for the ‘retailers of the press’. Faddei Bulgarin did not draw a precise line in his
1826 definition, but simply stated that “some meshchane” formed part of this middle group. This
reluctance to include the entire estate reflected the fact that, just like the peasantry, the
meshchanstvo (imperfectly translated as the urban petty bourgeoisie) was subject to recruitment,
the soul tax, and corporal punishment. It is clear that Bulgarin understood the meshchanstvo to
include traders, peddlers, and petty shopkeepers as well as craftsmen (remeslenniki, also called
tsekhovye), coachmen, hired domestics, seamstresses, and other free urban laborers. Because
members of this heterogeneous estate could become prominent through the crafting and sale of
quality goods, however, the Northern Bee evidently considered the meshchanstvo’s
economically successful members (like the tobacco producer Golovkin, mentioned earlier) to be
part of the middle stratum, especially if they eventually became members of the merchantry or
honored citizenry.

Despite the Northern Bee’s tributes to renowned members of the meshchanstvo, however,
the newspaper expressed clear anxiety over the behavior of the average meshchanin. The role of

566 Ibid.
the meshchanstvo in driving up the prices of consumer goods in St. Petersburg was an issue examined by Faddei Bulgari in an April 1846 feuilleton. Bulgari wrote that Russians were living in the age of “railroads, steamships, enormous machines, manufacturing and industry”, and that this industrial age had replaced an earlier way of living:

> Everything has its time. There were centuries of poetry, literature, arts, [now] the century of materiality, tangible benefits, the century of percentages has come. The walls of wealthy homes were formerly decorated with paintings, the offices adorned with books in bookcases; now walls are covered with wallpaper or are upholstered in silk, and offices are decorated with plaster or paper decorative brackets and statues. Crafts have taken the place of arts and reason [Remesla zaniali mesto khudozhestv i razuma].

Despite the spread of manufacturing, however, Bulgari argued that consumer goods were now more expensive: “This general expensiveness stems from [the fact] that nowadays luxury, albeit in different form, has spread everywhere and has penetrated into the marginal layers of society”. Echoing Osip Senkovskii’s qualms over the power of the gentleman’s suit to make a valet indistinguishable from his master (in Chapter Three), Faddei Bulgari argued,

> Today a valet wears the same tailcoat, the same hat and the same coat as his master, and a maid does not go without a crepe hat, [and] a fashionable cloak… Tea, coffee, wines are no longer foreign to valets and coachmen, and this is why everything besides cabbage soup and porridge has exorbitantly increased in price.

High consumer demand on the part of the meshchanstvo was impacting the ability of the provincial gentry, specifically those of “modest” means (with an annual family budget of around 6,055 rubles in assignats, Bulgari wrote), to afford such “necessities”. Bulgari implied that due to the ability of the meshchanstvo to purchase consumer goods, the provincial gentry had experienced a decrease in living standards as well as a reduction in its social distinction.

However, the Northern Bee’s undoubtedly ambivalent view of the meshchanstvo sporadically shifted to a full defense of the meshchanstvo’s interests; indeed, one of the Bee’s

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567 Severnaia pchela, April 27, 1846, No. 93.
568 Ibid.
most severe censures was occasioned by its defense of the Russian meshchanstvo in relation to
the revised tariff of 1850. In the tariff of 1850, according to Walter Pintner, “Regulations were
simplified, most of the remaining [import] prohibitions were removed, and duties were lowered
on a large number of manufactured luxuries and colonial products that were not produced in
Russia”. According to the *Northern Bee*, however, certain foreign goods were now directly
competing with goods that were actually made in Russia. In one of his feuilletons from January
1851, Faddei Bulgarin explained that a reader from Moscow had sent a letter to the editorial
office recounting an incident. The reader had met a gentleman at a Moscow clothing store who
was shocked that French gloves were being sold at a deep discount. The French gloves were now
only marginally more expensive than gloves made in Russia and were thus an absolute bargain.
The reader, for his part, emphasized that he always purchased gloves made by Russian
seamstresses, especially around Christmas and Easter so that the women would not go hungry. In
light of the revised tariff, the reader passed along five silver rubles and asked Bulgarin to donate
them; Bulgarin wrote that he donated the money to a widow who sewed gloves.

It is possible that Faddei Bulgarin assumed that this defense would be interpreted like his
1846 defense of the merchantry, but in the climate of post-1848 censorship, however, officials
perceived such a defense as undermining the government. The St. Petersburg Censorship
Committee presented the article to Nicholas I, who ordered that Bulgarin and the censor who
originally cleared the article be given a “strict reprimand” (*strogii vygovor*); moreover, Nicholas
I “ordered that Count Orlov strictly impress upon Bulgarin the impropriety of this article, which
clearly proves that he has always opposed government measures” and told L.V. Dubel’t “that he

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569 Pintner, *Russian Economic Policy under Nicholas I*, 244.
570 *Severnaia pchela*, January 3, 1851, No. 2.
would not forget this from Bulgarin”.\textsuperscript{571} A report from the St. Petersburg Censorship Committee several days later formally rebuked Bulgarin for implying that “private individuals are forced to help those who were ruined or upset by the government”. The committee stated that since “The \textit{Northern Bee} is in the hands of an enormous mass of readers from all estates and of various convictions, the aforementioned article was immediately understood by many [people] precisely in the above-mentioned reprehensible and provocative sense…”.\textsuperscript{572}

\textbf{The Expanded Middle Stratum: Professionals and Honored Citizens}

Over the course of the \textit{Northern Bee’s} publishing years, the newspaper expanded its conception of the middle stratum to social groups not originally specified in Faddei Bulgarin’s 1826 definition. These were professionals and honored citizens – groups that were either too miniscule to bother singling out in 1826 or, in the case of honored citizens, that simply did not yet exist. The professionals addressed by the \textit{Bee} were scholars and teachers with institute or university degrees as well as the graduates of specialized and technical schools established in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Together with landowners and chinovniki, teachers were clearly members of the relatively educated provincial societies that the \textit{Northern Bee} considered part of its readership. Teachers sent correspondence to the \textit{Bee} stating as much; in February 1825, the \textit{Northern Bee} published a letter from a teacher (“V.M.”, from “District town T.”) working in a township school.\textsuperscript{573} The author wrote that he had moved back to his district twenty-two years prior (after having earned his degree from St. Petersburg University); “since then, I live in a small town, diligently working as a Teacher in the local township School (\textit{v prihodskom Uchilishche}), and

\textsuperscript{571} L.V. Dubel’t, [Zapiska, 6 January 1851], quoted in \textit{Vidok Figliarin}, 577.  
\textsuperscript{572} “Tsenzura v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolai I,” \textit{Russkaia starina} No. 9 (1903): 649-51.  
\textsuperscript{573} \textit{Severnaia pchela}, February 10, 1825, No. 18. \textit{Severnaia pchela}, February 12, 1825, No. 19.
dedicating the rest of my time to reading News and Journals received from both Capitals. Since the time of the eternally-remembered year of 1812, the desire to read news has markedly spread”. The author explained that he read periodicals thanks to the “Venerable local residents” who, “pitching in with their small incomes”, bought shared subscriptions. The rest of the letter called attention to the decline in the quality of articles in Notes of the Fatherland (1818-1830) published by P.P. Svin’in, which is no doubt the real reason why the Northern Bee chose to publish the correspondence.

The opposite of the teacher in the above-mentioned article (who had a university diploma and read multiple periodicals), appeared in an April 1832 feuilleton titled “Mores: A District Private Practice Teacher. An Issue in a Non-Issue. Letter to the Publishers from the non-administrative town Backwoods, in NN. Province, NN. District”. Written from the point of view of the fictional “Ivan Russopetov” (Faddei Bulgarin), the feuilleton addressed the difficulties of provincial education for parents did not want to, or could not send their children to state schools:

I want to have a conversation with you about those sensible parents of the gentry estate and the upper merchantry who comprehend that the basis, beginning and end of a good upbringing must be absolute knowledge of the Russian language, domestic History, Geography, Statistics and the domestic Legal System, but who do not have the convenience to carry out their wishes for the benefit of their children.574

The feuilleton described the fictional author’s visit to the residence of an old work colleague (who was “one of these sensible parents” and “a kind and not foolish person [who] shaves his beard” and was therefore modern), a provincial landowner who had hired a seminary school dropout to educate his three sons and two daughters. Bulgarin’s description of the teacher was intended to immediately disqualify him in the eyes of readers: the teacher had a “giant head”, a long crooked nose, rosacea, long messy hair, and boots of different sizes. The teacher’s corrections to the children’s notebooks were full of mistakes, which the teacher defended by

574 Severnaia pchela, April 26, 1832, No. 94.
stating that he was simply following the misprints in the grammar book. Baffled by this “barbarism”, the fictional author asked the father why he had hired such a strange person (chudak); the father explained that no better alternatives existed, since he did not want to hire a French tutor, and educated Russians were more likely to join the civil service than to work as privately practicing teachers for a modest salary. “And so,” the father concluded, “our national upbringing will be insufficient until an estate of private teachers and governesses is formed in Russia, and until our Littérateurs and Scholars… will diligently compose children’s textbooks”.

Such an estate was, ideally, to be formed under the umbrella of “honored citizens”, the soslovie created in 1832. Bulgarin’s feuilleton about the “District Private Practice Teacher” concluded that this new estate would be the foundation of Russia’s middle stratum:

“The Supreme Manifest on the establishment of a new estate of Honored Citizens has instilled in me hope that a middle stratum [srednee sostoianie], necessary in a well-ordered State, will finally form among us”. The new estate would have two main functions; first, it would be made up of “governesses, private teachers, artists, stewards [upraviteli], [and] heads of factories” who would supplant the foreigners who had taken up these posts in Russia (or in some cases, created them in the first place). Second, the new estate would convey privileges and preserve social order by redirecting ambitious individuals out of the nobility: “The title honored citizen, sparing the useful and excellent member of society from corporal punishment, the soul tax and recruitment, will eliminate the desire to climb into ranks and into the nobility, which has infinitely multiplied, and will direct smart, educated and hardworking people into other occupations”.

The Northern Bee commended the creation of an honored citizenry because it seemed to resemble the newspaper’s own ideal version of the middle stratum, characterized by enlightened

\[575\] Ibid.
and prosperous manufacturers, merchants, artists, and professionals. As Alison Smith has argued, however, honored citizens in pre-Reform Russia were “instead an anomaly within a largely unchanged society – an estate of individuals with unusual freedoms rather than a coherent class”.  

576 Articles in the *Bee* that featured honored citizens did not differ from those the newspaper ran about distinguished merchants and manufacturers; ultimately, the creation of the honored citizenry did not lead to the middle stratum that the *Bee* had in mind.

**Conclusion**

In answering the question of how the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* represented their readers in print, we have observed the construction of a public based not only on educational and socio-economic criteria, but also behavioral criteria. For both the *Library* and the *Bee*, gentry readers had to be both geographically provincial and follow a code that entailed secular, enlightened behavior and some measure of country work. For the *Bee*, chinovniki – whether urban or provincial – only qualified as the middle stratum public if they came from the middle ranks (*chiny*) and did not behave in ‘foreign’ ways. Manufacturers and merchants who were secular and relatively educated were solidly middle stratum, while meshchane only counted if they were financially successful, somewhat educated, and preferably on their way to join the honored citizenry. Professionals and honored citizens joined the *Bee’s* conception of a middle stratum public since they shared some characteristics of the bourgeoisie on the pages of Western journals that served as models and sources.

This emphasis on behavior was directly connected to the porous and fluid nature of Russia’s middle groups in the middle of the nineteenth century. As historian Alexander Martin has argued, the “middling sort” was the successful creation of Catherine the Great’s imperial

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576 Alison Smith, “Honored Citizens and the Creation of a Middle Class in Imperial Russia,” *Slavic Review* 76:2 (Summer 2017): 327-349; here, 337.
social project; by the mid-nineteenth century, however, this middle stratum was no longer singularly loyal to the state that had created it. As literary scholar Catriona Kelly has observed, mid-nineteenth century Russia had a “very diverse intellectual culture” in which the middling groups articulated a range of ideas, from official conservative, to Slavophile, to liberal, to radical. Since the middle stratum was diverse both in social origin and intellectual belief, behavior came to be an increasingly important marker for conservatives like Senkovskii and Bulgarin, as well as for the emerging intelligentsia.

If the creation of publics and new classifications of Russian society could be done through periodicals like the Library or the Bee, then other periodicals could do so as well. This came as an unpleasant surprise to journalists like Faddei Bulgarin; when Bulgarin wrote to the Third Section in March 1848, he attacked what were, effectively, elements of the middle stratum. Writing to director L.V. Dubel’t about alleged signs of communism in N.A. Nekrasov and I.I. Panaev’s Contemporary and A.A. Kraevskii’s Notes of the Fatherland, Bulgarin declared that the readers of these periodicals were “teachers, generally ignoramuses who grabbed a superficial Western education, squandered nobles who have sipped semi-enlightenment, ruined petty merchants, petty kantonisty [sons of soldiers] in service, students, the enormous mass of petty chinovniki and poor officers, and [untalented] writers…” Moreover, Bulgarin alleged that these periodicals were allowed to propagate ideas that undermined autocracy because the censorship apparatus was staffed by censors with unreliable social origins or ideological beliefs: Professor A.L. Krylov, Bulgarin wrote, was “a popovich”; A.I. Freigang, “the son of a doctor”; A.N. Ochkin, “the son of a financially ruined merchant”; Professor S.S. Kutorga, “a popovich”; Professor A.V. Nikitenko “was a serf…[and] is laying mines underneath Russia”; Professor I.I.

