SOVIET SCIENTISTS (MEMBERS OF SCIENCE SOCIETIES) AT INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS IN THE 1920S: POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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Scientific societies played an essential role in the organization of science, contributed to the formation of civil society in Russia and determined the identity of scientists. In one of his books on science in the Soviet Union, the well-known American historian Loren R. Graham speaks of scientific societies as the most interesting private endeavors in Russian science. Indeed, scientific societies were public organizations of scientists and scholars. All outstanding and famous Russian scientists were members of scientific societies. For instance, Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834–1907) was a member of the Russian Physicochemical Society and the Russian Technical Society; Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849–1936) was a member of the Society of Russian Physiologists; Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky (1863–1945) was president of the Leningrad Society of Naturalists and a member of the Free Economic Society, the Russian Geographical Society, the Moscow Society of Naturalists, the Russian Mineralogical Society and others.

For the Russian academic community scientific societies were particularly important as a platform for presenting new scientific information. The President of the Russian Geographical Society Y. M. Shokol'sky argued that attendance at the society meetings where the members make speeches gives the scientists, especially the young ones, more than "spending the same time revising scientific journals and books".

The system of scientific societies grew at a significant pace until World War I, and they had a great influence in the international scientific community and extensive international scientific links. Members of the societies always took part in numerous international scientific meetings. Participation in international congresses, conferences and symposiums was a significant part of international communication between Russian and foreign scientists and scholars. Most of them completed their education in Europe, where they were able to establish personal contacts within the relevant disciplinary communities due to their excellent foreign language skills. Some of them managed to maintain these contacts all through their lives. For example, Sergei Fedorovich Oldenburg (1863–1934), a Russian orientalist, a member of the Russian Bibliological Society, and Secretary of the Academy of Sciences in 1904–1929, on his first trip abroad got to know Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935) who became the largest Indology professor at Collège de France and the director of the Institute of Indian Civilization at the Sorbonne. They stayed in touch throughout their lives.

Unfortunately, the international links of Russian science were destroyed by World War I. Therefore, Russian scientists focused on domestic disciplinary communities and created new scientific societies and journals in 1915–1917: the Russian Botanical Society (1915), the Russian Paleontological Society (1916), "The Russian Archives of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology" (1915), "The Russian Journal of Zoology" (1916) and so on.

But the dramatic events that followed (the October Revolution and the Civil War) ushered in a new phase of difficulties for international scientific communication because of Soviet Russia's international diplomatic isolation. It meant isolation from the international scientific community for scientific societies and their members. Scientists had no opportunity to receive new foreign publications, just as they were unable to publish the results of their own studies abroad, and they, indeed, could not travel abroad.

The goals of the new Soviet state in the early 1920s were to achieve diplomatic recognition and acceptance in the international community. The first successes of Soviet diplomacy were the economic agreements signed in 1921 with Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway, Austria, Denmark, and Czechoslovakia. The Treaty of Rapallo, signed with Germany in 1922, was especially important, as were the Genoa and Hague Conferences. In 1924–1925 the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with another group of countries. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the 1920s one of the aims of Soviet diplomacy was to restore and develop international scientific links.

The most important form of international relations, from the political and ideological point of view, was foreign travel with the aim of exchanging publications, establishing contacts with organizations and institutions, and especially participation in conferences, congresses and celebrations, as well as trips to foreign museums, archives and libraries.

From 1922 all applications for scientific trips abroad were considered and approved by the Commission on Scientific Foreign Trips by the Special Provi-
sional Committee on Science under the Council of People's Commissars. The Deputy Commissar of Public Enlightenment headed the Commission. Only personal applications were considered at the Commission meetings, so scientific societies had to submit each candidate for a journey abroad, but applications were only accepted with resolutions of organizations.

Despite all the difficulties, primarily financial, members of scientific societies were able to take part in some scientific events in those years. For instance, in 1923 the Russian Technical Society received an invitation to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the French Society of Civil Engineers in Paris, with which the society had always had close ties and exchanged publications. It would have liked to send a delegation to the meeting, but it had no way to do so without government assistance, so it asked the Academic Centre of Petrograd to support the application at the Central Executive Committee.

