

**Mariya Akhmetova and Mikhail Lurye**

## **Field Materials from Bologoe,<sup>1</sup> 2004**

In January and June 2004, two small-scale field trips were organised to Bologoe district, Tver province. The participants included staff, graduate students, and students from a number of different Russian and foreign universities: Mikhail Alekseevsky, Mariya Akhmetova, Pavel Altshuller (Russian State Humanities University, Moscow), Svetlana Amosova (European University, St Petersburg), Valentin Golovin, Evgeny Kuleshov, Mikhail Lurye, Svetlana Milkina, Anna Senkina (St Petersburg State University of Culture and Arts), Kseniya Zorina (Moscow State University), Svetlana Leontyeva (Leningrad State University), Sara Pankenier (Stanford University), Anastasiya Filippova (Institute of Foreign Languages, St Petersburg), and Jakob Fruchtman (University of Bremen).

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As often happens with such expeditions, most of the participants had their own agendas of material to be collected, which were linked with their current academic interests. Mariya Akhme-

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<sup>1</sup> The town's name is pronounced with the stress on the ending, Ba-la-GOYE. [Editor].

tova was particularly concerned with eschatological moods and beliefs, Valentin Golovin and Mikhail Lurye with soldier and youth subcultures, Svetlana Leontyeva and Arina Tarabukina with professional traditions and community relations among teachers in villages and small towns, and Jakob Fruchtmann with local views of and opinions about the Russian business elite ('oligarchs'). Material was collected in Bologoe itself, in settlements nearby, in the villages of Bologoe district, and in the ZATO ('military settlement')<sup>1</sup> of Ozer-noe in Valдай district nearby. However, despite the variety of thematic and territorial orientations, the fieldwork concerned had one unifying and underlying goal — to collect material that was connected with Bologoe in a direct or a mediated way, and which, therefore, could be considered to make up the local component in the town's cultural traditions.

To put it another way, we were trying to establish a nexus of stable thematic perspectives, judgements, explanatory models, narrative models and subjects, and mental and linguistic clichés, which the residents of Bologoe use to characterise their town according to socio-cultural, temporal, spatial, and axiological parameters.

Field studies of this kind are a relatively new direction in Russian folkloric and ethnographic tradition, but in recent years a fair number of them have been organised. Examples that we are aware of include the expeditions organised by the Academic Gymnasium<sup>2</sup> of St Petersburg University to Toropets (Tver province), to Staraya Russa (Novgorod province), to Gdov (Pskov province), and to Tikhvin, Pikalevo, Lodeinoe Pole, Slantsy, Volkhov (Leningrad province); by Leningrad University to Podporozhye and Priozersk (Leningrad province); by St Petersburg University to Myshkin (Yaroslavl province); and by the Russian State Humanities University to Borovsk (Moscow province). Collection of material in towns and settlements has also been carried out by individual researchers, including I. Razumova in Apatity (Murmansk province) and in Petrozavodsk, K. Shumov in Nyukhche (Perm province), M. Matlin in Ulyanovsk, S. Prokhorov in Kolomna (Moscow province), and others.

The reorientation of Russian anthropologists towards urban culture (both in the sense of the cultural spaces under consideration, and in the sense of thematic concerns), and especially towards material from Russian provincial towns, is determined, it would seem, by several different factors simultaneously. Among these, the most important are perhaps a) the move away from areas of research that have been traditional in Russian anthropology and into new ones, and especial-

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the quarters for officers and service personnel. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> i.e. classical high school on the pre-revolutionary model, with a staff including teachers from St Petersburg University. [Editor].

ly from ‘ancient’ and ‘rural’ phenomena towards urban and, by preference, recent ones (cf. the discussion in *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* no. 1); b) the obvious dependence on established semiotic studies of ‘local texts’ and ‘local myths’ with reference to Russian culture generally (and especially, Russian literature), which in turn was inspired by V. N. Toporov’s studies of the ‘Petersburg text’ and the concepts of ‘urban text’ and ‘urban myth’ that he introduced to the Russian public; and c) the interest that has been developing, over the last decade, in different areas of Russian humanities, in the Russian provinces, and the emergence of academic studies in this connection, including anthropological studies, which have in turn engendered a need for special materials from the field.

The attempt to systematise and to interpret the results of fieldwork on urban sites, to develop methods of collection, and parameters of analysis and interpretation, has been the subject of quite a few articles already (see e.g. [Kuleshov 2001]; [Kuleshov 2004]; [Leontyeva and Maslinsky 2001]; [Lityagin and Tarabukina 2000]; [Lityagin and Tarabukina 2001]; [Razumova 2000]). The most thorough and penetrating study of the content and functional characteristics and the pragmatics of this material (which in the terminology of folklorists is referred to as *neskazozhnaya proza* [non-folk-tale prose])<sup>1</sup> is, in our view, a recent essay by I. A. Razumova [Razumova 2003: 545, para. II.1.1].

The anthropological material collected in the course of ‘urban’ expeditions and touching on the ‘image of the town’, and the particularities of local consciousness among its inhabitants, tempts the interpreter to generalise, a process that is at once risky and productive. The sum of local people’s views of, and opinions about, their town can be synthesised into a ‘town text’ (a term especially widely used by A. A. Lityagin and A. T. Tarabukina). On the one hand, it is fairly clear that this ‘text’ as a non-discrete but definable whole exists only in the minds of those who are setting out to model it — whether they be local historians or visiting anthropologists. On the other hand, there is no doubt that a particular selection of stereotypes relating to a given town will recur constantly in statements by many, quite different inhabitants in particular communicative situations, which include, but are by no means limited to, excursions round museums, or answers to questions put by folklore collectors. This allows one to acknowledge the existence of a particular corpus of ‘general knowledge’ shared by the inhabitants of a given town about the place where they live. However, different

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. distinct from the tradition of the *skazka*, folk-tale — but referring not so much to the non-narrative character of the material (which is, rather, characterised by an abundance of anecdotal structures), but more to its everyday, by design ‘non-fictional’, non-magical content. [Editor].

components of this corpus of knowledge may be more or less significant for different groups of inhabitants, depending on their age and socio-cultural circumstances. At one end of the continuum fall local historians and teachers, who tend to be middle-aged to elderly (these comprised the core group of our informants); at the other, it seems fair to suppose, lie ‘streetwise’ teenagers, for whom local self-identification is only significant with relation to the territorial jurisdiction of a given group, as a result of which, for instance, the reputation of a given district within a town is a good deal more significant than is the reputation of the town itself. One should also not underestimate the role played by written and printed sources as bearers of stereotypical utterances about a town, disseminators of thematic tropes etc. (among these one might mention publications by local historians, and manuscript and printed collections of work by local poets), and also the role of institutionalised forms of dissemination of local information and the ways in which these make their impact — for instance, excursions, lessons about local history, special-occasion speeches by local dignitaries and writers, and so on.