577 Martin, Enlightened Metropolis, passim, but especially 177, 292-293, 294-299.
578 Kelly, Refining Russia, 110.
579 [F. Bulgarin], “O tsensure i kommunisme v Rossii,” March 6, 1848, in Vidok Figliarin, ed. Reitblat, 546.
Sreznevskii came “from Malorossia...[and was] an extreme Slavophile”; A.I. Mekhelin was “a Finn” and “worthless”. 580

Bulgarin’s attempt to draw ever-narrower circles for his public was tacit acknowledgement that the middle stratum was rapidly growing and differentiating. His fragmented representation of the middle stratum increasingly relied on behavior as an identifying marker; if in 1826 Bulgarin defined the middle stratum in more or less general terms (the service gentry, provincial landowners, civil chinovniki, wealthy merchants, manufacturers, and some townspeople), by 1848 he had to clarify that squandered landowners, improperly educated gentry, petty chinovniki, and petty, ruined merchants fell outside his classification of the middle stratum, or the genuine Russian public. Bulgarin was not alone in defining the middle stratum based on reading habits and behavior – indeed, his rival Vissarion Belinsky did just the same when he defined the “educated middle class...as a diverse group united by a tendency to read and wear Western-style clothing”. 581 Besides competing for readers, what these two journalists disagreed on, fundamentally, was the function of the middle stratum in Russian society: should it be conservatively or liberally minded? Should it be the base of autocracy, or the engine of reform? That question, and how critics defined the middle stratum, is examined in the following chapter.

580 Ibid., 543-544.
Chapter Six: Reactions: The Literary Marketplace

The appearance of the Northern Bee in 1825 and the Library for Reading in 1834 elicited an unprecedented intensity of polemics from poets, critics, novelists, journalists, and others. Criticism of the Bee and the Library centered on three main issues: putting commercial profits above (or instead of) aesthetic or philosophical values, spreading bad taste among an undiscerning middle stratum public, and using dishonorable or controversial tactics to increase the popularity of their periodicals (and in the case of the Bee, writing to the Third Section to tarnish rival periodicals). Critics writing after the closing of the Bee and the Library in the 1860s would level additional charges: the Bee and the Library held back the development of Russian literature and harmed the formation of a unified public consciousness and culture. Many of the criticisms against the Bee and the Library – their commercialism, their spread of bad taste, their being harmful to the creation of a unified Russian culture – would be repeated by intelligentsia writers of varying ideological beliefs in the post-reform period to criticize popular, or mass literature (lubochnaia literatura).\(^{582}\)

Concern with commercial Russian literature can be traced back to the late eighteenth century, a period that saw the privatization of printing, advances in printing technology, and the beginning of professionalization in publishing.\(^{583}\) These developments simultaneously created both the intellectual publisher and the trade publisher; the latter, according to Gary Marker, “warmly embraced the apparently bourgeoning market for the popular adventure stories and romances” like Matvey Komarov’s Adventures of the English Lord George and his version of the

\(^{582}\) Jeffrey Brooks, When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1985 [reprint 2003]), 295-352.

tale of the bandit Van’ka Kain. The success of commercial literature depended on a figurative and literal marketplace, where consumers would purchase materials to read just as they would foodstuffs, clothing, or household wares. The influence of the marketplace on literature caused consternation among many educated Russians at the turn of the nineteenth century, but such fears were not unique to Russia; nineteenth-century conservative English critics, for example, also worried that the marketplace would be harmful to literature and to their understanding of culture because it would reduce everything to a money transfer. Moreover, Romanticism – the dominant philosophical trend at the turn of the nineteenth century – set literature (and the arts in general) the task of capturing the spirit of the age; although many Romantic writers successfully negotiated the marketplace, the tension between aesthetics and commerce still persisted.

What set Russian concerns apart, I would argue, was the context of Russia’s Westernization: materialistic, commercial literature was perceived as threatening the creation of Russia’s own secular literary tradition; by extension, commercial literature threatened the completion of Russia’s Westernization, because every civilized European nation was supposed to have its own ‘proper’ literature. Of course, not every educated Russian shared this fear, as illustrated by Nikolai Karamzin’s well-known article “The Book Trade and the Love of Reading in Russia”, published in the journal Herald of Europe (Vestnik Evropy) in 1802. Karamzin had optimistically observed that “the noble ladies from the countryside during the St. Macarius fair [Makar’ev fair in Nizhnii Novgorod] ‘stock up’ not only on mobcaps but also on books. Formerly traders traveled through the villages with ribbons and rings; now they travel with

But others, like the Romantic poet Konstantin Batiushkov, displayed concern that the marketplace was distorting and deforming the proper course of Russian literature. Writing in 1811, Batiushkov provided a description of the book trade in Moscow that evinced anxiety over the possibility that the marketplace was making Russian literature uniquely “disgraceful”:

Anyone who has not visited Moscow does not know that it is possible to deal in books exactly the way one deals in fish, furs, vegetables, etc., without taking literature into account at all; he does not know that here there exists a translation factory, a journal factory, and a novel factory, and that book tradesmen buy learned goods, that is, translations and [original] works, by weight, repeating over and over again to the poor authors: not quality but quantity, not style but the number of pages! I am afraid to glance into a shop, for, to our shame, I think that there is not a single nation that has or ever has had such a disgraceful literature.

Batiushkov concluded that thankfully, such materialistic literature had a short life span and then disappeared into the provincial trade fairs, but his views expressed a belief common among many Westernized Russians, namely, that commerce was fundamentally harmful to Russian literature. These early reactions informed the assumptions and attitudes of critics to the publication of profit-driven periodicals like the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading.

Parallel to processes occurring in Europe in the early nineteenth century, Russian publishing underwent further professionalization in the 1820s that effectively created the profession of the journalist. Professionalization included acquiring knowledgeable staff and technical equipment, adhering to a regular publishing schedule, and standardizing payments to writers. The Northern Bee, for example, was published on a steam-powered press after 1829 (Grech acquired the first steam-powered printing press in Russia), and Nikolai Grech and Faddei

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Bulgarin were careful to ensure the timely delivery of their newspaper to subscribers, as correspondence indicates. As T.S. Grits, V.V. Trenin, and M.M. Nikitin explained, publications like the *Polar Star*, *Northern Bee*, *Moscow Telegraph*, and the *Library for Reading* and booksellers like A.F. Smirdin played an essential role in the professionalization and commercialization of Russian letters; indeed, the authors concluded that, “The first journalists in Russia in the narrow sense of the word were Bulgarin and Senkovskii”.

Against the background of a gradually expanding literary marketplace and increased professionalization, the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* were the manifestations of genres entirely new to Russia: the private daily newspaper, and the thick encyclopedic journal (although Polevoi’s *Moscow Telegraph* is considered a forerunner to the thick journal). The polemics against these periodicals were, as discussed above, motivated both by commercial competition as well as philosophical or ideological concerns. Critics with views as varied as the liberal Westernizers, Slavophiles, populists, and radicals all agreed that the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* were harmful because these publications represented the triumph of the marketplace and a version of shared Russian culture that was unacceptable (although they disagreed on what an acceptable shared culture should look like). Critics also pointed to the middle stratum audience as problematic because it read anything and everything indiscriminately, and thus could not recognize or appreciate ‘proper’ literature. Accordingly, while the previous chapters explored how the ‘retailers of the press’ defined and represented their readership, this chapter looks at how literary and ideological critics of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* characterized these publications, and how the polemical arguments touched on the issue of a middle stratum readership.

590 *Severnaia pchela*, July 16, 1829, No. 85.
Salon Culture and the “Literary Aristocracy”: 1820s – early 1830s

Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin were well-established Petersburg journalists by the time the *Northern Bee* began publication. Grech’s literary and political journal *Son of the Fatherland* had been in print since 1812 and had unusual longevity, if not large subscription numbers. In the late 1810s and early 1820s, Nikolai Grech was well acquainted with established literary figures like Derzhavin, Karamzin, Zhukovsky, and Prince P.A. Viazemskii; Viazemskii even wrote in 1818 that *Son of the Fatherland* could be considered the unofficial organ of the Arzamas Society since many members had published in the journal. Grech’s writings, such as his Russian language textbooks, short histories of Russian literature, and particularly his “Journey to France, Germany and Switzerland in 1817”, were both widely read and praised by educated Russians. Bulgarin, who had joined the staff of *Son of the Fatherland* in 1819, also came to know the leading literary figures of Petersburg’s salon culture. Although Iurii Lotman described Bulgarin as “an almost inconspicuous figure in Russian literature” prior to the publication of the *Bee*, Bulgarin had in fact been publishing the journal *Northern Archive* (*Severnyi arkhiv*) and its supplement *Literary Leaflets* (*Literaturnye listiki*) from 1822 and 1823, respectively. The *Northern Archive* was a journal for educated Russians that published historical primary sources; *Literary Leaflets*, as described in Chapter One, was where Bulgarin debuted the feuilleton style of writing, which he developed to great acclaim in the *Northern Bee*.

This, then, was the context in which the *Northern Bee* appeared in January 1825, and the initial critical reception appears to have reflected the status of Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin’s personal and professional relationships with other Petersburg writers. Both Grech and

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Bulgarin knew future-Decembrists A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and Kondratii Ryleev, editors of the financially successful and professionally innovative almanac *Polar Star (Poliarnaia zvezda, 1823-25).*\(^{594}\) Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, who maintained a friendship with Grech and Bulgarin both before the Decembrist revolt and during his exile in the Caucasus, responded positively to the appearance of the *Northern Bee.* In the review essay of the 1825 volume of the *Polar Star,* Bestuzhev-Marlinsky wrote that the *Bee* had filled a much-needed gap:

> We used to lack a newspaper with vital news which would combine political and literary reports: Messrs. Grech and Bulgarin have given us one – their *Northern Bee.* Diverse contents, fast news reporting, one-day publication schedule, and its very form – it has fully met its own goals. Every class and every age-group will find something for itself in it.\(^{595}\)

Ryleev had more complex dealings with the editors of the *Bee.* Grech recalled in his memoirs that Ryleev liked to visit his office to read periodicals and good-naturedly debate Grech’s support for autocracy;\(^{596}\) Ryleev’s ideological disagreements with Bulgarin in early 1825 prompted the future-Decembrist leader to famously threaten, half-jokingly, that after the success of the revolution, he would chop off Bulgarin’s head on the pages of the *Bee.*\(^{597}\) But these were not anti-commercial criticisms, and Ryleev remained on good terms with Bulgarin; indeed, Ryleev even bequeathed all his personal papers to Bulgarin following his arrest in December 1825.\(^{598}\)

Writers and periodicals with an anti-commercial outlook had a substantially different reaction to the *Northern Bee.* As soon as Bulgarin and Grech’s *Northern Bee* proved successful, a key section of society, what William Mills Todd III calls ‘familiar associations’, began

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594 The Polar Star’s innovations are discussed in Grits, Trenin, and Nikitin, *Slovesnost’ i kommertsia,* 152-153.
596 Grech, *Zapiski,* 308-312.
597 Lotman, *Pushkin,* 131.
598 Ibid.
vigorously opposing what they saw as the vulgarization and debasement of Russian literature and journalism. These associations of the era of Alexander I (based on patronage, salon culture, and the distribution of manuscripts) were slow to react to the commercialization of literature and, by the mid to late-1820s, found that they were no longer in charge of fashioning literary tastes and public opinion. One such ‘familiar association’, the Wisdom Lovers (Liubomudry), published the short-lived almanac Mnemosyne (Mnemozina) from 1824 to 1825 under the editorship of Wilhelm Küchelbecker (Vil’gel’m Kiukhel’beker) and Prince V.F. Odoevskii. Mnemosyne was not a commercial enterprise but an intellectual one; Küchelbecker, who hosted a kruzhok (circle) of friends sharing anti-commercial values, published Mnemosyne with his own money. This anti-commercial bias was not likely to have made Mnemosyne welcome the appearance of the Northern Bee, but the Bee’s tactics in undercutting competitors made the editors of Mnemosyne strongly critical. The incident was one of information theft: A.I. Odoevskii, who would later be exiled for participating in the Decembrist revolt, wrote to his cousin Prince V.F. Odoevskii in June 1825 that Bulgarin had been given an advance copy of a yet-unpublished volume of Mnemosyne by Grech, and that Bulgarin had printed one of the stories in the Northern Bee. A.I. Odoevskii wrote that Küchelbecker, who had given the copy to Grech, “was so enraged by the betrayal that he told [Grech] everything he thought about him”. The manners of polite society, practiced by the men (and women) of familiar associations who were accustomed to honest, ‘gentleman editors’ like Nikolai Karamzin and Baron A.A. Del’vig, were being flagrantly violated by editors whose primary concern was to give their

601 Grits, Trenin, and Nikitin, Slovesnost’ i kommertsiiia, 154.
603 Todd III, “Periodicals,” 46.
publication a commercial edge. On another level, members of familiar associations disdained the
new, profit-driven journalists and publishers for their espousal of an entirely different set of
values and for their willingness, if not total bias, to cater to the marketplace.