In the first half of the 1920s, the Russian Geographical Society was the most active of all at international scientific meetings. That society, like many others, had to cut back on scientific research, expeditions, and travel at home and abroad during the wars and revolutions, and renewed contact with foreign associations in 1922. The next year, Y. M. Shokal'sky, the President of the society, attended the International Meteorological Congress in Utrecht (Netherlands), and the International Statistical Congress in Brussels. He also participated in the First Congress of Slavonic Geographers and Ethnographers held in Prague in June 1924. Other Soviet scholars attended the congress too: the geographer S. L. Rudnytsky (1877–1937), a full member of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, and the director of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), the well-known ethnographer and academician Y. F. Karsky (1861–1931), who was elected to the Russian Geographical Society in 1926. Karsky chaired the congress on the first day and made a report on achievements in ethnographic research in Russia in 1915–1924.

Furthermore, in March 1924 the Russian Geographical Society was invited to the International Geographical Congress in Cairo on 1–5 April 1925. The congress was the first international meeting of geographers after World War I. The society wanted its members, who were 12 to 15 in number and who "must become not only representatives of society, but of the Republic as well", to take part in the Congress. Appealing to the Central Administration for Scientific Institutions (Glavnaukha) for support, the Russian Geographical Society noted the importance of the congress in Cairo as many very important issues of great scientific value would be resolved there. In addition, there was a more important fact. In 1923 the Russian Geographical Society protested against the London Geographical Society's proposal to remove European names in Central Asia, including the Russian ones. The protest, supported by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID), was sent to the London Geographical Society and several other geographical organizations in the USA, France, Denmark and Italy. It was assumed that these issues would be discussed at the congress. Saving Russian names in Central Asia had great political and ideological importance for the Soviet government. It should be stressed that the Leningrad Branch of Glavnaukha expressed its support for society's representatives at the congress, and the allocation of sufficient funds for this.

The Russian Geographical Society also received an invitation to the Congress of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, held in Madrid in October 1924. The society decided Y. M. Shokal'sky would be its representative at the meeting. The most important question to be decided at the congress was the proposed adoption of a standard figure of the Earth, for future use in all general discussions. Therefore, the society applied for a paid month-long travel permit for Shokal'sky. The next year, he attended a meeting of the International Statistical Council in Rome.

Another form of international contacts was the exchange of books. Indeed, in 1923 the government adopted a regulation granting the right to the free and tax-free exchange of publications between foreign scientific organizations and higher education institutions, scientific societies and research institutes. Needless to say, scientists met this regulation with enthusiasm. In the case of scientific societies, the Russian Physicochemical Society stressed that "receiving such rights and privileges is a vital matter for Russian physicists and chemists." In turn, the Russian Entomological Society noted: "a pleasant fact in the life of the society was the beginning of relations and the exchange of publications with foreign societies and scientists." At the same time, the Russian Mineralogical Society reported on "expanding relations with foreign countries, relations which have brought and continue to bring many foreign scientific publications." The exchange of books and publications became the main form of international scientific collaboration. The Russian Mineralogical Society, for example, exchanged them with 200 foreign research organizations and higher education institutions in 1925. The Society of Ancient Literature and Art sent its publications to the New York Public Library and the Institute of Slavic Studies in Paris, as noted in the 1923-24 annual report. The Russian Entomological Society exchanged books with 190 foreign scientific organizations before the October Revolution, and, in the mid-1920s, sent its publications to Romania, Bulgaria, 12 institutions in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, as well as to 5 Spanish organizations, 3 institutes in Japan, 11 and 4 in North and South America respectively, and to 4 organizations in Africa. The Russian Physicochemical Society sent its journal to the UK, France, the USA, Italy and others.

