

VLADIVOSTOK

Johanna Granville

Copyright: Johanna Granville, "Vladivostok." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History*, edited by John B. Hattendorf. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007 (p. 290).

Vladivostok is a key port city in southeastern Russia, the administrative center of Primorsky Territory (Primorskii Krai). Beginning in the 1600s, Russian explorers first reached Siberia's eastern coastline and founded the city of Okhotsk (1647). Until the mid-1800s, however, China's dominance of the southern regions of eastern Siberia restricted Russian naval activities. Finally, in 1860, Russian soldiers founded Vladivostok while on an expedition to map the eastern coast of the continent and to establish two military outposts in order to strengthen Russia's presence in the East.

Vladivostok currently occupies most of Muraviov-Amursky Peninsula, named after the governor-general of Eastern Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. Two bays, Amursky and Ussuriisky, wrap the peninsula, mirroring with their names two great rivers of the Russian Far East: the Amur, and the Ussury, its tributary. The city lies in a picturesque amphitheater around a narrow, deep bay known as the Golden Horn (Zolotoi Rog). The construction of the port city of Vladivostok intensified Russia's need for adequate transportation links. Tsar Alexander III drew up plans for the Trans-Siberian Railway and began building it in 1891. Despite the enormity of the project, a continuous route was completed in 1905, stimulated by

the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War a year earlier. Vladivostok became Russia's main naval base in the East after Port Arthur (located in Chinese territory and ceded to Russia in 1898) fell in January 1905 during the war.

After World War I, Japan seized Vladivostok and held the key port for four years, initially as a member of the Allied interventionist forces that occupied parts of Russia after the new Bolshevik government proclaimed neutrality and withdrew from the war. At the end of World War II, Joseph Stalin broke the neutrality pact that had existed throughout the war in order to occupy vast areas of East Asia formerly held by Japan. It was through Vladivostok, moreover, that some of the Lend-Lease aid, the most visible sign of U.S.-Soviet cooperation during World War II, passed on its way to Murmansk. Vladivostok is now the headquarters for the Russian Pacific Fleet, one of Russia's most powerful naval forces.

Until 1958, Vladivostok was an extremely cosmopolitan city. In the early part of the twentieth century, Russians were actually outnumbered by Chinese in Vladivostok, and during the years following the Bolshevik Revolution, there were large populations of Japanese and Americans. However, in 1958, Soviet authorities closed the city to all foreigners and even to most Russians citizens as a strategically important port and border zone, and all foreign shipping was directed to the nearby port of Nakhodka. The city was officially declared "open" on January 1, 1992. In the early years of the twenty-first century, about 47 percent of the population of Vladivostok is involved in industry, transportation, and communication. The main industries of Vladivostok are engineering and fishing. Two major fish processing companies are Vostoktransflot and Dalmoreproduct, where 90 percent of the fish

caught are processed directly on board the ships in the open ocean. The Vladivostokskii Rybokombinat is another famous fish processing factory, known throughout the country. Shipbuilding, ship repair, and equipment manufacturing are major engineering operations in Vladivostok. Other chief industries include food processing (confectionery, bread baking, meat, and dairy products), as well as the manufacturing of plywood, porcelain, ceramic, and furniture.

Vladivostok is the headquarters of the Far Eastern Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences and contains at least fourteen other academic and research institutes, including the Far Eastern State Technical University.

Bibliography

Markov, V. *Putevoditel' po Vladivostoku* (Vladivostok: Dal'nevostochnoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1993).

Matveev, N. P. *Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk g. Vladivostoka* (Vladivostok: Izdatel'stvo "Ussuri," 1990).

Stephan, John J. *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994.)

Striuchenko, I. G., et al. *Vladivostok: Putevoditel' po Gorodu* (Vladivostok: Iszdatel'stvo Dal'nevostochnogo Universiteta, 1993).