

Kevin Windle

‘Unmajestic bombast’: The Brisbane Union of Russian Workers as Shown in a 1919 Play by Herman Bykov

It is well known that in the years 1918-1921 the Russian socialist community in Queensland drew much attention to itself. A number of valuable studies have shed light on the activities of this community and the measures taken by the Commonwealth government to minimize their effects and contain revolutionary stirrings.¹ During the latter part of the war and the early post-war years, the military authorities closely monitored all ‘disloyalists’, real and potential, meaning, in particular, Germans, Sinn Feiners and those likely to be their allies. Since many Russians were openly disaffected and actively fomenting unrest it was only to be expected that they should be treated as real – not merely potential – disloyalists, and the leading figures kept under surveillance. As a result, the body of documentary material dealing with them, now held in the National Archives of Australia and the state archives, is extensive. One of the more unusual items preserved in the Brisbane Office of the National Archives is a short play in Russian, dated 13-14 February 1919, which throws much light on some of the personalities involved in the disturbances of that year and their personal and political relations: in particular on Herman Bykov, Aleksandr Zuzenko and Konstantin Kliushin. Since the first two played a leading role in the disturbances of March 1919, and Zuzenko went on to serve as an agent of the Communist International in Australia, this work, though of limited literary value, is of interest for what it can tell us about the Russian radical community in Brisbane, its leaders and its internal dynamics at the period.²

¹ See in particular Eric Fried, *Russians in Queensland, 1886-1925*, University of Queensland BA Honours thesis, 1980; Raymond Evans, *The Red Flag Riots: A Study of Intolerance* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1988); Raymond Evans, ‘Agitation, Ceaseless Agitation’, in *Russia and the Fifth Continent: Aspects of Russian Australian Relations*, eds. John McNair and Thomas Poole (Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1992), 125-71; Frank Cain, *The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1983).

² The Bykov materials referred to here may be found in the Brisbane Office of the National Archives of Australia (NAA): BP4/1, 66/4/2165. I am grateful to the NAA

The play in question, perhaps better described as a sketch or *kapustnik*, consists of twenty-six handwritten pages, with the title ‘On How We Are Learning Self-Management and Control’ [*O tom, kak my uchimsia samoupravleniiu i kontroliu*] (hereafter *Samoupravlenie*), and the author signs as ‘neumiraiushchii Pimen Iuvenalovich-Satirikon-Nestorov’. The title is followed by a dedication to ‘the Seriously Demented Group ... and all majestic heroes of unmajestic bombast’ [*gruppe kraine pomeshannykh ... i vsem velichavym geroiam nevelichavogo pustozvonstva*]. The play eventually found its way into the National Archives with other materials seized by the Intelligence Section of the 1st Military District (Queensland) shortly after the Brisbane riots. It was among the papers of one of the ‘disloyalist’ participants, Herman Bykov, the author behind the pseudonym. As Raymond Evans has recounted, Russian radicals were well to the fore in the large demonstration on 23 March 1919 against the War Precautions Act, still in effect four months after the end of hostilities, and Bykov himself was one of two Russians at the head of the march, each carrying a large red flag, in defiance of an official ban on any such display. The other was Aleksandr Zuzenko. For their part in these events, Bykov, Zuzenko and a dozen other Russians would soon be deported to their home country.

On Bykov, also known as Aleksei Rezanov, there is a regrettable dearth of reliable information, especially concerning his youth and his later life after his forced return to Russia. The scant details below derive from Raymond Evans’ studies, press reports from 1919, and the limited archive material. According to Evans, Bykov was born in Saratov in 1891 and arrived in Australia as a sailor in 1916.³ A tireless activist and prolific writer in the socialist press, he had once been a Left Socialist Revolutionary, and in this capacity had spent seven years in Tsarist prisons, but by 1918 he preferred to describe himself as a ‘Russian revolutionary Bolshevik Maximalist’.⁴ The military censor’s reports describe him as ‘a particularly dangerous revolutionary’, and at another point,

staff for their assistance in locating them, and to Dr Elena Govor, who first alerted me to the existence of the play.

³ Evans, ‘Agitation’, 129; Evans, *Red Flag Riots*, photograph caption between 120 and 121.

⁴ A. Resanoff, ‘Bolshevism and Democracy’, *Knowledge and Unity*, No. 30, 22/3/19. See also Evans, ‘Agitation’, 129.

‘a low class fellow, just the type to do mischief’.⁵ He was arrested in the wake of the Brisbane riots, having been quite badly hurt when a crowd of returned soldiers tried to toss him into the Brisbane River.⁶ While in custody in Brisbane’s Boggo Road Gaol, he again proved himself an able agitator: he was the initiator of a hunger-strike of four-and-a-half days which secured the ‘red flaggers’ treatment as political prisoners.⁷ He was released for a while on 19 July,⁸ prior to deportation, and soon afterwards a new Russian newspaper, *Nabat* (The Tocsin), appeared, for which Bykov seems to have been largely responsible. When arrested in April, he had been planning another Russian-language newspaper, *Fakel* (The Torch).⁹ He had drafted editorials and feature articles for it, although he had been unable to secure permission to publish. His articles in English continued to appear in *Knowledge and Unity* up to the time of his deportation and shortly thereafter.

Bykov was finally deported to Russia in September 1919, with a dozen other ‘Red Flag’ prisoners, including Kliushin, a central character in *Samoupravlenie*, and Mikhail Rozenberg (Michael Rosenberg), Zuzenko’s father-in-law. (In *Nabat* they are referred to proudly as ‘krasnoznamenovtsy’, while a hostile English-language press preferred the term ‘red-raggers’). Zuzenko himself, seen as a more dangerous subversive than the others, had

⁵ Intelligence Report, Week ended 12 March 1918, Censor’s Notes, NAA: MP 95/1/0, 167/85/91.

⁶ Extract from Brisbane Censor’s Report, week ending 26 March 19, NAA: MP 367/1, 512/1/898.

⁷ Evans ‘Agitation’, 150, 158; Norman Jeffery letter (24/4/59) in University of Queensland Fryer Library (UQFL) Poole-Fried Collection, 336, box 7, folder 4. *Nabat*, No. 1, 6 August 1919, p. 4.

⁸ Intelligence Report, Week ended 11 Aug. 1919, MP 367/1/0, 479/25/190, Resanoff to Peter Timm [Timms], also in UQFL Poole-Fried Collection, 336, box 3, folder 4.

