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"The Philosophers' Steamships": The Expulsion of the Russian Intelligentsia by the Bolshevik Regime in 1922

„STATKI FILOZOFÓW". WYPĘDZENIE ROSYJSKIEJ INTELIGENCJI PRZEZ REŻIM BOLSZEWICKI W 1922 ROKU

Streszczenie

W artykule zbadano jeden z najciemniejszych rozdziałów w historii Rosji, znany pod nazwą „statki filozofów", który wiązał się z deportacją dużej grupy najwybitniejszych przedstawicieli rosyjskiej inteligencji przez władze bolszewickie w latach 1922–1923. Pasażerowie tych eleganckich parowców stanowili elitę rosyjskiego życia intelektualnego. Byli to pisarze, poeci, dziennikarze, naukowcy i filozofowie. Nie należeli oni do żadnej partii politycznej ani nie wyznawali żadnej konkretnej wiary, ideologii czy doktryny. Ponad jedna trzecia z nich była zaangażowana w rozwijanie duchowej filozofii sztuki i kultury w Rosji. Niektórzy prowadzili wykłady uniwersyteckie, inni to znani pisarze, jeszcze inni byli liderami lokalnych zrzeszeń kooperatyw, lekarzami, agronomami i ekonomistami lub członkami małych sekt czy stowarzyszeń. Wszyscy mieli jedną wspólną cechę: Lenin osobiście wybrał ich do aresztowania i deportacji, uznając ich za niebezpiecznych przeciwników partii bolszewickiej, ale zbyt ryzykownych do zabicia, co uzasadniało ich wydalenie. Ekspatriacja dysydentów intelektualnych w 1922 roku była przewidywalnym krokiem w wewnętrznym rozwoju politycznym kraju. Jej głównym celem było ustanowienie ścisłej kontroli ideologicznej poprzez usunięcie elity intelektualnej kraju – tych, którzy dzięki krytycznemu i niezależnemu myśleniu mogli analizować sytuację i wyrażać idee krytyczne wobec reżimu. To wydarzenie stanowiło przełomowy moment dla rosyjskiej kultury, znacznie przyspieszając eliminację ważnych niekomunistycznych myślicieli z wpływowych i prestiżowych stanowisk w społeczeństwie. Dramatyczne przymusowe wygnanie inteligencji było kamieniem milowym na drodze Rosji ku totalitaryzmowi z ekstremistycznym zwrotem leninizmu i bolszewizmu: od tego momentu członkowie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego o wolnych umysłach i duchu nie będą już tolerowani.

Słowa kluczowe: parowce filozofów, 1922, deportacja rosyjskiej inteligencji, bolszewizm, rosyjska filozofia duchowa

Introduction

One hundred years have passed since the dramatic expulsion of over two hundred Russian scientists and scholars, along with their families, from 1922 to 1923. Forced by the Bolshevik government to leave Russia forever, they embarked on what came to be known as 'the philosophers' ships,'[1] elegant steamships intended to carry them away from their homeland. These passengers represented the elite of Russian intellectual life: writers, poets, journalists, scientists, and philosophers. They did not belong to any political party or adhere to any specific faith, ideology, or creed. Over a third were involved in developing a spiritual philosophy of art and culture in Russia; some taught university courses, and many others were prolific writers. Another third were former politicians, leaders of local cooperative assemblies, doctors, agronomists, and economists, or members of small sects, such as the Abrikosov group,[2] the Tolstoians, or the Eurasians. Some could not even be described as 'intellectuals': the only thing they all shared was that Lenin personally chose them for arrest and deportation, considering them dangerous opponents of the Bolshevik party, but too risky to kill, thus justifying their expulsion.

1. The removal of non-communist thinkers

We will therefore begin with that epochal event, the deportation of a large group of Russia's most important intellectuals, an episode known in Russian as "Filosofskii parokhod,"[3] (the Steamship of Philosophers). Taking place between the

1 Since 2000, commemorative articles have been published every five years on the anniversary of their expulsion to remind us of the impact of their loss on Russia. On 27 August 2002 the *St. Petersburg Times* published an article by A. Zoltov Jr. entitled *Shipping Away a Generation of Intellectuals*. On 8 October 2007 A. Arkhangelsky's article *In Memory of a Lost Chance: The Cost of Unfreedom* appeared in *Russian Profile*; on 28 November 2012, A. Darnay wrote *The ship of philosophers* in a blog post on *Ghulf Genes*; P. Gregory, *The ship of philosophers: How the Early USSR Dealt with Dissident Intellectuals*, "The Independent Review: Journal Of Political Economy" 13 (2009) 4, pp. 485–492; A.V. Razin, T.J. Sidorina, *The Philosophers Ship*, "Philosophy Now" 31 (2001).

