

VISIT OF THE RUSSIAN CARGO SHIP *DVINA* TO AUSTRALIA IN 1853

The pause in the Russo-Australian relations which followed the cessation of the Russian naval calls in Australian ports during circumnavigations lasted till the early 1850-ties. Nevertheless, Russia remained in sight of the politicians and the colonial community. She was considered as one of the most probable contenders of England and Australia in the Pacific region. However, the factor of the Russian danger had been viewed on the fifth continent in the context of total jealousy towards any foreign presence in the South Pacific at least till mid-1850-ties.

The concern of the Australians of their security inspired them to commence construction of military fortifications. In 1841a fort in the Bay of Port-Jackson near Sydney was founded. Although it was implied that Russia was one of the countries whose aggression Australia possibly would have to repel, a direct push to commence construction was given not by the Russian but by an American threat. Against the background of hostile relations between the British Crown and the newly independent ex-British colonies in America, the following incident became an occasion for it. In November 1839 two well armed American ships of the exploration expedition of Wilkes entered the Sydney harbor unnoticed and cast anchors. In reality, the Americans had had no hostile intentions and their visit went along in friendly atmosphere, but the very fact of a stealthy penetration of foreign naval ships into Port-Jackson urged the authorities of New South Wales to design and then to commence construction of defensive fortifications.

The colonial authorities received the crew of the Russian cargo ship *Dvina* which visited Sydney in 1853 with a certain share of suspicion but, in general, rather politely. The Russian ship was en route to Kamchatka, arrived in Port-Jackson on the 28 of June and stayed there till the 16 of July 1853. The captain of the ship captain-lieutenant Bessarabskiy noted the warm and friendly reception given to the Russian seamen, but simultaneously mentioned that many of the local officials were perplexed and persistently tried to find out on what occasion and sailing where to the Russian ships would come here after a nearly 30 years long break...

Only a year after the Crimean war would break out in Europe. It would wipe out hundreds of thousands of lives and interrupt the Russo-Australian relations for many years...

A.Ya. Massov. Rosssiya i Australia vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka. St Petersburg. 1998