

# Soviet Ethnography

## A Failed Affair with Marxism

**Andrei V. Golovnev**

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**Abstract.** Soviet power came into being after Revolution of 1917 with the efficient support of counter-imperial ethnic/national forces which also provided later on the composition of USSR as multinational state and, accordingly, growth, or even boom, of the ethnography/ethnology. However, since the new state and novel elite strengthened their positions, the same forces began to treat as the threat to the Soviet power. That was the background of turning point and drama that happened to early Soviet science on peoples and cultures in the late 1920s and early 1930s described in the article.

**Keywords.** Ethnography, ethnology, Russia revolution, Soviet power, Marxism ethnicity

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Anthropology and ethnology are often perceived as one and the same science. This is a case of modern Russian scientific register where both of them are presented under number 07.00.07 as *Ethnography, ethnology and anthropology*. Yet intersecting, they certainly differ; as Tim Ingold put it

Anthropology is not ethnography... The objective of anthropology, I believe, is to seek a generous, comparative but nevertheless critical understanding of human being and knowing in the one world we all inhabit. The objective of ethnography is to describe the lives of people other than ourselves [Ingold 2011, 229].

Russian experience gives quite eloquent picture of the peculiar properties of anthropology and ethnography, emphasizing the main protagonist in the study, accordingly, a person or a people. The article below describes an episode in early Soviet history to confirm this point as well as to feature the interrelations between ethnography and “national policy”.

One of controversial and delicate issue in the history and self-consciousness of anthropology/ethnography is its notorious connection with colonialism and

imperialism [Asad 1991; Pels 2008] that is highlighted by such metaphors addressed to anthropology and ethnology as “scientific colonialism” [Galtung 1967] or “child of imperialism” [Gough 1968]. Russian history is likely to reveal an obvious link between colonization and actualization of the knowledge about peoples. Discontinuous, if not jerky, development of the Russian/Soviet science of peoples seems to be impacted more with political challenges and circumstances rather than inner conditions of the science itself.

### **1. Preface on a dawn of ethnography**

Han Vermeulen rightfully points out that «Ethnography as a comprehensive description of peoples developed in response to Russian early eighteenth-century colonial practice»; «In Russia ethnography flowered early, to such an extent that the institutionalization of the discipline occurred earlier in Russia than in western Europe or the United States». European «historians like Müller, Schlözer, and Kollár were the first to formulate a science of peoples and invent names for it. However, they did this in the context of an international interest in peoples that prevailed as much in eighteenth-century Russia as anywhere else» [Vermeulen 2015, 217, 408].

Indeed, self-understanding and self-organizing of the vast Russian Empire, which by the 18th century had stretched across the whole Eurasia from the Baltic Sea till the Pacific Ocean, was followed with appearance of special practical knowledge of peoples. It is rather remarkable that the science emerged not in the office but on long journeys across Russia made by explorers, most of which were German scientists in service to Russian Academy of Sciences. It was Russia’s enormous scopes and ethnic diversity that ensured naturalists to turn into ethnographers while research trips. There were among others Daniel Messerschmidt, Johann Strahlenberg, Vassily Tatishchev, Gerhard Müller, Johann Fischer, Stepan Krasheninnikov, August Schlözer, Peter Pallas, and Ivan Lepekhin, who became casual ethnographers and parted in raising the ethnography. Yet, it was academician Johann Gottlieb Georgi who the first wrote and published a systematic work on ethnography. The full title of his four-volume book, issued in 1776–1780 in German and Russian, seems to be really ethnographic: *Beschreibung aller Nationen des Russischen Reichs, ihrer Lebensart, Religion, Gebräuche, Wohnungen, Kleidung und übrigen Merckwürdigkeiten*. Georgi depicted ca. 80 peoples of Russia and thus presented a novel main protagonist never appeared before — a people, and at the same time variety of peoples systematically described and well compared to each other. The focus on a people as a protagonist and subject of the study notified that new science of ethnography has come into being. In *History of Russian Ethnography*, Sergei Tokarev described Georgi’s book as «a novel combined ethnographical work, a kind of summary

of all peoples of Russia, their economic relations, and way of life as well». In Central Europe, the comparable work of Karl Czörnig, *Ethnographie der österreichischen Monarchie*, was issued several decades later, in 1855–1857 [Tokarev 1958, 13; 2012, 103].

