

BUKHARIN ON ANARCHISM AT THE RED LABOR CONGRESS

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It was the Summer of 1921. The First Red Labor International Congress¹ was seen to meet in Moscow, and many delegates from foreign countries were expected. The Anarchists at liberty in Moscow at the time were a mere handful. Most of our comrades were in the various prisons of R.S.F.S.R.², and – to tell the truth – I was getting ashamed of still being free. Every Anarchist in Moscow was anxious, indeed, felt it his duty, to bring to the attention of the foreign delegates, individually and collectively, the situation with regard to our persecuted comrades, as well as the general conditions of the country and of the Revolution.

A couple of months before, on April 25, 1921, the Anarchists confined in the Butirka prison, in Moscow, had been attacked at night, without the least provocation, by the Tcheka. It was a scene of ruthless brutality. The prisoners, helpless and exhausted by long confinement and undernourishment, were beaten up in the regular American police style. The men were clubbed with the butts of guns, by Tchekists and soldiers; the women were dragged down the stone steps by their hair; they were terrorised and threatened to be shot. Some of them believed they were being taken to execution, for the latter is almost always done at night, without warning, and in the manner described above.

For days following we did not know what had become of our comrades in the Butirka. All information was refused us, and we knew only that something terrible had happened, and that our comrades had disappeared from the prison. Then, about a week later, there began to arrive little sub rosa notes from our kidnapped comrades. One come from Ryazan, another from Orel, a third from Vladimir. We then learned that our comrades had been forcibly removed from the Butirka, separated and taken to different prisons. Thus A[ron] Baron found himself in Orel prison, while his wife, Fanny Baron, was sent to Ryazan, and so on. Later some of the men were transferred to the

*) IISG Amsterdam, *ALEXANDER BERKMAN Papers No. 184*.

<http://search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCH00040/ArchiveContentList>

Typescript, 6 pages, with very few manual corrections.

Underlining in the script is *italicized*, CAPITAL LETTERS are **bold**; obvious type errors are silently corrected; the few (unimportant) manual corrections are not noted; footnotes and [square brackets] are by the editor.

A German translation is published in “**Kampfgeister**”. Mitteilungen aus dem *Institut für Syndikalismusforschung* (Bremen), No. 4/September 2025, p. 52 – 67: <https://syndikalismusforschung.wordpress.com/2025/09/27/neu-erschienen-die-vierte-ausgabe-der-kampfgeister/#more-4335>

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- 1 Founding Congress of the *Red International of Labour Unions* (RILU) in Moscow, July 3rd – 19th 1921. For the proceedings of the congress cf. MIKE TABER (ed.), *The Founding of the Red Trade Union International. Proceedings and Resolutions of the First Congress, 1921*, Leiden – Boston 2024 (Brill); cf. also GEORGE WILLIAMS, *The First Congress of the Red Trade Union International in Moscow, 1921*. A Report of the Proceedings by GEO. WILLIAMS, Delegate from the I.W.W. (Second Revised Edition), Chicago 1922 (IWW) – the most accurate contemporary account; for the history of the RILU cf. REINER TOSSTORFF, *The Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), 1920-1937*, Leiden – Boston 2016 (Brill); for the relations of the international syndicalist movement and the RILU cf. also WAYNE THORPE, “*The Workers Themselves*”. Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923, Dordrecht – Boston – London and IISG Amsterdam 1989 (Kluver); REINER TOSSTORFF, *The syndicalist encounter with Bolshevism*; in: *Anarchist Studies*, Vol. 17.2/2009, p. 12 – 28.
- 2 Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

Taganka prison, in Moscow, among them Wolin{Voline}, [Efim] Yartchuk, [Grigorii Petrovich] Maximoff, [Mark] Mratchny, and several others. Most of the Anarchists in the various prisons were confined since December, 1920, when they were arrested in Kharkov just before the *legally permitted* Anarchist Conference was to begin in that city.

