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*(introduction, annotation, translation)*

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## **“I have no qualms about ... having shown Soviet Russia just like it is”: Aleksandr Lozovskii’s 1920 Reports About Travels with Foreign Delegates**

### **Introduction**

Travel reports were among the first texts published outside Soviet Russia about the Bolshevik regime. They have shaped the Western debates about Bolshevik power from the very beginning, and have resulted in an extensive research literature.<sup>1</sup> More recently, historians have begun to focus on the visits that produced these speculative and often spectacular reports. Older historiography tended to focus on the elements of deception by the Soviet authorities in orchestrating visits for foreign intellectuals, artists and politicians.<sup>2</sup> More recent research, however, fuelled by the opening of the archives after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has painted a more detailed and nuanced picture. Michael David-Fox, in his recent monograph on early Soviet cultural diplomacy, shows how the intentions of the Soviet authorities were to “showcase” not Soviet reality, but models of a near future to such visitors. Similarly, David-Fox examines the effects of such encounters within the Soviet Union itself.<sup>3</sup> Most recently, Anne Hartmann has analysed Lion Feuchtwanger’s 1937 journey to Stalinist Russia, which resulted in his infamous travel report “Moscow 1937”. By examining Soviet internal documentation of this journey, such as surveillance reports on the German writer, Hartmann not only shows that Feuchtwanger’s outlook on Stalin and the Great Terror was more ambiguous than his published report suggests, but also highlights the choreography and logistics of such visits, and the different levels of agency involved.<sup>4</sup> All in all, the ‘archival

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<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Furler: *Augen-Schein. Deutschsprachige Reportagen über Sowjetrusland 1917–1939*, Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987; Herta Wolf: *Glauben machen. Über deutschsprachige Reiseberichte aus der Sowjetunion, 1918–1932*, Wien, Sonderzahl, 1992; Christiane Uhlig: *Utopie oder Alptraum? Schweizer Reiseberichte über die Sowjetunion 1917–1941*, Zürich, Rohr, 1992; Ludmila Stern: *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920–40. From Red Square to the Left Bank*, London, Routledge, 2007; Inka Zahn: *Reise als Begegnung mit dem Anderen? Französische Reiseberichte über Moskau in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, Bielefeld, Aisthesis-Verlag, 2008. I am highly indebted to Brendan McGeever for proofreading and valuable feedback.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Hollander: *Political Pilgrims. Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928–1978*, Lanham MD, University Press of America, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Michael David-Fox: *Showcasing the Great Experiment. Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921–1941*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. See also: Michael David-Fox: *The Fellow Travelers Revisited. The “Cultured West” through Soviet Eyes*. In: *Journal of Modern History* 75 (2003), 2, pp. 300–335.

<sup>4</sup> Anne Hartmann: „Ich kam, ich sah, ich werde schreiben“. Lion Feuchtwanger in Moskau 1937. Eine Dokumentation, Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2017.

revolution' had a profound impact on researching not only the arcana of Soviet politics, but also such assumingly well-worn topics as foreign travels to the 'land of the Soviets'.

This new historiography on foreigners' visits to the Soviet Union has mostly focussed on either prominent intellectuals or 'bourgeois' specialists. What has received comparatively less attention, however, are the visits of so-called 'workers' delegates' to Russia. During the early period of Bolshevik rule, from Civil War to New Economic Policy (NEP), visits by foreign workers and labour movement activists were of considerable political importance to the regime. While convincing international bourgeois intellectuals of the superiority of the Soviet state was certainly important, winning over international labour movement activists was of significantly more value to the regime, not just in terms of striving for Communist hegemony within the international labour movement, but also given the initial focus of Soviet politics on world revolution. A worldwide revolutionary transformation required proletarian allies, not bourgeois sympathisers. Those foreign workers and revolutionaries visiting Soviet Russia represented a direct link to both imagined and real class allies abroad. Although workers' delegations were a popular topic in the largely uncritical historiography produced in the Eastern Bloc,<sup>5</sup> the subject has received little attention since the opening of the archives. Studies of the structures and practices of the Soviet authorities in relations to these workers' delegations are few and far between.<sup>6</sup>

In the second half of the 1920s, invitations to 'Workers' delegations' and the orchestration of their journeys through the Soviet Union became a staple feature of Soviet cultural diplomacy, or, to be more precise, the wing of Soviet cultural diplomacy directed towards the international labour movement and its organisations. Beginning in 1925 with an invitation for a German workers' delegation to visit the Soviet Union at the behest of the workers of Leningrad's Putilov factory (though on the instructions of the Politburo)<sup>7</sup>, these visitations evolved into a veritable "industry": Between April 1925 and October 1926 alone, 25 foreign workers' delegations visited the USSR, encompassing several hundred participants. The high point was the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1927, when numerous workers'

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<sup>5</sup> For just some examples, see: Claus Remer: *Deutsche Arbeiterdelegation in der Sowjetunion. Die Bedeutung der Delegationsreisen für die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in den Jahren 1925/1926*, Berlin(-Ost), Rütten & Loening, 1963; K. T. Luk'ianov: *Nemetskie rabochie delegacii v SSSR, 1925–1932 gg.* In: *Ezhegodnik germanskoi istorii* (1974), pp. 113–136. Despite this interest in workers' delegations in the 1960s and 1970s, the topic received next to no attention on the other side of the Iron Curtain. For a few exceptions: Albert S. Lindemann: *The 'Red Years'. European Socialism Versus Bolshevism, 1919–1921*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974; Daniel Calhoun: *The United Front. The TUC and the Russians, 1923–1928*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Schafranek: *Die Avantgarde der Einäugigen. Österreichische Arbeiterdelegationen in der UdSSR*. In: Barry McLoughlin, Hans Schafranek, Walter Szevera (eds.): *Aufbruch – Hoffnung – Endstation. Österreicherinnen und Österreicher in der Sowjetunion, 1925–1945*, Wien, Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1996, pp. 13–48; Matthias Heeke: *Reisen zu den Sowjets. Der ausländische Tourismus in Russland 1921–1941*, Münster, LIT Verlag, 2003; Aleksandr V. Golubev: *'...Vzgliad na zemliu obetovannuiu'. Iz istorii sovetskoi kul'turnoi diplomatii 1920–1930-kh godov*, Moskva, IRI RAN, 2004; David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, p. 102ff; Kevin Morgan: *Bolshevism, Syndicalism, and the General Strike. The Lost Internationalist World of A.A. Purcell*, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 2013. My contribution draws from my own engagement with the historical practices of workers' delegations. See: Gleb J. Albert: *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution. Revolutionärer Internationalismus in der frühen Sowjetgesellschaft 1917–1927*, Köln, Böhlau Verlag, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Albert, *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution*, p. 502.

