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Russian Illustrated Journals in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Dual Image of Readers

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At the beginning of the reign of Tsar Alexander II, the Russian government relaxed its censorship and other restrictions on the press along with its policy of *glasnost'* (publicity).¹ Around the same time, stimulated by the social change after the abolition of serfdom, people began to read books and periodicals eagerly in order to know how to live in the new social environment.² These changes, promoted both from above and below throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, provided the printing press with the opportunity to develop and circulate at full scale within Russian society. The printing press came to influence the public sphere of Russian society.

Studies of Russian illustrated journals are, however, relatively young, despite the fact that these journals played a major role in the Russian printing press in late imperial times. This is because such amusements as light reading, operetta, and tourism were not considered “serious” subjects in either the imperial Russian or Soviet academic traditions.³ The first study on Russian illustrated journals, written by Andrei Voronkevich, appeared as late as in 1986. According to his typology, which classified all Russian illustrated journals into four groups, illustrated journals were a medium offering readers non-professional, plain explanations of culture.⁴ Abram Reitblat also referred to illustrated journals when he analyzed the multilayered public sphere in the late Russian Empire.⁵ For him, the illustrated journals were a medium that would stabilize readers’ minds in a changing society, providing them with readings based on the traditional morals of family and religion. The work of Efim Dinerstein, which focused on the life of Adolf Marks, the publisher of the illustrated journal *Niva*, showed the various roles that this journal played in the cultural life of his time.⁶ Finally, the most comprehensive study on the illustrated jour-

1 William Bruce Lincoln, “The Problem of *Glasnost'* in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russian Politics,” *European Studies Review* 11 (1981), pp. 171–188; Жирков Г.В. Век официальной цензуры // Очерки русской культуры XIX века. Т. 2. М., 2000. С. 207.

2 Рейтблат А.И. От Бовы к Бальмонту: Очерки по истории чтения в России во второй половине XIX века. М., 1991. С. 13.

3 Уварова Е.Д. Как развлекались в российских столицах. СПб., 2004. С. 5–10. Louise McReynolds also tackled these neglected topics. Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

4 Воронкевич А.С. Русский иллюстрированный еженедельник в 1895–1904 гг.: Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата филологических наук. М., 1986.

5 Рейтблат. От Бовы к Бальмонту.

6 Динерштейн Е.А. «Фабрикант» читателей А.Ф.Маркс. М., 1986.

nals was written by Kim En Khvan, who analyzed the social role of *Niva*.⁷ He pointed out that positivism and utilitarianism were the main features of this journal's editorial policy with the aim of enlightening its readers.

Still, there remained the question of how the modern printing press functioned in the multiethnic environment of the Russian Empire. Previous studies on the Russian printing press have taken the presence of a certain universal public sphere for granted. While illustrated journals were regarded as a medium for cultivating readers' minds and nurturing good citizens, little reference has been made to the ethnic diversity of the Russian Empire.

This research tendency has been common for other types of printed media. For example, Jeffrey Brooks argued that the contents of *lubki* (plural of *lubok*; see below) and other popular printed matter helped peasant- and worker-readers create their versions of the modern world view in the late imperial period.⁸ Louise McReynolds discussed the role of newspapers in generating the public sphere and emphasized the importance of the middle class as readers, reporters, and publishers after the Great Reforms era.⁹ However, it is difficult to fully agree with Stephen Norris when he says that the *lubki* covering wars gave a solid image of Russianness to their readers and contributed to the formation of a sense of nationhood.¹⁰ Given the circulation limit of the Russian *lubki* within the multiethnic environment of the Empire, it is hard to believe that this phenomenon occurred on the scale of the whole Empire. In order to understand the function of the printing press within the multiethnic environment of the Russian Empire, it is necessary to be aware of the ethnic aspects of the printing press as well as its civic aspects.

For this purpose, after overviewing the situation of Russian printing, especially of the illustrated journals, in the late nineteenth century, I discuss the composition of readers and the characteristics of readers' image of illustrated journals. The composition of readers is an important factor because editors of commercialized periodicals often changed the styles of the periodicals ac-

7 Ким Е.Х. Роль и значение журнала «Нива» в развитии русского общества на рубеже 1870-гг. – начала XX века: Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук. М., 2004. Apart from the works on the illustrated journals themselves, there are two studies by Japanese historians discussing various representations in the Russian illustrated journals. Yoshifuru Tsuchiya, "Nichiro sensou kanren kiji sakusei notameno oboegaki – 'Niva' (1), (2) [Index of Articles on the Russo-Japanese War in the Journal 'Niva'. Part I, II]," *Shiso*, vol. 71/72 (2005), pp. 141–180; vol. 75 (2006), pp. 55–86; Toshiyuki Shimosato, *19 seiki kouhan no Rosia eiri shimbun ni miru higashi Asia hyoushou nikansuru kibanteiki kenkyu* [A Study on the Image of Eastern Asia in the Russian Illustrated Papers in the Second Half of the 19th Century], Report of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (Joetsu, 2006).

8 Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

9 Louise McReynolds, *The News under Russia's Old Regime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

10 Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812–1945* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

cording to the tastes of the readers. The composition of readers must be investigated from two viewpoints: 1) the social estates of readers and 2) their geographical distribution.¹¹ Then, a detailed analysis of texts and pictures in *Niva*, the most popular and influential illustrated journal before the Russian Revolution of 1917, will show the coexistence of the dual image of readers – the civic and the ethnic – reflecting the composition of readers. The chronological framework is from 1870, the time when Russian illustrated journals began to spread, to the turn of the century.

THE RUSSIAN PRESS AND ILLUSTRATED JOURNALS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In Russia until the reign of Nicholas I, publishing activities were sponsored mainly by governmental and religious institutions, and the private printing press had only just begun to spread.¹² At the end of the 1850s, the Russian printing press grew rapidly and various types of publications appeared.

