

Adolf Sprudz and the UST Index*

Igor I. Kavass**

¶1 In the late 1960s researching the treaties and international executive agreements of the United States became quite difficult. After World War II the United States began to enter into many international agreements, more so than during the whole time of its prior existence. Such indexing as there was did not offer adequate information. *Treaties in Force*, published annually by the United States Department of State, was not comprehensive, and its arrangement of information required some advance knowledge of what one was looking for. It did not lend itself to quick searches. There were no other cumulative indexes in existence for international instruments entered into after World War II that were not included in the excellent and authoritative Bevans collection of earlier American treaties and executive agreements.¹ It also should be remembered that these were the days of pre-electronic legal research when all searching had to be done manually.

¶2 Adolf Sprudz, known to his friends as Dolf, was a serious and dedicated student of international legal literature. His researching skills were unsurpassed. The range of his knowledge of international and comparative legal materials was astonishing. He not only knew where to find relevant information, he also knew the capacity of search tools and therefore what could not be found. The extent of his unique expertise is exemplified by *International Legal Research Perspectives*,² a collection of his writings.

¶3 In the early 1970s Dolf and I convinced “old” Bill Hein (the father of the current Bill Hein) to commence the reprinting of some old and generally inaccessible international law treatises in a collection we called the International Military Law and History Reprint Series.³ We continued this series, comprising altogether eleven volumes, throughout the 1970s.

¶4 In one of our many meetings in 1970, Dolf began to complain about the difficulties of finding and retrieving international agreements in general and United States treaties and agreements in particular. He mused how nice it would be to have a comprehensive index of such agreements, at least for the United States, but ideally for the whole world. Our minds began to work. We talked a bit more about the subject and eventually reached the conclusion that, at least for the United States,

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** Director of the Law Library and Professor of Law (retired), Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

1. TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1776–1949 (Charles I. Bevans ed., 1968–76).
2. ADOLF SPRUDZ, INTERNATIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES (1988).
3. *E.g.*, JAMES PARKER DEANE, THE LAW OF BLOCKADE (Buffalo, N.Y., William S. Hein, Int'l Military Law & History Reprints Series No. 5, 1972) (1855).

we could compile such an index ourselves. It was then a matter of finding a publisher. A tentative inquiry at West Publishing produced a polite but disinterested response. Then, if my memory does not betray me, we both attended the annual conference of the Association of American Law Schools in Seattle (it may have been some other meeting, but I remember that it was in Seattle). There we ran into Bill Hein and described to him the index we wanted to create. Much to our surprise, Bill seemed very interested and encouraged us to proceed with the project.

¶5 Then we began to work. As we did not have computers and in any event would not have known how to use them, we did everything by hand. We generated thousands of index cards that we checked, edited, and matched. Finally, the index was ready. It consisted of four volumes, containing respectively, a numerical list, a chronological list, a geographical country list, and a subject index. The *UST Cumulative Index* was published by William S. Hein & Co. in 1973, exactly thirty years ago.⁴ As an update, we also periodically compiled a *Current Treaty Index*. Dolf and I collaborated on treaty indexing for close to fifteen years. They were good years! We were never able to compile a treaty index for the whole world. We kept on gathering information, but other things intervened, and then the project became too big for us. Eventually Peter Rohn came out with a *World Treaty Index*,⁵ but even that publication could not manage to harness all of the information satisfactorily. And today, due to the large number of countries and the proliferation of international agreements, the task of having a reliable comprehensive register for all treaties and agreements of the world is too big even for computers. Dolf would have been happy to see such a work. Perhaps it exists where he now is?

4. IGOR I. KAVASS & ADOLF SPRUDZS, *UST CUMULATIVE INDEX 1950–1970: CUMULATIVE INDEX TO UNITED STATES TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS 1950–1970* (1973).

5. PETER H. ROHN, *WORLD TREATY INDEX* (1974).