
Discussion Forum

Humanities Research in Russia: Status of the Art

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Abstract—Achievements, trends, and problems in the development of social sciences after 1991 are considered, with a focus on the humanities—history, philology, and other areas. The author determines the distinctive features of this sphere of basic science and emphasizes the growing priority of domestic topics without compromising study of global subject matter and the structure of scientific institutions. A list of innovative interdisciplinary topics for future plans and projects is proposed. Special attention is paid to the RFH–RFBR grant policy, which has made it possible to overcome crisis phenomena that emerged after 1991 and to correct the scientific agenda in favor of interdisciplinary, practice-oriented studies and institutionally, in favor of university science. The author fixes crisis and negative phenomena in modern social science and the humanities, especially those related to their institutional support, norms of scientific ethics, and responsibility. Measures to improve the situation are proposed, including with regard to the unjustified decrease in the share of grant support for scientists within the Russian Academy of Sciences, the center of basic humanities research in Russia.

Keywords: humanities, scientific achievements, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Foundation for the Humanities, Russian Foundation for Basic Research, grants, research institutes, university science, priorities, scientific standards and ethics.

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The humanities are the block of scientific knowledge about man and society, which comprises, in the first place, complex disciplines such as history (including archaeology and ethnology) and philology (including linguistics and literary criticism), as well as philosophy and political science; the latter two, however, are beyond my competence. Together with economics, sociology, law, and psychology, this complex constitutes the circle of so-called social sciences. The above division is rather conditional: it is difficult to attribute some sciences to a category, much depending on the method, research problem, and topic.

We can identify some distinctive features of the humanities:

- the necessity and independent significance of not only the conclusion but also the description itself in many humanities-related disciplines and, correspondingly, the specifics of the scientific product (monographs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.);
- the appeal of humanities-related scientific knowledge not only to the professional community but also to the public, because many seek to know history

and literature, an essential part of the cultural background of modern man;

- a large amount in archival, textual, and field studies (diggings, ethnographic and folkloristic expeditions, surveys, etc.);
- the primary importance attached to publishing various materials: archival documents, written records, sources, and so on.

RESULTS AND GENERAL TRENDS OF RECENT DECADES

So-called interdisciplinary studies have occupied a leading place of late, since it is at the interface of different disciplines where new knowledge is largely generated [1, 2]. Had the linguist A.A. Zaliznyak not come 40 years ago to archaeologists at the Novgorod archaeological site, many discoveries in the reading of birch bark manuscripts and the history of the Russian language would not have taken place. Present-day anthropologists, archaeologists, and art historians cooperate with biologists, geneticists, and medical professionals, searching into the mysteries of artifacts, ancient texts, modern language, and human thinking.

Our colleagues—physicists and mathematicians—like to say jokingly that “there are natural sciences and unnatural sciences,” meaning by the latter social sci-

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ences. Note, however, that all sciences are necessary and important and not only those that broaden our knowledge about nature and laws of its development. As opposed to natural sciences, which deal with global subjects and development trends (there are no separate Russian, French, or German chemistry or biology), the humanities are more country specific regarding priorities and problems under solution. However, a global agenda is also present within social sciences because man and the cultural phenomena produced by him are largely universal [3].

Characteristic of Russia as a country with a global geopolitical status is global and universal interest in phenomena of social development, the evolution of humanity and individual societies and states, and cultural phenomena and processes. Hence, considering scientific strategy, it is important not to run to two extremes, one of them being global claims to studying the world, which inevitably entails the erosion of interest in domestic problems, and the other, the isolationistic position, when we consider Russia alone, while what is happening, for example, in Brazil or Australia is none of our business. The trend of Russian social theory in the late 20th–early 21st centuries is the growth of domestic priorities due to the newly established intellectual freedom, “the opening of society,” and its dramatic development. By the way, the author of this article is far from the only humanities scholar who in the late 1980s quit foreign subjects and turned to Russian ones because new opportunities opened up and Russia became more interesting than foreign countries. The turn to domestic subjects was backed by the state grant policy, which formed in Russia in the 1990s, as well as by more vivid demand on the part of the authorities and public institutions for diverse analytics and information instead of the Soviet, often bald, “memos to bodies” or the abstracts of inaccessible foreign publications for scientists not fluent in foreign languages or party officials.