We tried to bear all these considerations in mind, both in our fieldwork, and in preparing the publication that follows. All the same, a few words about the ‘Bologoe town text’ seem in order. The choice of Bologoe as the destination for an ‘urban’ expedition was, obviously, not fortuitous. On the one hand, Bologoe, both on historical-geographical and socio-demographic grounds, is a typical example of one kind of modern Russian provincial town at the district centre level.<sup>1</sup> Typical are the picturesque location (here, by a reservoir, the Bologoe Lake); the long ‘pre-history’ (Bologoe was first mentioned in the fifteenth century), and at the same time, the relatively short history of the place as an urban centre as such (the status of ‘town’ was conferred only in the first quarter of the twentieth century). The size is also typical (around 35000), as is the scattered nature of the housing, which is mostly one-storied and privately built, and which has a centre dominated by buildings of ‘merchant’ character; so too is the dominance by one industry (here, the railway), which at present does not provide the population with a serious livelihood; typical, too, is the steep decline in prosperity during the 1990s and the corresponding upsurge in migration to other places among young people. And so on and so on. But on the other hand, some characteristics of Bologoe, such as the town’s historic link with the railway and its position in the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> i.e. *raitsentr*. The *raion* is the second smallest administrative sub-division in the countryside (above the village). The size of such an area can, however, be quite large by Western European standards: perhaps 200 or more square kilometres. Usually, the district centre will be a town of perhaps 30-50,000, focused on a single enterprise (here, the railway) (as the authors point out below). [Editor].

route from Moscow to Petersburg, ought, it is reasonable to suppose, not only to ensure it a special place in the cultural landscape of Russia as a whole (a point that is in any case obvious), but also to signify particular characteristics in terms of the local consciousness, and by extension in the stereotypical range of ‘town texts’.

And all in all, our assumptions and expectations were borne out. What in official parlance would be termed the town’s status as ‘a major railway junction’ is constantly evoked in the discourse of Bologoe residents when they address the history and the present existence of their home patch. This is one of the core components of what one might term the ‘cultural branding’ of the place. In Soviet days, the railway provided Bologoe’s population with work, with the position of engine-driver standing at the top of the socio-economic hierarchy. The key point in characterising the idealised past is reliability (punctuality, exactitude, methodical work). *‘There was a big, big junction here. You couldn’t count the trains. Running from Peter<sup>1</sup> to Moscow. Things were kept in order then. Done right’* [4]. The radical changes to the socio-economic situation {that took place in the post-Soviet era}<sup>2</sup> brought with them significant modifications to the structure of social relations and to a sharp downturn in the number of jobs available locally. And one of the most widespread motifs of complaint among Bologoe residents is that the town stopped being a major railway junction as a result of privatisation and of the relocation of the railway management elsewhere (it is now in Vyshny Volochek on the outskirts of Moscow). *‘It’s not a junction at all now, you can’t see it’s Bologoe any more’* [11] is a fairly typical opinion. And the ‘railway topos’ is often used as a rationale for the history of the town. Bologoe became a big, prosperous village, and then a town, {it is argued}, only because the railway was built; the location of the place, and its importance in the Soviet transport system, meant that bombing was especially severe during the Second World War; and one of the most memorable events in recent local history was a bad railway accident involving a passenger train that took place in 1988. The town’s ‘railway image’ allows suitable historical and literary events to be linked with it: so one hears that the Bologoe railway workers diverted Tsar Nicholas II’s train from Petrograd to Dno station, or that this was where Anna Karenina threw herself under a train (according to another version, this was where Tolstoy wrote this scene of the novel), and so on.

The second key formula that occurs in representations of Bologoe

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Peter’ [Piter] is the colloquial name for St Petersburg, universally used in conversation. It is routinely used to translate cases where the form is adopted by informants below. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> Here and below, curly brackets {} are used to indicate insertions made by the translator for reasons of elucidation. [Editor].

is evoked in a hit song by *The Merry Lads*:<sup>1</sup> ‘*Bologoe, Bologoe, that’s somewhere between Peter and Moscyw...*’ Thanks to its location on the line between Petersburg and Moscow, Bologoe is understood as somewhere in-between, somewhere transitional, and in connection with this, one of the most popular motifs in the discourse of local history is the famous people from history who have passed through the town. Lying mid-way between the two capitals, the town seems to be in the very centre of the country — which in turn, no doubt, dictates the widespread image of Bologoe as the ‘heart’ of the country. This image is supported above all by narrative lines relating to the Second World War: about how railway works would daily toil to put back sections of the line that had been shattered by bombardment, about how engine drivers would guide trains through hails of falling bombs, or about how it was precisely in Bologoe where the announcer Levitan used to read the latest Soyuzinformbyuro reports of news from the front over Soviet radio {during the Second World War}. On the other hand, this position half-way between two metropolises makes Bologoe into a provincial outpost, a remote small town (which, as a matter of fact, is often ‘noted’ in song texts — cf. the vague place specification ‘somewhere or other’): ‘*It’s a remote little place. It was quite prosperous once, but now they closed the October Railway works section and that’s it. You can see it dying by inches*’ [7]. The assertion, ‘*we’re kind of half-way between Leningrad and Moscow*’ is used to justify the fact that the latest musical hits from Moscow and Petersburg don’t reach here [1].

Finally, the third component of local particularity is traditionally conceptualised as the name of the town itself, which is usually understood to be derived from *blagoe* (blessed, good, holy, saintly). The ‘blessed’ character of the place is usually traced to its characteristics in terms of landscape and ecology (which, in Bologoe folk’s opinion, acts as some sort of counterweight to the grim facts of the town’s current situation in economic, spiritual, and moral terms). Here, on the Valdai plateau, the water and air are clearer than anywhere else, which is why so many locals live to a ripe old age; there is a huge quantity of lakes in the region, and the town itself is located on the shores of a big, beautiful lake. The extraordinary beauty of the local landscape ‘drew here’ many famous figures from history and culture: the princely Putyatin clan<sup>2</sup> had a family estate at Bologoe itself; Matyushkin and Pushchin<sup>3</sup> used to visit, as did the

<sup>1</sup> *The Merry Lads* was a 1960s and 1970s ‘vocal-musical ensemble’, i.e. officially sanctioned pop group, taking its name from a film of the same name (*Veselye rebyata*, 1938), an extremely popular musical, starring Lyubov Orlova, the ‘Soviet Greta Garbo’, and directed by Grigory Aleksandrov. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> A prominent family of Russian aristocrats. [Editor].