delegations were invited for the celebration.<sup>8</sup> Over the course of the second half of the 1920s, these tours through the Soviet provinces took on a highly standardised form, with preferred routes, mandatory precautions and enthusiastic coverage in both the Soviet and foreign communist press.<sup>9</sup>

However, the first delegation of this type was far from routine for the Soviet authorities. In 1920, the British Labour Party announced their wish to send a fact-finding mission to Soviet Russia. Despite the Labour Party having been denounced as reformists by the Bolsheviks, the Soviet authorities accepted the request, though not without a heated internal debate about how to treat these delegates. Lenin stressed the importance of giving the Labour delegates a hostile reception; Georgii Chicherin and Karl Radek, meanwhile, argued for a more courteous approach. Radek and Chicherin won the day,<sup>10</sup> and thus the Soviet authorities had to come up with a full programme that would provide the delegates with as positive an outlook on Soviet Russia as possible – especially given the prominence of the members of the delegation.

The visiting group comprised the three party delegates – Ethel Snowden, Tom Shaw and Robert Harris –, the chairman Ben Turner, and the joint secretaries Charles Roden Buxton and L. Haden Guest. In addition, the delegation included three representatives of the Trades Union Congress (including the future leader of the 1926 general strike, A.A. Purcell), two delegates from the Independent Labour Party, a number of journalists, and the well-known philosopher Bertrand Russell.<sup>11</sup> The group arrived in Petrograd on 11 May, only to leave for Moscow the next day, where they would remain until 28 May, before travelling to Nizhnii Novgorod to board the steamship “Belinskii” for a cruise down the Volga River, towards Saratov. Part of the delegation returned to Moscow to visit the frontline of the Soviet-Polish war near Smolensk, while others continued by ship to Astrakhan.<sup>12</sup> All in all, the British delegates spent more than six weeks in Soviet Russia.

On their arrival in Petrograd, the Labour delegation had been met at the train station by Aleksandr Lozovskii and Anzhelika Balabanova,<sup>13</sup> two high-ranking Bolsheviks with years of personal experience – and, in the case of Balabanova, a figure with an outstanding reputation – in the international labour movement. Lozovskii was entrusted by the Party to accompany the delegation on their trip down the Volga.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 501; Jean-François Fayet: Preface. In: Jean-François Fayet, Valérie Gorin, Stefanie Prezioso (eds.): *Echoes of October. International Commemorations of the Bolshevik Revolution 1918–1990*, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 2017, pp. 6–27, here pp. 8–9.

<sup>9</sup> Schafranek, *Die Avantgarde der Einäugigen*; Christoph Mick: *Sowjetische Propaganda, Fünfjahrplan und deutsche Rußlandpolitik*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1995; Jürgen Zarusky: *Die deutschen Sozialdemokraten und das sowjetische Modell. Ideologische Auseinandersetzung und außenpolitische Konzeptionen 1917–1933*, München, Oldenbourg, 1992; Ulrich Eumann: *Eigenwillige Kohorten der Revolution. Zur regionalen Sozialgeschichte des Kommunismus in der Weimarer Republik*, Frankfurt am Main, Lang, 2007; Albert, *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution*.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen White: *British Labour in Soviet Russia, 1920*. In: *The English Historical Review* 109 (1994), 432, pp. 621–640, here p. 635; Jonathan Davis: *Left Out in the Cold. British Labour Witnesses the Russian Revolution*. In: *Revolutionary Russia* 18 (2005), 1, pp. 71–87, here p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> Davis, *Left Out in the Cold*, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> *British Labour Delegation to Russia 1920. Report*, London, Trade Union Congress, The Labour Party, 1921, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Davis, *Left Out in the Cold*, p. 75.

Shortly after their guided tour through the Volga region, another group of foreign labour movement activists began to pour into Soviet Russia: the delegates of the Second World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). The Second Congress, which was to take place from 19 July through to 7 August, was a crucial moment in Comintern history: not only was it its first “real congress” (Pierre Broué),<sup>14</sup> featuring delegates from real mass parties and movements, it was also its politically most diverse gathering, with groups and parties sending representatives and observers from the left social-democratic USPD through to council communist and even anarcho-syndicalist organisations. At the same time, from the Bolshevik perspective, this was the congress tasked with separating the wheat from the chaff in the international communist movement: it was there that the famous “21 Conditions” were put forward.

The treatment of the diverse group guests arriving for the congress was therefore of utmost strategic importance for the Bolsheviks. They had to win sympathetic, yet wavering labour movement leaders for the cause; at the same time, they had to marginalise those candidates deemed unreliable. Albert S. Lindemann has analysed these careful manoeuvres with respect to the Italian and French delegates. The delegates of the French SFIO and the Italian Socialist Party – both parties yet unaligned to the Comintern – arrived several weeks prior to the congress, and their treatment could not have been more contrasting. While the Italian group around Giacinto Serrati was met with warmth and fanfare, French delegates, Ludovic-Oscar Frossard and Marcel Cachin – the latter still being widely viewed as a reformist and war supporter –, were not even welcomed at the train station.<sup>15</sup>

A few weeks before the congress, Balabanova wrote a letter to the Small Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Congress delegates, she wrote, “strongly desire to go on a trip to Nizhnii Novgorod and down the Volga, just like the English delegation”. It was, as Balabanova stressed, of utmost political importance to grant the Comintern delegates their wish, as “[t]hey had been promised such an opportunity, and a non-fulfilment would have a rather negative impact on their relations [with us].” According to her, Lenin had already approved of this plan and had commanded Lozovskii with the organisation of the trip.<sup>16</sup>

Lozovskii was, on one hand, the perfect candidate for such an undertaking. Having spent almost a decade in European exile and having been active in the French trade unions, he spoke various languages and had first-hand knowledge of the European labour movement. Also, after overseeing the British Labour delegation, he had a certain degree of routine in organising such tours. On the other hand, however, he was not exactly known as a steadfast follower of the Party line. Having joined the Bolsheviks only in mid-1917, he had been expelled from the Party only a few months later, in December, and it was only in December 1919, not even a year before the events described here, that he was allowed to rejoin.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Pierre Broué: *Histoire de l'Internationale Communiste, 1919–1943*, Paris, Fayard, 1997, p. 160.

