

# A TREASURE OF RUSSIAN PUBLICATIONS AT THE SOCIAL SCIENCES LIBRARY

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*A collection of Russian publications – one of the thick collections of books – has been and is being supplemented, archived, preserved, and exploited by the Social Sciences Library to serve information users in our country. This collection has been shaped and expanded for more than a half past century, possesses a scientific value and high content of information about different social sciences and humanities. The treasure of Russian publications partly shows us a general picture of developed and achievementful social sciences of the former Soviet Union and present Federation of Russia.*

## I. Formulation and development of Russian books

In 1902, the Ecole Francaise D'extreme-Orient (EFEO) in Hanoi was founded and an affiliate Library under EFEO (or known as the Library D'extreme-Orient) was born a short time after that. In the beginning, Russian books entered the Library D'extreme-Orient, the predecessor of the Social Sciences Library (which is now the Social Sciences Information Institute under Vietnam Academy for Social Sciences). Russian books can be classified in line with the following major periods of time:

- Russian books prior to 1957;
- Russian books from 1957 to 1967;
- Russian books from 1986 up to present.

### 1. Russian books prior to 1957

Prior to 1957, the Library D'extreme-

Orient in the beginning had a meager number of Russian books. The books entered at earliest in the Library in 1934, 1936, 1941, 1948, 1949, 1951, 1952, and the number of Russian entries started increasing in 1955, 1956 and 1957. The total number of Russian entries during this period was 41 units.

The first book entered into the Library was the one titled: Konrad N.I. Kratkij ocherk grammatiki Japonskogo razgovornogo jazyka. Leningrad, 1934 – 85 pages (A Brief Introduction of Grammar to Conversational Japanese). Sv 6085.

Russian books in this initial period were in the following majors: history, archeology, ethnology, linguistics,

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philosophy, and Indochina, East-Asia and Southeast-Asia studies.

The number of Russian publications was limited, but it showcased:

- The Library expanded its publication sources into those in Slavonic language, rather only books in French, English, Chinese, Japanese, Chinese-Vietnamese or Vietnamese as it had in previous decades.

- Russian books were admitted to the Library not by direct purchase, but through major libraries in Paris, such as the Library of the École D'extreme-Orient in Paris.

- Though the quantity of books in Russian language was limited, but it sent out a "signal" to show that there had been a need to have materials in Russian language in our country prior to 1950s of the previous century.

- This marked one of the pivotal points laying the premises for selecting and expanding the source of Russian books later on.

## *2. Russian books from 1957 to 1967*

In 1957, France transferred the Library of the Ecole D'extreme-Orient to Vietnam. The State Sciences Committee was entrusted for the management of the Library. Between 1957 and 1967, the Library was named the Central Sciences Library under the State Sciences Committee.

Russian books during this period were grouped into only one separate book store (known as the Russian books store). Books' entry into the Library was preliminarily processed in accordance

with the following steps: registration, codification, classification, itemization and repository. Deposited books were arranged in line with their registration and, from 1958, classified as small, medium and large sizes which were equivalent to such marks as Sb, Sv and St. Up to now, these marks are still used by the Central Technology Science Library (the National Center for Science and Technology Information) and the Social Sciences Library (under the Social Sciences Information Institute).

Functioning and implementing the duty of a synthetic science library, the Central Sciences Library admitted books within the category of natural sciences, techniques and social sciences. Books of natural sciences and techniques accounted for approximately 70% of the number of book entries in the Library.

A year-on-year increase was recognized in the number of Russian books of social sciences: from 1958 to 1960, there were 3,626 units, an increase from 41 units prior to 1957; between 1961 and 1964, the number of book entries was meager, probably attributable to political and ideological matters (this period was dominated by revisionism and anti-revisionism); from 1965 to 1967, an additional number of 2,696 books was admitted to the Library.

During this period, our people fought a fight against the destructive war launched by the American. Foreign newspapers, books in general and Russian publications subscribed in particular used to arrive in our country very late, normally more than one year later the year of publication or sometime even two years later for arrivals

at the library despite the fact that the Social Sciences Library managed to ensure that books would arrive swiftly, adequately and promptly to serve readers.

It can be confirmed that the 1957-1967 period was the most crucial turning point of admission of Russian publications and the beginning of a period in which Russian publications become an indispensable resource of Vietnamese scholars.