2 Vladimir Vladimirovich Abrikosov (1880–1966) was a Byzantine-rite Catholic priest who converted from Russian Orthodoxy. Between 1920 and 1922, his home hosted dialogues between representatives of the Catholic and Orthodox churches, attended by Muscovite intellectuals.

3 See C. Baird, *Revolution from Within: The YMCA in Russia's Ascension to Freedom from Bolshevik Tyranny*, Pyramids2Clouds 2013; L. Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War: The Voyage of the Philosophy Steamer and the Exile of the Intelligentsia*, New York 2007; V.G. Makarov, V.S. Khristoforov, *Passazhiry 'philosofskogo parokhoda'. [Sud'by intelligencii, repressirovannoj letom-osen'ju 1922g.]*, "Voprosy filosofii" 7 (2003), pp. 113–137.

autumn of 1922 and the winter of 1923, it signaled the imminent collapse of Russian civilization and foreshadowed further catastrophes.

In 1922, significant political and foreign affairs, decisions, and cultural events in Russia laid the foundation for decades of institutionalized totalitarian oppression. The dramatic forced exile of the *intelligentsia* marked a milestone on Russia's path to totalitarianism following the extremist revolution of Lenin and Bolshevism: from then on, intellectually free members of civil society would no longer be tolerated.[4]

Lenin's party, which until 1917 had been part of the revolutionary movement, had by then become a terrifying instrument of reaction and oppression that pushed Russia towards economic and political barbarism.

As the country plunged into economic collapse and starvation, the 1922 deportation of intellectuals accelerated the removal of non-communist thinkers from influential and prestigious positions. This expulsion was accompanied by a series of repressive measures: the consolidation of control over universities, periodic purges of students and professors, creation of a surveillance apparatus over society and independent organizations, establishment of a central censorship body, and closure of unofficial journals and publishing houses, which ultimately stripped the intellectual public sphere of its autonomy.

2. Lenin, the instigator and the architect of the deportation

The "philosophers' ships" is an event in Soviet history that remains relatively unknown, a 'white spot' according to Russian emigration historian Mikhail Geller,[5] who argued that, on the one hand, Soviet historians still do not reveal the full truth,[6] and on the other, the exiles themselves left very little testimony

4 See M. Jansen, *A Show Trial Under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries. Moscow 1922*, The Hague–Boston–London 1982; R. Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin from the Secret Archive*, trans. C.A. Fitzpatrick, New Haven–London 1996; A. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. H. Andrews-Rusiecka, Stanford 1979, published in an expanded version in Polish, *Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od oświecenia do renesansu religijno- filozoficznego*, Krakow 2005.

5 M. Geller, *Premier avertissement: un coup de fouet. L'histoire de l'expulsion des personnalités culturelles hors de l'Union soviétique en 1922*, "Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique" 20 (1979) 2, p. 4.

6 State control over information released to researchers has been indisputably maintained throughout Soviet history. This surveillance involved a large and professionally well-trained staff. See A. Salomoni, *Un Savoir Historique D'État: Les Archives Soviétiques*, "Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales" 50 (1995) 1, pp. 3–27.

for both personal and political reasons.[7] Scholars generally agree that this event is mainly recalled in memoirs and jubilee articles published by the Russian emigration press, despite the fact that some of the exiled were important Russian historians. Only after the 1990s, with the opening of the KGB's secret archives, did the expulsion of intellectuals emerge as one of the darkest moments in Lenin's political career. Lenin was the instigator of their deportation and the architect of the policy that led to the arrest and exile of this elite group of Russian professors and writers.[8]

The expression "philosophical steamship" was introduced by the Russian philosopher and mathematician S.S. Khoruzhiy, who published an article with this title in the journal «Literaturnaya Gazeta» in 1990. This term refers to the collective name of at least five steamship voyages, including the *Oberbürgermeister Haken* (29–30 September 1922) and the *Preussen* (16–17 November 1922) that took 81 opposition intellectuals, including philosophers, from Soviet Russia, from Petrograd to Stettin in Germany. Including family members, the total number of those expelled from the country is estimated to be between 228 and 272 people, according to various sources.

