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**“AMERICAN DREAMS”
OF EARLY SOVIET ETHNOGRAPHY:
SOME REFLECTIONS ON BOGORAS’S LEGACY***

Upon his return from the United States, where he had participated in the 1928 International Congress of Americanists in New York, Vladimir G. Bogoraz also known as Waldemar Bogoraz to the English-speaking audience,¹ published a book-length travelogue titled *USA: People and Morals of America*, in which he wrote:

Thirty years ago moving from the American East to the far West, I wrote in my diary: “Many faces and figures [that surrounded me] strangely reminded [me] of Siberians from near Barnaul or Nizhneu-

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¹ On Bogoraz, see Elena A. Mikhailova. Vladimir Germanovich Bogoraz: uchenyi, pisatel’, obshchestvennyi deiatel’ // Daniil D. Tumarkin and Valerii A. Tishkov (Eds.). *Vydaishchiesia otechestvennye etnologi i antropologi XX v.* Moscow, 2004. Pp. 95–136.

dinsk, [they had] the same immense napes, shaggy hairs, bulbous noses, round gray eyes. Several times, it positively seemed to me that I saw old friends: thirty-eight-year-old Ivan, Vas’ka Sokhatyi, or Aleksei Pushnykh. I was ready to speak with them in Russian. But instead of booming and lively Russian speech, they emitted Anglo-Saxon sounds. I fell silent and passed by.”²

This episode illustrates how much Bogoras desired to find familiar Russian faces in America, a place he also loved and missed later, when he returned to Russia after his long-term sojourn in New York following the 1897–1902 Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Bogoras, a gifted writer, in his 1932 book skillfully depicted various American characters, from billionaires to anthropologists and poor people in the street. Reflecting upon these foreign social types, Bogoras, however, frequently hinted at his own liminal position in the Soviet Union in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and Stalin’s “Great Break.” After his colleague and lifelong friend Lev Shternberg passed away in 1927, Bogoras wrote to Franz Boas: “After that death, my position here has become difficult and even a little awkward.”³ Complaints about that awkwardness only escalated in subsequent letters. For example, in a letter dated September 16, 1930, Bogoras openly admitted: “Conditions in [the] USSR are complicate[d], especially in scientific relations. I mentioned in our meeting that I am gradually coming to the idea of joining the Communist Party, if they would want me to. But you see I am [illegible] that idea slowly enough and perhaps the issue will be otherwise [decided].”⁴

Commenting on these complaints in his study of the relationship between Boas and Bogoras, Sergei Kan even suggests that Bogoras might have considered emigrating to the United States at that time.⁵ While there is no evidence that Bogoras actually took any practical steps in this direction, his constant discontent with Soviet reality and the persistent politics of comparison between the USSR and the United States are obvious in his publications and personal correspondence of the time. In what follows, I

² V. G. Bogoraz-Tan. *USA: liudi i navy Ameriki*. Moscow, 1932. P. 10. Hereafter, all translations from Russian to English are the author’s.

³ Waldemar Bogoras to Franz Boas, October 1927 (n.d.) // *American Philosophical Society*. Franz Boas Papers.

⁴ Waldemar Bogoras to Franz Boas, September 16, 1930 // Franz Boas Papers.

⁵ Sergei A. Kan. “My Old Friend in a Dead-End of Empiricism and Skepticism”: Bogoras, Boas, and the Politics of Soviet Anthropology of the Late 1920s–Early 1930s // *Histories of Anthropology Annual*. 2006. Vol. 2. No. 1. Pp. 55–56.

offer a different explanation for these phenomena. I argue that Bogoras considered not so much leaving Soviet Russia for the United States but rather introducing certain American ideas and practices in the USSR. Abbreviated as “American dreams,” these ideas entertained by Bogoras will be discussed in this essay on the examples of three episodes from early Soviet ethnography.⁶ With the notable exception of several articles,⁷ Soviet–American mutual scholarly projections and dialog still remain largely underexplored in the modern history of anthropology. Thus, the three cases presented here can help revisit the traditional narrative of the history of anthropology by transcending the constraints of national borders and traditions.

I.