In Europe and the USA, the origin of classical anthropology is customarily associated with *Der Mensch in der Geschichte* by Adolf Bastian (1860), *Primitive Culture* by Edward Burnett Tylor (1871), and *Ancient Society* by Lewis Henry Morgan (1877), and since then anthropology has been thought to appear in its classic evolutionist form. In Germany and Russia, among others, the ethnology textbooks postulate that idea; i.e. the chapter *Development of Ethnology* in the ethnology textbook of Moscow University begins with the sentence, «As a discipline, ethnology was formed in the middle of the 19th century» [Ethnology 2006, 9]; the German textbook of the Universities of Göttingen and Munich introduce almost the same: «The works of a number of founders (such as Bastian, Boas, Rivers, and Malinowski) made anthropology to be institutionalized against a background of natural sciences in the late 19th – early 20th centuries» [Heidemann 2011, 16].

Russian–German ethnography of the 18th century and European anthropology of the 19th century are almost 100 years apart. Not only differ they in the time of emergence, they also vary in causes and motivations for developing. Russian ethnology appeared as a kind of empiric and practical knowledge that was aimed for the Empire's self-discovering and self-developing; Russian monarchs, especially such as Peter I and Catherine II, encouraged the academicians who had been hired from Germany, to study various resources of the Empire, including its manpower. Both Russian monarchs and their subjects used to take the knowledge about peoples and their interrelations as an ordinary practical staff; sometimes the study of peoples produced an effect of «fashion for ethno» followed with peculiar grand entertainments such as «a peoples parade» in the time of Empress Anna Ionannovna in 1740 [Golovnev, Kisser 2015, 59, 62, 67]. When reading the academician Heinrich Storch's writings in 1797, «no other state of earth contains such a variety of peoples» [Suny 2007, 58], it should be accounted that his enthusiasm concerning ethnographic affluence of Russia was strongly influenced by the progress of Russian ethnography.

Later on, in the 19th century, the centralized stability of the Russian Empire resulted in some slowdown in ethnography development. The urgent study of peoples continued to be topical mainly in border areas, especially those in the south and east of Russia; the oriental studies therefore took priority over other ethnographic research of the Academy of Sciences and the Russian Geographical Society. In the 19th century, Russian ethnology surrendered its former international leadership and was ready to borrow the achievements of anthropological evolutionism from Europe as state-of-the-art ideas. Yet,

in some spheres the classical Russian ethnography of the 18th century still retained its practical significance, e.g. in 1822, Russian statesman Mikhail Speransky used its groundwork to compile *Charter for the treatment of inorodtsy* (indigenous population of Siberia, Central Asia, and Russian Far East).

In Russia, the next tide of ethnographic works was caused by the revolutionary movement of the Narodniks (Populists, representatives of the Russian middle class in the 1860s and 1870s, involved in political agitation), whose common slogan «going to the people» closely resembled the ethnographic fieldworks. Particularly productive in ethnographic dimension happen to be the Populists' observations taken in the years of exile in the far areas of the Russian Empire, where Narodniks managed to apply in practice their skills in communicating with the common people and thus succeeded in studying their language and lifestyle. Furthermore, the local authorities frequently hired the well-educated exiles in such social activities as censuses or survey among the natives, like it has happened to Lev Sternberg on Sakhalin [Kan 2009, 45].

Being often “other-in-faith” and “other-in-descent” among Russian ethnic majority, the exiles managed to settle the familiar relations with the natives and had an access to substantial and unique ethnographic observations. German Dmitry Klementz thoroughly studied the indigenous peoples of Altai and Mongolia, the Poles Edward Piekarski, Waław Sieroszewski, and Bronisław Piłsudski researched those of Yakutia and Sakhalin. Famous Jewish trio (so-called ethno-troika) played a prominent role in Russian and Soviet ethnography: Lev Sternberg studied the Nivkh people and their neighbors on Sakhalin and in the Amur, Vladimir Bogoraz travelled and lived with the Chukchi people and the Koryaks, Vladimir Jochelson made a special study of the Yukaghirs. Their “expeditions” (actually exile) lasted for several years and involved many ways to communicate and behave, which afterwards appeared to be known as “stationary method” and “participant observation” in anthropology and ethnology. While getting used to indigenous cultures, many exiled ethnographers learned the languages of native peoples, thus having outstripped the fieldwork method of Bronisław Malinowski for a few decades.