⁹ On *Fakel*, see Intelligence Report, Week ended 12 March 1918, Soviet of Souse [sic] of Russian Workers to F. Goozeff 6/3/19, and Censor’s Notes, NAA: MP 95/1/0, 167/85/91. The first four pages of *Nabat*, in what may be a proof copy, are held with Bykov’s *Fakel* articles and feuilletons in NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/2165. A further copy of *Nabat* is located in UQFL, Poole-Fried Collection, 336, box 21, folder 2. *Nabat*, said to be produced by *Gruppa kommunistov* in Brisbane, is of poor print quality and in places less than fully legible. It is likely that it never entered circulation. This is most probably the only issue. It is dated 6 August 1919.

been deported as early as April, and his young wife Civa (Tsetsiliia, Tsiva) had followed him in May. Seventy-one years later, when interviewed by Eric Fried, Civa Zuzenko reported that she and her husband had remained in contact with Bykov, evidently in Leningrad, and that he had a wife and ‘lots of children’. She suspected that he might have perished in the siege of Leningrad.¹⁰ Whether or not Bykov survived the siege, he appears to have outlived Zuzenko, whose career was cut short by arrest and execution in the purge of 1938. Of Bykov’s life in the intervening years little is known beyond the fact that in 1923 he was in communication with his Brisbane and Ipswich comrades from Chita, where he was Secretary of the Far-Eastern Bureau of the CP Central Committee, and sent a ‘political letter’ to be read as a lecture at meetings.¹¹

The mere fact that the play was among Bykov’s papers need not of itself prove that he is Satirikon-Nestorov, the author. Indeed, the fact that he appears as a character in it, under the name Squeaky-Creaky, might suggest that his authorship is unlikely. However, a close examination of the play and the surrounding documents, and others by Bykov and his comrades, suggests strongly that Bykov is the author, on a number of grounds:

(1) handwriting: it happens that the file contains other handwritten material, notably the article ‘Rus’ avstraliiskaia’, which bears the signature Rezanov, and one does not need to be an expert in the field to recognize the very close similarities: the highly individual forms of certain letters are often difficult to read, and equally difficult to read in *Samoupravlenie* and the other documents;

(2) punctuation (or lack of same) and spelling (mis-spelling): again it is possible to compare the play with the handwritten documents known to be in Bykov’s hand, and observe close similarities. One of the errors common to *Samoupravlenie* and ‘Rus’ avstraliiskaia’ is the spelling ‘Ziuzenko’ for ‘Zuzenko’.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Eric Fried for supplying copies of his videotaped 1990 interviews with Civa and Ksenia Zuzenko.

¹¹ There are references to Bykov’s letter from Chita in the minute books of the Ipswich Branch of the Union of Russian Workers, held in the Comintern Archive, *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii* (RGASPI), as Fond 495, Opis’ 95, Delo 5, e.g. p. 120 (1 July 1923).

(3) content, personal sympathies and personal ideological position: as will be shown below, these are fully consistent with Bykov's other writings and with what we know of his personal and ideological relations with other members of the Russian Association at the time. A form of words used in the text of his article 'Rus' avstraliiskaia',¹² 'my uzhe uchimsia samoupravleniiu', is very close to the title of the play. Certain uncommon phrases, such as 'buridanovy osly' (Buridan's asses), appear in *Samoupravlenie* and Bykov's signed letters.

None of the above factors, of course, rules out a collaborative effort, i.e. Bykov as one of a pair or group of authors, with Bykov as an amanuensis. However, as there is no evidence to indicate that this might actually be the case, in the text below I shall treat Bykov as the sole author. It may be taken as a near certainty that the play has never been published. Stage performances are equally unlikely. The five weeks between its completion and the Red Flag procession would hardly have been sufficient time to organize actors, rehearsals, etc., and any performance after 23 March, the day of the demonstration, can be ruled out, as it would not have served the interests of any of the protagonists, who were mostly in prison if not already deported.

Samoupravlenie is set in Brisbane (*vo grade Brizbene*) and presented as a record (*otchet*) of a meeting or series of meetings of the Russian Association — also known as the Union of Russian Workers (URW) — at Christmas 1918. It is heavily satirical, with much hyperbole for comic effect, and occasionally, where the language used seems improbable, the author gives a helpful footnote to assure readers that he is citing the actual words of the speaker on a given occasion, thus indicating that he is exaggerating less than one might suppose. The degree of exaggeration is difficult to judge, but of the historical context we do know that these were stirring times for members of the URW in Brisbane, a body which had assumed a strong left-wing profile under Artem (Fedor Sergeev) and had welcomed the overthrow of the monarchy in Russia.¹³ This

¹² 'Rus' avstraliiskaia: Iz zapisnoi knizhki "trampira"', (NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/2165). This article was written in 1918 for publication in *Knowledge and Unity*, but did not appear. An undated afterword, dealing with the struggle in the URW between his own faction and the anarchist wing led by Zuzenko, was appended in February or March 1919.

¹³ The life of Fedor Sergeev (1884-1921), known in Australia as Tom Sergeeff/Sergaev or Big Tom, is the subject of numerous Soviet biographies, memoirs

meant, of course, that the URW was not viewed favourably by conservative elements in Australian society, still less since the October revolution, and less again since the Bolshevik peace with Germany in March 1918. The URW was now under surveillance. One of its leaders, Petr Simonov (Peter Simonoff), had been appointed Consul-General early in 1918 but was not recognized by the Australian government.¹⁴ The URW was publishing newspapers in Russian, with editorial policies strongly opposed to the government and the war effort. *Znanie i edinenie*, the URW's newspaper, was closed down by a government order in December 1918; Simonov and Zuzenko had been banned from speaking in public and from publishing in November, and Simonov was soon arrested for defying the ban. Zuzenko launched another paper illegally in December (*Deviaty val*), and then began issuing *Znanie i edinenie* in English (Knowledge and Unity) and pretending that Civa was the editor.¹⁵

The radical Russian community, like revolutionary communities elsewhere, was anything but monolithic. The URW (known in English as 'the Souse', a corruption of *soiuz*) was riven by factions along lines which seemed to derive as much from personal differences as ideological ones. From early

and novels, as well as academic studies. On his years in Queensland (1911-1917) see Tom Poole and Eric Fried, 'Artem: A Bolshevik in Brisbane', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 31/2 (1985), 243-54; Kevin Windle, 'Brisbane Prison: Artem Sergeev describes Boggo Road', *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 38 (2004), 151-180; Eric Fried, 'Sergeyev, Fedor Andreyevich', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 11, 1891-1939 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988).