Despite the crisis phenomena of the early 1990s and many persisting difficulties, the past two to three decades can be assessed as the most fruitful period in the history of domestic social theory, incomparable with any previous one. Suffice it to say that, for example, the institutes of the RAS Division of History and Philology have radically broadened the scope and increased the number of published works and have completed large scientific projects constituting the golden pool of Russian science. These are discoveries related to the early history of humanity and its assimilation of the ecumene (the State Prizes of the Russian Federation of 2004 and 2012), studies on the Novgorod antiquities and language (the State Prize of the Russian Federation of 2009), the creation of the multivolume *World History* and a historical encyclopedia (the State Prize of the Russian Federation of 2014), the encyclopedia *Nations and Religions of the World* and the historical–ethnographic series “Nations and Cultures” (the State Prizes of the Rus-

sian Federation of 2001 and 2015), and works on Sinology (the State Prize of the Russian Federation of 2009). In addition, noteworthy are fundamental works on the history of Russia; the creation of the corpus of the Russian language and academic dictionaries; the preparation of collected works by Russian writers; and studies on Siberian folklore, minority languages, and the history of religions.

We should recognize that fundamental scientific studies have mainly been done, as in the past, by regular researchers of the 15 so-called central (Moscow and St. Petersburg) and approximately 10 regional (Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, Ufa, Ulan-Ude, Makhachkala, Petrozavodsk, and others) research institutes within the Russian Academy of Sciences and since 2013, within the FASO (Federal Agency for Scientific Organizations) system and under the scientific–methodological supervision of the relevant RAS division. Over all these years, the institutes with a total staff of slightly more than 3000 researchers have been supported moderately but stably by the state and have determined priorities and developed their scientific plans practically independently [4]. Of course, this system is outdated because of its inertia and insufficient orientation at public demand (or the so-called social order). However, an important role in the development and modernization of the humanities has been played in the same period by the support of the Russian Foundation for the Humanities (RFH), created in 1992, which in the 2016 was incorporated into the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR). To an extent, the grant allocation–based selection of scientific topics and projects has been correcting scientific initiative from below, manifesting an external scientific influence on the part of experts and the councils of scientific foundations [5, 6].

Over the years, under the obvious budgetary funding shortfall, more than 250000 Russian humanities scholars have been supported by grants. By the beginning of 2017, over 50000 scientific projects had been funded, including the following: more than 30000 research projects were carried out; within their framework, over 150000 scientific articles were published; about 2500 symposia, conferences, seminars, and other scientific events were held; about 3000 expeditions and other field studies were supported; more than 1000 information resources were created on the Internet; and about 6000 scientific books were published.

Especially impressive is the publishing program in the sphere of the humanities. Over 25 years, more than 200 Russian libraries received free of charge almost 1 mln copies of grant-supported scientific books. In fact, in the most difficult period, grant support rescued the scientific book publishing industry in the field of social sciences and the humanities. It not only saved it but also helped bring it to a new level: note that for humanities scholars, the book is in most cases the

only way both to introduce new knowledge, obtained in the course of research, in scientific use and to introduce new knowledge in practice. In my opinion, the recent restrictions imposed by fiscal control bodies on the issue of and the right to sell grant-supported scientific books are erroneous and require urgent reconsideration. A scientific book very rarely brings commercial profit; it should be sold and be present on the shelf for years and should meet the demands of each new generation of scientists and students. At any rate, such is the practice of bookshops in university campuses across the world. As for Russia, the system of selling scientific books has been destroyed because of the sluggishness of Nauka Publishers.