The “ethno-troika” (Sternberg, Bogoraz, and Jochelson) could use their fieldworks to become accomplished experts: they did not graduate from universities and did not maintain doctoral theses, yet they contributed a lot to ethnography. They all were absorbed in ethnography and anthropology both before and after the revolution as well, especially when they took part in the Jesup North Pacific expedition planned and directed by Franz Boas. However, they also put their energy into social and revolutionary activities, including participation in Jewish organizations. In methodology, they applied everything which could arouse research interest and provide new opportunities, including the theory of social evolution of L. H. Morgan

(L. Sternberg especially) and the ideas of cultural evolutionism of E. B. Tylor, human geography of F. Ratzel and R. F. Graebner, and anthropological historicism of F. Boas as well.

## **2. Ethno Boom**

The Revolution of 1917 gave a powerful incentive to ethnography/ethnology in Russia. Seemingly, the revolutionaries who assumed power must have fought at the fronts of the Civil War rather than developed ethnography. Yet soon after February Revolution, in April 1917, the Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of Russia (KIPS) was founded as a part of the Academy of Sciences, to compile the ethnographic map of Russia with copious comments. One of the first Bolsheviks' Decrees was the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia (November 2 (15), 1917), which proclaimed: (1) equality and sovereignty of peoples of Russia; (2) right of peoples of Russia of a free self-determination, including secession and formation of a separate state; (3) abolition of all national and religious privileges and restrictions; (4) free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups populating the territory of Russia. It was first signed by Joseph Jughashvili-Stalin as the People's Commissar of Nationalities [Decrees 1957, 41]. The significance of a national factor and ethnographic studies is indirectly distinguished by the fact that it was the Commissar of Nationalities who became soon the leader of the Communist Party and the architecture of the nationally shaped Soviet Union. According to Terry Martin, the USSR was «the Empire of affirmative activities», which safeguarded ethnic interests of minorities rather than those of a national majority, the Russians. Ronald Suny considered that the USSR became the «cradle» of the nations created and even «made up» by the Bolsheviks' government (in post-Soviet times, it was those «forged» nations that appeared to become the hearths of nationalism which destroyed the Soviet Union) [Martin 2001; Suny 1993].

Both the Russian Empire in the 18th century and the Soviet state in the 20th century used the knowledge about its peoples to arrange and constitute their spatial entity, and therefore ethnography was re-taken as an instrument for government and politics. Since the national movement of “oppressed non-Russian minorities” (the Jews, Georgians, Latvians, and Poles etc.) was one of the factors of the Revolution, and the new ruling elite was ethnically oriented and sometimes favorably disposed to nationalism, the “ethnic problem” seemed to be topical in the Soviet Union. In the first Soviet decade, the state experienced a boom in national movements and study of peoples.

Even in the conditions of the war and post-war devastation, a wide range of ethnic/ethnographic priorities is revealed in the foundation of

Permanent Commission for the Study of Tropical Countries (1918), Board of Orientalists at the Asiatic Museum (1921), the Japhetic Institute (1921), and the Slavic Commission (1922). In 1918, Lev Sternberg and Joseph Lukashkevitch founded the Geographical Institute in Petrograd with a novel Anthropogeographic department (then Ethnographic); in 1920, there were 284 students that are much more than at contemporary Soviet and foreign universities. In 1919, at Moscow University the Physical anthropology department under the head of Dmitry Anuchin separated from the Geographical department; in 1922, in the Social sciences department there appeared an Ethnolinguistic division with a Chair of ethnology under the head of Professor Petr Preobrazhensky [Solovey 1998, 50; Kan 2009, 278, 282].

In October 1922, the Central Ethnographic Office at the Section of National Minorities of the People's Commissariat for Education (*Narkompros*) was established with a goal for «thorough study of the peoples of the RSFSR». In June 1924, Bogoraz delivered the report at the meeting of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities (*Narkomnatz*) and took an active part in forming the Committee for the Support of the Peoples of Northern Remote Areas (Committee of the North) at the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; the newly-founded Committee soon appeared to become one of the most active state ethnographically oriented organization. By this time, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (the *Kunstkamera*) had become a major center for fundamental science and continued to publish the Collected Essays of MAE. In 1923, there first issued the magazine *Krayevedenie (Local Studies)* and in 1925, an ethnographic journal *Northern Asia*; at the same time, there was established the Worker's department (*rabfak*) for indigenous people at Leningrad University, to educate native northern students. In 1926, there first appeared an academic journal *Ethnography* edited by academician Sergei Oldenburg; the journal soon became the central one for the ethnographic society of Soviet Russia. In the middle 1920s, there were launched an array of ethnographic expeditions to all parts of the vast USSR. The issues of *Ethnography* partly reflected the scale of the ethnographic works on the East Slavs (86), peoples of European part of the USSR (87), peoples of the remote areas of the USSR (88), various peoples of the world (89), study of folklore (90), religions and faiths (91), and theory and methodology of the science (93) [Solovey 1998, 41–46, 81].

