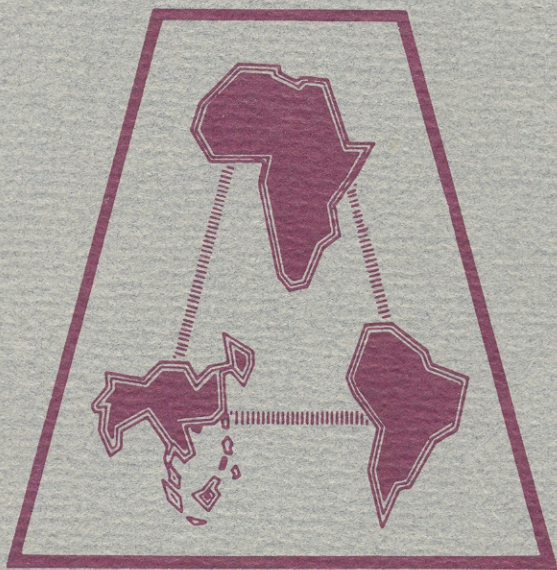


# The Global Practice Of Anthropology



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THE GLOBAL PRACTICE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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## PRACTICING ETHNOLOGY IN RUSSIA: AN OVERVIEW

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ANATOLY YAMSKOV and NADEZHDA DUBOVA

### INTRODUCTION

If one looks at the history and present position of ethnology in Russia, s/he is certain to be puzzled by a paradox. The long established discipline, which has accumulated an impressive compendium of data as a result of the efforts of many top specialists, until recently was little known to the public. Even now it enjoys very limited influence in Russian society. Judging from the number of scholars or research and training centers, ethnology in Russia falls far behind other social sciences, such as sociology, history, social geography and psychology, economics and, in more recent years, political science.

Generally speaking, there is no special subdiscipline of applied ethnology in Russia with its own professional organizations, uniform terms, research methods and goals. Consequently, there is not a single article devoted to applied ethnology in the country. The following attempt to discuss history and major approaches to the application of ethnological research in Russia is thus somewhat subjective and should be taken as a preliminary attempt to discuss the topic.

During the Imperial and Soviet periods, the discipline of ethnology was better known as ethnography, and more or less corresponded to cultural/social anthropology in English-speaking countries. In the Soviet tradition, archaeology, physical anthropology and linguistics had been developing as separate disciplines, though close contacts between them and ethnography always were maintained and some scholars (like late academician Valery Alexeev) worked successfully in several of these disciplines.



## HISTORY OF RUSSIAN ETHNOLOGY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The first ethnographic data recorded in Ancient Russia (Kievan Rus) in the chronicles began with Nestor's "Povest Vremennyh Let" in the early 12th century. This tradition survived for many centuries and, in Siberia, it stopped only in the late 17th century with the chronicle written by Semen Remisov.

During the time of Peter the Great, who transformed Russian Tzardom into an Empire and westernized the ruling elite in the beginning of the 18th century, the first scientific expeditions started to work in the country. Invited foreign scholars or Russians, trained in a Western manner, started to collect ethnographic data along with information about mineral resources, geography, etc., mainly at the outskirts of the Empire. The tradition of government-organized expeditions, in which both military personnel and civilian scholars took part, lasted up to the start of the 20th century, but the most productive period was in the 19th century.

Peter the Great established the first Museum, "Kunstkamera", in 1714, and the Academy of Sciences in 1724. Both of these were state institutions in St. Petersburg, organizing expeditions and studying and exhibiting the resulting collections, including ethnographic ones. In 1831, Peter's Kunstkamera was divided into 7 separate museums, one of them being the Museum of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences (Stanyukovich 1974). Currently it is known as the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, and together with the Institute of Ethnography it comprises the oldest and second largest research center in the present Russian Academy of Sciences.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a great impetus to the development of ethnography was given by the state-sponsored or private activities of army officers or civilian administrators who compiled descriptions, often very detailed and accurate, of certain territories where they were stationed and of their new neighbors -- the local peoples. Ethnographic and folkloristic research among ethnic Russians and other peoples of the central European part of the Empire also started in the early 19th century, but mainly due to the efforts of unofficial, well-educated amateurs.

The Russian Emperor's Geographical Society was established in 1845 in St. Petersburg, and from the start, academician Karl Behr organized the first official ethnographic research institution in the country, the Department of Ethnography. It became the major coordinating and consultative, publishing and organizing center of ethnographic research, including state-sponsored expeditions, for the next 50 years.