The operation of the Soviet authorities to expel prominent figures in science and culture was carried out on Lenin's orders in 1922 and 1923 as part of the fight against dissent. These steamship journeys from Petrograd were not the only deportations; similar operations were also carried out on steamships from Odessa and Sevastopol, and by train from Moscow to Latvia and Germany. Tickets for the steamships were paid for by the Soviet government, whereas those travelling by train had to buy their own tickets. In the memoirs of one of the exiles, Fyodor A. Stepun, it is noted that all deportees could take a winter and a summer coat, a gown, two pieces of undergarments of each type, two-day shirts, two-night shirts, two pairs of underwear, and two pairs of socks. Gold objects and precious stones, except wedding rings, were forbidden for export, and baptismal crosses had to be removed from the neck. It was permitted to bring a small amount of currency, up to $20 per person.

7 M. Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration 1991–1939*, New York–Oxford 1990.

8 On this subject, see C. Baird, *A Revolution from Within*..., p. 3. See also, M. Glavatsky, *Filosofsky parokhod: god 1922-i*, Yekaterinburg 2002; P.R. Gregory, *Lenin's Brain and Other Tales from the Secret Soviet Archives*, Stanford 2008.

3. Five steamship voyages

In the autumn of 1922, on 28 September and 16 November, the two steamships, the *Oberbürgermeister Haken* and *Preussen*, left the dock in Petrograd bound for Stettin[9] in Germany (present-day Szczecin in Poland). These elegant vessels, typically used for Baltic Sea cruises, carried an exceptional cargo on board: more than a hundred Russian intellectuals and their families, 225 people in total.[10] After a two-day crossing, *the Haken*, the first ship chartered by the Bolsheviks for their deportation, anchored at the pier between Baum Brücke and Lange Brücke, and the first group disembarked. Once ashore, the distinguished passengers, after a quick procedure at the port authorities, headed for the railway station,[11] about 800 meters away,[12] to be loaded onto the train to Berlin, where Alexander Kerensky (former prime minister of the provisional government before the Bolshevik coup in November 1917) had arranged accommodation for most of them.

The consolidation of Soviet power led to an intensified fight against dissent and the expulsion of ideological opponents abroad, implemented through administrative expulsion (without trial). The members of that diverse group of professors, journalists, philosophers, writers, engineers, agronomists, and prominent figures in Russian political and religious circles did not leave voluntarily; they were expelled by order of V.I. Lenin and his comrades in the Bolshevik Party.

Later, other intellectuals were transported by rail to Riga in Latvia or by ship from Odessa to Istanbul, and as far as the Afghan border. Although they never thought of themselves this way, the intellectuals expelled in 1922 were the first dissidents of Soviet totalitarianism, whose fates would be intertwined with the subsequent victims of the Stalinist purges.

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9 Stettin was an important port on the Baltic Sea. After Hamburg and Bremen, it was the third largest in Germany. Before a canal was built from Berlin to Hamburg, Stettin was the preferred port for reaching Berlin. Additionally, an outer harbour in Swinemünde, located 45 miles upstream along the Oder River, served Stettin. These ships usually transported passengers on cruises across the Baltic Sea, sailing up the Oder basin from St. Petersburg to the capital of Western Pomerania. Cf. K. Pittelkow, R. Schmelzkopf, *Heimathafen Stettin. Die Geschichte des Stettiner Hafens, seiner Reedereien und seiner maschinengetriebenen Schiffe 1815–1945*, Cuxhaven, 1987.

10 The figure of 160 was provided by S. Fediukin, *Velikij Oktiabr' i* Intelligentsia, Moscow, 1972. See C. Baird, Revolution from Within… L. Chamberlain's book *Lenin's Private War* reveals the 1922 GPU arrest report, which lists 160 names (pp. 297–304).