Professional, market-oriented periodicals criticized the *Northern Bee* as an ordinary
practice of commercial competition. The primary competitor was Nikolai Polevoi’s journal
*Moscow Telegraph*, which launched the same year (1825) and competed for the same middle-
stratum readership; according to Chester Rzadkiewicz, the first few issues of the *Moscow
Telegraph* stated that the journal would publish for “the ‘middle ranks’ of merchants, craftsmen,
ordinary government workers (chinovniki), and provincial gentry”. From 1825 through 1827,
the *Bee* and the *Telegraph* traded polemics every few issues (in what Polevoi dubbed the
“journal wars”), focusing largely on misspellings, grammatical mistakes, incorrect facts, and
even out-of-date fashion advice. With this nitpicking criticism, the *Bee* and the *Telegraph* tried
to take away each other’s subscribers, but the ink warfare ended in 1827 with a truce of sorts.
Prince P.A. Viazemskii, who had helped Polevoi launch and edit the *Telegraph*, left that year
after a dispute with Polevoi over the *Telegraph*’s commercial direction.

Criticism of the *Northern Bee* in the 1820s and early 1830s also took place in the context
of a gradually developing, broader debate between the so-called “aristocratic” and “plebeian”
journalism. As literary histories explain, Grech, Bulgarin, and Polevoi (“plebeians”) joined
together in 1830-31 to attack the “literary aristocracy”, also known as the “Pushkin pleiad”
(which included A.A. Del’vig and P.A. Viazemskii), which published the almanac *Northern
Flowers (Severnye tsvety)* and the journal *Literary Gazette (Literaturnaia gazeta)*. The

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604 Rzadkiewicz, “Polevoi’s *Moscow Telegraph* and the journal wars of 1825-34,” 65.
605 Ibid., 70.
immediate catalyst for the polemics between the “Pushkin pleiad” and Grech, Bulgarin, and Polevoi appears to have been a disagreement over Nikolai Karamzin, who was quoted earlier in this chapter. Grech and Bulgarin had tried to claim Karamzin as their own, so to speak, while Polevoi appeared to be rejecting Karamzin’s *History of the Russian State* with his explicitly *narodnyi* publication, *History of the Russian People*. Neither angle suited the “Pushkin pleiad”, who considered Karamzin’s legacy (as a gentleman-publisher and man of letters) very much their own.

Beyond charges of “literary aristocratism”, the sometimes-dishonorable tactics used by the editors of the *Northern Bee*, usually Faddei Bulgarin, for the sake of commercial success drew criticism from a wide array of writers and periodicals. Faddei Bulgarin’s use of the Third Section as an arbiter in the literary marketplace was a particular cause for criticism of the *Northern Bee*, initiated by Alexander Pushkin. A “steady stream of secret denunciation”, in Isaiah Berlin’s words, flowed from Bulgarin’s pen to target rival periodicals; his reports to the Third Section accused M.P. Pogodin, Prince P.A. Viazemskii, A.S. Pushkin, N.A. Polevoi (until their truce), V.P. Titov, S.P. Shevyrev, V.F. Odoevskii, and the Kireevskii brothers Ivan and Petr of being “liberals” from 1826 through 1828; later, from 1846 through 1851, Bulgarin denounced A.A. Kraevskii, V.G. Belinsky, N.A. Nekrasov, and several others as being socialists, atheists, communists or communist-sympathizers. Although many suspected that Bulgarin’s denunciations were responsible for the closing of several publications in the 1830s, the recent publication of Bulgarin’s reports indicate that they were actually ineffective, and that other factors were responsible for shutting down rival periodicals. Furthermore, scholarship by Abram

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608 Ibid., 88. Rzadkiewicz, “Polevoi’s ‘Moscow Telegraph’ and the journal wars of 1825-34,” 77-79.

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Reitblat has demonstrated that many writers and publishers wrote denunciations to the Third Section to target rivals, and that Bulgarin’s collaboration was not unique.

Pushkin’s surprise discovery that Bulgarin was an agent of the Third Section (caused by the passing of his Boris Godunov manuscript from Tsar Nicholas I to the Third Section to Bulgarin) led him to label Bulgarin with the epigraph “Vidok Figliarin”, after Eugène François Vidocq, a French journalist and police spy. Pushkin published two articles in the Telescope (Teleskop, 1831-36) in 1831 that hinted at Bulgarin’s secret occupation: “The Triumph of Friendship, or Aleksandr Anfimovich Orlov Justified” and “A Few Words About Mr. Bulgarin’s Little Finger, and About Other Things”, written under the pseudonym Feofilakt Kosichkin. The first article compared Bulgarin to the Moscow chapbook novelist A.A. Orlov, who wrote unauthorized sequels to Bulgarin’s novels; Orlov was depicted as selling his books, while Bulgarin as selling his honor. The second article mixed elements of Bulgarin’s biography with the plot of Ivan Vyzhigin (Bulgarin’s bestselling novel in 1829); Pushkin included a fictional table of contents for a satirical sequel to Ivan Vyzhigin that included “Chapter II. Vyzhigin’s first libel. The Garrison” and “Chapter XVI: Vidocq or Down with Masks!”. Other writers picked up on the epigraph as well as the comparison to A.A. Orlov and applied this to criticism of the Bee; for instance, the Russian Veteran’s Literary Supplement mockingly compared one of Orlov’s books in 1839 to an article written by Bulgarin in the Northern Bee.

As for depictions of the Northern Bee’s readership, it was practically axiomatic that the Bee was the paper of Russian civil servants, or chinovniki. A.V. Nikitenko recalled visiting Petrozavodsk in 1834 and seeing that “chinovniki read nothing but the Northern Bee, in which

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611 Quoted in Frazier, Romantic Encounters, 77.
612 Vidok Figliarin, 443.
they believe as in the Holy Scripture”. Fictional depictions of the Bee’s readership relied on this well-established association: as mentioned in the previous chapter, the lowly Petersburg chinovnik Poprishchin reads the Bee while descending into madness in Nikolai Gogol’s 1835 short story “The Diary of a Madman”. Observers grouped both provincial and urban chinovniki as readers of the Bee; considering the Bee’s own claim on chinovniki and the Third Section’s corroboration that many chinovniki only received the Bee (in Chapter Five), these assessments were accurate.

**Language, Taste, Commercialism, and “Provincial” Readers: 1830s – 1840s**

The French literary scholar André Meynieux marked 1834, specifically the publication of the Library for Reading, as the beginning of the Russian literary marketplace. Although this designation ignores commercial publishing from the eighteenth century, the emphasis on 1834 as a pivotal year is not incorrect. That was the year that Vissarion Belinsky began his journalistic career as literary critic for the Telescope and A.F. Smirdin launched the Library for Reading with Osip Senkovskii and Nikolai Grech as editors. The Library was an immediate success: Smirdin’s professionalism in paying larger salaries in a timely manner attracted most major and many minor writers, and the thematic range covered by Russia’s first thick journal brought in subscriptions of 5,000 to 7,000 in the first few years of publication, at a time when most periodicals had around 1,000 subscribers. The Library’s large subscription numbers caused consternation on the part of rival journals (including, among others, the Telescope; the Moscow Observer (Moskovskii nabliudatel’), established by S.P. Shevyrev in 1835 as a rival to the Library; and the Contemporary (Sovremennik), Alexander Pushkin’s short-lived venture in 1836-

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613 Quoted in A.I. Reitblat, “Literaturnye Listki i Severnaia Pchela,” in Faddei Venediktovich Bulgariin, 134.
614 Frazier, Romantic Encounters, 35.
37).\textsuperscript{616} Even newspapers were affected by the Library’s popularity; writing to A.F. Vel’tman in December 1837, Nikolai Polevoi (un-official co-editor of the Northern Bee at the time) lamented the Library’s influence on subscription numbers for the Bee and Son of the Fatherland (Syn otechestva, of which Polevoi was official co-editor): “Will Brambeus [Osip Senkovskii] rule for long? Quo usque tandem [For how long]? He has sat on us and rides us… I will make every effort to do better [to improve the Bee and Son of the Fatherland]…”.\textsuperscript{617} The Bee’s 2,400 subscribers in 1837 were just enough to pay for publication expenses, Polevoi wrote, but innovations were needed to compete with the Library.\textsuperscript{618}

The commercial success of the Library for Reading triggered a wave of criticism from writers whose aesthetic and intellectual beliefs caused them view the marketplace with profound skepticism. One of the sharpest attacks on the “commercialism” of both the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading came from the pen of the Slavophile S.P. Shevyrev, literary critic for the Moscow Observer in 1835-37 and co-editor of the Muscovite (Moskwitianin, 1841-56). The first issue of the Moscow Observer ran Shevyrev’s oft-quoted article (“Literature and Commerce”, or Slovesnost’ i togovlia) attacking “speculation” in literature, in which he stated, “The Library for Reading is simply a stack of banknotes, turned into articles”.\textsuperscript{619} Using a variety of anti-commercial metaphors, Shevyrev declared, “I look upon journals like I look upon capitalists. The Library for Reading has five thousand souls. The Northern Bee has, perhaps, half as many… I imagine [our literature] as the owner of a pawn shop; here, upon a throne of banknotes, she sits with accounts in her hand”.\textsuperscript{620} The commercial, or “material” direction was harming the

\textsuperscript{616} Todd III, “Periodicals,” 53, 55.
\textsuperscript{617} N. Polevoi, Letter to A.F. Vel’tman, December 20, 1837, “Iz perepiski N.A. Polevogo,” Russkaia starina T. CVI (May, 1901), 409.
\textsuperscript{618} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{619} S.P. Shevyrev, quoted in Grits, Trenin, and Nikitin, Slovesnost’ i kommertsiiia, 223; also quoted in Frazier, Romantic Encounters, 35.
\textsuperscript{620} S.P. Shevyrev, quoted in Grits, Trenin, and Nikitin, Slovesnost’ i kommertsiiia, 223-24.
“spiritual” one, Shevyrev continued, and was leading to the proliferation of hackwork by
“speculators-litterateurs”, as well as the propagation of bad taste. Literature could only
develop, according to Shevyrev, if booksellers maintained moral standards and did not cater to
the marketplace. Shevyrev reiterated his critical position in the *Moscow Observer* in 1842,
stating that the commercialism represented by Senkovskii was a threat to taste, morality, and all
future prospects for Russian literature. Dignified, intelligent people, he stated, were letting the
entrepreneurs take over what once belonged to them:

> The entire Russian reading public now lies in the hands of commercial literature…
> Meanwhile, the capital of the Russian intellect and imagination, the treasures of thought,
> knowledge, and language lie in the hands of talented people who are, for the most part,
> inactive… [T]hey release virtually none of the capital of their gifts into general
> circulation and concede, in their idleness and apathy, the leading roles to literary
> entrepreneurs – and this explains why our contemporary literature has grown rich in
> money and bankrupt in thought.

Shevyrev considered it criminal to pander to the demands of the marketplace – this, essentially,
would be akin to a mob ruling the development of literature. The public, instead of receiving
entertainment, needed education and intellectual molding by writers and journalists who were
principled. Shevyrev did not mention, however, that he had lauded many of the works that
later appeared in the *Library*, or that he had declined to publish literature that did not match his
personal taste – as when he refused to publish Gogol’s “The Nose” in the *Moscow Observer*
because it was “dirty”.

Shevyrev’s lumping of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* together as
similarly “commercial” publications was not unique; in fact, many (if not most) critics
considered these periodicals comparable in terms of their commercial nature and the composition

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622 Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 96.
624 Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 96.
625 Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, 96-97.
of their readership (despite the commercial rivalry between the Bee and the Library, and the polemics between the two publications that picked up after 1835). Indeed, critics of the two publications liked to define one in terms of the other: Nikolai Gogol wrote to the Slavophile critic, poet, and historian M.P. Pogodin in January 1834 that the Library was “now another Bee”, while Prince P.A. Viazemskii wrote to the poet I.I. Dmitriev in April 1834 that “the Northern Bee is from the same hive as the Library”. The year 1834 also saw the closing of Polevoi’s Moscow Telegraph (due to an unfavorable theater review), and critics were quick to claim that the Library was a different version of the Telegraph. In the same letter to Dmitriev, Viazemskii wrote with some condescension that the Library was “satisfying the needs of our provincial and journal-loving public”, and that it would absorb the readers of Polevoi’s recently closed Moscow Telegraph.

Viazemskii’s comments about provincial and journal-loving readers reflected a common line of argumentation used by critics of the Library for Reading, since “provincial” was supposed to be associated with an inability to judge quality publications. Definitions of the Library’s readership as “provincial” or “journal-loving” (i.e. those who read indiscriminately) were also supposed to demonstrate that the journal was not a serious literary undertaking. In another letter to M.P. Pogodin in 1834, Nikolai Gogol commented on the types of readers who subscribed to Library: “The chiefs of sections and the directors of departments read and split their sides laughing. Officers read and say: ‘son of a b…! how well he writes!’ Provincial landowners buy and subscribe and probably will read it. Only we, sinners, put it aside for reading

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626 Quoted in Shliapkin, “Grekhopadenie pervago cheloveka v literature (karrikatura 1837-38 gg.).” 328.
627 “Pis’ma k I.I. Dmitreevu kn. P.A. Viazemskogo,” April 18, 1834, Russkii arkhiv no. 4-5 (1868): 638.
628 Ibid.
629 Lounsbery, “How Not to Read: Belinsky on Literary Provincialism,” especially 121-123.
at home.” Gogol’s emphasis on middling *chinovniki*, military men, and provincial gentry was a version of the middle-stratum readership identified by Grech and Bulgarin in the previous chapters. The last fragment of Gogol’s letter regarding the literary elite ‘sinfully’ reading copies of the *Library* is also worth mentioning, as it was not uncommon for critics to simultaneously entertain themselves with the contents of the journal, if only to claim to know their enemy.