The Russian Geographical Society and its Department of Ethnography also exists, organizing symposia and publishing proceedings or collections of papers, which are presented at the regular monthly sessions. As in the last century, branches of the Society still are active in major regional centers of Russia, but now, having virtually no funds and a staff of one or two clerks only, they do not act as real research centers.

In Moscow, the Society of Natural Scientists, Physical Anthropologists and Ethnographers was formed in 1863 in the form of a public organization, affiliated with the university. It became a fund-raising, coordinating and publishing center too, though less important than the Geographical Society, and unlike the latter, it ceased operating in 1931. Nevertheless, this Society started the first regular specialized journal in 1889 -- "Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie" (Ethnographic Review). In 1993, the journal "Sovetskaya etnografia" (Soviet Ethnography) was renamed after this predecessor.

Professor Dmitriy Anuchin, famous for his research in geography, ethnography, archaeology and physical anthropology, established the first training centers in Russia. In 1880, the Chair of Anthropology was established with courses in physical anthropology and ethnography (Tokarev 1966), and in 1884 the Chair of Geography and Ethnography (Markov and Solovey 1990) was established. Both were located at Moscow State University.

The history of Russian ethnology before 1917 was studied in detail by Professor Sergey Tokarev, though he did not cover the problems and areas of applied research (Tokarev 1966). The same is true for many articles on the topic of Russian ethnology, appearing mostly in the continuing series of collections "Ocherki istorii russkoy etnografii, folkloristiki i antropologii" (Essays on the History of Russian Ethnography, Folklore Studies and Physical Anthropology), published by "Nauka" Press in Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg.

During pre-revolutionary times, Russian ethnology was forming as a discipline with a strongly applied character, as was typical for any colonial power of that time. It was even considered by the officials as a prime source of local-scale economic and geopolitical information. The major focus was on economy and land use, settlement patterns, demography, folk law, beliefs (religion) and folklore of the populations under study. Social and military organization, and political, economic and marital links with neighboring groups also were studied in detail. Starting with the Medieval chronicles, special attention was always paid to the folk knowledge of the origins, history and past migrations of the surveyed populations.

## SOVIET ETHNOLOGY: RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTERS

After the October Revolution of 1917, the first departments of ethnography/ethnology were established in the country, showing the growing importance of the discipline. In 1919, the Department of Ethnography was organized in the newly established Institute of Geography in St. Petersburg (Tokarev 1974). The same year in Moscow, professor Dm. Anuchin re-established the Chair of Anthropology (with courses in ethnography) in the "old" University, and the new "1st" University was organized with the Chair of Ethnology (from 1922) which transformed into the Department of Ethnology in 1925. Professor P. Preobrazhensky from that department produced the first Soviet textbook "Ethnology", published in 1929.

The methodological discussions of the late 1920s turned into ideological, and finally into political ones. P. Preobrazhensky advocated ethnology as a more "progressive" and universal social science with strong links to sociology, compared to the "tzarist" ethnography oriented towards geography, but he lost his case and was jailed and killed and his textbook was forbidden (for more details about these tragic events see Slezkin, 1993). For some time in the early 1930s, there was no training in either ethnography (not to speak about the banned ethnology) or history in the universities, and no classes in history in the schools of the USSR (except for the history of the Communist movement or October Revolution.)

Only in 1934 were history courses re-established in the Soviet universities, the historical departments re-opened, and ethnography was allowed again, but as nothing more than a specialized part of history. Chairs of Ethnography were organized from the middle 1930s at the Department of History in the Universities of Leningrad and Moscow (in the latter by professor Sergey Tolstov in 1939; Markov and Solovey 1990). Due to ideological reasons, the "old" ethnography had been drastically transformed in its methodology and research priorities, and compelled to avoid any methodological links or cooperation with geography (or ecology, as was the case in the 1970s and early 1980s.)