11 A railway connecting Berlin to Stettin was built in 1843. Cf. L.M. Herrick, W.K. Uncapher, *Pomerania: Atlantic Bridge to Germany*, Janesville 2005.

12 Mayor Haken, celebrated as the great benefactor of Stettin in the late 19th century, modernised the riverbank and named the dock where the Russian scholars landed and the ship on which they travelled. Cf. L. Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War…*, p. 163.

4. An act of 'Bolshevik humanism'

Many contemporary Russian commentators lament that, despite the transparency movements of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, which helped transform Russia's conscience and government, the 1922 expulsion of intellectuals is often considered a 'humanitarian act' rather than a criminal action in order to suppress opposition voices.[13] Trotsky's justification for the expulsion of the intelligentsia in 1922, given to the American journalist Louise Bryant (wife of John Reed, who represented the main US news agency, the International News Service), attempted to present the expulsion as an act of 'Bolshevik humanism'. He urged Bryant to "rehabilitate Soviet power before world public opinion" with the following words: "These elements we are sending out and will continue to send out in the future are politically insignificant. But they are a potential weapon in the hands of our enemies. In the event of new military conflicts, which cannot be ruled out despite our peaceful policies, these irreconcilable dissident elements will be political-military agents of the enemy. In that case, we will have to shoot them according to the rules of war. That is why we prefer to expel them now, early in the quiet period. I hope you will recognize our prudent humanity."[14]

The expatriation of dissident intellectuals in 1922 was a foreseeable step in the country's internal political development. The main reason was the authorities' attempt to establish close ideological control by removing the intellectual elite, those who could independently analyse the situation and express their critical views of the existing regime.

The deportees were among the best-known and most respected figures in Russia, like N. Berdjaev, S. Frank, L. Lossky, S. Bulgakov, F. Stepun, B. Vyšeslavcev, I. Lapšin, L. Karsavin, A. Izgoev, and S. Trubeckoj. They authored books and newspapers still widely read in 1922 by the moderate majority. The exiles taught at universities, institutes, and schools where even Bolsheviks and cadets sent their children at the time.[15] Many were professors, with half a dozen holding senior administrative positions, renowned for their technical expertise. The term 'philosophers' ship suggests that only philosophers were forced into exile, while there were eleven philosophers in all who suffered that tragic fate.

The group also included cultural critics, religious thinkers, and economists. Notable deportees included the rector of Moscow University, professor

13 See A.V. Razin, T.J. Sidorina, *The Philosophers' Ship*…; A.V. Kvakin, *Vysylka intelligentsii v 1922–1923 gody: mify i real'nost*, "Gumanitarnyye nauki" 1 (2013) 9.

14 C. Baird, *Revolution from Within*…, p. 234.

15 L. Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War*…, p. 14.

Novikov (a zoologist), and the rector of St. Petersburg University, professor Karsavin (a philosopher). Mathematicians from the Faculty of Mathematics of Moscow State University, led by Dean Stratonov, and prominent agrarian economists like professors Bruckus, Zvorykin, Lodyženský, Prokopovič, and agronomists Ugrimov and Velihov were also expelled. Additionally, those responsible for international aid during the previous,[16] year's severe famine, such as A. Izjumov, V. Kudrjavcev, and A. Bulatov, were expelled, leading to the liquidation of the Zadruga cooperative. The historical sphere also suffered a terrible blow with the expulsion of scholars such as A. Kizevetter, A. Florovsky, V. Mjakotin, A. Bogolepov, and sociologist Pitirim Sorokin.[17] Lenin himself drew up much of this list, possibly recalling Plato's assertion that there is no politics without philosophers. By eliminating philosophers, Lenin hoped to increase his political dominance.

5. The operation "Expulsion Abroad"

Over the past fifty years, historians have added little to the sparse and often inaccurate information about the GPU, the Russian secret police.[18] According to its official spokesman, D.L. Golinkov, "In August and September 1922, following an order of the GPU, the most active counterrevolutionaries were expelled from Petrograd, Moscow, Kyiv, and other major centers".[19] H.H. Fedjukin reported that "In August and September 1922, by administrative means, 160 of the most active bourgeois ideologues were expelled from Petrograd, Moscow, and Kyiv, some abroad, some to northern regions."[20] Operation 'Expulsion Abroad' was carried out nationwide: arrests of those on the list were made in Moscow, Petrograd, Kyiv,

16 A year before they were expelled, these intellectuals enlisted the American Relief Administration (an American relief mission to Europe and later to post-Revolutionary Russia after the First World War, led by Herbert Hoover, future president of the United States) to aid in a massive relief effort during the severe famine that was plaguing Russia, saving over 20 million lives.