<sup>3</sup> Participants in the abortive coup attempted by the ‘Decembrist rebels’ in 1825, aimed at replacing Nicholas I by his brother Konstantin. [Editor].

painter Nikolai Roerich; and the poet Vladislav Khodasevich had a house nearby.

The fragments of interviews with inhabitants of Bologoe that we publish below are selected and arranged by theme. The first group consists of ‘aetiological’ texts, in which a direct link is drawn between the morphological and etymological characteristics of the town’s name and its most significant characteristics. The second group brings together fragments of narratives, ruminations, and lamentations in which the ‘railway hypostasis’ of Bologoe is asserted as the dominant factor, in symbolic and socio-cultural terms, within the ‘image of place’ that is current locally (especially among people of the older generation). And finally, the third and fourth parts of the selection include narrative fragments relating to two tragic events of local-historical significance: the fire that took place during a film-showing at the cinematograph in 1911, and the derailment of an express not far from Bologoe in 1988. We should note that both set narratives implicitly link the catastrophe with other themes of relevance for Bologoe: in the first case, this is the idea of expiation and religious renewal (with the destruction of the Church of the Protection of the Virgin in the 1930s seen as a great sin on the part of Bologoe inhabitants of past generations); in the second, the theme of the fragility of today’s Bologoe, surrounded as it is by quaking bogs, which can, if they want, swallow up even objects as big as railway carriages (cf. the ‘negative’ understandings of the etymology of the town’s name in Section I).

### Field Materials

#### I. The Toponym ‘Bologoe’

[...] There’s a place round here called Vaskina tropka [Vaska’s Track]. A little place it is, near the end of town, out towards the Leningrad-Moscow line, round Selkhoztekhnik, <sup>1</sup> where the old cemetery is — we have a new one now, down in Medvedevo. You have to cut the trip through the woods as short as you can, it’s all bog round here, see. The town’s built on a boggy place, and they were quaking bogs too. So no wonder it’s Bologoe... Actually, there are two meanings to the name, you know. It wasn’t Bologoe to begin with, it was Blagoe. Blagoe, see? Which meant it was a good [*blagopoluchnoe*] place, a fine, well-set-up place. Good intentions {were behind it}, so it was Blagoe. But the second {meaning of} Blagoe is that it was a bad place, because cows would get sucked down and die in the quaking bogs, people would drown there too. And now, there was this man who loved the forest, a man who had special skills. He would always go through the forest, he’d take short

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<sup>1</sup> The agricultural machinery works. [Editor].

cuts through the bog. And he had a track marked out where you'd run no risk of drowning. Since then... He was called Vaska, see, and so, well... other people'd use that track to go for berries, and we children'd go that way after nuts, when I was six or seven or so [1].

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**So what does the name 'Bologoe' come from?**

Lots of things. It means it's both bad and good.

**So why bad and why good?**

I don't rightly know. Well, they say talking loudly or shouting is bad, and especially when you use bad words. I'm not going to start talking about that, no, I won't start talking about that. For a start, what can we say? Because, see — till the railway came, there were only about eleven people here, so what did they do? They farmed, they did, the place is full of fish and mushrooms and berries, they did real well here. They'd walk over the bogs, you could only get over from the high road winters, no-one got here in summer, we was cut off. So the railway spoilt things. But the name already existed. That name was already in use [...]

**We heard it was a bad place because of the bogs. Or do you mean something else?**

Well, sometimes they'd say it {Blagoe} came from the saying *krichat blagim golosom* [to bawl at the top of one's voice]. See? That it was from there, see? I don't know, I don't know, I don't know a thing. They just gave it that name, they did.

**So what is it correct to say? *V Bologoe* or *v Bologom*?<sup>1</sup>**

You'll even see it written both ways {let alone hear it}. Sometimes the first, sometimes the second. I didn't get enough schooling myself to tell you which is right [...]

**So what would you say yourself?**

I wouldn't say nothing myself. I don't go nowhere, I just went out after the goats, after them. I'm not saying nothing, not the one way, nor the other neither [2].

<sup>1</sup> A standard form of Russian place names ends in the suffix -ovo/-evo, and is historically a short-ending adjective, understood to describe the word 'village' (*selo*), and commonly formed from the surname of a local landowner (Sheremetyevo, Abramovo, etc.), or from the name of a local saint (Nikitino). It is customary not to decline such place-names. Bologoe constitutes a problem from two points of view: the place is not a 'village', so the adjectival character of the name has been eroded (and it is not clear at all what to do with a noun ending in -oe, as this is an aberrant suffix). Yet it is also a long-form adjective, which definitely should decline. Hence the confusion. The authors of this publication, like most educated Russians, naturally use the form *v Bologom*, but as the discussions included here show, many local inhabitants think that *v Bologoe* is preferable, even seeing the current drift towards *v Bologom* as a sign of declining grammatical standards. [Editor].



\* \* \*

I don't know. There are lakes all over here. All with names that end in an O. It's all over lakes here, round about, and out there by the dacha<sup>1</sup> is another lake. And round by Medvedevo is Ogryzovskoe lake. Round all over they are, in a nutshell.

**So why did you say things end in an O? Bologoe doesn't, does it?**

Well, I don't know, to be sure. But I heard there was lots of letters, I did.

**Lots of words with O?**

Yes, yes. Round here, I heard it is, near that Kaftinskoe lake... That's where people come from Moscow for their holidays, they all come and stay there. It's a fine lake, that, a fine place [3].

\* \* \*

**So what's correct: *v Bologom* or *v Bologoe*?**

*V Bologoe*. Doesn't decline.

**So why?**

You know, I can't tell you that answer to that, you see, all the villages end in O round here, Kuzhenkino, Lopatino, Makaevo and so on, all in O [...] All in the letter O. So it's Bologoe. They say there was a hill called Blagaeva Hill once. You see? [4]

**So have you heard why Bologoe is called that?**

Because of being *blagoe*, a blessed place. It really used to be a blessed place, this. Look at the countryside, eh! And the air years ago! It was like wine. Wonderful air it was. But what's it like now, eh? What's it like now? [5]

\* \* \*

**Could you tell us what the name 'Bologoe' comes from?**

*Blagoe*. It was a fine place [...]

**And what's it correct to say? Is 'Bologoe' declined or not?**

You know, people never used to decline it. I think it all started about five years ago. *V Bologom*, *v Bologoe*. That never happened before.

**So you mean it isn't correct?**

Yes I do.

