

## **The Rehabilitation of Bogdanov<sup>1</sup>**

Between 1985 and 1991 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under its General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev lifted restrictions on freedom of expression in the Soviet Union, virtually abolished censorship of the press, and set in motion the reform process which in August 1991 would bring about the ending of Communist Party rule.<sup>2</sup>

One of the objectives of Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*' was to encourage more free enquiry into the history of the Soviet régime, and, in particular, to dissociate the Party from many of Stalin's policies of the late 1920s to 1950s.<sup>3</sup> In the evolution of this policy, the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, was a landmark.<sup>4</sup> Following the Plenum of the Central

---

<sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of the Introduction to: *Bogdanov and his Work. A guide to the published and unpublished works of Alexander A. Bogdanov (Malinovsky 1973—1928)*, edited by John Biggart, Georgii Gloveli and Avraham Yassour. Ashgate, 1998. [ISBN 1 85972 6321 2]. The introduction has not been updated to take account of the substantive amount of work that has been published on Bogdanov since 1998. Only in a few instances have later works been referred to for purposes of correction or clarification.

<sup>2</sup> On the abolition of censorship, see Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and his reforms 1985-1990* (London, New York, 1990), p.67. The Main Administration of Literature and State Publishing - *Glavlit* - lost its censorship functions in June 1986.

<sup>3</sup> As early as September 1985, Professor Yuri Afanasiev of the Institute of World History of the Academy of Sciences was able to denounce the turpitude of the historical profession in the Communist Party journal *Kommunist*. See Dev Murarka, *Gorbachov: The Limits of Power* (London, 1988), p.326, citing Yu. Afanasiev, "The past and ourselves", *Kommunist*, No.14 (1985). Gorbachev himself in October 1986 made an early appeal for a renovation of the social sciences. See *XVII s"ezd KPSS i zadachi kafedr obshchestvennykh nauk* (Moscow, 1987) cited by Murarka, pp.337 and 422.

<sup>4</sup> In January 1987 *Moscow News* published extracts from an inaugural address delivered by Afanasiev upon his appointment as Rector of the Moscow Institute of Historical Archives in which he again compared unfavourably the standards and achievements of Soviet historiography with those of the rest of the world and in particular the poor condition of

Committee of the Communist Party of 26-27 January 1987, Gorbachev, seeking to give his policy renewed momentum, insisted at a meeting with editors and media figures held in February 1987 that “there should be no blank pages in either our history or our literature”.<sup>5</sup>

On 17 April 1987 the new research agenda which the Party leadership had in mind was outlined by Ideology Secretary, Alexander Yakovlev, to the Social Sciences section of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Historians were invited to consider why the New Economic Policy had been abandoned at the end of the 1920s and the ‘administrative-command’ system of party-state management introduced.<sup>6</sup>

A revision of Soviet history was clearly deemed to be an essential precondition of *perestroika*: the publication of the twelve-volume official history of the USSR was halted, as was that of the multi-volume history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. On 8 January 1988 Gorbachev announced that a commission of the Politbureau, under his chairmanship, would supervise the publication of a set of *Essays on the History of the CPSU*. These, he suggested, “could become a textbook”.<sup>7</sup> Party history journals began to reflect the new policy orientation.

---

Soviet studies of the Revolution of 1917. See Murarka, pp.326-327, citing Yu.Afanasiev, ‘The energy of historical knowledge’, *Moscow News* (11 January 1987, No.2); See also the interview with Afanasiev, ‘From positions of truth and realism’, *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, March 21, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> R.W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution* (London, 1989), p.130. For the report in *Pravda* of 14 February 1987, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, XXXIX (1987), No.7, pp.6-8.

<sup>6</sup> See A. Yakovlev, ‘The attainment of a qualitatively new condition of Soviet society and the social sciences’, *Kommunist* (May, 1987), No.8.

<sup>7</sup> Davies, *op.cit.*, p.137.

## **Bukharin: icon of Leninism**

In the first stages of the revision of Party history, the “limits of truth” were to be “fixed by the Party’s need for legitimacy”.<sup>8</sup> The announcement in *Literaturnaya gazeta* on 9 December 1987 that the author of a new biography of Stalin would be the trustworthy General Dmitrii Volkogonov, had already given notice of the régime’s intention of keeping the process of reappraisal under control. For the purposes of *perestroika*, the early 1920s were to be viewed as a period in which some kind of political pluralism had flourished and during which alternative paths of socialist development had been available. This expedient view required a perpetuation of the cult of Lenin, a purpose that was served by the rehabilitation and virtual ‘canonisation’ of Nikolai Bukharin. An opponent of Stalin by the later 1920s, Bukharin was now represented as having been the custodian of Lenin’s ideas.

On 4 February 1988 the sentences that had been passed on Bukharin and others during the Purge years were quashed by the USSR Supreme Court and on 21 June 1988, in the centenary year of his birth and fifty years after his execution, he was posthumously re-admitted to the Communist Party.<sup>9</sup> In the press, Bukharin was now identified with the policies and values which the régime wished to encourage: with gradual economic change, with the co-operative principle in agriculture, with pluralism in politics, and with socialist

---

<sup>8</sup> See Erwin Oberlander, *The Soviet Union 1987-1989: Perestroika in crisis?* (London, 1990), p.47. In an address delivered by Gorbachev on 2 November 1987 to the Central Committee and to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet on the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, nearly half of which was devoted to the history of the USSR, it became apparent that the new policy in history was concerned as much with the need to find a new legitimacy for the rule of the Communist Party as with revitalizing the historical profession. See Davies, *op.cit.*, p.135.

<sup>9</sup> In October 1987 a Commission of the Politbureau had been set up under Mikhail Solomontsev to look into the “purge” trials of the 1930s. The other members of the commission were KGB Chief Viktor M. Chebrikov and Alexander Yakovlev. Yakovlev later took over the chairmanship of the Commission. See Sakwa, *op.cit.*, pp.96-97.

humanism. This, it was argued, was the tradition that had been embodied in Lenin's last writings. Writing in *Pravda*, on 9 October 1988, the hundredth anniversary of Bukharin's birth, V.V. Zhuravlev, the new Head of the History section of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, wrote: "Bukharin was amongst those who spoke out boldly against Stalin's aspirations and who, risking their own lives, tried to uphold Leninist principles of socialist construction and Leninist norms in Party life." Zhuravlev spoke of a "Bukharin alternative ... which consisted in the protection of Lenin's conception of socialism against Stalin's deviations from it ...".<sup>10</sup>

There was now an outpouring in Soviet journals of articles on the 'Bukharin alternative'.<sup>11</sup> The party journal *Kommunist* re-published Bukharin's *The Political Testament of Lenin*, which had first appeared in *Pravda* on 24 January 1929.<sup>12</sup> At least five anthologies of Bukharin's works were published during the next two years, and a biography by the American historian, Stephen Cohen, was published in translation.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> See *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol.XL (1988), No.41, pp.16-17, 24.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Oktyabr'* (1988), No.2, in which G.I. Shmelev defended what he depicted as the "Bukharinist alternative" in agriculture.

<sup>12</sup> See *Kommunist* (1988), No.2.

<sup>13</sup> These were, in order of date of submission of the manuscript for printing: *Izbrannye trudy* (Leningrad, Nauka, 1988); *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Moscow, Politizdat, 1988); *Problemy teorii i praktiki sotsializma* (Moscow, Politizdat, 1989); *Put' k sotsializmu* (Nauka, Novosibirsk, 1990); *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Moscow, Ekonomika 1990). Steven Koen, *Bukharin. Politicheskaya biografiya 1888-1938* (Moscow, "Progress", 1988).

## Re-appraising Lenin

The Gorbachevian revision of Party history did not go unchallenged. As early as June 1987, V.A. Grigoriev, Head of the Department of Scientific and Educational Institutions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, revealed that the new policy had created divisions amongst Party historians. On the one hand “a considerable number of scholars were inert and lacked the strength and even the willingness to renounce deep-rooted stereotypes ...”. At the same time, another group “was demanding a re-examination of the whole heroic path of the Leninist party, a complete re-writing of its history.” This was not what the political leadership had had in mind. As the leading Party history journal put it, “Both these extreme directions must be criticized. New thinking must be ... based upon ... a true Party approach to the evolution of the past and present”.<sup>14</sup>

The months January to March 1988 witnessed a fierce controversy over the limits of *glasnost* in relation to the reputation of Lenin. Two articles in *Pravda* on 10 and 15 January 1988 criticized the playwright Mikhail Shatrov for failing to draw a sufficient contrast between Lenin and Stalin in his play *Further, ever further*.<sup>15</sup> Then, on 28 January 1988, V.V. Zhuravlev accused Shatrov of holding Lenin, rather than the XIII Party Congress, responsible for failing to remove Stalin from office.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> See *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* (1987), No.8.

<sup>15</sup> See M. Shatrov, *Dal'she, dal'she, dal'she* [1988]. Shatrov in the mid-1960s had received some public acclaim for his *The Sixth July* and *The Bolsheviks*. Between 1967 and 1969 he had written the screen plays for four television films, *Sketches for a Portrait of Lenin*, but these had been banned from public showing until January 1987. In April 1987 a new work of historical reinterpretation *The Brest Peace*, was published in *Novy mir*. See Stephen Cohen's interview of Shatrov in *Moscow News*, 14 June 1987 and Murarka, *op.cit.*, pp.284-285; and 324). See also the interview with Shatrov in *Ogonek* (1988), No.5, cited by Alec Nove, *Glasnost in Action: Cultural Renaissance in Russia* (London, 1989), p.31.

<sup>16</sup> Davies, *op.cit.*, p.140.

At no time before the collapse of the Soviet régime in August 1991 did the political leaders of the Communist Party, its ideology department, or the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, dissociate themselves from the Leninist political or philosophical tradition. Rather, the debate during the period of *glasnost*' was over how the Leninist tradition should be redefined. Had the Gorbachev régime survived, and the policy of *glasnost*' continued, would the Communist Party have abandoned the cult of Lenin and returned to the mainstream of social democracy? What we can say is that a policy of unrestricted research into Party history would have made it increasingly difficult to continue to identify the history of Bolshevism with the history of Lenin and his supporters. The myth of Lenin's political and intellectual dominance of Bolshevism before 1917 and of his pre-eminence in Marxist thought after 1917 would have been impossible to sustain.

### **Bogdanov in the history of Bolshevism**

In 1989, the Institute of Marxism-Leninism had begun to prepare for publication a memoir written in 1914 by one of the founders of Bolshevism, Alexander Bogdanov-Malinovsky, entitled *Ten Years of Heresy in Marxism (Desyatiletie otluheniya ot Marksizma)*. This account of Bogdanov's political and philosophical disagreements with the Plekhanov school of Russian Marxism and with Lenin in particular, contained a devastating and prophetic critique of the philosophical bases of Leninism. Had Bogdanov's work been published before 1991, Soviet historians would, for the first time, have been able to evaluate the arguments of the thinker against whom in 1908-1909 Lenin had written, and in 1920 re-published, his *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, a work which after 1917 had acquired canonical status in Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

Who was Bogdanov, and what are the grounds for thinking that his place in the history of Russian political and intellectual history merits reappraisal?

Born in 1873 in the village of Sokolko in the Governorship of Grodno,<sup>17</sup> the son of a village school teacher, Alexander Malinovsky had been, together with Lenin, a founder-member of the Bolshevik fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Party (RSDRP) in Geneva in 1904. After the 1905 revolution (during which Bogdanov had led the Bolshevik fraction in the St. Petersburg Soviet) the policies of Bogdanov and Lenin had diverged. Whereas Lenin argued that the RSDRP should play a role in the newly created State Duma similar to that played by the German Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag, Bogdanov, following Stolypin's alteration of the franchise in 1907, denied that the Duma was an authentic parliament and considered participation in it to be a dissipation of the energies of the labour movement. Although unable to obtain a majority within the Party for a boycott of the Third Duma, or for the recall of the Party's deputies, Bogdanov had succeeded in December 1908 in convincing an All-Russian Party Conference to make the Social Democratic group in the Duma accountable to the Party Central Committee. This was the policy of so-called 'ultimatum'. The Bolshevik fraction now split into two sub-fractions, each of which claimed to be the legitimate successor of the fraction of 1904.