Nikolai Gogol had much to say about the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading*, in part because he abhorred what he saw as unprincipled hackwork, and also because the *Bee* and the *Library* ran mocking, poor reviews of his work. Gogol’s 1835 article “On the Movement of Journalistic Literature in 1834 and 1835”, published in Pushkin’s *Contemporary*, provided one of the most succinct critiques of the *Northern Bee* and especially the *Library for Reading*. Gogol’s main target was *Library* and the abuses that Osip Senkovskii committed against the journalistic profession, against writers, and especially against readers. Although many journals and newspapers had gone extinct in the early thirties, Gogol wrote, the newly ascendant *Library for Reading* had not taken notice of the public’s increased appetite for mental sustenance. Senkovskii’s editorial ‘tyranny’ was particularly emphasized: the bookseller Smirdin had listed an array of writers on the front page of the first issue, but this was just to catch the public’s attention, after which the dominating voice of Senkovskii eliminated all other points of view. Senkovskii’s literary standards were even more perplexing to Gogol: the editor would fixate on certain grammatical forms, criticize nearly all French literature (Senkovskii notoriously rewrote a positive ending for Balzac’s *Père Goriot*), and would either heap lavish praise on authors or thoroughly trounce their work for no apparent reason. In short, Gogol stated, Senkovskii’s

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reviews had “neither positive nor negative taste – [they had] no taste at all.”

Although, in response to this article, Pushkin wrote, “Many of [Senkovskii’s] articles that you passed over without notice, were worthy of occupying a place in the best of European journals.”

In the same article, Gogol observed that the Library’s success rested on subscriptions from provincial readers (and fans of Baron Brambeus are found in Gogol’s Inspector General – in the wife of the provincial town mayor). He reached the same conclusion regarding Grech’s Son of the Fatherland, which was allegedly so bland and poorly written that only elderly provincial types subscribed to it, simply for the sake of having something to read (the journal is found in Gogol’s Dead Souls in the houses of old provincial gentlemen). Gogol also described the Northern Bee as aimless and unprincipled, largely because it allowed readers to draw whatever conclusions they could, instead of being guided by a strong, clear point of view.

Depictions of provincial readers as the core audience of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading (and Son of the Fatherland – which helped reinforce the trope of the monopolistic trio) were also found in the criticism of Vissarion Belinsky, whose articles influenced both contemporaries and, later, populist critics. As a literary critic for several journals including, famously, the Telescope and Notes of the Fatherland, Belinsky examined the Library from several angles, one of which was “provincialism”. In 1836, Belinsky described the readers of the Library for Reading in the following detailed manner:

Imagine the family of the steppe landowner, a family reading everything that is comes upon from cover to cover. [On receipt of The Library for Reading] [t]he daughter reads Ershov, Gogniev, and Strugovshchikov’s poetry and Zagoskin, Ushakov, Panaev, Kalashnikov, and Masal’skii’s stories; the son, as the member of a new generation, reads Timofeev’s poetry and Baron Brambeus’s stories; the papa reads articles about the two-

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632 Quoted in Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 5.
and three-field systems and about various means of improving the land, while the mama – about a new means of curing tuberculosis and dyeing thread.  

If not presented as satire, this description could almost be interpreted as a real snapshot of a family reading the Library. For Belinsky, however, the Library’s actual provincial readers represented the metaphorical provincialism he despised. As Anne Lounsbery has argued, Belinsky’s nearly constant citation of the “provincialism” of Senkovskii’s readership also referred to a kind of improper reading; Belinsky believed that Senkovskii employed no rational standards for teaching readers how to make aesthetic comparisons for themselves. Belinsky’s ideal opposite was the educated, Westernized reader, cited in the previous chapter. Again, this was more of a metaphorical urbanism, but the provincial/urban dichotomy was all the more convenient since it was echoed by Bulgari and Senkovskii in the reverse – they held provincial readers as more genuine and sincere judges of literature than urban types, as discussed in Chapter Five.

The fullest expression of Belinsky’s criticism of the Library for Reading appeared in his review article “Nothing about nothing” (Nichto o nichem), published in the Telescope in 1835. Belinsky summarized his argument thusly: “The Library is a provincial journal, and this is the secret of its power, its strength, its credit [i.e. standing] with the public”. Provincialism, according to Belinsky, was everything “that is foreign to any elegance, that speaks with emptiness, mediocrity, pettiness, and that speaks with provincial wit, provincial amusement”. Belinsky examined the different sections of the Library and came to the following conclusions: the Russian literature published in the Library (churned through a “factory”) was dull and

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633 Quoted in Frazier, Romantic Encounters, 132.
634 Lounsbery, “How Not to Read: Belinsky on Literary Provincialism,” 121-123.
636 Ibid.
insipid; the translated foreign literature was of the lowest quality; the scholarly articles were cut and abridged and were thus unfaithful to the original manuscripts; the Criticism section was mean-spirited; the Literary Chronicle was full of witticisms but had no truth; the Miscellany section bashed French literature while simultaneously borrowing items from French journals (the Industry and Agriculture section was conspicuously skipped over). But the readers of the Library not only tolerated this, but also welcomed it: “The province sympathizes with this, encourages this, and this is not surprising: an illiterate [bezgramotnyi] person listens with pleasure to abusive language against literacy, because this literacy is his dishonor and ignominy. It is most profitable to flatter the crowd; this is a sure game.” Belinsky concluded that the Library understood the game of profit all too well.

Besides the Library’s mediocre content and the poor taste of readers, Belinsky found that the editor Osip Senkovskii was distorting all good sense when it came to his strange and narrow-minded criticism. Senkovskii’s lack of standards or principles meant that his reviews were essentially worthless. Senkovskii, Belinsky wrote,

despises any sort of true glory, bitterly casts out anything marked by talent, and gives all possible protection to mediocrity and incompetence: for him, Messrs. Bulgarin and Grech are excellent writers, first-rate talents, while Mr. Gogol is a Russian Paul de Kock and, of course, cannot compare in any way to these geniuses.

Belinsky considered the Northern Bee to be even worse, content-wise, than the Library; the Bee was “an inexhaustible mine of foolish reviews”, published on a “level of golden mediocrity”, and would have no readers if it lost its foreign political news section. Belinsky also mentioned Grech’s Son of the Fatherland in passing, thus cementing the association of the three journalists and their three periodicals as a triumvirate.

637 Ibid.
638 Ibid.
639 Ibid.
To Gogol and Belinsky, the careless attitude toward submitted text, use of unsigned reviews, and willingness to forego any kind of cultural program was an insult to the reader and to the responsible development of literature. The Russian reader, coming onto the literary ‘scene’ relatively recently, was not yet equipped with the proper standards of taste or moral and aesthetic value. Gogol and Belinsky shared this view, and Belinsky championed Gogol as the talented new face of the “natural school” (until their famous falling out in 1847, that is). With the proper incubation, literature, according to Belinsky, would not be pure entertainment, but would become a sort of “res publica, great and important, a source of lofty moral enjoyment and live ecstasy.” The reading public, Belinsky continued in a Hegelian vein, would then become “a single living personality, historically developed, with a certain direction, taste, and view of things.” Indeed, one of the aims of Notes of the Fatherland, as stated in its program in 1839, was to “create taste”. Journalists who were catering to the marketplace while flaunting the conventions of professionalism were jeopardizing the future development of Russian letters and the obshchestvo itself.

A final note about the criticism of the 1830s-1840s concerns language. Criticism of the Library for Reading frequently pointed to Osip Senkovskii’s near-microscopic attention to word choice, grammar, and syntax in literature, as well as his extreme liberties with ‘editing’ submitted works to suit his beliefs on language and his ideas of what readers wanted. Senkovskii’s belief was that “The works of literature, being a continuation of the charm of fashionable conversation, must be written in the language of the contemporary educated society.” He detested verbose, pompous language that used words like sei and onyi as well as

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640 Todd III, Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin, 103.
641 Todd III, Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin, 103.
642 Quoted in Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 104.
He cut and rewrote submissions to Library so that the texts would better reflect his conception of ‘contemporary’ language – a practice that was roundly denounced by critics like Belinsky and Prince V.F. Odoevskii, who were appalled by what they saw as ‘Polonisms’ in Senkovskii’s rewriting. Under his pseudonym Baron Brambeus (taken from King Brambeus in the chapbook tale of Frantsyl the Venetian), Senkovskii wrote several articles about the archaic forms that riddled Russian letters, prompting Prince P.A. Viazemskii to write that the Baron’s “all-seeing eye” would catch verbal transgressions in private letters. However, recent scholarship by literary scholar L.G. Chapaeva has argued that Senkovskii’s stance on language was characteristic of the attempt, by many writers, to find a language of the middle stratum in the 1830s and 1840s. Examining the work of Vladimir Dal’, Chapaeva argues:

Dal’ develops the ideas of N.I. Nadezhdin, who considered that the “middle stratum” [srednee soslovie] should play the main role in the development of new norms of literary language. Dal’ agrees that “currently there is no possibility of writing in a Russian language that would seem necessary, because the middle that we seek does not yet exist, and there are only extremes: the language of the upper stratum, [which is] half-Russian, and the language of the lower stratum, [that of] simple folk [prostonarodnyi].” The idea of a middle stratum and a “middle style” [srednem sloge] was widespread in the 1830s-1840s, [and] was developed by O.I Senkovskii and S.P. Shevyrev from different positions. In the view of Dal’, this middle stratum was destined to form a synthesis of the “inborn and the acquired”, thus creating a genuine national system of the Russian language.

Although Senkovskii never explicitly stated that his goal was to create a “middle style”, his editing of the Library for Reading as well as his rare writings on Official Nationality reflected the belief that language was a mediating force. As Chapaeva has argued, Senkovskii’s statement

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643 Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 32-35.
644 Ibid., 28-29.
645 Ibid., 50.
646 Quoted in Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 33.
that Official Nationality meant a “Russian god, Russian tsar, Russian language” defined 
narodnost’ in terms of a common language.

It was, ostensibly, on the basis of the linguistic argument that Senkovskii praised Pushkin 
and Lermontov while mocking Gogol; Senkovskii remarked that “The Queen of Spades” was 
written in a “language that one speaks and that one can speak between people properly” (langue 
qu’on parle et qu’on peut parler entre les gens comme il faut), while A Hero of Our Time, 
written in 1840, was “light, simple, and very pleasing.” However, Senkovskii found that 
Gogol’s Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka and later on, Dead Souls, were full of “vulgarity”, 
bad grammar, and unacceptable folksy local color. Senkovskii reiterated the presence of filth 
and dirt in Gogol’s stories in his review articles for Library for Reading. This inability to 
appreciate Gogol’s art particularly irked Belinsky, who saw Gogol as the initiator of a new age 
of ‘naturalism’ in Russian literature. Populist critics later cited the Library’s poor reviews of 
Gogol’s works as proof of its insignificance.

Paths of Literary Development, Populism, and Final Verdicts: 1850s – mid-1860s

Alongside Pushkin, Gogol, and Belinsky, Alexander Herzen stands as one of the 
strongest critics of the Northern Bee, although his views on the Library for Reading were rather 
unique and departed from the narrative discussed above. One short polemic written between 
1843-44 (sent to Belinsky for publication in Notes of the Fatherland, but never actually 
published) poked fun at the “marriages” of the Northern Bee’s Grech and Bulgarin as well as the 
Muscovite’s Pogodin and Shevyrev. Herzen found that both sets of editors railed against Europe 
but for different reasons; the Bee criticized Europe for lacking morality and order, while the

648 Todd III, Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin, 24.
649 Quoted in Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 31.
650 Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 35.
Muscovite found that Europe’s values were illogical and wrong. Herzen also hinted at the “police” activities of Grech and Bulgarin, and implied that Bulgarin promoted businesses in exchange for a fee.651

If Herzen used oblique language in the article above, intended for publication in Russia, he was uncensored in his 1851 essay “Literature and public opinion after 14 December 1825” (La littérature et l'opinion publique après le 14 décembre 1825), part of a collection of essays arguing for revolution in Russia, published first in Paris and then London.652 Here he wrote of the despair that descended upon Russian publishing after the failed Decembrist revolt, when “Only Pushkin’s resonant and broad song echoed across a landscape of slavery and anguish”.653 Herzen no longer characterized Grech and Bulgarin as a married couple, but as “Siamese twins” and “renegades” who “allied themselves with the government, having smoothed over their part in the 14th [of] December with denunciations against their friends”.654 For Herzen, Grech and Bulgarin held a monopoly over journalism in the 1830s due to “their role as police agents, not as literary figures”.655

Herzen gave Senkovskii and the Library for Reading, however, a surprising evaluation: Senkovskii had inadvertently destroyed the idea of monarchy. Although “Senkovsky established his magazine as one establishes a commercial enterprise”, Senkovskii’s satire and lack of systematic, ideological convictions had made people see the arbitrariness of any system, including the Nikolaevan one:

Ridiculing everything which men hold most sacred, Senkovsky, without wishing it, demolished monarchism in people’s minds. Preaching comfort and sensual pleasures, he

651 A.I. Gertsen, “Um khorosho, a dva luchshe.” http://az.lib.ru/g/gercen_a_i/text_0390.shtml
652 This was part V of Herzen’s Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie.
654 Ibid.
655 Ibid., 10.
led people to the simple thought that it is impossible to enjoy oneself while constantly thinking about the secret police, denunciations, and Siberia, that fear is not comfortable, and that no man can dine well if he does not know where he will spend the night.  