<sup>15</sup> Albert S. Lindemann: *Socialist Impressions of Revolutionary Russia 1920*. In: *Russian History* (1974), 1, pp. 31–45; Albert S. Lindemann: *Entering the Comintern. Negotiations Between the Bolsheviks and Western Socialists at the Second Congress of the Communist International 1920*. In: *Russian History* (1974), 2, pp. 136–167.

<sup>16</sup> Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), Moscow, 489/1/51, 1: Letter from Anzhelika Balabanova to the Small Bureau of the ECCI, undated.

<sup>17</sup> On Lozovskii's biography, see Reiner Tosstorff: *Alexander Lozovsky. Sketch of a Bolshevik Career*. In: *Socialist History* (2009), 24, pp. 1–19.

Perhaps this still precarious position is one of the reasons Lozovskii left such detailed reports of the Volga journeys: he had to prove himself anew as a reliable Party member.

This second Volga trip, with a steamer full of Comintern delegates (the full list of passengers has not yet been uncovered), began on 1 July and continued for twelve days. Lindemann characterises the journey as “a standard ‘prepared’ tour for foreign visitors to Russia [... ] undoubtedly designed to mask some of the most unpleasant or damning aspects of Bolshevik rule.”<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere, Lindemann stresses that the transformation of the Italian and French delegates in their attitude towards the Comintern and Soviet Russia cannot be explained without taking into account their experiences and treatment in Russia<sup>19</sup>. However, the Volga journey is only covered by Lindemann in passing. The reports by Lozovski published here show, for the first time, that both this journey and its predecessor (for Labour Party delegates) were far more than “standard ‘prepared’ tour[s]”.

Firstly, the reports shed light on the roots of certain ‘conversion moments’ of European labour movement leaders. One can take the example of Angel Pestaña, the representative of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT). His Moscow journey played a crucial role in the CNT’s decision not to join the Comintern and Pestaña’s distancing from communism. His report from the Moscow journey which he gave in Spain mentions the cruise on the Volga only briefly.<sup>20</sup> As Lozovskii’s report shows, however, this briefness might have been caused by the fact that the journey was a personal embarrassment for Pestaña, having been forced, as an anarcho-syndicalist, into giving a speech against ‘backward workers’. Another example is Cachin, who underwent the quite astonishing transformation from a ‘social patriot’ fiercely denounced by the Bolsheviks to a founding figure and doyen of French communism. Lozovskii’s report hints at the importance of this journey in the political evolution of Cachin: Lozovskii’s role as ‘tour guide’ appears to have contributed greatly to Cachin’s conversion to Communism.

Secondly, and even more importantly, the reports show in great detail the very early development of “orders of seeing and showing” (Anne Hartmann) and the “technology of hospitality” (G. B. Kulikova) in relation to foreign delegates.<sup>21</sup> Lozovskii’s guided tours, in contrast to *ex-post* images of tough Bolshevik control, appear largely improvised, with decisions taken on the spot, occurrences of local confusion, and a large portion of self-will on behalf of the foreign delegates. Also, the reports lay bare the importance that such visits had on the lower strata of the regime – the party, soviet and trade union activists and officials at the local level. Lozovskii details that the delegations “received invitations from all over. Every town wanted to show us around.” Moreover, “everywhere we were told that our arrival made the work of the local organisations easier [...] and showed the non-believers that the

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<sup>18</sup> Lindemann, *The ‘Red Years’*, p. 181.

<sup>19</sup> Lindemann, *Socialist Impressions*, p. 45.

<sup>20</sup> Angel Pestaña: Report on the Action Taken by the Delegate Angel Pestaña at the Second Congress of the Third International Which Was Presented by Him to the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, ed. by Francisco J. Romero Salvadó. In: *Revolutionary Russia* 8 (1995), 1, pp. 39–103.

<sup>21</sup> Anne Hartmann: Ordnungen des Zeigens und Sehens. Westliche Intellektuelle und ihre sowjetischen Guides Mitte der 1930er Jahre. In: Stefan Lampadius, Elmar Schenkel (eds.): *Under Western and Eastern Eyes. Ost und West in der Reiseliteratur des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2012, pp. 91–108; G. B. Kulikova: “Tekhnologiia gostepriimstva” v Sovetskom Soiuze, 1920–1930-e gody. In: A. Iu. Poliakov (ed.): *Problemy istorii servisa. Zdravookhranenie, kul’tura, dosug*, Moskva, MGOU, 2004, pp. 149–158.

international proletariat and its support [for Soviet Russia] is not a myth dreamt up by the Bolsheviks[.]” The visits by the foreign delegates to the towns and villages of provincial, hunger-ridden and war-torn Russia had a special significance for those who had to uphold both Bolshevik rule and their own belief in the communist project in these remote locations. The visits refuelled their belief in the international importance and transnational nature of their political work – in other words, they reinforced the “charisma of world revolution”.<sup>22</sup>

Lozovskii likely assumed that his fellow Bolshevik leaders might disapprove of his tour-guiding style – otherwise he would not have had the urge to defend his approach so vehemently. In the conclusion of his first report, he stresses that he does have “no qualms about having picked random villages and shown Soviet Russia just like it is.” After their return, the Labour delegates stated that they were satisfied with the journey and were able to see everything they had wanted to see.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Lozovskii’s strategy seemed to have initially paid off. The report produced and published by the delegation shortly after their return to Britain, however, tells a different story. In addition to detailing the faint social progress they were able to observe in Soviet Russia, the authors did not hide from laying bare the harsh realities of Soviet provincial life. Moreover, the report provided space for statements by non-Bolshevik socialist organisations such as the Socialist Revolutionary Party, whose Central Committee’s manifesto was included in English translation.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly detailed feedback from the participants of the second trip involving Comintern delegates has yet to be found. However, it appears that Lozovskii’s improvised handling of the tour did not sit well with his fellow Bolshevik leaders. A year later, on the eve of the Third World Congress of the Comintern, the Communist Party’s Politburo resolved to elect a commission to produce a strict itinerary for congress delegates which explicitly let it be known “that sightseeing [destinations] outside this list are out of question.”<sup>25</sup> Lozovskii’s strategy of “pick[ing] random villages” proved to be unpalatable for the Comintern and party bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the tours led by him served as trial runs for countless guided tours for foreign workers and revolutionaries through Soviet Russia.