Many years of friendship and academic collaboration between Franz Boas and his Russian colleagues, such as Waldemar Bogoras, Lev Shternberg, and Waldemar Jochelson (known as the “ethno-trio”) could not fail to affect the development of Russian and then Soviet ethnography of the North and Siberia. As I have argued elsewhere, those collaborations profoundly shaped the style of Soviet ethnographic fieldwork and the research interests of the first generation of students belonging to the Bogoras–Shternberg school and the later Soviet indigenous ethnohistories.⁸ As one of Boas’s closest Russian friends, Bogoras interiorized his methodology so deeply that the influence of the “father of American anthropology” can easily be discerned in Bogoras’s studies of paleo-Asiats, in which he mapped the ancient migration of material objects and folklore motifs between Eurasia and America.⁹ His biographer Elena Mikhailova argues that even the “Paleolithic novels” written by Bogoras in the genre of science fiction resulted from his conversations with Boas during his stay in New York in 1902–1904.¹⁰

⁶ The archival material substantiating the first and the third parts of this essay will be published separately as part of a volume in the series “The Franz Boas Papers” (general editor: Regna Darnel) edited by Dmitry V. Arzyutov, Sergei Kan, Laura Siragusa, and Aleksandr Pershai, and tentatively titled *Paper Bridges: Franz Boas and Russian Anthropology*.

⁷ Igor Krupnik. *Jesup Genealogy: Intellectual Partnership and Russian-American Cooperation in Arctic/North Pacific Anthropology*. Part I. From the Jesup Expedition to the Cold War, 1897–1948 // *Arctic Anthropology*. 1998. Vol. 35. No. 2. Pp. 199–226.

⁸ Dmitry V. Arzyutov and Sergei A. Kan. The Concept of the “Field” in Early Soviet Ethnography: A Northern Perspective // *Sibirica: Interdisciplinary Journal of Siberian Studies*. 2017. Vol. 16. No. 1. Pp. 31–74.

⁹ See Krupnik. *Jesup Genealogy*.

¹⁰ Mikhailova. Vladimir Germanovich Bogoraz.

In turn, Boas borrowed ideas from Russian colleagues, particularly from the German-language publications of Leopold von Schrenck, the director of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography and a member of the Imperial St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Boas admitted that von Schrenck’s *Die Völker des Amur-Landes* was “of fundamental importance” for designing his research plan of the Jesup Expedition.¹¹ The Soviet ethnographers also fully relied on Schrenck’s geological models of Siberian indigenous histories, clearly bearing the influence of Friedrich Ratzel’s *Anthropogeographie* and the Altaistic and Eurasianistic ideas of Matthias Castrén. This intellectual complex, along with Marxism, helped Soviet ethnographers develop transnational models of ancient indigenous migrations and “prove” the evolutionary “backwardness” of some groups.¹²

One of the main results of Russo-American collaboration involving the “ethno-trio” was the formation of the historical anthropology discipline in its Russian version, later known as *etnogenez* (ethnogenesis) and *etnicheskaiia istoriia* (ethnic history). Boas explicated the importance of the historical method during preparations for the Jesup expedition, outlining its conception as follows: “We must, so far as we can, reconstruct the actual history of mankind, before we can hope to discover the laws underlying that history.”¹³ Boas reduced the history of humankind in all its regional and cultural diversity to the evolution of historically unified “circumpolar culture” and the “Eskimo problem” in particular.¹⁴ This theoretical premise, along with ethnographic, linguistic, and archaeological empirical knowledge accumulated based on Boas’s research program, was transferred to early Soviet Russia, where the “historical particularism” promoted by Franz Boas (i.e., exceptional attention focused on northern peoples) was converted into a peculiar politics of identity. The Soviet field ethnographers, whom Bogoras called “missionaries of a new way of life,” collected data about indigenous languages, customs, and social relations as well as material artifacts, in order to reconstruct their histories before they vanished without a trace as

¹¹ George W. Stocking, Jr. (Ed.). *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883–1911*. Chicago, 1974. P. 110.

¹² See V. G. Bogoraz-Tan. *Rasprostranenie kul’tury na zemle: osnovy etnogeografii*. Moscow and Leningrad, 1928.

¹³ Stocking Jr. (Ed.). *A Franz Boas Reader*. P. 108.

