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Ethnic Publications

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I. Scope

For the purpose of this statement, an ethnic group is considered to be a group of persons sharing a common race, national origin, language, ancestry, religion, or culture. These groups may include:

- 1) Ethnic minorities of long standing maintaining a separate identity;
- 2) Emigres established in a new country but still maintaining a separate identity;
- 3) Recent political refugees;
- 4) Temporary residents such as students and “guest workers.”

This policy is intended to include library materials in any language or format, including electronic. The provisions of the Collections Policy Statements relating to the specific format are followed. Custodial divisions will be consulted in addition to area or subject specialists.

Ethnic publications from the United States and those from foreign countries are considered separately, as indicated below.

II. Research Strengths

The Library of Congress has strong collections in all areas of ethnic studies, comprising both materials generated by ethnic groups themselves and general, historical, and theoretical works in the field of ethnic studies and its subfields. A great variety of languages, geographical areas, and categories of publications are represented in the collections. Recent decades have seen dramatic growth in ethnic publications, but the Library’s retrospective collections are also extensive and rich, ranging from newsletters and family or local histories to scholarly conference proceedings and dissertations, as well as materials born digital.

III. Collecting Policy

A. Ethnic publications - United States

The Library will acquire publications created by, for, or about any of the ethnic groups living in the

United States, representing all areas of the world, and including Native Americans. The Library of Congress seeks to obtain for its permanent collections library materials that document the history, experiences, and contributions of each of the ethnic groups in the United States, from the earliest time to the present. Emphasis will be placed on materials of national, regional, or state-wide interest. Publications that are primarily local in scope are limited to a highly selective sampling, since it is understood that extensive collections of such materials are the responsibilities of state and local institutions and ethnic organizations. Examples of local publications to be generally excluded are: newsletters of social clubs, churches, temples, etc.; local history materials excluded by the Collections Statement for Local History; and other serials and monographs addressed to a local audience. These general objectives do not preclude the acquisition of materials, including ephemera (refer to Collections Statement for Ephemera), for temporary use, for possible selection for the permanent collections, or for possible filming and cataloging as a collection.

B. Ethnic publications - foreign

The Library will acquire more selectively those publications created by, for, or about ethnic groups in foreign countries. All time periods, geographic areas, and languages are potentially within scope, as are all materials available electronically. Emphasis is placed on materials that have regional, national, or international significance.

IV. Acquisition Sources

Materials published in the United States, including those born digital, are generally acquired through copyright when possible, or, in some cases, donations, purchases, and exchanges. Most significant ethnic publications reach the Library through the blanket approval plan or through donations and exchanges. Cataloging in Publication is also an acquisitions source for general reference works concerning the subject of ethnic publications published within the United States.

V. Collecting Levels

A. Materials concerning ethnic groups in the United States: Collecting level 5.

The following categories of materials will be collected comprehensively:

1. Directories, bibliographies, statistics, and genealogies;
2. Works on ethnicity in general, immigration in all its aspects, citizenship, and related topics;
3. Works by ethnic organizations of national scope; ethnic newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks of national circulation;
4. Works on the history, economic and social status, traditional culture, influence on and contribution to U.S. society of the various ethnic groups.

B. Materials concerning ethnic groups outside of the United States: Collecting level 4 (research level)

C. Specialized materials of a local scope concerning ethnic groups in the United States: Collecting level 4 (research level).

The following groups of materials will be collected selectively:

1. Publications relating to local groups, organizations, or committees. Emphasis is placed on local materials that have regional, national, or international significance, e.g., from localities having a heavy concentration of a given ethnic group;
 2. Non-book materials illustrative of the history, experience, and contributions of ethnic groups. The provisions of the Collections Policy Statements relating to each specific format are followed. Custodial divisions will be consulted in addition to area or subject specialists.
- D. Specialized and non-book materials concerning ethnic groups outside of the United States: Collecting level 4 (research level).
- E. Ethnic publications - Foreign: Collecting level 4 (research level).

Revised November 2008