17 S. Finkel, *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and The Making of The Soviet Public Sphere*, New Haven–London 2007, p. 38.

18 The first secret police after the Russian Revolution, established by a decree from Lenin on 20 December 1917, was called the "Čeka" (ЧК). Its members were called čekists, a name that is still used to refer to today's members of the Russian FSB, the successor to the KGB. Čeka, short for Večeka (the "All-Russia Extraordinary Committee to Combat Counterrevolution and Sabotage".)

19 D.L. Golinkov, *Krah vrašeskogo podpol'ja*, Moskva 1971, p. 302. See D.L. Golinkov, *Krushenie antisovetskogo podpolya v SSSR (1917–1925dd)*, Moskva 1978.

20 S.A. Fedjukin, *Velikij Oktjabr' i intelligencija*, Moskva 1972, p. 287. Cf. S.A. Fedjukin, *Bor'ba s burzhuaznoi ideologiei v usloviyakh perekhoda k NEPu*, Moskva 1977.

Yalta, and other cities. Those arrested were imprisoned for periods ranging from a few days to two months, depending on local customs. They had to sign a document stating that if they returned to the RSFSR, they would be shot.

The reason the 1922 victims were taken by surprise was their lack of experience with totalitarianism. The concept that a single, total vision of the world could be imposed by a brutal police regime was unprecedented in the modern world. The first of the two vessels chartered by the Bolsheviks to deport them to the West became both a literal and metaphorical ship, carrying away the nation's intellectual elite, and with it, the very notion of free thought.[21]

The deportation of the intelligentsia in 1922 was not a spontaneous act but the culmination of a plan developed over several years. The liberal idea of the intellectually and morally independent individual became incompatible with the Bolshevik vision of civil society, leading to increasingly massive state interference in the work of scholars, professionals, and exponents of the Russian artistic and cultural world.[22]

Opinions differ on who exactly instigated the plan: L.A. Kogan suggests that the idea of exile might have come to different people at the same time,[23] but V.I. Lenin was undoubtedly the mastermind and leader of the operation. Kogan notes: "Lenin observed the activity of the Russian idealists with concern. His library in the Kremlin contained the books of Alekseev, Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Volinskiy, Ivanov-Razumnik, Ilein, Karsavin, Lapchin, Novgorodtsev, Rozanov, Stepun, Trubetskoy, Shpet, Frank, and Jakovenko; but not because he sympathised with their views. Most of these authors were included in the deportation lists." French historian Geller shares this view: "Lenin was the initiator of the exile and the architect of the entire policy that culminated in the deportation of these representatives of Russian culture."[24]

Like Rakhmetov, the protagonist of the novel *What Is to Be Done?* who inspired generations of revolutionaries in Russia[25] with his asceticism and ruthless dedi-

21 S. Finkel, *On the Ideological* Front…, p. 227.

22 Ibidem, p. 3.

23 L.A. Kogan, *An Unread Page: G.G. Shpet as Director of the Institute of Scientific Philosophy. 1921–23*, "Russian Studies in Philosophy" 37 (1999) 4, pp. 38–52.

24 M. Geller, *Premier avertissement: un coup de fouet [L'histoire de l'expulsion des personnalités culturelles hors de l'Union soviétique en 1922]*, "Cahiers du Monde Russe" 20 (1979) 2, p. 163.

25 *What Is to Be Done?* (Russian: *Chto délat'?)* is an 1863 novel by the Russian philosopher, journalist, and literary critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828–1889). Chernyshevsky, a prominent literary and social critic, journalist, novelist, democrat, and socialist philosopher, is often identified as a utopian socialist and a leading theorist of Russian nihilism, much praised by Karl Marx, Georgi Plekhanov, and Vladimir Lenin.

cation to the cause, Lenin became an emblem of philosophical materialism and the nobility of Russian radicalism. On 12 March 1922, Lenin published an article titled 'On the Significance of Militant Materialism,' further solidifying his ideological stance.