¹⁴ Franz Boas. *Race, Language, and Culture*. New York, 1940. Pp. 344–355; see also Igor Krupnik (Ed.). *Early Inuit Studies: Themes and Transitions, 1850s–1980s*. Washington, DC, 2016. Pp. 3–7; Laurel Kendall and Igor Krupnik (Eds.). *Constructing Cultures Then and Now: Celebrating Franz Boas and the Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Washington, DC, 2003.

a result of the rapid Sovietization of the country. These scholars were also tasked with assisting the “backward peoples” to ascend to the new, socialist stage of historical progress and embrace the universal Soviet culture.¹⁵ This complex mission embraced by early Soviet ethnographers, along with the reluctance of the Soviet authorities to institutionalize the discipline of ethnography itself,¹⁶ inspired Bogoras to design a new undergraduate curriculum that defined the outlook of the Leningrad school of ethnography. During its early years, it prioritized long-term field ethnography, knowledge of local languages, and a strong focus on material culture. In a sense, Bogoras’s “American dreams” came true in the form of the Leningrad school, which combined the personal research experience of the “ethno-trio” and the conceptual influence of Boas.

II.

Judging from the archive of Franz Boas at the American Philosophical Society and the archive of Waldemar Bogoras at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Bogoras and Boas resumed their written correspondence soon after their mutual friend Waldemar Jochelson emigrated to the United States in 1922. This correspondence was a breath of fresh air for Bogoras, who had been isolated from international academic contacts since the Bolshevik Revolution. In his letters, Bogoras asked Boas to update him about developments in American anthropology and science in general in the past years, or where the next International Congress of Americanists would take place. Nevertheless, Bogoras did not waste his years of isolation. He became a professor at Petrograd University (now St. Petersburg State University) and laid the foundation for the new Soviet ethnography. In a way, his academic success was the main obstacle to his other initiatives: it pushed aside more practice-oriented plans, such as the project of creating reservations for the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North as the staple of nationality policy there. He articulated this idea for the first time in an article published in 1922 in the newspaper *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* (Life of Nationalities): “The territories of primitive tribes in the tundra and the forest, on the foothills and mountain spurs have to be part of a special reserve [*zakaznik*], designated specifically for their habitat

¹⁵ See David G. Anderson. *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia: The Number One Reindeer Brigade*. Oxford, 2000; Francine Hirsch. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, 2005.

¹⁶ N. B. Vakhtin. “Proekt Bogoraza”: bor’ba za ogon’ // *Antropologicheskii forum*. 2016. No. 29. Pp. 125–41.

and to be almost completely forbidden for the use and even entry of other [people].”¹⁷

In March 1923, Bogoras repeated this idea in his speech to the Board of Narkomnats (People’s Commissariat of National Affairs).¹⁸ The speech became known as “the Bogoras theses.”¹⁹ Given the occasion, Bogoras framed his idea in more cautious political language, as “A Proposal regarding the Question of ‘Study and Protection of Borderland Peoples.’”²⁰ Conflating the rhetoric of nature preservation and ethnic group protection, his “proposal” also used the Marxist notion of capital:

Aborigines [*tuzemnye liudi*] themselves are the best element of distant deserts’ wealth. They represent living capital along with the millions of shoals of whitefish and salmon, thousands of herds of reindeer, shining *soroki* of sables and dens of foxes and arctic foxes. They were all created by nature itself and have to be used by technology.²¹

Using the Russian term for natural reserve (*zapovednik*), Bogoras expanded its meaning and proposed that indigenous peoples of the Soviet North be considered part of the nature that was protected in such reserves. The Siberian ethnographer Petr E. Ostrovskikh, who commented on and endorsed this project, promptly noted the similarity of Bogoras’s proposal to North American Indian reservations.²² Bogoras himself used the term “reservation” in the opening part of the text, albeit downplaying any references to Native Americans:

The protection of borderland [native] peoples [*okrainnye narody*] should be based on a system of reservation territories [*rezervatsii–zakaznye territorii*] allocated from the territory of the country. They have to be large enough to accommodate each borderland nationality in accordance with its aboriginal way of life [*iskonnyi byt i obraz zhizni*], and prohibited from settlement by neighbors, both Russians and other foreigners with stronger cultures.²³

¹⁷ V. G. Bogoraz-Tan. O pervobytnykh plemenakh // *Zhizn’ natsional’nostei*. 1922. No. 1. P. 1.

¹⁸ V. G. Bogoraz-Tan. Ob izuchenii i okhrane okrainnykh narodov // *Zhizn’ natsional’nostei*. 1923. No. 3–4. P. 170.

¹⁹ Mikhailova. Vladimir Germanovich Bogoraz.

²⁰ Bogoraz-Tan. Ob izuchenii i okhrane okrainnykh narodov. Pp. 178–180.

²¹ Bogoraz-Tan. Ob izuchenii i okhrane okrainnykh narodov. P. 170. Sorok is an old Russian unit used in fur trade meaning forty animal pelts.