Among the many types of publications, revolutionary books and periodicals have certainly been the most studied. Members of the revolutionary intelligentsia such as Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Nikolai Dobroliubov, Nikolai Nekrasov, and others, regarded the printing press as an important tool for revolutionary propaganda. They discussed many social problems in the pages of “thick” journals like *Sovremennik* and *Otechestvennye zapiski*. To these could be added the illegal press abroad. In London, Aleksandr Gertsen founded “The Free Russian Press” in 1853. Geneva was another center of the revolutionary press. The turning point came after the peasant emancipation in 1861 and the

11 Reitblat provided a prominent description of readers’ social composition without, however, showing sources to a sufficient extent. I would like to give the information about the readers’ social estates by using materials from the Russian public libraries in the late imperial times. For a more detailed analysis, see: Тацуми Ю. Популярность иллюстрированных журналов среди читателей публичных и народных библиотек России в XIX в. // История библиотек. Вып. 6. 2006. С. 35–48.

The geographical aspect of readers’ distribution is closely related to the question of book trade. We already have many studies on the Russian book trade in the nineteenth century, but these studies often concern any one individual publisher or specific region; hence, the press circulation in Russia as a whole is still to be examined. Almost the only exception is the attempt by Pushkov and Grishina, who used statistics about periodical subscribers by post and classified all Russian provinces into several cultural types, but I find their method excessively mathematical. I revisit this problem using the same sources and adding data procured from *Pamiatnye knizhki* of various provinces in those days. Пушков В.П.; Гришина З.В. Культурная типология России во второй половине XIX века // ЭВМ и математические методы в исторических исследованиях. М., 1994. С. 97–128.

12 Lounsbery discussed the impact that the change of the literary institution from manuscript to printing press had on the literature and culture in the age of Nikolai Gogol. Anne Lounsbery, *Thin Culture, High Art: Gogol, Hawthorne, and Authorship in Nineteenth-Century Russia and America* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Polish revolt of 1863, when the tsar's government changed its policy and put more restraint on the press. Chernyshevskii was arrested in 1861 and *Sovremennik* was finally suppressed in 1866. Severe restrictions were imposed on the importation of revolutionary publications into Russia. In the second half of the nineteenth century, revolutionary publications could not find any permanent route for distribution.

Another type of journal that has often been referred to in many studies is the educational publication. In the Great Reforms era, many educational associations like *Obshchestvo rasprostraneniia poleznykh knig* [The Society for the Promotion of Good Books] and *Komitety gramotnosti* [The Committees for Literacy] in many cities engaged in publishing. For the purpose of enlightening the peasants against ignorant *lubki*, they not only opened bookshops and sold their own publications in the countryside, but also made contracts with other bookstores in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and provincial cities, as well as with the book depots (*knizhnye sklady*) opened by the *zemstvos* in rural villages. The *zemstvos* also participated in publishing activities later with the same aim. There is no consensus, however, about the effect that the educational associations' publishing activities could have had. One bibliographer wrote that their publications "were a drop in the ocean of the *lubki*,"¹³ while recent studies are revising this poor image of the associations' publications.¹⁴ In any case, it is a fact that the associations' publishing activities were not continuous and did not have a major influence in the period under discussion.¹⁵

The *lubki* were booklets with illustrations and short texts, printed from wood blocks or copper plates. Their typical subjects were fairy tales, military pictures, examples for moral instruction, saints' lives, and other religious stories.¹⁶ The center of *lubki* sales was Apraksin Dvor in St. Petersburg until 1862 when a fire occurred there. After that, it moved to Nikoliskaia Street in Moscow. The *lubki* were distributed by peddlers, who brought them to rural villages and to the local markets in Vladimir and Nizhnii Novgorod.¹⁷ The *lubki* trade was one of the biggest currents in publishing in nineteenth-century Russia.

13 Куфаев М.Н. История русской книги в XIX веке. Л., 1927. С. 203.

14 Шумихин В.Г. Для жизни настоящей и будущей (Книжное дело Вятского земства). Киров, 1996. С. 54.

15 The case of the Committee for Literacy in Petersburg shows discontinuity of associations' publishing activities: from 1880 to 1893 it published only 1–8 titles, and finally in 1894, the number of publications grew to 24 titles, reaching 42 titles in 1895. Блюм А.В. Издательская деятельность С.-Петербургского комитета грамотности (1861–1895) // Книга: Исследования и материалы. Сб. 38. 1979. С. 103.

16 Boris Sokolov discussed the unique aesthetic value of *lubki*. Соколов Б.М. Художественный язык русского лубка. М., 1999.

17 Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, pp. 62–64; Симоны П.К. О книжной торговле и типах торговцев на старом Апраксинском рынке (до пожара 1862 года) // Новый журнал. 1995. № 3. С. 157–167; Книга в России 1861–1881. Т. 2. М., 1990. С. 143.

The *lubki* were not supposed to be ideal reading for all classes, however, as is suggested by the fact that the educational associations were against them. From the 1860s, the readership in Russia developed with the readers emerging from among urban inhabitants. Reading materials most suited to them were the books and periodicals published by the commercial printing companies. The number of these publications grew from 6,508 titles in 1881 to 13,247 in 1895. Bookshops also multiplied: in St. Petersburg, there were 54 bookshops in 1867, 135 in 1886, and 153 in 1896. In Moscow, there were 76 bookshops in 1867, 179 in 1883, and 181 in 1895; and in the provinces, there were 45 bookshops in 1867, 684 in 1881, and 1325 in 1895.¹⁸ These popular publications by commercial publishing companies eventually occupied the central position in the Russian press.

Among these popular publications, periodicals had more popularity than books. At the beginning of the 1860s, Dimitrii Pisarev wrote: "Periodicals are spreading to all corners of Russia ... Most people read only journals."¹⁹ This is because periodicals were more reasonably priced and easier to transport across the vast expanses of the Empire, and their contents featured social problems in a more up-to-date fashion than books. Journals circulated around the countryside more smoothly than newspapers. A poet, Samuil Marshak, who lived in Voronezh Province at the end of the nineteenth century, noted that newspapers were unusual guests not only in his small town but also in the nearest city.²⁰ Periodicals published in St. Petersburg and Moscow gained more popularity than local periodicals.²¹

The main institutions distributing periodicals in those days were public libraries and a subscription system, partly due to the governmental restriction on publishers to sell copies on the street. Public libraries were eagerly established by educational associations, *zemstvos*, and local administrative bodies throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result, each province in European Russia had an average of 17 libraries in 1894.²² The subscription system covered a broader area. Readers in the two capitals paid a fee for a year or half a year in advance and received periodicals at the office of the publisher. Readers in the provinces used the system of mail subscription: through the commission of local bookshops, subscribers in the provinces received periodicals from St. Petersburg, Moscow, or other cities by post. This system was realized by the development of the railways and the post in the second half of

18 Чернин А. Сборник сведений по книжно-литературному делу. Ч. 1. М., 1867; Книга в России 1881-1895. С. 21, 27-28.