Professionals continued their work in museums and state organizations even during the early 1930s. In Leningrad, in 1933, scholars from the former Department of Ethnography at the Institute of Geography were joined with the staff of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology, and of the former Institute for the Studies of the Peoples of the USSR. They formed a research institution that went through several reorganizations, and in 1937 finally became the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

The Moscow Branch of the Institute of Ethnography was formed and headed by professor Sergey Tolstov in 1943. Soon it became the leading research center in the country. In 1992, the Moscow and St. Petersburg branches became independent institutions, the Moscow one being renamed the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The post-war period saw the gradual spread of research and training institutions from Moscow and Leningrad to provincial centers, mainly during the 1960s and 1970s. Currently, every republic of the Russian Federation (and the same is true with respect to the capitals of the post-Soviet states and former Union Republics of the USSR) has a branch research institute, affiliated with the republican or regional branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and/or the Republican Ministry of Education. In every one of 19 such institutes there are departments of linguistics and literature, history and ethnography, archaeology. In some cases, such institutes have differentiated, but nowhere have independent ethnological research centers appeared.

Major regional centers, such as Vladivostok and Novosibirsk, have the same kind of research institutes as the Russian Academy of Sciences. The research institutes usually have up to a dozen or slightly more ethnologists, with about one hundred in St. Petersburg and about two hundred in Moscow. Most have scientific degrees, and are engaged in academic research. In Moscow and St. Petersburg they are training post-graduate students, and some scholars, purely by individual choice, have an extra job as lecturers in the universities.

Professional ethnologists also work in many provincial museums that are devoted to local history and geography and usually have ethnographic sections. Often individuals combine work in the local university as a part-time lecturer, and work in the museum as a researcher and lecturer, if both exist in the city.

Chairs of Ethnography are operating at the Department of History in the Universities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Kazan (Tatarstan) and in a few other places. The staff of these chairs rarely exceeds a dozen trained scholars who combine lecturing in ethnography and academic research. Students, training in ethnography, do not have special courses in applied ethnology.

It has been estimated that the leading training center in the country (Chair of Ethnography at the Department of History at Moscow University) prepared 800 graduate and post-graduate students during 1945-1990 (Markov and Solovey 1990). This number includes foreigners and persons from the previous Union republics. It can be assumed that something like 500 of them were graduate students from the Russian Federation, and other university centers could have trained some 300-400 more graduates. We can add about 50-200 persons who got

a five-year university education in geography, history, sociology and other sciences but went for post-graduate studies in ethnography and thus become professionals too. These figures give an idea of the size of the ethnological community in Russia.

To better understand the position of ethnology in Russia, one must note that there are no departments of ethnology anywhere in the country, while most provincial and republican capitals have universities with departments of history (as a rule) and, often, departments of sociology, geography and, in recent years, of political science. Numerous researchers and, first of all, lectures in such disciplines as the history of the Communist Party of the USSR, scientific communism, political economy of socialism, etc., have moved to the political sciences or sociology after the end of the USSR and they have organized new or enlarged old departments and chairs of social sciences.

Unfortunately, there is no review of the history, personalia and methods of Soviet ethnography, though some information can be found in scattered articles.

#### THE SOVIET PERIOD: APPLYING RESULTS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Though applied ethnology, as a distinct subdiscipline with its organizations, methods and aims, had not formed during the Soviet period, the idea of application of research results into practice was always promoted by officials in both the Academy and universities. The section on application was, for instance, an important and unavoidable part of yearly reports that every scholar or lecturer had to submit to the administration of his or her institution.

Generally speaking, Soviet ethnographers acted only as consultants to state officials, producing reports with information and recommendations on special requests, or on their own initiative, but with no influence on and not even involved in the process of policy formulation and decision-making. Those few scholars who joined government organizations usually stopped their own research and publishing activities. There were two major exceptions to this rule that made it possible to speak about applied ethnography in a real sense -- the work of ethnographers in the North in the 1920s, and the Khoesm expedition to Aral basin in 1950s - 1980s. In both cases, ethnographers were participating in the process of implementation of their recommendations.

In the 1920s, the major focus of Soviet ethnography was on the Northern indigenous groups, and many ethnographers played crucial roles in developing alphabets and written (suited for future literature) languages of these groups, sometimes working as teachers themselves. This work was analyzed in a special

article (Antropova 1972); a bibliography of some reports of practitioners that were published in the 1920s (Slezkin 1993) also is available. The ethnographers were successful too in such a delicate field as collectivization in the North. By constantly monitoring the actual subsistence economy and migrations, and being able to appeal to top state and party officials, ethnographers did the most to slow down the process, for more than a decade, and to minimize the losses that the people suffered. In the 1970s and 1980s, ethnographers produced many reports, criticizing the state economic and social policies in the North and their effects on indigenous populations. Judging from the role of ethnographers in changing or preserving traditional life styles of entire ethnic groups, the Soviet North and Siberia are the most important examples of applying results of ethnographic studies.