At last, in the early USSR ethnoeuphoria resulted in renaming the Historical department of Moscow University as the Ethnological one (1925–1931). According to Sternberg, «ethnology became the quintessence of social sciences», and «under the influence of national enthusiasm, the newly-founded autonomous republics were zealous to learn their native language and culture» [Sternberg 1926, 42]. In 1926, two of «ethno-troika» went simultaneously to different international conferences: Lev Sternberg to the Pacific Ocean Congress (Tokyo) and Vladimir Bogoraz to the Congress of

American Studies (Rome). Giving a speech, Bogoraz, in that regard, sincerely proclaimed: «At one stroke, we, the ethnographers of the Soviet Union, could embrace the whole world» [Bogoraz 1927, 282]. Never before had Russia held the Conference of native ethnographers and anthropologists, and at last that time came. To get ready for the All-Union Congress of Ethnographers, it was thought to invite the ethnographers of Leningrad and Moscow to take part in a preliminary conference and to discuss the problems and prospects of ethnography/ethnology.

### **3. *Anti-ethnologist, or the seductions of Marxism***

While preparing for the Ethnographic Conference, which was meant to be held in April 1929 in Leningrad Marble Palace, its conveners made an agenda including: methods and theory, ethnography and Soviet development, Marxism and ethnology, ethnographic education, ethnography and museums, publication activities, and the arrangement of an All-Union Congress of Ethnographers. It was postulated that obstacles in defining both the intentions and subject of Soviet ethnography/ethnology were posed by its connection with the humanities and social sciences (through history and sociology), or with natural sciences (through geography and biological anthropology) as well. The competitive claims for leadership staked by Leningrad and Moscow ethnographers could admittedly complicate their cooperation. It was Professor Vladimir Bogoraz (Leningrad) and Professor Petr Preobrazhensky (Moscow) who were the most prominent participants of the dialogue.

Bogoraz has acquired the leadership among Leningrad ethnographers succeeding to his friend and colleague Sternberg who died shortly before the Conference, in 1927. The school founded by Sternberg and Bogoraz based at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (the *Kunstkamera*) and the Geographical Institute. Moscow school under the head of Preobrazhensky housed at Moscow University where the high value of ethnology was underlined by renaming the Historical department into Ethnological one. The dispute between the schools of Bogoraz and Preobrazhensky arouse for defining ethnography whether as a historical discipline (Preobrazhensky), or as a synthetic study which has both natural and humanitarian features (Bogoraz). However, the question was not a stumbling block if only because every part of the dispute accepted opposite views in its own way: before the revolution, Sternberg and Bogoraz voiced the historical character of ethnography, and Preobrazhensky took the achievements of anthropogeography and ethno-psychology into consideration.

The contribution of ethnography to the development of socialism was another crucial issue suggested for discussion. This subject was mainly supported by young and very efficient scientists such as Nikolay Matorin (Leningrad)

and Sergey Tolstov (Moscow). To elaborate the question, it was thought to discuss the issues of universities, public education, museums, field methods, and specialized journals as well.

Having plunged into mutual polemics, the leaders of Leningrad and Moscow ethnographers underestimated the third part which that time looked like an alien with its ideological statements about inconsistency between ethnography and Marxism. Valerian Aptekar, former political commissar, devoted follower of academician Nikolay Marr, looked rather casual, if not ridiculous as an applicant for the mission to articulate this inconsistency. Meanwhile, in order to clear up that “misunderstanding” the Conference has chosen a prominent Bolshevik, the head of Communist University and Glavnauka (Central Administration for Scientific, Scholarly-Artistic, and Museum Institutions) Martyn Lyadov (Mandelstam) to preside the forum.