During the years 1907 to 1909, the sub-fractions led by Bogdanov and Lenin competed for control of group funds and of the Bolsheviks' newspaper *Proletarii*. Until the end of 1907, Bogdanov and his associate Krasin were able to outvote Lenin within the Bolsheviks' financial committee and, in particular, to control the allocation of income from a robbery of the Tiflis State Bank

---

<sup>17</sup> The town of Grodno (Hrodna) had been acquired by Russia during the Third Partition of Poland (1795). In 1801 it became the seat of the Grodno Governorship. In the Third Partition, Sokółka had been acquired by Prussia. It had become part of the Russia Empire in 1807.

organized by a group of Georgian Bolsheviks under ‘Kamo’ (Semen Ter-Petrosyan) in June of that year. Towards the end of 1907, however, Lenin succeeded in diverting to his own group income from the estate of a party supporter and furniture manufacturer, Nikolai Pavlovich Shmit. The intention of the ‘Left-Bolsheviks’ to call Lenin to account during the next All-Party Congress was thwarted when an All-Party Conference of the RSDRP of December 1908 (January 1909 by the Western Calendar) resolved not to convene such a Congress. Lenin was therefore able to continue using the Bolsheviks’ paper, *Proletarii*, to publicise his own policies. In May 1909, in his *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, he sought to discredit Bogdanov by proclaiming his ideas inconsistent with Marxism, and in June 1909 he contrived the expulsion of Bogdanov and his key supporters from the ‘Bolshevik Centre’.<sup>18</sup>

The response of the ‘Left-Bolsheviks’ was to organize a Party training school for worker-activists from Russia. This first Party School was held at the residence of Maxim Gorky on the island of Capri in December 1909. In November 1910 a second School was convened in Bologna. Courses were delivered in one School or the other by, in addition to Bogdanov and Anatoly Lunacharsky, such Party figures as Gregor Alexinsky, Alexandra Kollontai, Martin Lyadov, Petr Pavlovich Maslov, Vyacheslav Menzhinsky, Mikhail Pokrovsky, Vasily Desnitsky-Stroev, Leon Trotsky, Stansilav Volsky and Mikhail Veltman-Pavlovich. At the Party Schools of Capri and Bologna, underground workers received instruction in Marxist theory, conspiratorial technique, the history of the labour movement, and art and literature. Lectures covered a wide range of topics including syndicalism and the ideas of Nietzsche. The immediate purpose of the Party schools was the training of worker cadres to replace intellectuals who had defected from the labour

---

<sup>18</sup> On the history of the *Forward* group, see John Biggart, “‘Anti-Leninist Bolshevism’: the Forward Group of the RSDRP,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (1981) No.2.



movement after the revolution of 1905. However, the courses also formed part of a wider project for the education of the working class: in January 1908 Lunacharsky and Gorky on Capri had conceived of publishing a history of Russian popular culture and this soon merged with the idea of an *Encyclopaedia* that would systematize human knowledge for the benefit of the working class and serve as the socialist equivalent of the *Encyclopédie* of the French Enlightenment. The “Proletarian University” of 1918 and the first Soviet literary and general encyclopaedias represent a continuation of these ideas.

On 28 December 1909, a letter to the Central Committee of the RSDRP signed by Alexinsky, Bogdanov, Fedor Kalinin, Lunacharsky, Lyadov, Pokrovsky, Virgil Shantser and others, had announced the formation of a new fraction, the *Forward* (*Vpered*) group of the RSDRP. However, the *Forward* group was no more successful than any other fraction of the RSDRP in uniting the Party around its policies. Nor was it less vulnerable to schism. On Capri, Gorky had quarrelled with Bogdanov and Lunacharsky; he declined to contribute to the Bologna School.<sup>19</sup> In 1911 Bogdanov resigned from the group when Alexinsky questioned the integrity of his management of the Tiflis funds. Pokrovsky, Lyadov and Menzhinsky resigned in the same year. In Geneva, an ‘Ideas Circle’ under Valerian Lebedev-Polyansky and Mikhail Tskhakaya remained faithful to Bogdanov’s cultural programme, but in Paris Alexinsky and Dmitrii Manuilsky abandoned the idea of cultural revolution in favour of propaganda within the armed forces and planning for insurrection. In December 1913 Lunacharsky broke with Alexinsky (though not with the Geneva circle) and set up his own ‘Circle of Proletarian Culture’ in Paris together with the worker-Bolshevik Fedor Kalinin and the writers Pavel Bessalko, Mikhail Gerasimov, and Alexei Gastev.

---

<sup>19</sup> Gorky had never formally been a member of *Vpered*.

Following his resignation from the *Forward* group, Bogdanov contributed during 1912 and 1913 to the legal Social Democratic newspaper *Pravda*, published in St. Petersburg. When Lenin brought pressure to bear upon the paper's editorial board, Bogdanov was excluded from its columns. Thereafter, he devoted himself to his writings in philosophy, sociology, and economics and to the idea of a 'Union of Socialist Culture' which he conceived as being a necessary adjunct to the political and trade union activities of the labour movement. In 1912 he completed (and in 1913 published) the first volume of his *Universal Science of Organization*, or 'Tektology', which he conceived as an alternative epistemology to Hegelian dialectics for the social sciences, and, indeed, as a 'science of sciences'. In 1914 and until his return to Moscow in 1915 for treatment of a nervous disorder, Bogdanov served as a doctor on the Eastern Front with the 221st Roslavl Infantry Regiment. Following his recovery, he served as a junior house surgeon in an evacuation hospital and then with a mobile medical unit attached to prisoner of war camps.

Throughout 1917 Bogdanov remained faithful to the policy of the RSDRP that the autocracy should be succeeded by a democratic republic or 'people's state' based upon universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage. Pending the convening of a Constituent Assembly, he favoured the idea of a socialist coalition government that would be accountable to the Soviets, but he condemned, in June 1917, Lenin's slogan of a transfer of 'All Power to the Soviets'. For Bogdanov, conflicts of interest between the two principal social classes represented in the Soviets, the industrial proletariat and the peasantry, were more likely to result in civil war than in any 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The idea that the working classes of Europe, who had followed their own ruling classes into war, would immediately cast off the shackles of domination and inaugurate a 'permanent revolution', he considered to be wishful thinking.

Bogdanov also took issue with what he described as the 'Maximalist' argument that the war economy and resulting 'state capitalism' would facilitate a transition to socialism. In what appears to have been the first use of the term, he described 'War Communism' as an adaptation of economic activity to the consumption needs of the army. As the war progressed, military consumers' communism spread throughout the economy by way of state control of supplies, prices and distribution. Military authoritarianism insinuated itself into political institutions, creating the preconditions for government dictatorship and the subjugation of the masses. As these effects multiplied, the economy was transformed into a system of 'state capitalism', an integral feature of which was the formation of syndicates and trusts. It was possible that many of the characteristics of state capitalism would disappear in peace-time, but it was more likely that the need to co-ordinate economic demobilization would make for a conservation of this new system. Unlike some, Bogdanov did not believe that this system of 'War Communism' would facilitate the transition to socialism: a war economy based on state-bureaucratic regulation that had destroyed resources on a massive scale was the very opposite of socialism, which he understood as being a system of production based upon the principle of labour co-operation. Nor did the German experience of resource management and control over prices and profits provide any model for socialist planning. This experience had been made possible only by a temporary suspension of conflict between capitalists on the one hand, between workers in the labour market on the other, and by the conscription of the intelligentsia. It had left no scope for initiative. By contrast, true socialist planning would treat societies as cultural and not merely as economic entities.

For Bogdanov, the World War had highlighted the cultural backwardness of the working class: inadequately organized and hidebound by tradition,

industrial workers had succumbed to the primitive nationalism of the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Nor was the intelligentsia better equipped to effect a transition to socialism: the cultural development of the socialist planners themselves was a precondition of socialism, but most social scientists, as members of the ruling class, were imbued with the individualism of private enterprise. Genuinely socialist planning would be not merely economic (*ekonomicheskoe*) but socio-economic (*khozyaistvennoe*): it would require an appropriate level of development of both the technical and the social sciences. Above all, a ‘universal organizational science’ or science of planning would be needed that would combine and co-ordinate all of the individual disciplines.

Why was it, Bogdanov asked, that, in the face of these facts, radical theorists argued for an immediate transition to socialism? As early as May 1917, commenting upon Lenin’s return to Russia, Bogdanov had identified him as being the personification of authoritarianism within the labour movement. Later that year he wrote of the tendency of new classes and especially of their leaders or “ideologues” to borrow organizational forms from the old régime. It was this “conservatism of thought” which explained the “utopia of an immediate transition to socialism”. Yet any attempt prematurely to lead the working class into the realm of socialist reconstruction was doomed to failure. Prophetically, Bogdanov warned of “the emergence of a new Arakcheev, only on a grander scale. Having acquired sufficient power, he would appoint an official in every enterprise and subordinate the entire economy to the required number of departments. There would then ensue a rapid dissipation of the forces of production and, in due course, the collapse of the entire system”.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> A. Bogdanov, *Voprosy sotsializma* (Moscow, 1918), pp.38, 40. General Alexei Andreevich Arakcheev (1769-1834) was Secretary of the Empire for Military Affairs under Alexander I. He is notorious for his brutal administration of Alexander’s “military colonies” (self-supporting settlements for the Russian army).

The October Revolution was interpreted by Bogdanov not as a conspiracy but as a “workers’-soldiers’ revolt” rendered inevitable by Russia’s continuing involvement in the war. The social base of the new Bolshevik party (Bogdanov described it as the “War Communist” party), consisting as it did of the “proletarian-socialists” on the one hand and “soldier-communists” on the other, was inherently unstable. Lenin’s contention that socialism could be built by a “proletarian-peasant” alliance of this kind he dismissed as, quite simply, un-Marxist. Instead, Bogdanov looked forward to the formation, at the end of the war, of a new workers’ party that would be joined by “those elements of the social democratic intelligentsia whose ideals have remained intact”.<sup>21</sup>

During 1917 Bogdanov worked in the Cultural and Educational Department of the Moscow Soviet and published political commentaries in its newspaper, *Izvestiya*. He contributed to *Sotsial-Demokrat*, the paper of the Moscow Bureau of the Central Committee and of the Moscow Committee of the RSDRP, until March 1917 when the paper began to align with the “revolutionary defeatism” of Lenin. He wrote for *New Life* (*Novaya zhizn*), a newspaper associated with the United Social Democratic Internationalists, but he did not join this new faction of the RSDRP. He deplored the division of the Russian Social Democratic Party into what had, in effect, become separate parties, and when, in July 1917, the Leninists, the Interdistrict Group and various others, including Trotsky, formed the grouping that was later to turn into the Communist Party, he did not join this party. When, in November 1917, Lunacharsky offered him a post in Lenin’s government (in the Commissariat of Enlightenment, he declined.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> See A. Bogdanov, ‘Fortunes of the Workers’ Party in the Present Revolution’, *Sbornik*, No.10 (1984), translated from *Novaya zhizn*, No.19 and No.20, 26 January/8 February and 27 January/9 February, 1918.

<sup>22</sup> See Georgii D. Gloveli, ‘Socialism of science versus socialism of feelings,’ *Studies in Soviet Thought* 42 (1991).

Between 1918 and 1921, when he found it expedient to resign, Bogdanov devoted himself to work in the Russian Proletarian Cultural Educational Association, or Proletkult, the incarnation of his earlier plans for a “Union of Socialist Culture”.<sup>23</sup> From 1918 to 1926 he was a member of the Presidium of the Socialist Academy, lecturing on economics and organizational science (he protested on theoretical grounds when, in 1923, the Academy was renamed the “Communist” Academy). In this same period he lectured on political economy in Moscow State University. After 1917 he continued to write and to publish prolifically.

### **Bogdanov and cultural revolution**

That Bogdanov’s ideas provided the matrix for Marxist debates on literary and cultural questions during the 1920s has been well established by Soviet and Western scholarship.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, in distorted form, his ideas were to play an important part in the ‘cultural revolution’ of 1928, a purge of educational and cultural institutions which served as a prelude to, and became an integral part of, the general social and economic revolution of the First Five Year Plan.