Since 1998, the RFH has conducted regional competitions in accordance with agreements concluded with the administrations and governments of Russian federal subjects. These competitions prompt the development of the humanities not only in traditional scientific centers but also countrywide and direct scientists toward solving a region's problems. Regional projects are dedicated to studying the languages, literature, and cultural heritage of Russia's peoples and to problems of the social and economic development of regional and local communities and favor the activation of social and humanities research in Russian federal subjects. In total, more than 11000 humanities projects have been supported while running such competitions, over 1 bln rubles being allocated to fund them. Since regional projects are as a rule supported by the foundation and Russian federal subjects on an equal basis, this means that local budgets have spent almost the same amount to fund the regional humanities.

An effective way to respond to public demand, including interests of power structures, is target tenders on interdisciplinary projects. In connection with the announcement of 2006 The Year of the Humanities, Culture, and Education—The Year of Academician D.S. Likhachev, the Cultural Heritage of Russia competition was held. The year 2007 became The Year of Russian Language, and the RFBR held a thematic competition “The Russian Language in the Modern World.” The first target competition proper took place in 2009. Since 2011, target competitions have been held annually. Over this period, 250 scientific projects for a total amount of more than ₺688 mln have been supported within their framework. Among successful ones in terms of results, one can particularly mention the following: The 1150th anniversary of Russian Statehood; The Year of 1812 in the History and Culture of Russia; Russia in WWI (1914–1918); The Creative Legacy of M.Yu. Lermontov and Modern Times; Russia in 1917; The Crimea in the History, Culture, and Economy of Russia; and The Preparation of Dictionaries of the Russian Language of Various Types and Profiles.

This positive trend in the development of domestic topics in the humanities can and should be supported

by not only the state but also by private individuals and companies who feel and taste the need to support knowledge in the humanities, including without direct and quick dividends. Thus far, however, most of the business class perceive sponsors who support, for example, studies on Russian chronicles, folklore expeditions, underwater archaeology, and such undertakings as benevolent eccentrics rather than as the norm. Let me give an example. Most of the nearly 40 volumes of the “Peoples and Cultures” series, dedicated to peoples of Russia and the bordering countries, were published due to the support of the state Russian Foundation for the Humanities, and several volumes about the titular nations of Russian republics were supported by republican authorities. It was most difficult to find sponsors for the volumes *Russians* and *Jews*. In the former case, it was unclear who to address for support: “All are for Russians, but there is no money”; in the latter, it was the hard-to-explain frugality and intra-Jewish “dispositions” that delayed the solution of the issue for almost two years, with the manuscript ready for publication.

Let me summarize. The scientific strategy in the development of humanities knowledge should rely on a threefold component: the initiative of scientists themselves; demand and support on the part of the state; and private sponsorship by not only business but also institutions of civil society, which requires explanatory work [2]. It is necessary to convince people that to give money for a scientific expedition or the publication of an academic work is no less praiseworthy than to pay for a gala concert or a prestigious party.

HOW MUCH AND WHAT HUMANITIES SCIENCE DOES MODERN RUSSIA NEED?

From the moment of its establishment, domestic humanities research has developed on a multidisciplinary basis and has been characterized by all-encompassing attitudes and ambitions, which were largely justified and confirmed by real achievements. It is sufficient to recall the examples of complex circumnavigatory expeditions of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (I.F. Kruzenshtern (also known as A.J. von Krusenstern), Yu.F. Lisianskii, O.E. von Kotzebue, and others) or the Soviet nomenclature of the humanities and social-science institutes, which embraced all major disciplines, regions, and countries, as well as global processes. For example, in the years of the collapse of the colonial system and the emergence of dozens of new countries, the USSR Academy of Sciences created the Institute of Africa; after the Cuban Revolution, the Institute of Latin America appeared; during the Vietnam War, the Institute of Oriental Studies received 100 new appointments. After 1991, the system of research institutes, which had been formed in the Soviet Union as a phenomenon of all-embracing interest with a reference to the role of the country in the world, was preserved, partly by inertia.

What changes are possible here is an important question, which obviously does not imply voluntaristic solutions. In my opinion, however, it is unreasonable to keep the global front of the humanities-related studies in Russia in its old Soviet version; it is necessary, without running into the extremities of isolationism, to correct scientific priorities around domestic topics and some global problems directly related to national security and economic and cultural competition in the external world.

