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Russia and Her Science.

The director of the central intelligence agency, Allen W. Dulles, is disturbed over the extent of the information any Russian can secure today merely by reading American scientific and technical journals. So are many of our specialists in these fields. But the real trouble seems to be that we do not have comparable access to the results of important work now being done by scientists and technicians in the Soviet Union.

We know that the Russians are doing important work, especially in mathematics, physics, applied mechanics and petroleum technology. The popular concept in this country that they are not gifted scientifically is erroneous. Equally false is the assumption that they have allowed ideology to distort all phases of their scientific research.

Such interference has been detected in Russian biology, to be sure, and in chemistry the current Russian work does not appear to be particularly good, although here the fault seems to be sloppiness rather than ideological frustration. Otherwise, however, the Soviet Union is credited with possessing scientists and technicians who are first-class where they are not actually pre-eminent in the world.

That much has been gleaned from various sources, including the Russian journals which have been obtainable. But there is evidence

that, particularly from about 1950, careful supervision has been exercised by the Soviet authorities to see (1) that certain journals shall not be regularly exported and (2) that certain information ordinarily published elsewhere shall not be printed even in Russia.

The details of the Kremlin's policy in this respect are not entirely clear and the degree of secrecy seems to vary from time to time. But it is obvious that the Soviet dictatorship is in a far better position to censor fundamental scientific news than we are, outside such areas as atomic and aeronautical research. Allen Dulles is right. We probably are too open-handed with information, in view of the lack of reasonable reciprocity. What can be done about it is another question.