¹⁴ On Simonov, see in particular Eric Fried, 'The First Consul: Peter Simonoff and the Formation of the Australian Communist Party', in McNair and Poole, 110-25. See also Eric Fried, 'Simonov, Peter', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 11, 1891-1939, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988). Many in the URW, including Bykov, regarded Simonov as a poor choice for the role of consul-general. See Bykov, 'Rus' avstraliiskaia', and Kevin Windle, 'A Troika of Agitators: Three Comintern Liaison Agents in Australia, 1920-22', forthcoming in *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 2005. Simonov published his own brief account of his years as Soviet representative in Australia: 'Tri s polovinoi goda sovet'skogo diplomaticheskogo predstavitel'stva', *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, 7 November 1922, 61-66.

¹⁵ Zuzenko had resorted to the same ploy when banned from publishing in November. He had removed his own name from the Russian-language *Znanie i edinenie* and made Civa the nominal editor.

1918 Bykov headed a breakaway group entitled ‘Gruppa russkikh rabochikh’, which was itself divided into those who claimed to be true worker-revolutionaries, like Bykov, and the others, including Kliushin, whom Bykov regarded as effete intellectuals cut off from the masses. This division is clearly reflected in the play, though at a later date there seems to have been a move towards a rapprochement between some key members of the Group, including Bykov, and the URW. However, the origins of a separate Russian group in Ipswich, which would later compete with the Brisbane URW for Comintern recognition, appear to lie in this division of 1918.

From the time of the February and October revolutions of 1917 the Queensland Russians increasingly attracted the attention of the police and military intelligence: the 1918 May Day performance, ‘Breaking the Chains of Bondage’, devised by A. Khrutsky — misread or misconstrued in some intelligence reports as ‘Rutsky’, ‘Hootsky’, ‘Krutsky’, ‘Hruzki’, ‘H. Ruzki’ or ‘Comrade Ruski’ — was monitored by no less than three police informers, one of whom described it as ‘quite the most ludicrous gathering I have ever attended’.¹⁶ Surveillance continued as the first anniversary of the October Revolution approached, and efforts were made to curtail the public activities of Simonov and Zuzenko. Within the URW, ongoing discussion took place on ways to respond to the War Precautions Act, particularly once the armistice was signed, and heated debate continued over the political direction and management of the Union itself. Demonstrations were being planned from the very beginning of 1919, and the individuals portrayed in *Samoupravlenie* were actively involved. In fact a large demonstration was held on Sunday 26 January 1919,¹⁷ with red flags displayed, but on that occasion no violence resulted as the loyalists were unprepared. It is known, however, that well

¹⁶ ‘Most ludicrous gathering ...’ quoted by H. E. Jones in a secret report to Acting Prime Minister W. A. Watt, 10 May 1918, NAA: A3934/1, SC5/1. Khrutsky was also the author of an essay ‘Revoliutsiia i burzhuanoe chistilishche’, NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/3557, advocating the Bolshevik ‘Maximalist’ programme. The handwritten Russian text is accompanied by a somewhat unreliable English translation in typescript, with the title ‘Revolution and Cleaning Out of Bourgeois’.

¹⁷ Intelligence Report, week ended 29 Jan. 1919, p. 39, NAA: MP95/1/0, 167/69/76.

before the March riots the security services were strongly recommending the deportation of the leading Russian radicals, especially Zuzenko.¹⁸

Thus it may be seen that by February 1919, when this play was written, tensions were running high on several different fronts: the URW was fractured and its leading figures were at odds; the splinter group known as the Group of Russian Workers could not present a united front of its own; URW members were increasingly defiant in their attitude to the government and its laws; its leaders were already in breach of laws which they regarded as unjust, and were preparing to step up the challenge by new demonstrations; loyalist groups, consisting largely of returned soldiers, were mobilizing to confront the ‘disloyalists’ and aliens in their midst.

Such is the background to Bykov’s *Samoupravlenie*, which consists of seven scenes and a kind of ‘annex’. The cast of characters and the contents of the scenes are set out in summary form below, and the general thrust of the work is briefly characterized. Leaving aside those who appear in the ‘annex’ there are three main characters, two with walk-on parts, and some unidentified ‘voices’ (*golosa*). All except the ‘voices’ have aliases, but all represent figures in the revolutionary community in Queensland. All can be identified: the author provides somewhat cryptic notes, usually parts of names rather than full names, which are mostly sufficient, though at times more information would be helpful. In addition to the characters who are part of the cast, there are references to ten others, sometimes by real name (Sergeev, Simonov), sometimes by an alias. Again, those with only aliases, like Gorkin (A. Gorsky) and Vasia Tiu-tiu (V. Tiutin),¹⁹ can be identified without difficulty with the

¹⁸ See H. E. Jones, ‘Conditions in Queensland’, dated 21/12/18, NAA: A456/4, W26/241 p. 5; Jones repeated this advice in a letter to the Attorney General on 3/2/19, and it was endorsed by George Steward in a letter to the Acting Prime Minister on 4/2/19, NAA: A1606/1, A35/1.

¹⁹ Tiutin, who at one time was a member of the small Russian community working at Mt Cuthbert, where Zuzenko had also spent some time, is sometimes referred to in the files of the security services as ‘U. Tuitene’ or ‘W. Tuitene’, a form he may have used himself. He also used the name ‘W. Tweed’. See Intelligence Report, week ended 6 Nov. 1918, Censor’s Notes, NAA: MP 95/1/0, 164/46/56. Tiutin, who was not deported, was still living in Australia in the 1960s. See his letter to James Normington

help of the truncated forms given in the author's footnotes, but at this distance it is not always possible to learn much more about them. Clearly the play was written for contemporaries who knew the characters, not for curious readers who might happen upon it the better part of a century later. Nevertheless, the identity of the three main characters behind the 'speaking names' is not in doubt:

Rvi-Parusa, sirech' Razrushitel' (Rip-the-Sails, or the Destroyer),²⁰ occasionally 'Velikii Razrushitel'' (the Great Destroyer): a footnote says 'A. Z-nko' [= Zuzenko];²¹

Lysyi Rezoner (the Bald Philosopher): a note says 'K. K-n-Or-v' [Konstantin Kliushin, also known as Orlov];²²

Pili-Skripi (Squeaky-Creaky): 'A. R-v-B-v' [Herman Bykov, also known as A. Rezanov, occasionally 'Rosanoff'].²³

In addition, Raznosi-Nevynosimoe (Spread-the-Unspeakable, also appearing as Raznosi-Raznosimoe, Spread-the-Spreadable), or 'Fei-nov', who has a walk-on part, is Feiginov. Misha Skripochkin, who makes one short speech, is almost certainly Mikhail Vishnevsky (Michael Wishnewsky). His bride Marusia Sibiriachkina, or 'Tar-va', is Maria Tarkhanova, the daughter of

Rawling 30 Dec. 1962, Noel Butlin Archive Centre (Australian National University), N57/110.