The other most important region of the USSR, from the point of view of economic and social consequences of applying results of ethnographic research, has been Central Asia. Here the founder and the first director of the Moscow Institute, Professor Sergey Tolstov, organized after World War II, the Khoesm expedition for multidisciplinary research on ethnography, archaeology and paleogeography of the Aral area. As a result, many formerly irrigated fields were found and some of them, after the information was given to local officials, were re-irrigated and settled again after centuries of being desert pastures. Recently, the late Professor Boris Andrianov, retired Professor Alexander Vinogradov, and the present head of the department, Professor Larisa Levina, took the lead in discussions and abortive planning (because the split of the USSR) of measures to ameliorate the severe ecological crisis in the Aral area.

Ethnographers also played a crucial role in demarcating the boundaries of the republics and autonomous regions when they were formed in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s. Actually, the project to create ethnic maps, showing areas, settled and used by all ethnic groups of the country, was launched before the Revolution. The scholars, who survived or stayed in Russia, were recruited to finish the project and to consult on the new "national" boundaries. But in this politically sensitive field, the decision-making remained in the hands of the party and state officials, and the scholars served as consultants only.

For almost the whole Soviet period there were repeated attempts to eradicate the folk or religious ceremonies, beliefs and practices corresponding to major events of the life cycle, and to introduce the new, socialist ones. Especially strenuous efforts were made in the 1930s, and in the 1960s and 1970s. However, no famous ethnographer took part in these actions despite heavy ideological pressure. Research in this field was organized and many scholars monitored the situation in different areas of the USSR and among different ethnic groups, informing the state and communist party institutions.



During the last years of the USSR, when ethnic conflicts started to spread over the country, ethnographers were very active in preparing reports to the Central Committee of the CPSU or to the government on the history, present situation and possible future developments of ethnic contacts in all multiethnic areas, both conflict-ridden and still peaceful. Such reporting on inter-ethnic relations was taking place in the earlier times too, but not on such a large scale.

By the middle 1980s, writing reports to official bodies on practical issues was considered one of the major components of professional ethnographic research, the others being field work, publication of articles and monographs or presentation of conference papers. Nevertheless, there are no mentions of applied ethnography as a subdivision of the discipline and no reviews of the methods or goals of application of ethnographic research in either Soviet period textbook (Tokarev 1958; Bromley and Markov 1982).

#### PRACTICING ETHNOLOGY

The period immediately before and after the split of the USSR should be reviewed separately for many reasons. Democratization made ethnologists far more active, not only in writing reports and providing information and recommendations, but also in stressing the need for their active participation in all stages of activities organized by the state, and likely to change the lives of the ethnic groups they study. The state officials themselves became more interested in joint work with specialists in cases where public opinion might turn out to be negative and generate opposition in the popular mass media. Ethnic tensions, pogroms, and open conflicts made ethnography/ethnology and ethnologists if not popular, at least known to the public, and the term "ethnicity" and its derivatives occupied newspapers for the first time.

Practicing ethnology in that period could be divided in two parts: (1) planned, but abortive, activities (usually very interesting methodologically), and (2) actions that were fully realized. Among the latter was a completely new development in which professional ethnologists emerged as key political figures or as state officials who continued (unlike in the past) to publish their scholarly works and political manifestos centered on ethnic issues.

The examples are numerous, and only the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in Moscow played an important role in the professional careers of the following well-known political figures:

1. Dr. Galina Starovoitova, member of both the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1989-1991) and Supreme Soviet of Russia (1990-1993), one of the leaders

of democratic opposition, chief advisor on ethnic affairs to President B. Yeltsin (1992).

2. Dr. Mikhail Chlenov, leader of the Zionist movement of Soviet (Russia and C.I.S.) Jews.
3. Dr. Evdokia Gaer, member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1989-1991) and Parliament of Russia (from 1993), deputy-head of the State Committee on the North (1991-1993).
4. Professor Valery Tishkov, head of the State Committee on Nationalities Affairs (1992).
5. Dr. Arthur Mkrtchyan, first elected President of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (1990) who tragically died the same year.

Actually professional ethnologists were (and still are) leading consultants on all sides in numerous ethnic conflicts all over the former USSR, thus splitting the professional community itself along ethnic lines. Many consultants finally moved into government to become officials. The Moscow Institute alone provided nearly a dozen officials who are now working in the institutions of the Russian Federation.