19 Рейтблат. От Бовы к Бальмонту. С. 35.

20 Маршак С.Я. В начале жизни // Книга и читатель 1900-1917: Воспоминания и дневники современников. М., 1999. С. 115.

21 Книжный вестник. 1866. № 5. С. 128.

22 Статистика Российской Империи. XL. Сборник сведений по России 1896 г. СПб., 1897.

the nineteenth century. Periodicals were so popular that they occupied almost one half of the out-of-town mail and two thirds of the in-town mail.²³

There were two types of general magazines: the “thick” journals and the “thin,” illustrated journals. The thick journals, edited by intellectuals, including revolutionists as we saw above, were quite popular in the 1860s. On the other hand, illustrated journals were a new medium in Russia.

It is characteristic that many publishers of Russian illustrated journals came from Europe. The founder of *Niva*, Adolf Marks, was born in 1838 in Stetten and began to work at a bookshop in Wismar, the third-largest city in the Mecklenburg-Schwerin Grand Duchy, before moving to a medical bookshop in Berlin. Afterwards, he decided to go to Russia in the hope of finding more business chances in the immature Russian book market than in Germany. He reached St. Petersburg in 1859 and worked in the book trade between Germany and the Bitepazh bookshops for five years. After that, he found a job at one of the biggest bookshops in Gostinyi Dvor of St. Petersburg that was opened by Mavrikii Volf from Poland in 1853. There, he met two colleagues, German Kornfeld from Poland and German Goppe from Germany who had worked in England and Belgium, with whom he lived in a single room and became good friends.²⁴

These three young men left the Volf bookshop one after another. Being of Western origin and knowing the European book market well, they founded a new commercialized medium by imitating European illustrated journals like *The Illustrated London News*, *L'Illustration*, and *Die Illustrierte Zeitung*. They were Goppe's *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia* (1869–1898) and *Ogonek* (1879–1883), Marks' *Niva* (1870–1917), and Kornfeld's *Strekoza* (1875–1918).²⁵ These illustrated journals were published weekly, with 52 issues in a year, did not cost much, though the price varied (4–13 rubles), and were scrutinized by censors.²⁶ Each issue had about 20 pages filled with articles about culture, science, politics, wars, and novels. Almost all the articles appeared with pictures. The contents can be categorized into articles for enlightenment, amusement, and advertisement. While the existing thick journals required readers to have a certain knowledge to read articles on social matters, literature, art, and so on, the articles in the illustrated journals explained those problems with pictures. Readers could understand them far more easily. This was a considerable change in the quality of information.

23 Книжный вестник. 1886. № 4. С. 195.

24 Динерштейн. «Фабрикант» читателей. С. 13–23; Белов С.В. Издательство Г.Д.Гоппе // Книга: Исслед. и материалы. М., 1986. Сб. 53. С. 52–69.

25 As a matter of fact, there were some preceding illustrated journals in Russia, for example, *Illiustratsiia* (1858–1863) published by A.O. Bauman. But they still could not find a readership and were short-lived.

26 Preliminary censorship was partly abolished in 1865, but publications with illustrations were not freed.

Niva grew to 250,000 copies in 1900 and became the most popular illustrated journal in Russia before the 1917 Revolution. A. Kaspari's *Rodina* and Goppe's *Ogonek* also gained popularity, being strongly influenced by the style of *Niva*. The number of subscribers to the illustrated journals exceeded that of the thick journals. In 1900, 90,000 copies of thick journals were issued, while there were 500,000 copies of illustrated journals.²⁷ In this way, the illustrated journals occupied the central position in the growing Russian press in late imperial times.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ILLUSTRATED JOURNALS

The publisher of *Niva* thought it necessary to create a group of "new readers," because there were no journals like *Niva*.²⁸ Readers were a very important factor in determining the characteristics of the illustrated journals as shown by the fact that they usually accepted contributions from readers.²⁹ Who were the new readers that the publisher intended to create?

Contemporary materials from the public libraries show that in the 1840s, reading was a limited activity mainly of the aristocracy, clergy, and officials – that is, the privileged class.³⁰ But during the Great Reforms when Russian economic growth let cities expand, many people came into the cities and began to engage in reading. At that time, the composition of readers in the public libraries was as follows (Table 1)³¹:

This source shows that in the 1870s–1880s, with new readers consisting of merchantry (*kupechestvo*), urban commoners (*meshchanstvo*), people of various ranks (*raznochintsy*), lawyers, doctors, and teachers, a newly risen middle class appeared and it equaled in number readers from the privileged class. In the 1890s, peasants and factory workers also became readers of the popular press, partly due to the spread of small libraries in villages.

Who among these readers read the illustrated journals? One public library in Moscow recorded the proportions of illustrated journals and thick journals in the total books and periodicals requested by each social group in 1887 (Table 2).³² Both readers from the privileged class and new readers from

27 Рейтблат. От Бовы к Бальмонту. С. 15, 41.

28 Авсеенко В. Кружок беллетристов «Нивы» в 70-х годах // Нива. 1904. № 50. С. 1006.