In the field of historical sciences, this is primarily the history of Russia; in archaeology and ethnology, the historical–cultural heritage, the ethnic and religious diversity on the territory of the historical Russian state; in Oriental studies, the Eurasian component of the Russian past and present. A correction in favor of Russian topics proper is possible and necessary over the entire complex of humanities-related disciplines, of course, within reasonable limits. Demand for knowledge about the external world and earlier epochs of human history should be preserved for educational purposes and for the purposes of foreign policy, Russian diplomacy, and business. In the field of philological sciences, we should maintain the world level of Russian linguistics: although enthusiasm about structural linguistics is passing, modern linguistic processes and so-called corpus linguistics are coming to the fore. It is desirable to revive interest in classical literary criticism, especially regarding the history of Russian literature and its global impact. The present-day generations of Russians “read and reread the classics,” as is called for by the famous program of the *Kultura* (Culture) TV channel, increasingly rarely. Apropos, the RFBR short-term plans envisage the announcement of target competitions dedicated to the creative activity of F.M. Dostoevsky, A.M. Gorky, and V.V. Mayakovsky.

A special place regarding the multinational character of our country belongs to humanities research in the republics of the Russian Federation. Almost all of them had one to two humanities-related research institute(s), which had previously been within the system of the USSR Academy of Sciences and then, within the Russian Academy of Sciences. Their collectives had no prominent achievements but sang for their modest supper properly and, most critically, developed not only local problems but also, most importantly, those of countrywide and even global significance. Just tell me where on earth one can study the Kalmyk language and the Jangar Epic better than in Kalmykia itself. Where can one study on a full-fledged basis the globally unique linguistic diversity of Dagestan, this “Mountain of Languages,” beyond the relevant humanities institute of the Dagestan Scientific Center, RAS? This situation is common to all the republics that preserve and study the historical–cultural heritage of Russia’s peoples as a part of the world cultural legacy. Needless to say, republican humanities scholars aim their efforts at preserving their languages

and traditions and maintaining the ethnocultural identity of the republics’ titular nations. At the same time, their affiliation with the Russian Academy of Sciences and connection with its leading institutes ensure the preparation of scientists and due scientific standards, protecting themselves against the risk of slipping into peripheral isolationism. This is important, because some humanities institutes in the republics are already “under the knife” of FASO’s restructuring of academic scientific establishments.

Which old priorities should be preserved, and what new ones can be proposed? There are several so-called classical disciplines and scientific occupations that require permanent support and development by the very fact of their existence and Russia’s responsibility for their development. Let us mention the most important of them:

- studies on Russian philology and culture, the languages and cultures of the peoples of Russia, and the national historical-cultural legacy;
- studies on the lifestyle, interests, needs, traditions, and values of the country’s inhabitants and the life imports and strategies of modern Russians;
- the basics of social life and the organization of society at all levels, from nationwide to regional and local;
- the historical experience of the governance and self-governance of a culturally complex society;
- the conditions, mechanisms, and forms of bringing up responsible citizens and developing legal culture;
- the psychological status of the society and civil solidarity and accord.

Achievements in these trends differ by the level of developments, the common problem being insufficient unity of efforts on the part of representatives of humanities disciplines around large-scale projects and the shortfall of innovative research methods.

The grant policy of recent years and the steps to inventory the system of scientific establishments seemingly orient us toward interdisciplinarity and the formation of creative teams, including the university professoriate. The latter should presumably yield scientific products of the highest level, and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science is ready to pay generously, but, unfortunately, only to the leading higher education institutions selected for accession into the top hundred higher education institutions of the world. However, the trend toward supporting university science, including through decreasing support for the academic sector, has come into conflict with the fixation on increasing sharply professors’ salaries, because it has turned out that this is possible only if their teaching load is increased. Let us not delude ourselves: the current excessive teaching norms leave neither time nor energy for science. Add to this various “merging” initiatives in universities, leading to the dis-

appearance of classical faculties of history and philology, as well as independent departments on scientific trends, which used to make university science.

