

*Akogare no kuni:*  
**Post-war Japanese writers  
on the Soviet Union**

STEFANO ROMAGNOLI

*Sapienza University of Rome*

*Abstract*

*A significant number of travelogues to the USSR were published in Japan between the fifties and the sixties, testifying to a thriving intercultural exchange as well as to a growing interest in the Soviet Union by the Japanese public. This paper analyzes two works by the renowned Japanese writers Tokunaga Sunao (1899–1958) and Ōoka Shōhei (1909–1988), who respectively visited the USSR in 1954 and 1962. In a seminal study, Paul Hollander examined the infatuation of Western intellectuals who traveled to the Soviet Union and other communist countries, arguing that their perception and judgement was ultimately shaped both by personal self-deception and by carefully arranged “techniques of hospitality” that strongly influenced and limited their experience. Following his scholarship, I discuss the two travelogues in order to explore questions as to how the authors’ identities within the Japanese society informed their beliefs about the Soviet Union, and how were such beliefs negotiated with the actual experience.*

**Keywords:** travel literature; Soviet Union; political pilgrims; Tokunaga Sunao; Ōoka Shōhei.