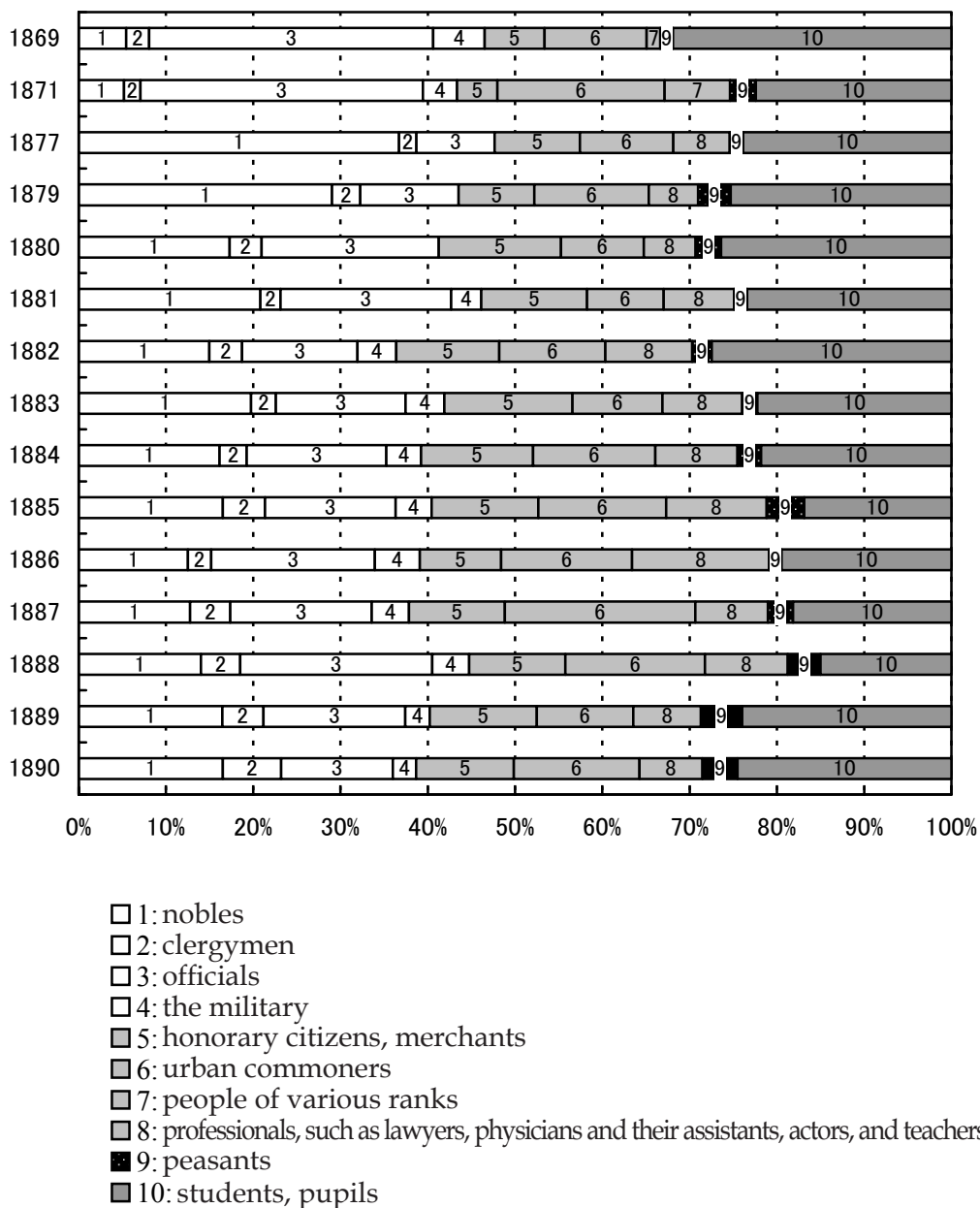
29 Нива. 1870. № 9. С. 144; № 25. С. 400; Родина. 1889. № 22. С. 712.

30 Ганенко П.Т. История Кишиневской публичной библиотеки (1830–1917 гг.). Кишинев, 1966.

31 The number of readers in 1869–1895 was: 940 in 1869, 1262 in 1871, 1075 in 1879, 1082 in 1880, 1080 in 1881, 851 in 1882, 919 in 1883, 701 in 1884, 581 in 1885, 550 in 1886, 518 in 1887, 400 in 1888, 425 in 1889, 375 in 1890, 482 in 1894, and 434 in 1895. (Data of 1870, 1872–1878, 1891–1893 are lacking.) Российский государственный исторический архив (РГИА), ф. 776, оп. 11, д. 19, л. 15; Отчет о состоянии Карамзинской библиотеки за 1869 году. Симбирск, 1870; Годовой отчет по Карамзинской библиотеки. Симбирск, 1876–1895.

32 Отчет о деятельности городской бесплатной читальни, учрежденной В.А. Морозовой в память И.С. Тургенева за 1887 год. М., 1889. С. 21–29.

Table 1. Social Estates of Readers in Karamzin Public Library in Simbirsk



the middle class read as many illustrated journals as thick journals, while intellectual readers preferred thick journals to illustrated ones.

A library in Kharikov recorded an example of the kind of readers that requested illustrated journals: "Two girls came and requested *Strekoza*, but we did not have those kinds of journals. A librarian on duty recommended *Anna Karenina* to them, which had just been returned. Then, 'What's this? Is it in-

Table 2. The Use of Thick Journals and Illustrated Journals by Each Social Group in Moscow City Library (1887)

	Thick journals	Illustrated journals
Students (10,776 copies)	49.91%	2.53%
Teachers (1,175 copies)	42.55%	5.02%
People of free profession (5,972 copies)	34.50%	7.15%
Clergymen (31 copies)	16.10%	6.45%
Officials (2,185 copies)	18.35%	11.26%
The military (944 copies)	27.75%	14.94%
Merchants and industrialists (2,898 copies)	21.46%	14.67%
Employees in private companies (13,293 copies)	16.08%	15.58%
People without definite professions (7,197 copies)	13.51%	14.54%
Artisans and craftsmen (10,338 copies)	4.65%	20.28%
Workers and domestic servants (1,759 copies)	3.30%	17.68%
Pupils of middle and elementary education (36,603 copies)	7.14%	8.76%
Women (3144 copies)	32.00%	6.71%

teresting?’ – It turned out that they had never heard anything about *Anna Karenina*, or even about the existence of L. Tolstoy. They were very well dressed and it was difficult to suppose such ignorance.”³³ Marshak told how they read illustrated journals in his childhood when his father subscribed to one of the journals, *Vokrug Sveta*, for his children: “I still did not know then that we could criticize journals and that journals had shortcomings. Not only I but also my elder brother read each issue from the first line to the editor’s signature at the end of the last page, and we were heartily satisfied with all that the journal gave us.”³⁴

Judging from these sources, the illustrated journals seemed to have many well-off readers from the middle class, who were immature, innocent, and naive towards the printed word.

