

# BOOK PIRACY

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It is a billion-dollar, world-wide counterfeiting operation involving names like John Le Carre, Harold Robbins and Henry Kissinger.

It operates mainly from commercial outlets in Asia but also in Europe and on the campuses of American universities.

It is known in the trade as "book piracy", the illegal reprinting of published materials. In recent years, the development of cheap, high-quality printing has transformed book piracy from a minor irritant into a sophisticated, lucrative global operation. There are ominous implications for book buyers everywhere.

A study by the Geneva, Switzerland-based international publishers estimated that in 1982 pirates in Asia accounted for more than \$A1.2 billion in such publications.

"It is a serious problem and it is growing at an alarming rate," said Alexander Burke. Mr Burke is executive vice president of the McGraw-Hill book company and chairman of anti piracy committee formed last January by the Association of American Publishers. He and other leaders of the world publishing industry discussed the problem recently at the Frankfurt book fair.

## FORGERIES

Sometimes the pirates make little effort to disguise their forgeries. A Singapore-produced book has on its cover the

name of Robert Ludlum, the thriller writer, along with the unintelligible title, "The Discover Intelligence." Inside is a pirated version of "Inside The Company," Philip Agee's expose of the CIA.

"They obviously thought Ludlum's name was a better draw than Agee's," said Ian Taylor coordinator of the campaign against book piracy, which was started by British publishers two years ago.

Increasingly, however, pirated books look like the real thing, and are marketed in much the same way. A well-financed South Korean operation publishes a glossy, four-colour catalogue four times a year. It lists more than 2500 titles.

Mr Burke said that in a book store in Seoul he found his company's Schaum series of college textbooks supplements neatly displayed for sale.

"It was hard to tell they were fake," he said. "The production was good and they even had the McGraw-Hill name."

According to people studying the problem, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore have the largest unauthorised publishing

industries. They concentrate almost exclusively on best sellers, quality reference books and college-level textbooks.

## LEXICON

One of the most widely pirated books is said to be the "Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English."

Sales of a 20-volume dictionary of music published four years ago by MacMillan Publishers, London, which retails for more than \$A1000, were significantly damaged by South Korean and Taiwanese pirate works marketed for less than \$A300.

According to Mr Taylor, some of these editions were advertised for sale on a student bulletin board of the University of California's Santa Barbara campus.

"Once saw how easy it was to duplicate something we had spent 12 years and \$75 million I realised it could mean the end of such works," said Nicholas Ryan Shaw, MacMillan's managing director.

The problem is not new. In the 1800s, Charles Dickens complained bitterly about American book pirates who robbed him of royalties. The Soviet Union ignored

all international copyright conventions until 1973.

## PROTECTION

Piracy was on agenda when the US Secretary of State, George Shultz, visited Singapore. Conciliatory statements issued later by Singaporean trade officials are viewed as a direct outgrowth of his trip. But there is no meaningful copyright protection there.

"In Singapore it costs you \$500 if you litter the street and a \$5 fine if you pirate a book," a US publishing spokesman said.

Elsewhere, there has been more substantive progress as governments weigh the cost of lost customs revenues and unstable markets. In Hong Kong, not long ago, the police arrested 61 people and confiscated \$22,000 worth of printing machinery in a raid prompted by complaints from US and British publishers.

In August, 1984 the Indian Parliament enacted a tough anti-piracy law that carries a penalty of up to six months in prison and a fine of up to \$5500 for a first offence. This is expected to have an immediate effect on illegal printing activities there.

And when a Pakistani pirate began turning out copies of Henry Kissinger's 'The White House Years,' a note from the former Secretary of State to Pakistan's President Ziaul Haq promptly landed the culprit behind bars.

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