²² Ibid. Pp. 180–81.

²³ Ibid. P. 179.

The politically compromised term outweighed the accompanying progressive rhetoric, so the editors found it necessary to reprimand Bogoras from the vantage point of Bolshevik ideological orthodoxy: “The ‘nature reserves’ [*zapovedniki*] for the American government are the same as the church or religion in general – a hypocritical disguise for righteous concealment of all its predatory exploits.”²⁴

Bogoras returned to this topic for the last time in his American travelogue. By the early 1930s, he had evidently departed from the ideal of strict isolation on reservations but still believed in their progressive role for the social and cultural development of indigenous peoples of the North:

There are other spots on the map of America. For example, the so-called Indian reservations, where the last remnants of the indigenous population live as if in a nature reserve [*zapovednik*] under the special limited rights and constant care of officials. The Indians had been persistently dying out and only during the past quarter of a century had begun mixing with whites and blacks and learning some agriculture and various crafts, and had ceased dying out. During the past presidential election, they gained the right to vote for the first time.²⁵

The rhetoric of the “extinction of natives” reveals Bogoras’s original populist (*narodnik*) background, as this concern was characteristic of the anticolonial discourse of Siberian regionalists (*oblastniki*) of the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁶ His colleagues at the Geography Faculty of Petrograd University shared this concern as applied to wild nature, and one of them, the geographer Veniamin P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, was among the first to propose establishing a network of *zapovedniki* in Soviet Russia modeled on American national parks.²⁷ Since the early 1920s, Bogoras had drawn closer to Petrograd naturalists both professionally and personally. After the death of his wife Sofia in 1921, he moved to the apartment of his close friend and colleague, a zoologist and advocate of *zapovedniki*, Ivan D. Strel’nikov.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid. P. 173 (editorial note).

²⁵ Bogoraz-Tan. USA. P. 30. Apparently, he was referring to the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which was enforced by individual states at various time.

²⁶ David Rainbow. *Siberian Patriots: Participatory Autocracy and the Cohesion of the Russian Imperial State, 1858–1920* / PhD diss.; New York University, 2013.

²⁷ Douglas R. Weiner. *Models of Nature: Ecology, Conservation, and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*. Pittsburgh, 2000. Pp. 9, 21.

²⁸ Until his death, Bogoras occupied a room in that apartment in the building of the Lesgafit State Institute of Physical Education. E. A. Mikhailova. Sof’ia Konstantinovna Bogoraz (1870–1921): shtrikhi k portretu Vladimira Germanovicha Bogoraza // *Antropologicheskii forum*. 2016. No. 29. P. 120.

One of the fundamental commonalities between social scientists and naturalists at Petrograd University was their embrace of the notion of *etalon* (standard sample, or model). Environmentalists spoke of models of “healthy nature” representing some general types,²⁹ and ethnographers perceived ethnoses (*narody, etnosy*) as ideally demarcated groups, distinct from each other.³⁰ The concept of model natural environments led to one of the most successful projects of nature preservation, whereas the perception of model human groups eventually shaped “ethnic particularism” as the underlying principle of Soviet nationalities policy.³¹

One of Bogoras’s “American dreams” – the project of reservations for indigenous peoples of the North as model habitats – was never approved by the Soviet authorities. If it had been, it might have significantly changed the social landscape of the Russian North and Siberia. It was not completely forgotten, however, and gained some popularity during the first post-Soviet years.³² Specifically, some indigenous activists viewed reservations as a promising means of preserving “traditional” cultures and protecting nature that had been seriously damaged by Soviet economic policies.³³

III.

Franz Boas was dreaming about completing his decades-long anthropological exploration of Arctic populations by adding a European part to the Asian and American segments that had already been studied.³⁴ With this goal in mind, in the mid-1920s he attempted to organize a Kola expedition, together with Fridtjof Nansen and the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture in Oslo. For various political reasons, that collaborative project never materialized but Boas did not give up on the idea of studying the European North. Thinking about a possible collaboration with Soviet ethnographers, he shared his plans with Bogoras, whose reaction to this initiative was ambiguous.³⁵ On

²⁹ Weiner. *Models of Nature*. P. 70.

³⁰ David G. Anderson, Dmitry V. Arzyutov, and Sergei S. Alymov (Eds.). *Life Histories of Ethnos Theory in Russia and Beyond*. Cambridge, 2019.

³¹ Yuri Slezkine. *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism* // *Slavic Review*. 1994. Vol. 53. No. 2. Pp. 414–52.

