

SOC. 4.01.2 Strategy of
Deception
SOC. 4.01.2 Praeger
C.I.A. 2.04.2 General
P-Unger, Harlow G.
C.I.A. 7.02 U.S.I.A.
Orig Filed under Unger

Front Page Edit Page Other Page I4

RALEIGH, N.C.
NEWS & OBSERVER
APR 21 1968
M-130,044
S-154,008

The News and Observer, Sunday, April 21, 1968

Information Agency Is Producing Propaganda

By HARLOW G. UNGER.
Toronto Telegram News Service

NEW YORK — For at least four years and probably more, the United States Information Agency has been violating the laws of the United States. It has acknowledged these violations before Congress on at least two occasions and has promised to "cease and desist."

But the violations are continuing and Congress appears unable or unwilling to stop them.

Unlike the uproar produced by disclosures of CIA subversion of private organizations in the United States last year, little public indignation was produced by disclosures before Congress that the USIA had, in effect, subverted the American publishing industry.

The USIA has been paying publishers secretly to produce books bearing no government label and distribute them through normal commercial channels in the United States and other countries, including Canada. Thus, many of the politically-oriented U. S. books available in local bookstores in downtown Toronto, Montreal, New York, San Francisco and other major North American cities are nothing more than U. S government propaganda.

The USIA, which operates the United States Information Service libraries around the world, is, of course, paid to be Uncle Sam's press agent, and it has been highly effective. Despite the popular foreign sport of burning USIS libraries, the USIA manages to get about 15 million books describing "the American way

of life" into the hands of foreigners each year.

There is, however, no doubt in the minds of foreign readers that the books off USIS shelves are propagandistic, and the USIS does not attempt to hide its role as the propaganda arm of the U. S government.

But USIA officials are far less open about the agency's so-called "book development" program, because this scheme is entirely illegal.

The program is a two-pronged affair. One aspect of the program merely involves a USIA order asking a publisher to add, say, 25,000 extra copies to his press run of a given book. USIA then pays the publishers a high enough price to allow these extra copies to be sold at attractive (50 percent or more) discount prices

in foreign bookstores.

There is nothing to indicate to readers that the books were bought and paid for with USIA funds. "Co-operative" publishers in this scheme include such famous paperback publishers as Fawcett, Bantam and Pocket Books.

Although perhaps the books technically cannot be called propaganda, because they were not written by the USIA, there is little question that the publishers, knowing that a lush USIA contract awaits them, are often willing to influence the author to write the "right" kind of book.

The second prong of the USIA's book development program is more insidious. Under the scheme, USIA simply goes out and hires an author to write the "right" kind of book, it then pays the publishers to

print it and distribute it through normal commercial channels.

Books of this type are being sold today in the U. S., Canada and other nations to readers who have no idea they are reading straight propaganda from Washington.

The USIA contract with authors and publishers under this scheme is quite clear. It states in part: "Publication shall be without attribution to the agency. The contractor will not issue . . . publicity or information in any form regarding this contract or the fact of the government's connection with the subject book."

In 1966, Frederick A. Praeger, a subsidiary of Encyclopedia Britannica, published a book called, Why Vietnam? by Frank N.

Trager. USIA paid Praeger \$5,750 to publish it and the author \$2,500 to write it. Newsweek magazine later recommended it to its readers. No American or foreign reader had any idea it was sponsored by the U. S. government's propaganda arm.

In 1966 Doubleday published a USIA-sponsored book by Jay Mallin of Time magazine called Caribbean Crisis: Subversion Falls in the Dominican Republic. It was an apologia for the U. S. landings in the Dominican Republic. Later that year Mallin was paid nearly \$5,000 in USIA funds to write a book called Terror in Vietnam, which was published by D. Van Nostrand.

A magazine called The New Leader received \$16,500 in USIA and CIA funds a few years ago to compile a book

Illegally

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