In the months of May and June, 1921, delegates began to arrive in Moscow for the Third Congress of the Communist International and for the Red Labor Congress. The Moscow Anarchists had several conferences with a number of the delegates, even some Communists participating. Besides that, we have had talks with almost every delegate to the Red Labor Congress, supplying them with the necessary information and asking them to investigate for themselves the truth of our statements. The foreign delegates, Anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists, and even some Communists seemed to be outraged and indignant over such happenings as the brutalities in the Butirka prison, and at first could hardly credit that such things could happen in a revolutionary Republic. They were also inclined to doubt that Anarchists or other revolutionary elements are really persecuted and suppressed in Russia. Thus Souvarine³, one of the intellectual leaders of the Communists of France, told us that as a French Communist and an adherent of Moscow, he yet could not believe such a situation possible. Before long, however, the delegates convinced themselves that our statements were in no way exaggerated, and most of them agreed that something must be undertaken to bring about friendlier relations between the Bolshevik government and the left revolutionary elements, especially the Anarchists and Anarcho-syndicalists.

Meanwhile the Red Labor Congress had opened⁴, time was passing, and our comrades still remained in the prisons. Conditions in the latter were constantly growing worse: the regime was becoming more severe, the food ever more insufficient, the treatment more brutal. The imprisoned men and women felt that they could not live in such conditions much longer: many of them fell sick, and all of them were in exhausted physical condition. The Taganka prisoners were especially driven to desperation by the hopeless outlook: no charges were being brought against any of our comrades, and the attitude of the Tcheka convinced them that their imprisonment was to be permanent. At last they decided to send a declaration to the Bolshevik government. They called attention to the fact that all of them had been arrested arbitrarily and were kept in prison without cause; that no charges were made against them, contrary to the provisions of the constitution of Russia which directs that no person be held without a charge longer than 48 hours. The declaration demanded the liberation of the imprisoned comrades and stated that the men would declare a hunger strike to the death if they received no satisfaction within five days. This declaration, signed by the 13 Anarchist prisoners in the Taganka, was sent to the following official bodies⁵: 1) the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, the Ve-Tcheka; 2) the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, de jure the highest State authority of Russia; 3) the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, de facto the highest government body of Russia; 4) the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and 5) the Executive Committee of the Red Labor International.

Five days passed, and **no reply** came from any of the organizations addressed. In consequence, the Taganka hunger strike was declared on the night of 3-4 of July, 1921.

It was a desperate step by people driven to desperation by the callous and brutal attitude of the Bolsheviks. Considering the already exhausted condition of the prisoners, a long-protracted hunger

3 BORIS SOUVARINE (1895 – 1984).

4 July 3rd, 1921.

5 June 28th, 1921.

strike practically meant certain death.

Some of the Moscow Anarchists, that were at liberty, insisted that the anarcho-syndicalist delegates bring the matter of the persecution of our comrades up on the floor of the Red Labor Congress. We considered it something more than a question involving the 13 hunger strikers, or even all the comrades in prison. It was a situation that concerned the whole Anarchist movement in Russia; nay, more: it involved fundamental principles of the Revolution itself. Our efforts at last resulted in a Committee of delegates being formed. It was decided to try first semi-officially to reach some agreement with the leaders of the Bolsheviki, in order to avoid bringing the matter up publicly before the Congress. Thereupon the Delegate Committee, consisting of French and Spanish representatives⁶, called upon Dzierżyński⁷, chief of the Ve-Tcheka. Dzierżyński proved very affable and friendly, remarking that it could no doubt be arranged for **all** the Anarchist in Russian prisons to be released. He requested the Committee to submit a list of the persons they wished released. The Committee were jubilant.