²⁰ Here and below, translations are attempted, with some loss of word-play, only of the more obviously invented names which have significance in the author's design. There are inconsistencies – regularized here – in the author's use of capitals and hyphens in names with two or more components.

²¹ Zuzenko: often given in English documents as 'Soosenko' or 'Soozenko', and occasionally 'Zezanco' and 'Zuzuko'. The mutations undergone by Russian names, even without the problem of aliases, can lead to serious confusion. The Polish surname Owsiak, which occurs in *Samoupravlenie*, appears in Australian documents as 'Offsack', 'Offseck' and 'Offsick'; Steve Tolstobrov (Tolstobroff) is referred to in the Brisbane *Telegraph* on 31 March 1919 as 'Steve Loestohross' and in some documents as 'Tominogoi' and 'Elistobroff'.

²² Kliushin: this name is more commonly found in Australian documents – and hence in later writing about this period – in the transcription 'Klushin' (which Kliushin himself may have used), and sometimes 'Klishin'.

²³ At least one of Bykov's articles is signed with the pseudonym 'Stepan Tukov'. See 'Na sviashchennyi motiv', NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/2165.

the Ipswich activist Pavel Tarkhanov, as the minutes of the meetings of the URW Ipswich Branch make clear.²⁴

In the seven scenes there are no other named characters, only a sort of chorus supplied by the ‘voices’. The chorus technique is a traditional device, of course, and is used by Pushkin in *Boris Godunov*, of which *Samoupravlenie* has parodic echoes. At numerous points in the play we hear the views of ordinary people (*golos ‘divno nastroennoi massy’* – the voice of the ‘strangely inclined mass’), who exchange ironic comments in demotic tones and illiterate speech, or sing snatches of song.

In *Samoupravlenie*, the three main characters mock one another and what the others stand for, and the mockery is not particularly good-natured, while the authorial stance is itself mocking in its attitude to two of the central figures. So much so that two of the three can only be described as caricatures.

The Bald Philosopher (Konstantin Kliushin-Orlov) is one of the caricatures. Like many others in the community, Kliushin had a long history of political activity in Russia and his *curriculum vitae* included a term in a Siberian prison. His views on ‘the crowd’, expressed in his article ‘Parliament and Soviet’, might seem to support the opinions attributed to him in *Samoupravlenie*,²⁵ but his principal thesis is the superiority of soviets over Western parliamentary systems, and elsewhere he argued the need to educate the revolutionary working class.²⁶ To Bykov, Kliushin is now a ‘former’ radical, no longer active.²⁷ Though a member of ‘The Group’, that is, of the

²⁴ ‘Faganoff’, sometimes ‘Fagenog’, whose name appears occasionally in the Brisbane press and the security files (e.g. Summary of Communism, NAA: A6122/40, 111, pp. 61, 138), is undoubtedly the same individual as Feiginov. Mikhail Vishnevsky sometimes appears as ‘Michael Weshonusky’, e.g. NAA: A3934/1, SC5/1. His marriage to Tarkhanov’s daughter is mentioned in the minutes of a meeting of the Ipswich Branch on 9 April 1922 (RGASPI 495.95.5). A letter from Constable Rawlings to the Brisbane Inspector of Police, 26 April 1919, NAA: BP4/1 66/4/3660, names Vishnevsky’s wife incorrectly as ‘Taranova’.

²⁵ Konstantin Klushin, ‘Parliament and Soviet’ [no date, but before 9 April 1919], NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/3660.

²⁶ Intelligence Report, Week ended 11/12/18, NAA: MP95/1/0, 167/57/68, K. Klushin to Pikunoff 1/12/18, QF2569.

²⁷ See ‘Rus’ avstraliiskaia’ and the letter by ‘Arov’ (Bykov) to Bolotnikoff (11/3/19) in the Intelligence Reports, copies in UQFL Poole-Fried Collection, 336, box 3, folder 4,

breakaway ‘Group of Russian Workers’, the Philosopher is shown as considering himself above the crowd, whom he refers to as ‘stado baranov’ (a flock of sheep), adding statements such as ‘massu nado oskorbliat’, ... U nee kamennye mozgi’ (the masses must be insulted, ... their brains are made of stone). Views such as these, with the confession ‘Moi ideal – individualizm’ (my ideal is individualism) and ‘Moi bog – lichnost’ (the personality is my god), serve to turn his already hostile audience further against him. The same material, with some of the same phrases, is used by Bykov-Rezanov in his unpublished ‘Rus’ avstraliiskaia’, where Kliushin is again called a *former* political and described as very much the individualist intellectual. In another article written during the same period, Bykov derided the ‘sentimental, petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, who love the people only in theory, and know them from books, written by themselves’.²⁸ In *Samoupravlenie* the Bald Philosopher is a figure of fun, jeered at by his audience when he gives lectures in the Russian community. In a reference to a performance of Tolstoi’s *Living Corpse*, he says he has played the role of Ivan Nikolaevich. He (or the author) may mean Ivan *Petrovich* Aleksandrov, a minor character, who says ‘ia vse ponimaiu potomu chto ia genii’ (I understand everything because I’m a genius) and ‘i zhizn’ i smert’ dlia geniia bezrazlichny’ (life and death are a matter of indifference to a genius), sentiments consonant with Bykov’s portrayal of the Bald Philosopher, even if their application to Kliushin forms part of the author’s hyperbole.²⁹

As for Kliushin’s relations with Zuzenko, these are known to have been strained in January 1919, partly as a result of Kliushin’s defection to form the ‘Group of Russian Workers’,³⁰ but there had also been animated exchanges following the inaugural issue of Zuzenko’s newspaper (23 December 1918)

where the author states that Kliushin had taken no part in recent demonstrations and meetings. Also 336, box 3, folder 4, The Comrades of the Soviet of the Russian Workers to J. Maruschak, (23/4/19).

²⁸ A. Resanoff, ‘Bolshevism and Democracy’, *Knowledge and Unity*, No. 30, 22/3/19.

²⁹ Lev Tolstoi, *Sobranie sochinenii v 20-i tomakh* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1963), Vol. 11, 360.

³⁰ NAA: MP95/1, 167/36/45, Intelligence Report, Week ended 9/10/18, Zuzenko to Tyutin (on the decline of ‘the Group’), 29/9/18, QF2019.