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The two reports, published here for the first time, are held in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow. The first report, dealing with the Labour delegation, is kept in the papers of the Communist Party Fraction of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions (*fond* 95); the second, on the Comintern delegates, is located in the papers of the Second World Congress of the Comintern (*fond* 489). Neither come with a cover letter. The first report has no explicit addressee, while the second is broadly addressed to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and the Communist International (presumably its Executive Committee). They are standard reports which were usually made

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<sup>22</sup> Albert, *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution*.

<sup>23</sup> Davis, *Left Out in the Cold*, p. 75f.

<sup>24</sup> British Labour Delegation to Russia 1920. Report.

<sup>25</sup> RGASPI, Moscow, 17/3/183, 3–4: Resolution of the Politburo of the CC of the RCP(b), 2 July 1921. Published in: G. M. Adibekov et al. (eds.): *Politbiuro TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern. 1919–1943 gg. Dokumenty, Moskva, ROSSPEN, 2004*, p. 87f.

after completing a particular party task, and were designed to be read and evaluated by party colleagues and/or superiors.

While I have done my best to annotate the documents on the subject of the Soviet contexts described here, time and language constraints have prohibited me from systematically checking them against the personal documents and recollections of the foreign delegates, most importantly Frossard's diary (kept at the Hoover Institution) and the contemporary recollections of the Italian participants. However, these documents have been quoted and analysed in length by Lindemann, and the archival and bibliographical references for them can be obtained from his work.

### Document 1

#### **Aleksandr Lozovskii: Report on the Volga journey of the British Labour delegation, [June 1920]**

*Typescript with hand-written corrections, Russian language. Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (RGASPI), Moscow, f. 95, op. 1, d. 14, l. 1–8.*

#### REPORT ON THE JOURNEY DOWN THE VOLGA (28/V – 5/VI 1920)

##### 1. COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION

The inclusion of bourgeois journalists in the delegation was doubtlessly an error.<sup>26</sup> It was impossible to create special arrangements for them, so we had to transport the delegates of the labour organisations and the journalists together – not just on the steamboat, but also [on the trips to] the workers' organisations in the provinces. It was impossible to explain in every town that this or that person is a journalist of a bourgeois newspaper and that he has to be subjected to different treatment, thus the provincial comrades cheerfully greeted all foreigners who arrived together. Also, to create special arrangements and warn [the locals] every time that they are not "ours" would have been inconvenient, as all journalists, be it bourgeois, yellow,<sup>27</sup> or bourgeois sympathisers, and even the socialist ones, are to a certain degree bound together by professional solidarity.

Another major inconvenience of the delegation was due to the fact that, apart from the English delegates, it included a number of representatives of different organisations, and the Executive Committee of the Third International, while delegating these comrades (German syndicalists, [members of] Australian Industrial Workers of the World etc.), did not bother to

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<sup>26</sup> Ethel Snowden describes the steamship passengers in her travel report as consisting, besides the delegates themselves, of "interpreters, agents, secretaries and journalists, a party of 30 to 40 people, all anticipating a good time" (Ethel Snowden: *Through Bolshevik Russia*, London, Cassell & Co., 1920, p. 164). For an analysis of Snowden's travelogue, see most recently: Nadine Menzel: *Nach Moskau und zurück. Die Reiseschriften von Ethel Snowden, Sylvia Pankhurst und Clare Sheridan über das postrevolutionäre Russland im Jahr 1920*, Wien e.a., Böhlau, 2018. pp. 89–185.

<sup>27</sup> The term "yellow", originally used to characterise blackleg trade unions, refers in Bolshevik political language to reformist political bodies, and not, as one might assume today, to boulevard journalism.

tell me who they were, whom they represent, why they came, what they want to know and observe, and how, according to the Executive Committee of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International, they are to be treated.<sup>28</sup> All these comrades, considering themselves representatives of workers' organisations, demanded equal treatment. They wanted the [festive] receptions organised for the English delegation to be directed at them, and were highly offended when they were refused the floor at the rallies and assemblies. Here, the Executive Committee of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International complicated the matter by failing to provide definite directives concerning each of its guests. This is visible from the diary entry of one of the delegates of the Australian [Industrial] Workers of the World, which says that "both in Moscow and on the road his work has been sabotaged".<sup>29</sup> The lack of preparatory information on the treatment of the delegates of workers' organisations, and the purely mechanical inclusion of journalists and representatives of the yellow press, confused the situation and made our steamship more akin to a Noah's Ark than a delegation of workers' organisations. Such a conflation of bourgeois journalists and workers' organisations could not but cause consternation among the latter. If it is necessary to cart bourgeois journalists around Russia, then they need to be carted separately.

## 2. THE MOOD OF THE DELEGATION

From the very first moment, the English delegates declared that they would like to explore the situation in the provinces on their own and learn about what is happening there without spending time with receptions etc. Completely unambiguously they claimed that festive receptions are arranged in order to steal their time and keep them away from exploring the situation in the provinces. To these direct and indirect accusations by the secretary of the delegation, I answered: "The comrades in the provinces want to receive you as the representative of the English workers. They care little for you personally. They are interested in the English proletariat, and want to greet it by greeting its representative. If you consider visiting a town without getting in touch with local workers' organisations, then, firstly, you will not see anything and not get to know anything, and secondly, the workers' organisations in the provinces will not understand such a treatment, which may cause them to distrust the English workers. However, – I said to them – you are free to do as you please." As they approached me with the request to have a look at a Russian village, I told them that it would come at the expense of any excursions into the towns, and concerning the [choice of the] village, that we will stop every day at a random destination. They met this idea with broad approval. They saw that we are not afraid to show them any village and to stop at any point of our journey.

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<sup>28</sup> The full list of the participants of the Labour delegation's trip to the Volga, apart from the Labour and TUC delegates themselves, is yet still to be found. Yet this is an interesting hint towards the fact that the ECCI apparently sent some Comintern congress delegates who were already in Russia on this trip as well.