**Why?**

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. house used for summer holidays; apparently not a private, single-family dacha, but the holiday home mentioned by other speakers. [Editor].

Ah, now, I can't tell you that. They just talk funny. *Iz Bologogo* [from Bologoe]. It never used to decline [...]

**So you say, there was a place called Blagoe? Was it really a fine place? Did it live up to its name?**

Blagoe? Well, how should I put it: we've all had our chips here. I'm seventy-five and registered disabled level one.<sup>1</sup> So I don't know whether it does live up to its name... We like it here, and if I go and visit my sister in Leningrad I'll spend three or four days at a pinch, and by then I'm dying to get back here. To Bologoe. It's sort of quieter here, see, less noise. In Bologoe it is, than in the big cities [6].

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**So what does the word 'Bologoe' come from?**

You know, I can't tell you that, but once I went on a guided tour, we did, went on a guided tour. And the guide said that no-one can say where it comes from. It might be because it's 'Blagoe', a blessed place, or it might be Bologoe from the bogs, because we have them everywhere. Bogs everywhere. So it's one or the other, 'boggy place' or 'a blessed place', a good place. Well, the Tatars never got here, of course. Didn't reach it here.

**So what's correct? 'v Bologoe' or 'v Bologom'?**

Well, I'm no expert, but in the papers... in the local paper, they write 'v Bologom'. So you see, it does decline.

**What about the locals?**

Ah, well some say it one way and some the other [7].

\* \* \*

Well you see, these days people don't give a damn for anyone or anything.<sup>2</sup> But the thing is that it isn't a Russian name to start with. Khan Báty,<sup>3</sup> when he was on his way over to Novgorod, stopped by here, eh... Not right here, not in this place, but at the far end of the lake, Bologoe, where the holiday home is [...] Glubrechikha, it's

<sup>1</sup> *Invalid pervoi gruppy*: classified as 'very severely disabled' as opposed to level two (*invalid vtoroi gruppy*), for the more mildly disabled, and entitled not only to receive disability benefit, but also to all kinds of other social welfare payments. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> *seichas 'kogo' ne sklonyayut i 'chego' ne sklonyayut*: 'people don't even decline "who" and "what": i.e., a) don't use even the accusative case of common pronouns correctly, can't tell who from whom; and b) don't criticise anyone or anything (*sklonyat'* also means, colloquially, to take something or someone to task) [Editor].

<sup>3</sup> The Tatar khan responsible for the sacking of Ryazan in 1237. His name is usually stressed on the second syllable. Both 'Blagoe' and 'Bologoe' are almost certainly words of Slavonic origin, but it is common in Russian popular culture for anything perceived as linguistically aberrant to be assumed to be of Tatar origin — cf. the widespread belief that taboo words such as *khui* [prick, cock] are 'Tatar'. [Editor].

called. And that Glubrechikha, he... well, he liked it so much, it says all this in our local museum, see... he called it 'Blagoe'. Not 'Bologoe', but 'Blagoe'. But then, as time went on, they twisted it round and messed it about, and it ended up just 'Bologoe'. But that's from Tatar-Mongol and Finnish too, I think. And so they had to decline it like a foreign word, which meant you'd not find it with endings in any dictionary.<sup>1</sup> Bologoe used to be like a foreign word. See... And then... Then the locals, you know, they wanted to grab some power for themselves. There was one of them called Suslik [Marmot], yes, Suslik. Four years younger than me or so, five, maybe. He was the secretary of the Komsomol District Committee. And then, in *Novgorodskie vedomosti* (The Novgorod Gazette), he went and dug up that, well, eh, Bologoe wasn't a foreign word at all, it was Russian, from *blagoe*. And that Báty had been told by some priest that it was a blessed place. A good place, that is [8].

\* \* \*

### So does 'Bologoe' decline? What's the right way to say it?

Bo-lo-go-e. It doesn't decline.

### So why not?

Well, I don't know, basically... it's from an old word, so far as I can remember, my grandmother and grandfather were teachers, I heard it {from them}. The place is a fine place. A good place, a holy place. And an extra letter got stuck in. Blagoe turned into Bologoe. From the word *blagoe*.

### But why shouldn't it decline then, after all *blagoe* usually does?

Because it's a proper noun.<sup>2</sup> It doesn't decline [9].

\* \* \*

### Does 'Bologoe' decline?

Yes, because it's an adjective. Blagoe. And Bologoe. It refers to 'place', sort of. *V Bologom, k Bologomu* [towards Bologoe]. So. You'll even find writers and local historians writing that it's an adjective, so it should decline, but we don't say it right, 'a train is just arriving *k Bologoe*' [towards Bologoe]. *K Bologomu. Ya iz Bologogo* [I'm from Bologoe]. I live *v Bologom*, not *v Bologoe*. That's what's right. But everyone's got used to *v Bologoe*.

### So everyone says...

Usually they say *v Bologoe*. They say what they've got used to [1].

<sup>1</sup> Numerous common words of foreign origin, such as *kafe* and *kofe*, do not decline, so Bologoe should work by analogy, is what the informant means. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> This in fact ought to make no difference at all. [Editor].

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The point is that we've also got the Church Slavonic language, and the letter combination 'la' is unvoiced. 'Olo' is the Russian form, the old Russian form. 'Blago', 'bologoe'.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps they meant something was a blessing — the town or whatever. No-one could translate it. But one of those brainy local Party city committee types who'd gone to work in Kalinin, as they used to call it,<sup>2</sup> he suddenly told everyone you should decline it, because 'Bologoe' was like 'Shirokoe' [Broad], it... there's a place called that, with the rest home, it's an adjective. But then the arguing started, and I don't know, it hasn't caught on. The thing is, so you don't have to get mixed up, you should always say 'Bologoe town'<sup>3</sup> When war was declared, they used to say,<sup>4</sup> 'Our forces are just approaching the town...' and then the town itself went in the nominative anyway. OK? And you should use 'Bologoe town' now as well. But he demanded {people say} 'v *Bologom*', '*Bologogo*', just like that [...] When we're talking normally we don't decline it. Even if we say something like, I don't live in Bologoe town, I live in Bologoe [v *Bologoe*], when we should really say, v *Bologom*, right? You see, it just hasn't taken hold [10].

## II. The Town and the Railway Line

I had this pupil, she used to love songs about Bologoe, she'd forever be singing them... Both {of them did}. They could already write free compositions of their own, with no title set, when they were in class eight,<sup>5</sup> and they'd draw on moments in their lives when they felt proud of where they came from to do it. And then in class ten, too. The free composition used to inspire them, you see.

