

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keeping up with Soviet Quaternary Science

Any student of the Quaternary who has even a nodding acquaintance with Russian will find an open door to a vast body of literature on all aspects of Quaternary studies. In the field of palynology, for example, Russian is second only to English in terms of the number of papers published (Manten, 1968).

Although bibliographic sources such as *GeoAbstracts* or the Geological Society of America's *Bibliography and Index of Geology* list some of the Russian literature, severe problems arise when the researcher tries to find a more comprehensive means to keep up with the voluminous Soviet literature. Many important Soviet papers appear in special volumes edited by various research organizations. One cannot keep up by merely scanning a few journals, even if the local university library should happen to subscribe to them. Many of these special volumes can only be found in libraries such as the Library of Congress. In such cases the *Library of Congress Catalog—Books: Subjects* is useful, but a large number of titles will not appear in any research library. For those who would like to buy these volumes, a further complication is that many of these titles are out of print almost immediately after publication. A typical press run for a specialized Soviet scientific book is about 1000 copies, and most dealers do not maintain a stock of such specialized Soviet books. By the time you read about it in a book review or geologic abstract, the book will have long since been sold out.

But it is possible to keep up with current Soviet Quaternary science, and with only a

moderate amount of effort. The reasonable price of Russian books makes it relatively easy to order and purchase the books yourself. I mention below some of the most useful bibliographic tools.

(1) Because Soviet scientific books are usually published in limited numbers and very quickly sold out, it is necessary to find out about new books several months *before* publication. The Soviet Academy of Sciences (Akademiia nauk SSSR) publishes an annual list of forthcoming scientific books entitled *Sovietskie knigi No. 1 Plan vypuska literatury*. The catalog can be found in university libraries, is available free from book dealers, or can be requested from Mezhdunarodnaia Kniga, Moscow, G-200, USSR. The catalog is in two volumes: Volume 2 covers natural sciences and technical literature. One can also subscribe to a fairly inexpensive weekly book list, *Novye Knigi SSSR*, which announces new books well in advance of publication.

(2) An efficient means to keep up with current Soviet and European journals (and recent books) is provided by the *Referativnyi Zhurnal—Geologiya* and the *Referativnyi Zhurnal—Geografiia*. Both versions of this outstanding monthly bibliography contain a 50-page section entitled, "An-tropogenovyi period," which contains abstracts of major papers on a broad range of Quaternary studies, including papers in such languages as Czech, Polish, Rumanian, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Japanese, and Chinese. Although the yearly subscription rate for *Referativnyi Zhurnal* is quite high, a separate subscription is available for the section, "An-

tropogenovyi period," at a more reasonable rate (ca. \$25 per year). Although the *Referativnyi Zhurnal* is very thorough in its coverage of the literature, it is not useful as a guide for buying Soviet books because there may be a considerable time lag between the publication of a book and its review in the *Referativnyi Zhurnal*.

Another bibliographic publication is the weekly *Letopis' Zhurnal'nykh Statei*, which lists only Soviet journal articles by

subject and author, but has a shorter lag time than the *Referativnyi Zhurnal*.

REFERENCE

- Manten, A. A. (1968). A short history of palynology in diagrams. *Review of Paleobotany and Palynology* 6, 177–188.

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