Deviatyi val. Zuzenko, writing as ‘Sania Mamin’, was alleged to have accused Kliushin of being a ‘spy’, and Kliushin had denounced this ‘pack of lies’.³¹

The prime target of Squeaky-Creaky’s mockery, however, and the second of the colourful caricatures, is Rip-the-Sails, the reckless ‘Destroyer’ and spirit of anarchy and negation, hence the attribution to him of a series of epithets beginning with *bez-* (non-/un-/less): inter alia, *bezvlastnik*, *bezustavnik*, *bezsovetchik*, *beznachal’nik*, and *bezmotivnik*. Squeaky-Creaky savages the illogical statements and self-contradictions of Rip-the-Sails, citing oxymorons such as *bespartiinaia partiinost’*, *bezgosudarstvennaia gosudarstvennost’*, *bezvlastnaia vlast’*, *vlastnyi bezvlastnik*, etc. Zuzenko, the model, could indeed be contradictory, able now to hail the Bolsheviks for installing true anarchy, now to denounce them as ‘judases’. Here the playwright has ‘the Destroyer’ at one point speaking of himself and his friends as ‘we Bolshevik anarchists’. The enemy of dictators, he is condemned for seeking dictatorial powers for himself in the URW and wider Russian community.³² In *Samoupravlenie* he is held up for ridicule by an opponent who had more than once emphasized that ‘Soviet rule does not mean anarchy’.³³

Zuzenko was proud of his record of organizing strikes and workers’ protests in northern Australia, and of his work for the anarchistically-inclined Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). On this, as on more recent events, the playwright is very well informed and brings to bear a wealth of detail. He quotes Zuzenko’s speeches and articles, chapter and verse, from *Znanie i edinienie* and *Deviatyi val*, making use of key phrases which are unmistakably Zuzenko’s (*diktatura Bol’shevikov; s mesta v kar’er*), and longer quotations, sometimes slightly modified, such as ‘luchshe chas orlinogo poleta chem gody trudovogo sushchestvovaniia’ (better an hour of flight as an eagle than years of

³¹ Intelligence Report, Week ended 29 Jan. 1919, copy in UQFL 336, box 3, folder 4.

³² When secretary of the URW, and over the preceding two years, Zuzenko sought to unite Russian workers’ groups in a federation. See A. Matulichenko, ‘Federatsiia grupp russkikh rabochikh v Avstralii’, *Rabochnaia zhizn’*, No. 79, 5 September 1917. Bykov uses this as further evidence of his ‘demagogic tendencies’.

³³ A. Resanoff, ‘Bolshevism and Democracy’, *Knowledge and Unity*, No. 30, 22/3/19.

a life of toil).³⁴ Clearly the playwright revels in his own hyperbole, but the more colourful utterances of Rip-the-Sails are fully in line with other statements known to be by Zuzenko, who was still a fully committed anarchist at this period, though very much a supporter of revolution.³⁵ At this point (February 1919) Bykov in his play makes him vehemently anti-Bolshevik.

Major H. E. Jones, the Director of the Investigation Branch, wrote in August 1922 of Zuzenko's formidable oratorical skills: 'We are informed that his fluency and forcefulness as a speaker made him a really wonderful propagandist among his own countrymen.'³⁶ Bykov, who is more sceptical about his oratory, makes Rip-the-Sails express himself mainly in declamatory histrionics and shouted slogans: 'Doloi ...' (Down with ...), 'Da zdravstvuet ...' (Long live ...), 'Budet buria!' (A storm is coming!). When the author refers in his dedication to *geroi nevelichavogo pustozvonstva* (heroes of unmajestic bombast), it is quite clear that in his eyes the 'hero of heroes', the leading exponent of this oratorical genre, is Zuzenko.

Squeaky-Creaky (representing Bykov-Rezanov, the author) is also attacked, but his attackers are Rip-the-Sails and the Bald Philosopher, whose criticisms are dismissed in advance as either incoherent or merely personal. Rip-the-Sails, a master of *ad hominem* abuse, at one point calls Squeaky-Creaky 'gnusnaia gaden'kaia lichnost' (a vile, repellent individual), and an authorial note says these are 'A. Z-ko's exact words'. He adds that Squeaky-Creaky is 'podslepovataia mordochka, pripliusnutaia figurka' (a purblind face and flattened figure), and 'agent Gruppy' (i.e. *Gruppya* in the special sense of

³⁴ Writing as 'Matulichenko' in *Raboचाia zhizn'*, on 18 October 1916, Zuzenko had said, 'Luchshe den' orlinogo poleta, chem gody presmykania po griazi povsednevnosti.'

³⁵ Zuzenko's allegiances had changed, he says, by the time he arrived in Moscow in early 1920. He spelled this out in an article in a New York Russian-language newspaper in 1921: A. Matulichenko, 'Kak ia, anarkhist, stal lenintsem', *Novoe russkoe slovo*, 16 Feb., 17 Feb., 18 Feb. 1921. More detail on Zuzenko's journalism in Australia, the USA and Soviet Russia may be found in Kevin Windle, 'Zhurnalists i revoliutsioner na trekh kontinentakh: A.M. Zuzenko i ego zhurnalistskaia deiatel'nost' v 1916-1924 gg.', forthcoming in *Tynianovskii sbornik*, vyp. 12 (2005).

³⁶ Jones to Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, Melbourne 16/8/22; National Library of Australia, Papers of William Morris Hughes, 1538, Series 21, p. 205.

Gruppa russkikh rabochikh), but these phrases merely illustrate Zuzenko's way with words, and the words have little relevance in ideological or political debate. Unlike the other two main protagonists, Squeaky-Creaky is not a caricature; instead he appears as the voice of the committed, rational worker-communist, whose persuasive skills do not rely on bandied slogans. By and large, Rip-the-Sails does not argue ideological points in the way that Squeaky-Creaky does. Instead he indulges a taste for florid and emotive rhetoric, with personal invective. It is known that there was tension not only between Zuzenko and Kliushin, but also between Zuzenko and Bykov. In a long letter to Bolotnikov, a north Queensland comrade, on 11 March 1919, Bykov forcefully made the point that Zuzenko was no longer secretary of the URW, having been severely reprimanded for his 'anti-Bolshevik and anti-Soviet agitation' and replaced as secretary by a collective body termed a soviet. In the same letter Bykov attacks 'the influence of Sania Mamin's instigations against Bolshevism as a government.'³⁷ All of these points are echoed, in very similar terms, in the 'Afterword' to his 'Rus' avstraliiskaia', written at about the same time, and in the flyer 'Za sovety – ili protiv sovetov' (For the Soviets – or against the Soviets), in which he writes in the name of the triumphant Brisbane soviet, denouncing Mamin by name as a 'Bakuninist' and anti-Soviet anarchist.³⁸

The two 'portraits' in the 'annex' introduce new characters, for whom, apparently, no place could be found in the body of the play. The two who occupy the limelight here are named Vechnyi Flius (Eternal Abscess), for whom a note says A. L-n (i.e. Aleksei Lenin, who was well known to the military authorities at the time); and Nol'-Kapustin or Nol'-Kapustnik (Nikolai Lagutin), who has rather less than a walk-on part in the play proper but is mentioned by Rip-the-Sails, who says 'on i ia anarkhisty' (he and I are both anarchists). Both Lenin and Lagutin, with Tiutin and others, had been prominent in a Russian anarchist organization as early as January 1915, as shown by the minutes of two meetings of the Queensland *Bezgosudarstvenniki*

³⁷ Intelligence Report, Week ended 19 March 1919, copy in UQFL 336, box 3, folder 4. The name 'Arov' derives from the author's abbreviation 'A. R-ov' (= A. Rezanov, = Bykov). 'Sania Mamin' was one of Zuzenko's numerous aliases.