*At the forking ways that by the lakeside go,  
Along the railway junction,  
Bologoe town is so close  
To the rails that it seems frozen  
To them. So that's Bologoe:  
The dust flies in at my window,  
Our little town Bologoe —  
My song has far to go.*

<sup>1</sup> These ratiocinations do not make a lot of sense in Russian either. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> Now restored its original name of Tver. [Editor].

<sup>3</sup> Because then the word 'town' would be declined, meaning that 'Bologoe' did not have to be. [Editor].

<sup>4</sup> i.e. radio announcers etc. [Editor].

<sup>5</sup> i.e. aged about fifteen. The practice of allowing 'free composition', rather than setting a subject (such as 'Autumn', 'New Year', 'My Holidays', etc.) was relatively unusual in the Soviet school. However, as this case shows, pupils tended to 'play safe' anyway and write what they thought the teacher expected. [Editor].

That's by some famous composer, I've forgotten who. But you should make sure you get it down. And this girl who lived down the barracks, next to the embankment, it was this great big barracks where the railway workers used to live, she wrote such a touching poem. And she even wrote something like, '*We set our watches when the trains go by.*' She meant we knew the exact time, they were so reliable. Whenever a train came by, we'd know from the noise of the wheels where it was going and that [10].

\* \* \*

OK, well I can say a few things, for instance, Bologoe got to be known because of the railway. It's the main thing about Bologoe. All the trains that came through would stop here, and one would be coming from Moscow and one from Peter. The trains would stop here for two hours, and we had one of the best restaurants anywhere here. And on the tables — but you can read about all that in Théophile Gautier, in his *Journey to Russia*,<sup>1</sup> what the Bologoe restaurant was like, so I won't go into that. And what also delighted everyone about Bologoe, and Théophile Gautier too, was the Bologoe station. When Théophile Gautier was on his way here, to Bologoe,<sup>2</sup> he wrote afterwards, see, that we're arriving at one of the stations and it looks like St Mary's Church in central London.<sup>3</sup> But the Bologoe station doesn't stand at the verge of a big road, it stands between two railway lines, where trains coming from Moscow and from Petersburg stop at the same time. And the people that used to go on those trains, and the two-hour stop, and what they used to sell in Bologoe, what they used to serve there, the wines, the silver, the glass — he describes all that. So you haven't read it? Well, do read Théophile Gautier, it's in the local library, by the way. *Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow*.<sup>4</sup>

### Is that really what it's called?

Yes. *Journey*. Oh no, *Journey Round Russia*, something like that. Théophile Gautier, ask for it [2].

\* \* \*

There was even this... We're railway people... It's us who... It's us

<sup>1</sup> *Voyage en Russie*. Paris, 1867, based on two trips by Gautier, in 1858-9 and 1861. A Russian translation appeared in 1988. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> The original has 'k Bologoe' as an eccentric dative, treating what is an adjectival form as though it were a neuter noun. [Editor].

<sup>3</sup> About every second church in 'central London' is called 'St Mary's'. The church that Gautier was in fact referring to, as his *Voyage en Russie* makes clear, was St Mary le Strand, which stands at the middle of a bifurcation in one of central London's widest and best-known streets. [Editor].

<sup>4</sup> This is in fact the title of a famous work by Aleksandr Radishchev (1749-1802). [Editor].

who switched the points at Dno station, when [Nicholas II] was on his way to Peter. That happened, you know.

**So that was in Bologoe?**

Yes. That was at night. When the train had just come up [...] That's from the facts in the museum. The workers, the railway workers, they switched the points, and they sent the train not to Peter, where it should have been going, but to Dno, to Dno station, in the Pskov direction. See? And there's no knowing where that might have led to, eh?

**If he'd actually got to Peter, you mean?**

Of course. You see, it was right then, it was during the coup. You know who, of course you do, who that was, don't you? [...] He went against the people, against the tsar. And what did they drop Russia in, eh? [5]<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

Bologoe used to be famous, even Boris Aleksandrov came here.<sup>2</sup> There was the Yakk factory, the Yakovskaya accordion factory, there was a brick factory. Really, Bologoe was a ginormous railway junction, five lines going in different directions. You could go to Finland, you could go to Germany. It was a huge junction, it was. Even when they changed the signalling system — before that, they used to change the points by hand — when Khrushchev was coming through, they stopped the train and asked him {to come out}. He got down, and they said to him, 'There's been four thousand men and women lost their jobs round here, because of the points system being changed to automatic, and what are we to do?' He gave his word, and then they built two factories: the lock factory and the 'Electromachine' one. The signalling system went automatic. He's {i.e. my grandson here is} an engine driver, you know.

[*Informant's grandson puts in:*] Ten years ago, we had a railway works section, but now we don't even have that. There's perestroika for you.

Lots of people {remember} Trotsky round here, especially the old ones, yes... He was here several times.

**Really? And what did he do here?**

Well, he set up here, on the railway, a whatsit, a Communist cell, didn't he? And so he used sometimes to come over. To talk about

<sup>1</sup> This is presumably a historically inaccurate claim that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were responsible for the Tsar's forced abdication in February 1917. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> The foremost Soviet ice-hockey player of the 1970s, national champion in 1975, 1977, and 1978, and a member of the gold-medal-winning Olympic team in 1976. He was killed in a car crash in 2002, not long before his forty-seventh birthday. [Editor].

things, to see what they were doing, how they were doing it. And they were managing somehow... Look how lovely it is here. Main thing is, you can see the whole town.

**But you've never heard any stories about Trotsky going hunting round here?**

In Lykoshino. But that's not here, it's more like thirty kilometres away. That's Valdai already, Lykoshino is, Lykoshino station. That's right, though. I have heard. Well, one way and another everyone in power went through Bologoe. They had to get between Leningrad and Moscow, see. And how were they to do that? The planes they had in those days... you'd have been scared to pilot one, let alone put someone in the government in one. And there were armoured trains, well, not armoured trains, but special trains, government trains, we called them 'letter trains' [*liternye*]. They'd come by pretty often, and who'd be on them, eh? The carriages'd look the same as always. Well then. But the people that built them knew that they weren't, they were bullet-proof, they were. You'd not get into those so easily, even if you took the rails apart. See? Because. So they'd get out of the train here, Papanin<sup>1</sup> made the first stop here, right? When the Papaninites were on the job, you know, it was something to do with getting to the North Pole for the first time. And then other people, it's hard to say who though, can't remember all that now. And, well, on the Valdai islands, see, the Dlinnye borody,<sup>2</sup> there are islands called that, there's a government sanatorium there, lots of people would come through to those. The last President of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, whatsisname... Nikolai Ivanych something...