22 "O predostavlenii vyslonym uchenym razvedeniym i nauchnym uchenykh razvedeniym prava obmena izdaniyami s vyslonym uchenym razvedeniym i nauchnym uchenykh razvedeniym drugikh stran" (On Guaranteeing Universities and Scientific Institutes the Right to Exchange Publications with Universities and Scientific Institutes in Other Countries), Dekret Soveta Narodnych Deputatov 16 January 1923, in Sebhranie vstavlenii i rasporazhenii uchebnoi i krest'ianakh pravitaelm RRFSSR (hereafter SU), 1923, No. 4, Art. 67.

23 TGa SPb, f. 2555, op. 1, d. 632, l. 20 ob.

24 Ibid., d. 595, l. 43.

25 Ibid., l. 131 ob.

26 Ibid., d. 630, l. 43.

27 Ibid., d. 718, l. 28 ob.

28 Ibid., d. 796, l. 6 ob.

29 Ibid., f. 2556, op. 3, d. 92, l. 14.
In the case of scientific links with China, the official diplomatic relations that preceded lasting contacts and negotiations were established on 31 May 1924. However, on 3 April 1924, the diplomatic plenipotentiary representative of the Republic of China in the Soviet Union in Moscow applied to the Academy of Sciences, the Geological Committee, the Leningrad Society of Naturalists, the Russian Geographical Society, the Russian Mineralogical Society and the Russian Paleontological Society with a request "for periodic exchanges of their publications with the China Geological Survey". The societies and institutions responded positively. The exchange was carried out by sending publications from Leningrad to Moscow, as all of them were situated in Leningrad, to the address of the diplomatic mission. In response to that, the China Geological Survey directed their publications to Soviet scientific organizations and institutions.

The exchange of literature went through the All-Union Society of Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (Vsesoyuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoy syazi s zagranitsemy - VOKS), through the Bureau of Book Exchange at the Academy of Sciences and the Bureau of Combined Information created specifically for the purpose under the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. In May 1924 the Bureau sent a questionnaire concerning their international contacts to scientific societies. In particular, the Bureau was interested in knowing with which countries and scientific and public organizations abroad a connection had been established and how it was expressed, the printing bodies abroad they were connected with at that time, etc.

Scientific societies also developed one more form of international scientific relations: a membership of foreign scientists. For example, in 1923 there were 124 foreign members in the Russian Mineralogical Society (44 honorary and 80 full members). The number of foreigners in the societies increased. Indeed, in 1922 there were 61 foreign scientists (12 honorary and 49 full members) in the Russian Entomological Society, but, by the beginning of 1930, there were 83 of them (10 honorary and 73 full members).

The international contacts of scientific societies were thus quite successful and developed in many forms in the early 1920s. Besides, for the first time after the beginning of World War I, scientists were able to travel abroad for scientific goals, although those trips were rare.

30 Ibid., d. 676, I. 52.
31 Ibid., d. 625, I. 36; d. 719, I. 18; d. 722, I. 6; d. 723, I. 7.
32 Ibid., d. 676, II. 51–52.
33 Ibid., d. 722, I. 8.


However, a crucial role in the final emergence from international scientific and diplomatic isolation was played by the 200th anniversary of the Academy of Sciences, which took place in 1925. The Council of People's Commissars adopted a decree "On the celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences" on 25 July 1925. The solemn meetings took place both in Leningrad and Moscow. The presidium of the Academy received two thousand greetings and addresses, and the celebrations were attended by 130 foreign scientists from 24 countries. The largest delegation was from the Weimar Republic. The person representing the Berlin Academy of Sciences at the celebrations was

34 SU, No. 48, Art. 363 (1925).
the outstanding theoretical physicist, founder of quantum physics, professor Max Planck (1858–1947), as reported by its leadership in a letter dated on 16 June 1925, together with an expression of gratitude for the invitation. Representatives of the Berlin Academy of Sciences presented the heads of the Russian Academy of Sciences with a congratulatory address which is now stored at the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences Archive. The celebration the 200th anniversary of the Academy of Sciences had political and ideological significance as it marked its final emergence from international scientific isolation, and also helped to enhance the prestige of Soviet science in the international scientific community.