### *3. Russian books from 1986 up to present*

In 1967, the Central Science Library was dichotomized into two major libraries – the Central Science and Techniques Library under the State Committee for Science and Technology (which is now the Ministry of Science and Technology) and the Social Sciences Library under the Vietnam Committee for Social Sciences (which is now the Vietnam Academy for Social Sciences). This dichotomy caused the division of assets and publications into two categories:

- a. Natural sciences and technical science;
- b. Social sciences

According to unofficial transfer reports, within 1967-1968, the Social Sciences Library admitted nearly 9,000 units of Russian books relating to social sciences. The library re-processed these books in line with the following procedures: registration, new codification, classification, itemization, storage, preservation, sortation and taking stock of books not relating to social sciences. The above work was done for more than three years, from 1968 to 1970. During this period, the library also utilized the new classification frame – the BBK of the

Soviet Union – in order to classify books and develop new searching systems applicable to Russian books. From 1970 to 1989, Russian books became a principal supplementary source and steadily increased in quantity year-on-year. Means and ways to supplement Russian books were also diversified and plentiful. They could be directly reserved and purchased from XUNHASABA, exchanged with Soviet Union's libraries, donations from science organizations, libraries, information agencies of the Soviet Union or from scientists who had books brought back after their business trip to the Soviet Union, the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Vietnam as well as from Soviet Union scientists on their business trip to Vietnam.

The diversified supplementary source of Russian publications prior to the 1990s showcased:

- A swift increase in the quantity of Russian books, two or three units for every single book. Additional Russian book stores were initially formulated for exchange of books between libraries. Still, auxiliary stores were also established to replace the main ones.
- that in this period, the Social Sciences Library had a clear-cut policy directed at increasing the quantity of Russian books, creating permanent supplementary sources that could help to get access to other information sources if necessary, particularly expanding the additional coverage of social sciences.
- an abrupt growth that led to the duplication of editions, unwanted quality of books for knowledge dissemination, books prepared for high schools or

colleges, donation or exchange, lowering the credibility on donated and given-for-free books.

## II. Identification of types of Russian books

At the time being, the Russian books store at the Social Sciences Library registers with 75,333 book titles with 82,648 units.

In the Russian books store, publications are diverse and of plentiful types. According to statistics published by the former Soviet Union, in early 1980s of the last century, social science publications in the Soviet Union made up 37.8% of the combined number of published science publications.

The Russian books store is currently hosting such publications as:

- Books written by classic Marxists-Leninists.
- Books on social sciences.
- Monographs.
- Collections of research works.
- Documents of national and international symposiums.
- Textbooks of academies, universities and colleges.
- Textbooks designed for the Party's schools.
- Collections of research works done by universities, academies.
- Documents relating to international economic cooperation programmes.
- Different types of great dictionaries, specialized dictionaries, bi-lingual dictionaries, explanatory dictionaries, etc.
- Statements relating to archeology and countryside.

- Annual statistics yearbooks.

- Books on documents of plenaries, congresses of the Soviet Union Communist Party, the Supreme Soviet Union, Labor Union, Youth Union, and Women's Union.

- Books of translated science documents and of translated literature.

- Social science bulletins and reviews, thematic collections, etc.

- Novels.

- General literature volumes, collections of works of writers, short stories, long stories, memoirs, notes, reports, transcripts, brief notes, etc.

- Legendary stories, fabulous stories, collections of proverbs, idioms, etc.

- Pictorial, photographic, stamp books.

- Children's books.

- Map books.

- Books for foreign language teaching.

There are also some other types of Russian publications. In the Russian books store, publications are mainly in Russian, but not a small quantity of books from republics of the former Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Serbia, Poland, Slovakia and Czechs, which use the Russian alphabetical system, are also included. Still, books from Mongolia, though with a small number, but in a language sharing the same Russian alphabetical system, are admitted to this store and arranged similarly to Russian books. Hence, in the Russian books store at the Social Sciences Library, there are not only publications in Russian, but also include books printed in languages using the Russian alphabetical system.

Books additionally entered into the Library are primarily published by major publishers at the Central level (Federal), publishers in some Republics, territorial and regional publishers, publishers of high-profile universities and academies. Publishers that have the most books published include "Pravda" (the Truth); "Smysl" (Ideology) ; "Ekonomika" (Economic) ; "AN SSSR" (Soviet Union Academy) ; "Politizdat" (Political Publisher) ; "Vysshaja Shkola" (Advanced School of the Party) ; "Znanie" (Knowledge) ; "Khudozhestvennaja literatura" (Arts and literature); "Prosveshchenie" (Education) ; "Voenizdat" (Military Publisher) ; "Vostochnaja literatura" (Oriental Literature); "Iskusstvo" (Arts); "Sovetskaja Enciklopedija" (Soviet Union Encyclopedia) ; "Russkij jazyk" (Russian language Publisher); " MGU" (Moscow National University Publisher) ; " LGU" (Leningrad National University Publisher).

### **III. A brief review of some books appreciated for scientific value**

Books in Russian language kept in shelves of the Social Sciences Library make up only a small portion of publications by the former Soviet Union and the present Federation of Russia, but it showcases us a paramount picture of the system of research institutions, universities with social science faculties, science development strategies, research scope, the powerful contingent of scientists across the territory, ascertaining the Soviet Union science school existing along with the nearly one century life of the Soviet Union state.