Herzen did echo some of Gogol and Belinsky’s arguments against the Library for Reading, namely its commercialism, as well as Senkovskii’s lack of unified worldview and his disastrous corruption of the taste of other writers. But Herzen also tried to find the silver lining of an otherwise dark period of time – dark because of his own internal exile in Russia during 1834-42. Despite his leaving Russia in 1847, Herzen’s account of Russian journalism after 1825 was deeply influential on progressive and populist writers, largely because his works and periodicals (the Polar Star and the Bell) were constantly being smuggled into Russia. As Robert Belknap observed, “The most influential Russian journalist of the 1850s and 1860s was not in Russia at all”.  

Herzen’s essay, and his depiction of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading, would become standard reference material for Soviet literary scholars.  

Inside Russia, criticism of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading continued into the 1850s and early 1860s. Writing in the revamped Contemporary, Nekrasov, Chernyshefsky, and Dobroliubov polemicized with Bulgarin and Senkovskii over the literary merits of the “natural school”.  

Satirical journals like the Spark (Iskra, 1859-73) frequently mocked the Northern Bee as “decrepit” (driakhlaia) and out of touch with the new generation. The general arguments, however, were variations of what had been stated earlier by Pushkin, Gogol, Belinsky, and Herzen. Belinsky’s legacy was particularly powerful for progressive and populist writers; Belinsky’s ideological oppositions, framework of argumentation, and assigned values

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656 Ibid., 13.  
659 Nikolai Leskov, writing for the Northern Bee in 1862, protested against the Spark’s constant attacks.
were arguably the single most important factors in the mythologization of an ‘unholy triumvirate’ made up of the *Northern Bee, Son of the Fatherland*, and *Library for Reading*.  

After Senkovskii’s departure from the *Library for Reading* in 1856 and the closing of the *Northern Bee* in 1864, populist writers were able to look back upon these publications as relics of earlier, gloomier time. Their narratives reflected the stereotypes and binaries that had accrued over the previous decades. One of the most emblematic articles came from A.P. Piatkovskii’s 1865 article in Nekrasov’s *Contemporary* titled “The Journalistic Triumvirate” (*Zhurnal’nyi Triumvirat*). Piatkovskii was not a remarkable writer, and he went on to edit first the populist pedagogical journal *People’s School* (*Narodnaia shkola*) from 1878-82, and then the reactionary conservative *Observer* (*Nabliudatel’*) from 1882-1904. In his 1865 article, Piatkovskii wrote in an exaggerated and hyperbolic tone of “the time between 1835 and 1840 when all of Russian literature was under the oppression of three entrepreneurial journalists: Bulgarin, Grech, and Senkovskii”.661 This was a period of “despotic rule”, when literature was governed by profit-seeking journalists in the service of the secret police. 662 This self-serving triumvirate would have rivals “systematically destroyed”, while opposing writers were too weak and disorganized to maintain a resistance. 663

Piatkovskii explained the commercial success of the *Bee* and the *Library* as a) having been the result of a virtual monopoly and b) having the support of an indiscriminate middle-stratum readership: “If the *Northern Bee* occasionally permeated high society [vyschee obshchestvo], then the *Library for Reading* was read voraciously within the middle stratum [v

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660 Pedrotti, for one, has argued that Belinsky “firmly established the negative attitude toward Sekowski [Senkovskii].” Pedrotti, Józef-Julian Sękowski, 1.
661 Piatkovskii, “Zhurnal’nyi Triumvirat (Ocherk iz istorii russkoï zhurnalistikii tridtsatych godov),” 206.
662 Piatkovskii, 206.
663 Piatkovskii, 207.
The public not only accepted “the vulgar wit” of the monopolistic trio, but also considered the triumvirate to be as talented as Pushkin and Griboedov. The result of these activities, Piatkovskii gravely concluded, was that the development of literature and the growth of enlightenment in the 1830s were damaged and paralyzed, while “the very ability of thinking freely and independently from [the triumvirate]” was all but impossible. The author, having been born in 1840, had little direct knowledge of this triumvirate, and sourced his information from the elderly Prince V.F. Odoevskii, “who fought much in his lifetime against this journalistic clique.”

As Abram Reitblat has insightfully noted, much of the later commentary about these periodicals had ideological goals in mind. Piatkovskii’s black-and-white language, his emphasis on monopoly, despotism, and unfairness, and his depiction of an ignorant public all served to distinguish the dark, old times from the new era full of reforming potential. Piatkovskii’s rhetoric of extremes was also a symptom of the polarization of periodicals in the 1860s and “the virtual disappearance of the middle ground”. Subsequent generations would be left with a concentrated myth that pitted good against evil, honesty against corruption, and collaboration with the regime against virtuous opposition. Later critics also characterized the “triumvirate” of periodicals as having damaged the course of Russian literature; in a 1911 entry for “Bulgarin” in the Russian Biographical Dictionary, the Russian (later Soviet) literary scholar and bibliographer A.G. Fomin stated that, “With its groveling, falsification of public opinion,

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664 Piatkovskii, 208.
665 Piatkovskii, 208.
666 Piatkovskii, 208.
667 Piatkovskii, 207.
668 Reitblat, “Russkie pisateli i III Otdelenie (1826-1855)”: 158-186, 158.
670 Reitblat, “Russkie pisateli i III Otdelenie (1826-1855)”: A.I. Reitblat has demonstrated that many writers came to work for the Third Section, but that after the 1840s, these numbers grew from single digits to the tens and even hundreds. By the time Piatkovskii was writing, there were more writers in the Third Section than ever before.
venality, [and] worthless critical assessments of literary phenomena, the *Northern Bee* had the most harmful influence on society, [and] held back the growth of public consciousness *[obshchestvennogo soznaniia]* and literary development*671* Fomin’s linkage of public consciousness with literature was an assessment taken from Vissarion Belinsky, whose Hegelianism had inspired him to think of literature as a key component in the creation of a national consciousness.*672*

**Conclusion**

Fyodor Dostoevsky, too, weighed in on the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* in his 1846 novella, *Poor People (Bednye liudi)*. Early in the epistolary novel, the lowly copy clerk and poignant protagonist Makar Devushkin writes to his second cousin Varvara:

*Well, and what a dump I’ve ended up in, Varvara Alexeyevna! …Well, and people rent these sort of hotel rooms …But actually they seem to be good people, all the educated, learned type. There’s one civil servant (his job’s something to do with literature), he’s a well-read man; he talks about Homer, and about Brambeus, and about various authors of theirs, he talks about everything – he’s a clever man!*673

Towards the end of the novella, on an unexpectedly nice day, Devushkin writes:

*…And the weather’s so splendid today, Varenka, it’s so nice. True, there was a bit of drizzle in the morning, as if it was being sprinkled through a sieve. Never mind! To make up for it, the air’s become a little fresher. I went to buy some boots and bought an amazing pair of boots. I walked down Nevsky. I read The Bee.*674

Devushkin’s reading preferences were not, of course, the central concerns of Dostoevsky’s story about the wretched existence of certain Petersburg residents. These passages about Brambeus and the *Bee*, however, are some of the details that Dostoevsky used to make Devushkin seem like

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a genuine copy clerk. Dostoevsky famously molded Devushkin on the poor clerk Akaky Akakievich in Nikolai Gogol’s “The Overcoat”, but humanized Devushkin by giving him an “inner life, personal dignity, and the ability to love”. Whereas Gogol may have had his lowly clerks read the Bee or Baron Brambeus (Osip Senkovskii) as a bit of satire, Dostoevsky put this reading material in their hands as a marker of their real social standing. Devushkin’s letters to Varvara detail the oppression and humiliation he feels as an impoverished clerk living in a Petersburg slum, but they also mention the brief moments of happiness that he experiences. Devushkin praises the slum neighbor as “well-read” and “clever” because he reads Brambeus; later, Devushkin’s cheerful stroll down Nevsky concludes with his reading the Northern Bee. Having no formal education, Devushkin praises Pushkin, Senkovskii, and the Bee (and thus, we can assume, Bulgarin) with equal enthusiasm. He lack of education means that he cannot tell the difference between writers, while his impoverishment means that he savors any contact with literature, either directly or by proxy, as a joyous occasion. Although this was not criticism, strictly speaking, Dostoevsky’s depiction of the readership of the Northern Bee and Senkovskii (and by extension, the Library for Reading) echoed the arguments of Gogol and Belinsky – that uneducated readers liked these periodicals simply because they did not know any better.

As this chapter has traced, criticism of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading was initially prompted by the disquieting combination of dishonorable behavior with commercial success. The Bee’s instances of plagiarism, the Library’s liberties with submitted manuscripts, Bulgarin’s police work, and Senkovskii’s tight-fisted control of the Library’s tone were all perceived as unacceptable by writers accustomed to salon culture. Had these publications not found commercial success, it is unlikely that so much would have been written about them;

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however, the fact that such “unscrupulous” periodicals did find commercial success offended members of “familiar associations” and the “literary aristocracy”.

The sense that what the Bee and the Library did was “improper”, and the role of the market in condoning this impropriety through monetary reward, also permeated the criticism of Slavophiles like S.P. Shevyrev and Westernizers like Vissarion Belinsky. Whereas Shevyrev’s position against the marketplace came from a utopian conservatism (in Andrzej Walicki’s term), Belinsky’s criticism came from a concern that the marketplace could not be trusted with the important task of edifying Russian readers, and thus reforming and successfully Westernizing Russia. Belinsky feared that the Bee and the Library were knocking readers off the proper course of enlightenment with their championing of mediocrity; moreover, these publications were potentially hindering the formation of a clear national consciousness that was essential to Russia’s historical development. This assessment was not yet final, and Belinsky did not claim that these publications had succeeded in harming literature. Later generations who embraced the progressive platform popularized by Belinsky, however, did look upon the Bee and the Library as sources of harm to Russian letters. Moreover, the polarization of the 1860s and the simultaneous canonization of Pushkin and Gogol necessitated the demonization of evil counterparts; Grech, Bulgarin, and Senkovskii (along with their publications) fit this role perfectly.

The articles, essays, diary entries, and correspondence discussed in this chapter attest to the wide spectrum of reactions to the Bee and the Library. Indeed, during the second third of the nineteenth century, virtually every periodical and most writers had something to say. Entire enterprises and ideological positions were constructed in reaction, like Del’vig’s Literary Gazette and Shevyrev’s Moscow Observer, which were launched with the explicit purpose of countering
(unsuccessfully) the influence of the *Bee* and *Library*, respectively. But the *Bee* and the *Library* could not maintain market dominance for too long; the transformations of these periodicals in the 1850s and 1860s are discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter Seven: Transformations: Generational, Political, and Market Changes

The transformation and decline of the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* roughly correspond to the two historical turning points of mid-nineteenth-century Russia: 1848 and 1856. Revolutions in Europe in 1848 had, infamously, led to the doubling-down of censorship inside Russia. New censorship rules established by the Committee of 27 February and the Committee of 2 April provided a secretive committee the power to remove publications from print and reprimand writers after they had passed through the pre-censorship system. This new system, in place from 1848-55, impacted the *Northern Bee* by reducing the range of information it could publish about the government for its middle-stratum audience, although subscriptions did not suffer and actually improved over the course of the Crimean War. Unrelated to the censorship “terror”, this same period of 1848-55 was one of serious decline for the *Library for Reading*, largely because of competition from the journals *Notes of the Fatherland* and the *Contemporary* and the emergence of a new generation of middle-stratum readers who identified with progressive ideas. With the death of Nicholas I in 1855, the signing of the Treaty of Paris in March 1856, and the start of a loosening of press censorship the same year under Alexander II, both the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* embarked on a second, more significant period of transformation. New, cheaper periodicals established from 1856 onward caused the *Northern Bee* to lose its market share and eventually shutter in 1864. The transfer of the *Library for Reading* to the critic A.V. Druzhinin in 1856, meanwhile, turned the journal into a publication catering to a narrower middle stratum audience interested in the ‘aesthetic’ camp of literature. With the further relaxation of press censorship, the *Library* under Druzhinin and then A.F. Pisemkii became a platform for moderate liberal reform in the early 1860s. The journal’s audience was further narrowed under editor P.D. Boborykin in 1863-64, who made the *Library
an organ of the liberal intelligentsia interested in serving the common people. In the climate of polarized political thought, however, the Library shuttered due to bitter polemics with radicals and populists and a resulting loss of subscribers.