Between 1917 and 1921, Bogdanov’s principal institutional base in Russia and the vehicle for the dissemination of his ideas on culture was the Proletkult. As early as May 1920, the extent to which Bogdanov’s ideas were being disseminated became a matter for discussion in the Politbureau, when both

---

<sup>23</sup> Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1990).

<sup>24</sup> In literature, it was Valerian Pletnev who, while repudiating Bogdanov, sought to adapt his ideas on cultural revolution to conditions of Party hegemony. After Pletnev, the most zealous and doctrinaire of the younger generation of the ‘post-Bogdanovists’ was Leopold Averbakh. See Edward J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature 1928-1932* (New York, 1953); S. Sheshukov, *Neistozhe revnilei. Iz istorii literaturnoi bor’by 20-ykh godov* (Moscow, 1970); and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1931* (Bloomington, 1978).

Lenin and Stalin expressed concern at the impending publication by the State Publishing House of a new edition of his *Short Course in Economic Science*.<sup>25</sup> When, in July and August 1920, during the Second Congress of the Comintern held in Petrograd and Moscow, the Proletkult leaders launched the idea of a ‘Cultural International’ (*Kultintern*),<sup>26</sup> Lenin took pre-emptive action: later that year he arranged for the publication of a second edition of his *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, inviting the veteran Bolshevik Vladimir Nevsky to write a new introduction which appeared under the title ‘Dialectical materialism and the philosophy of sterile reaction’. Then, on the occasion of the First All-Russian Congress of the Proletkult in October 1920, Lenin brought pressure to bear upon the Commissar for Education, Anatoly Lunacharsky, to have the Proletkult brought under state control.

This episode precipitated a debate within the Politbureau over how cultural change was to be understood from a Marxist standpoint. The debate was waged at meetings of October and December 1920, and was marked by a disagreement between Lenin and another theorist within the Party leadership, Nikolai Bukharin, who was unwilling to dissociate himself from Bogdanov on every point. Even so, in a letter published in *Pravda* on 1 December 1920, the Central Committee of the Communist Party finally denounced the Proletkult as being of petty-bourgeois social origin and of a decadent and “idealist” inspiration. Leadership of the working class in the fields of science and culture was to be reserved for the Communist Party.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> See *Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaya khronika* (Moscow, 1970-1985), VIII, p.529 and *Bol'shevik* (1936), p.78.

<sup>26</sup> On the founding of the Kultintern, see *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya* (1920), No.17/19, pp.1-5.

<sup>27</sup> For the text of this letter, see *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh S"ezdov, Konferentsii i Plenumov TsK*, Vol. II [1917-1924] (Moscow, 1970).

The effect of this letter was to entrench the idea that Bogdanov's ideas were heretical. Within the Proletkult, a 'Party loyalist' faction led by Valerian Pletnev led the institution away from policies of cultural development towards the fostering of labour productivity. Increasingly, the Proletkult came under Party and state control. Though Bogdanov now strove to adopt a less conspicuous political profile (he resigned from the Presidium of the Proletkult), Lenin's fear of his influence may be seen in the criticism that he now directed at Bukharin, whose own theory of culture had been developed under the influence of Bogdanov. When Bukharin outlined his own ideas in an article published in *Under the Banner of Marxism*, July-August 1922,<sup>28</sup> Lenin served notice of his disapproval in a response written by one of his ideological watchdogs, the deputy-head of *Agitprop*, Yakov Yakovlev.<sup>29</sup>

Lenin's vindictive campaign against Bogdanov continued during the last months of his active life. Though his second stroke of 10 March 1923 deprived him of the capacity for speech or political action, it seems likely that during the final stages of his illness, and at any rate before 1 August 1923, he gave instructions for the publication of one of the last collections of his writings, *Against A. Bogdanov*.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> N. Bukharin, 'Burzhuaznaya revolyutsiya i revolyutsiya proletarskaya', *Pod znamenem Marksizma (Under the Banner of Marxism)*, No. 7/8 (July-August 1922).

<sup>29</sup> Ya. Yakovlev, 'O proletarskoi kul'ture i Proletkulte', *Pravda*, 24 and 25 October 1923. Yakovlev castigated the *Proletkult* and its new theoretical mentor, Valerian Pletnev, but his real targets were Bukharin and Bogdanov.

<sup>30</sup> V.I. Lenin & G.V. Plekhanov, *Protiv A. Bogdanova* (Moscow, Krasnaya nov', 1923).



## The arrest of Bogdanov

In 1923 the willingness of the Bolshevik leadership to employ not only polemics but also police methods in its persecution of Bogdanov was demonstrated by his arrest and incarceration in the Lyubyanka prison. As early as 4 January 1923, Yakovlev in *Pravda* had not only renewed the by now familiar charge of ‘Menshevism’ against Bogdanov but had also accused him of forming a “political group or party”, conceived as a successor to the *Forward* group of 1909.<sup>31</sup> In his introduction to the volume *Against A. Bogdanov*, Yakovlev repeated this charge: Bogdanov and Lunacharsky were to be considered “dangerous enemies”; Bogdanov was “organizing a political struggle against the Communist Party from the position of capitalism”.

The political grouping that Yakovlev had in mind was the *Workers’ Truth* (*Rabochaya Pravda*) faction of the Communist Party, one of two left opposition groupings that had been in existence since 1921. Whilst there is no doubt that the programmatic statements of *Workers’ Truth* drew their inspiration from Bogdanov, and Bogdanov had met with several leaders of the group, there was no evidence to suggest that he had ever had belonged to it and during his interrogation Bogdanov categorically rejected this charge. When, however, *Workers’ Truth* and *Workers’ Group* sought to exploit the industrial unrest which broke out in both Moscow and Petrograd in July and August 1923, the GPU arrested their leaders. As part of this operation, Bogdanov was arrested on 18 September 1923.<sup>32</sup>

In a memoir that he wrote after his detention, *Five weeks with the GPU*, Bogdanov made it clear that the suggestion for his arrest had come from a senior level of the party leadership. He noted the difficulty experienced by

---

<sup>31</sup> Ya. Yakovlev, ‘Menshevizm v Proletkultovskoi odezhde’, *Pravda*, 4 January 1923.

<sup>32</sup> A. Bogdanov, *Five weeks with the GPU* (1923).

Dzerzhinsky in securing his release even after he had satisfied his interrogators. By September 1923, Lenin was too gravely ill to have been personally involved, but, as Yakovlev's article makes clear, Bogdanov was by this time viewed in some sections of the Communist Party as a dangerous opponent of the régime and this alone would have been sufficient to delay his release. In signing the protocol authorizing Bogdanov's release on 13 October 1923, the GPU investigating officer, M. Slavatskiy, instructed that his case should remain open.<sup>33</sup> It was not until the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 16 January 1989 passed a decree rehabilitating a wide range of political oppositionists that the file on Bogdanov was finally closed.<sup>34</sup>

### **Death of Bogdanov**

Profoundly affected by his experiences during the World War, Bogdanov had, as early as 1921, begun to pursue research into the techniques and science of blood transfusion.<sup>35</sup> By 1922, together with the medical doctors Dmitry Gudim-Levkovich and Semen Maloletkov he had formed a working party for research into the science and technique of blood transfusion. In December 1925 this working party reported to the People's Commissar for Health, Nikolai Semashko, who in March 1926, with the approval of Stalin, appointed Bogdanov Director of what was to be the world's first 'Institute for Clinical and Experimental Haematology and Blood Transfusion'.

---

<sup>33</sup> *MGB* File R-39968, 1.19. Head of the 7th Department of the Secret Political Section of the OGPU, M. Slavatskiy was at this time also responsible for the surveillance of Maxim Gorky. See Vitaly Shentalinsky, *The KGB's Literary Archive* (London, 1997), p.234.

<sup>34</sup> Formerly 'N-1793' (not rehabilitated), it is now 'R-39968' (re-habilitated).

<sup>35</sup> During a visit to London in December 1921 Bogdanov had purchased blood transfusion equipment from a London hospital.

It was in this experimental branch of medicine that Bogdanov made his last contribution to human knowledge, investigating techniques of blood transfusion and the effects of transfusion upon the immune system and the ageing process. On 7 April 1928 Bogdanov died of the effects of an experiment in exchange transfusion in which he had volunteered to take part. Whereas it was once thought that his death might have been due to personal or political intrigue or that, in despair at the increasingly oppressive nature of the Soviet régime, he had committed suicide, it is now considered that he died from an adverse reaction to incompatibilities between his blood and that of his counterpart in the exchange transfusion.<sup>36</sup> His death, which can be seen as that of a martyr in the advancement of medical science, was in keeping with the collectivist and humane values that had guided his political and intellectual career.<sup>37</sup>

### **Bogdanov's works**

In an autobiography of 1925, Bogdanov divided his works into five categories: Political Economy; Historical Materialism; Philosophy; Organizational Science; and Proletarian Culture. Under each of these headings he could claim to have made an original contribution to theory. As early as 1903, his contribution 'Exchange and Value' to *Outlines of the Realistic Philosophy of Life*

---

<sup>36</sup> Bogdanov and his counterpart, a 21 year old student Lev Koldomasov, were of the same blood group. It is now thought that there were incompatibilities between the blood of Bogdanov and Koldomasov that were not detectable in 1928. On this topic see: Douglas W. Huestis, *The Struggle for Viability. Collectivism through Blood Exchange: Alexander Bogdanov* (Tucson Arizona, 2001); Nikolai Krementsov, *A Martian Stranded on Earth. Alexander Bogdanov, Blood Transfusion and Proletarian Science* (University of Chicago Press, 1911); James D. White, *Red Hamlet. The Life and Ideas of Alexander Bogdanov* (Brill, Leiden, 2018).

<sup>37</sup> See A.Belova, *A.A. Bogdanov* ("Meditsina", Moscow, 1974). For the most expert explanation of the circumstances surrounding Bogdanov's death, see Douglas W. Huestis, 'The life and death of Alexander Bogdanov, physician', *Journal of Medical Biography*, Volume 4 (August, 1996).

proved “for the first time the theory of labour and value based on the principle of equilibrium”.<sup>38</sup> In *On the Psychology of Society* (1901-1904) and in *The Science of Social Consciousness* (1914) he had further developed Marx’s theory of social ideologies, demonstrating that ideas had not a passive-reflective, but an active-organizational function in society. In his principal philosophical work, *Empiriomonism*, written between 1903 and 1907, he had provided “a picture of the world from an organizational standpoint, that is, as a process of formation, conflict and interaction by complexes and systems of various types and degrees of organization”.<sup>39</sup> In these early philosophical works Bogdanov had anticipated his later *General Science of Organization* (1913-1922), “a general study of all elements of nature, practice and thought”,<sup>40</sup> a science which, he considered, provided the social sciences with a disciplinary base superior to, indeed transcending, philosophy. A number scholars now maintain that in his *Tektology* Bogdanov provided many of the ideas later used by Ludwig van Bertalanffy, until recently considered the founder of organization theory. Bogdanov’s pioneering work in another sphere has also gone unrecognized. From what we know of Antonio Gramsci’s contacts with the cultural section of the Communist International, and in particular with Anatoly Lunacharsky, it seems likely that Bogdanov was a direct or indirect source of Gramsci’s ideas on cultural hegemony and the social role of the intellectual.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> A translation of Bogdanov’s autobiography is contained in George Haupt (ed.), *Makers of the Russian Revolution. Biographies of Bolshevik leaders* (London, George Allan and Unwin, 1974).

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>41</sup> On Bogdanov and Gramsci, see Zenovia Sochor, ‘Was Bogdanov Russia’s answer to Gramsci?’, *Studies in Soviet Thought* 22 (1981); and John Biggart, ‘Marxism and social anthropology - a Proletkult bibliography on the History of Culture’, *Studies in Soviet Thought* 24 (1982). [More recently research into the relationship between the thought of Bogdanov and that of Gramsci has been taken up by Craig Brandist and Noemi Ghetti.

The bibliography *Bogdanov and his Work* provides scholars with an opportunity for appraising the encyclopaedic range, the dissemination, and the influence of Bogdanov's work. In it, the extent of his contribution to philosophy, economics, systems thinking and to research in blood transfusion are revealed. We also discover the importance of his contribution to Bolshevik agitational and programmatic literature. It is now clear (and we are here indebted to the pioneering research of Koblents) that Bogdanov was the principal author of the leaflets, pamphlets and manifestos issued by the Bolshevik fraction in St. Petersburg during the revolution of 1905, a circumstance which Leninist historians were later at pains to conceal.