Russian books at the Social Sciences Library refer to the following sciences: philosophy, sociology, statistics, anthropology, history, archeology, ethnology, economics, state and law, military science, literature, linguistics, culturology, arts studies, education, religion, psychology, politics, Marxism-Leninism, press studies, information-library, physics-sports, natural sciences and technological science. Added to the above sciences include a huge number of literature and arts works.

Having investigated the Russian books store at the Social Sciences Library, one can realize an all-embracing research scope of social sciences and humanities, from general to specialized matters, or from global to specific country studies. Scientists in the former Soviet Union and present Federation of Russia have been dealing with research relationships of internal and external matters, retrospective and modern issues. In our opinion, textbooks in Russian language at the Social Sciences Library are of systematic, conceptual character, forecasting development of sciences, containing dense content of information, practical and scientific worth in concrete conditions and circumstances.

Many book-sets published in the mid of the last century still remain their scientific value and are likely to be recognized as the most literal materials being utilized. They belong to the material net of history, archeology, ethnology, literature, linguistics, culturology, military science, arts studies, architecture, and especially a system of referential books, etc. Various researches done by current Russian

scientists inherit undeniable scientific achievements recorded by Soviet scientists in the past.

The book-set "Great Encyclopedia of the Soviet Union", with 30 volumes, published in 1978, is the one having a high value and content of information. In order to compose this book-set, the Soviet Union mobilized contributions from a dozen of thousand of scientists in different fields, including foreign scholars, to preparing this publication. In early 2000, "The new Russian Encyclopedia" (Sv 31254) was compiled by Russian scientists, published in 2005-2006. However its sections and contents were not differentiated from the "Great Encyclopedia of the Soviet Union", only some new word items were added in for updating it.

The book-set "History of Russian literature", with 10 volumes, published in 1941-1956, has been repeatedly supplemented and reproduced. Though it is more than a half century old, none of the others can replace it. Currently, it is utilized as textbooks for compulsory study in universities across Russia.

Apart from the above book set are others, but the most noteworthy of these is the "Modern Russian Literature Dictionary", with 17 volumes, published in 1965. In our country, Russian literature researchers constantly exploit and utilize this book set as a precious material source that provides full, systematic and accurate information pertaining to development of the Russian literature.

Among Russian literature books, it should include famous works of such Russian writers as A.S.Puskin, N.V.Gogol,

A.P.Chekhov, M.Lermantov, F.M. Dostoevskii, L. Tol'stoi, M. Maiakovskij, M.Gorkij, N. Ostrovskij, E. Evtushenko, M.A. Solokhov, etc.

Linguistics books are also plentiful and of scientific value. Some of these books were translated into Vietnamese and employed as curricula and textbooks by linguistics faculties of universities, such as the "Basics of general linguistics" of Stepanov Ju.s, published in 1977, or the book having a high content of information, "A brief history of linguistics in Russia" of F. M. Berezin (1968); or "The history of linguistic theories" of N. A. Kondrashov (1979).

The most noteworthy book on linguistics, among others, is the explanatory dictionary of Russian language, titled "Russian Dictionary", with 4 volumes (1986). This dictionary has been repeatedly reproduced and one of the thickest explanatory dictionaries being most broadly used in our country and others.

As regards arts studies, one can not help without mentioning the book set titled "History of Russian Arts", consisting of 12 volumes (1953). The book set was published more than a half century ago, but it still remains its scientific character. Shortly after the production of the above-mentioned book set, scientists in the Soviet Union published the book "History of General Arts" (1956-1965), with 6 volumes, chiefly presenting theoretical issues, methodologies, research target of arts studies, periodization of schools of painting arts, and painting works of famous painters in the world being showcased at such museums as Ermitage,

Russian Museum of Arts, etc.

With regard to history books, in 1958, the first lot of books entered into the Library included the book set titled "The World History", consisting of 12 volumes, first published in 1958 and finished the publishing work in 1979. The book titled "History of the Second World War 1939-1945", with 12 volumes, published in 1980. It is the book written on a world war with numerous important events and facts pertaining to military arts utilized for the war of homeland defense, armed forces, services and characters in the war.

The most noteworthy referential book on military science is the "Encyclopedia of Soviet Union Military", with 8 volumes, published in 1976. In 1985, some volumes of the publication were translated into Vietnamese and published with high appreciation from the military circle who considered the encyclopedia as one of the valuable referential materials.

Pertaining to ethnology, there are many books drawing interest from Vietnamese scholars, such as "Ethnicity and ethnology" (1973) of Academician Ju. V. Bromlei.

In sum, we only give certain examples to illustrate the scientific value, systematic and highly descriptive character of the treasure of Russian publications stored at the Social Sciences Library. In the last half part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one can easily realize that scientists in our country deemed Russian books the key to open the door to approach the Soviet Union and the world science, a crucial information source for the research, teaching and training work of the contingent of social science workers. On the other hand, information builders recognize Russian books as a premise to create a safe "bar" of social science information.