³² N. B. Vakhtin. *Korennoe naselenie Krainego Severa Rossiiskoi Federatsii*. St. Petersburg, 1993.

³³ State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). F. 10101. Op. 1. D. 121. L. 16–22.

³⁴ Tamara Lönngren. “...otkladyvaetsia do bolee blagopriatnogo vremeni”: O Kol’skoi ekspeditsii Frit’ofa Nansena // *Scando-Slavica*. 2019. Vol. 65. No. 2. Pp. 146–69.

³⁵ This ambiguity of attitude towards Bogoras’s American colleague is documented in Sergei Kan. “My Old Friend in a Dead-End of Empiricism and Skepticism”.

the one hand, Bogoras was uneasy about participating in a study of the Soviet North by Americans and Europeans. He shared his concern in a private letter of December 12, 1926, to the secretary of the Academy of Sciences, Sergey F. Oldenburg,³⁶ and publicly in the Soviet press.³⁷ On the other hand, his correspondence with Boas shows that Bogoras nevertheless did not refuse to resume their scholarly collaboration.

They met in person at the International Congress of Americanists in New York in 1928 and discussed joint projects. In this essay, I consider just one result of that meeting: the decision to exchange graduate students. A graduate of the Leningrad University Department of Ethnography, Julia Averkieva, was sent to “Papa Franz” to study anthropology and conduct field research in British Columbia,³⁸ and a student of Boas, Archie Phinney, was sent to the USSR to “examine the Soviet methods towards their aboriginal groups” under the guidance of Leningrad-based ethnographers.³⁹ Apparently, in this way, Boas and Bogoras hoped to secure future collaboration between Soviet and American anthropologists.

Julia Averkieva left Leningrad University for Barnard College in New York in 1929 and began her one-year course in anthropology under the guidance of Franz Boas. We do not know much about her education in America or her personal contacts there, but her correspondence with Boas after her return to the Soviet Union reveals her fascination with him – “her only papa” – and Boasian anthropology.⁴⁰ Her deep interest in his “historical

³⁶ Waldemar Bogoras to Sergei Oldenburg, December 12, 1926 // Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg Branch (SPF ARAN). F. 2. Op. 1 (1917). D. 15. L. 92–93.

³⁷ V. G. Bogoraz-Tan. Zachem nam nuzhny zemli u poliusa // *Ogonek*. 1926. No. 21. Pp. 13–14; V. G. Tan-Bogoraz. Kto takie amerikanisty // *Ogonek*. 1926. No. 37. P. 12.

³⁸ See Eduard L. Nitoburg. Iu. P. Petrova-Averkiewa: uchiyeni i chelovek // Tumarkin and Tishkov (Eds.). *Vydaiushchiesia otechestvennye etnologi i antropologi XX v.* Pp. 399–428.

³⁹ Archie Phinney to Franz Boas, January 21, 1932 // Franz Boas Papers; Joshua Smith. Cultural Persistence in the Age of “Hopelessness”: Phinney, Boas, and the U.S. Indian Policy // Regna Darnell, Michelle Hamilton, Robert L. A. Hancock, and Joshua Smith (Eds.). *Franz Boas as Public Intellectual: Theory, Ethnography, Activism*. Vol. 1. Lincoln, 2015. Pp. 263–76; Benjamin Balthaser. “A New Indian Intelligentsia”: Archie Phinney and the Search for a Radical Native American Modernity // Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner (Eds.). *Indigenous Visions: Rediscovering the World of Franz Boas*. New Haven, 2018. Pp. 258–76.

⁴⁰ See Igor’ V. Kuznetsov. Julia Averkieva/Franz Boas Correspondence (1931–37) // *Bulletin: Anthropology, Minorities, Multiculturalism, New Series*. 2006. Vol. 1. No. 2. Pp. 117–59; Idem. Vers une généalogie de l’anthropologie soviétique: l’expédition de F. Boas et de J. Averkieva (1930–1931) // Boris Petric and Elena Filippova (Eds.). *Panorama de*

particularism” overlapped with the Marxist doctrines that dominated Soviet social sciences, which, at times, produced odd combinations.⁴¹ Although Averkieva acknowledged Boas’s intellectual influence on the ethnographic curriculum at Leningrad University, with its stress on geography and natural sciences,⁴² in her publications she also harshly criticized or even attacked American colleagues and Boas personally:

Tacitly, the American “fathers of ethnography” [read: Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber and Robert Lowie] connive to exploit and coerce the oppressed national minorities [*natsmen shinstva*] of America. All this speaks for the fact that American science is bourgeois and reactionary (although it has collected rich materials, which will be sorted out by the Marxist). This science draws backward from metaphysics and eclectics, and not forward, along the path of the development of dialectical materialism.⁴³

Approximately one month before the publication of this article, Averkieva admitted in a letter to Boas that the theoretical part of his scholarship was difficult to comprehend, as “it requires knowledge of philosophical questions.” She nevertheless agreed with his criticism of Marxism when used as a methodology for ethnographic studies:

If I rightly understand you, you accept it as marxism or materialism, is it so? With you[r] critique against it, I personally agree, e.i. [*sic*] that it is impossible all aspects of culture explain immediatly [*sic*] from economics, that all sides of life and of nature are in intimate relation with each other and it is difficult to see what is the cause and what is the result. But when one intends [*sic*] to investigate some particular phenomena he has to isolate it from the general mutual relations. It is nessery [*sic*] to find some general criterium for the understanding of all aspects of [the] life of a people, and this criterium can be found when some particular case will be isolated. How do you think of that?⁴⁴

l’anthropologie russe contemporaine. Paris, 2011. Pp. 45–65; idem. “Posledniaia ekspeditsiia” (iz istorii russko-amerikanskogo sotrudnichestva v izuchenii korennykh malochislennykh narodov) // Etnograficheskoe obozrenie. 2018. No. 3. Pp. 53–69.

⁴¹ Dmitry V. Arzyutov, Sergei S. Alymov, and David G. Anderson (Eds.). *Ot klassikov k marksizmu: soveshchanie etnografov Moskvy i Leningrada (5–11 apreliia 1929 g.)*. St. Petersburg, 2014.

⁴² Iu. P. Averkieva. *Sovremennaia amerikanskaia etnografiia* // *Sovetskaia etnografiia*. 1932. No. 2. P. 98; see also Arzyutov and Kan. *The Concept of the “Field” in Early Soviet Ethnography*.

⁴³ Averkieva. *Sovremennaia amerikanskaia etnografiia*. P. 102.

⁴⁴ Julia Averkieva to Franz Boas, March 2, 1932 // Franz Boas Papers.

Notwithstanding Averkieva's personal sympathy for Boas and his method, the general context of the Soviet Cultural Revolution and American Great Depression and her personal involvement in Soviet academic politics made Marxism the sole conceptual language acceptable to her.⁴⁵ Moreover, a militant politicized tone was expected in publications on foreign social sciences, especially from someone compromised by collaboration with "bourgeois scholars" such as Averkieva after her American year.⁴⁶

Whereas Averkieva was born to a family of Russian peasants on the White Sea coast and fluent in the language of the local Karelian population (a Finnic-speaking group), Archie Phinney was also a first-generation college graduate from an Idaho family of Nez Percé (Niimiipuu) Indians. According to Phinney's letter to Boas, what surprised him the most about Soviet academe when he arrived in Leningrad in the fall of 1932 was that Soviet officials and ethnographers "hold innumerable meetings – student meetings, faculty meetings. I've been to half a dozen already, and they talk for hours about plans. Later on, perhaps, I can participate intelligently in this sort of thing so I will make arrangements to become adjusted in my own way."⁴⁷

He also noticed that two supreme intellectual authorities dominated the field of Soviet ethnography: Lewis Henry Morgan and Karl Marx. As he informed Boas, "I seem to have plunged suddenly into the functioning and practical aspects of this new methodology. I suppose I shall continue to see Russian life confusedly until I get my proletarian glasses."⁴⁸

This was a very astute observation, as the Soviet ethnographers at the time were indeed obsessed with combining the ideas of Morgan with the Bolshevik rendering of Marxism. It is no mere coincidence that the Soviets acquired almost simultaneously, in 1936, the archive of Karl Marx in Paris and photocopies of Morgan's manuscripts held in Rochester, New York, and treated these documents as a material fetish of sorts (in the Marxist sense). There were even plans to name the Institute of Ethnography of the Soviet Academy of Sciences for Morgan.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Sergei A. Kan. Iuliia Averkieva i Frants Boas: vzaimnaia simpatii i ideologicheskie raznogliasiia // *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. 2018. No. 3. Pp. 70–79.

⁴⁶ See Nitoburg. Iu. P. Petrova-Averkieva. Pp. 404–405.