We obtain some idea of the dissemination of Bogdanov's ideas in the Soviet Union during the 1920s from the number of editions to which his principal works ran and from the variety of languages into which they were translated. Thus, we find that a tenth edition of the *Short Course in Economic Science* was published in 1920; a third edition of the *Science of Social Consciousness* was published in 1923; an eleventh edition of the *Introduction to Political Economy* was published in 1924; a fourth edition of the *Course in Political Economy* in 1925 and 1926. Second and third editions of the three volumes of *Tektology* appeared between 1925 and 1929. During the 1920s, in the Soviet Union alone, Bogdanov's works were translated into Armenian, Chuvash, Georgian, Hungarian, Kazakh, Tatar, Ukrainian and Yiddish. We do not have information on print-runs, or on the use of Bogdanov's works in educational institutions, but this publication data testify to the extensive circulation of Bogdanov's ideas.

## Philosophy

During the 1920s, Hegelians in the Soviet philosophical establishment embarked upon a campaign against the Positivist, or so-called ‘Mechanist’ view that the natural sciences and not philosophy provide the key to an understanding of the human condition.<sup>42</sup> Criticism of Bogdanov’s epistemology and organization theory formed part of this campaign (he was explicitly labelled a ‘Mechanist’),<sup>43</sup> and, following the republication of Lenin’s *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* in 1922, most ‘Mechanists’ took care to distance themselves from him.<sup>44</sup>

The onslaught against the ‘Mechanists’ was led by one of Bogdanov’s earliest critics, A.M. Deborin, who, from his stronghold in the Institute of Red Professors and in the columns of *Under the banner of Marxism*, upheld the pre-eminence of Hegelian dialectics.<sup>45</sup> In 1927 three issues of the *Bulletin of the Communist Academy*, of which Bogdanov was a founder member, carried criticism of his philosophy.<sup>46</sup> In 1929, at the Second All-Union Conference of

---

<sup>42</sup> For a recent treatment of the philosophical debates of the 1920s, see David Backhurst, *Consciousness and Revolution in Soviet philosophy from the Bolsheviks to Evald Ilyenkov* (CUP, 1991), especially Chapter Two: “Deborinites, Mechanists and Bolshevizers”.

<sup>43</sup> See E. Pashukanis, “The theoretical work of Communists in 1926”, *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi Akademii* (1927), No.22, in which Bogdanov is described as an “idealist”, “Machist”, “revisionist”, “father of Bogdanovshchina” and “Mechanist”.

<sup>44</sup> Bogdanov commented wryly: “You won’t find people so stupid as to cite me; it’s disadvantageous...There is unity, but they won’t cite me.” See David Joravsky, *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science 1917—1932* (New York and London, 1961), p.136.

<sup>45</sup> In one statement written in prison in 1923, Bogdanov commented on the campaign which was being waged against him: he had once thought that *Pod znamenem Marksizma* devoted half its time to opposing his ideas, but one of its editors, Dvolaitzky, had informed him that its *entire* purpose was to do so. See “‘Delo’ A.A. Bogdanova (Malinovskogo)”, *Voprosy istorii* (1994), No.9, p.14.

<sup>46</sup> *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi Akademii* (1927), No.15 (F. Telezhnikov), No.18 (K. Milonov) and No.24 (A.S. Deborin). See P.A. Plyutto, ‘Pioneers in Russian systems thinking: Bogdanov

Marxist-Leninist Institutions of Scientific Research, the Deborinites succeeded in having the ‘Mechanists’ condemned, in so doing utilizing an argument that had been used against Bogdanov in the past: any denial of the necessity for ‘qualitative leaps’ in development implied that socialism could ‘grow out of’ capitalism; this denial therefore constituted a political threat.<sup>47</sup>

Though the Deborinites were themselves soon overthrown by a rival group whose power base was located not within professional institutions but within the Communist Party, this coup d’état did not lead to a rehabilitation of either ‘Mechanism’ or of Bogdanov.<sup>48</sup> On the contrary, the subordination of philosophy to political considerations resulted in a degradation of polemics to the point where A.V. Shcheglov, in 1937, would summon all right-thinking Marxists to “grind into the dust all of those Bogdanovist-Bukharinist bourgeois restorationist ‘theories’ which serve as the instrument of fascist counter-revolution in the struggle against socialism in the USSR”.<sup>49</sup> This position obtained official endorsement in Stalin’s *Short Course History of the Communist Party*, which was published one year later. In the fourth chapter of this work, which covers the period 1908 to 1912, a canonical exposition of dialectical

---

and Vernadsky’, paper delivered to the conference *The Origins of Organization Theory in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Norwich, 1995).

<sup>47</sup> Bakhurst, *op.cit.*, pp.45-46. See also Deborin’s introduction to I. Vainshtein, *Organizatsionnaya teoriya i dialekticheskii materializm* (Moscow/Leningrad, 1927) where he writes: “The terrible and sinister prophecies of Bogdanov sound like truly monstrous lies when set against the constant developing construction of socialism in the proletarian state.” See P.A. Plyutto, *op.cit.*

<sup>48</sup> At a meeting of the Party committee of the Institute of Red Professors in December 1930, Stalin described the Deborinites as “Menshevizing idealists”. On 26 January 1931 a resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party handed over the editorial board of *Under the Banner of Marxism* to the Party loyalists Pokrovsky, Adoratsky, Mitin, Yudin, and Maximov.

<sup>49</sup> A.V. Shcheglov, *Lenin’s struggle against the Bogdanovist revision of Marxism (Bor’ba Lenina protiv Bogdanovskoi revizii Marksizma)* (Moscow, 1937). Shcheglov was an associate of M. Mitin and his editor was M. Iovchuk, a future functionary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Rector of the Academy of Social Sciences. See G.D. Gloveli, “‘Sotsializm nauki’: Mebiusova lenta A.A.Bogdanova (Moscow, 1991), p.54, citing S. Korolev, ‘Chelovek na vyshke’, *Sovetskaya kul’tura*, 17 September 1988.

and historical materialism follows immediately upon a denunciation of Bogdanov, Bazarov, Lunacharsky, Yushekevich and Valentinov. Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* is lauded as a "materialist generalization of everything important and essential acquired by science, and especially the natural sciences, in the course of a whole historical period, the period [since] Engels's death".<sup>50</sup>

## **Economics**

What was the contribution of Bogdanov to the development of economic thought?<sup>51</sup> The research of Andrei Belykh of the Department of Political Economy of the University of St. Petersburg has traced the extent of Bogdanov's influence upon such leading economists of the 1920s as V.A. Bazarov, V.G. Groman, N.I. Bukharin and L.N. Kraitsman. According to Belykh, Bogdanov's tektological 'law of the least' and concept of the 'bi-regulator' were of seminal influence during the 1920s in shaping theories of proportional economic development; in his theories of static and dynamic equilibrium Bogdanov had exercised a direct influence upon Bukharin; in his work on analogies he had laid the basis for mathematical modelling and in his speech to the First Congress on the Scientific Organization of Labour in January 1921, 'Organizational principles of a unified economic plan' he had put forward a number of ideas which became axioms in mathematical economic research. In the opinion of Belykh, "traditional ideas concerning the

---

<sup>50</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) - Short course* (English Edition, Moscow, 1939), p.104. The Russian edition appeared in 1938.

<sup>51</sup> On this subject, see N. Shukhov, 'Voprosy sotsializma v ekonomicheskoi literature 20-ykh godov', *Voprosy ekonomiki* (1990), No.4, in particular pp.114-117 (Shukhov) and pp.121-123 (Kirillov).



history of the inter-sector balance need to be substantially modified to take into account the contribution of A.A Bogdanov”.<sup>52</sup>

Among other things, it was this indebtedness to Bogdanov which was used to discredit Groman and Bazarov during the debates over the First Five Year Plan.<sup>53</sup> At a Conference of Agrarian Marxists held on 27 December 1929, Stalin personally denounced the idea of proportional economic development (“equilibrium”) as “utopian” and “anti-Marxist”.<sup>54</sup> His immediate targets were Bazarov and Groman but a condemnation of Bogdanov was implicit. In the first issue of *Under the Banner of Marxism* for 1931, the association was made explicit in an article by P. Vyshinsky who spoke of, in the case of Bazarov, “the full set of Tektological gibberish - ‘organizational links’, ‘structural forms’, ‘universal applicability’, ‘quantitative analysis’ (instead of qualitative), ‘models’ ...”. At the trial of the Mensheviks in March 1931, Groman and Bazarov were accused of leading a counter-revolutionary organization within the State Planning Agency, *Gosplan*. Groman was sentenced to imprisonment.

---

<sup>52</sup> A.A. Belykh, ‘Matematicheskii metod v Sovetskoï ekonomicheskoi nauke v period 20-ykh - nachala 30-ykh godov’, *Sovet Molodykh Uchenykh, Institut Ekonomiki AN SSSR, Sektor Istorii Politicheskoi Ekonomii Sotsializma* (Moscow, 1988); ‘O kiberneticheskikh ideyakh A.A. Bogdanova’, *Ekonomicheskie i matematicheskie metody* (Moscow, AN SSSR, 1988), T.XXIV, No.5; ‘Voprosy kolichestvennogo analiza v ekonomicheskikh rabotakh N.I. Bukharina’, *Ekonomicheskie i matematicheskie metody* (Moscow, AN SSSR, 1988), T.XXIV, No.6; ‘V.A. Bazarov kak ekonomist-matematik’, *Ekonomicheskie i matematicheskie metody* (Moscow, AN SSSR, 1989), T.XXV, No.6. See also his ‘A note on the origins of input-output analysis and the contribution of the early Soviet economists: Chayanov, Bogdanov and Kritsman’, *Soviet Studies* (1989), No.3. On equilibrium theory, see G.D. Gloveli, ‘A.A. Bogdanov i N.I. Bukharin, sbližheniya i razmezhevaniya’, in: I.D. Semenov and G.D. Gloveli, *N.I. Bukharin: Issledovanie nauchnogo naslediya (politiko-ekonomicheskii aspekt)* (Institut Ekonomiki Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow, 1988); and A. Belykh, ‘A. Bogdanov’s Theory of equilibrium and the economic discussions of the 1920s’, *Soviet Studies* (1990), No.3.

<sup>53</sup> In addition to the works by Belykh, see Alexander Erlich, *The Soviet industrialization debate* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) and Naum Jasny, *Soviet economists of the Twenties. Names to be remembered* (Cambridge, 1972) Bogdanov was, himself, proud of his influence on early Soviet economic planning. Whilst in prison in 1923 he invited Dzerzhinsky to ask Groman, Bazarov and Krzhizhanovsky whether they attached any importance to organizational science in their work on a “unified economic plan”. See *Five Weeks with the GPU* (1923).

<sup>54</sup> Stalin, *Works*, Vol.XII, 143-146.

Bazarov, thanks, it would appear, to the intervention of Gorky, was not tried publicly, but was imprisoned and then exiled to Saratov.<sup>55</sup> Had Bogdanov lived until 1931, could he have avoided the fate of his intellectual disciples? It seems unlikely. By 1937, as we have seen, he was being linked with Bukharin (executed in that year) and with the threat of “fascist-counter-revolution”. The worker Vasilii V. Glagolev (Grubov), who was the custodian of Bogdanov’s archive, was purged, as were the former Proletkult activists, A. Gastev, M. Gerasimov, V. Kirillov, and I. Filipchenko.<sup>56</sup> In 1937 Bogdanov’s name was removed from the official title of the Institute of Blood Transfusion, which had been named after him by a decree of the RSFSR Sovnarkom on 13 April 1928.<sup>57</sup>

### **The rehabilitation of Tektology**

From 1937 until Stalin’s death in 1953 the attitude of the Communist Party towards Bogdanov followed the lines laid down in A.V. Shcheglov’s *Lenin’s struggle against the Bogdanovist revision of Marxism*. During the Stalin years the myth of Bogdanov as having been a disciple of Ernst Mach (“Machist”) and a “nihilist” became firmly embedded in party historiography. As late as 1952, one year before his death, Stalin himself accused the economist L. Yaroshenko

---

<sup>55</sup> *Protseess kontrrevolyutsionnoi organizatsii men’shevikov* (Moscow, 1931); P. Vyshinsky, ‘Obrazchik vreditel’skoi filosofii (bazarovshchina)’, *Pod znamenem marksizma* (1931), No.1. See A. Belykh, ‘Bogdanov’s Tektology and economic theory’, paper delivered to the conference *The Origins of Organization Theory in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Norwich, 1995). Bazarov returned to Moscow in 1935 and died of natural causes in 1939.