As a result, university humanities research in Russia has remained provincial, secondary; the expected breakthroughs have not happened, except for the good indicators of the country's four to five main universities able to employ part-timers from academic institutes. University scientists from the Russian provinces try to break into the cohort of leading researchers; however, without the respective environment, contacts, business trips, and, most importantly, long research leaves, no noticeable shifts will occur. At least every fifth academic year of a university teacher should be free from teaching and designed for scientific research. This is the world practice, which remains unestablished in Russia. Yet even if the quality of humanities research at higher education institutions is substantially improved, which can only be embraced, it is the Russian Academy of Sciences and its research institutes that will still be the main centers of basic science in our country. It is them and in part foreign colleagues that provide scientific innovations in terms of topics and methods.

Despite the fact that the system of research institutes within the Academy has practically been preserved over 25 years, as well as their staffing and financial support, a certain regrouping in the relations of the main social studies—related disciplines is observable, at least at the level of scientific grant policy. In this context, one can make interesting conclusions by analyzing projects on various fields of social and humanities knowledge that have been supported by the RFH over the 25 years of its activity. Traditionally, the share of historical and philological sciences among such projects was high. For instance, in 1996, 31% of the projects proposed on history, including archaeology and ethnography, were supported and 20%, on philology, or 51% of all supported projects. In 2004, the situation was as follows: 26.6% for history, 18.4% for philology, or 45% in aggregate. In 2016, projects on history constituted 22% of the supported projects, on philology, 21%, or 43% in total. We see that, although the distribution of supported projects within the historical—philological block varied, history was always the leader, and the block itself, remaining the leader, has somewhat yielded its positions and is short of 50% in the total.

The share of approved projects on the complex of sciences usually united under the aegis of social science decreased (from 23.1% in 1996 to 19% in 2016). Instead, that of the block of sciences uniting psychology, pedagogy, and complex studies of man significantly increased (from 8.5% in 1996 to 19% in 2016). The share of economic sciences increased less considerably (from 12.5% in 1996 to 15% in 2016). There emerged a new trend within which scientific projects are supported, “global problems and international

relations,” but their share is rather small, only 2% in 2016.

When analyzing the above figures, it would be incorrect to conclude that the field of the humanities has been restructured cardinally. Still we can note a tendency, confirmed by observations of other researchers as well: growing interest in such spheres of social and humanities knowledge that imply a relatively short road from basic developments to their applied use. These are undoubtedly psychology, pedagogy, social problems of human health and ecology, and economics. I hesitate to appraise this tendency, but, to all appearances, it manifests the spirit of the time, briefly expressed by the word *pragmatism*.

Recognizing the primacy of the initiative of scientists themselves, I dare to propose a list of promising topics and priorities in social science and the humanities.

(1) The study of the phenomenon of collective and personal identity of Russians, which includes components such as a sense of empathy with the native land, the concept of the public good, responsibility for one's own health and family, and the observance of rights and duties.

(2) The problem of life priorities and meanings of different age categories and social groups considering not only previous experience and traditions but also modern values and interests.

(3) The spatial development of the Russian nation considering geographical and economic factors and the historical experience of the assimilation of natural landscapes and resources.

(4) The problem of the indoctrination and recruitment of representatives of different groups, ages, and ethnicities into radical ideologies and social practices as a condition to manifest extremist violence, including terrorism.

(5) The problem of “cultural suburbs” in the form of massive housing areas lacking social control, public self-organization, and a feeling of satisfaction with life.

(6) Impending conflicts caused by cultural and social differences between the older population of villages and small settlements and the population of new megalopolises.

(7) Problems associated with preservation of natural and historical habitats, cultural memory, and sacred places under market economy conditions and private ownership of land and resources.

These are broad topics, which cannot be developed without the participation of economists, sociologists, political scientists, and specialists in other trends, whose scientific interests are beyond the limits of the humanities proper.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANITIES KNOWLEDGE

There are serious problems in this respect, the primary ones of them being the destruction of professional standards, ethical norms, and responsible interpersonal relationships among scientific workers and the teaching staff. Having not succeeded in extirpating the practice of the old Soviet “telephone justice,” we allowed commercial and monetary interests and a rush toward academic degrees (unfortunately, predominantly in social science and the humanities) on the part of ambitious and semicriminal “people with resources” to intrude aggressively into the sphere of education and science.