Furthermore, the first international scientific conference was held in the Soviet Union in the anniversary year. The 3rd International Limnology Congress was held both in Moscow and Leningrad, and was attended by the founders of the International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology; the European hydrobiologists A. Thienemann, E. Naumann, H. Alm and R. Kolkwitz. The organizing committee included the famous Russian hydrobiologists S. A. Zernov, A. L. Behnning, S. N. Skladovsky and N. K. Dekshah, relying on official Soviet authorities and the scientific community.

Foreign scientists also participated in the All-Union scientific conferences. For instance, there were 21 foreigners, including the eminent scientists N. Bohr, G. Lewis and F. Frank, at the Sixth Congress of Soviet Physicists.

The New Economic Policy led to economic and financial recovery and, as a result, the international scientific links of Soviet science began to extend and develop intensively. Scientists started to travel abroad for scientific purposes more frequently, but at the same time had to go through a complicated and bureaucratic procedure for their submission.

In November 1926 Narkompros issued a special circular “On the order of receiving scientific journeys abroad”, according to which journeys might be taken “to conduct or complete scientific works and improvements in the specialty, if all the possibilities of research and advances in scientific research institutions

and universities of the USSR have already been exhausted”, while “the mission to review the state of a particular area of science abroad and the establishment of scientific relations are granted only in extreme cases”.

Societies intending to send their members abroad had to apply to the Commission on Trips Abroad with motivated applications for every scientist and completed questionnaires by 15 December. Scientists could also submit themselves, but with a resolution from the society. In any case, however, applications received after the deadline would not be considered, except for applications for international conferences and congresses.

It is interesting to look at the questionnaire that had to be completed. It consisted of nine questions, including the full name of the scientist, his position and scientific specialization, the name of the organization requesting the trip, the scientist’s monthly salary, who was to cover the costs of the trip abroad (Narkompros, another state agency, the scientist himself), the length of the stay abroad and travel dates, if it is the first time the scientist has been sent abroad (if not, when he last travelled abroad), the goal of the journey and the place of the assignment.

Besides, every application had to be accompanied by a detailed scientific itinerary. The journey could be taken either at the expense of the state or that of the scientists themselves. Regardless of the source of financing, all the applications underwent a strict selection procedure, and the number of possible applications was also limited. Each society could submit a maximum of 3–4 applications a year. Moreover, half of all applications from any scientific society had to be submitted by young scientists whom the Soviet powers could trust from an ideological point of view, unlike the old specialists (so-called spyct). Nevertheless, young scientists joining the scientific community after the October revolution did not speak any foreign languages and had no links with foreign colleagues. Moreover, young members of scientific societies made up only a small category so it was almost impossible to fulfil the condition for sending them abroad. At the same time, it was not much easier to send experienced scientists, as the Bolsheviks feared the scientists could fail to return from their journeys abroad, which would be a blow to the reputation of the Soviet power. This fear

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35 Saint-Petersburgsky filial Arkhiv Rossiyskoy Akademii nauk (St. Petersburg Branch of the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences, hereafter SPb ARAN), f. 12, op. 1, d. 8, l. 135.
36 Ib id., op. 3, d. 9.
39 GARE, f. 5446, op. 37, d. 17, l. 245, 248.
40 TsGA SPb, f. 2555, op. 1, d. 1044, l. 92.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., l. 92 ob.
43 Ibid., l. 93 ob.
44 Ibid., l. 92 ob.
45 Ibid.
was well-founded, since more than once in the 1920s a scientific trip abroad happened to turn into an emigration. For instance, the botanist V. V. Lepeshkin (1876–1956), a full member of the Leningrad Society of Naturalists and an honorary member of the Russian Botanical Society, took a scientific trip to Prague in 1922. After that he kept working in various European countries until he settled in the USA in 1927, and never returned to the USSR. Such people were called defectors (aka nevestavshchie).