**Ryzhkov.**

Ryzhkov, aha. Ryzhkov would get out of the train here, he'd come every year, and he'd always get out of the train. Have a look round Bologoe. Especially since the Strommashina<sup>3</sup> factory was here [...] The Strommashina factory and the lock factory — that's when Khrushchev came by, yes, on the way from Moscow to Leningrad, not sure why, it was ages ago, in '63, I think, in '60... in '62. Well, anyway, before they got rid of him. He got out here... Or to be more exact, he didn't get out, he opened a window, and he {leaned out} like this see, like this, his top half. And I happened to be on night duty that very night, I was on duty watch at the railway depot. See? And I saw him too. A dead ordinary, straight-down-the-line Russian bloke, he says 'Eh-eh' like that, nice and slow. He says 'Eh'. And so we —

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Dmitrievich Papanin (1894-1986), rear admiral, polar explorer and Hero of the Soviet Union (twice over); director of a variety of polar stations between 1932 and 1938; between 1939 and 1946, oversaw the directorate of the Great Northern Marine Route. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> Lit. 'Longbeards', presumably from their shape or from the vegetation growing there. [Editor].

<sup>3</sup> Making tankers and other transport systems for the oil and petrol industry. [Editor].

not me, of course, someone from the town Communist Party committee, went right up to him. Well, not right up, of course, keeping a respectful distance, like that birch tree [*points*] is from here. Well, after all, you can never tell. As a matter of fact, they'd agreed it all with him in advance, with the railway police, that we'd do this and we'd do that, and don't you take any notice, and we won't do nothing we shouldn't. And so we complained that all the young people were having to leave. Usually all the young people would go to Leningrad. Not much to Moscow, but mostly to Leningrad. So all the Bologoe people, and from the villages, they'd end up in Leningrad, at the Leningrad PU,<sup>1</sup> yes? All those would come from round here. There was no work locally. And only a year later, they put the Strommashina factory into the town plan, the provincial plan [...]

**So who did you complain to about there not being any work?**

To Khrushchev himself. Directly. And there was some lad behind him taking notes. So he noted it down, and they built it right away, right? According to the {original} plan, the provincial chiefs weren't going to develop anything in Bologoe. And then...

**Did people stop leaving after that?**

Yes. They did stop. After all, why should they — three thousand jobs at once, you couldn't even get people to fill them all. They had to get specialists in from somewhere else. And now there are around five hundred left working at that factory. Maybe a few more, maybe a few less [8].

\* \* \*

And now, you know, now, right, now that privatisation stuff's started, they've split the railways up into sections and started privatising it. We used to have this fantastic engine factory. And now what? In private hands, see? [...] And now look — people are ruined, they've turned into beggars. They do half the amount of work. We used to really put our backs in, see? We was famous for it. It used to count, see? And now what, you know? You don't have to go far. We've got a town festival, we have, Railway Workers' Day — that's the town festival. But bit by bit, it's turned out Railway Workers' Day hardly gets celebrated. That is, the workers themselves do celebrate it, but in the paper all you'll see is a little article somewhere, {something about} the town festival, Railway Workers' Day. Even the press has cut it down to size. So how can we say we count? And before, there used to be a real party for Railway Workers' Day. We'd go to the lake, to Medvedevo,<sup>2</sup> I remember like it was yesterday, we

<sup>1</sup> i.e. *professionalnoe uchilishche* — vocational training college. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> Russian 'do Medvedeva' — i.e. with a non-standard declension. [Editor].



were all young then, so we'd all go. There's a big park there and the House of Culture. That's where they'd set it up, the party would be in the bit going down to the lake. On Railway Workers' Day, that was. It wasn't the town festival at all. Now people celebrate the town festival, instead of celebrating Railway Workers' Day, they celebrate Town Day... So the railway workers have got shoved on the back burner, and so.... [6]

\* \* \*

Everything's gone to pot. Bologoe's a railway junction, and everything's gone to Moscow and Petersburg. There's no work at all. It used to be a railway town — engine drivers, drivers' mates, conductors, loads and loads. We've got three or four different lines going through here. And now it's gone to pot. And the powers that be get it all. He'll never get voted in again.<sup>1</sup>

### **So when did Bologoe stop being such a centre for the railways?**

Well, so, it literally started with Yeltsin, and now everything's run out of Moscow. We used to have a special section of the railway, the October Railway, it was called, it had a whole building {in Bologoe}, with its own engineers, its own team {of mechanics, drivers etc.}. There was an engine depot, my pupil, my protégé, he used to run it, there was a rolling-stock depot too. We had all that once... [10]

### III. The Fire in the Cinematograph

#### **Raisa Vasilievna, they told us in the museum there was a dreadful fire in the cinematograph back in the 1900s...**

Ah yes, now that would be in 19... 1911. Well, we had the cinematograph from 1910. It hadn't been open even a year when it burned down, in February 1911. We had a Prince Putyatin living here then, Pavel Artemyich Putyatin, he had his manor-house here, the place where the House of Culture used to be, and now it's being turned into the House of Sport. Where the hotel is, you know, right opposite there? Well, close to that manor-house is where they built the cinematograph, where the building for that was. Of course I don't... don't have any photos or nothing, you'd maybe find those in the museum. And in nineteen eleven this actor Davydov came over from Moscow, to perform in the cinematograph. Before they showed the films, he'd do his turn, sing a song or something, all I know is that he'd do a turn. And there were over a hundred and fifty people there. It was packed. To see him, they'd come, and then to watch the film. And the projectors they had in those days wasn't much good, you

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the former governor of Tver province, who was standing for re-election at the time. [M. Akmetova and M. Lurye].

had to put petrol in so as to light up the screen and the wind-on mechanism worked by petrol too, and so all in all, to cut a long story short, the projectonist made a careless move and the thing caught fire, and the projector all burned up, and the exit door opened inwards and not outwards, and when people ran up as the burning took hold they started pressing on the door, and the door wouldn't open, because, you see, it would only open inwards. And so seventy-six of the hundred and fifty, or seventy nine, maybe, they was burnt to death. Lots of children, too. And lots of people got bad burns and then they died later, in hospital. Or they stayed in there for ages. And then they put a chapel up where that cinematograph had been. It's still there now, it was very run down and neglected for a while. They used to sell paraffin there or something. And then they decided to open it up as a chapel again. And now, well, there's even a wonder-working icon there [1].

\* \* \*

Oh yes, the fire, there was a fire here, yes. Well... The cinematograph was wooden, see. And the film burst into flames. And there was only one exit. You see, people stampeded over there, but it was the gas that took most of them off. When the film started burning, they were falling over each other [*o drug druga*]. That was on Holy Thursday, that was.