When reporting on *Marxism and ethnology* at the Communist Academy in May 7 1928 (a year before the Leningrad Conference), Aptekar accused ethnography/ethnology of contradicting Marxism. His sentence for the science was based on the following: ethnology is built on controversial concepts “culture” and “ethnos”; such a category as “ethnos/nationality” is mistaken either as an anthropological race (vulgar materialism), or as national spirit (spiritual idealism). Consequently, ethnology displays its contradiction to dialectical materialism, and, therefore, the Marxist sociology is appealed to cover the object field of this «bourgeois substitute for social studies» and to «abolish ethnology as a separate science» [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 250–252]. Surprisingly, that Aptekar’s report was not only accepted into the agenda of the Leningrad Conference as one of key-notes, but it also exceeded the time-limit of the session and then turned into the main theme to discuss.

Such clear abuse of the ethnography/ethnology in front of a lot number of experts could be taken as either the Theatre of the Absurd or an example of social masochism, if not accounting some veiled circumstances. The Conference was held in Marble Palace owned that time by the State Academy of Material Culture under the head of powerful academician Nikolay Marr, the author of pretentious *Yaphetic theory*. Thus, academician Marr was a host of the Conference, and Aptekar continuously reminded the participants about this in a bit annoying way; he called N. Marr «the owner of the house», «the chairman of our conference, the head of its executive committee» [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 195, 206]. Having gathered ethnographers “in his palace,” academician Marr however did not take part in the Conference and not even gave his opening greetings to the attendants; he unofficially yielded his voice to his henchman Aptekar.

It is difficult to say how fully the participants of the Conference understood that they fell into the psychological trap of Marr who took Aptekar as



an oracle to deliver them his messages. Now we can just guess why the academician treacherously held the whole ethnographic conference “hostage.” His *Yaphetic theory*, pompously called as *Yaphethidology*, Marr could imagine becoming a general methodology for all humanities and social sciences. It is possible that to accomplish the purpose, he thought to knock ethnology off its pedestal of the «quintessence of social sciences» where it had been put by Lev Sternberg and his followers. Yet, it seems unlikely that academician Marr might have dared risk like that, unless he perceived that ethnology would fall from grace with Soviet power soon. Anyway, the resoluteness in Aptekar’s tone revealed him as a «cudgel of Marr» and an experienced Party polemicist who assumed the right to rule destinies with a rod of Marxism.

According to Aptekar, the arguments delivered by Preobrazhensky «give clear evidence that it is not all right with Marxism here»; the idea declared by Bogoraz in *The Basics of Ethno-Geography* «can not be basic to the development of Marxist ethnology»; «with relation to the Marxist approach to science, there is nothing to do with a “clear description”» that seems to be a principal ethnographic method for fieldwork. As a whole, there occurred oppressive, if not hopeless situation:

We won’t be able to build Marxist ethnology just because we won’t be able to take “ethnos” as one of the stages, or steps of the dialectical development of economic community [...] the abolition of the concept “ethnos” would result in official ending the science of ethnology itself; the matter was brought forward by N. Ya. Marr absolutely independent of me [...] as a result we can conclude that any attempt to develop ethnology as a Marxist science is doomed to failure[...] [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 198-207].

Nikolay Matorin answered that «Comrade Aptekar has monopolized the knowledge of Marxist method» and added some folk phrases to reduce the tension caused by the Aptekar’s speech: «Aptekar...promised a big bloodshed, but has just eaten a finch»; «You have not given us any definitely pointed word, but it was all missed beside the mark». Aptekar’s speeches sometimes caused laughter, but often they made people indignant:

Comrade Aptekar leads us to simply impossible obscurantism (Markelov) [...] we can take the speech of Comrade Aptekar at the Conference as one of the misunderstandings (Tolstov) [...] For two years now, comrade Aptekar has been bearing the name of anti-ethnologist (Iljin) [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 216–218, 225, 235].

The shock after Aptekar’s claims could not get over even the chairman of the Conference, Martyn Lyadov, who applied to Aptekar in the language he understood:

[...] There gathered more than 200 people there [...] You came and you were speaking for an hour and a half. What conclusion could the comrades draw from your speech? They must have sat on their backsides and waited when Comrade Aptekar and other scholastics would decide how to call the science. It is an appeal for idleness. It's but a denial of Marxism. (*Applauses*) [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 239–240].