<sup>29</sup> The Australian IWW delegate is Paul Freeman (1884?–1921), who, despite his quarrel with Lozovskii, went on to become a Comintern functionary, before being killed in the ill-famed experimental monorail train accident in Russia in 1921, together with several Russian and German communists. Freeman's critical attitude of the Volga journey is confirmed by an internal memorandum written by the Russian-Australian Comintern emissary Aleksandr Zuzenko, in which he testified that during the journey, "Comrade Freeman quarrelled and almost came to blows with Comrade Lozovsky" (see: David W. Lovell, Kevin Windle: *Our Unswerving Loyalty. A Documentary Survey of Relations Between the Communist Party of Australia and Moscow, 1920–1940*, Canberra, ANU Press, 2008, p. 71). For Freeman's biography, see: Frank Farrell: *Freeman, Paul (1884–1921)*, in: *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/freeman-paul-6245>. I am very thankful to Evan Smith for bringing these sources to my attention.

### 3. THE SOVIET PROVINCES

The first town we made a stop at was Nizhnii [Novgorod]. The rally at the Sormovskii factory, where 10,000 workers adopted a very good resolution, turned out very well.<sup>30</sup> The banquet forced upon us by the Nizhnii Novgorod trade fair and organised by the people of Nizhnii Novgorod cannot be considered a success: Too many delicacies were dished up despite our hunger-ridden times. The Nizhnii-Novgoroders clearly overdid it. At the same time, the rally in the theatre went down very well, despite the fact that, when one of the English delegates started to talk about the special path of the British labour movement, I had to take the floor for a concluding speech to explain to the Nizhnii Novgorod workers what this “special path” meant. The following fact speaks volumes of the local customs: The day we arrived, the chair of the *Ispolkom*<sup>31</sup> abolished a commission made up by the representatives of the trade union council, the *Ispolkom*, and the *Gubkom*,<sup>32</sup> and instead appointed a dictator [sic!] for our reception.

#### KAZAN’.

In Kazan’ we only spent two hours, something that deeply offended the Kazan’ comrades, who had prepared a huge parade and a series of festive sessions for the following day.<sup>33</sup> However, we made very good use of those two hours. As soon as we got off the ship, we were surrounded by a huge crowd of Tatars and Russians, so we made an improvised rally on the spot, at which we unleashed [*vypustili*] the English,<sup>34</sup> the Germans and even the French. We conducted this rally without the representatives of the *Ispolkom* and the trade unions council, who arrived only later. The organisation of the Tatar Republic caused great interest on behalf of the delegates, but, unfortunately, we did not have enough time to invite any of the local Tatars, so we had to explain to them the core of the Tatar autonomy by ourselves on behalf of the Tatars.<sup>35</sup>

#### NOVODEVICH’IA PUSTYN’.

The first village that we visited, completely randomly, was Novodevich’ia Pustyn’. This is a vast and rich Volga village, quite kulak-ish, but nevertheless I decided to stop over and show them our village just like it is.

In Novodevich’ia, they all split into groups and started wandering around the village. From talking with peasants they were left with a rather curious set of impressions. Firstly, they encountered hostility towards the English proletariat for the blockade, and were told that the

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<sup>30</sup> On the practice of adopting internationalist resolutions, see Albert, *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution*, p. 234–256.

<sup>31</sup> „Ispolkom“: „ispolnitel’nyi komitet“, executive committee.

<sup>32</sup> „Gubkom“: „gubernskii komitet“, guberniia committee (guberniia being the second-largest measurement of territorial division in Soviet Russia).

<sup>33</sup> This is described in Ethel Snowden’s travel report: Snowden, *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 175.

<sup>34</sup> In colloquial Russian, the terms „English“ („angliiskii“) and „British“ („britanskii“) are often used synonymously, with a preference for the former.

<sup>35</sup> The Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, with Kazan’ as its capital, was established in 1920.

Entente is to blame for the lack of goods and agricultural machinery in the countryside. This made a huge impression [on the delegates]. Also, a delegate found out from a *muzhik*<sup>36</sup> that a peasant only lived on two *funt*<sup>37</sup> of bread a day, which is supposedly too little. When a delegate asked how an urban worker lives on half a *funt* or one *funt*, the peasant replied that [a worker] toils less hard and thus can live on less bread. The journalists wandered off to the huts, where they found pies, white bread, eggs, lard and other goods that are rare in the city. The overall impression [they were left with] is as follows: the *muzhik* is well off, and has no intention to hand over any foodstuffs to the cities voluntarily. We organised a 5000-strong rally, where the *muzhiks*, with their beards on display, listened with grim faces to the speeches in English, French and German, and furiously shouted "hoorah" to the English proletariat. Also, [the delegates] could observe that our modern countryside has a number of cultural facilities (school, peoples' house etc.). I do not know what the Triapichkin<sup>38</sup> observers from the bourgeois newspapers will write about this village, but I assume that for the delegates, the sight of a real Russian village was very useful.

#### SIMBIRSK.

In Simbirsk, we sat for three hours. Representatives of the *Ispolkom* and the [trade] unions council came on board. An exchange of speeches and greetings took place, and afterwards an excursion into town.

Our stay in SAMARA went well.

Here, we went directly from the ship to the *Ispolkom*, where the chairman explained in detail the work of provincial Soviet institutions, the composition of the congresses of the *ispolkom* etc. During the day, we looked at the factories and mills, and in the evening there was a festive session of the *guberniia* Soviet Congress, which had a huge impact on the delegates.

As well as the chairman of the *Ispolkom* and the Soviet Council, a number of other speakers delivered their greeting speeches. A representative of the Mordvinian-Chuvashian population<sup>39</sup> detailed the suffering of the peasants from the Czechoslovaks<sup>40</sup> and called for a struggle against the imperialists and for the support of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International. A peasant woman from the Melekesskii *uezd*<sup>41</sup> called the English women into the ranks of the social revolution. A representative of the Muslims talked about the English politics towards the Muslims in oriental expressions, very colourful and vividly. A 14-year-old boy called for the creation of a Children's International. Finally, a Menshevik took the floor and admitted that the Menshevik

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<sup>36</sup> „Muzhik“: colloquial Russian term for a male peasant.

<sup>37</sup> „Funt“: traditional Russian measure of mass, equivalent to approx. 400 grams.

<sup>38</sup> Triapichkin is a minor character from Nikolai Gogol's play "The Government Inspector" (1836), used here as an allegory for a ruthless boulevard journalist.

