

**A Scholars' Guide  
to Humanities  
and Social Sciences  
in the  
Soviet Successor States**

*The Academies of Sciences  
of Russia,  
Armenia, Azerbaidzhan,  
Belarus, Estonia, Georgia,  
Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan,  
Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova,  
Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan,  
Ukraine, and Uzbekistan*

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# A New Social Science

Dr. Blair A. Ruble

Director

Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies,  
Woodrow Wilson International  
Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.

A well prepared and thoughtfully organized reference work communicates multiple levels of information, so that its appearance in multiple editions permits users to chart change over time. The first edition of *A Scholars' Guide to Humanities and Social Sciences in the Soviet Union* appeared in early 1985, just as Mikhail Gorbachev was selected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This second edition goes to print - under a new title - some seven years later, and the universe it seeks to describe has been transformed. A third edition some time in the late 1990s undoubtedly will report on an academic landscape ever further removed from that covered by the first edition. 1st ed

Before approaching this new knowledge industry, it is instructive to be reminded of the contours of the Soviet production of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities prior to 1985. Five characteristics marked the Soviet social sciences and humanities enterprise at that time, four of which distinguished it from similar activities in the United States.

1. **Size of the enterprise.** As in the United States, in the Soviet Union science involved an enormous investment of people and capital - tens of thousands of people and thousands of institutions. The data for Soviet science in 1985 showed that there were over 5,000 research institutions, including 20 academies, employing 1.5 million scientific workers, about a third of whom had graduate degrees. Approximately 800,000 science workers were employed in research institutions (including some 225,000 in the social sciences, as compared to 316,000 in the United States at the same time), one-fifth of them in academic institutions and the rest in other state agencies. Two-thirds of the scientific workers were employed in the Russian Federation, which was home to some 70 percent of the Soviet population. o

2. **Hierarchical and centralized character.** The structure of Soviet social science had its roots in the 1920s and 1930s, and its development was ruled by a rigid administrative logic. The Soviet Academy of Sciences established branches in the capitals of the non-Russian republics in the 1930s, which absorbed the research functions of the local universities. During the period between the 1940s and the early 1960s, these branches became republic academies, and academy branches were created in all the autonomous republics by the mid-1970s. The academic structure thus grew in accordance with political and bureaucratic principles, with scientific considerations playing only a secondary role.

3. **Influence of extra-academic considerations.** It is well known that research and personnel decisions were strongly influenced by ideology, ethnic considerations, and conformity and that research organizations were open to KGB influence and infiltration to a degree qualitatively different from patterns in other advanced countries.

4. **Relative isolation.** Between the 1920s and 1985, virtually no Soviet social scientists were trained in foreign graduate programs, and there was very little cross-publication or joint authorship of scientific papers between Soviet scholars and foreigners.

5. **Uniformity of research product.** Although debates always existed in the Soviet social sciences and humanities, they were often conducted in obscure and Aesopian language, frequently within a very narrow range of acceptable disagreement. Consequently, the product of research appeared to

be much more standardized than in other scientific communities (and, in fact, than was actually the case inside the Soviet community of social scientists and humanists). Massive projects undertaken to honor this or that anniversary of some politically or ideologically significant event were scattered throughout the research reported in the 1985 edition of the *Scholars' Guide*. Such efforts lent an overly standardized cast to much of the research product.

The radical transformation of the country's political and economic life since 1985 has dramatically altered the manner in which research is conducted in the social sciences and humanities. Many more changes are no doubt in store for the scholars and institutions covered in this edition of the *Scholars' Guide*. Nonetheless, five important trends have already altered much of what distinguished Soviet social science and humanities research from that in other advanced industrial states.

1. **Decentralization.** The years since 1985 have witnessed a dramatic drive for autonomy and, ultimately, independence in nearly all the constituent political units of the former Soviet Union. Behind the daily headlines lies a no less momentous change in the academic world. The unified USSR Academy of Sciences hierarchy - within which the nominal autonomy of republican academies masked effective administrative subordination - no longer exists. Within the new Academy of Sciences of the Russian Federation, regional branches and scientific centers have claimed space for independent decision-making. For example, the reorganization of the research effort in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and the growth of regional centers in the Urals and the Far East attest to greater autonomy in decision-making even within Russia. These changes are visible in the second edition of the *Scholars' Guide*, both in the plethora of new research programs and centers within each of the former constituent republics and in the expanded international contacts of nearly every institute contained in the volume.