It should be emphasized that the closing of the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading in the mid-1860s was, in both instances, due to market competition and the appearance of rival publications, discussed below. The methods and genres developed by the Bee and the Library had not ceased to be of interest to readers; indeed, these practices were replicated by rival publications established in the second half of the 1850s. In the case of the Bee, these alternatives were ideologically similar in that they were ‘establishment’ publications, but had the advantage of being cheaper and usually illustrated. In the case of the Library, which competed for the minority educated reader after 1856, these alternatives reflected the schism between ‘aesthetic’ and ‘civic’ literature that occurred in the mid-1850s; in addition to existing competition from Notes of the Fatherland and the increasingly radical Contemporary, after 1856 the Library struggled to compete with Mikhail Katkov’s Russian Herald, an ‘establishment’ journal that took a moderate tone and attracted major literary talent. Other journals founded after 1856 took the Library’s place in addressing the general reader, focusing on encyclopedic content and the interests of the bourgeois family. Indeed, the closing of the Bee and the Library was far from the end of the bourgeois periodical; their shuttering marked the beginning of a veritable explosion of bourgeois publications in the second half of the nineteenth century. Figures like Pavel Usov and A.V. Starchevskii served as living linkages between the Bee, the Library, and the mass-circulation bourgeois publications of the late nineteenth century that continued to propagate European middle-class culture in Russia.
“The People Now Are Different”: 1848 – 1855

In many ways, the Northern Bee continued its traditional course between 1848 and early 1855. In response to the announcements of the Committee of 27 February, Faddei Bulgarin submitted a report to the Third Section in March 1848 that affirmed that the Northern Bee would continue to support the government. Bulgarin wrote that the Bee was still capable of influencing “common opinion” [obshchee mnienie], just as it had after the Decembrist Revolt, during the Russo-Turkish War, and during the 1830-31 Polish Rebellion.676 This “common opinion” was important in 1848 because “Now there are different circumstances, different needs and different people, and it is necessary to speak with them differently – but to speak is by all means necessary”.677 Writing again after the Committee of 2 April (the Buturlin Committee), Bulgarin implied that the value of the Northern Bee’s continuing support of the government was in the newspaper’s relevance to the middle stratum. As “proof” that “various estates” [razlichnye sosloviiia] supported him, Bulgarin attached two letters to his report: one was by P.G. Volkhovskii from the Don (a provincial landowner), and the other by a Siberian merchant named Pichugin (forwarded by another merchant named I.S. Vavilov).678 Although he described his support as coming from “various estates”, Bulgarin effectively demonstrated support from a slice of the middle stratum. This sentiment echoed his reports from the late 1820s, which maintained that the supporters of the Sovereign came from the “educated middle class”.679

But to be effective supporters of the government, press publications like the Northern Bee needed to be free from arbitrary censorship rulings. Writing in 1849, Faddei Bulgarin strongly emphasized the importance of publishing and the role of the press in persuading people to

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676 Faddei Bulgarin to A.F. Orlov, March 13, 1848, in Vidok Figliarin, 551.
677 Ibid.
678 Faddei Bulgarin to L.V. Dubel’t, April 23, 1848, in Vidok Figliarin, 564-65.
support the government. Echoing the reports he wrote after the Decembrist Revolt, Bulgarin stated that it was more important than ever to keep the public informed, because “Persuasion can only be eliminated through persuasion”. Without directly blaming the Buturlin Committee, Bulgarin wrote that “police methods” could not stop the dissemination of revolutionary ideas, which were being smuggled through books across Russia’s border with Turkey and then spread by word of mouth. The Russian censorship apparatus, he wrote, “has reached the highest level of ridiculousness” and has even “compiled a whole list of banned phrases”; some of the Bee’s articles were being banned simply because they contained certain words or phrases, such as references to universities.

Mixed in with Bulgarin’s explanation of the importance of public opinion in 1848 were his charges against Notes of the Fatherland and the Contemporary. These charges were in line with his previous pattern of denunciations against journalistic rivals, which alleged revolutionary sympathies or actions but which were actually motivated by commercial concerns over competitors. However, Bulgarin’s denunciations of Notes of the Fatherland and the Contemporary departed from his earlier reports about rival periodicals in that they also specified an allegedly problematic readership; as discussed in Chapter Five, these 1848 reports expressed concern over a younger generation of middle stratum readers who had supposedly “superficial” enlightenment and poor financial standing. These reports revealed Bulgarin’s anxiety that the Bee was declining due to an ageing readership, while younger middle-stratum readers were choosing more progressive publications.

These concerns over readership, however, appeared to be refuted by the Northern Bee’s record-high subscription numbers during the Crimean War. Primary accounts of subscription...

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680 Faddei Bulgarin to L.V. Dubel’t, October 5, 1849, in Vidok Figliarin, 570.
681 Ibid., 571.
682 [F. Bulgarin], “O tsensure i kommunisme v Rossii,” March 6, 1848, in Vidok Figliarin, 546.
figures are difficult to find; however, according to secondary accounts, subscription numbers for the *Northern Bee* ranged between 3,000 and 4,000 for the 1820s, were anywhere between 2,500-7,000 in the 1830s, 3,000-4,000 in the 1840s, and came to a historical peak of about 10,000 during the Crimean War.\(^{683}\) To estimate actual readership, those figures could be multiplied by a minimum of four to account for readers within families (the father of a family, his wife, and any grown children living with them, i.e. sons and unmarried or widowed daughters), as William St. Clair has suggested for British periodicals.\(^{684}\) These are conservative estimates, however, as reading periodicals aloud and sharing subscriptions between neighbors were established practices in Russia, as Katherine Pickering Antonova has illustrated in her micro-history of the Chikhachev family.\(^{685}\)

While the *Northern Bee* had a substantial increase in readership during the Crimean War period, the opposite was true for the *Library for Reading*. The *Library*’s 5,000 to 7,000 thousand subscribers in the 1830s (O.A. Przhetslavskii even claimed a figure of 9,000) had dwindled down to less than 500 subscribers in 1853.\(^{686}\) Although the *Library* had to compete for subscribers ever since *Notes of the Fatherland* began publication in 1839 and the revamped *Contemporary* launched in 1847, the period of unmistakable decline for the *Library* began in 1848. That year the publisher Matvei Ol’khin sold his rights to the *Library* (along with a debt of 30,000 silver rubles) to V.P. Pechatkin, and when Osip Senkovskii fell ill with cholera later that year, Pechatkin brought in A.V. Starchevskii to help manage the journal as an assistant to Senkovskii.

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\(^{686}\) The figure of 500 is from Starchevskii’s letter to Senkovskii, dated April 27, 1853. IRLI f. 583, ed. khr. 43, ll. 176-176ob.
Senkovskii’s correspondence with Starchevskii between late 1848 and early 1856 reveals clear acknowledgement that the Library was in rapid decline, both financially and in the quality of its published content. Senkovskii even wrote to Starchevskii (in an undated letter, but likely 1851) stating that Notes of the Fatherland was “higher [i.e. better] than it [the Library] in entertainment and diversity [of content].” 687 Senkovskii’s ideas to improve the Library involved more popularization of foreign scholarly content, which he would choose and translate, as well as translations from the English mass press, specifically the Penny Magazine and the Penny Cyclopaedia. 688 In the Literary Chronicle section, Senkovskii continued to review everything from agriculture manuals to travelogues, histories, books on popular science, commercial handbooks, children’s textbooks, and more. He continued to speak to his middle stratum audience by recommending books that would suit their needs and the needs of their families.

Despite these intentions from Senkovskii, under Starchevskii’s de facto editorship the Library took a different approach in order to increase its readership and profitability. This approach involved attempting to make the Library resemble its competitors Notes of the Fatherland and the Contemporary – by enticing writers to leave those publications for the Library. Both Starchevskii and Elizaveta Akhmatova (Senkovskii’s unofficial assistant) evidently agreed on this and, through Akhmatova’s efforts, brought in Aleksandr Druzhinin from the Contemporary to be a contributor to the Library in 1850. 689 Although Druzhinin still contributed articles and literary criticism to the Contemporary, the addition of his name to the Library’s table of contents was a considerable achievement; Druzhinin had earned critical acclaim for his 1847 epistolary novel Polinka Saks (notably from Vissarion Belinsky, who

687 IRLI f. 583, ed. khr. 43, ll. 70-70ob.
688 IRLI f. 583, ed. khr. 43, l. 167.
689 Druzhinin’s first piece in the Library was fiction. A. Druzhinin, “Petrogofskii fontan,” in “Russkaia slovesnost’,” Biblioteka dlia chteniia 104 (1850): 53-112.
praised the novel as an excellent example of the natural school) and was widely regarded as the leading literary critic of the late 1840s and 1850s. In 1853 the Muscovite’s literary critic Apollon Grigor’ev characterized Druzhinin as “the most educated and smartest of contemporary critics”; writing Druzhinin’s biography at the turn of the twentieth century, S.A. Vengerov concluded, “Grigor’ev’s opinion of Druzhinin can be called the common opinion for the entire interval (1848-55), separating the death of Belinsky from the beginning of the activities of Dobroliubov and Chernyshevsky”.

Starchevskii and Akhmatova were evidently counting on Druzhinin’s status as a respected literary critic to attract readers from rival publications. Druzhinin published some original fiction and analyses of English literature in the Library, but his main contribution was his cycle of feuilletons titled “Letters of an Out-of-Town Subscriber about Russian Journalism” (Pis’ma inogorodnago podpischika o russkoj zhurnaliste). Druzhinin had debuted these feuilletons in the Contemporary in 1849 (published on a near-monthly basis) to great acclaim, and brought them over to the Library in 1852 and 1853 (reverting back to the Contemporary in 1854), where they appeared in the Miscellany section almost every month. If Senkovskii’s voice in the Literary Chronicle section was that of a sarcastic and witty Petersburg satirist, then Druzhinin’s voice over in the Miscellany section was that of a highly educated provincial landowner who spoke to other educated readers about prominent works of Russian literature. The difference in tone between these two literary critics was striking; while Senkovskii told readers what was worth purchasing and reading, Druzhinin assumed that readers already knew what was worthy of reading and jumped straight into discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of recently published Russian fiction and literary histories (Druzhinin did not review the range of

691 Vengerov, Druzhinin, Goncharov, Pisemskii, 1-2.
non-fiction that Senkovskii regularly reviewed). In comparing the criticism of Senkovskii and Druzhinin, one gets the sense that the two authors were speaking to different segments of the middle stratum; Druzhinin’s first “Letter” in the *Library* in 1852 told readers, “The best part of the public has long since overtaken and knocked down all of us journalists and litterateurs.”

Druzhinin argued that Russian journals were mired in endless polemical battles and attacks on defenseless authors, which was off-putting and boring to educated readers: “While we were gnawing and getting into pedantic rhetoric, a small but select circle of Russian readers has learned multiple languages [and] follows everything new in the European sciences and literature… Russian journals are read occasionally, from having nothing [else] to do”.

However, the attempt to transform the *Library for Reading* into a version of *Notes of the Fatherland* or the *Contemporary* was not successful for a number of reasons. First, with the exception of Druzhinin, the *Library* did not attract many writers from these rival periodicals, and those who did come over were minor authors. The *Library* had neither the funds to pay competitive honorariums, nor the reputation of a progressive and dynamic journal that would attract young writers. Even Druzhinin, who reluctantly joined the *Library*, wrote to Starchevskii in an undated letter (likely 1852), “[The] *Contemporary* and *Notes of the Fatherland* pay well, while the *Library* pays poorly. These journals are esteemed by the public, [while] the *Library* – you know yourself [*Èti zhurnalny v chesti u publike, Biblioteka – sami znaete*]. They have thousands of subscribers, [while] the *Library* has hundreds…”

Second, the *Library*’s editorial board was plagued by perpetual disagreements. Senkovskii’s letters to Starchevskii during this time evince frustration over what the latter chose to publish. Most of Senkovskii’s grievances, in

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692 [A. Druzhinin], “Pis’ma inogorodnago podpischika o russkoi zhurnalistike. XXV. Dekabr’,” in “Smes’,” *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 111 (1852): 98-126; here, 125.
694 RGALI f. 1157, op. 2, ed. khr. 2, l. 1ob.
fact, were about him not being consulted as well as about Starchevskii not publishing the reviews and translations he had prepared. Senkovskii was also unhappy with the publisher Pechatkin for not paying him the same salary rate (per number of subscribers) that A.F. Smirdin once had. Furthermore, Senkovskii disapproved of Druzhinin’s participation in the *Library* because the two fundamentally failed to get along (Senkovskii accused Druzhinin of unspecified “unprincipled behavior” in one letter, and wrote that he had thrown Druzhinin’s previous correspondence in the fireplace without opening it). Third, the professional quality of the *Library* had markedly decreased: printed pages were undeniably sloppy and included spelling, grammar, and pagination errors as well as over-inked (often unreadable) letters and off-centered paragraphs. Senkovskii’s letters reveal that Starchevskii would sometimes delay printing until he received certain commissioned articles, and thus some monthly issues of the *Library* were late. Possibly because of insufficient funds, the *Library* no longer published original articles in its Industry and Agriculture section in 1853, opting instead to republish short news items from periodicals like the *Agricultural Newspaper (Zemledel’cheskaia gazeta)* and *Mediator (Posrednik)*; the *Library* completely eliminated its Industry and Agriculture section in 1854 (beginning with volume 124), thereby reducing its relevance to the very provincial landowners who formed the base of its readership. These compounding problems led Senkovskii to write to Starchevskii (in an undated letter, but likely late 1853 or early 1854) that “The journal has declined in all respects”.