<sup>39</sup> The Mordvin and Chuvash peoples are the native inhabitants of the Volga region around Samara.

<sup>40</sup> This refers to the uprising of members of the Czechoslovak Legion, who were kept as prisoners of war in Russia, in the summer of 1918, at the very beginning of the Russian Civil War. A large part of them was held in captivity in the Samara region, and in June 1918, the Czechoslovaks were able to defeat the Red Army units and temporarily capture the city of Samara.

<sup>41</sup> Uezd: local unit of territorial division in Soviet Russia

support for the Czechoslovaks was a crime,<sup>42</sup> and finished by exclaiming: “Long live the social revolution”.

The speeches by the Tatar-Chuvash and by the Menshevik made the biggest impression on the delegates, and in later speeches they referred to the atonement speech of the Menshevik and the speeches of the national minorities [*inorodtsev*].<sup>43</sup>

Before reaching Samara, the journalist Buxton asked me whether he could stay in Saratov in order to visit some people in the Buzulukskii *uezd* on request of the Quaker mission which used to be located there.<sup>44</sup> I replied that permission for foreigners to stay in the provinces depended on the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the VChK,<sup>45</sup> and that one could correspond with Moscow over that matter after arriving in Samara. But in Samara it turned out that he already received a permit from Sverdlov<sup>46</sup> and, furthermore, from the depute commander of the military district. I immediately told Buxton that it is not possible to stay without a permit without receiving an answer from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, but Buxton nevertheless remained there. Moreover, when I told him before the ship set sail that there was no permit, he replied that he “would manage”. From Marksstadt and Samara I sent instructions to the Samara *Gubispolkom*, the contents of which are known.<sup>47</sup>

Our time in the village VOSKRESENSKOE was also well-spent.

This is a village with 12,5 thousand inhabitants, where a year ago a kulak uprising took place, but where not even a thought of such an uprising remains. The village has a Party organisation of 175 people, and 100 members of the youth union [Komsomol]. There is a theatre, a people’s house, three schools etc.

[The delegation] split into small groups, some of which managed to end up with Old Believers, while others visited the local teacher (a female communist, who received us all very warmly).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The so-called KOMUCH government, formed by supporters of the Constituent Assembly, among them Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were able to temporarily come to power in Samara thanks to the military efforts of the Czechoslovak Legion.

<sup>43</sup> It is peculiar that Lozovskii uses not the Soviet term for national minorities (*natsional'nye men'shinstva, natsmeny*), but the Tsarist one.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Roden Buxton (1875–1942), Labour Party politician, journalist, and secretary of the Labour Delegation, apparently spoke Russian, as he functioned as an interpreter for the delegation besides the ones provided by the Soviet authorities. See: White, *British Labour*, p. 628.

<sup>45</sup> VChK: All-Russian Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, Russian: Vserossiiskaia chrezvychainaia komissiia po bor'be s kontrrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem, founded in December 1917 at the Council of People’s Commissars as the first Soviet secret police organisation.

<sup>46</sup> The person mentioned here is not Iakov Sverdlov, but his younger brother Veniamin Sverdlov (1886–1939), who, after having lived in the US before the revolution, was an official in the People’s Commissariat of Transport between 1918 and 1921.

<sup>47</sup> Buxton split from the party near Saratov and visited several villages on his own. He describes his experiences in the “Report on the Village of Ozero”, included in the delegation report: *British Labour Delegation to Russia 1920. Report*, pp. 130–136. The contents of the instruction sent by Lozovskii could not be found.

<sup>48</sup> This encounter is vividly described in Snowden, *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 179, even though she describes it as something that happened in Samara.

This authentic village made a huge impression on everyone, even on the correspondents of the bourgeois newspapers. I have no qualms about having picked random villages and shown Soviet Russia just like it is.

MARKSSHTADT made an even better impression.

This is a clean little German town<sup>49</sup> which, especially after Samara, felt like the pinnacle of cleanliness. Here, a rally on the square was organised with [speeches in] English and German. Speeches were made. The delegates had a hard time understanding the organising principles of this Volga German region which lacks any territorial integrity. The Marksstaders even organised a parade and displayed German diligence together with pure Russian hospitality.

SARATOV.

In Saratov, the delegation visited the *Gubispolkom* and *Gubprofsovet*,<sup>50</sup> the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Sovtrudarmii*,<sup>51</sup> the House of Labour and Enlightenment, some hospitals, and finally the festive joint session of all workers' organisations of the city of Samara.

Since the speeches, all in all, resembled those given at previous destinations, I will not dwell on them.

The regional committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary party presented the delegation with a rather long letter, in which the S-R standpoint on the current situation was expressed. The letter was rather skilfully composed, as it made use of our weaknesses (the events in Astrakhan where the leaders of the metal workers' union were shot,<sup>52</sup> the tariff policy, etc.), and it ended with a call to the English proletariat to intervene in our affairs and learn from our example of how not to make a social revolution.<sup>53</sup>

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the following should be noted.

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<sup>49</sup> The town of Marksstادت (Marxstadt), a town founded as Ekaterinenshtadt (Katharinenstadt) by German colonists in the 18th century, and in 1920 renamed in honour of Karl Marx, was the administrative centre of the Autonomous Region of the Volga Germans from 1919 to 1922.

<sup>50</sup> Gubprofsovet: trade union council of a *guberniia*.

<sup>51</sup> Sovtrudarmii: Soviet Labour Army. The eight Soviet Labour Armies, existing between 1920 and 1921, were a militarized labour force, formed on the basis of Red Army units at the end of the Civil War. They were involved in aiding with industrial and agricultural work, but also in the fight against banditry and uprisings.

<sup>52</sup> Most likely this is a reference to the heavy unrest in Astrakhan in March 1919, where armed workers clashed with the authorities. There was a large number of casualties on both sides, and numerous assumed leaders of the uprising were shot in the aftermath. See: Dmitrii Churakov: *Buntuiushchie proletarii. Rabochii protest v Sovetskoi Rossii*, Moskva, Veche, 2007, p. 232f.

<sup>53</sup> No mention of this letter is preserved in the Labour delegation's travel report, but a similar letter, passed by socialist oppositionists from Tambov to the British delegation, is preserved in the International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam) and was published in Russian by: Iurii Fel'shtinskii (ed.): *Obrashchenie Tambovskoi okruzhnoi organizatsii trudovogo krest'ianstva k predstaviteliam angliiskikh rabochikh*. In: *Minuvshee* 4 (1987), pp. 253–273.

