

A.M. Reshetov, I.P. Sologub, (eds), *Problemy etnografii i istorii kultury narodov Aziatsko-Tikhoookeanskogo regiona*, St Peterburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 2004, 367 pp. 185 roubles.

The festschrift *Problems of Ethnography and History of Culture of Asia-Pacific Rim Peoples* is dedicated to the memory of an outstanding Russian anthropologist Nikolai Aleksandrovich Butinov (1914-2000) and his life-long studies of the South Pacific peoples. For decades he was the head of the Department of Australia, Oceania and Indonesia in the St Petersburg Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography and the convenor of the annual Readings in honour of N. Miklouho-Maclay in the Institute, which brought together the Pacific Rim specialists in the field of anthropology and ethnohistory. Dr Butinov, whose interests ranged from the deciphering of Easter Island tablets to the developments in the young state of Papua New Guinea, was himself an institution and the festschrift is in essence a summary of the half a century-long epoch of Australian-Pacific studies in the USSR/Russia.

The collection opens with Butinov's scholarly biography by Elena Revunenkova and Alexander Reshetov. Reshetov's expertise in the history of ethnographic studies in the USSR contributes to defining Butinov's research within the still unexplored history of Soviet anthropology. It depicts Butinov's evolution from the loyal supporter of the communist ideology in the 1950s to a champion of revision of the dogmatic postulates of the Soviet theory of primitive society in the 1960s and the following years. 'Letters from Afar' by Vladimir Kabo, Butinov's colleague and friend now living in Australia, provide another unconventional approach to these issues. This is a collection of personal letters, which the author wrote to his mother Elena Kabo from Leningrad throughout the 1960s rendering the life in the Institute in the post-Stalinist years. The letters expose the confrontation between the conservative forces in the Institute and a small group of rebels, which included Nikolai Butinov. This struggle, which took at times a dramatic turn, reflected the increasing reactionary tendencies in the Communist Party's ideological apparatus. These dissident scholars were banned from travelling abroad and meeting foreign colleagues, their published works were severely criticised from the dogmatic Marxist standpoint, and publication of their new works was hindered.

Such a background makes the scholarly exploits of Butinov and his aspiration for the scientific truth especially noteworthy. The collection provides the reader an opportunity to look in the creative laboratory of this outstanding scholar as the first three sections of the book include thirteen of Butinov's unpublished papers prepared for publication by Maria Butinova, his widow and colleague. Among the themes Butinov was working on in the last years of his life was Miklouho-Maclay's heritage, particularly his championing of the equality of races in the context of the theoretical anthropology of the time. Another field of Butinov's studies is the transformation of the traditional social institutions in the young state of Papua New Guinea.

Butinov and K.I. Kuzmin's article discusses their approach to the deciphering of Easter Island tablets with rongorongo script, while an article by Irina Fedorova, a specialist in Rapanui ethnography, chronicles the development of the prolific Russian school in this field, which originated with Miklouho-Maclay's visit to the island and the acquisition of tablets in 1871. Among the anthropological contributions in the collection is a controversial paper by Pavel Belkov 'Australia – New Guinea: On the notion of ethnic continuity', in which he tries to demonstrate structural and functional similarities between ritual objects (masks and churingas) from New Guinea and Australia.

A paper by the historian Aleksandr Massov 'The ethnographical observations of Russian Navy seafarers in Australia and New Guinea during the second half of the nineteenth century' contributes new data to the history of Russian anthropological interest in the area. He examines accounts by surgeon Pavel Burtsev and the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich of the corvette *Rynda* in Port Moresby, New Guinea in 1887 and by the midshipmen V.K. Pilkin and V.P. Zotov of the cruiser *Razboinik* in Port Darwin in Australia in 1893. Unlike the professional ethnographers, they reflect attitudes of the Russian society at large to the 'exotic' indigenous peoples.

Papers by John McNair (University of Queensland) and Alla Petrikovskaya (Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow) explore the history of Russian-Australian contact in the twentieth century. McNair provides a subtle analysis of the perceptions of the Australian Left, which became an integral part of Australian intellectual and social history, in his paper 'Russia Through Rose-Tinted Spectacles: The Testimony of Female Australian Communists in the 1930s'. He examines three representative accounts – Suzanne

Abramovich's *So this is Russia!*, Katharine Susannah Prichard's *The Real Russia* and Betty Roland's *Caviar for Breakfast* – arguing how far they were from reality. In 'Russians in Australia: the cultural contribution (The first half of the twentieth century)' Petrikovskaya explores the introduction into Australian circulation of the riches of Russian culture by Russian émigrés and renowned stage performers. She deals in particular with the efforts and achievements of Inocento Serishev, Russian priest and publisher, Danila Vassilieff, painter and sculptor, Dolia Ribush, stage director, and Nina Maximova-Christesen, founder of Russian studies in Australian academia.

Russian studies of anthropology and ethnohistory of Aotearoa (New Zealand) date back to Bellingshausen-Lazarev visit in 1820. Moscow historian Ludmila Stefanchuk explores recent developments of the Maori struggle for economic and cultural autonomy. The collection also includes papers about Russian connections with countries of South-Eastern Asia and a valuable overview of published catalogues of Australian and Pacific ethnographic collections in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography by V.N. Kisliakov.

The book is a high quality production by the new academic publishing house, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, and is well illustrated, but it lacks an index. Unfortunately, the publisher omitted providing on the imprint page the names of the members of the editorial board headed by Alexander Reshetov whose devotion to the memory of Nikolai Butinov made this publication possible.

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Jakob Hedenskog, Vilhelm Konnander, Bertil Nygren, Ingmar Oldberg, and Christer Pursiainen, (eds), *Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions of Security under Putin*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 366 pp.

At his seventh state of the nation address delivered in early May 2006 Russian President Vladimir Putin compared the United States to a ravenous wolf: 'Comrade Wolf knows whom to eat, and it eats without listening'. This stark pronouncement came in the wake of a denunciation of Russia's checkered democratic record by American Vice-President Dick Cheney. What had