The program article devoted to ideological issues clearly foreshadowed the future exile of the intelligentsia: "In Russia we still have – and no doubt will have for quite a long time to come – materialists from the non-communist camp, and it is our absolute duty to enlist all followers of consistent and militant materialism in the joint work of fighting against the philosophical reaction and prejudices of the so-called educated society. Dietzgen correctly, appropriately, and clearly expressed the fundamental Marxist view of the philosophical tendencies that prevail in bourgeois countries and are held in esteem by their scientists and publicists, when he said that in fact professors of philosophy in modern society are in most cases nothing but fanatical 'lackeys of clericalism'." Lenin concluded the article by stating: "The Russian worker has gained his power but is not yet able to use it; otherwise, he would politely send such teachers and members of the scientific communities to countries with a bourgeois 'democracy'."[26]

6. A systematic struggle against bourgeois ideology

Lenin insisted on the need for "a systematic and offensive struggle against bourgeois ideology, philosophical reaction, all forms of idealism, and mysticism," decreeing that this struggle was "the first of the tasks of a communist." This ideological fight evidently meant waging war against the intelligentsia.

The repression and deportation of intellectuals by the Bolsheviks began in May 1922 as one of Lenin's last major acts, shortly before a disabling stroke left him partially paralyzed. According to C. Baird, Lenin's urgency in 1922 can be attributed to several factors that explain why he felt it necessary to expel these intellectuals rather than provoke international censure by applying a more direct final solution.

Firstly, thanks to the Treaty of Rapallo with Germany, the Bolsheviks were finally able to obtain loans from international banks and were deeply involved in loan negotiations. Deportation abroad was a radical yet "humane" measure compared to death sentences in public trials. An international embargo would have permanently undermined their efforts or resulted in more unfavorable interest rates.

26 V.I. Lenin, *On the Significance of Militant Materialism*, *Lenin's Collected Works*, vol. 33, trans. D. Skvirsky, G. Hanna, Moscow 1972, pp. 227–236.

Secondly, the Bolsheviks had to adhere to the strict deadlines set by the American Relief Administration (ARA), the massive American humanitarian relief mission in Europe after World War I, which remained active in Russia until 1923. They could not risk any action that might be used as an excuse to cancel the program prematurely. Hoover, the director of the aid plan, had already threatened to halt ARA relief measures when only the leaders of the VKPG (the famine relief committee) were sentenced to death. If Lenin had executed more than a hundred of Russia's most famous intellectuals, including many members of the VKPG, the ARA would likely have withdrawn its support from the Bolsheviks.

The possibility of a mass expulsion of teachers and writers was first mentioned by Lenin in May 1922 in a letter to the public commissar for justice, I. Kurskij, as an alternative to shooting. This solution had the advantages of being collective; executing one or two hundred of the most important representatives of the Russian intelligentsia simultaneously was a risky venture in the early 1920s, bound to create an unfavorable impression abroad. Moreover, the small number of Russian intellectuals seemed likely to later discourage any attempt at brutal repression.

In a letter dated 15 May 1922, Lenin outlined the draft of a supplementary article to the Penal Code, arguing the need to modify certain points. He referred to those involved in activities such as propaganda or agitation, or membership or assistance given to organizations whose purpose was to assist that part of the international bourgeoisie which refused to recognize the rights of the communist system replacing capitalism and strove to overthrow that system through violence, either through foreign intervention, blockade, espionage, press financing, or similar means. This would now be an offence punishable by death, which, if mitigating circumstances were proven, could be commuted to imprisonment or deportation abroad (for a specified period or permanently) as decided by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union. Lenin ordered his Justice Department to amend the Penal Code on 17 May 1922, making the free expression of any alternative viewpoint a crime (or its support) punishable by death or deportation. On 19 May, he ordered the head of his secret police force to find or fabricate evidence against those scholars so that they could be charged under this new law.

Further events developed very quickly. Amendments were made to the law, lists of those to be exiled were prepared, and fabricated evidence was collected and produced for their conviction. On 10 August 1922, the Central Executive Committee of the Union decreed exile abroad or to specific districts within the country for those involved in counterrevolutionary activities.