The consultative activities of academic or university ethnologists gained momentum and gradually turned into constant cooperation with government bodies or officials. For instance, Professors Zoya Sokolova and Valery Tishkov from the Moscow Institute produced a first version of the planned Law on Indigenous Ethnic Groups of Siberia and the North that would regulate land rights, among other things. Later, they reviewed the first version after its editing and transformation by other experts and officials, thus continuing the work on a continuing basis. The scholars that moved to government organizations in Moscow constantly contact their former colleagues and include them in various teams of experts working on new prospective laws or concepts of federal policies that touch upon ethnic or cultural issues.

For the first time, ethnologists were able not only to criticize state actions or plans in their unpublished reports, but to play an important role in preventing some of the industrial projects they considered to be potentially harmful to the local ethnic groups. Though the main reasons to stop these projects were financial, articles in professional journals helped to postpone the construction of new electric power stations and water reservoirs in Siberia and Altay mountains (Savoskul and Karlov 1988; Stepanov 1993).

## THE BAIKAL PROJECT: AN EXAMPLE OF PLANNED APPLIED RESEARCH

The last years of the USSR witnessed many abortive projects based entirely or, to a large extent, on applied ethnology. The proposed measures to save the population of Karakalpaks, Kazakhs and Uzbeks, living near Aral Lake in Central Asia and literally dying because of contaminated drinking water from rivers (salt is blown from the drying lake and chemical pollutants come from the irrigated cotton fields of Uzbekistan), were already mentioned above. Unfortunately, many of these projects were aborted due to the political and economic crisis.

The present authors and their colleagues were invited to the Baikal project in 1990 by its Buryat organizers. Originally the special Law of the USSR on Lake Baikal, and conservation of this largest reservoir of fresh water on Earth, was accompanied by a large-scale social and ecological development program in the basin of the lake. The idea was to restructure industry and agriculture in order to reduce the pollution. Local Buryat intellectuals seized the opportunity and put forward an idea to achieve both conservation of nature and preservation of the culture and language of the Buryats. Buryats are an indigenous minority ethnic group in the Buryat republic, located on the eastern shores of lake Baikal. Former pastoral nomads and semi-nomads, Buryats had been forcefully settled in predominantly Russian villages and towns since the 1930s. Living and working among Russians, they were forgetting their Mongolian language and culture that had been adapted for pastoralism, but not for farming or an industrial work and life style.

The basic ideas behind the cultural-ecological approach to the Baikal project start from the proposition that the Soviet system of collectivized agriculture caused both sedentarization of previously unsettled groups, and concentration (and mixing) of all local ethnic and culturally distinct components of the rural population, together with their live-stock and plowed lands in and around the largest settlements. The human impact and its environmentally negative results were serious, causing soil erosion of large fields and overstocked pastures, and contamination of river and run off waters by refuse from large animal farms. In order to reduce erosion and pollution, not only technological innovations (often very expensive) are required, but simple decentralization of the rural population and its activities can help too since it can reduce the impact in crisis areas by removing part of it to presently unused territories. Decentralization of the rural population is simply a partial return to its traditional economic occupations and settlement patterns, including those that are semi-nomadic. Thus, it would not pose a problem, provided the population still remembers the former life style and is ready to resume it. The portion of the rural population that would return to the traditional life and economy would also preserve its language (Buryats, Evenks) and unique culture (various Russian and Buryats groups) from linguistic

russification and cultural urbanization (Russians) or marginalization (non-Russians).

In the Baikal basin and in the Buryat Republic, the rural population (398,000 persons in 1989) is culturally heterogeneous. Ethnic Buryats (35% of the total) still remember well their "tribal" affiliation. The tribes, some of which moved from the steppes of Mongolia two to three centuries ago or from the Siberian woodlands on the Western shore of Baikal, used to differ greatly with respect to the roles of pastoralism, hunting and farming in their economies, or in the frequency and distance of seasonal migrations, and in the animals they were raising (for instance, all had sheep, but only "Mongolian tribes" had camels). Those groups that formed Buryat Cossack regiments of border guards had a very specific economy and culture too. Evenks (0.3%), living in the northern areas, were once taiga hunters with reindeer used for transportation (Soviet Information Center 1990:145).