³⁸ *Za sovety – ili protiv sovetov*, signed 'Sovet', March 1919, NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/2165.

(anarchists), preserved in the Brisbane Office of the National Archives of Australia.³⁹ Lagutin was in the thick of things in 1918, when he organized and officiated at the May Day celebrations which centred round ‘The Chains of Bondage’. In the same year he served for a short time as editor of *Znanie i edinienie*, before Zuzenko took it over, and was regarded by the military authorities as ‘one of the most violent and reckless agitators in Brisbane’, ‘a thorough-going destructionist’, and something of a specialist in matters of firearms, explosives and demolition.⁴⁰ A third figure speaks only briefly in Portrait 1 to deflate the Eternal Abscess. He is given the name Gnilo-Bananov (Rotten Bananas), incompletely identified in a footnote as ‘A. Sh-pov’, in all likelihood John (or Ivan) Shuiupov, the owner of a fruit-shop in Stanley Street, South Brisbane (sometimes incorrectly recorded as ‘Shouinpoiff’ and ‘Shuyunoff’).

Although the main characters represent different strains of revolutionary thought, it should be noted that to outsiders and to the Australian authorities they were all radicals, all simply ‘disloyalists’, all undesirable, and any differentiation was hair-splitting. To insiders the divisions were real and important, no less than those in revolutionary circles in Russia itself in the period 1917-24 (Bolshevik, Menshevik, SR, Anarchist, anarcho-syndicalist, anarcho-communist), and the main characters are very much at odds with one another. A breakdown by scene of the content – the word ‘plot’ is hardly appropriate – is given below, with the author’s scene-headings translated:

Scene One, in which we receive praise. In tones of high melodrama Rip-the-Sails addresses an audience of workers (perhaps only two workers), hailing them as ‘titans of the earth’. He declares that he is a ‘navigation officer, first

³⁹ *Pervaia obshche-kvinstlenskaia konferentsiia Bezgosudarstvennikov* (referred to in some accompanying notes in English as ‘First Conference of the “Citizens of the World”’) and *Zasedanie 29-ogo ianvaria 1915 g.*, NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/2165. Lenin would later fall into disgrace. The records of the URW Ipswich branch for 1922 show that while serving as chairman of the famine relief fund he disappeared, taking with him £18/15/7d. from the URW’s funds, which included £3/12/5d. from the famine fund (RGASPI 495.95.5, see esp. pp. 41-2, May 1922).

⁴⁰ Summary of Communism, compiled to 9 Feb. 1922, NAA: A6122/40, 111, pp. 59-65 Lagutin, Nicholas.

class, who has taken part in expropriations and come within two inches of the gallows', and will show them the way. Tolstoi and Christ, he affirms, 'died fighting for the freedom of the working class, for anarchic communism.'

Scene Two, in which we begin to get annoyed and wax seriously indignant. The Bald Philosopher tries in the face of loud jeers to give a lecture about ancient Greece and Egypt, but his audience grows increasingly impatient with his open contempt for non-intellectuals. He emerges as an inveterate misanthropist (*narodonenavistnik*), out of touch with ordinary people. There are topical references to Kliushin's dispute with his trade union, the meat industry employees, over his exclusion for refusing to pay a levy to support the *Daily Standard*.⁴¹ Squeaky-Creaky, to wild applause, denounces the intelligentsia as belonging to the past. The future belongs to the Bolsheviks and the working class, he declares.

Scene Three, in which we do not recognize Soviet power and declare anarchy. Rip-the-Sails makes an impassioned speech to his worker audience, declaring that 'destruction is creation, and creation is the making of destruction'. Refusing to recognize Soviet power, he exclaims that communism in Russia is really anarchy (which he supports) and concludes, 'Long live All Power to the People! ... Long live anarchy!' The audience listens as sceptically as before.

Scene Four, in which we declare ourselves consuls and pronounce some anarchists man and wife. Rip-the-Sails cites the new Soviet laws on marriage and calls for recognition of the marriage of Misha Skripochkin, an anarchist, and Marusia Sibiriachkina. Squeaky-Creaky points out that these anarchists have already been married in a registry office, thus manifesting an incongruous respect for bourgeois law.

Scene Five, in which we renounce statutes and soviets. Rip-the-Sails calls on the meeting to ignore the 'vile Zimmerwald Bolshevik traitors', burn all laws and statutes, and rely on resolutions and declarations instead. Squeaky-Creaky observes that the anarchists also have rules and that the present secretary wants to make his own. The Bald Philosopher also denounces Rip-the-Sails' inconsistencies. Spread-the-Unspeakable threatens Squeaky-

⁴¹ Kliushin set down his case in an article entitled 'No Sympathy for You', held in NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/3660.

Creaky and the Bald Philosopher, while backing Rip-the-Sails with cries of ‘Long live anarchy!’

Scene Six, from which it emerges that the Great Destroyer is terribly tired and wants to rest. Prologue: the socialists have organized a ‘conspiracy’ to depose the anarchist dictator from the Secretary’s throne. Rip-the-Sails announces that the comrades may elect a new secretary in his place, but not Squeaky-Creaky. He recommends Vasia Tiu-tiu, but Nol’-Kapustin, a fellow anarchist, would also be acceptable. A proposal by Spread-the-Spreadable and Rip-the-Sails to remove Squeaky-Creaky from office and expel him from the URW fails.