<sup>56</sup> G.D. Gloveli, “Sotsializm nauki”: *Mebiusova lenta A.A.Bogdanova* (Moscow, 1991), p.54.

<sup>57</sup> G.D. Gloveli, ‘Zasedanie, posvyashchennoe pamyati A.A.Bogdanova’, *Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniya i tekhniki* (AN SSSR, Moscow, 1989), No.1, pp.144-145.

of dabbling in “something resembling universal organizational science”.<sup>58</sup> Nor did Party theoreticians waver in their fidelity to ‘Leninist positions’ during the administration of Khrushchev, notwithstanding the enthusiasm for cybernetics and ‘scientific technical revolution’ which was born at this time. In the ten weighty volumes which were published between 1961 and 1981, under the title *Cybernetics in the Service of Communism*, there was no mention of Bogdanov’s pioneering work in combining systems analysis with socialist theory.<sup>59</sup> In 1964 (the year in which Khrushchev was overthrown) it was proposed at a seminar on the methodology of cybernetics held at one of the colleges of higher education in Leningrad that there should be a serious reappraisal of Bogdanov’s work. The editorial board of the journal *Philosophical Sciences* (the editor in chief was M. Iovchuk) responded by publishing an article by L. Suvorov entitled ‘Aspects of the struggle of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party against Bogdanov’s organizational science’. Ridiculing Bogdanov, Suvorov denied that he had any right to be considered a scientific thinker, let alone a pioneer of cybernetics.<sup>60</sup> Then V.G. Afanasiev, a future editor of *Pravda* and an Academician, in the first volume of the almanac *Scientific Management of Society* (1967), repeated the old falsehood that Bogdanov’s ‘law of the minimum’ represented a strategy for restricting development to the lowest common denominators.<sup>61</sup>

Recently, two Russian philosophers have tried to give credit where it is due for the rehabilitation of *Tektology* in the Soviet Union. In the opinion of Vadim N. Sadovsky and Vladimir V. Kelle, such credit belongs, above all, to A.I.

---

<sup>58</sup> I.V.Stalin, *Ekonomicheskie problemy sotsializma v SSSR* (Moscow, 1952), p.70.

<sup>59</sup> G.D.Gloveli, “Sotsializm nauki”: *Mebiusova lenta A.A.Bogdanova* (Moscow, 1991), p.54.

<sup>60</sup> L.N. Suvorov, ‘Iz istorii bor’by V.I.Lenina, partii Bol’shevikov protiv Bogdanovskoi “Organizatsionnoi nauki”, *Nauchnye doklady Vysshei Shkoly (Filosofskie Nauki)* (1966), No.3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, p.55.

Uemov, M.I. Setrov, G.N. Povarov, A.A. Malinovsky, E.G. Yudin, I.V. Blaiberg, P.K. Anokhin, A.L. Takhtadzhian, and N.N. Moiseev. According to Sadovsky and Kelle “these authors took a considerable risk in appreciating Bogdanov’s *Tektology* in the late sixties and early seventies and not infrequently exposed themselves to the fire of ideological criticism.”<sup>62</sup>

In 1967 M.I. Setrov published his ‘Common features of the Tektology of A. Bogdanov and the theory of systems’.<sup>63</sup> In 1970 the fifth volume of the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia* carried an article on ‘Tektology’ written by Bogdanov’s son, A.A. Malinovsky.<sup>64</sup> A further landmark was the publication in 1972 by A.A. Takhtadzhian, biologist and Academician, of a major article, ‘Tektology: history and problems’ in which he identified *Tektology* as the first attempt to devise an all-embracing scientific approach to the study of systems, preceding in this respect Ludwig von Bertalanffy’s ‘general theory of systems’.<sup>65</sup>

Despite this growing recognition, any advocacy of Bogdanov in the Soviet Union still had to be qualified by tributes to the infallibility in philosophy of Lenin. As late as 1980, Bogdanov’s omission from an anthology of writings on Soviet aesthetics for the period 1917-1932 surprised one hostile reviewer, but

---

<sup>62</sup> Vadim N. Sadovsky and Vladimir V. Kelle, Foreword to *Bogdanov’s Tektology*, Book 1, edited with an introduction by Peter Dudley, Centre for Systems Studies, University of Hull (1996), p.xvi. This foreword provides a list of the relevant works of the authors named. It is fair to say that the name of V. Sadovsky should be added to the role of honour.

<sup>63</sup> M.I. Setrov, ‘Ob obshchikh elementakh tektologii A.Bogdanova, kibernetiki i teorii sistem’, *Uchenye zapiski kafedr obshchestvennykh nauk vuzov g. Leningrada, Seriya “Filosofiya”* (1967), Vyp.8.

<sup>64</sup> Bogdanov’s son, the late Alexander Alexandrovich Malinovsky, was a distinguished geneticist. He was a resolute opponent of Lysenko and had suffered accordingly in the years after 1948. He was the translator into Russian of Ernst Schrödinger’s famous work *What is life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell* (London, 1944). In addition to the entry on *Tektology* written for the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia* in 1970, he wrote the entry on Bogdanov in the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Philosophy (Filosofskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar’)* (2nd ed., Moscow, 1989).

<sup>65</sup> A.L. Takhtadzhian, ‘Tektologiya: istoriya i problemy’, in: *Sistemnye issledovaniya, 1971* (Moscow, 1972).

only because he had been the “real founder of vulgar sociology”.<sup>66</sup> Only on the eve of *perestroika* was a work published which seemed to indicate that the defenders of Marxism-Leninism were now on the defensive. In 1985 *Politizdat* published no fewer than 100,000 copies of the second edition of a work by A.I. Volodin, *A battle cannot be avoided (Boi absolutno neizbezhen)*. “It is no secret,” Volodin wrote, “that from time to time our ideological adversaries (he had in mind the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski) launch works in which it is bluntly stated that *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* was merely a document in the fractional struggle within Russian Social Democracy and that it was produced at a time when Lenin somehow or other had to discredit Bogdanov and undermine his influence among the Bolsheviks ...”.<sup>67</sup> Volodin then proceeded to provide an account of the campaign of Plekhanov and his disciples (Akselrod-Ortodoks, Deborin and Lenin) against the epistemology and sociology of the neo-Positivists, Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, Bazarov, Valentinov and Yushkevich. Volodin made no serious attempt to explain the views of the Bogdanov school; he did, however give a number of hostages to fortune in citing several extracts from Bogdanov’s *Ten Years of Heresy*, in which Bogdanov had expressed his own trenchant opinion of the competence of Plekhanov and Lenin in philosophy.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Review by V. Akimov of G. Belaya (ed.), *Iz istorii Sovetskoi esteticheskoi mysli 1917-1932* (Moscow, 1980), translated from *Voprosy literatury* (1981), No. 3, in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, XXXIII (1981), No.18, p.10.

<sup>67</sup>A.I. Volodin, “*Boi absolutno neizbezhen*” (Moscow, 1985), pp.5, 223.

<sup>68</sup>A. Bogdanov, *Desyatiletie otlucheniya ot Marksizma* (1914), cited in Volodin, *op.cit.*, p.176.

## **Bogdanov as a “theorist of Stalinism”<sup>69</sup>**

In retrospect, we can see that Volodin’s book formed part of a final rear-guard action in defence of Marxism-Leninism. However, the determination of reformers to restore the reputation of the ‘Old Bolsheviks’ was bound, sooner or later, to lead to the rehabilitation also of Bogdanov. Ironically, it was at this time that Bogdanov came under attack from a new quarter, from the ranks of the Russian nationalists, who, in arguments that mark the emergence in Russian politics of a new ‘Red-Brown’ alliance, sought to re-legitimize Lenin as a ‘National-Bolshevik’ and to identify Bogdanov, rather than Lenin, as the link between early Bolshevism and Stalinism. In 1987, in the journal *Our Contemporary (Nash sovremennik)*,<sup>70</sup> Appolon Grigorievich Kuzmin denounced the ‘Machists-Bogdanovists’ for their denial of the value of ‘the nation’.

For some, the place in which they live is the ‘Native Land’ (*Rodina*) with a capital letter. For others the ‘native land’ is in the lower case. For others still, it is a matter of indifference where they live ... Bogdanov fell into this third category. In 1919 he summoned the proletariat to abandon patriotism and to forswear the Russian language in favour of English.<sup>71</sup> For Bogdanov the national question did not exist. He subscribed to the theory of Otto Bauer and identified the ‘nation’ with an ‘ethnos’ which remained unchanged over thousands of years. Such views were prevalent in the 1920s, as may be seen from the introduction to Bogdanov’s

---

<sup>69</sup> I am indebted to Georgii D Gloveli for bibliographical support in this section.

<sup>70</sup> A. Kuzmin, ‘Meli v Eksterritorial’nom potoke’, *Nash sovremennik* (1987), No.9. Kuzmin is a Doctor of Historical Sciences and the author of *Nachal’nye etapy drevnerusskikh letopisaniya* and of *Tatishchev*.

<sup>71</sup> Kuzmin refers to A. Bogdanov, *O proletarskoi kul’ture 1904-1924* (Leningrad - Moscow, 1925), pp.331, 337.

anthology of 1925, *On proletarian culture*. They were developed on the left by Trotsky and on the right by Bukharin, with Lunacharsky, who in the 1920s saw himself as the occupant of a ‘conquered country’, adhering to the ‘centre’.<sup>72</sup>

For Kuzmin, the displacement of national consciousness by class consciousness in the minds of the Bolsheviks explains their early hostility towards the Russian cultural legacy, a hostility which, he claims, became a systematic feature of their cultural policy. In deference to the prevailing Party line he resorted to tortuous textual exegesis in order to demonstrate that Lenin, unlike “Social-democrats of the Bogdanov-Trotsky type”,<sup>73</sup> had included nationalism in his understanding of socialism. Lenin, we are reminded, in *Which inheritance do we reject?* (1897) had described nationalism as being “progressive in its time.” Only after 1905 had he come to the conclusion that the ‘nation’ had become polarized between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.<sup>74</sup> After Brest-Litovsk, conscious that the ‘patriotic peasantry’ had been antagonized, Lenin had insisted that the Bolsheviks were fighting for the ‘socialist fatherland’.<sup>75</sup>

In a later article in *Our Contemporary*, Kuzmin developed a theme that had been implicit in the first, that of a continuity between Bogdanovism and Stalinism:

---

<sup>72</sup> Kuzmin, *op.cit.* (1987), p.176.

<sup>73</sup> Kuzmin, *op.cit.* (1987), p.177.

<sup>74</sup> Kuzmin, *op.cit.* (1987), pp.175-6.

<sup>75</sup> Kuzmin, *op.cit.* (1987), pp.190-192. Another historian who has argued that the “Left Bolsheviks” were the theorists of “totalitarian democracy” is M. Agursky, in *Third Rome: National Bolshevism* (Boulder, 1987).

The administrative propensity derives from our Machists of the beginning of the century. A.A. Bogdanov and A.V. Lunacharsky are best known in this connection, but Stalin, Kamenev, Rykov and Bukharin were also inclined towards Machism. The essence of Machism is to be found not in the ‘complex of sensations’ but in the ‘complex of voluntarism’ (*proizvol*) towards life and the people which derives from this ‘complex’. The value of Lenin’s work *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* was not sufficiently appreciated by his contemporaries and even now its meaning has not been fully grasped.<sup>76</sup>

“Why was it”, Kuzmin asked, “that during the 1920s so many outstanding writers were vilified”? This was because almost every ideological organization was under the influence of subjectivist Bogdanovist and Trotskyist ideas. Far from having been a departure from the policies of the 1920s, the year 1929 had been their natural development. It was precisely at this time that *Proletkult* and the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (*RAPP*) had regained influence. Mistrust of the peasantry had been cultivated by the Trotskyists, Mensheviks, Members of the *Forward* group and pseudo-internationalists of all sorts, and so the peasantry had borne the brunt of their policies.<sup>77</sup>

In this article, the theme of the peasantry as the repository of national culture was associated for the first time in anti-Bogdanovist historiography with the theme of cultural revolution as genocide. Reviewing a short story, *Zubr*, by Daniel Granin, which was based on the biography of the Russian geneticist, Nikolai Vladimirovich Timofeev-Resovsky (1900-1981), Kuzmin argued that Russian eugenics were to genetics what ‘God-building’ had been to Marxism. The founders of the *Russian Journal of Eugenics* (*Russkii evgenicheskii*

---

<sup>76</sup> A. Kuzmin, ‘K kakomu khramu ishchem my dorogu?’, *Nash sovremennik* (1988), No.3, p.156.