The scientific community failed to stem this phenomenon, and some of its representatives even took part in fabricating college and scientific works “to order,” in providing academic degrees for officialdom. Until recently, there were no barriers for state officials and other influential people willing to acquire (buy) academic degrees and ranks. The previous leader of the upper house of the Russian parliament once said boastfully that three-fourths of the senators had academic degrees and ranks, and, hence, such a senate had no need for scientific support! The problem of insufficient competence in elaborating political decisions is beyond the scope of this article, but it does exist.

The long-standing existence of this original form of academic corruption, especially within higher education establishments and in some academic institutes, has led to the reproduction of a generation of poorly qualified representatives of the scientific intelligentsia and the degradation of the ideas of scientificity as such and scientific ethics. This new crisis phenomenon has aggravated old problems in the organization of humanities research: the presence of a significant number of low-productive and even scientifically incapable workers in the staffs of institutes and higher education establishments, inertia in research, and the lack of initiative in searching for sources and customers and consumers of scientific results. Concerning the RAS Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, which I headed for 26 years, I know for a fact that about one-third of its researchers have lost scientific capabilities or ceased their scientific activity, another one-third are satisfied with minimal indicators, and only the remaining one-third is yielding significant scientific results. Any speculations that scientific “stars” need a “broth” of the average and weak are indefensible and are mere excuses. Perhaps in some establishments this dead weight is not so great, but the problem of scientific collectives as a kind of welfare departments, where one can live for years at others’ expense, remains. It is perhaps the main one, because it gives rise to leveling and underpayment to those who deserve more. Thus far, the personnel renovation car-

ried out by the FASO does not in the least address this problem. An option to resolve it could be “scientific pensions” for retiring workers.

The initiatives of the past four years to reorganize academic science have given Russian humanities scholars next to nothing: the reorganization of institutes has left the dead weight (low-productive and actually idle people in science) untouched, the penetration of laymen into science and their provision with academic degrees continue, and the moral climate in the system of scientific communities has not become cleaner. This is made worse by the growing industry of producing paid publications and boosting scientometric indicators, mostly visible in the humanities again. Having found themselves on the ranked list, essentially “garbage” journals (for former merits or famous names on the front pages) are stuffed with moneyed orders for publications but remain low-grade editions. High-quality scientific anonymously peer-reviewed journals with working editorial boards have to spend much effort to be entered into these prestigious lists without lobbying.

Or let us take another painful problem: it suddenly comes to light that the Internet version of a journal is impossible because the journal itself was once sold by someone to a commercial firm, for which it is important not to communicate knowledge to specialists but to sell as many copies as possible. Such is, for example, the story with the East View Publications Company, which has grabbed the foreign subscription of scientific journals and, in the intricate tandem with the Nauka Publishers and the Pleiades Publishing Company, has deprived of publishing rights the research institutes that created these journals and are still providing for their activities. As an example, let me mention the once main academic journal of historians, *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History), which was privatized by the editorial board 25 years ago and later turned into a feeble family closed-door deal until it found itself in the Web of Science list owing to its former history. At present, things with the journal are looking up again owing to paid articles, but not in terms of the scientific level of its publications.

An unprecedented situation has developed in science: one can view three- to five-page long texts as articles on the humanities if they are equipped with keywords, an abstract in English, and references. In one such new trash journal on ethnosocial problems, I discovered in references to every article works by its editor-in-chief—in every issue, irrespective of the topic under consideration! This is an obvious example of the parasitic system of “growing” scientometric indicators. Yet it would be difficult to lay a finger on the journal: at the extreme top, as chair of the guardianship board, we see such a surname that it is safer to steer clear of.