1. Due to the chequered nature of the delegation and some ambiguities concerning the functions of those who accompanied it, there were some misunderstandings which had a negative impact on the progress of our work. Sverdlov apparently did not know that he is responsible purely for the technical side of things, and, for example, granted Buxton a permit to use on all railroads, as well as conducted direct negotiations with the secretary of the delegation concerning who is to stay with the sick,<sup>54</sup> etc. This created a very unpleasant situation, a duplicity of command, and inevitable stress [*derganie*] for some delegates.<sup>55</sup>

2. The [Labour] delegation attempted to stress several times that it represents millions of workers, while the other delegates are just representatives of small groups. When they started to utter such thoughts, I pointed out to them that we cannot divide delegates into rich and poor, and at meetings I began to send onto the floor, after the official trade union delegates, the representative of the London Shop Stewards, [Jack] Tanner.<sup>56</sup>

3. The tour of this delegation into the provinces gave a boost to our provincial organisations – even more than to the delegates themselves. Particularly in those villages where we stopped by, comrades told us: “We have been telling workers and peasants for such a long time that we have support from workers in other countries, that they stopped believing our words; [but] now they have seen the living representatives of the foreign proletariat, our influence is growing again.”<sup>57</sup>

4. For the future, it is not advisable to water down the delegations of workers’ organisations with representatives of the bourgeois press, and representatives of organisations which have no clear relation to us yet (industrialists,<sup>58</sup> syndicalists, etc.), because it causes confusion at the local level, since one cannot polemicise with them about the stupid ideas they utter, while at the same time one cannot bar them from speaking altogether, as they are participants of the journey.

5. Everyone in the provinces complains about the lack of personnel. This is particularly felt in Samara where the whole work rests on the shoulders of literally a couple of individuals. It is absolutely necessary to send party backup to Samara, otherwise the Samara *guberniia* might deliver an unwelcome surprise. [...] <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Clifford Allen (1889–1939), British politician and leading member of the Independent Labour Party, contracted pneumonia on the journey and could only debark in Astrakhan’, while most other delegates already debarked in Saratov, except for a few who stayed to tend to him. See: Snowden, *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 166; White, *British Labour*, p. 632.

<sup>55</sup> The confusing situation regarding the chain of command on the ship did not remain hidden from the delegates. Ethel Snowden noted: “The organisation of the steamship [...] was mystifying to us. First there was the recognised commander. Then there was Sverdloff, the Acting-Commissar for Ways and Communications, who appeared to be the highest authority; then came the Trade Union Delegate who travels with the ship; then the man in charge of our party, who seemed to be armed with authority over the crew as well. There were occasions when orders conflicted, and the result was very funny.” (Snowden, *Through Bolshevik Russia*, p. 166).

<sup>56</sup> The British trade unionist Jack Tanner (1889–1965), a syndicalist, attended the Second Congress of the Comintern and briefly joined the Communist Party of Great Britain.

<sup>57</sup> For the positive impact such visits could have for local Bolshevik authorities, see Albert, *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution*, pp. 495–528.

<sup>58</sup> Here, Lozovskii refers to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

<sup>59</sup> The omitted part of the paragraph deals with squabbles within the party and trade union organisations of Samara.

A. Lozovskii

Attached: Protocols of all sessions, meetings and rallies which took place during our journey from Nizhnii [Novgorod] to Saratov.<sup>60</sup>

## Document 2

### **Aleksandr Lozovskii: Report on the Volga journey of the Comintern delegates, 13 July 1920**

*Typescript with hand-written corrections, Russian language. Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (RGASPI), Moscow, f. 489, op. 1, d.514, l. 2–5.*

#### REPORT TO THE CC OF THE RCP AND THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

[hand-written:] (Journey to the Soviet Provinces)

13 July 1920

The delegation left Moscow on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July and spent 12 days en route. During this time, we visited Nizhnii Novgorod, the village Il'inka, Cheboksary, Kazan, Viten'ga – a Tatar village ten *verst*<sup>61</sup> from the [banks of the] Volga –, Udory, where we looked at the schist pits, Simbirsk, Samara, Marksstadt, Saratov, Tambov, Tula, and Ivanovo-Voznesensk. The overall impression from the journey is the following: The journey had an enormous impact on everyone without exception; even the elements most remote from us, such as Frossard and Cachin, stated repeatedly that only now they understand the might of Soviet Russia.<sup>62</sup>

Our usual working method was the following. After arriving in a town, we would organise a discussion with the [local] *Ispolkom*, *Gubkom*, and *Gubprofsovet*. After two to three hours of talks, we would organise rallies in every town, either in closed facilities or on the streets, and the whole province was electrified by the arrival of real, non-Russian-speaking foreigners which had a miraculous impact on the proletarians. In Saratov and Tambov, in Kazan and in Cheboksary – everywhere we were told that our arrival made the work of the local organisations easier, poured energy into the workers' [...] <sup>63</sup>, and showed the non-believers that the international proletariat and its support [for Soviet Russia] is not a myth dreamt up by the Bolsheviks; and that now the work in Party and trade union spheres will take a giant leap forward. So electrified were the provinces by our arrival, that we received invitations from all

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<sup>60</sup> These materials are located in RGASPI, 95/1/14, 9–32.

<sup>61</sup> *Verst* (sg. *versta*): old Russian unit of length, approx. 1,06 km.

<sup>62</sup> Frossard and Cachin travelled to Moscow to discuss the relationship of the SFIO with the Comintern and to be admitted to the Second Congress as observers. On June 19, 1920, they met with the ECCI to discuss this, and afterwards with Lenin personally, who gave them a lukewarm welcome, while not dismissing them completely and thanking them for coming to Moscow. While Frossard wanted to head back to France immediately, Cachin was more inclined to stay. In the end, several Comintern officials convinced them to stay, and the stay in Russia, including the Volga journey, made such a deep impression on both socialists that they returned to France completely transformed. See Lindemann, *The 'Red Years'*, pp. 174–180.

<sup>63</sup> One illegible word omitted.

over. Every town wanted to show us around. Of course, we had to pick and choose only the most important and necessary [destinations], and concentrate on organising mass meetings where representatives of all European countries would speak.

