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Parapsychology called object of Soviet study

Paris (NYT)—An emigre Soviet physicist says that the Soviet Union has been doing secret work in parapsychology, with what appear to be military and police purposes.

A French scientist and former intelligence agent, Jacques Bergier, has written a book saying that extrasensory perception, one of the theories studied by parapsychology, may be used in espionage, thought control, surveillance and as a weapon.

The Soviet emigre, August Stern, is a son of Dr. Mikhail Stera, an endocrinologist who was imprisoned before being allowed to leave the Soviet Union in March. August Stern spent several years in a secret Siberian laboratory in the late 1960's trying to find a physical basis for psychic energy or "psi particles," as they are called.

Soviet concern on the issue was demonstrated in the case of Robert C. Toth, a correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, who was interrogated in Moscow by the KGB, the security police, and was accused of having received "state secrets" about parapsychology. He was allowed to leave the country after protests by the U.S. government.

The incident had the earmarks of an entrapment, in the view of diplomats and others. There is no sign that the 25-page document on parapsychology handed to him on the street just before he was seized contained important information. Howev-

er, there is a record of Soviet sensitivity and August Stern's information indicates that parapsychology is a matter of concern to the authorities.

Mr. Stern, who now lives in Paris, said he was told before leaving the Soviet Union two years ago that an even more secret laboratory than the one he knew in Siberia had been set up in Moscow under the direction of the KGB.

Parapsychology covers four specific fields of nonphysical phenomena. They are telepathy (transmission of thought without use of the senses), extrasensory perception, telekinesis (transmission of motion without any evident use of physical energy) and clairvoyance (the ability to see distant or future events without physical intervention).

At one time in the late 1950's and early 1960's, the U.S. Navy and the Stanford Research Institute did experiments in telepathy to see whether it could provide an undetectable means of communicating with submarines. So far as is known, the experiments failed. But word of them reached Moscow and apparently provoked high-level interest in the subject.

In June, 1975, Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, urged the United States to agree on a ban of research and development of new kinds of weapons "more terrible" than anything the world has known.

There is no evidence that Mr. Brezhnev was referring to something in the field of parapsychology. But it is a possibility.