The Conference suffered a serious collective trauma from attack Aptekar made. Nikolay Nikolsky called him a “savage person” comparable with a quack-doctor that indifferently performed an operation and left. Bogoraz determined the long discussion of Aptekar’s paper as “our two-day struggle with a dragon” and then added: «After those three-day debates, we, ethnographers, can’t understand whether we were abolished or not, whether we could stay alive or not». By the fourth day of the Conference, the syndrome of hostages that seized the participants, had come to a climax with electing *l’Enfant terrible* (as they called Aptekar) a member of the presidium of the Conference [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 244, 254].

What was the reason: whether sophisticated scenario of academician Marr or an inspired play of his pupil Aptekar, that applied foul means of psychological terrorism like those of toughguys in sport and Cheka officers on interrogation? Be that as it may, another part of the truth is hidden in the conceptual weakness of Soviet ethnographers in their attempt to knit ethnography with Marxism. For several days, in the Conference-hall and corridors, the collective mind of Soviet ethnographers tried to invent a suitable formula for the required alliance.

Prof. Preobrazhensky stated that «both ethnology and ethnography are the history», and historical materialism, consequently, is their methodology; Bogoraz insisted that «in its primitive periods, ethnography is based on some biological and zoological elements». Sergey Tolstov turned against “national Marxists” that try to substitute ethnic approach for that of class: «the inclinations to emphasize ethnos and to present ethnography as the science of ethnos seem to be unscientific and harmful tendencies and we must struggle against them». Fenomenov, in his turn, reproached Tolstov for generously labeling any ethnographer as a “chauvinist” and warned about a threat for ethnography if it denied studying ethnos and ethnic cultures [From the classics to Marxism 2014, 113, 130, 152, 159].

The fierce debates about science and politics showed that when ethnography is in season, Marxism is out of season, and search of alliance leads to “affair failure.” After the Conference Bogoraz as a “guild master” mobilized all his scientific and literary talent to make ethnography closer to Marxism and wrote a feature article in journal *Ethnography*; but result was again disappointing for everyone and himself — it appeared to be the worst writing work of him. The article (it was his edited speech delivered at the Sociological section of

Marxist historians at the Communist Academy of the USSR in Moscow) is written in jerks and full of repeated arguments and conclusions that prove his own uncertainty and hesitation. Being described as “superstructure,” faiths doesn’t look better; being broken down by stair of formations, folk topics remind slogans; the statement that without Marxism any fieldwork is «full of gaps and lacunas» just copies his former assertions about language; and the flowery conclusion that «in the early ages of mankind, we can provide just conditional arguments about certain social formations» [Bogoraz 1930, 9-10] seems to be lack of meaning. As a result, the reader could have thought that Marxism was able just to spoil ethnography (although, that time it was supposed to get rid of such thoughts as soon as possible).

#### **4. Discord (in loco conclusion)**

The Leningrad Conference of ethnographers entailed the rapid decline of Soviet study of peoples: many of those institutions that had been opened in the 1920s happened to be closed in the 1930s. In 1930, the Ethnological department of Moscow University was abolished; in 1932, the same thing happened to the Ethnographic division of the Geographical department of Leningrad University. In 1930, journal *Ethnography* was replaced with *Soviet Ethnography* the first issues of which carried the symptomatic headlines: *Bourgeois Finnish ethnography and Finnish fascist politics*, *Against nationalism in Chuvash ethnography*, etc. Any manifestation of ethnics was henceforth was interpreted under a sinister shadow of nationalism and fascism. At the 17th Communist Party Congress in 1934 Stalin declared that the manifestations of as Great Russian as local nationalism contradict to “Lenin internationalism”. Sergey Tolstov, the young leader of Moscow ethnographers, insistently supported the definition of the Soviet culture as «national in form and proletarian in plot» [Ethnography 1929, 1-2, 63].

Ethnographers actually reached a deadlock. The ones, who tried to tie science and Marxism together and even called themselves “Marxist ethnographer,” discovered the simple truth: there is no such thing as the “Marxist ethnographer,” because ethnography is incompatible with Marxism and it is not science at all. It was rumored the Communist Academy deliberately drove ethnographers away: ethnography swiftly got strong counter-revolutionary flavor. Not surprisingly, the year of 1932 witnessed a book of collected articles under the title *Ethnography at the service of the class adversary*, in which preface S. N. Bykovsky wrote:

Revealing the leaving conditions of every “indigenous” group, its welfare and cultural level, ethnography used to give information about the state of indigenous peoples to the ruling classes to favour the enslavement and failure of that every people “under examination [Ethnography at the service 1932, 7].