In subsequent years, some conditions for considering applications for foreign business trips were changed. In May 1927, the Council of People’s Commissars issued the decree “On regulation of foreign business trips”, according to which scientific journeys to international congresses and conferences were allowed only with the approval of the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. On 21 July 1927 the Council of People’s Commissars approved “Regulations on the Commission on Scientific Foreign Trips”. The Commission was part of Narkompros, and consisted of 7 members: three from Narkompros (the Deputy Commissar of Public Enlightenment, the head of Glavnauka or his deputy, the head of the Committee of Vocational Education or his deputy), a member of the People’s Commissariat of Health, a member of the People’s Commissariat of Finance, a member of the People’s Commissariat of Agriculture, and a member of the Supreme Economic Council (VSNKh). The Deputy Commissar of Public Enlightenment headed it as before. The Commission determined the number of journeys and issued travel documents.

Notwithstanding all the bureaucratic obstacles and financial problems, Soviet scientists did manage to go abroad. Members of scientific societies often took trips abroad to participate in conferences and congresses, and on rare occasions to attend anniversary celebrations or for other purposes.

The Russian Geographical Society remained the most active. In 1926 the society submitted its librarian I. P. Murzan for a trip to the International Congress of Librarians and Friends of the Book in Prague from 28 June to 3 July 1926. That application was supported by the Leningrad Branch of Glavnauka. There were also participants from Moscow, Kiev, the Central Book Palace, Moscow and the Library of the Institute of Art.


In the same year, the secretary of the Russian Geographical Society, the famous botanist, geographer and academician V. L. Komarov (1869–1945), participated in the Third Pan-Pacific Science Congress as the head of the Soviet delegation consisting of 10 scientists. The Soviet scientists gave a speech and prepared an exhibition on Russian scientific research into the Pacific Ocean during the previous 200 years. The congress marked the establishment of the permanent Pacific Science Association.

broad international scientific links; its relations with the geographical societies of Europe and America were hugely successful after its restoration. It was invited not only to conferences, but also to solemn meetings. The major event in 1928 was the 100th anniversary of the Berlin Geographical Society, where the Russian Geographical Society was represented by Y. M. Shokalsky. In 1926 the Russian Mineralogical Society was also invited to the 50th anniversary celebration of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

Unfortunately, visiting specialists often failed to receive official permission for a scientific trip. For example, in 1926 the Russian Entomological Society received an invitation to the 3rd International Entomology Congress held in Zurich on 19–25 June 1926. Although the society received permission from the authorities to go abroad, "according to circumstances beyond the control of the society", it was "deprived of the opportunity to send a representative to the congress".

In 1928 the Leningrad Physical-Mathematical Society was invited to participate in the International Congress of Mathematicians in Bologna. The program committee of the congress invited all the mathematicians and representatives of the leading universities and academies around the world. The congress was held under the distinguished patronage of Victor Emmanuel, the King of Italy, and the honorary presidency of His Excellency, the leader of the government Benito Mussolini. The president and some members of the Leningrad Physical-Mathematical Society made presentations not only on their own behalf but also for some members of the society who were unable to attend.

The participation of Soviet scientists in international scientific congresses was undoubtedly of important political and ideological significance, which was especially perceptible at the congresses of representatives of the humanities. Soviet scholars had to prove the correctness of Marxism at international scientific meetings, as although the Marxist-Leninist methodology was implemented very

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53 TIGA SPb, f. 2556, op. 3, d. 3, l. 33.
55 Ibid., p. 3, 4.
56 TIGA SPb, f. 2556, op. 3, d. 3, l. 33.
rapidly in the humanities, it was not that intense in the technical and natural sciences. However, both Marxists and non-Marxists represented the USSR at the Sixth International Congress of Historians in Oslo on 14–18 August 1928. The representatives of the Leningrad Society of Researchers of Finno-Ugric Peoples at the congress were its secretary, professor of Leningrad Branch of the Communist University of Western nations I. Ya. Depman, and the associate member A. M. Lincevsky. The latter was to make a report in English about petroglyphs he had opened and studied in Karelia. Both had to go at their own expense, but with the permission of the Soviet government. Overall, there were 100 scholars from 29 countries, 12 scholars were from the Soviet Union. However, the congress was not without ideological clashes between the Soviet historians and Russian immigrants headed by the antiquity historian M. I. Rostovtsev (1870–1952), an incident widely covered by the Norwegian newspapers.