**So did people say it was all because they'd gone to the cinematograph on Maundy Thursday?**

Yes. Yes they did, there was a rumour going round the priests had been saying that. It was supposed to be an eh, punishment from God.

That was in nineteen thirty [*comment from informant's grandson*].

That's right.

**So when was it?**

That was roughly, well, sometime roughly... they blew up the cathedral in nineteen thirty, yes, that's when it was, in twenty seven. Well, it was all a big to-do, there was husbands saving their wives, when it was burning down, his wife was in there so he rushed in to save her, and he got her out, but he burned to death himself [4].

\* \* \*

**Excuse me: is it true, please, that the cinematograph burned down because of it being Holy Thursday?**

No, it was on Forgiveness Sunday. Forgiveness Sunday, it was.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Sunday before Ash Wednesday, when it was traditional to ask forgiveness of one's family, friends, and associates for offence caused during the year. [Editor].

**We were told it was a punishment from Heaven.**

Well, I dunno, maybe it was and maybe it wasn't, but the fact is that cinematograph was put up in a hurry, there's nothing left, there were no, well not like you'd build now if you had a business to run, right? It was put up in a hurry. And if you have something with fire involved, and there was, then you have to keep an eye on it, like we do at home, we make sure not to leave any lamps lit, in case something goes wrong. Well, I don't rightly know how to put it in a technical way, but anyway, they wasn't doing none of that. And only, well then it so happened this actor who was very popular in Bologoe came over, and everyone rushed over to see him, well, what I'm trying to say is, it was Forgiveness Sunday, and that's not Lent yet. It's not Lent, you know. Well, everyone says sorry to everyone else and gets ready for the Lenten fast, and so, so to speak... So why should we be punished? For what happens round here now, maybe? You'll see some young girl walking round with a fag in her mouth, and she's going to be a mother sooner or later, isn't she? And the gyppos round here too, that's why we've got a dog, and you get those drug addicts shooting up round here all the time, so we ought to get punished for that? See, it's hard to say that we'd gone to the cinematograph specially, we'd go there every day in any case. It wasn't Lent, and it wasn't an ordinary Sunday, right? Well, not that we go any more, now we sit watching television and God knows what rubbish at that. But in those days, it was silent films and there was some actor, maybe I told you that ready.. But you know, I can't really say anything. They just didn't observe the rules... what do you call those rules?

**The fire regulations.**

The fire regulations. That's right. That's why the fire started [2].

\* \* \*

**So there's a chapel built on the site of the cinematograph that burned down?**

There is. There is that. Oh, it was a terrible tragedy, that was... Well, my granddad, he had a ladder [*transcription uncertain*], an old one, in the old days. And I remember he had this big thick picture hung up there. Probably a print, I'd say. And I remember that well. And not so long ago... hang on... they wrote about it in the newspaper; the issue for the eight hundredth anniversary {of when the town was founded}, and they had something about it. They even wrote about it in the paper. The father, he said a mass specially, because lots of people died there. It was wooden.

**So when was that?**

Oh, now you've got me... In 1904... I don't remember for sure.

### Before the Revolution, then?

Before the Revolution, yes, it was before the Revolution, it was. And you know, there on his ladder, I remember it like it was yesterday, I was a girl then, just a young thing, I read through it all, oh all that stuff — *Queen Margot*, and *Works of a Young Man*, and this here too [i.e., an issue of *Niva* for 1911]<sup>1</sup> And you know, there were some glass-fronted bookcases lying around, some bookcases, yes, with two or three shelves, and there were bodies all over the place. That's it. Yes, I haven't forgotten it even now, I've still got the picture in my mind, the one copied from the photograph [6].

\* \* \*

### So do you know what that chapel is, the one not far from the river-bank? What kind of a chapel is it?

It's... there was a cinematograph on that spot once. Back before the Revolution. The *Aurora*, it was called.<sup>2</sup> And in some year, back before 1917, I don't know, probably in '50... in 18... no, I must mean in 19... in the twentieth century. Well, that cinematograph burned down. And it was a merchant that built it, when it was standing [...]. See, the projectionist took his eye off the ball, and the film caught fire, and his booth burned down, and he was stupid enough to open his window and shout, 'Fire, fire, everyone out!' And the spectators, they wasn't too bright either, and they was there watching the film, about, what'll we say, Charlie Chaplin or whatever, or what am I saying, something more interesting probably, they didn't have trash films like there are now, they loves that, the silent films... They stampeded up to the door, and they blocked it up, they blocked it up so much, they did, that no-one was able to get out. I don't remember how many died, it's all in the local museum. Well, it was around a hundred died, something like that. In that accident. They couldn't do nothing, they just all got burnt up. Now if someone really strong had been around... like Boris Kosmanov is now, he can lift two hundred kilos without even thinking about it. He'd have gone up to that queue and pushed everyone out of the way and then let them out, and they'd all have got out. And so they were struggling there for ten minutes, fifteen minutes. Until the whole thing burned down. And so, they had a collection in aid of it, one of the merchants suggested it. And they were pleased to build it, to build that {chapel}, to build it with the people's money. That chapel, there, is on the spot,

<sup>1</sup> Gloss inserted by the editors of the publication. *Niva* was a popular illustrated journal of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, something like *The Illustrated London News*, but with a widely-read fiction supplement as well. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> A possible name for a cinema, but more likely after 1917 than before — cf. the reference to 'Charlie Chaplin', who did not reach Russia till the 1920s (and then only a select audience). [Editor].

the place where the first cinema in Bologoe was, the *Aurora*. And that *Aurora*, the cinema that just got built, well it was built because we still all remembered, we Bologoe people. Everyone had relations who were involved, well, I haven't, if you come to it, but my wife's great aunts or second cousins or something like that died. Right. So they built a chapel [8].

#### IV. The Railway Disaster of 1988

So, '88. That was just when my elder grand-daughter was born, on the fourth of August. And two weeks later, on the sixteenth, yes, of August, between Berezaika station — that's over towards Peter — and Bologoe station the *Aurora* train burned down. It was dreadful. The carriages burned up, people were shouting and screaming. They got everyone in, every doctor in the place came running, all the buses were taken off their usual routes... They rounded up all the cars and buses to take people away. Because it didn't happen at the station, see, it happen somewhere you couldn't get to easily, about a kilometre or two away, so you had to walk there, the buses couldn't go. So you see, it really was a catastrophe. And they had an investigation afterwards, ever such a long one, why it had all happened. The *Aurora* train, number 23 or 24.<sup>1</sup> From Peter to Moscow. And the reason turned out to be, they said, that the foundation wasn't sound, the rails were subsiding, and so that was it. Then a story started going round that there was something wrong with the wiring, the wiring in the train itself. And on top of that the first three... the engine and the front three carriages, or front two carriages, jumped off the rails, and all along from the third carriage to the eighth carriage was the most terrible mess, and people got caught up in it and got burned to death. But things were fine in the last two carriages. And, come to that, the last carriage, the thirteenth, where they always sell tickets for people who live in Bologoe, that was OK too. Well no-one... all right, some people got injuries, and it was quite some stress. There was a girl on that train, she used to come to my drama group, Olechka, she was called, she told me what she'd seen and what had happened [1].