**Change and Continuity: 1856 – 1865**

The second, more significant period of transformation of both the *Northern Bee* and the *Library for Reading* coincided with the Treaty of Paris in March 1856 and the end of the

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695 IRLI f. 583, ed. khr. 43, ll. 176-176ob.
696 RGALI, f. 167, op. 3, ed. khr. 222, ll. 1-1ob.
697 IRLI f. 583, ed. khr. 43, l. 93.
Crimean War. In March 1856, both A.V. Starchevskii and Osip Senkovskii left the Library; Aleksandr Druzhinin became sole editor after negotiations with publisher V.P. Pechatkin. With Pechatkin’s financing and several additional loans, Starchevskii bought the rights to the journal *Son of the Fatherland* (originally Nikolai Grech’s publication) and transformed it into an affordable illustrated weekly newspaper that published largely the same type of content as the *Northern Bee*. Despite their strained relationship, Starchevskii convinced Senkovskii to contribute occasional feuilletons to *Son of the Fatherland* in 1857 under his pseudonym Baron Brambeus, which continued until Senkovskii’s death in March 1858. This, together with the newspaper’s substantially lower price (six silver rubles for delivery to Petersburg residents and seven silver rubles for delivery to out-of-town subscribers, versus the *Northern Bee*’s fifteen silver rubles for delivery to Petersburg residents and sixteen silver rubles for delivery to out-of-town subscribers in the late 1850s-early 1860s) made *Son of the Fatherland* the first serious competitor to the *Bee*.

The appearance of *Son of the Fatherland* in 1856 forced the *Northern Bee* to institute changes in an attempt to stay competitive. In 1858, Nikolai Grech and Faddei Bulgarin agreed to expand the number of columns in the newspaper, hire more staff, increase payments for articles, and pay for telegraph dispatches. Grech and Bulgarin continued their business relationship despite the deterioration of their friendship after 1856, largely due to Bulgarin’s refusal to let Grech’s children inherit his share of the *Bee*. In the post-Crimean War relaxation of censorship, staying competitive also meant discussing national issues more openly, albeit within the generally conservative framework typical of the *Bee*. Issues of the *Bee* from 1857 featured more government reports and official statistics on the functions of various government ministries and

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offices. Reader’s letters were published in greater numbers and dealt with a range of provincial, cultural, and economic issues. For example, a reader’s letter published in January 1857 titled “More on the Rybinsk railroad” addressed an ongoing debate over railroads on the pages of the Bee and the Saint Petersburg News. Stating that the latter periodical had published incorrect transportation costs, the reader “I.O.” presented arguments in support of the railroad branch connecting Rybinsk to Vyshnii Volochëk, part of the railroad network linking Moscow with towns on the Volga River.701

These changes to the Northern Bee did not affect how it addressed its middle-stratum readership. Faddei Bulgarin’s feuilletons continued to speak to the middle stratum in largely the same way as before, but with slightly more directness. For example, one feuilleton from January 3, 1857 touched on the increase in food prices, directly addressing the middle stratum: “In the higher stratum and among the wealthy they do not speak at all of costliness, especially of the costliness of foodstuffs. This is called bad form and petty-bourgeois mores [Éto nazyvaetsia mauvais ton i meshchanskimi nravami]. But among the middle stratum of society there is only talk of costliness.”702 Bulgarin continued that this was due to speculators and traders raising prices on foodstuffs after the Crimean War; he advised prudence among the public, such as avoiding buying treats like caviar and jams while prices were unnecessarily high. Bulgarin also continued his criticism of the “natural school” of writers while registering disapproval of the new generation of readers. In a feuilleton from January 5, 1857 Bulgarin observed, “In recent times the taste of a large portion of Russian readers towards literary works has completely changed, and has shifted from humoristic or moral articles to coarse sketches of the mores of simple,

701 Severnaia pchela, January 4, 1857, No. 3.
702 Severnaia pchela, January 3, 1857, No. 2.
Bulgarin objected to the way these sketches “illustrate the one bad side of simple folk” and wrote, “Before you begin to describe the weaknesses and vices, you must elevate the entire estate in its own eyes”, citing the merchant estate as an example. Bulgarin specified that he was not against satire: “Quite the contrary! When enlightenment and education settles in our higher and middle estates, then harmful insects attack the sweet fruits of enlightenment”; these insects were “the evil that enlightenment brings with it, against which the only method is comedy, satire, fable and humor. This is how Catherine II understood it, who in all fairness is called the Great!”

Bulgarin wrote that eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century writers had written useful satire and humor (writers like Molière, Addison, Fonvizin in the eighteenth, and Jouy, Griboedov, and Krylov in the early nineteenth century), and that he wished to return Russian literature to how it was in the 1820s (i.e. prior to the “natural school”). This desire to return to an older, better, wiser age was clear indication that the Northern Bee was in decline.

After the relaxation of press censorship in 1856, 1857, and especially 1858 (when dozens of new journals were permitted, including the so-called ‘boulevard’ publications sold by the single issue), the Northern Bee experienced further loss in its market share. Besides the lower price of Son of the Fatherland, this newspaper and as well as other private periodicals were republishing some information that the Bee had originally printed. Grech had explained in a letter to Bulgarin in 1858 that the “cheap newspapers… reprint our hard work”, newspapers like Son of the Fatherland (1856-1901), Golden Fleece (Zolotoe runo, 1857-59), Illustration (Illiustratsiia, renamed Illustrated Newspaper, or Illiustrirovanaiia gazeta, 1858-73), and Leaflet for Everyone (Listok dla vsekh, 1858-60), but that there was no point in suing them because

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703 Severnaia pchela, January 5, 1857, No. 4.
704 Ibid.
nothing would come of it.\textsuperscript{705} With the exception of \textit{Illustration/Illustrated Newspaper} and especially \textit{Son of the Fatherland}, which published for four and a half decades (and has been described by one scholar as a newspaper for the middle stratum), the other competitors to the \textit{Bee} were short-lived bourgeois periodicals that did not survive for more than a few years.\textsuperscript{706} These cheaper periodicals did, however, exist long enough to pull away readers from the \textit{Bee} and undermine its financial stability.

While the \textit{Northern Bee} struggled against cheaper competitors, the \textit{Library for Reading} seemed to be improving in both quality and prestige during the late 1850s. Under Aleksandr Druzhinin’s editorship between 1856 and 1858, the \textit{Library} had explicitly turned away from the methods and direction associated with Osip Senkovskii. Instead, Druzhinin concentrated on literature, the arts, and reform issues abroad. Among Russian authors published in 1857, for example, were Afanasy Fet, A.K. Tolstoi, Ivan Turgenev, M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, and many works by Druzhinin himself; translated works included the American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe’s European travelogue \textit{Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands} (with discussions of antislavery meetings in England); the Sciences and Arts section featured articles like Pavel Annenkov’s “Memories of Gogol” and M.M. Mikhailov’s “The Arrangement of Prisons at the Beginning of the Penitentiary System” (dealing with France, Britain, and the United States). Petr Boborykin recalled in his memoirs that Druzhinin had genuinely reinvigorated the \textit{Library} after 1856 and turned it into a publishing organ of the “Turgenev-Botkin kruzhok”, which also included Grigor’evich and Annenkov.\textsuperscript{707} Ivan Turgenev, writing to Druzhinin in January 1857,

\textsuperscript{706}O.F. Kuznetsova, “Gazeta ‘Syn Otechestva’ v 60-e gody XIX v. : (Stanovlenie i razvitie pressy dla sred. soslovii),” (Avtoref. dis. [Dissertation synopsis], Moscow, 1988).
\textsuperscript{707}P.D. Boborykin, \textit{Za polveka: vospominaniia} (Moscow: Zakharov, 2003), 158, 172.
expected the *Library* to overtake the *Contemporary* in popularity.\textsuperscript{708} Once Alexander II permitted the discussion of domestic reforms in print in 1858 (serfdom, women’s education, and other issues), Druzhinin fully embraced a reform agenda and brought in A.F. Pisemskii as co-editor. Between 1858 and 1860, the *Library* established itself as a moderately liberal publication that was in support of domestic reforms. The journal’s prestige increased with important publications like Ivan Turgenev’s *First Love* in 1860; additional censorship reductions in 1859-60 allowed the *Library* (and other private periodicals) to introduce a foreign politics section and thereby keep up with current events.

However, the transformation of the *Library for Reading* under Aleksandr Druzhinin occurred during the great literary-ideological schism that followed Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War; the schism produced rival camps of so-called aesthetic (“pure”) and civic (“didactic”) art, and Druzhinin and the *Library* played key roles in this development. According to literary scholar Derek Offord, Druzhinin was still on good terms with the editors Nekrasov and Panaev when he left the *Contemporary* in early 1856, as well as with their new literary critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky, with whom Druzhinin had disagreed over the significance of Pushkin (Chernyshevsky had named Gogol as Russia’s most important writer in his cycle “Essays on the Gogol Period of Russian Literature”):

> Druzhinin prints some of Nekrasov’s verse in the first number of *Biblioteka* which he edits and at the end of 1856 the two journals are subscribing jointly to foreign publications. Druzhinin’s personal relations with Panayev remain cordial. Nor does Chernyshevsky immediately criticise Druzhinin: in October 1856 he writes a cautious note on the appearance of *Biblioteka*, admitting its right to differ and full of respect for Druzhinin.\textsuperscript{709}

By the end of 1856, however, writers who had once agreed to disagree on issues of literature and art had ceased to tolerate differences of opinion, a situation which Druzhinin described to

\textsuperscript{708} Cited in Offord, “Aleksandr Vasilyevich Druzhinin,” 146.
\textsuperscript{709} Offord, “Aleksandr Vasilyevich Druzhinin,” 157, 159.
Turgenev as “one of the strangest in the world”. Polemicizing with each other from the “aesthetic” camp of the *Library* and the “civic” camp of the *Contemporary*, these writers turned to increasingly hyperbolic language:

Thus Druzhinin speaks of the ‘smell of old carrion’ which emanates from the writings of Chernyshevsky… Nekrasov accuses Druzhinin of lying in an article on Gogol and refers to his way of thinking as ‘sh… with cream’, the ‘stench’ from which would alienate all that was ‘alive’ in the young generation from *Biblioteka*. Panayev applies the epithets ‘rotten’ and ‘superficial’ to Druzhinin as a critic. Chernyshevsky defies Turgenev to find in Druzhinin’s work a ‘single idea’ which is neither banal nor plagiarised; even Grigoryev seems better to Chernyshevsky than Druzhinin: he may be mad but at least he is a human being, not a ‘cesspit’.711

Druzhinin’s belief that the writer had to transmit eternal truths and reveal the poetry inherent in all facets of life appeared to be disconnected from the immediate reality of social reform that radical writers like Chernyshevsky urgently felt. Where in the late 1840s Druzhinin had established himself as a liberal Westernizer who supported the abolition of serfdom and various other reforms, his same views in the late 1850s were interpreted as insufficiently reformist and even ‘conservative’. Indeed, Druzhinin acquired the label of a ‘conservative’ largely because of his exhortations to remain calm and dispassionate, avoid extremes, and not blindly follow the demands of the ‘civic’ camp: Panaev described Druzhinin’s views as “rotten conservatism”, while Herzen continued to label the *Library* as “conservative” under Druzhinin’s editorship.713

Druzhinin and the *Library* were dismissed by rivals as not meeting the needs of the new generation: “Druzhinin is now ‘harmless’, wrote Chernyshevsky towards the end of 1856, ‘because no one listens to him and no one reads him’. His ‘rotten tendency produces sympathy in no one except N.I. Grech and F. Bulgarin’, Panayev affirmed in [1857].” 714

710 Quoted in Offord, “Aleksandr Vasilyevich Druzhinin,” 158.
711 Offord, “Aleksandr Vasilyevich Druzhinin,” 158.
On the eve of the Great Reforms, then, the *Library for Reading* had become a journal of dispassionate analysis (eschewing vituperative polemics) and liberal moderation (supporting gradual reform); the polarized political atmosphere of the 1860s, however, had a ruinous effect on moderate Russian periodicals. Even liberals like Turgenev found that the *Library* was “too ‘cold’ and ‘passionless’ (*besstrastna*)” under Druzhinin. Druzhinin left the *Library* in November 1860 due to declining health (he would die of tuberculosis in 1864) and handed sole editorship to A.F. Pisemskii, who kept the tone of the journal largely the same while adding more interesting content (such as articles on Darwin’s *Origin of Species* and the outbreak of the American Civil War in April 1861). Midway through 1861, Pisemskii added a new section to the *Library* that discussed domestic issues in more detail, notably the carrying out of the Emancipation, but also school reform (especially education of the *narod*), mutual credit institutions, pensions, military spending, the government treasury, and other national questions. Pisemskii also published his own works in the *Library*, which included realist fiction about the peasantry not written in the ‘didactic’ style. In what was to become a turning point for the *Library*, Pisemskii began publishing satires of the radical intelligentsia, and was joined by the new contributing writer P.D. Boborykin in satirizing radical critics like Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, and Pisarev. Boborykin recalled in his memoirs that Pisemskii “held art and fiction in high regard, and he could not stand the direction of criticism coming from Chernyshevsky”.

