

WHO CAN SWALLOW SUCH SWILL?
ONLY THE SENATE!

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Editor:
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Senate Group Finds CIA Now Active Only in Books Abroad

The book publishing program of the Central Intelligence Agency, once considered an important weapon of long-range propaganda, reached a high watermark in the year 1967 and has subsequently been sharply scaled down and limited almost entirely to books published abroad, according to the recently released report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

With the exception of one reference to Praeger and several other pre-1967 book publishing ventures, the report contains no names of individual authors, titles or publishers. A spokesman for the Intelligence Committee would not go beyond the contents of the report in commenting on relations between the CIA and the world of publishing. Press officer Spencer David told *PW* the Committee had an agreement with the CIA not to disclose sources of information or methods or the names of individuals and organizations involved without their consent. "The civil rights of individuals and organizations used by the CIA without their knowledge have already been abrogated," he said, "so we don't want to turn around and do the same thing."

"The publicity which in 1967 surrounded several CIA-sponsored organizations and threatened to expose others," the report noted, "caused the CIA to act quickly to limit use of U.S. publishers... Thus since 1967 the CIA's publishing activities have almost entirely been confined to books and other materials published abroad. During the past few years, some 250 books have been published abroad, most of them in foreign languages."

The CIA denied to the Committee the number of titles and names of authors of the propaganda books published since 1967. Brief descriptions provided by the Agency indicated the breadth of subject matter, however, including the following topics enumerated in the Committee report: (1) commercial ventures and commercial law in South Vietnam; (2) Indochina representation at the U.N.; (3) a memoir of the Korean War; (4) the prospects for European union; (5) Chile under Allende.

During the pre-1967 period, the CIA had developed a complex pattern of

relationships in which it could get books published or distributed abroad without revealing any U.S. influence by covertly subsidizing foreign publications or booksellers; by initiating or subsidizing indigenous national or international organizations for book publishing or distributing purposes; and by stimulating the writing of politically significant books by unknown foreign authors—either by directly subsidizing the author, if covert contact were feasible, or indirectly, through literary agents or publishers.

Prior to 1967, the CIA had produced, subsidized or sponsored well over 1000 books, the Senate Committee said. Approximately 25% of these were in English. "Many of them were published by cultural organizations which the CIA backed, and more often than not the author was unaware of CIA subsidization," the Committee report states. "Some books, however, involved direct collaboration between the CIA and the writer." Some books were published without any knowledge on the part of the publisher that the writer had been subsidized by the CIA. But there were cases where publishing houses contracted with the CIA to publish books, the Committee said.

In 1967 alone, the CIA published or subsidized well over 200 books, ranging from books on wildlife and safaris to translations of Machiavelli's "The Prince" into Swahili and works of T. S. Eliot into Russian, to a parody of the famous little red book of quotations from Mao entitled "Quotations from Chairman Liu."

According to the Committee, the CIA has recently been particularly sensitive to the charge that CIA covert relationships with the American media jeopardize the credibility of the American press and risk the possibility of propagandizing the U.S. public. Former director William Colby expressed this concern in testimony before the House Select Committee on Intelligence when he said: "We have taken particular caution to ensure that our operations are focused abroad and not at the United States in order to influence the opinion of the American people about things from a CIA point of view." The new director, George

Bush, has made similar assurances.

The Senate Committee, headed by Senator Frank Church (D., Idaho) went a step further, however, by noting that there is domestic fallout even from covert propaganda abroad, including books intended primarily for an English-speaking foreign audience. "For example, CIA records for 1967 state that certain books about China subsidized or even produced by the Agency circulated principally in the U.S. as a prelude to later distribution abroad." Several of these books on China were widely reviewed in the United States, often in juxtaposition to the sympathetic view of the emerging China as presented by Edgar Snow. At least once, a book review for an Agency book which appeared in the *New York Times*, was written by a CIA writer under contract.

E. Howard Hunt, who had been in charge of contacts with U.S. publishers in the late 1960s, acknowledged in testimony before this Committee that CIA books circulated in the U.S. and suggested that such fallout may not have been unintentional.

"Question: But, with anything that was published in English, the United States citizenry would become a likely audience for publication?"

"Mr. Hunt: A likely audience, definitely."

"Question: Did you take some sort of steps to make sure that things that were published in English were kept away from American readers?"

"Mr. Hunt: It was impossible because Praeger was a commercial U.S. publisher. The books had to be seen, had to be reviewed, had to be bought here, had to be read."

[Frederick A. Praeger, who in October 1968 left the firm which he had established in 1950, told *PW* in 1967 that "only 15 or 16 books" were published which had any CIA connection—fewer than 1% of the books which the company had published since its establishment—and that most had been published in the late 1950s. He declined to identify the titles but described them as dealing with Communist parties or movements abroad. He said that some had been suggested by the CIA and some by himself and that in this regard the publisher's role was "no different from our relationships with other government agencies." He insisted that "the CIA at no time had any editorial control whatsoever."]]

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