Where were the illustrated journals read in the Russian Empire? *Niva* had a circulation of 100,000 in 1883, with 87,557 issues among them (87.6 percent) delivered by subscription in European Russia, in contrast to 3,595 (3.6 percent) in Caucasia and Transcaucasia, 2,586 (2.6 percent) in Siberia and Kirgizia, 1,818

33 Десятилетие Харьковской общественной библиотеки (26 сент. 1882 г. – 26 сент. 1896 г.). Харьков, 1898. С. 46.

34 Маршак. В начале жизни. С. 119. Among readers, especially somewhat mature people, literary supplements to the illustrated journals were often more popular than the journals themselves. One reader criticized *Niva* for the journal proper’s dullness. Борисов Л.И. Родители, наставники, поэты... // Книга и читатель 1900–1917. С. 138. Dinershtein emphasized, however, that the illustrated journals themselves also gained popularity. Динерштейн. «Фабрикант» читателей. С. 46.

in Poland (1.8 percent), and only 412 (0.4 percent) in Turkestan and 359 in Finland (0.4 percent).³⁵ This means that the illustrated journals were distributed almost only in European Russia.

The "Materials for newspaper and journal statistics of 1868," compiled by K. Bekker, sheds light on the distribution of Russian periodicals in European Russia before the popularization of the illustrated journals; this volume shows the numerical amount of St. Petersburg periodicals sent by post to fifty European Russian provinces.³⁶ Bekker divided the population of each province by the number of periodicals received there in order to show the level of periodical distribution.

As the map made from this source shows, the region with the liveliest periodical distribution was Petersburg Province. It was an exceptional cultural center, which had 38 people per one periodical copy. Next came Moscow Province with 344 people per one periodical copy; Taurida Province followed with 370, thanks to two big cities, Moscow and Odessa, in these two provinces. Around Odessa, there were areas with 401–499 people per one periodical copy, Kherson and Ekaterinoslav Provinces, located in the south, next to Taurida Province. In the northern region, Novgorod, Olonets, and Arkhangelsk Provinces followed. Remarkably in these northern provinces, periodicals were actively distributed despite the high proportion of peasants in the population (more than 90 percent). This is partly because many Old Believers and free peasants with high literacy lived in this area.³⁷

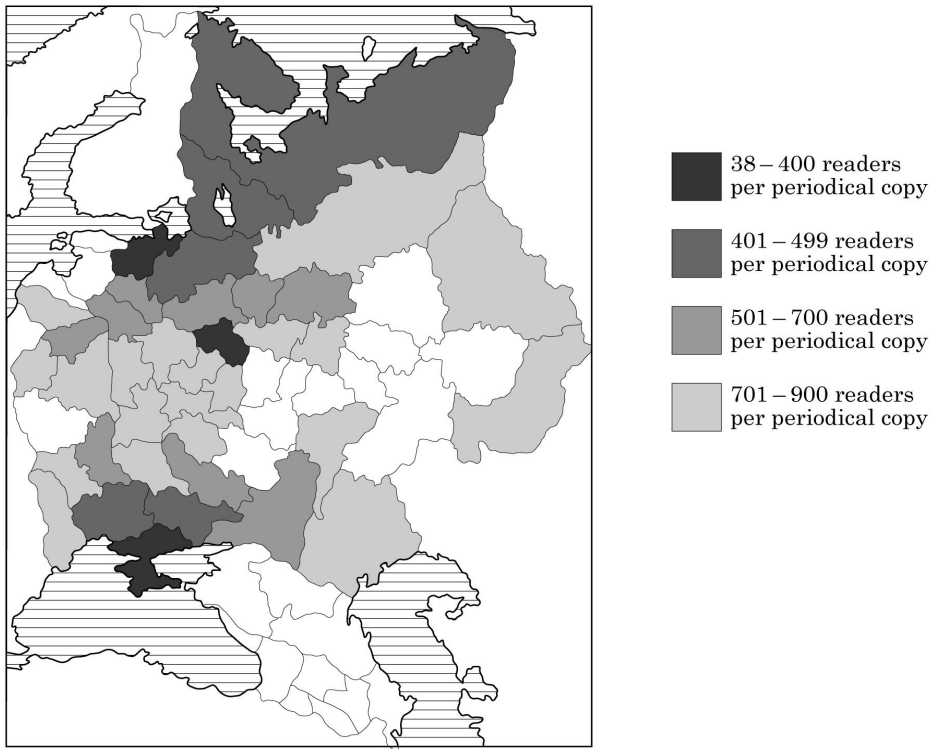
One element that depressed the circulation of periodicals was the high proportion of peasants among the populations of provinces, because most peasants did not read. Around Petersburg and Moscow Provinces, Pskov, Yaroslavl, Tver, and Kostroma Provinces were limited to 501–700 people per one periodical copy due to the high proportion of the peasant population (88–92 percent). In the south, Don Voisko Province and Kharikov Province were at the same level for the same reason. Far fewer periodicals circulated in Smolensk, Kaluga, Tula, Orel, Kursk, Poltava, Vladimir, Nizhnii Novgorod, Vologda, and Perm Provinces, with 701–900 readers per one periodical copy. This area, spreading from the Central Black Earth Region through left-bank Ukraine to the region along the Volga and the Urals, also had a high proportion of peasants in the population (88–96 percent).

35 Нива. 1883. № 52. С. 1274.

36 Материалы для статистики газетного и журнального дела в России за 1868 год. СПб., 1870. However, this volume lacks information on three Baltic and Stavropol provinces. About **estates and religion in each province: Население губерний Европейской России** по сословиям 1867 г. // Статистический временник Российской империи. II. Вып.1. СПб. 1871. С. 72–73; Население европейской России по вероисповеданиям // Статистический временник Российской империи. I. СПб., 1866. С. 34–37.

37 Копанев А.И. Волостные крестьянские библиотеки XVI–XVII вв. // Русские библиотеки и их читатель. Л., 1983. С. 59–70.