<sup>77</sup> Kuzmin, *op.cit.* (1988), p.163.



*zhurnal*) in the 1920s, he claims, had been influenced by the Bogdanovists. “Mechanism, which was a characteristic of our philosophy in the 1920s (it was also engendered by Machism) opened wide the door for eugenics”. Just as Lunacharsky had written of the “perfecting of the species, even if this means great sacrifices in the short term,” so G. Mellor, a contributor to this journal, had written of creating a “God-like being”.<sup>78</sup> Since Timofeev-Resovsky had left the Soviet Union to work in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin, the implication of Kuzmin’s argument was clear: Stalinist cultural revolution and Nazi racial policy had a common source. This was not the last time that Bogdanov’s social engineering was linked to the practice of mass extermination: in a collection published in 1989 for the use of scientific workers, teachers in higher education institutes and political propagandists, it was alleged that Bogdanov’s “counterposing of the new culture to the old” found its “implementation” (*sic*) in the excesses of the “great proletarian cultural revolution” and the atrocities of Pol Pot.<sup>79</sup>

In the work of three other nationalist critics of this period the need to deny any continuity between Leninism and Stalinism made for a denunciation of Bogdanov and the identification of his views with those of Lunacharsky. According to Alexander Gangnus, writing in *New World* in 1988, the group which had succeeded Lenin after his death had not included a single “real Marxist”: at least half of Lenin’s first Politbureau had consisted of “Left

---

<sup>78</sup> The *Russian Journal of Eugenics* had been closed down in 1929, but between 1925 and 1945 Timofeev-Resovsky had worked in the Kaiser Wilhelm Biological Institute near Berlin and from 1936 he had been director of its Department of Genetics and Biophysics.

<sup>79</sup> “Objectively, independently of his wishes, his views led to the destruction of culture.” See: M.I. Panov, ‘*Pochemu Plekhanovskaya kritika A.A. Bogdanova ne srobotala*’, in E.F. Solopov (ed.), *Marksistsko-Leninskoe metodologicheskoe nasledie i sovremennaya nauka (Vsesoyuzny Dom Politicheskogo Prosveshcheniya pri TsK KPSS, “Nauka”, Moscow, 1989)*. In more traditional vein, Panov also holds Bogdanov responsible for the sectarian cultural policies of Leopold Averbakh, Vladimir Kirshon and Fedor Raskol’nikov, and in particular for their persecution of Mikhail Bulgakov. This work had a print-run of 25,000.

Communists” and it was out of this tendency that the later “administrative command system” had grown.<sup>80</sup> Just as Stalin, who had been no theoretician, had derived his ideas on industrialization from Trotsky, so he had obtained his ideas on culture from Gorky and Lunacharsky, one-time participants in the “Capri opposition to Marxism”. For Gangnus, the “utopian socialism” of this group represented an imposition of subjective idealism, of mystical religiosity, upon the democratic values of culture and science. Voluntarism was extolled over respect for the law and arbitrariness took precedence over the spirit of enquiry. Authoritarianism and personality cult were the hallmarks of this philosophy, the theoretical foundations of which were to be found in Lunacharsky’s *Foundations of Positivist Aesthetics* of 1904,<sup>81</sup> in the early writings of Bogdanov and in the influence of Nietzsche upon both. For Gangnus, socialist realism in literature and Lysenkoism in biology also had their roots in these philosophies.<sup>82</sup>

The representation of Bogdanov and Lunacharsky as Nietzscheans rather than Marxists is to be found in another, more scholarly treatment of these issues. According to A.A. Lebedev, writing in *Problems of Philosophy (Voprosy filosofii)* in 1989:

In Russian Social Democracy ‘God-building’ found its direct political correlative in the voluntaristic tendencies of the *Forward* group, formed after the defeat of the revolution by the Bogdanovists who understood

---

<sup>80</sup> Alexander Gangnus, ‘Na ruinaх pozitivnoi estetiki (iz istorii odnogo termina)’, *Novy mir* (1988), No.9. This point had already been made by F. Burlatsky in an article in *Literaturnaya gazeta* of 20 April 1988.

<sup>81</sup> A.Lunacharsky, ‘Osnovy pozitivnoi estetiki’, in: *Ocherki realisticheskogo mirovozzreniya* (St. Petersburg, 1904).

<sup>82</sup> Gangnus, *op.cit.* (1988), pp.148-149.

Marxism as a kind of ‘philosophy of struggle,’ the meaning of which consists in the idea of forcing the sluggish and inert processes of history. This is why the Left Russian Social Democrats of this period had such sympathy for the ‘superman’ of Nietzsche.<sup>83</sup>

Describing Stalinism as “God-building of a new type”, Lebedev, traces the origins of God-building back to the ideas of the Populists, in particular to Lavrov, who had considered the moral ideal and the critically thinking individual to be the motor forces of history and to Mikhailovsky, who, in his *The Hero and the Crowd* (*Geroi i tolpa*, 1892) had outlined a theory of manipulation of the behaviour and ideas of the masses by myth.<sup>84</sup> For Lebedev, there was a kinship between these ideas and later ideas of a ‘superman’ and ‘supreme being’ who dominates and comes to personify the movement of history. Had not Stalinism created new rituals, an hierarchy of values and an apparatus of compulsion? Had not his sacrifices been accompanied by hymns of intolerance of a fanatical religious character?<sup>85</sup> For Lebedev, the ideas of the God-builders provided a “matrix” or “situation model” for those who followed.<sup>86</sup> Are Bogdanov, Bazarov and Lunacharsky to be held responsible for Stalin’s alleged application of their ideas?

Ideas, once they have been expressed, irrespective of their author’s subsequent relationship to them, have a life of their own ... . The

---

<sup>83</sup> A.A. Lebedev, ‘Poslednyaya religiya’, *Voprosy istorii* (1989), No.1, p.39. Lebedev quotes from *The Anti-Christ* in which Nietzsche talks of the need to encourage the elimination of the weak by the strong.

<sup>84</sup> Lebedev, *op.cit.* (1989), pp. 42-44.

<sup>85</sup> Lebedev, *op.cit.* (1989), p.53.

<sup>86</sup> Lebedev, *op.cit.* (1989), p.40.

connection is to be found not in the sphere of subjective motives but in the objective conditions of reproduction of a particular system of ideas.<sup>87</sup>

Even so, in his use of the term “preconditions” (*predposylki*), Lebedev makes an insinuation of historic guilt.<sup>88</sup>

For M. Arapov, writing in *Knowledge is Strength* (1990), Bogdanov was unquestionably the principal draughtsman of the social experiments of Stalin.<sup>89</sup> Bogdanov’s error, according to Arapov, was that, in common with other left intellectuals, he had subscribed to an evolutionist idea of progress. He had conceived of nature (including human nature) as an obstacle standing in the way of progress, as a realm of ‘chaos’ into which reason had to introduce order.<sup>90</sup> Certainly, in his science fiction novel, *Red Star*, Bogdanov had warned that a policy of “socialism in one country” would give rise to a society based upon a siege-economy, terror and barbaric patriotism, and had been sceptical of the notion of a society without conflict (*bezkonfliktnost*). Granted, in 1918 he had warned Lenin of the rise of a new Arakcheev, had emphasised the need for democratization and economic and cultural reconstruction, and called for an end to the oppression of nationalities. But at the same time it was Bogdanov who had invented the ‘language of utopia’ that had served as the Bolshevik régime’s instrument of radical social change.<sup>91</sup> According to Bogdanov’s organization theory, if the forces making for conflict

---

<sup>87</sup> Lebedev, *op.cit.* (1989), pp.38, 40.

<sup>88</sup> Lebedev, *op.cit.* (1989), p.52.

<sup>89</sup> Arapov, *op.cit.* (1990), p.66.

<sup>90</sup> Arapov here introduces the then fashionable theme that Marxists displayed a violent and exploitative attitude towards nature. [In recent years, Arran Gare and Giulia Rispoli have shown that Bogdanov’s work has completely different ecological implications].

<sup>91</sup> Arapov, *op.cit.* (1990), pp. 66-68.

within society did not in all instances result in social breakdown, this was only because countervailing forces were at work. The forces making for equilibrium he had defined as ‘culture’ and his error had been to think that he could harness the forces of culture in order to reconstruct society. Though his first experiment in linguistic and cultural engineering, the Proletkult, had failed, his project had subsequently been taken up by men of action and applied on a scale that he himself could not have imagined. Arapov, like Lebedev, exonerated Bogdanov from responsibility for the uses to which his ideas were put, but in a similar back-handed fashion: “It was not Bogdanov who constructed this Devil’s kitchen ... but he was one of its architects”.<sup>92</sup>

### **Rehabilitation in Soviet Russia**

Not having been a member of the Communist Party, and not having died as a consequence of the Purges, Bogdanov did not come into the same category of political oppositionist as such ‘Old Bolsheviks’ as Bukharin. Strictly speaking, his “case” was not covered by a resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on 6 January 1989, “On additional measures to restore justice with respect to the victims of the repression that took place in the 1930s, the 1940s and the early 1950s.” Even so, it would appear that the decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR which followed, on 16 January 1989, provided the legal basis for Bogdanov’s rehabilitation.<sup>93</sup> The KGB now closed the case which the OGPU and its successors had kept open since 1923 and re-classified the files which they had held on Bogdanov since that time.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Arapov, *op.cit.* (1990), p.71.

<sup>93</sup> For the resolution of the Central Committee, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, XLI (1989), No.1, p.13.

<sup>94</sup> See the notes in the Ashgate Bibliography to Bogdanov’s *Five Weeks with the GPU* (1923).

Bogdanov's un-official rehabilitation had begun a year earlier: Unsurprisingly, it was the work, in the first instance, not of Party historians but of local historians, economists, systems theorists and historians of science. The 60th anniversary of Bogdanov's death and the 115th anniversary of his birth provided the occasion for a spate of articles which appeared in the Soviet press during 1988.<sup>95</sup> On 12 May 1988 a commemorative meeting was held under the joint auspices of the Moscow Society of Historians of Medicine and the Section for the History of Biological Sciences of the Moscow Society of Naturalists in the Institute for the Organization of Health Care and Social Hygiene of the Soviet Ministry of Health. This meeting was attended by scholars from the Institute for the History of the Natural Sciences and of Technique of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the All-Union Haematological Centre of the Soviet Ministry of Health, the Institute of Economics and the Institute for Systems Research of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The meeting was addressed by Bogdanov's son and Doctor of Biological Sciences, A.A. Malinovsky, and by Georgii D. Gloveli, a researcher of the Institute of Economics, who spoke on "The systems method of A.A. Bogdanov and the development of blood transfusion". Those in attendance pointed to the theoretical contribution of Bogdanov to the natural sciences: in 1908, three years before K.E. Tsiolkovsky, Bogdanov had predicted the use of atomic power for rocket propulsion. His theories of 'feed-back' and of the 'weak link' had been applied in the disciplines of economics (in the modelling of inter-sector balances) and biology (in the study of the ageing process). His general systems theory, denounced as reactionary during the 1950s, had, in 1978, been declared ahead of its time by the American scholar Richard Mattesich.

---

<sup>95</sup> Bogdanov was born on 10 August 1873 (o.s.); he died on 7 April 1928.