⁴⁷ Archie Phinney to Franz Boas, November 12, 1932 // Franz Boas Papers.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Sergei A. Kan and Dmitry V. Arzyutov. The Saga of the L. H. Morgan Archive, or How an American Marxist Helped Make a Bourgeois Anthropologist the Cornerstone of Soviet Ethnography // *Histories of Anthropology Annual*. Vol. 10: Local Knowledge, Global Stage / Ed. Regna Darnell and Frederic W. Gleach. Pp. 149–220.

Phinney was also absolutely right to expect that “proletarian glasses” would be indispensable for a sympathetic view of “Russian life.” Bogoraz himself worked hard to acquire such optics: his paper at the 1928 International Congress of Americanists in New York was dedicated to the success of Soviet nationality policy and the mobilization of indigenous people in its support, based on the experience of the Institute of Northern Peoples in Leningrad.⁵⁰ Despite Bogoraz’s best intentions, however, Morgan and Marx remained alien and essentially irrelevant thinkers for him. His attempts to become an earnest Marxist failed.⁵¹ Upon his arrival in the USSR, Phinney hoped “to find in the Soviet system a model that the United States could emulate,” as he wrote in a letter to Boas, who arranged his study in Leningrad having exactly this goal in mind. However, Phinney admitted in the same letter that he was “not optimistic about the value of the Russian method as a thing applicable to the US Indian reservations.”⁵² Very soon, the inadequacy of the Marxist explanatory paradigm even in Soviet conditions became apparent to Phinney. As he conveyed to Boas in a letter dated August 8, 1933:

I get, from what I read and from what is constantly told to me, too many facts about the phenomenal development of native groups that were from the beginning rather well constituted socially and economically and not enough facts about the social rehabilitation or regeneration of tribes that haven’t achieved an economic status consistent with the Soviet industrialization plans.⁵³

As U.S. policies toward national minorities began to change under the new administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Phinney tended to see them as more progressive than Soviet ones. This became more obvious when he finally obtained firsthand experience during a field expedition to Altai (Oirotia), where he observed this East Siberian autonomous region and its relations with Moscow and government officials. It was there that he received a copy of the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934 (the Wheeler–Howard Act). This “Indian New Deal” increased self-government and economic viability of native Americans and was a major step toward endorsing indigenous values and practices, hence Phinney responded to it very enthusiastically.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Bogoraz-Tan. USA. Pp. 212–213.

⁵¹ V. G. Tan-Bogoraz. K voprosu o primeneniі marksistskogo metoda k izucheniiu etnograficheskikh iavlenii // *Etnografiia*. 1930. No. 1–2. Pp. 4–56; Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ARAN). F. 358. Op. 2. D. 177. L. 2–29.

⁵² Balthaser. “A New Indian Intelligentsia.” P. 261.

⁵³ Archie Phinney to Franz Boas, August 8, 1933 // Franz Boas Papers.

⁵⁴ Archie Phinney to Franz Boas, July 6, 1934 // Franz Boas Papers.

Eventually, Phinney partially adopted Soviet Marxist methodologies or at least their rhetoric, and “applied Marxian theories of capitalist development to the situation of the Nez Perce.”⁵⁵ He also picked up some clichés from Soviet ethnographic discussions of the time, so references to the precarious position of indigenous groups under the Russian imperial regime can be found in his published and unpublished papers.⁵⁶ This seems to be the main influence on Phinney of more than four years of socialization at the center of Soviet ethnography in Leningrad.

If Boas and Bogoras planned to lay the foundation for cooperation between Soviet and American ethnographers of the younger generation, their hopes were in vain. Despite the parallels and even the commonality of their life experiences, it seems that Averkieva and Phinney did not get along well and showed few common interests. Averkieva, who was three years younger, was already finishing her dissertation and disapproved of Phinney’s seemingly indifferent attitude to scholarship. As she complained in August 1934 in a letter to Boas, “Archy [*sic*] is not doing much anything here. It seems, that he does not care at all about serious studies in anthropology; he is just [a] young tourist in our country.”⁵⁷ In fact, Phinney just had different interests and priorities. He was working hard on Nez Percé grammar and a number of translations, giving lessons in sign language, conducting some ethnographic fieldwork in Altai and Kabardino-Balkaria, and preparing his candidate of sciences dissertation. Neither their immersion in each other’s cultures nor common interests in the ethnography of minority groups allowed Averkieva and Phinney to overcome their divergent concerns regarding Soviet and American political situations and academic cultures.