Map. The Geographical Differences in the Distribution of Periodicals in European Russia (1868)



Another element that prevented active distribution of periodicals was the high proportion of non-Russian, non-Orthodox people among the population. In the western and eastern parts of European Russia, in Vitebsk, Vilno, and Kiev Provinces, in spite of a low proportion of peasants in the population (74–80 percent), the distribution of periodicals was not very high (501–700 readers per one periodical copy). This area was characterized by the large number of its Catholic and Jewish population. (Catholics occupied 26.6 percent of the population of Vitebsk Province and 63.2 percent of Vilno Province. Jews accounted for about 10 percent in these three provinces.) Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev, Kovno, Chernigov, Podolsk, and Bessarabia Provinces also had a large number of Catholics and Jews, resulting in the depression of periodical circulation (701–900 readers). Eastern provinces with large Muslim populations, such as Orenburg, Astrakhan, and Saratov, had only 501–700 readers per one periodical copy.

In other provinces in the Central Black Earth Region (Penza, Voronezh, Riazan, and Tambov Provinces) and the area with a large Muslim population (Kazan, Simbirsk, Samara, Viatka, and Ufa Provinces), Russian periodicals were scarcely distributed; there were more than 900 readers per one periodical copy in these provinces. To sum up, the distribution of periodicals in European Rus-

sia had two centers: the northern center around Petersburg and Moscow, and the southern one around Odessa. Between them, there existed the vacuum-like Russian countryside and areas with many non-Orthodox people.

The popularization of the illustrated journals in the 1870s changed this situation partly because they flowed into the countryside. To take an example of the Central Black Earth Region in 1883, Riazan Province had 1,244 volumes of *Niva*, Tambov had 1,634, and Voronezh had 1,455; in the 1860s, these areas used to have the lowest level of periodical distribution.³⁸

In provinces with great urban populations, for example, in Kiev and Kharikov Provinces, both thick journals and illustrated journals saw an increase in subscribers.³⁹ In contrast, in the countryside, illustrated journals often became the sole medium. In Voronezh Province in 1889, for example, the four major illustrated journals (*Niva*, *Rodina*, *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*, *Strekoza*) had 1539 subscribers, while *Vestnik Evropy* was the only thick journal circulated there with a slight increase – from 61 in 1868 to 68 in 1889.⁴⁰ Orel Province showed a similar tendency. The number of received illustrated journals (*Niva*, *Rodina*, *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*) was 2,141 in 1891, but that of *Vestnik Evropy* decreased from 86 in 1868 to 60.⁴¹

Niva gave an example of the typical readers of the illustrated journals in the provinces. A young doctor went on vacation to his family's estate, about 40 *verst* away from the nearest county town. Without any cultural institution, he got bored. Then, he met a remarkable person, the uncle of the neighboring landowner and a retired officer who served in the Russo-Turkish War in 1877–1878. He had such a wide knowledge – about world politics, industry, geography, art – that the children considered him to be “a living encyclopedia.” The young doctor did not understand how this man could know so many things in the countryside without books, and finally asked him. The man invited him to his bedroom and showed him the entire issues of *Niva* for the previous 25

38 Нива. 1883. № 52. С. 1274.

39 In Kiev Province, 119 volumes of the thick journal *Vestnik Evropy* were received in 1868 and this number grew to 274 in 1886. On the other hand, 3,633 volumes of the illustrated journals (*Niva* and *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*) were received in 1886. In Kharikov Province, the number of received volumes of *Vestnik Evropy* was 89, which rose to 161 in 1886, while there were 2,318 received volumes of the illustrated journals (*Niva*, *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*, *Strekoza*). Сведения о числе периодических изданий, получавшихся в почтовых и почтово-телеграфных учреждениях Киевской губернии в 1886 году // Адрес-календарь и справочная книга Киевской губернии на 1888 год. Киев, 1888. С. 31–34.

40 Газеты, журналы и другие периодические издания, получавшиеся в Воронежской губ. в 1889 г. // Памятная книжка Воронежской губернии на 1892 год. Воронеж, 1892. С. 92–99.

41 Ведомость о числе газет, журналов и др. периодических изданий, получавшихся жителями Орловской губернии в 1891 году // Памятная книжка Орловской губернии на 1892 г. Орел, 1892. С. 19–29.

years.⁴² This episode illustrates how the illustrated journals became a very important medium, as almost the only source of knowledge, which enabled common readers in remote provinces to obtain information regularly.

On the other hand, in regions with many non-Orthodox people, the situation had not changed. In Kovno, Vilno, Grodno, and Minsk Provinces in the western part of Russia, only 436–618 issues of *Niva* were received in 1883. In the eastern part, Orenburg and Ufa Provinces had 628 and 520 issues.

In these regions, Russian and non-Russian people read almost entirely different matter. For example, in Bessarabia, the competition between Russian and Rumanian formed a language barrier.⁴³ In Orenburg and Ufa Provinces, Russian and Muslim reading matter was also separated due to differences in the educational system based on religion.⁴⁴ Polish publications spread from Warsaw into the western Russian provinces; Jewish publications, accordingly, from printing houses in Grodno, Vilno, Zhitomir, and Minsk;⁴⁵ and Tatar publications formed a distribution belt from Kazan, Orenburg, and Astrakhan to Baku.⁴⁶

Thus, the illustrated journals did become an important medium in the countryside, but their circulation was limited almost exclusively to a relatively narrow sphere of ethnically Russian readers, due to the language barrier between Russians and non-Russians.

THE DUAL IMAGE OF READERS IN THE ILLUSTRATED JOURNALS

As described above, the illustrated journals had many semi-intellectual readers from the newly risen middle class, living in European Russia separated, at least, culturally from the non-Orthodox, non-Russian population.

Targeting these semi-intellectual middle-class readers, *Niva* mainly spared pages for two kinds of enlightenment – scientific and artistic.⁴⁷ *Niva* printed scientific and technological matters, along with articles on belles-lettres, fine arts, theaters, and music. The cover of *Niva* in 1878 demonstrates these

42 Рогодин З. Семейный журнал // Нива. 1904. № 50. С. 1016.

43 Трубецкой Б.А. История журналистики Бессарабии 1854–1916 гг. Кишинев, 1978; Kyoko Shida, "Teisei Roshia niokeru nanbu touchito chikikan kankei: Bessarabiawo jireini [Local Rule and Inter-regional Relations in the South of the Russian Empire: The Case of Bessarabia]," *Roshiashi kenkyu* 76 (2005), p. 146.