We prepared a partial list of our prisoners. There was no means of making a complete list, since only the Tcheka itself possessed such information. Our list contained only the names of our comrades in the prisons of Petrograd and Moscow, with a few others known to us as being in several other prisons. Who was imprisoned in the South of Russia, in the East and in Siberia we had no means of learning. The Committee submitted our *partial* list to Dzierżyński. This time he was not so affable as at first interview. He began to make excuses: “some” could not be released, but he would see what can be done. He would return the list to the Committee in a day or two and would then indicate who could be released.

A week passed in fruitless efforts to secure the next interview with Dzierżyński. The Committee men were getting restive; some of them began feel it everything was not quite as it ought to be. At last the Tcheka chief was gracious enough to see them again. This time he was brusque. He informed the Committee that the imprisoned Anarchists were “too dangerous to be released{”}; besides, he told them confidentially, some of them were “bandits” and the delegates need not concern themselves about them. But “the government was anxious to show every possible consideration to the foreign delegates”, and honor their request “so far as possible”; therefore some of the men on the list presented by the delegates would be released. And thereupon Dzierżyński handed to the Committee a list of Anarchists in the Taganka that “could be released”. The list contained just **four** names – boy students who were arrested for reading the works of Kropotkin in their home circle. The list did not contain a single name of our tried old comrades in the various prisons of the Bolsheviki.

The members of the Committee began to realize that their conferences with Dzierżyński would lead to nothing. Some of them even understood that Dzierżyński was merely playing for time, and that his offer to release four of the prisoners was calculated merely to break the hunger strike in the Taganka. It was already the eighth day of the strike⁸. The condition of the prisoners was very critical: none of them could walk any more; several had suffered fainting spells, one man lost his hearing, another was unconscious. Three of the comrades seemed already at the point of death.

6 Of the five delegation members, only JOAQUÍN MAURIN (Spain, *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* – CNT) is known by name (cf. TOSSTORFF, RILU, p. 399, fn. 134); following BERKMAN the others could be HILARI ARLANDIS (CNT), and MOISEI KNELER [MICHEL], HENRI SIROLLE and JEAN GAUDEAUX (France – *Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires* – CSR).

7 FELIKS EDMUNDOWICZ DZIERŻYŃSKI (1877 – 1926); *in the script*: 'Djerzhinsky'.

8 July 10th, 1921.

A committee of ten delegates, representing various countries and including anarcho-syndicalists as well as communists, (Tom Mann, Sirolle, Gaudeau⁹, Michel, Leval, Arlandis¹⁰, Cascaden and others¹¹) went to see Lenin about the matter¹². Lenin at first sent out word that he was busy, and declined to see them. But the Committee insisted on an interview, considering the seriousness of the situation, and Lenin finally consented. He assured the delegates that the imprisoned Anarchists were really not worth troubling about, but added that he would be willing to release them and deport them out of Russia. "If they should return they would be shot", he told the delegates. The delegates left with the promise of Lenin that the matter would be decided that evening by the Central Committee of the Party, and that the decision would be communicated to the Committee the next days.

At 1 P.M. the next day (I believe it was the 12th or 13th of July¹³) I was called by one of the delegates to his room in the Hotel Luxe. Several other members of the Committee were also there. We telephoned to Lenin to learn the decision. We were told that Lenin was not well and could not be spoken to. Half an hour later we telephoned again. We succeeded in getting Lenin on the telephone. The Central Committee had considered the matter, he told us; it has appointed Trotsky as its representative to deal with the delegates' Committee, and we should therefore apply to him. Lenin refused to inform us of the decision of the Central Committee.

We telephoned to Trotsky. He replied that he would send us the decision in written form by a personal messenger, within two hours. It was then 2 o'clock. Exactly at 4 [o'clock] Trotsky's messenger arrived, bringing us the written decision, signed by Trotsky in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia¹⁴. The document referred to the imprisoned Anarchists as Makhnovtsi and bandits and stated that it "was dangerous to release them". It further informed us that "the Anarchists in the prisons" would be released and deported abroad. It also demanded of the Delegates' Committee that they should have the Taganka hunger strike terminated at once.

