

# The Dust That Isn't There

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
22 SEPT 93

## **CONFIDENTIAL**

*This article, the first of a series describing the exploitation of Soviet scientific and technical publications by the intelligence community, corrects public misapprehensions about what happens to these publications in the Library of Congress.*

### **George A. Pughe**

A rash of articles has recently appeared, both in the daily press and in such a distinguished source as the Federal Bar Journal,<sup>1</sup> expressing deep concern over our failure to exploit Soviet and Satellite publications, especially the Soviet scientific and technical literature. With extraordinary uniformity these articles point out that although the Library of Congress "receives between 20 and 30 thousand Soviet publications annually, they are simply gathering dust on the shelves of the Library." The same articles note by way of contrast that the USSR's All-Union Institute for Scientific Documentation (VNICI), located in Moscow, has a permanent staff of 2,300 employees who screen and abstract or translate over 11,000 periodicals (largely U.S. and U.K. publications, but including also those produced in the USSR itself) in 85 different languages and publish 15 comprehensive abstract journals in the physical, natural, biological, and earth sciences.

While it is true that the Soviet program is more comprehensive than the combined U.S. effort, this disparity must be read in the light of Western generosity, which gives the Soviets more materials to process. It is fortunately untrue that the resources of the Library of Congress are "gathering dust on the shelves."

As early as 1948, the Directorate of Intelligence, United States Air Forces, recognized the vast intelligence potential available in the Slavic Collections of the Library of Congress. At that time funds were transferred to the Library, under authority of the Economy Act of 1932, to support a massive attack on the problem of screening, abstracting, translating and otherwise utilizing all of the information of air intelligence value available in the Library. Since then Project Treasure Island, embodied as the Air Information Division (AID), has been exploiting annually between 40,000 and 50,000 publications currently acquired or previously available in the Library, supplemented by the Soviet and Satellite publications collected by Air Force representatives abroad.

During the period from 1948 to 1951 the principal emphasis was placed upon locating and exploiting economic and industrial information essential to the growing mission of the Strategic Air Command, that is, air target intelligence. Since the Library of Congress was faced at this time with a backlog of some 70,000 uncatalogued Russian publications, the Air Force provided additional funds to obtain the necessary controls over this large body of material, an action which has been of great benefit to the Library, other Federal agencies, and the nationwide scholarly community.

In 1951 Treasure Island broadened its program, by Air Force directive, to exploit information bearing directly upon the Soviet and Satellite military and civil air potential, with particular emphasis upon Soviet Air Force doctrine, strategy, tactics, logistics, equipment, organization, training, and personnel.

In 1953 the Air Force directed that a program extending to Soviet science and technology be initiated and that additional qualified specialists be engaged to undertake the systematic exploitation of the Soviet publications then becoming available in the physical and earth sciences, as well as the related technologies.

At this point it became apparent that much greater emphasis should be placed upon mobilizing and improving all ways and means at hand for acquiring the most recent Soviet journals, monographs, dissertations, and other published sources. As a first step, the Air Force arranged that all Soviet and Satellite publications collected abroad by air attache offices and other personnel should be forwarded directly to AID. For its part, the Library of Congress initiated or expanded a series of actions

and programs designed to increase the flow of Soviet Bloc materials. Blanket orders for virtually all available Soviet books were given to book dealers overseas. Exchange agreements were negotiated with libraries and scholarly institutions in the USSR. At the present time, the Library has exchange agreements with no fewer than 124 Soviet libraries and institutes, the principal agreement being with the All-Union Lenin Library in Moscow. The terms of this agreement call for the annual exchange of 2,500 books and 70,000 frames of microfilm. The Air Information Division has been authorized to nominate about 80% of the specific items to be requested by the Library of Congress under this agreement.

The Air Force has similarly stepped up its collection program by establishing a central document collection office at its European headquarters in Western Germany, by emphasizing the importance of this program in its orientation of newly assigned air attaches, and by developing such devices as "want lists," specific requests for information, and other means for guiding overseas collectors.

These actions have increased the flow of Soviet and Satellite publications by 4007c during the last three years, and a recent development promises to yield additional items sometimes missed or simply unavailable through established collection channels. An agreement reached between AID and several libraries abroad which are able to obtain hard-to-get but important items such as doctoral dissertations provides that such items will be microfilmed by these libraries and forwarded to the Library of Congress. Now there is greater assurance that AID will be able to acquire practically all significant Soviet publications through one means or another.

With the collection program effectively under way, the problem for AID is to develop means to exploit all of the material for information of air intelligence value. With the broadened emphasis on Soviet science and technology arises the formidable task of locating and attracting specialists who have not only a fluent command of technical Russian, a reasonable knowledge of English, and an advanced academic background in the physical or earth sciences or related technologies, but also some practical experience in the aircraft-missile industry or in industries which contribute to our air weapons systems.

For the past eight months an active recruiting program has made possible the appointment of additional specialists who meet these high standards. The qualifications of other appointees approximate :these

requirements, and many of the older members of the AID staff can also contribute to the exploitation of materials in the field of science and technology.

Nevertheless, it is still desirable and necessary to mobilize talent available outside of AID. The cover-to-cover abstracting of 136 Soviet scientific and technical journals and the critical review and evaluation of all Soviet books available (100 to 150 per month) is beyond the capability of even an expanded AID. As of February 1958, overseas capabilities either in or available to the Air Force have been developed to abstract some 94 Soviet scientific and technical journals. The remaining 42 and all books are processed in AID.

For the foreseeable future, AID will continue to provide special assistance to Air Force contractors who are undertaking special studies and evaluations of different aspects of the Soviet air weapons systems and potential. This requires a specialized pinpointing of desired information, as distinct from a comprehensive exploitation of pre-determined sources. In time, of course, the massive volume of scientific and technical data which will be available through the abstracting and book evaluation program (40,000 abstracts and 1,500 book reviews annually), together with the support of the Air Force Technical Intelligence Center, promises to facilitate the problem of assisting these contractors.

Since the very inception of this exploitation program in the Library, the Air Force has made available to the intelligence community virtually every item of information produced by AID. And while it has no direct responsibility within the Government for making such information available to the public, the Air Force advised the National Science Foundation a year ago (April 1957) that the abstracts and book reviews of Soviet scientific and technical literature were all available for publication and use. Means for making this material available to the U.S. industrial and scientific communities are currently being considered by both the executive and the legislative branch of the Federal Government. Meanwhile, precious little Soviet literature has been gathering dust on the shelves of the Library of Congress.

---

1 "The Dissemination of Technical, Scientific, and Engineering Information as a Factor in `Competitive Co-Existence,'" by Jennie and Herschel Clesner. Federal Bar Journal, Vol. XVII No. 3, 1957, p. 236.

Top of page

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Posted: May 08, 2007 07:06 AM