2. **Monetization.** Administrative decentralization has been accompanied by new budgetary procedures that make every research center more dependent than ever on access to money - both domestic and foreign. Scientific enterprises are being reorganized in an effort to promote individual creativity and initiative. A number of research and educational institutions - including those of the academies of sciences covered in this volume - have initiated so-called "self-financing" and "cost-accounting," whereby research projects must cover their own expenses. Publishing houses and periodicals, including many scientific journals, must now earn income to meet their expenditures. The resulting search for research contracts, grant support, and subscribers has undermined traditional mechanisms of administrative control throughout the knowledge industry. Meanwhile, intensified demand for self-financing is driving scientists and research centers to approach foreign sources of financial support through direct aid as well as joint ventures. A number of social scientists have established consulting firms that conduct contract research for a variety of clients, including government ministries, factories, scientific centers, and foreign institutions (both private and governmental). The old, highly centralized scientific-bureaucratic behemoth described in the first edition of the *Scholars' Guide* has gone on a crash diet.

3. **Glasnost'.** The development of unrestricted public and scholarly discourse is perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the era of perestroika. No subject is too politically or ideologically unorthodox and no viewpoint too heretical to be submitted to public consideration. Source materials once considered too sensitive to be shared with any but the most narrow circle of researchers have been opened while entire new areas of research are coming to the fore. The uniformity of research product once imposed from above has given way to flourishing, varied, and lively debate in all social science and humanities disciplines.

4. **Expansion of social science.** Social scientists and scholars in the humanities now travel to foreign research centers, enroll in foreign graduate degree programs, and in their home institutions, audit courses taught by foreign scholars - all to an extent that was unimaginable when the first edition of the *Scholars' Guide* appeared. Public opinion research has flourished. Non-Marxist social theory has gained wide currency. The social science research agenda has expanded into once taboo areas. Each of these trends may be detected in the descriptions of the various research programs summarized in this volume.

5. **Growing international contact.** The changes that have occurred over the past seven years have opened the doors for scholars to travel abroad, participate in international conferences, compete individually for research grants, enter foreign graduate and undergraduate programs, and publish their work abroad. At the same time, scholars have become more candid and keen on debating issues concerning domestic developments. Foreign social scientists and humanities scholars appear regularly in the professional and popular press. Sources once closed (as in the case of certain archival

materials) or never collected (as was the case with public opinion data) are now widely available to local and foreign scholars alike. This new openness has fostered a rapidly expanding pattern of bilateral contacts between the various institutions described in this volume and their foreign partners. The isolation that so distinguished Soviet science in the past - particularly in the fields under scrutiny here - has come to an end.

All of these trends are evident in one way or another in the various entries that constitute the second edition of the *Scholars' Guide*. In some ways, however, the transformation captured by the word *perestroika* is more apparent through the varied manner in which the two editions were produced. The first edition was the work of two distinct American and Soviet teams working in tandem under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies - Soviet Academy of Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences. The teams divided responsibilities and brought the results of their work together at the end. The Commission, administered in the United States by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), had long been the principal framework for joint scholarly conferences and research projects between the United States and the Soviet Union in social, political, and cultural studies. It continues to play an important role in scholarly cooperation in the social sciences and humanities.

The second edition was also conducted under the Commission's sponsorship. However, the American and Soviet editors worked as members of a single *kollektiv*. It no longer proved necessary - as it had in 1985 - to acknowledge representatives of the Embassy of the USSR, Washington, D.C., and the Embassy of the United States of America, Moscow, for assistance in facilitating scholarly communication. Direct cooperation among editorial board members has flourished, free from the various bureaucratic encumbrances that limited such contact in the past.

It is with all these differences between past and present in mind that I invite the reader to approach the second edition of the *Scholars' Guide*.

In closing, I would like to invoke the hope expressed by John William Ward and Wesley A. Fisher, the authors of the Preface to the first edition of the *Scholars' Guide*, who, in their respective capacities as President of the American Council of Learned Societies and Secretary to the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences, wrote of their wish that "the successful conclusion of this ambitious joint project will lead to further cooperative scholarly efforts between American and Soviet individuals in future years." I only hope that the second edition will fulfill that laudable desire nearly as well as the first edition succeeded in its objectives.