To arrange the conditions of release and deportation, in co-operation with the Delegates' Committee, the Central Committee of the Party appointed Trotsky and Dzierżyński as the representatives of the government. The foreign delegates that were most active on the Committee requested the Moscow Anarchists to add two of their own members to their Committee, to aid them in the arrangements and in the conferences with the representatives of the Communist Party. The various Anarchist groups of Moscow elected A[lexander] Shapiro and Alexander Berkman as their

9 in the script: Godeau.

10 in the script: 'Orlandis'; further down correctly 'Arlandis'.

11 Known members of the Committee visiting LENIN are GORDON CASCADEN (Canada – *Edmonton District of the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union of Canada*); MANUEL DÍAZ (Mexico – *Confederación General de Trabajadores México* – CGTM – and *Partido Comunista de México* – PCM); MAURICE DISCH (Germany – *Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* – AAUD); MOISEI KNELER [MICHEL] and JEAN GAUDEAUX (France – CSR); GASTON LEVAL (Spain – CNT); TOM MANN (Great Britain – *Shop Stewards and Communist Party of Great Britain* – CPGB); BERNHARD REICHENBACH (Germany – *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands* – KAPD), who probably arranged the meeting; as well as two of the three Swedish syndicalist delegates – FRANS SEVERIN, JOHN ANDERSSON and EDWARD MATTSON – from the *Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation* (SAC).

12 The night from July 10th to 11th, 1921.

13 in fact: July 12th, 1921.

14 The letter was published in: INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS (ed.), *Letters from Russian Prisons*, London 1925 (ALBERT & CHARLES BONI), p. 255 – 257 [*de facto* editor was ALEXANDER BERKMAN], and again in: G. P. MAXIMOFF, *The Guillotine at Work. Twenty Years of Terror in Russia* (Data and Documents), Chicago 1940 (The Chicago Section of the ALEXANDER BERKMAN Fund), p. 499 – 501; cf. also Kate Sharpley Library: <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/jwswk7>.

representatives on the Delegates' Committee¹⁵.

The decision of the Communist Party, together with the recommendation of the foreign delegates to terminate the hunger strike, was communicated to Taganka. It was on the 11th day of the hunger strike. That night the prisoners also received an official visit from Yagoda¹⁶, of the Ve-Tcheka, who informed them of the decision of the government. The Anarchist prisoners decided to accept release and deportation and the hunger strike came to an end.

Then began our Committee's conferences with the government. But neither Trotsky nor Dzerzhinsky put in an appearance. Instead, Lunacharsky¹⁷ took Trotsky's place, while Dzierżyński was represented by his first assistant, Unschlicht¹⁸, then the actual head of the Ve-Tcheka. From the very first conference, in Lunacharsky's office in the Kremlin, it became evident that the Ve-Tcheka had been given complete charge of the matter at issues, and that it was determined to carry out the decision of the Central Committee of the Party in its own way and by its usual methods. At the first session Unschlicht declared that the decision to release and deport the imprisoned Anarchists referred **only** to the 13 hunger strikers in the Taganka. We pointed out to him that the document of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, signed by Trotsky, distinctly concerned **all** Anarchists in the prisons of the Bolsheviki, and that we considered it a solemn promise that could not be broken. It was in vain. Unschlicht insisted that *his* interpretation of the matter was different, and he refused to discuss the matter. He spoke in the name of the all-powerful Ve-Tcheka, in a tone that plainly indicated that he came to command, not to discuss. He spoke in monosyllables, sharply, even disdainfully. Before the close of the conference he rose and left the room, without feigning to glance at the delegates. "That was rather discourteous to the foreign delegates", I remarked; "he did not even bid them good bye". "He just left for a moment", the Spanish delegate¹⁹ at my side replied; "he will be back presently, for he would not insult us like that". But Unschlicht did not return.