Thanks to Bogdanov's efforts, the first Soviet Institute for Blood Transfusion had been founded in 1926.<sup>96</sup>

The rise of 'regional consciousness' in Russia played a part in the rehabilitation of Bogdanov. As early as 1982, V.V. Novoselov, a specialist in the history of the Russian North, had published in *Soviet Health Care* an article on Bogdanov's exile in Vologda. Drawing extensively upon local archives, he had pointed out the importance of Bogdanov's role in the revolution of 1905.<sup>97</sup> On 11 September 1988 another article on the same theme, written this time by a local economist, V. Perepechenko, appeared in the Vologda newspaper *Red North*.<sup>98</sup> On 6 December 1988, *Red North* published a view of Bogdanov's career by Georgii D. Gloveli in which he expanded more fully on the significance of Bogdanov than in his address of April. Enlisting the prestige of the recently legitimized Bukharin, Gloveli pointed out that Bukharin had been amongst those who had published fulsome obituaries after Bogdanov's death.<sup>99</sup> Bogdanov had been a major intellectual influence during the 1920s: his textbooks on economics had been widely used in Soviet and Party Schools and his works had been translated into almost twenty languages. His views on economic development, in particular his insistence on the need for proportionality and the strict compensation of labour expenditures, had coincided with those of other critics of Stalinist economic policy, such as V.A. Bazarov and N.D. Kondratiev. His arguments on the retardative effect of

---

<sup>96</sup> G.D. Gloveli, 'Zasedanie, posvyashchennoe pamyati A.A.Bogdanova', *Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniya i tekhniki* (AN SSSR, Moscow, 1989), No.1, pp.144-145.

<sup>97</sup> V.I. Novoselov, 'A.A.Bogdanov v Vologodskoi ssylke', *Sovetskoe zdavookhranenie* (Moscow, "Meditsina", 1982), No.3, pp.67-70. Novoselov's article had been submitted on 8 September 1981. See also his *Marsiane iz-pod Vologdy* (Vologda, 1994).

<sup>98</sup> V. Perepechenko, 'A.A.Bogdanov v Vologde', *Krasny sever*, 11 September 1988. *Krasny sever* was the newspaper of the Vologda Oblast Party Committee and Oblast Soviet.

<sup>99</sup> Bukharin, 'A.A. Bogdanov', *Pravda*, 8 April 1928.

bureaucratic regulation upon economic growth and on the impossibility of real planning in conditions of class war had constituted a challenge to the administrative command system. Many of Bogdanov's ideas had their counterpart in the theories of V.I. Vernadsky concerning the "noosphere". He had been an influence on the writers Andrei Platonov and Ivan Efremov. His systems theory, which had begun to receive grudging recognition only during the 1960s, was of direct relevance to the needs of *perestroika*.<sup>100</sup>

Gloveli's article served as a prelude to the convening in Vologda from 8—10 December 1988 of a first 'All-Union Seminar' under the title "Bogdanov Readings" which was attended by specialists from Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Lvov and Grodno. The Institute of Economics, the Institute of Blood Transfusion, and the Institute for Systems Research were again represented, as also, this time, was the Vavilov Institute for Genetics.<sup>101</sup> However, this was a little publicised event. A more significant step towards rehabilitation was taken on 7 December 1988 with the publication in *Literaturnaya gazeta* of a full-page article entitled 'Opponent', written by V. Dorofeev on the basis of information supplied by Nadezhda Konstantinovna Figurovskaya and Georgii D. Gloveli. Here, liberally interspersed with excerpts from Bukharin's obituary, the earlier themes of rehabilitation were further developed: the impeccable credentials of Bogdanov as a revolutionary before and during the 1905 revolution; his importance as a disseminator of Marxist ideas; his status as a Professor of Political Economy in the First Moscow State University and as a founder-member of the Socialist Academy.

---

<sup>100</sup> G. Gloveli, 'Ucheny-revolutsioner', *Krasny sever*, 6 December 1988.

<sup>101</sup> For a report on the seminar, see V. Perepechenko, 'Ekho Bogdanovskikh chtenii', *Krasny sever*, 21 December 1988. Perepechenko was at this time campaigning for the display of a Bogdanov memorial plaque in the Kuvshinovo hospital where Bogdanov and Lunacharsky worked during their exile. In 1975 the local party organization had fixed a plaque but only to the memory of Lunacharsky.



Did not the effort invested by Lenin in his *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* indicate that, for Lenin, Bogdanov was an ‘opponent’ whose stature was on a par with that of Dühring for Engels? In the year in which Lenin had worked on his treatise, Bogdanov had published *Red Star* in which he had predicted the consequences of a policy of attempting to construct “socialism in one country”. Had Lenin’s judgement of Bogdanov not been too harsh? Whatever opinions one might have regarding Bogdanov’s epistemology, his *Tektology* (as Bukharin had pointed out to Lenin, who had not read this work) had to be seen as a pioneering effort to transcend philosophy and to discover the general laws governing all structural relationships. “From a present day standpoint such an endeavour does not contain the slightest amount of heresy.” As for the Proletkult, Bogdanov had emphatically condemned the cultural iconoclasm of certain groups within it. His contribution to the science of blood transfusion had more than redeemed any of his alleged aberrations.<sup>102</sup>

Among social science institutions, the principal initiative for the rehabilitation of Bogdanov was taken during 1988 by the Institute of Economics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In September 1988 a “Commission on the Scientific Legacy of A.A. Bogdanov” was set up within the Institute under Leonid Abalkin and Nadezhda Figurovskaya with Georgii Gloveli as secretary. By 1989 this Commission had produced a two-volume edition of Bogdanov’s *Tektology* in the series *Legacy in Economics (Ekonomicheskoe nasledie)*.<sup>103</sup> The originality of Bogdanov’s ideas (and his claim to be the first to

---

<sup>102</sup> V. Dorofeev, ‘Opponent’, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 7 December 1988, p.13. The article carries the famous photograph of the chess game between Bogdanov and Lenin on Capri in April 1908 (not 1909 as indicated). In a letter to Lunacharsky of 19 November 1917 Bogdanov would describe Lenin as a “crude chess-player” (“*gruby shakhmatist*”). See Georgii D. Gloveli, ‘Socialism of science versus socialism of feelings’, *Studies in Soviet Thought* 42 (1991).

<sup>103</sup> A.A. Bogdanov, *Tektologiya: Vseobshchaya organizatsionnaya nauka* (2 vols, Moscow, 1989). The print run of this edition was only 8,000. The same editorial collegium of the Institute of Economics was involved in the re-publication of works by two other famous victims of the

have employed the term “War Communism”) was for the first time acknowledged in a leading Soviet history journal in 1990.<sup>104</sup> In the same year an anthology of Bogdanov’s works prepared by Georgii D. Gloveli was published under the title *Problems of Socialism*.<sup>105</sup> From 1989, the momentum of rehabilitation and rediscovery was maintained at a series of national and international conferences. The first of these was convened in April 1989 by the Institute of History of the USSR of the Academy of Sciences, the Scientific Council of the Academy of Sciences on the History of Social Thought and the Moscow City Archival Administration.<sup>106</sup> In April 1991, a special session was devoted to Bogdanov at a conference on Russian culture held in the former Komsomol High School.<sup>107</sup> Conferences were convened in Moscow in 1993 on the 120th anniversary of Bogdanov's birth and in 1996 on the 70th anniversary of founding of the Institute of Blood Transfusion.<sup>108</sup>

---

purges: A.V. Chayanov, *Krest’yanское khozyaistvo* (Moscow, 1989); and N.D. Kondratiev, *Problemy ekonomicheskoi dinamiki* (Moscow, 1989).

<sup>104</sup> V.P. Buldakov and V.V. Kabanov, ‘Voenny kommunizm: ideologiya i obshchestvennoe razvitiye’, *Voprosy istorii* (1990), No.3, p.41.

<sup>105</sup> A.A. Bogdanov, *Voprosy sotsializma. Raboty raznykh let* (Moscow, 1990). The editorial board comprised L.I. Abalkin, G.D. Gloveli, V.K. Paramenov and N.K. Figurowskaya.

<sup>106</sup> The Archival Administration, which in April 1989 mounted an exhibition of documents and photographs materials drawn from various state archives, had by this time founded a Bogdanov collection of its own. For a report on the conference, “A.A. Bogdanov (*Malinovskii*) *Revolutionary and Thinker*”, see *Voprosy istorii* (1989), No.10, pp.183-184.

<sup>107</sup> The conference of April 1991, “*Russian culture in the first third of the twentieth century*”, was organized by the History Section of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the Youth Institute of the Central Committee of the Komsomol and State Committee of Labour, and by the Institute of Soviet History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. For contributions by the historians of the Komsomol High School to the revision of “Leninism”, see the anthology *Politicheskie opponenty Lenina* (Institut Molodezhi TsK VLKSM i Goskomtruda SSSR, Moscow, 1991) and, in particular, L. Chizhova, ‘On ne byl ortodoksalen ...’.

<sup>108</sup> The conference of 5 October 1993 was convened by the Russian National Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, the Institute of Economics, the Institute of the History of Science and Technology, the Institute of Man, the Institute of Systems Analysis (all of the Russian Academy of Sciences), the Russian State Humanitarian University and the Bogdanov Centre for Tektological Research. The conference of 1996 was

## Rehabilitation in the West

The ‘re-discovery’ of Bogdanov in the West preceded his rehabilitation in Russia by a good number of years. Though his *Tektology* had been translated into German between 1926 and 1928, and a number of his works on economics and culture had been translated during the 1920s, these translations had not established his reputation. In Poland during the 1960s a freer intellectual atmosphere made possible an early reappraisal of Bogdanov. In 1961 the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences, T. Kotarbinski, called for a lifting of the ban on *Tektology* which he described as “a work full of penetrating insights and original ideas”. For Kotarbinski, a leading representative of the widely respected Lvov-Warsaw school of logicians and philosophers, Bogdanov’s work had anticipated the new discipline of ‘Praxiology’, the “general theory of optimization of work” at that time being developed by Polish scholars.<sup>109</sup> In 1968 the Polish scholar W. Przelaskowski pointed out the similarity between Bogdanov’s “law of the minimum” and contemporary principles of network planning and management (the PERT methodology).<sup>110</sup>

Outside of the Communist bloc, the French socialist L. Apostel as early as 1960 described Bogdanov’s universal organizational science as an attempt to “enlist cybernetics in the renewal of Marx’s general theory of labour”.<sup>111</sup> However, credit for initiating the scholarly study of Bogdanov in the West belongs to Dietrich Grille for his *Lenins Rivale. Bogdanov und seine Philosophie*

---

convened from 22-24 April by the National Research Centre for Haematology of the Russian Academy of Medical Science, Moscow, the successor to the Institute of Blood Transfusion.

<sup>109</sup> G.D. Gloveli, “Sotsializm nauki”: *Mebiusova lenta A.A.Bogdanova* (Moscow, 1991), p.54.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, p.55.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.54-55.

(1966) and to Avraham Yassour, whose bibliography, ‘Bogdanov et son oeuvre’, in the journal *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* (1969) resulted from his doctoral research in the University of Paris. In 1978 and 1979 George Haupt and Jutta Scherrer began to publish some of the results of their research into Bogdanov’s early political career.<sup>112</sup> The contribution of German scholarship was augmented in 1980 by the publication of Gabriele Gorzka’s *A. Bogdanov und der russische Proletkult* and, in 1982, of Krisztina Mánicke-Gyöngyösi’s “*Proletarische Wissenschaft*” und “*sozialistische Menschheitsreligion*” als Modelle proletarischer Kultur. By 1984, in a note on the state of ‘Bogdanov studies’, Zenovia Sochor was able to write that “A.A. Bogdanov is undoubtedly coming into his own in the West”.<sup>113</sup> Soon afterwards, a number of important books appeared which contributed to our understanding of the place of Bogdanov in the history of Russian politics and social thought. These were Robert Williams’s *The Other Bolsheviks: Lenin and his Critics 1904-1914* (1986), Zenovia Sochor’s *Revolution and Culture: the Bogdanov-Lenin Controversy* (1988) and Lynn Mally’s *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (1990).

In a number of monographs scholars have investigated important aspects of Bogdanov’s social thought and political career. James White has written on Bogdanov’s activities in Tula and Moscow before 1905;<sup>114</sup> Avraham Yassour

---

<sup>112</sup> See, for example: Georges Haupt & Jutta Scherrer, ‘Gor’kij, Bogdanov, Lenin. Neue Quellen zur ideologischen Krise in der bolschewistischen Fraktion (1908-1910)’ and Jutta Scherrer, ‘Les Écoles du parti de Capri et de Bologne: La formation de l’intelligentsia du parti’, in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, XIX (1978), No.3; Jutta Scherrer, ‘Culture prolétarienne et religion socialiste entre deux révolutions: les “Bolchéviks de gauche”’, *Europa* (1979), No.2; Jutta Scherrer, ‘The cultural hegemony of the proletariat. The origins of Bogdanov’s vision of proletarian culture’, *Studies in History* (1989), No.2.

