HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Title	<New and Development>Soviet Studies in Japan : One Scholar's View
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Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 3, 90-92
Issue Date	1985
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/7949
Type	bulletin (article)
File Information	KJ00000034097.pdf

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New and Development

Soviet Studies in Japan: One Scholar's View

Soviet studies in Japan today present an interesting but complex picture. To convey that picture adequately in a brief essay is a challenge, especially since appearances sometimes change on closer inspection.

Let us first examine the numbers. According to the Directory of Japanese Scholars in Soviet and East European Studies (1977), there are 891 specialists in various areas of study.The leading disciplines are Economics (251), Literature and Languages (247), History (128), Political Science (71), Social Thought (62), Law (38), International Relations (37), and Education (36). However, it is far from clear that these numbers can be taken at face value. For instance, the figure for Economics includes Marxist economists, whether or not they have expertise in the Soviet or East European area. A rough estimate suggests that the actual number of economists engaged in research and teaching in the Soviet area is probably no more than 80. The figures for certain other disciplines call for similar adjustment.

The data on publications is also problematic. According to the Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies in Japan, 2,038 items (including reviews) were published in 1980 alone. One must keep in mind, though, that this total includes articles in popular magazines. Purely scholarly monographs and articles, I suspect, account for far less than half of the total. One must also keep it in mind that there are few scholarly journals that publish referred articles. There is no interdisciplinary journal, comparable to *Slavic Review*, devoted to Soviet and East European affairs.

Yet although the numbers may be less imposing than would appear at first glance, the quality of scholarship in Japan is impressive. Scholars such as Haruki Wada (revolutionary movement), Yuzuru Taniuchi (peasants and power in the 1920s), and Hiroshi Kimura (Japanese-Soviet relations) are recognized as among the world's foremost authorities on their respective subjects. Many young scholars are also beginning to produce interesting work, such as monographs on the workers' movements in the tsarist and Soviet periods. But research interests tend to be concentrated in certain areas, leaving wide gaps in coverage of the field. Soviet foreign policy and Soviet politics, to name two important examples, are extremely weak areas. There is in fact a certain reluctance on the part of Japanese scholars to engage in analysis of contemporary events. Many of those who are called political scientists could more properly be described as historians.

Soviet studies in Japan have so far been maintained by the efforts and sacrifices of individual specialists, persevering under difficult working conditions. If the field is to develop further, solutions will have to be found for a number of problems facing the scholarly community.

First, Japanese Sovietologists are somewhat isolated from the international scholarly community. Although they are well-versed in the latest developments in Western and Soviet scholarship, their own work is not as well known as it should be. The serial *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, published in Western languages by the Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido

University, and *Japanese Slavic and East European studies* (Kyoto) should help rectify this.

Second, the government and private sector will have to recognize the importance of Soviet studies to Japanese national interests by providing large-scale financial support to the field on a continuing basis. Up to now, Hokkaido University's Slavic Research Center has been the only research institute in the country concerned with Soviet and East European affairs. It has a staff of seven researchers but is constrained by a small operating budget and inadequate support staff. Although a new center is now being planned on the government's initiative (see below), Japan still compares poorly in this respect with the U. S.

Third, Soviet studies in Japan should have a national organization comparable to the AAASS in the United States, that is, an interdisciplinary association drawing together specialists with different approaches from both within and outside of academia. Japanese associations at present tend to be organized along ideological lines; for example, the Association for the Study of Socialist Economics represents the Marxists while the Japanese Association for Soviet and East European Studies represents the non-Marxists. These are the two largest associations in the field. A national interdisciplinary, non-political association could represent the interests of the entire field and would have the further advantage of acquainting specialists with those in different disciplines. This would encourage the establishment of interdisciplinary courses and programs, now a rarity in Japanese universities.

Fourth, the national organization mentioned above should concern itself with the question of how to train future specialists. The Hokkaido University Slavic Research Center is a research institute, without students. Future specialists will come from graduate schools where our present specialists are teaching. But there is no guarantee that the latter will be replaced by Soviet or East European specialists when they retire. Orderly development of the field will require greater attention to the regular production of specialists.

Fifth, modernization of library facilities and services will be of immeasurable importance in furthering soviet studies. Improvement of the interlibrary loan system and establishment of a computerized information retrieval system connecting the various research libraries in Japan would foster the dissemination of information on a national level.

Sixth, renewed attention must be paid to Russian language training. Although Russian is taught in 139 colleges and universities throughout the country, only two institutions grant the Ph. D. in Russian language and literature. The number of students studying Russian, particularly in advanced courses, has declined considerably in recent years. The total number of graduate students, including candidates for the master's degree, is no more than 40.

Japan is an economic power and a close neighbor of the Soviet Union. Soviet studies are of obvious importance to the nation. Yet unless steps are taken to promote the growth of such studies, Japanese scholarship is likely to be overtaken soon by that of China and South Korea, whose specialists on Soviet affairs, backed by vigorous government support, have made great progress recently. One welcome sign that the Japanese government has some concern about the state of Soviet studies in Japan is the recent announcement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that a Center for Soviet Studies is to be established within the Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo. How the new Center will be funded and staffed

is not yet clear, but it will apparently sponsor research projects mobilizing specialists in both academia and government. This is a step in the right direction, but there is much ground to cover and it remains to be seen if other urgently needed measures will follow.

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(This article was originally printed in the *AAASS Newsletter*, 24, No. 3 (Summer, 1984), in a slightly different version.)

Hokkaido University Has Acquired the Bernstein Collection

The Slavic Research Center proudly announces that the Hokkaido University Library has acquired the Leon B. Bernstein Collection, which contains approximately 5,000 titles, of which approximately 2,200 are extremely rare books and manuscripts. The Bernstein collection of books, correspondence, manuscripts, unique autographed and mimeographed materials, revolutionary pamphlets and leaflets is the result of more than sixty years of assiduous collecting by Leon Bernstein (1877–1962), who was a founding member of the Bund, and lived in Paris since 1905 until his death as a professional journalist and a book collector. Bernstein's own political activities and his ability to maintain relations with different socialist factions earned him access to major party libraries and archives, enabling him to amass a unique collection of materials, many of which are not to be found in American, European, or even Soviet libraries. He remained in Paris during the German occupation, and his collection was further enriched by the collections of Bernstein's acquaintances who fled the country or were killed during the war.

The collection was first sold to the Newberry Library in Chicago in 1956, and then to Hunter College in New York in 1965, but for various reasons neither library could make these materials available to a broader segment of researchers.

The Slavic Research Center Library and the Hokkaido University Library would like to invite many researchers to make use of this fascinating and valuable collection.