Nevertheless, in general, international scientific communication was quite successful during the second half of the 1920s, and other forms of international relations developed well.

The book exchange, which involved new scientific organizations and scientists abroad, was intensified as government had significantly simplified the procedure. According to the order of the People’s Commissariat dated 2 February 1926, scientific institutions, research institutes, universities and societies were granted the right to send the personal writings of its employees and members abroad, both written and printed, without requiring any certificates from Glavnauka.

Moreover, the geography of the exchange was most impressive. For example, in 1926 the Russian Entomological Society sent its journal to 68 institutions and organizations located in the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Japan, Brazil, Australia, South Africa, Bulgaria, Romania, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Egypt, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, India, Ceylon, Canada and New Zealand. It should particularly be noted that the Soviet Union did not have diplomatic relations with most of them. The scientific contacts of societies outpaced the diplomatic ones.

In 1927 the Leningrad Physical-Mathematical Society submitted its publication to 147 foreign correspondents (professors from Germany, Denmark, Poland and the USA) and obtained books from Munich, Berlin, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Krakow, Warsaw, Paris, Toulouse, Bologna and Rome. The society also received 15 foreign magazines and several foreign dissertations a year after that.

In 1927 the Russian Geographical Society exchanged with 101 institutions abroad: it sent 860 copies of its publications, and received 3,500 copies of the foreign ones. In contrast to this, the Russian Mineralogical Society emphasized that the flow of foreign scientific publications is still quite weak, with a particularly poor response from France and England, and a much more satisfactory one from America, Germany, and the British colonies.

In 1928 researchers from the Leningrad Society of Researchers of Finno-Ugric Peoples circulated their publications in Finland, Sweden and Czechoslovakia. In 1929 it received publications from the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, from the Hungarian Ethnographic Society in Budapest and from the New York Public Library. In the same year, the Leningrad Society of Naturalists received 592 volumes from abroad in exchange for 620 publications for 505 correspondents abroad.

Along with the book exchange and foreign travels, an important role in the international contacts of scientific societies was played by the membership of foreign scientists.

Sixteen foreign members were in the Russian Entomological Society in 1926. At the same time, fifteen eminent foreign scientists were engaged in the...

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66 TsGA SPb, f. 2556, op. 3, d. 29, l. 12.
67 Ibid.
70 TsGA SPb, f. 2555, op. 1, d. 977, l. 20.
71 Ibid., d. 1004, l. 3 ob.
field of astronomy and geodesy at the Russian Astronomical Society\textsuperscript{80}, while more than one third of the Russian Mineralogical Society consisted of foreigners (127 members out of 326 were foreigners – 80 full members and 47 honorary ones)\textsuperscript{81}.

The Leningrad Microbiological Society also included foreigners, mainly honorary members from Delft, Paris, New Jersey, Harbin, Alexandria, Tokyo, Berlin, Frankfurt, Vienna, London, Brussels, New York, Rome, Leeds, etc\textsuperscript{82}.

In the second half of the 1920s, the number of foreign members in the Russian Geographical Society increased: there were 8 foreign honorary members in 1926, and 13 foreign scientists in 1927; at the same time, at the beginning of 1930, the society consisted of over 30 foreign members (15 full members and 15 honorary members)\textsuperscript{83}.

Furthermore, foreign scientists gave presentations at meetings of societies. For example, the eminent French physician and biologist, Professor Antoine Lacassagne (1884–1971) took part in the meeting of the Leningrad Society of Radiographers and Radiologists on 10 June 1926. He gave a speech about the results of treating patients at the Radium Institute in Paris\textsuperscript{84}. Lacassagne was the first to use radioautography with a naturally occurring radioactive substance, and was a pioneer in the field of cancer induction using radiation and chemicals\textsuperscript{85}.

The prominent French physicist professor Paul Langevin (1872–1946) gave a speech about his latest work at the meeting of the Russian Physicochemical Society on 30 May 1928. He also presented his invention of a device for transmitting sound underwater to detect submarines\textsuperscript{86}.