<sup>113</sup> Zenovia Sochor, ‘On the difficulties of rehabilitating Bogdanov in the Soviet Union’, *Sbornik* (Newsletter of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution, No.10 (1984), pp.11-12.

<sup>114</sup> James D. White, ‘The first Pravda and the Russian Marxist tradition’, *Soviet Studies* (1974) No.2; ‘Bogdanov in Tula’, *Studies in Soviet Thought* 22 (1981).

has studied Bogdanov's philosophy and his interpretation of the revolution of 1905;<sup>115</sup> Zenovia Sochor has made it clear that Bogdanov, unlike Lunacharsky, was not a disciple of Nietzsche;<sup>116</sup> Jutta Scherrer has previewed her edition of the Bogdanov-Gorky correspondence;<sup>117</sup> Gabriele Gorzka and Lynn Mally have written on the theory and practice of the *Proletkult*.<sup>118</sup> I have myself dealt with Bogdanov's ideas on 'War Communism' and 'New Class' and attempted to evaluate his influence upon Bukharin.<sup>119</sup> The translation into English of Bogdanov's science fiction prefigured an American interest in the Russian revolution from the standpoint of 'utopianism'. Here, the work of Richard Stites has been important.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> A. Yassour, 'The empiriologist critique of dialectical materialism', *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 24 (1983); and 'Bogdanov-Malinovsky on Party and Revolution', *Studies in Soviet Thought* 25 (1984).

<sup>116</sup> Z. Sochor, 'A.A. Bogdanov: in search of cultural liberation', in: Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), *Nietzsche in Russia* (Princeton, 1986).

<sup>117</sup> J. Scherrer, 'Gorkij-Bogdanov: aperçu sur une correspondance non publiée', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* (1988), No.1. This correspondence has since been published. See Jutta Scherrer and Daniela Steila, *Gor'kij-Bogdanov e la scuola di Capri. Una corrispondenza inedita (1908—1911)*. Carocci editore. Rome 2017.

<sup>118</sup> G. Gorzka, 'Proletarian cultural revolution: the conception of Aleksandr A. Bogdanov', (*Sbornik*) Newsletter of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution, No.9 (1983); L. Mally, 'Intellectuals in the Proletkult: problems of authority and expertise', in D.P. Koenker, W.G. Rosenberg, and R.G. Suny, *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington, 1989).

<sup>119</sup> John Biggart, 'Bukharin and the origins of the proletarian culture debate', *Soviet Studies* (1987), No.2; John Biggart, 'Alexander Bogdanov and the theory of a "New Class"', *The Russian Review* (1990), No.3.

<sup>120</sup> *Red Star* was first published in English in L. Fetzer (ed.), *Pre-Revolutionary Russian Science Fiction: An Anthology* (Ann Arbor, 1982). *Red Star* and *Engineer Menni* have also been translated by Charles Roughton in: L.R. Graham & Richard Stites (eds.), *Red Star: The First Bolshevik Utopia* (Bloomington, 1984). See also Mark B. Adams, 'Red Star - Another look at Aleksandr Bogdanov', *Slavic Review* (1989), No.1; and Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams. Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York & Oxford, 1989).

The publication in 1990 of a special issue of *The Russian Review* testified to a still growing interest in Bogdanov.<sup>121</sup> By this time, however, it had become apparent that for Bogdanov to be accorded an appropriate place in the history of Russian social thought and of the social sciences, a far greater number of his works would have to be translated. A short version of *Tektology* had been published in English in 1980,<sup>122</sup> and in January 1995 an international conference on the importance of *Tektology* in the history of organization theory was convened in Norwich.<sup>123</sup> In March 1996, a collaborative effort by Vadim N. Sadovsky, Vladimir V. Kelle and the British systems theorist, Peter Dudley, produced the first English-language edition of the first volume of *Tektology*.<sup>124</sup> However, many important works of Bogdanov still await translation.

---

<sup>121</sup> *The Russian Review* (1989), No.3. Articles by Marot and Biggart and commentaries by A. Kelly, Z. Sochor and A. Walicki.

<sup>122</sup> See George Gorelik, (Trs.), *Essays in Tektology. The General Science of Organization* (Intersystems Publications, Seaside, California, 1980). This is a translation of *Ocherki Vseobshchei Organizatsionnoi Nauki* (Samarskii Proletkult, Gosizdat, Samara, 1921). Appendices by Bogdanov and an introductory article by Yu.Milonov have been omitted.

<sup>123</sup> See John Biggart, Peter Dudley and Francis King (eds.), *Alexander Bogdanov and the Origins of Systems Thinking in Russia* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 1998).

<sup>124</sup> *Bogdanov's Tektology*, Book 1. Foreword by Vadim N. Sadovsky and Vladimir V. Kelle. Edited, with an introduction by Peter Dudley (Centre for Systems Studies, The University of Hull, 1996).

## **Bogdanov's bibliographers**

The first scholar to compile a bibliography of Bogdanov's works was Joel Naftalievich Koblents (1900-1983), a professional bibliographer and member of the Communist Academy.<sup>125</sup> With the assistance of Bogdanov, Koblents completed his work in 1923.<sup>126</sup> The bibliography of Koblents lists only published works: there are 365 numbered entries in the Russian language and these are listed alphabetically by title. The listing of editions is a valuable feature of the work of Koblents, as is a list of reviews published during the 1890s and 1900s, a list of political brochures and pamphlets written by Bogdanov but which did not carry his name, and a list of translations.<sup>127</sup>

As a consequence of Bogdanov's arrest by the OGPU in 1923, the bibliography of Koblents was never published and it survived only in typescript copies held by Bogdanov's son A.A. Malinovsky, the Koblents family, the Social Science Library (INION), the Library of the Academy of Sciences, and the former Central Party Archive (now the Russian State Archive of Socio Political History - RGASPI). According to Joseph Belenky, some of these typescripts contain additions made by Koblents after 1923, or by others after that date. What seems to have been a draft edition of the bibliography in card index form, which was formerly in the possession of Bogdanov's son, has also circulated and was consulted for the present work

---

<sup>125</sup> According to Bogdanov's son, Alexander Alexandrovich Malinovsky, Koblents undertook this work at the suggestion of Lenin. See A.A. Maiknovsky, 'Vospominaniya o Bogdanove' (no date, Bogdanov Family Archive).

<sup>126</sup> Koblents is best known as the compiler of the famous "*Bio-Biograficheskii Arkhiv*". See I.L. Belenkii, '*I.N. Koblents: zhiznenny put', nauchnoe nasledie', Arkhiograficheskii Ezhegodnik za 1986 god*' (Moscow, 1987), pp.241-255.

<sup>127</sup> According to Belenkii, Koblents, in a list of his own works which he compiled in 1965, gave the title "*A.A. Bogdanov (Malinovskii). Bibliografiya ego trudov*" (Moscow, 1923, 82 pp.). The copy used for the present bibliography contained 365 entries in 81 pages and did not include translations. See Belenkii, *op.cit.*, p.242.

(this card index is considered by some to have been Bogdanov's son's own compilation).

Before Bogdanov's death, a brief listing of his works was provided by N. Karev in volume 6 (1927) of the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*.<sup>128</sup> Between 1925 and 1926 Bogdanov prepared a version of his autobiography for the anniversary edition of the *Granat* encyclopaedia and this was published, together with a list of works, in 1929.<sup>129</sup> A critical entry on Bogdanov written by G. Lelevich for the first Soviet *Literary Encyclopaedia* contained very few references to his works.<sup>130</sup> In 1931, a much fuller list was provided in V.I. Nevsky's *Leaders of the Revolutionary Movement in Russia: A Bio-Bibliographical Dictionary*.<sup>131</sup> Thereafter, it was not until 1989 that any serious listing of Bogdanov's works appeared in Soviet sources, with the republication of *Tektology* by the Institute of Economics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The bibliographical appendix to the second volume of this edition was compiled by Georgii Gloveli with reference to the bibliography of Koblents.<sup>132</sup>

In the West, Dietrich Grille provided a valuable bibliography in his monograph of 1966, listing over 150 titles.<sup>133</sup> However, it is to Avraham Yassour that we are indebted for the next major step forward. In his doctoral

---

<sup>128</sup> See *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, T.6 (Moscow, 1927), pp.574-582.

<sup>129</sup> See *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Bibliograficheskogo Instituta Granat. Deyateli Soyuzov Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Oktyabr'skoi Revolyutsii*, T.I (Moscow, 1929), pp.30-33.

<sup>130</sup> See *Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya*, T.I (Moscow, 1929), pp.525/6-529/30.

<sup>131</sup> V.I. Nevskii (ed.), *Deyateli revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii: bio-bibliograficheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1931).

<sup>132</sup> See A.A. Bogdanov. *Tektologiya. Vseobshchaya organizatsionnaya nauka* (Moscow, "Ekonomika", 2 vols., 1989), vol. II, pp.332-338.

<sup>133</sup> Dietrich Grille, *Lenins Rivale. Bogdanov und seine Philosophie* (Cologne, Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1966).



dissertation for the University of Paris on Bogdanov's role in the revolution of 1905, Yassour included an extensive bibliography and in 1969 this was published in systematic form, together with commentaries, in the journal *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* under the title '*Bogdanov et son oeuvre*'.<sup>134</sup> In 1989, in view of the new opportunities for research which had opened up in the Soviet Union, John Biggart and Georgii Gloveli agreed to work with Yassour on the expansion of this bibliography. Gloveli was at this time a member of the International Commission on the Legacy of A.A. Bogdanov which had been set up by the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences under the chairmanship of Leonid Ivanovich Abalkin and the direction of Nadezhda Konstantinovna Figurovskaya. Invaluable support was received from Galina Dmitrievna Alekseeva, of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. From an early stage in this project, Peter Alexandrovich Plyutto, a professional archivist working in the Moscow City Archives and, later, in the Russian State Humanitarian University, contributed important biographical data and guidance in the matter of archival sources.<sup>135</sup>

When, after August 1991, open access was provided to the former Central Party Archive (TsPA) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the authors obtained the assistance of Nina Sergeevna Antonova and Natalya Venyaminovna Drozdova, who were themselves working on the classification of the archive's holdings on Bogdanov. Guidance on materials held in the library of the former Institute of Marxism-Leninism was provided by Maya

---

<sup>134</sup> Avraham Yassour, '*Bogdanov et son oeuvre*', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* (1969), vol.X (juillet-décembre), pp.546-584.

<sup>135</sup> Plyutto's doctoral thesis was an important source, together with the research of Georgii D. Gloveli, for the location of materials in Russian state archives. See: Petr Aleksandrovich Plyutto, '*Istoriya i opyt rekonstruktsii arkhiva A.A.Bogdanova (Malinovskogo) (1873-1928 gg.)*'. *Dokumenty A.A.Bogdanov i dokumenty o ego zhizni i deyatel'nosti v Rossiskikh i zarubezhnykh arkhivakh*. Dissertation submitted for the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences to the Russian State Humanitarian University (Institute of Historical Archives), Moscow, 1994.

Davydovna Dvorkina. In the Institute of World Literature, Irina Alexandrovna Revyakina contributed her extensive knowledge of the correspondence between Bogdanov and Gorky. The cultural historians Larisa Chizhova and Andrei Rogachevsky generously provided information from their own archival research.

Western scholars were generous in their support. These included: in Glasgow University, James D. White a leading authority in the history of Marxism in Russia and John Jackson, who was pursuing doctoral research into the history of the labour movement in Moscow. Works published during the 1980s and 1990s by Gabriela Gorzka, K.M. Jensen, Lynn Mally, Krisztina Mánicke Gyöngyösi, Zenovia Sochor, Jutta Scherrer and Robert C. Williams, provided not only valuable background information but also many references. The American haematologist, Douglas Huestis, made materials available from his personal collection and provided expertise on Bogdanov's contribution to the science of blood transfusion.

© John Biggart (November 2018)