44 Гильмиянова Р.А. История библиотек Башкортостана: XVIII век – 1917 год (По материалам Оренбургской и Уфимской губерний): Автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук. Новосибирск, 2003.

45 Кельнер В.Е. Очерки по истории русско-еврейского книжного дела во второй половине XIX – начале XX в. СПб., 2003.

46 A. Bennigsen et C. Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *La presse et le mouvement national chez les musulmans de Russie avant 1920* (Paris: Mouton, 1964), pp. 53–54, 216–217.

47 Рогодин. Семейный журнал. С. 1016.

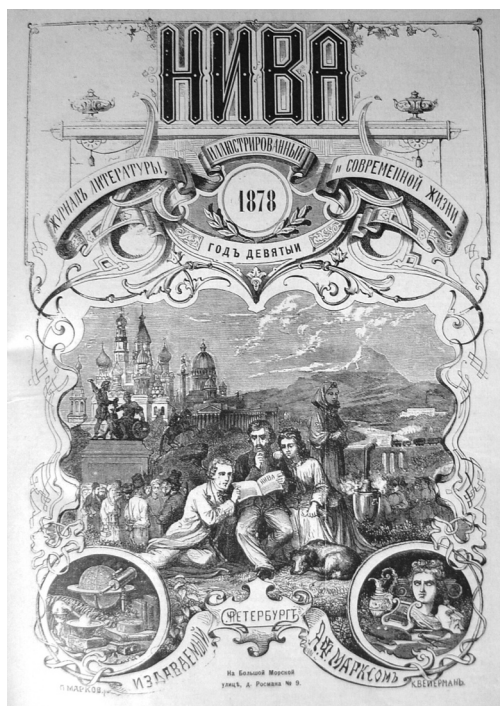


Figure 1

showed the image of a healthy family consisting of a father, a mother, and a child, with a neat appearance in the European mode. The supplements consisting of the latest fashion mode in Paris emphasized this tendency (Figure 3). Dress patterns (Figure 4) in these supplements enabled Russian women to make their clothes in the European manner at home.⁴⁸ The civic image of "us," envisaged by its editors, as citizens of European bourgeois style was abundant.



Figure 2

The Russian illustrated journals were, however, different from the European ones. Notable examples are to be found in religious articles and articles

dual purposes (Figure 1). Telescope, globe, and experimental apparatus are drawn in the left-hand circle in the foreground, while sculpture, lyre, and vase are shown in the right. These enlightening articles, especially those for knowledge, preferred to deal with inventions, architecture, railways, and the achievements of modern European science. By displaying the fruits of modern European civilization, *Niva* expected the Russian semi-intellectual middle-class readers to acquire the knowledge necessary for this purpose.

It is not by chance that readers of *Niva* at the center of its annual front page in 1878 (Figure 1) are dressed in the European fashion. In addition to the title letters in every issue of *Niva* appeared the image of a family engaged in reading (Figure 2). This picture

48 Нива. 1893. № 32. Приложение; Christine Ruane, "Clothes Shopping in Imperial Russia: The Development of a Consumer Culture," *Journal of Social History* 28:4 (Summer 1995), p. 770.



Figure 3

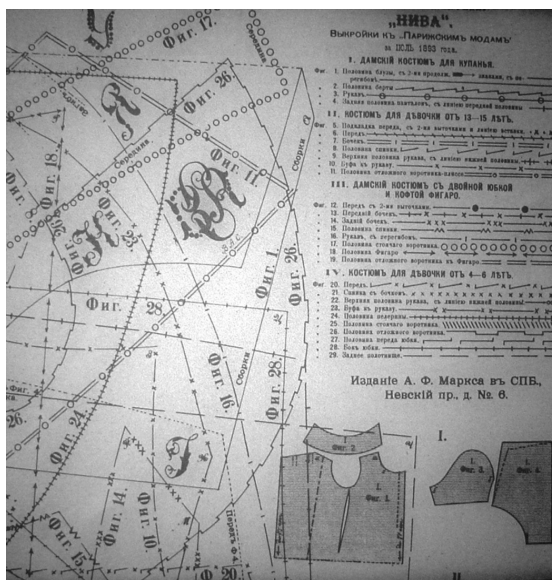


Figure 4

about non-Russian subjects of the Empire. It is true that these articles also had viewpoints in common with those of the European illustrated journals. Despite their essentially secular nature, the illustrated journals recommended that their readers develop a religious mind for the sake of becoming good citizens. One may compare an illustration, taken from *The Illustrated London News*, of a child praying with a caption emphasizing the innocence and importance of this practice (Figure 5) with the illustration from *Niva* of a girl and her grandmother reading the Bible (Figure 6).⁴⁹ This illustration is also accompanied by a caption underscoring the holiness and benefits of the Bible. The Russian illustrated journals often issued long serial articles called "Peoples in Russia (*Narody Rossi*)" from the very beginning of its publication, in addition to many individual articles on non-Russian people. In these articles, non-Russians were illustrated in a typically Orientalistic manner, and their appearance, clothes, nature, foods, and culture were explained in detail, just as in the case of their descriptions in European illustrated journals.

However, since the 1880s, under the influence of the intensifying Russification policy, the Russian illustrated journals began to show religiously chauvinistic attitudes far more openly than European journals. Russian Orthodoxy was highly respected and the peak of this mood was the 900-year anniversary of the Christianization of Rus' in 1888. They stressed this historical event with enthusiastic rhetoric such as follows: "No event on a cornerstone of Russian history was celebrated with such outstanding ceremony as the one that occurred in the cradle of Christianity in Russia, in Kiev, called the 'Mother

49 "The Child's Prayer," *The Illustrated London News*, No. 1129, 1862 (Feb. 1), p. 130; *Нива*. 1878. № 15. С. 261–263.



Figure 5



Figure 6

of Russian towns' from ancient times."⁵⁰ And a large picture of a baptism scene (Figure 7) and a contemporary mass event celebrating Christianity in Kiev (Figure 8) were incorporated as supplements.⁵¹ In these articles and pictures, religion became not merely the instructor of people's minds. Attention was shifted to Russianness when they described this as an event in which "for the first time, the Russian people were christened."⁵² An image of Russian Orthodoxy connected with ethnic Russian identity was offered to readers as a typical vision of "us," and the shared image of "our" land in the illustrated journals was defined as Holy Orthodox Russia.