Scene Seven, in which we continue to be consuls and examine the divorce process, in which the ‘strangely inclined masses’ turn into ‘porcupines’.⁴² Squeaky-Creaky states that, since the URW now performs marriages, it cannot escape matters of divorce, and that divorce under Bolshevik rule will be simpler and fairer than it is when controlled by the Church. The URW must consider the proposed Rosenberg divorce and give approval. Rip-the-Sails, who vehemently opposes all intervention in private and family affairs, is enraged by Squeaky-Creaky’s counter-arguments and departs with a torrent of abuse. He then ‘runs to the police with three editors and hurriedly marries one of them’ (Civa Rosenberg). The divorce of the Rosenberg parents does not take place.⁴³

Urgent appendix, in which it is communicated that His Anarchic Majesty, the authoritarian anti-authoritarian, renounces his throne. Pandemonium.⁴⁴ Rip-the-Sails, here identified with ‘counter-revolution’,

⁴² The author has Rip-the-Sails twice use the word *dikobraz* (porcupine) in its figurative sense: awkward, reclusive person.

⁴³ Other sources, such as Fried’s interview with Civa (1990), make no mention of any divorce, but a Brisbane Police Department report to the First Military District HQ on 28 April 1919 mentions that Michael Rosenberg was living apart from his wife when he was arrested (NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/3660). The family would soon be divided permanently by deportation. Their daughter Civa followed her deported husband to Russia in May 1919. Michael was deported in September of that year, never to return. Civa’s brother Boris followed in 1924. Michael’s wife Dora (Doris) and two other daughters, Fanny and Edith, remained in Australia.

⁴⁴ The author has ‘*pandominium*’.

abdicates as URW secretary with a further angry tirade. The stage directions say, ‘All power is transferred to a soviet. Anarchy has suffered a cruel defeat.’ A brief ‘Apotheosis’ consists of a near-quotation from *Boris Godunov*: ‘Lampada gasnet. Eshche poslednee skazanie i letopis’ okonchena moia. Okonchen trud zaveshchannyi mne bogom,’ (the lamplight fades. When I have set down one more tale my chronicle will be complete. The work entrusted to me by God is done).

The two ‘Portraits’ (*besplatnoe dobavlenie dvukh portretov*) conclude the play: in the first, the Eternal Abscess (A. Lenin) delivers a lecture, emerging as an eccentric supporter of the Bald Philosopher. In Portrait 2, Nol’-Kapustin (Lagutin) has the floor, speaking as an anarchist and extremist ally of Rip-the-Sails.

The quotation from *Boris Godunov*, close to the end of the play, is but one of many ‘intertextual’ elements. The text shows clearly that the author has a broad literary education: he deploys an impressive range of vocabulary and idiom, including uncommon historical and ecclesiastical vocabulary, and gives proof of extensive cultural knowledge, which includes musical knowledge, e.g. the libretto of Gounod’s *Faust*. The range of sources of his literary allusions is highly eclectic, including some works well known to Russian readers, and others that are relatively obscure. A prime source of inspiration was clearly the 1850 one-act vaudeville *Fantaziia* by ‘Koz’ma Prutkov’, that is, by Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoi and Aleksei Mikhailovich Zhemchuzhnikov. Here Bykov would have found much comical use of familiar songs, given new lyrics for the stage, and a model for his particular kind of ‘speaking name’: it is likely that his Rvi-Parusa, Pili-Skripi and Gnilo-Bananov owe a debt, given their form and semantic echoes, to Prutkov’s Razorvaki, Batog-Batyev and Kutilo-Zavaldaisky.⁴⁵ Other well-known works cited or referred to include: Pushkin’s *Boris Godunov*, Griboedov’s *Woe from Wit* (‘Von iz Mosky, siuda ia bol’she ne ezdok’), the Bible (Genesis, Psalms) and Tolstoi’s *War and Peace*, as well as the less well known *Living Corpse*. The Bald Philosopher is marked as an intellectual by his references to Rabelais (Panurge’s sheep from *Pantagruel*), Lessing in Krylov’s translation, and Buridan’s ass. Less obvious

⁴⁵ I am grateful to my colleague Dr Kirill Nourzhanov for reminding me of the names in *Fantaziia*.

allusions, unidentified in the text, are to an anti-religious song, popular in Social Democratic circles at the turn of the 20th century, ‘Skazka o pope i cherte’, sung to the tune of ‘Iz-za ostrova na strezhen’:

Это дьявол Вас смущает на зловещие дела,
 «в пламень адский завлекает чтоб душа его была».⁴⁶
 (The devil is prompting you into dark deeds;
 ‘luring you into the fires of hell to claim your soul.’)

More significant, perhaps, are six lines, with only minor inaccuracies, from a poem by Aleksei Apukhtin, including:

Вы знаете на днях я королем был избран всенародно. [...]
 И день и ночь пишу законы,
 Для блага подданных своих и очень устаю.
 (A few days ago I was elected king by all the people. [...]
 And I write laws day and night,
 For my subjects’ benefit, and I get very tired.)

The lines are spoken by an unidentified voice (chorus) but have obvious application to Rip-the-Sails, whom the author is denouncing as an anarchistic autocrat. However, the point of greatest relevance about this poem, which dates from 1890, is its title ‘Sumashedshii’ (The Madman).

From all of this it may be seen that with *Samoupravlenie* Bykov, perhaps in a prolonged moment of anger, even exasperation, was launching a bitter and pointed attack on his rivals in a community for whom politics was everything. In the eyes of its members, the struggle in Queensland, magnified by the revolution in Russia, had assumed a significant role on the world stage, giving them an acute sense of being engaged in a historic conflict. A lampoon such as *Samoupravlenie* had the potential for irretrievable damage to the already fragile radical community and might well have rendered any further communal action impossible. Since there was one further spectacular joint enterprise only a few weeks later, it is most likely that the script remained in Bykov’s drawer, unknown to Zuzenko and Kliushin, the two who would have been most angered by it.

Zuzenko would certainly have been stung on seeing himself described as a ‘dictator’ and ‘counter-revolutionary’. On this last point, and on the single

⁴⁶ The lines depart slightly from the standard version, while remaining true to the sense.

reference to Il'in, a special note is required. Since this reference appears early and is used to define a principal character, it is clearly important. Rip-the-Sails' self-introductory line in Scene 1, 'I am the spiritual son of my spiritual father', is at once revealing and puzzling. A footnote explains, 'see Z-ko's letter to the counter-revolutionary Il'in, whom he regards as his spiritual father.' In the absence of the text of Zuzenko's letter, which must have enjoyed some publicity at the time (late 1918), we can only surmise the general nature of its content, but its background may be set forth, at least in part. The reference is to the remarkable Nikolai Il'in (Nicholas Illin), the one-time 'Tolstoyan' who had emigrated with his family to North Queensland in 1910. The story of the Il'ins and the 'Aboriginal' dynasty founded by Nikolai's son Leandro on the Atherton tableland has been ably told by Elena Govor.⁴⁷ Nikolai, a free-thinking liberal and eccentric who had come into conflict with established modes of thought and behaviour in Tsarist Russia, was hardly an obvious 'role model' for a revolutionary like Zuzenko, but certain connections may be posited.