Ethnic Russians (62% of the total) in the area are comprised of the following groups: Old Believers (Semeiskie) engaged mainly in farming; Old Settlers (Sibiriyaki) who combined farming with hunting; and Russian Cossacks who were engaged in farming and stock-breeding. All these Russian groups had the practice of using an individual seasonal households ("zaimki") in the forest or steppes for winter hunting or feeding and pasturing animals, or for summer plowing of supplementary lands and pasturing animals, in addition to a central home in the village. The other fraction of the rural Russian population -- descendants of the migrant peasants of 1900s - 1910s -- had no such distant additional farms located 5 to 15-25 kilometers from the main village.

The traditions of most groups comprising the present rural population of the area make it possible to decentralize the rural population and its activities, revitalizing semi-nomadic pastoralism among Buryats and extensive private farming based on additional seasonal households among Russians. The problem was, first, to determine the exact nature of the economic, land use, and settlement patterns in certain villages, and among certain ethnic and cultural groups, some 60-70 years ago. The existing ethnographic data, being very rich in reconstructions of "typical" or more developed samples of traditional economic systems and seasonal migrations of Buryats or Old Believers, could not be used for this task since it was not designed to characterize every locality, not to mention specific villages and their major population groups. Secondly, it was necessary to find out what part of the present population from every ethnic and cultural group wants to, and has the knowledge and skills to leave large rural settlements. Third, it was essential to work out some recommendations for possible problems related to schooling and medical services for those who would leave existing villages.

Essentially the same project, though of lesser scale, also were launched in Northern Sakhalin among Nivhs, in Western Siberia among Khanty and Mansi, and in a few other places in the North and Siberia. The idea was to use professional ethnographers, as specialists in the traditional cultures of these peoples, who could provide information about now abandoned hunting and fishing grounds of present indigenous populations, the present economy and culture of these groups, and their ability and desire to move from large modern settlements. The purpose of these projects was to allow populations to resume previous occupations and life styles in order to escape from linguistic russification and cultural marginalization in predominantly Russian settlements.

This kind of applied anthropology is bound to develop further in the light of planned privatization of lands in the country. Many top ethnologists, such as professor Yuriy Simchenko, already have appealed to government bodies to postpone, despite the proclaimed ideological goals, any land privatization in the areas of indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia until thorough ethnological research is carried out, and past and present patterns of actual land use and seasonal settlements are well documented.

The Baikal project, however, differed from those mentioned above in its strongly multidisciplinary character and ecological background. Members of our research group were invited to join the Baikal project as specialists in ethnic (cultural) ecology or ecological anthropology, but the organizers of the project considered the demographic, medical and biological problems to be no less important than the cultural ones for the planned study.

First, we were assigned to make a prognosis of population numbers, taking into account these groups' possible partial conversions to the traditional life style. A conversion could provoke either an increase or decrease in the number of children in the affected families and changes in their death rate, possible modifications of family size and generation structure, and either an increase or decrease in out-migration. Special attention was to be directed to ethnic groups in contact, since different reproductive behavior and cultural restrictions can form the basis for differences in population adaptability to the new conditions and, as a consequence, problems in inter-ethnic relations. That is why the estimation of possible migration and reproductive behaviors of the group are very important for social policy-making in the region.

Changes in nutrition, due to new forms of contact between the population and nature which result from the conversion to a traditional life style, could lead to modifications in morbidity structure. New stressors could provoke the appearance of illnesses previously (during the last decades) not peculiar to this group, or the appearance of some "social" illnesses (alcoholism, drugs addiction).

In this connection, it is very important to know the past, current and projected future epidemiological situation in the examined population group and locality. It is not a secret that official statistics often do not have such information, not only due to the mistakes of careless clerks and physicians, but frequently because the ambulance stations are very far from some rural settlements and it is not easy to reach people who are sick. Sometimes the qualification of the medical personnel in these small places is not sufficient to make a diagnosis in difficult cases. Further, the self-estimation of one's own health status is very far from reality, and the person doesn't apply for medical services. Practically, there is no statistically significant information about the differences between self and specialist conducted estimations of an individual's health status and, as a consequence, no real estimation of the health status of a particular population. This leads to many mistakes in social policy and, in some cases, means that the ministry of public health strategy is not very effective.