I am bound to note that in the most recent years Russia has witnessed the fall of the prestige of human-

ities scholars, disregard for professional knowledge, and the blossom of parascience and esoteric, antiscientific constructions and deliberate falsifications [7]. Politicians and propagandists cannot resist the temptation of so-called presentism, which manifests itself in formulating and imposing such concepts and assessments of history that meet short-term needs but do not necessarily agree with science. A myth is proclaimed a truth if the constructors of subjective prescriptions and, together with them, the mass consumer have bought into it. Turning to authenticity is regarded as unnecessary and even harmful.

The concepts of the history of Russia accepted by domestic science are being revised by external politicized Russophobic interpreters and internal neophytes of various types, from ultraconservative activists to scandal-seeking authors. Just tell me what for a large Russian publishing house published a book by a certain Mr. Ponasenkov with his crackpot version of the history of the Patriotic War of 1812. If the goal was to make some money from a scandal, it is a shame; if the reason was an incompetent selection, it is even worse. The impression is that Russian publishers no longer care about their reputation and the influence of their products on the morality, psyche, and competences of Russians, the main thing for them being to sell something and make money.

For three decades on end, the shelves of our bookshops have been lined with gilt-edged historical “works,” the authors of which intentionally destroy scientific views on history, invent esoteric versions of the origin of man, humankind, and individual nations, descending to racism and extremist interpretations. By its harmful effect on the reader, this antiscientific blur is very similar to anti-Russian falsifications, justly denounced by the public. Right before our eyes, popular haters of Russia like T. Snyder and A. Applebaum are drilling the present generation of the Western young in the full revision of the fundamental scientific versions of the history of the 20th century. By their antiscientific attitude, domestic “rehabilitators” of Stalin and mass repressions or the creators of the odor of sanctity around the Russian monarchy are little or no different. In this situation, professional humanities scholars often feel despair and the desire to shut themselves in academic “ivory towers,” which is essentially an erroneous position.

The current situation in the Russian humanities requires a program of conceptual-theoretical, institutional, and science organization-related measures. Among them, the following can be proposed.

(1) To enhance the prestige of major trends of social science and the humanities by including some of them in the list of respective major scientific trends approved at the state level.

(2) To conduct public discussions and to elaborate scientific community-shared norms of and approaches

to criteria of scientific approaches and professionalism in the humanities.

(3) To elaborate qualitative and reputational criteria to assess the effectiveness of the activity of research institutes and teams in the sphere of the humanities.

(4) To reform the Highest Attestation Commission (VAK), to renovate academic degree councils, and to peer-review the eligibility of higher education establishments to confer academic degrees on an independent basis.

(5) To adopt stricter criteria on the establishment of scientific editions and their inclusion in the so-called VAK List, as well as conditions and criteria to support and hold conferences in the sphere of social science and the humanities.

(6) To improve requirements on scientists and their responsibility for the preparation of dissertations, reports, peer reviews of publications, and assessments of grant applications.

(7) To remove excessive bureaucratic restrictions imposed on expenditure conditions, accounting, and the implementation of the results of grant-supported studies.

The most important proposal, however, is to reverse, at least partially, the discriminatory policy toward academic research institutes, which are already behind the university professoriate in terms of remuneration and have suffered a decrease in the share of grant subsidies over the last four years. Regarding the social sciences and the humanities, in 1996 the share of projects fulfilled at institutes of the RAS and other state academies was 54% of all supported projects. In 2013, it decreased to 52% and by 2016, to 26.3%. Higher education institutions (including Moscow State University) in 1996 were executing 20% of all supported projects; in 2013, 33%; and in 2016, 53%. Observable are a sharp growth in the number and funding of projects executed by higher education establishments and a dramatic fall in the number of projects implemented by scientists from academic institutes, which has happened over the last three years (from 52% in 2013 to 26.3% in 2016). Some people think that these are merely consequences of the amalgamation of the two foundations; in my opinion, however, the deliberate attitudes and moods of experts had something to do with this, and we should remedy this situation, which is unfavorable for academic scientists.

Although all the above reflects my personal position as a scientist, I hope that the proposed analysis of the situation will be discussed and will perhaps give impetus to corrections in the domestic scientific strategy.

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