The delegation took a long time to understand the principle of our Autonomous Regions,<sup>64</sup> and this is why we stayed in the capital of Chuvashia – Cheboksary –, in Kazan, and in Markshtadt, so that, through experience and practice, they could see how we conceive the rights of the peoples of Russia for self-determination. The talks with representatives of the Chuvash, Tatar and German peoples in these towns were very useful for the whole delegation, as they saw, or rather heard, from the mouths of the former *inorodtsy*, their loyalty to Soviet Russia and the Russian proletariat.

We left Saratov for Tambov, even though I did not expect Tambov to be of any interest to the foreigners. It turned out, however, that Tambov made a wonderful impression due to its good organisation, its simplicity and its cleanliness, which made an impression first and foremost on Cachin, who had expected to find total chaos and decay in the provinces.

Following requests from some of the delegates, we visited Tula. I knew that they had a hidden agenda to find out about the strikes that took place there recently.<sup>65</sup> I assumed that we had nothing to hide concerning the strikes, or the measures we took to put an end to them, and so I gave orders to head towards Tula, and made an agreement en route with c[omrade] Osinskii that we would reveal everything.<sup>66</sup> My expectations were entirely fulfilled. The fact that we did not conceal anything about the strike and that we spoke openly about its suppression did disconcert some, but it guided others towards taking a firm standpoint [*napravilo na opredelennuiu liniyu*]. The results showed instantly. At a big rally that we organised at the weapons factory, the representative of the Spanish Confederation of Trade Unions, an anarchist, dedicated half of his speech to the topic of backward workers, pointing out that workers' backwardness and egotism [*shkurnichestvo*] were the fiercest enemies of the working class and communism.<sup>67</sup> Also, Serrati declared in his speech in the name of the Italian Socialist Party and the Italian working class that the Italian socialists fully and unconditionally stand behind Soviet power and the communists when it comes to the

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<sup>64</sup> Autonomous regions and “republics” were erected in several regions of early Soviet Russia to grant a stronger degree of territorial and cultural autonomy to non-Russian peoples if they constituted a majority in a particular region.

<sup>65</sup> In the beginning of April 1919, a massive city-wide strike took place in Tula, a town famous for its arms industry. It was caused not only by the bad living conditions of the workforce, but also by the arrest of 32 well-known local trade unionists, many of them Mensheviks. In the course of the strike, 290 more people were arrested. See: Churakov, *Buntuiushchie proletarii*, p. 229f.

<sup>66</sup> The well-known Bolshevik revolutionary Valerian Obolenskii (nom de guerre: N. Osinskii, 1887–1938) headed the *Ispolkom* of Tula in 1920.

<sup>67</sup> The Spanish representative mentioned by Lozovskii can only be Angel Pestaña, as he was the only representative of the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) who came to Moscow in 1920. See: Romero Salvadó: The Views of an Anarcho-Syndicalist on the Soviet Union. The Defeat of the Third International in Spain. In: *Revolutionary Russia* 8 (1995), 1, pp. 26–38, here p. 35. In his travel report, Pestaña mentions the whole Volga journey only very briefly (Pestaña, Report on the Action, p. 56), and makes no reference to himself speaking at public assemblies during the trip. For the changing attitudes of South European syndicalists towards the Bolshevik state, see: Reiner Tosstorff: Die Syndikalisten und die Oktoberrevolution. Die südeuropäische Perspektive. In: Wladislaw Hedeler, Klaus Kinner (eds.): “Die Wache ist müde”. Neue Sichten auf die russische Revolution von 1917 und ihre Wirkung, Berlin, Dietz, 2008, pp. 222–241.

measures taken to liquidate the senseless strike at the weapons factory.<sup>68</sup> Ivanovo-Voznesensk made an enormous impression on the delegates, even though one has to add that the people of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, due to their proletarian frankness and straightforwardness, told [the delegation] about the immense suffering of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk textile industry.

Of the whole delegation, the Dutch were the ones who stood in sharp opposition to everything.<sup>69</sup> The whole time they stressed that they were being cheated, that they were not being shown the real Russia, that they would not receive translations of what was said to them. All in all, this opposition took on such an idiotic character that they became the laughing stock of the whole delegation. Things went so far that one of the Dutch delegates threatened to file a complaint against me to the Executive Committee of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International because I would not behave as they wanted me to. Concerning the French, Cachin certainly turned several degrees to the left. Before we reached Tula, he told me: "I do not understand the Mensheviks. They should have come to Soviet power, saying: yes, we erred, we want to redeem our errors, give us some, even the most modest, work to build up Soviet Russia. I do not understand these idiots!".

All in all, about 95% of this journey was a success, since in just 12 days we managed to look at an enormous number of towns, a mass of organisations in these towns, and we became acquainted with Soviet economy and local life, and, in the best sense of this word, stirred up the backward Soviet provinces.

One has to point out the lack of personnel at the local level. All talks begin with [complaints about] hardly anyone having remained [in the provinces]. [The local cadres] tear themselves apart and are not able to do even a tenth of the work that has to be done. But since this lack of people is a consequence of the war, there is hardly anything that can be done about it right now.

Summing up, the following needs to be said: It is necessary to use the presence of foreign comrades to have them touring the provinces. The speeches of the foreigners in the name of the communist parties of their home countries make a bigger impact on the local workers than hundreds of proclamations and thousands of wonderful newspaper articles. Since there are scores of representatives of the foreign proletariat right now in Russia due to the congress, once it finishes we should send those to the provinces who haven't yet been. This will be useful for the delegates and even more so for the Soviet proletarian provinces.

A. Lozovskii

Moscow 13/VII 1920

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<sup>68</sup> Giacinto Serrati (1872–1926) headed the delegation of the Italian Socialist Party to the 2nd Congress of the Comintern.

<sup>69</sup> The majority wing of the Communist Party of the Netherlands was represented at the Second Congress by David Wijnkoop and Jan Proost Jansen, but Herman Gorter, leader of the left-communist minority, was also present in Russia at that time, trying to get his position heard by Lenin and the Comintern. It is unclear whether the latter was part of the Volga trip. On the relations between the different wings of Dutch communism and the Comintern, see: Gerrit Voerman: *From Lenin's Comrades in Arms to "Dutch Donkeys"*. The Communist Party in the Netherlands and the Comintern in the 1920s. In: Tim Rees, Andrew Thorpe (eds.): *International Communism and the Communist International 1919–43*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. 127–142.