

A Note on Casual Intelligence Acquisition

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A sophisticated tourist describes how he casually probed weak spots in the Iron Curtain.

Amerikanskiy Turist

"Your pass, please," crisply asked the guard. "Oh, the Devil! I left it home." With a gesture of annoyance tempered by indifference, the guard motioned me into the Frunze Soviet Army Club in Moscow. And so I wandered around and cased the place. The auditorium was ultramodern, well equipped for several hundred guests. The luxury of the surroundings for the senior and field-grade officer class which frequents this elite officers' club was evident in the mosaic murals and paintings depicting in warm colors the past battles of the Red Army. No secrets lying about-but a laxity on the part of the guard reflecting his assumption that, after all, no unauthorized Soviet citizen would try to get in.

So, too, in Tbilisi. When as a visitor from Moscow I inquired about a place I could relax in the evening, other than the restaurants or one pseudo-nightclub, someone mentioned the Voroshilov Club, down almost next to the Staff of the Transcaucasian Military District. So I sauntered into the Voroshilov Club, and was asked for my *bilet*. Surprised that a ticket would be required, I asked where to get one. When my inquiry was met with incomprehension, I adopted what I had observed to be a Soviet technique for overcoming perplexity, and began shouting I had a right to enter. Again, a shrug of the shoulders and I went in. Only later did I

realize that the club was exclusively for Party members, and the attendant had been asking for my Party card (the Russian word being identical with that for a ticket)! In this case I was evidently taken as a visiting Czech or East German Communist.

But the greatest opportunities for casual intelligence collection may occur in places where no subterfuge is required to gain access. By cultivating a young lady working in a secondhand bookstore in Moscow, for example, I obtained a classified five-volume Soviet history of the Soviet-German campaigns of 1941-1945 prepared at the Frunze Military Academy (Command and Staff College), which a negligent Soviet officer, or perhaps his widow, had left in a group of books sold to an undiscerning bookseller. This work, much more comprehensive than any previously known to exist, is based on materials from *Military Thought* (the confidential theoretical military journal, published by a section of the General Staff for senior Soviet officers), unpublished war college lectures, and material from archives. It was written by a number of generals and colonels.

The military bookstores form a separate system of stores under the Military Publishing House of the Ministry of Defense, with branches in the dozen or so main cities. I visited some half dozen of these, and obtained various open publications (the artillery manual, internal service regulations, disciplinary regulations, etc.) and some factory and office civil defense posters. But in Leningrad, by exceptional chance-and by flashing a Soviet officer's identification card-holder I had picked up elsewhere, in a provincial military store-I bought another (1956) classified history of the recent war, and another study, put out by the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff (National War College). This study, like the Frunze Academy series, had not previously even been known to exist.

These incidents illustrate the opportunities created by the difficulty Soviet citizens have in recognizing Russian-speaking foreigners (unless, of course, their dress is too evidently Western). On a number of occasions, after dealing at some length with a Soviet citizen, I have casually admitted the fact (which I had never done anything to conceal) that I was an American; and it came as an obvious surprise to them.

It is no news to any intelligence officer that libraries continue to be a useful source of intelligence. In the Soviet Union they are often most useful in indicating categories of items *not* available on security (or political) grounds. In some libraries, by filling out the forms required

(including the notation "non-Party" in respect to Party status) and submitting one's passport to negligent inspection, it is possible to get a regular library pass to consult some areas in history and military affairs, for example, which are not open to all. The most useful library I found, however was the Fundamental Library of the Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences, where I filled out no forms, did not identify myself except as a foreign scholar, and yet obtained access to files including unpublished dissertations, political instructions in the armed forces, etc.

Security on military matters including ordnance-leaving aside the separate matter of airfields and field installations-is sometimes mildly compromised at the military museums. In the Frunze Aviation and Civil Defense Museum I was able to buffalo the attendants into allowing me to take flash color photographs of the engine of the TU-104 and certain other items which the US Air Attache's office had been denied permission to take. When as a foreign tourist I asked if it was permitted to take photographs, I was told, "In general, no." After arguing not "in general" but in particular (Why not? Of course if they were ashamed to have a foreigner take interest in their technological level ..), I was finally granted permission. Similarly, at the Zhukovsky Aviation Section located at the Central Aerodynamics Institute, I succeeded in photographing scale models of various Soviet aircraft, including one prototype (identified even as to model) which we had never before seen! At the Naval Museum I was able to see, but unfortunately not to obtain (as it was secured under glass) the April 1957 "Instructions of the Central Committee to the Organizations of the CPSU in the Soviet Army and Navy," a document unpublished and, I believe, not yet in our possession.

My purpose in describing these incidents is to illustrate the little appreciated possibilities for casual intelligence collection by prepared travelers, aside from such routine opportunities as conversations with Soviet citizens and direct observation of installations encountered. Some of these opportunities are denied to attaches (e.g., photography in the Air Museums) but some of them can be exploited even by official representatives (e.g., coverage of second-hand bookstores to secure classified or rare published Soviet materials).

These and other techniques of casual intelligence acquisition can of course only supplement covert collection operations; but they have the advantage of legality. Some of them do require pseudo-impersonation and pseudo-naivete, and some require that the subject not be under surveillance at the time. Most of them require, in addition to knowledge

of Russian, a detailed specific awareness of possible targets, that is, knowledge of requirements, of what is and is not already available, and of the location of institutions not publicly identified and other such places. Often it is purely a matter of exploiting unpredictable potentialities, but these too can better be seized upon if examples are previously available.

This discussion does not pretend either to open an entirely new field nor to do more than note a few aspects of the subject. It is offered merely as an individual's observations on the unexhausted field of casual intelligence collection, based upon recent experience while traveling as a tourist in the U.S.S.R.

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