In that spirit the conferences dragged on, in a very irregular and haphazard manner. The foreign delegates had almost to beg for a conference, continuously making appointments with Unschlicht which the latter seldom kept. Lunacharsky had said very definitely that he understood Trotsky's document to promise the release of **all** the imprisoned Anarchists, but in the presence of Unschlicht he always referred the matter to him. Unschlicht paid no attention to Lunacharsky, though the latter was supposed to represent Trotsky at our conferences. Unschlicht was the symbol of the Ve-Tcheka, and there is no greater power in Russia. By degrees the foreign delegates on our Committee were realizing it. Thus, at our first conference a letter was prepared for the Taganka prisoners, setting forth the conditions made by the Ve-Tcheka for their release and deportation. The letter was signed by Lunacharsky and all the delegates with the single exception of myself. (I objected to those conditions as being unjust and even brutal: one condition, for instance, being that the Taganka comrades be deported 2, or maximum 3, days after their release from prison. Knowing the condition of the men after their hunger strike of eleven days, and the fearful means of railroad travel in Russia, I considered that condition unacceptable as well as entirely uncalled-for.) Unschlicht expressed himself satisfied with the letter to Taganka, and requested that it be sent to him at night to

15 The delegation that negotiated with LUNACHARSKY and UNSZLICHT (see below) consisted of MOISEI KNELER [MICHEL] and HENRI SIROLLE (CSR), GASTON LEVAL and HILARI ARLANDIS (CNT), ALEXANDER SHAPIRO (Russia – *Golos Truda*) and ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

16 GENRIKH GRIGORYEVICH YAGODA (1891 – 1938).

17 ANATOLY LUNACHARSKY (1873 – 1933).

18 JÓZEF UNSZLICHT (1879 – 1938).

19 probably HILARI ARLANDIS.

the Ve-Tcheka headquarters. He would then immediately send it by personal messenger to the prisoners. The letter, signed and sealed, was delivered to Unschlicht, as agreed. Two days later we learned that Unschlicht refused to forward the letter to the men in Taganka who were waiting for it with feverish hope.

The government was systematically creating difficulties and delaying matters. The purpose of its policy was apparent; it did not want the Anarchists to be at liberty while the Red Labor Congress was in session. Besides that, it had been promised by Trotsky that the delegates would participate in the arrangements for the safe departure of the prisoners from Russia and providing them with proper passports for unmolested entry abroad. But the government had other plans: it did not intend any delegates to be present in Moscow when the Taganka men were released.

Meanwhile our comrades remained in prison, in daily expectation of liberty. Representatives of the Tcheka visited them frequently, always with the promise that they would be freed “in a few days”. But days came and went, and our comrades remained in the Taganka, living in uncertainty, their nerves over-strained with vain waiting, their health breaking down.

Then came the Bolshevik bombshell at the Red Labor Congress. Some of the delegates, as mentioned above, intended to bring the question of the persecution of revolutionists and of the Anarchist hunger strike to public attention at the Congress. But when the government promised to release the Anarchists from *all* prisons, it was understood that it would be done immediately, and therefore the delegates thought it best to avoid a scandal at the Labor Congress. They felt certain that the “revolutionary government” would keep its promise. It was the tacit general agreement that the matter should not be brought up at the Congress.

But the Bolsheviks were secretly preparing a surprise. The Congress was drawing to its close, it was the eve of the last session²⁰. Suddenly Bukharin²¹ – *not* a delegate – appeared on the rostrum. He announced that he had been delegated by the Communist Party, through its Central Committee, to address the delegates on a certain subject. And immediately he launched into a venomous denunciation of the Anarchist movement in Russia²². The Anarchist movement in Europe is one thing, he said; the Anarchist movement in Russia is nothing but banditism and Makhnovstchina. The Russian Anarchists are murderers and counter-revolutionists, and the proof of it is that Makhno has only recently blown up several bridges on Soviet territory and killed some peasants whom he suspected of being Communists. Then he quoted statistics from the official paper to show that Makhno really was fighting the Bolshevik regime and that the Anarchist movement of Russia is nothing but banditism.