In 1926 the library and the museum of the Society of Ancient Literature and Art, which were "open for the scientific studies of society's members, professors and other scientists, as well as for young scientists", engaged foreign scientists, for example, Lucien Tesnière (1893–1954), professor at the University of Strasbourg and an expert in Slavonic languages\textsuperscript{87}. The Russian Geographical Society was also attended by foreign scientists. For example, there were some foreign visitors, mostly from France and Germany, in 1927\textsuperscript{88}.

Thus, the international scientific contacts of Soviet Russia were quite successful in the 1920s and scientific societies played an important role in this. They were able to reinstate their international links very quickly because they depended on the broad and strong connections established before World War I. International communication developed actively in different forms, especially as a publication exchange. However, scientists' participation in international scientific meetings had the greatest political and ideological significance for the new regime.

Nevertheless, despite some successes of Soviet diplomacy and the establishment of diplomatic relations with some countries, Soviet scientists' participation in international meetings was irregular in the first half of the 1920s. Scientific societies received invitations to international scientific meetings and decided who would represent them as the number of applications was limited. Yet it was not so easy to get permission from the government structures to travel abroad, not for political, but rather for economic reasons. In fact, the country was in an economic crisis after the Civil War, when trips were mainly carried out at the state's expense.

The situation changed after 1925 when, after the celebration of the 200\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Academy of Sciences, Soviet science finally emerged from isolation. The first International Congress was held in the Soviet Union. Soviet scientists became a part of the international scientific community. They were required to demonstrate the latest achievements of Soviet science at international conferences and congresses and to enhance the prestige of the new regime. Besides, thanks to the New Economic Policy, the country had managed to resolve some of its financial problems. However, the procedure for obtaining permission for a foreign trip was made stricter in the late 1920s.

During the 1920s, in spite of the complicated submission process, Soviet scientists (members of scientific societies) visited international scientific meetings in Spain, France, Norway, Germany, Poland, Italy, the UK, and other countries. It should be stressed that the foreign travel situation radically changed in the early 1930s. There were no longer financial deficits but political control became a critical factor. The Soviet government pursued a policy of "sovietization" and "communication" of science from the end of the 1920s, so
only scientists conducting the science of Marxist-Leninist ideology would be permitted to travel abroad. These were mostly young scientists who had come to science in the 1920s. However, they did not speak any foreign languages and so had no publications in international journals and no contact with the relevant disciplinary communities abroad.

The fates of scientific societies that sent members to international scientific meetings during the 1920s varied. Some of them were closed, the others turned into mass public organizations, while some were replaced by state research institutions in the early 1930s. They no longer played such an important role in Russian scientific community as they had done before.

ON SOVIET SOIL.
CURTIS MARBUT’S ENCOUNTER WITH RURAL RUSSIA IN THE STALINIST TRANSFORMATION

Jan Arend

In many cases, attending a scientific congress abroad is simply “business as usual” in the working life of a scientist. Sometimes, however, a congress can bring about a turning point in the intellectual biography of a scientist. And in some rare cases, a trip to a congress by an individual researcher can even become important for an entire community of scientists at home. This happens when the congress traveller gains knowledge that – like a previously missing piece from a jigsaw puzzle – fits in with the knowledge of those who stayed at home to form a new, informative picture.

This article examines such a case and thus reveals a specific effect of international science congresses: by facilitating first time encounters between members of different scientific communities, congress trips may in some cases trigger learning processes and create experiences that the participants can introduce to their domestic scientific communities when they return. In such cases, the success of the transfer of knowledge depends on the specific communication skills of the individual congress traveller: skills at imparting and transmitting knowledge.

This article focuses on the influential American soil scientist Curtis Fletcher Marbut (1863–1935) and his participation at the Second International Congress of Soil Science, which took place in July and August 1930 in the Soviet cities of Leningrad and Moscow. By focusing on this example, this article sheds light on an important chapter in the history of American-Soviet relations in an area of tension defined by rivalry in science, politics, and agricultural production.