When these illustrated journals dealt with non-Russian inhabitants in the newly gained territory as a result of many wars in which the Russian Empire engaged in Central Asia, the Balkans, and the Far East in the late nineteenth century, the same criterion was applied; this means that Russian Orthodoxy played the role of excluding outsiders. For example, the ecclesiastical institutions that suffered from battles against the Tatar Muslims, such as the *skete* monks in Bakhchisaray, were highly respected,⁵³ while the people in Central Asia were criticized for their backwardness. On the other hand, the illustrated journals were more sympathetic to Christianized people and their land, because, as one article of *Niva* clearly stated, Russification meant conversion to Orthodoxy.⁵⁴ One article narrated with sympathy the life of a Buriat officer, a converted

50 Нива. 1888. № 33. С. 827.

51 Нива. 1888. № 28. С. 692–693; № 33. С. 825.

52 Нива. 1888. № 28. С. 699.

53 Нива. 1872. № 5. С. 411.

54 Нива. 1879. № 19. С. 368.

Orthodox, who graduated from Kazan State University and tried to Europeanize and Christianize his local company, only to find himself isolated, and he died.⁵⁵ Converted non-Russian people like the Chuvash were called “good neighbors of the Russians.” Hence, one episode of a christened Chuvash who did not follow the fast and reversed his icon to face the wall so that he was not reminded of his failure was described in a humorous and paternalistic tone.⁵⁶ The Ural Cossacks were also beloved because they were Christianized and helped the Russian expansion into Central Asia, and their territory was described as “the borders of the Russian land.”⁵⁷ People in the western part of the Empire, for example, the Estonians, were favorably described because of their



Figure 7

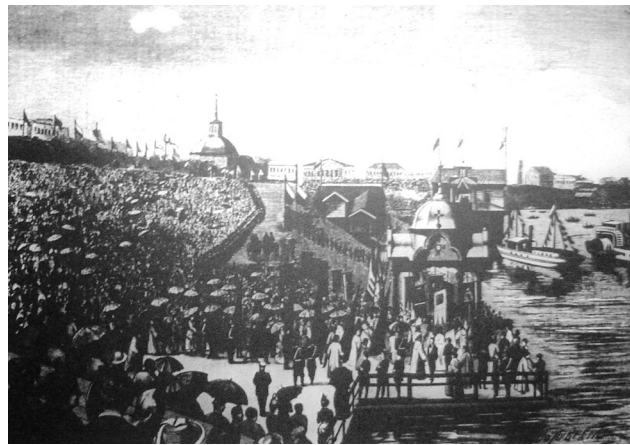


Figure 8

relatively mature culture under Western influence, but they were still regarded as outsiders since they were not Russian Orthodox.⁵⁸

As the landlocked Russian Empire had non-Russian inhabitants within its border, the Russian illustrated journals, the medium for readers within European Russia, showed a sense of dividing inside from outside when referring to non-Russian subjects of the Empire. In this sense, the Russian illustrated journals provided their readers with another image, the ethnic “we,” that is, the Russians.

In this context, it is only natural that the annual front page in 1878 (Figure 1) had an image of a Russian Orthodox church, probably Saint Basil’s Cathedral with Minin and Pozharskii monument, on the left-hand side in the background.

55 Нива. 1872. № 36. С. 570.

56 Нива. 1871. № 30. С. 475.

57 Нива. 1873. № 11. С. 172.

58 Нива. 1871. № 50. С. 799.

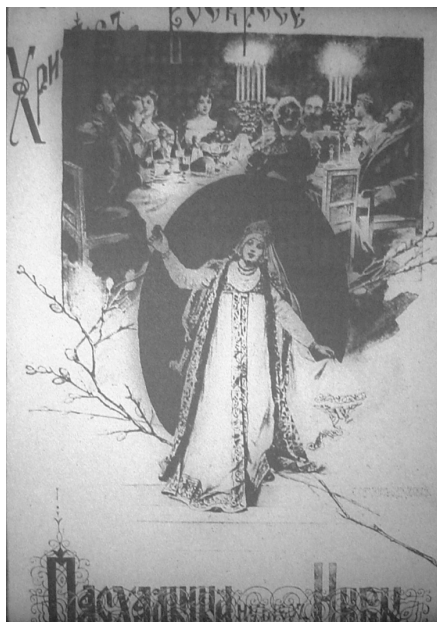


Figure 9

The image of European-mannered readers with a Russian Orthodox background is apparent. Another example of this dual image of readers can be found in the picture of Easter (Figure 9).⁵⁹ A girl in the Russian traditional style stands in front of people wearing modern European fashion. As was reflected in the composition of their readers – the semi-intellectual middle class on one side and the inhabitants of European Russia on the other – the illustrated journals had a dual image of their readers.

CONCLUSION

The Russian illustrated journals had many middle-class, semi-intellectual readers. Targeting them, these journals offered articles for enlightenment and amusement based on modern European culture. The ideal image of readers represented in those articles and pictures put emphasis on the civic image of “us.” At the same time, as a result of the fact that their distribution was limited in European Russia, there inevitably appeared the ethnic image of the Russian people with the basis of Russian Orthodoxy. Non-Russian subjects of the Empire were placed according to this criterion: from the neighboring converted Orthodox to the culturally immature heathen. This sense of distance was one of the most conspicuous phenomena of the Russian illustrated journals.

In this way, the Russian illustrated journals, one of the most influential printed media in the late nineteenth century, had a dual image of readers. The civic aspect was neither universal nor dominant in the public sphere. The ethnic aspect did not work for the creation of nationhood on the scale of the whole Empire, but exclusively constructed an image of ethnic Russians. To this must be added the fact that, outside the current of the Russian printing press, wide streams of printed materials in other languages – Polish, Jewish, and Tatar – existed. Both the civic and ethnic aspects of the Russian illustrated journals could only gain relative and limited positions in the multiethnic environment of the Russian Empire. This dual structure in relativity must be kept in mind when analyzing the nature of the public sphere in which the Russian illustrated journals functioned.

⁵⁹ Нива. 1896. № 11. Приложение.