The Convention hall was in an uproar as Bukharin finished his talk. From all sides of the hall delegates demanded the floor. But the Chairmen of the Red Labor Congress, Losovsky²³, declared that the matter need not be discussed and that therefore the incident is closed. The tumult increased. The delegates seemed to be of a different opinion. Some loudly resented Losovsky's arbitrary method of deciding by his own authority questions concerning the Congress. An uncomplimentary epithet was thrown by a German delegate at the Chairman. The French delegates were on their feet,

20 July 19th, 1921.

21 NIKOLAI BUKHARIN (1888 – 1938).

22 BUKHARIN's intervention and SIROLLE's answer (cf. below) are documented in TABER, l.c.p. 518 – 525. In the official proceedings the turmoil caused by BUKHARIN's speech and by LOSOVSKY trying to close the floor and go on with the agenda – which nearly crashed the congress – is simply noted as: “Noise and shouts from the seats of the French and Spanish delegations.” (ibid., p. 522).

23 ALEXANDER LOSOVSKY [SOLOMON ABRAMOVICH DRIDZO] (1878 – 1952).

shaking their fists at Losovsky: they demanded recognition. The whole house wanted the question opened for discussion, or that at least an opportunity be given to reply to the attack of Bukharin against the whole Anarchist movement of Russia. Cries of Shame! Outrage! rang in the hall. Till this incident Losovsky had run the Congress to suit his own fancy. The majority of the delegates were Communists representing various countries, though the delegates were mostly men of the City of Moscow²⁴: they agreed unquestioningly with all the propositions of the Communist Chairman. But the attack of Bukharin was so outrageous and unwarranted, so sinister in its motives, that it awakened the sense of fair play even in some Communist delegates. These joined the demand of the French and German anarcho-syndicalists that one of the French delegates be given the floor. Still Losovsky refused to accede to the general demand. He attempted to go over to the next point on the day's agenda, but now the audience was aroused to a high pitch, and Losovsky was not permitted to proceed. Above the terrible noise and din Arlandis, the Spanish delegate, made himself heard. A staunch supporter of the Bolsheviks and close friend of Losovsky, he yet could not remain silent at the autocratic behavior of the Chairman. He jumped on the rostrum and in a voice trembling with indignation demanded that the French delegates, who had arranged matters with the Bolshevik government concerning the release and deportation of the Anarchist prisoners, be heard in reply to Bukharin's attack. Still Losovsky remained obdurate, and then pandemonium broke loose. The whole audience was on its feet; some of the delegates rushed up to the front of the platform, all shouting, demanding the floor, some even threatening the Chairman. Losovsky was at last forced to put the question of giving the French delegates the floor to a vote. All through the previous sessions of the Congress the Communist delegates had voted as one man, on all questions. Losovsky no doubt hoped for similar action on the present occasion. But the result astounded him: the majority of the Communist delegates voted against Losovsky. It was most significant that the Ukrainian delegation, all Communists, voted in favor of challenging Bukharin's attack on the Anarchists. The motion to give the French delegates the floor, in reply to Bukharin, carried with such a tremendous majority that Losovsky – contrary to the established practice of the Congress – refused to announce the number for and against.