Govor has recounted Il'in's adoption of the rebellious philosophy of Tolstoi in his late period. Il'in had undergone a period of near-infatuation with Tolstoi in 1890-92, which had – one presumes – defined his thinking and public image even after his philosophy had taken a different direction. The Russian doctor known in North Queensland as 'Lev Tolstoi' in about 1918, briefly referred to by Captain Kravchenko (based on Zuzenko) in an episode in Paustovsky's novel *Blistaiushchie oblaka* (The Gleaming Clouds), is undoubtedly modelled on Il'in, who had some medical training, although Il'in had outgrown his obsession many years earlier.⁴⁸

In Bykov's parody, Rip-the-Sails is shown hailing Tolstoi and Christ as 'revolutionaries' and anarchic communists. Zuzenko in all we know of him had little time for Christianity in any form, not even the unorthodox brand

⁴⁷ Elena Govor, *My Dark Brother: The Story of the Illins, a Russian-Aboriginal Family* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000). In some Australian government documents, and in Evans' 'Agitation', Il'in's name appears as 'Nillin'.

⁴⁸ Konstantin Paustovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1957), Vol. 1, 298-99.

espoused by Tolstoi, but he may well have found much to admire in Il'in's independent and democratic spirit and his readiness to defy authority.

However, less than a year after the revolution, Nikolai Il'in was denouncing the Bolsheviks in a letter to *The Cairns Post*.⁴⁹ This publication incensed some revolutionary-minded Russians, who wrote to Zuzenko in Brisbane about it. By expressing his abhorrence of Bolshevik brutality, in particular the murder of the imperial family, Il'in had cut his ties with the revolutionary community in Australia, and it seems certain that Zuzenko, as leader of that community and editor of its newspaper, replied by letter repudiating Il'in's stance and regretting that he (Zuzenko) could no longer view Il'in as his 'spiritual father'. While Zuzenko and Il'in might earlier have been at one in seeing the Bolsheviks as dictators, Zuzenko appears to have shifted his ground to a 'Bolshevik-Anarchist' position. The letter to which Bykov refers has not been traced, but Bykov's note linking the 'counter-revolutionary Il'in' to Zuzenko is no doubt intended as a slur on both parties.

What is remarkable here is that only five weeks later 'the Great Destroyer' and 'Squeaky-Creaky' would bury their very considerable differences and march side by side with red flags raised in the demonstration which would lead to the expulsion of both men from Australia. Weeks earlier their relations seemed to have passed breaking point, with Bykov, at least, giving vent to much personal acrimony. After the riots, the factions drew together in adversity: the tone of the newspaper *Nabat*, with which Bykov was closely associated, is conciliatory, expressing full solidarity in the face of the common enemy, with no hint at past differences. The round-up of Russians and the 'pogroms' after the demonstration of 23 March are lamented in its pages as a resounding defeat for the URW as a whole, rather than for any particular faction within it. Zuzenko's leading role in the event receives full acknowledgement. On this *Nabat's* view concurred with that of the military authorities: Zuzenko's deportation order was signed on 25 March, only two days after the demonstration, and within a month the S.S. Bakara removed him

⁴⁹ Govor, *My Dark Brother*, 204-8. Intelligence Report, Week ended 6 Nov. 1918, NAA: MP 95/1/0, 164/46/56 G. Tokareff to Zuzenko, 22 Oct 1918.

from Australia's shores⁵⁰. The others identified for deportation, including Kliushin, Rosenberg and Bykov himself, were not dispatched until September.

That in brief outline is the general character and context of Bykov's *Samoupravlenie*. The author would have made no serious claims to literary merit. It was never intended to be more than an ephemeral piece, capturing the moment and atmosphere *vo grade Brizbene* in February 1919, and mocking certain prominent individuals in his milieu. If it is of interest 87 years later it is as a snapshot of that milieu, of what the Censor in his reports called the 'inner circle of murderous ruffians',⁵¹ and of certain individuals in that extraordinary community who went on to achieve greater fame or notoriety – primarily Sergeev and Zuzenko. Sergeev on his return to Soviet Russia rose high in the Bolshevik hierarchy, but his career was cut short by his death in an accident in July 1921. Zuzenko, no longer 'His Anarchic Majesty' but a member of the Russian Communist Party and an agent of the Communist International, would return from Moscow to Sydney and Melbourne, determined to set Australia and the British Empire ablaze, and would play an important role in setting the Communist Party of Australia on its feet. Having been expelled again (1922) he would return to Moscow, take up his original profession (sea-captain) after a period of journalism, and later become a legend in his own right and an influence – in various ways – on the work of at least four Russian writers between 1924 and 1975. As early as 1925 he was the unnamed hero of Paustovsky's sketch 'Kapitan-kommunar' (The Communar Captain), later expanded and incorporated into *Blistaiushchie oblaka*, in which he received the name Kravchenko. In 1935 Zuzenko and his ship, the *Smol'nyi*, featured prominently, though anonymously, in Aleksei Tolstoi's *Izvestiia* article 'Orfei v adu' (Orpheus in the Underworld), and many years later he appeared as Captain Vitalii Drozd in Iurii Klimenchenko's novel *Shturman dal'nego plavaniia* (The Ocean-Going Navigation Officer), and as the hero of the same author's *Zhizn' i prikliucheniia Long Aleka* (The Life and Adventures of Long Alek). Both Paustovsky and Klimenchenko would devote space to him, at last

⁵⁰ A copy of the deportation order, signed by E. J. Russell at the Department of Defence, is in UQFL 336, box 8, folder 9.

⁵¹ Extract from Censor's Intelligence Report 1st M.D., week ending 12 Feb. 1919, Censor's Notes, NAA: MP 367/1/0, 479/25/190, box 54, A13.

giving him his real name, in their memoirs.⁵² The legend long outlived the man, who was executed in Moscow for ‘espionage’ in August 1938. This play from 1919 provides an opportunity to see the legend taking shape.

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⁵² A more detailed treatment of Zuzenko in Russian literature may be found in Kevin Windle, ‘Aleksandr Zuzenko i avstraliiskaia tema v sovetskoi literature’, forthcoming in *Studia Rossica Posnaniensia*. On Zuzenko and Mikhail Bulgakov see Windle, ‘Zhurnalists i revoliutsioner na trekh kontinentakh’.