\* \* \*

**Have you heard anything about some railway accident in Bologoe or near Bologoe in the 1980s?**

Yes, yes. Train number 59.

**What route was it going?**

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<sup>1</sup> Russian express trains carry distinguishing numbers, like flight numbers: here, 23 or 24 because the informant cannot remember which one runs from Moscow to Leningrad/St Petersburg, and which in the reverse direction. [Editor].

From Leningrad to Moscow. Yes, there was an accident. I don't know exactly what went on or anything, but it was dreadful. You should have seen the bodies they were bringing out. And then afterwards they were carrying them out on stretchers, like in the war or something, running round in their white coats. They brought them over. And then, eh, they took them off to hospital. All the carpenters were kept busy making coffins, they did it for free, who'd take money for that? And so many. And big cars took them off to all different places. It was dreadful, there were so many people caught up in it.

### **Did anyone from Bologoe die?**

From Bologoe itself? Don't think so, There was this guard though, manning carriage number thirty, she was a neighbour of mine. She had concussion or something, she went flying, she broke the glass in the window, of the toilet. She jumped out. And she did something to herself. But now she's fine, she says she's fine. There was an accident right enough [3].

\* \* \*

### **And they say there was some railway disaster here in the eighties?**

Quite right. It was the 'Aurora', the 'Aurora'.

### **So what happened?**

Nothing much. Well, over a hundred people died, eh. There's a place over there, on the left. Before you get to Bologoe, then [*one word indecipherable*] there's a halt, it's called. There's a bog there, a great big bog. Low-lying, it is there. Boggy. And it's there where the catastrophe happened.

### **How did it happen?**

Don't know how. But we were hauling people out of that bog, even. Corpses. Of people that got killed. Lots of them did get killed, lots [...] Well and... And they didn't crash, the trains didn't, something... went wrong. The whatsit, something went wrong with the leccy, the wires in the buffet car or... dunno [11].

\* \* \*

### **And in the eighties there was a train collision there...**

There was, yes. It was the 'Aurora' [...] Between some stations [*several words indecipherable here*] and Berezaika. The train got derailed. Two carriages, three maybe, started burning. In two carriages there was a load of children [...] It's a boggy place, that, you can't get through it.

### **So is there a monument there?**

No. Well, in time there will be, no doubt, because... But where's the money to come from? First, you have to have the money, and then second, the people in the trains weren't from Bologoe... Not from Bologoe, you see. I... so who is the memorial meant to be for? But really they should, of course. There was loads of people died, and there, well in two places there is a memorial, where the collision happened. They dug a common grave, a common one [7].

\* \* \*

**There was a big accident here in the eighties, but what kind of an accident?**

There's lots of water around there, it's quaking bog. And it<sup>1</sup> subsided.

**So did lots of people die?**

Well no, not specially, not specially many people died. Well, because the carriages didn't overturn, you see.

**Didn't overturn?**

No. Well, two did. But the squaddies got there quickly, see, in their tanks [12].

\* \* \*

**Informant List**

1. Interview with Raisa Vasilyevna Tishkova (age 64; born in Kharitonyikha village, Valdai district, Novgorod province, moved to Bologoe aged nine. Education to vocational secondary level (at Leningrad Institute for Cultural Activists). Worked as a tour guide; sang in the folk chorus, 'Home Tunes', organised at the local school of music; founder and leading member of the local folk song club, 'Sudarushka').<sup>2</sup>
2. Interview with Vera Fedorovna Martynova (b. 1931; education to secondary level; worked as a supervisor in a nursery school; now an active member of her local Orthodox parish, and helped with the reopening of the chapel).
3. Interview with Valentina Mikhailovna (b. 1935; education to secondary vocational level).
4. Interview with Mariya Nikolaevna Shteimeler (84 years of age; b. Bologoe; has completed higher education. Taught history for 42 years).

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<sup>1</sup> Most probably the railway line is meant. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> From the affectionate diminutive of *Sudarynya*, madam. [Editor].

5. Interview with Nina Semenovna \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> (aged about 55; moved to Bologoe in the mid 1980s from Siberia, works in the local church).
6. Interview with Zinaida Nikolaevna Sukhetskaya (b. 1928 in Bologoe).
7. Interview with Vasily Grigoryevich Domozhirov (aged about 75; b. Sergievo village, Bologoe district; moved to Bologoe in 1947; education to secondary vocational level).
8. Interview with Valentin Vladimirovich Miroshin (b. 1927, Bologoe; has completed higher education (Tver Pedagogical Institute); worked as an engine-driver, a shift leader, the railway depot Communist Party organiser, a history teacher, a Pioneer camp director).
9. Interview with a woman aged about fifty.
10. Interview with Valentina Aleksandrova Teteryadnikova (aged 84; b. Leningrad; arrived Bologoe aged about eleven; has completed higher education (Tver Pedagogical College); worked as teacher of Russian language and literature, as study director,<sup>2</sup> and as head teacher, and also as the head teacher of a boarding school,<sup>3</sup> ran a logic and philosophy hobby circle).<sup>4</sup>
11. Interview with Tamara Mikhailovna \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> (b. 1936 in Knishshchiny, Vyshevolotskii district, Tver province; moved to Bologoe in 1957; education to secondary vocational level; worked as ticket and seat reservations clerk till 1992; now sells sunflower seeds as a snack to supplement her pension).
12. Interview with a man aged about seventy-five.

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<sup>1</sup> This informant did not give her surname. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> *zavuch*, the academic deputy of a head teacher in a Soviet or post-Soviet school. [Editor].

<sup>3</sup> Since the 1960s these have also been the destination for children of school age in the state orphanage system. [Editor].

<sup>4</sup> Hobby circles (*kruzhki*) were and are the term for activity-based clubs, which until 1991 were usually under the aegis of the Pioneer movement, the Communist children's organisation; now, where they exist (the number has diminished significantly), they are attached to individual schools. [Editor].

<sup>5</sup> This informant did not give her surname. [Editor].



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*Translated by Catriona Kelly*