The Ethnographic Congress that had been thought to be held in 1932 failed; January 1932, it was replaced with the conference of the Communist Academy and the Society of Marxist historians; the formal leader of ethnographers Nikolay Matorin gave there the report *Concerning the tasks of Marxist historians on the ethnographic front*; using but quotes around the word “ethnography”, he underlined that «it is absolutely outdated as a separate discipline». In May 1932, delivering the report *Whether Marxist ethnography is possible* at the All-Russian Archeological and Ethnographic Conference, he gave an unambiguously negative answer. Matorin was supported by his Moscow colleague Tolstov who said: «There should not be and there can't be at all such a separate discipline or science as ethnography». The participant of the Conference, Mikhail Markelov bitterly concluded then: «Ethnography was buried [...]» [Alymov, Arzjutov 2014, 70-73].

There were carried out institutional reforms against that background. On February 1 1930, there was established Institute for the Study of Nations of the USSR (IPIN) on the basis of KIPS under the head of academician Marr with Matorin as his deputy. In 1933, IPIN and the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAE) merged into the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography (IAE). Having joined the Japhetic Institution, the Institute of Oriental Studies, and the Commission of Russian Language into the Institute of Language and Thought, academician Marr meanwhile concentrated his control of linguistics as well [Solovey 1998, 195, 201, 202].

Such centralization of the science let on the one hand the fond desire of ethnographers about a specialized institute come true; yet, on the second hand the centralization made it possible to control the research community and flavor all works with politics; and at last it allowed to convey the authorities' will to and via the leaders of science. The career and fate of Nikolay Motorin seems to be the most indicative to this effect. In October 1930, he was elected as the director of MAE, then after merging MAE and IPIN in February 1933 he became the director of IAE. It was he who became the editor-in-chief of the central journal *Soviet Ethnography*. Yet, never two years passed but in December 1934 he was dismissed from his post; being accused of counter-revolutionary activities, he was then expelled from the Party (in the past he was the secretary of Grigory Zinovjev, the powerful Party leader, later the oppositionist). After almost two years in exile and prison, on October 11 1936, he was sentenced to death and shot [Reshetev 2003, 147–179].

Alexandr Zolotarev figuratively marked in his article of 1934 that both ethnography and Moscow ethnographers were in verge of extinction [Zolotarev 1934, 118]. Yet, that figure of speech soon became the harsh reality: according to Alexandr Reshetov, almost 500 ethnographers were subject to repression [Reshetov 1994, 186]. Among them there were many participants of that notorious ethnographic conference held in Marble Palace

in 1929. Most of them were targets in the investigations during *The Academy case*, *The Case of the Central board of the study of local lore*, *The Case of local nationalists* etc. Valerian Aptekar, the persecutor of ethnology, could not avoid punishment as well: he was accused of counter-revolutionary terrorist activities and shot in 1937.

Since the Soviet state has been stabilized and new ruling elite strengthened its positions in the late 1920s, the “national forces” and ethnic interests which recently so much inspired and empowered the revolutionary leaders were no longer in favor and demand. Moreover, these forces, in alliance with ethnography/ethnology, apparently became a threat to the social and political stability. The former values of ethnicity/nationality were decisively replaced with those of internationality. A jinn which helped to make the revolution was strongly asked to come back to bottle.

After the ups of the 1920s and the downs of the 1930s, Soviet ethnography experienced a period of duality when politically correct studies on the primitive communism, engaging in struggle against religions and building socialism among small peoples of the North had been held in parallel with fundamental multidisciplinary research of the ethnogenesis and the ethnic history of the peoples of the Soviet Union and other countries. The latter direction unofficially maintained that stream of ethnic research which actually contradicted to the Soviet Marxist ideology. Soviet ethnography inherited this peculiar, sometimes hypertrophied, attention to ethnicity from the Russian study of peoples of the 18th century, though the values and estimations of ethnicity were handed not only over scientific schools and the generations of researchers but over the reviving practical need for the self-determination and control of the polyethnic Empire. Until now, this peculiarity of the Russian study of peoples distinguishes it from European anthropology.

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