In 1861 the *Library* was thoroughly condemned by the radical satirical journal *Spark* and the *Contemporary*, with the editors of the *Spark* challenging Pisemskii to a duel. This event

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717 Boborykin, *Za polveka*, 172.
718 ESBE, s.v. “Pisemskii, Aleksei Feofilaktovich.”
disillusioned Pisemskii with his job as editor of the Library and with Petersburg publishing in general; he arranged for P.D. Boborykin to take over as sole editor in 1863 and left Petersburg for Moscow.\footnote{Ibid.}

Boborykin inherited the Library as both its editor and owner (Boborykin bought the Library and its large debt from V.P. Pechatkin in February 1863). He hoped to turn the Library into “a broadly liberal organ, though without any revolutionary-socialist tinge”, to end the polemics “against nihilists, gradualists and the like”, and to publish emerging authors.\footnote{I use John McNair’s translations of Boborykin’s texts in the Library: “Ob izdanii v 1864 g. zhurnalnaya Biblioteka dlja chteniia pod novoi redaktsei,” Biblioteka dlja chteniia N. 10 (1863): 2. Quoted in McNair, “The Reading Library and the Reading Public”: 216.} But Boborykin’s understanding of ‘broad’ was actually rather narrow: in 1864 the Library explicitly identified itself with the intelligentsia (what Boborykin defined as the “educated minority”) and made its goal “the union of our society with its own people, and their shared life, which is just beginning and is still poor, weak and young”.\footnote{“S.-Peterburg, 1 noiabria 1864 goda,” Biblioteka dlja chteniia N.10-11 (1864): 1. Quoted in McNair, “The Reading Library and the Reading Public”: 221, 222.} Boborykin’s Library maintained some of the ‘aesthetic’ elements inherited from Druzhinin and Pisemskii (Boborykin was, by his own admission, in the ‘aesthetic’ camp) but gave the journal the task of resolving how to serve the narod. Boborykin considered himself both a member and a chronicler of the liberal intelligentsia (Soviet scholars dubbed his chronicles as ‘bourgeois’), whose most important task was to serve the people;\footnote{A.M. Linin, K istorii burzhuaznogo stila v russkoi literature: tvorchestvo P.D. Boborykina (Rostov-on-Don: Gostip. im. Kalinina, 1935).} his semi-autobiographical story On the Road! (V put’-dorogu!), published in the Library in 1862-63, comes to this very conclusion (as do his later works of fiction in the late-1860s-1900s, according to John McNair).\footnote{John McNair, “Boborykin and his Chronicles of the Russian Intelligentsia,” in The Golden Age of Russian Literature and Thought: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990, ed. Derek Offord (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 149-167.} Although Boborykin falsely claimed to have coined...
the term ‘intelligentsia’, it is clear that he meant the term as it was understood by the mid-1860s, which according to Nathaniel Knight, meant neither the narod (understood as the lower classes) nor the state and its officials.\footnote{Nathaniel Knight, “Was the Intelligentsia Part of the Nation? Visions of Society in Post-Emancipation Russia,” \textit{Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History} 7:4 (Fall 2006): 733-58; here on Boborykin, 741. The back cover of the 2003 Russian edition of Boborykin’s memoirs still claims, incorrectly, that Boborykin coined the term ‘intelligent’. Boborykin, \textit{Za polveka}.} However, just as polemics with the radical intelligentsia had lost the Library one editor (Pisemskii), a new round of polemics had an even more profound effect on the periodical. Radical critics offended by the publication of Nikolai Leskov’s novel \textit{No Way Out (Nekuda)} in 1864 attacked the Library for satirizing Vasilii Sleptsov’s ‘Znamenskii commune’; the \textit{Contemporary, Russian Word (Russkoe slovo)}, and the imprisoned radical critic Dmitrii Pisarev all lambasted the Library.\footnote{McNair, “The Reading Library and the Reading Public”: 223-224.} Subscriptions suffered, compounding Boborykin’s already excessive debts; without enough funds to continue paying authors and the printers, and the Library was forced to close in mid-1865.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 226.}

Nikolai Leskov provides us with an interesting link back to the \textit{Northern Bee} and the transformation of the newspaper in the early 1860s. The year 1859 had been another turning point: Faddei Bulgarin died in September, Pavel Usov purchased Bulgarin’s share of the Bee, and Nikolai Grech (while still owning part of the Bee) went into semi-retirement. With the beginning of 1860, the \textit{Northern Bee} was effectively Usov’s own newspaper. Usov kept the Bee in step with the government by giving full backing to the reform measures (the Third Section continued to ‘work’ with the newspaper by sending certain articles for publication, such as those stressing the supposed calmness of the peasantry).\footnote{IRLI, f. 583, ed. khr. 737, II.1-1ob.} In addition to covering the reforms from the government’s point of view, the Bee at this time reflected Usov’s own interest in industry, commerce, and trade (he was simultaneously editor of the \textit{Mediator}, a newspaper devoted to

\footnote{IRLI, f. 583, ed. khr. 737, II.1-1ob.}
these same issues). Usov invited writers and contributors to the *Bee* who shared his middle-of-the-road view (it is difficult to label Usov a conservative or liberal), including Nikolai Semenovich Leskov, pseudonym M. Stebnitskii. Leskov wrote dozens of feuilletons for the *Bee* in 1862 that covered both domestic issues and the arts; he wholeheartedly supported the reforms of Alexander II and fiercely polemicized with radical critics and ‘nihilists’. His feuilletons about the mysterious St. Petersburg fires of May 1862, however, appear to have been purposefully misunderstood: rumors spread that Leskov and the *Bee* were accusing St. Petersburg students in deliberately starting the fires. Critics like Dmitrii Pisarev condemned Leskov and any periodical willing to publish him; the reputation of both Leskov and Usov’s *Bee* substantially suffered (Leskov published his ‘anti-nihilist’ novel *No Way Out* in response to this bitter experience, which damaged the Library’s reputation, as discussed above).  

728 This reputational damage to Usov’s *Bee* came as commercial competition from cheaper papers was thoroughly undoing the *Bee*’s financial standing. In the early 1860s the *Northern Bee* had around 4,000 subscribers, while *Son of the Fatherland* commanded some 20,000 subscribers.  

729 Additional ‘bourgeois’ newspapers founded in the 1860s that borrowed techniques from the *Bee* immediately became competitors, like A.A. Kraevskii’s daily *Voice* (*Golos*, 1863-1884); faced with dwindling subscriptions, Pavel Usov closed the *Northern Bee* in September 1864. Usov went on to work for his former competitor *Son of the Fatherland*, as well as the business daily *Stock Market Gazette* (and its evening edition *Evening Newspaper, Vecherniaia gazeta*), the journal *Stock Market*, and Kraevskii’s International Telegraph Agency in the 1870s. 

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Conclusion

In tracing the decline of the Northern Bee and Library for Reading it may be easy to miss the very real success of the Russian bourgeois periodical as a genre. After all, the Northern Bee shut down after struggling against competitors who borrowed elements from the Bee: first Son of the Fatherland (1856), then Illustration/Illustrated Newspaper (1858), and then Voice (1863). For example, Kraevskii’s Voice “published the names of those who moved up the ranks of state service” and the “names and amounts of donations” to charitable causes, just as the Bee had done since the mid-1820s. Replicating genre elements popularized by the Bee, these newspapers of the second half of the nineteenth century added their own borrowings from European bourgeois periodicals and as a rule charged lower prices (the Voice charged twelve silver rubles for a yearly subscription versus the Bee’s fifteen). The Bee shut down not because it failed to adjust to the era of the Great Reforms, but because its model was first replicated and then improved by other periodicals.

The Library for Reading presents us with a more complicated, ‘dual’ legacy. The first legacy concerns the Library’s bourgeois emulators and successors. We have seen how, with the transfer of the journal to A.V. Druzhinin, the Library began to cater to a narrower middle stratum audience interested in the ‘aesthetic’ camp. With the Library no longer filling the role of the general encyclopedic thick journal, other bourgeois journals filled the void in the late 1850s and early 1860s: Family Circle (Semeinyi krug, renamed Petersburg Herald, or Peterburgskii vestnik, 1858-62), Entertainment (Razvlechenie, 1859-1918), Around the World (Vokrug sveta, 1860-68, edited by M.D. Ol’khin’s son Pavel Ol’khin), Spectator of Public Life, Literature and Sport (Zritel’ obshchestvenoi zhizni, literatury i sporta, 1861-63), as well as an array of

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731 On the Voice (Golos), Ibid., 50.
732 On the bourgeois models of the Voice, Ibid.,
specialized journals for members of the bourgeois family: the women’s *Fashion Shop* (*Modnyi magazin*, 1862-1883), the children’s *Work and Leisure* (*Delo i otdykh*, 1864-66, edited by Elizaveta Akhmatova) and *Family Evenings* (*Semeinye vechera*, 1864-1891), and various journals on agriculture, gardening, hunting, and photography; taken together, these periodicals formed a link between the encyclopedic *Library* of the 1830s-1840s and the famous bourgeois illustrated journals *Niva* and *Rodina* of the late nineteenth century.\(^{733}\)

The second legacy of the *Library for Reading* concerns the role of the intelligentsia in the history of Russia’s middle stratum. Under A.V. Druzhinin and A.F. Pisemskii, and even more explicitly under P.D. Boborykin, the *Library* addressed a subset of the middle stratum: first the aesthetically inclined educated reader, and then (under Boborykin) the liberal intelligentsia reader concerned with how to serve the people. This transformation of the *Library* reflected the emergence of the intelligentsia in the mid-1850s, whose members were not interested in writing for the general reader but for ideologically liked-minded. We know that Boborykin identified wholeheartedly with the intelligentsia, which he defined in his memoirs (in reference to the 1860s) as professional writers, teachers, professors, and artists.\(^{734}\) Around 1830, this would have been the definition used by Faddei Bulgarin to identify a portion of the middle stratum; as a provincial landowner from Nizhnii Novgorod, Boborykin himself would have been labeled a member of the middle stratum. Although the intelligentsia is discussed in the following pages, it is important to underscore its role in dividing the identity of the middle stratum into an ‘educated’ or ‘thinking’ minority and a larger bourgeoisie interested in personal achievement, education, family, leisure, and consumer goods. The *Library* shut down because it had narrowed

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\(^{733}\) See the years 1858-1864 in Lisovskii, *Bibliografiia*, 137-200.

\(^{734}\) Boborykin, *Za polveka*, 192.
its audience, but with neither the financial success of *Notes of the Fatherland* nor the radicalism of the *Contemporary*, it could not successfully compete for the intelligentsia readership.
Conclusion: The Middle Stratum and Modern Russian Culture

This dissertation has argued that the Northern Bee and the Library for Reading were important forerunners in establishing the genre of the bourgeois periodical in pre-reform Russia. The Bee and the Library propagated attitudes, values, and behavior that both reflected and helped construct the modern culture of a Russian middle stratum, emphasizing education, individual achievement, self-fashioning, hard work, and the family. We can imagine the reader of the Bee and the Library as a modern nineteenth-century Russian who was either formally or self-educated, shaved his beard, followed recommendations for books related to his career, and read the profiles and obituaries of other modern Russians just like him engaged in commerce, charity, and cultural activities; his wife read literature, articles about estate management, and reviews of children’s textbooks; together they were concerned about the best way to educate their children for successful future careers. From this portrait, and from the examples detailed in Chapter Four and Five, we can see how these periodicals served as models for the immensely popular bourgeois print institutions Niva and Rodina that were established in the late nineteenth century and dominated until the end of Imperial Russia.

Crucially, materials from the Bee and the Library challenge the trope of a weak and formless middle stratum in pre-reform Imperial Russia. We see that bourgeois attitudes and values were clearly in place by the 1860s, when the intelligentsia of all camps proclaimed Russia’s bourgeoisie to be small, professional, and urban. For instance, the jurist and liberal intelligent Boris Chicherin wrote in his 1862 essay “What is the Middle Stratum?” (Chto takoe srednee soslovie?), that the middle stratum consisted largely of professionals living in cities, but that it was too small and apolitical and did not contain enough “enlightened forces” to be an
effective civic and political force. This was not a faithful representation of Russia’s bourgeoisie, a large portion of which existed out in the provinces along with large swaths of Russia’s industry. The intelligentsia did not count itself among the middle stratum, even though its members (writers, professors, teachers, artists) came from that very social segment; identifying itself as neither the state nor the common people, the intelligentsia put itself outside of class and even outside the nation, as Nathaniel Knight has argued. In their arguments for reforming Russia, members of the intelligentsia (both liberal and radical) minimized the existence of the Russian middle stratum by adopting a Western European (often explicitly Marxist) model of the urban, professional middle class against which Russia failed to measure up. This narrative, in turn, has dominated both Soviet and Western historiography, but evidence from the Bee and the Library can help us reconstruct a more accurate picture of nineteenth-century Russian society, in which both intelligentsia culture (focused on the gulf between themselves and the narod) and genuinely popular bourgeois culture (flourishing in cities and provinces) existed side by side.

This corrective is necessary because the narrative of the progressive and populist intelligentsia continues to distort our picture of nineteenth-century Russian culture. Periodicals like the Bee and the Library make it possible to trace the development of Russia’s middle stratum in the second third of the nineteenth century; by incorporating other bourgeois periodicals and consumer texts from the 1820s through the end of the Imperial period, we can trace the middle stratum’s long-term development. In doing so, we will find that Russia’s bourgeois culture was far richer and more widespread than previously imagined.

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735 B. Chicherin, “Chto takoe srednee soslovie?” in Neskol'ko sovremennykh voprosov (Moscow: Tip. V. Gracheva i komp., 1862), 138.
736 Knight, “Was the Intelligentsia Part of the Nation? Visions of Society in Post-Emancipation Russia,” passim.
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