Sirolle spoke for the French delegation. Notwithstanding the flaming excitement of the situation and the deep indignation against the vilification of the Anarchist movement by Bukharin, Sirolle spoke in a most self-contained, dignified manner. The atmosphere was with high tension, and one could feel the admiration of the whole delegate body flowing out to the speaker. He began saying that, as an anarcho-syndicalist, he knew but **one** Anarchist philosophy and **one** Anarchist movement the world over. It was the same in France, in England, in Germany as in Russia. To deliberately confound that movement with Makhnovstchina, as Bukharin had done, was a willful misrepresentation for the sole purpose of misleading the foreign delegates not familiar with the Russian situation. Sirolle called attention to the fact, well known to Bukharin and to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in whose name Bukharin had spoken, that **no** Anarchist group in Russia considered Makhnovstchina as an Anarchist movement. Even the Federation of Anarchist groups of the Ukraine, the Nabat, who stands nearest to the Makhno movement and whom the Bolsheviks regard as out-and-out Makhnovtsi, does not recognise the Makhno *povstantsi*²⁵ as an Anarchist movement. The proof of it is the resolution of the Nabat Federation Conference, held in September, 1920, which reads: "In reference to the revolutionary army under Makhno, it should be

24 in the script: "... men of the City **or** Moscow ..." – which makes no sense.

25 rebel peasantry.

emphasised that it is a **mistake** to consider it Anarchistic". To quote statistics to the delegates about Makhno's destructive work against the Bolsheviki, as Bukharin had done, is a cheap demagogue trick calculating to confuse, not to enlighten. Those statistics prove only that Makhno is at war with the Bolshevik regime, but it has no bearing whatever on the question of the Anarchist movement in Russia. To speak of Makhno's activities as synonymous with the work of the Russian Anarchists is an infamous misrepresentation.

The delegates listened spellbound. Sirolle was demolishing Bukharin's "argument" with a clearness and precision most convincing. His evident sincerity, impersonal attitude, combined with his pleasant, melodious voice and manly bearing, powerfully impressed the whole audience. In conclusion Sirolle pointed out the sinister diplomacy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in its bringing up the subject of Anarchism in Russia at the eleventh hour of the Congress, in the hope of justifying Anarchist persecution by unchallenged misrepresentation. He reminded the delegates that the French anarcho-syndicalists at the Congress had foregone their original intention of broaching the subject in public, on the promise of the Bolshevik government to make a satisfactory settlement regarding the imprisoned Anarchists. And now, at the last moment, when the Delegates' Committee had already come to a definite agreement with the government, and when it was understood that the matter was not to be discussed at the Congress, the Communist Party has attempted to exploit the situation for its propaganda against the Anarchist movement of Russia. Its petty vindictive policy is a disgrace to a "revolutionary" government and detrimental to the Revolution.

Sirolle closed amid thunderous applause of the audience. Bukharin's lies were exposed: he stood on the platform pale, speechless, conscious guilt written on his face. The mask had been torn off the Bolshevik government in its dealings with Anarchists, and all could see. For once throughout the whole Congress had the truth triumphed.

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It was not till two months later (on September 17, 1921) that the Taganka hunger strikers were released from prison. Tortured in body and mind, they came out physical wrecks. The miserable treatment accorded them by the Bolshevik government, after their release, the deception practiced upon them, their final deportation without good passports, and the consequent arrest of the majority of them in Stettin²⁶ – present an eloquent page of Bolshevik treachery and brutality. It has been adequately described by Comrade Maximoff²⁷, one of the victims of the Communist State, the Judas of the Russian Revolution.

Alexander Berkman

Stockholm, March, 1922.

26 FRITZ KATER, chairman of the German syndicalist *Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* (FAUD), vouched on behalf of the union for the deportees, who were finally able to continue their journey from Stettin to Berlin.

27 this could be G. P. MAXIMOFF, *The Hunger Strike and the Deportation of Anarchists from Soviet Russia* [dated 7. February 1922]; reprinted in: MAXIMOFF, l. c. p. 475 – 499; cf. also *Kate Sharpley Library*: <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/8kpsck>. As far as I know, this text wasn't published until March 1922; MAXIMOFF also gives no hint where – or if ever – it appeared; it's possible it was published in the Scandinavian, esp. Swedish, syndicalist and anarchist press, but I don't know about it.