Therefore, the most important aims in the bio-medical field of the Baikal project were : (1) Epidemiological observation of the region by physicians; (2) Getting data on the self-estimation of the health status of the same persons; (3) Comparing the results of these two steps with the information of the same persons in their medical cards; (4) Formulating the prognosis of health status modifications in the new conditions; (5) Suggesting necessary changes in the medical service net; (6) Elaboration of the system of optimization, taking into account the proposed dispersed settling, when the non-traditional approach is in need, and (7) Elaboration of the system of folk medicine popularization and its helpful collaboration with that of official medicine.

The main objective of the whole project is to understand the natural tendencies in the changes of settlement patterns and life styles, and in the development of the local economy. Then we were to determine the limits of these processes (natural, legislative, cultural and other norms) which take place in the group and to elaborate on this basis the possible ways to an optimal development stimulation.

Unfortunately, the well-known financial difficulties have retarded the realization of the Baikal Project. There are not enough funds and experts to implement changes in Buryat republic. The local administration doesn't have enough funding to invite specialists from Moscow or St. Petersburg, which are more than seven thousand km away from Baikal.



## HUMAN ECOLOGY: A REVIEW OF APPLIED PROJECTS

A very important coordinating role in our country for the last 10 years has been played by the Section of Human Ecology in the Biosphere Board of the Russian Academy of Sciences. It coordinates not only scientific programs, but actively assists in organizing the monitoring of environmental conditions, of air, water and ground pollution in different parts of the country.

It is very difficult to determine the beginning of the exploration in human ecology in the USSR. Officially the first works in the International Biological Program (Section "Human Adaptability") took place in 1967-1968. But many diverse research projects, not connected with each another, were carried out many years before.

Since that time, numerous projects and programs were prepared and some of them were realized. In 1968-1969, 75 expeditions were carried out in the different parts of the USSR, including those in high altitude regions, in the extreme North, in arid climate, and so on. A total of 46 topics were studied in stationeries among urban populations. All of them, combined with the explorations of the Anthropological Institute and Museum of the Moscow State University, made it possible for Tatyana Alexeeva to develop the concept of morpho-physiological adaptive types. This concept became the basis for many practical innovations. First of all, it is the special service for watch (regular, short-term) migration. Watch migration is necessary in some distant oil and gas extracting regions. In these cases, the workers, either from South Siberia, South Ural or Central Russia, fly for one to three months to the North, to the extreme environment. At their work places there is no possibility to build a stationary settlement and environmental conditions are so rigorous that children and females cannot live there. Special medical services situated in the places of continuous life help to select the persons who are more adaptable to the harsh changes of environmental conditions during the short term, and contribute to the restoration of the health status of workers after a watch. The main points of such services are Saratov (on Volga river), Magadan (on the northern Pacific coast) and Arkhangelsk (North of the European part of Russia).

Special investigations, which are a concrete development of the above-mentioned theoretical concept, take place in Novosibirsk, and are being conducted by a group of academicians, including Vlail Kaznacheev and his colleagues. They help in optimization of the adaptation process of the migrants to the extreme northern territory.

## PRACTICING ETHNOLOGY: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The current situation is rather uncertain. All the above mentioned academic, university and other research and training centers continue to function. The end of state control over scientific activities made it possible to organize some new chairs or independent research centers or units, often having the term "ethnology" in their titles. In Moscow alone, in early 1994, there were at least a dozen new research units with "ethno-" (political, sociological) in the title. However, in many cases, these new institutions were formed by former specialists in Marxism-Leninism, or communism. Now they present a serious competitor for applied projects, successfully using personal links with former party and state officials who largely remain in power (Tishkov 1992).

The tense competition between professional ethnologists and other social scientists for applied projects in inter-ethnic relations and ethno-political studies has been accompanied by an acute financial crisis of the state-financed Academy of Sciences and universities. As a result, the regular fixed salaries of the scholars that come from the federal budget are now very low, and since 1993, the Government started to delay payments for one to three months. This makes it literally impossible for a scholar to survive on salary alone. Because of this, some researchers are leaving the institutes and universities and moving to private business to work as interpreters, clerks, etc. Others join the federal or provincial state organizations, and a few among them become practicing ethnologists engaged in consulting and organization of applied research projects.

For those who remain in the academic institutes or universities, the main hope is to apply for a special short-term (1-1.5 years) research grant from Russian or Western foundations which sponsor scholars. Currently, it is the most attractive prospect, since grants from the J. and K. MacArthur or "Cultural Initiative" (G. Soros Fund in Russia) Foundations enlarge the income three to five times. But, the most common way to earn additional money is to join a project, specially financed by the state organizations, and thus to start practicing ethnology on a more or less regular basis. A majority of young and middle-aged scholars, at least in Moscow or St. Petersburg, have already gained such experience.