* * *

As is typical of daydreams, most “American dreams” of early Soviet ethnographers did not come true as envisioned. Still, they had profoundly shaped the discipline of Soviet ethnography as a hybrid of evolutionism, Marxism, and museum studies of material culture. Although the names of Boas and Bogoras were not always at the center of academic debates in postwar Soviet ethnography, their methodologies certainly were. To this day, the topic of ancient migrations dominates the reflections of Russian

⁵⁵ Balthaser. “A New Indian Intelligentsia”. P. 263.

⁵⁶ Archie Phinney. *Racial Minorities in the Soviet Union* // *Pacific Affairs*. 1935. Vol. 8. No. 3. Pp. 321–27.

⁵⁷ Julia Averkieva to Franz Boas, March 24, 1934 // Franz Boas Papers.

anthropologists affiliated with the Academy of Sciences. Likewise, the extinction of languages and cultures and the need for their special care and protection by the state and scholars, remain central for Russian ethnography and anthropology. As was mentioned earlier, the idea of integrated nature and culture reserves (reservations) resurfaces from time to time. Even some of the old misunderstandings and difficulties of translation, both linguistic and conceptual, persist in the contacts of Russian anthropologists and ethnographers with their American and European counterparts. One way to resolve these misunderstandings is to transcend national borders and national academic traditions in reconstructing the history of anthropology.

SUMMARY

Dmitry Arzyutov discusses a phenomenon that he defines as “American dreams” of Russian ethnography in the early twentieth century based on the example of Waldemar Bogoras, one of the founders of early Soviet ethnography. The essay highlights three specific cases that frame the development of this discipline not through the familiar narrative of gradual isolation but as a story of sometimes problematic contacts and exchanges with American anthropologists. The contacts that were established during the joint Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897–1902) led by Franz Boas continued into the 1920s. Arzyutov shows that the main concepts of Soviet ethnography, such as “ethnogenesis” and “ethnic history,” were products of the debates about the origin of the peoples of Arctica and Siberia between Franz Boas and the Russian expedition participants, Bogoras and, to a lesser degree, Lev Shternberg. The second case addresses Bogoras’s unrealized project of establishing nature reserves-cum-reservations for the native peoples of Siberia. These were to combine the prerevolutionary idea of nature reserves (popular among Bogoras’s geographer colleagues) with the North American practice of Indian reservations. Finally, the third case compares trajectories of the two students of Bogoras and Boas, Julia Averkieva and Archie Phinney. Their stories show how Marxism might have been differently understood and deployed in the transnational context, and how this difference could have generated intellectual and personal disagreements and conflicting versions of identity politics. The three cases taken together testify to the importance of shifting the optics of the history of anthropology from reconstructing national traditions and local genealogies toward tracing dialogue and mutual borrowings.

Эссе Дмитрия Арзютова разворачивается вокруг фигуры одного из основателей раннесоветской этнографии Владимира Германовича Богораза. Он сам, его научное окружение и ученики, являются носителями интеллектуальной установки, которую автор определяет как “американскую мечту” советской этнографии. В эссе рассматриваются три сюжета, задающие новую рамку осмысления развития этнографии – не через привычный нарратив постепенной изоляции, а как истории трудного и далеко не всегда успешного процесса контактов и обмена с американскими антропологами. Эти контакты, восходящие к Тихоокеанской экспедиции Джесупа (1897–1902) под руководством Франца Боаса, продолжались вплоть до конца 1920-х годов. Арзютов указывает, что такие фундаментальные концепции советской этнографии, как этногенез и этническая история, были продуктом дискуссии о происхождении народов Арктики и Сибири между участниками экспедиции: Богоразом (и, в меньшей степени, Львом Штернбергом) и Боасом. Второй сюжет реконструирует нереализованный проект Богораза по созданию природных заповедников как резерваций для коренных народов Севера. В этом проекте соединялась российская идея охраны природы в заповедниках и заказниках, сформулированная накануне большевистской революции и активно обсуждавшаяся географами – коллегами Богораза, и североамериканская практика индейских резерваций. И, наконец, в третьем сюжете прослеживается история обмена студентами Богораза и Боаса: Юлии Аверкиевой и Арчи Финни. Их история показывает, как по-разному понимался марксизм в транснациональном контексте и как эти различия влияли на академическую политику, а также политику идентичности за пределами университетских аудиторий. Эссе в целом демонстрирует важность переноса фокуса в изучении истории антропологии с поиска национальных традиций и локальных генеалогий на изучение диалога и взаимных заимствований.