A wave of arrests swept through Moscow, St. Petersburg, and several other major cities. Those named on the lists were arrested and imprisoned for periods ranging from two days to two months.

The official announcement of their deportation was made on 31 August 1922 in the *Pravda* newspaper with the headline: "First warning."[27] It did not mention specific surnames, nor did it indicate the number of those to be expelled; the official organ of the Bolsheviks assured readers that "no great scientist" was among those targeted.

With this move, Lenin had deprived Russia of its most important and capable intellectuals. Of the 174 arrested, 160 were sent abroad (the total number of deportees was 225, including their accompanying families). No one was granted a trial, explained their arrest, or allowed to defend themselves against the charges. Instead, they were told to be grateful that their fate was exile and not death by firing squad.

The arrests all took place in the middle of the night. Each person on the list was designated by a secret numbered order, which included their address and stated that they were part of the 'operation'. Each arrest lasted about four hours, as officers searched their homes for incriminating evidence. From the philosopher Berdyaev, they seized his notebooks, all his letters, and even documents he had thrown out.[28]

Those arrested were taken to prison, where they were detained, rarely for more than three or four days. The interrogations were all the same: the arrestees were asked to express their opinions on "the Soviet power structure and the proletarian system of government".

Baird notes that there is still no complete list of exiles. The inability to clarify the situation may be due to the GPU destroying evidence to maintain secrecy. It is known that separate lists were compiled simultaneously for Moscow, Petrograd, and Ukraine. These lists were revised, and the those listed and exiled were adjusted. Kogan mentions that the original Ukrainian list had 77 people, the Moscow list had 67, and the Petrograd list had 30. Eventually, after many revisions, 160 people were designated for exile. The investigation is complicated, as the deportees quickly scattered to different countries after their arrival in the original place of deportation: Germany. Many emigrated to the United States, France, Czechoslovakia, and other countries.

27 "Pravda", 31 August 1922, p. 1.

28 Designated by order no. 1722, Berdyaev was one of the first arrested on 16 August 1922. The police arrived at one o'clock in the morning. See Kogan, *An Unread Page*…, p. 71.

Conclusion

The effort to rediscover the 'philosopher's ships' is likely just beginning, it documents a little-known moment in Russian history, thanks to the slow and patient work of a few scholars. This painful, albeit dutiful excavation aims to uncover and complete a missing chapter in the history of a lost world, which goes to confirm some of the darkest aspects of early Soviet communism and Lenin himself.

Translated by Mark J. Hunt

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"THE PHILOSOPHERS' STEAMSHIPS": THE EXPULSION OF THE RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTSIA BY THE BOLSHEVIK REGIME IN 1922

Summary

This article examines one of the darkest chapters of Russian history, known as the 'Philosophers' Ships', which saw the deportation of a large group of the most eminent representatives of the Russian intelligentsia by the Bolshevik authorities between 1922 and 1923. The passengers on these elegant steamers represented the elite of Russian intellectual life: writers, poets, journalists, scientists, and philosophers. They did not belong to any political party or adhere to any specific faith, ideology, or creed. Over a third of them were involved in developing a spiritual philosophy of art and culture in Russia; some taught university courses, while many others were well-known writers. Another third were leaders of local cooperative assemblies, doctors, agronomists, and economists, or members of small sects or associations. The one thing they all shared was that Lenin personally chose them for arrest and deportation, considering them dangerous opponents of the Bolshevik party, but too risky to kill, so much so that he justified their expulsion. The expatriation of dissident intellectuals in 1922 was a foreseeable step in the country's internal political development. Its primary aim was to establish close ideological control by removing the country's intellectual elite – those who, through critical and independent thought, could analyze the situation and express ideas critical of the regime. This event marked a critical moment for Russian culture, greatly accelerating the removal of important non-communist thinkers from influential and prestigious positions in society. The dramatic forced exile of the intelligentsia was a milestone on Russia's path

towards totalitarianism, with the extremist turn of Leninism and Bolshevism: from then on, the intellectually and spiritually free members of civil society would no longer be tolerated.

Keywords: the philosophers' ships, 1922, deportation of the Russian intelligentsia, Bolshevism, Russian spiritual philosophy

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