So, from the first glance, it looks like applied ethnology has a bright future in contemporary Russia, simply as one of a few ways to survive as a professional scholar. Besides, for the first time in recent decades, ethnology gained some prestige and publicity, and government officials have realized its importance and applied potential. However, two major problems make the future of applied anthropology not so optimistic. First, the financial crisis engulfed not only the Academy and universities, but other state organizations too, on both federal and

provincial levels. It caused many small-scale and relatively cheap applied projects to be canceled, even after some or most of the work had been done. The scholars who were not paid for the job already done are not very enthusiastic about launching or joining other applied projects. Second, the poor (literally and emotionally) position of most scholars greatly reduced the number of graduate and post-graduate students training in most sciences, including ethnology. Combined with the outflow of active scholars to private business or government agencies, and retirement of many others, it made the total number of ethnologists shrink. The Institute in Moscow, for instance, lost about 25% to 30% of its scholars in the early 1990s, and the trend continues.

On the other hand, practicing ethnology has recently gained new ground in the government organizations. Since early 1994, there is a new Ministry of Nationalities Affairs and Regional Policy, currently headed by Mr. N. Egorov (Dr. Sergey Shahray had left the Ministry in 1994). It was formed on the basis of the previous State Committee on Nationalities Affairs that had been enlarged three or four times in 1993. This Committee, existing from the early years of Soviet power, was extremely uninfluential and weak in the 1970s and 1980s. In the early 1990s, however, it started to grow and absorb ethnologists among others. The former State Committee on the North also was merged with the new Ministry. In both committees, there were professionally trained ethnologists, and in 1993 many more joined. At present, the Ministry works in close contact with the Institute and the Chair in Moscow, and with professionals in the provinces and republics. Both committees and the Ministry have been major initiators and funding agencies for projects in applied ethnology, although previously they limited their activities to ordering reports from the scholars. Major topics for investigation still remain inter-ethnic relations and conflicts, and the current situation of indigenous people of the North and Siberia. Studies of ethnic Russians and other peoples of the Russian Federation living in the new post-soviet states also are attracting more and more attention of the state officials and scholars alike.

Recently, two scholars from the institute and the university interviewed 13 of the most influential ethnologists in Moscow (ten from the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, three from the Chair of Ethnography) about their ideas on current methods and research priorities, and possible future developments in Russian ethnology. Most of them agreed that studies of inter-ethnic relations and conflicts would remain the most important areas of research due to their applied character and, consequently, be the most probable projects for financial support from the Government (Filippova, 1993; 8, 10). It is interesting to note that, even at this time, the leading scholars said nothing about the need to develop applied ethnology as a certain subdiscipline with its own methods, terms and well-defined research areas and priorities. On the whole, the

experts think that theory and methodology of ethnological research would not be studied in the immediate future at all, or at best would remain outside major discussions.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is hard to make judgments about the future of practicing ethnology in Russia because of the very uncertain socio-economic situation at present. Applied projects serve as the main, if not the major, source of financial support to a growing number of scholars, and both the public and government officials understand the importance of the subdiscipline. In case the financial situation in the country improves, both the number of projects and scholars involved are bound to increase. There are also certain grounds to hope that now a substantial number of ethnologists working in government organizations would remain active scholars and continue their own research and publishing activities.

On the other hand, there are no attempts even to review research priorities, methods and principles, or the history of applied ethnology in Russia. Having gone through intensive ideological pressure in recent times, when it was compulsory to pay at least lip service to "Marxist methodology and theory" of the discipline, most Russian scholars are not inclined to discuss any methodological issues for some time. Besides, the number of scholars has been constantly diminishing for some years now, and fewer and fewer students turn to training in ethnology.

It looks like contacts with foreign practicing ethnologists may influence Russian ethnology greatly at this particular moment, especially in drawing attention to the methodological and ethical problems of applied ethnological research. The latter aspect is especially important, since in any case the real influence of ethnologists on the lives of the ethnic groups in Russia is substantial and growing. There is virtually no discussion, however, of the moral issues involved, except for criticism of the Soviet period attempts at reconstruction of cultures, economies and settlement patterns of the country's population. Practical cooperation in certain projects is quite possible too, and there is no problem in finding well-qualified and interested, but mostly empirically-oriented, partners in Russia.