

Who's Trying To Suppress Book That Uncorks Scandal Of Decade

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Guy Richards' book **IMPERIAL AGENT** published a little over four months ago has the potential to uncork the biggest bureaucratic scandal of the Johnson Administration.

But there is a catch. Someone is trying to suppress the book....

When news of the book leaked out from the publisher, Devin-Adair, the big, popular, mass circulation magazines clamored to see proofs of it. Reader's Digest, Life, True, Look, The New Yorker, Playboy — they all wanted an advance look at this blockbuster.

A copy of the manuscript was rushed to True magazine. Life magazine received copies of the galleys. Reader's Digest and The New Yorker were also given copies of the manuscript.

Advance enthusiasm by the magazines was matched by their oddly similar, chilly but polite rejection. Vague reason piled upon vague reason. "Let's see if it becomes a best-seller first," said the editor of True. The New Yorker which had just run the Penkovskiy Papers replied: "Doesn't quite fit our needs."

A major television agent was also enthusiastic. He thought a TV documentary was a certainty.

Radio and TV personalities asked for copies of the book. There was the same excited interest... then silence.

So far Richards, an editor at the New York World Journal Tribune, has been interviewed concerning the book, in Hartford, New York City, Philadelphia, Fort Worth, and St. Louis.

"It takes only a quick reading," said Richards last week, "to see why the suppression of the book is one of those rare tasks in which one finds a common interest among the British, Russians, and several agencies of the U.S., including the CIA, State Dept., Foreign Service and FBI."

In other words all the same people who have had a hand in keeping the door closed on the story since it began late 1960. The same people who will scramble and yell when Congress begins to uncover layer after layer of bureaucratic bungling which has been hidden by the culprits from the beginning, hidden bloopers that in themselves help to obscure bloopers and more hanky-panky.

The shocking lesson of the Goleniewski-Romanoff case (see related story beginning page 1), "is the glaring error of allowing a secret organization like the CIA to handle a matter of such magnitude in a way that enables its bureaucrats to suppress all signs of their own mistakes and bury all the related leads," writes Richards. "No agency — and especially a secret agency — should have such absolute power."

There seem to be so many groups attempting to suppress the book that it's hard to tell just who is responsible for doing what.

One of the strangest charges against the book, a charge obviously designed to hinder its sales, and a charge that is completely false is that the

paganda." The Virginia Kirkus Organization in New York began this huckly-buckly in advance of the book's publication. The Kirkus group specializes in an information newsletter to book-sellers. Richards terms the Kirkus characterization of **IMPERIAL AGENT** "a real banana peel operation."

"This did a lot of harm," he said referring to the Kirkus bleep, "but it also boomeranged because there is no propaganda, anti-Semitic or otherwise, in the whole book. The subject (anti-Semitism) has no mention at all except in one of the options given the reader as one of some seven alternate interpretations which might be placed on the Goleniewski Case."

Despite the Kirkus allegations the book has done well in the few cities where it has gotten reviews or radio shows. According to the author, the book has done well in Washington "on a word-of-mouth basis; but there, as in New York, some persons — possibly CIA stooges — have quietly gone to bookdealers on the whispering campaign of anti-Semitism and put the banana peel under the book. Thus we have found stores whose salesmen have told would-be buyers that they were out of it, or that it would take two weeks to get it, when, in fact, the store had it; when, in fact, it would take only a day to obtain it from a local jobber."

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did admit to having a few copies. Brentano's book was selling "fairly well in singles." In the home of the "snakeiest" bureaucracy, apparently no group had been buying the book in large quantities to keep them off the market; though the thought is not so far-fetched.

Early this year Princess Marina Kropotkin, a Russian emigre related to the nobility of St. Petersburg, flew to Munich Germany, certain of interesting a major German publisher in purchasing the rights to the book. On arrival she found the director of the publishing house on holiday. She left an extensive message concerning the book.

The next morning Princess Kropotkin received a telephone call at her hotel from a man who identified himself as Mr. Coleman. He said he represented the same large German publishing firm she had contacted the previous day. He invited her to his office in the center of town.

When the Princess arrived at the appointed location, not in the same building she had formerly visited, she found the "office" identified with a cardboard sign over the door. There were two girls filing and typing in the office with "Mr. Coleman." Later a second man joined them.

According to Devin-Adair this "publisher's representative" spoke flawless German as well as flawless English with a slight American accent. He was prepared to pay \$80,000 for the German rights to the book. Contracts were ready to be signed.

The Princess hesitated. Obviously there was something wrong. "Mr. Coleman's" knowledge of the Goleniewski-Romanoff affair was as extensive or perhaps more extensive than her own — and he hadn't read the

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book yet.

Princess Kropotkin returned to her hotel puzzled and waited to hear from the "publisher's representative." She heard nothing. Five days later there was no answer to repeated phone calls to the office of "Mr. Coleman." She returned to the office. There was no one there. The cardboard sign had been removed.

Later, on returning to the office of the publishing director who had been on holiday, Princess Kropotkin found that he had never heard of "Mr. Coleman." However, the director said, he was interested in the rights to the book, though not on the scale that "Mr. Coleman" had indicated in his conversations with her. To date the German publishing house "remains interested," according to Devin-Adair.

Probably the most unusual twist of many, though not entirely inexplicable nor tinged with espionage maneuvering, is that Michal Goleniewski, now signing his name A.N. Romanoff, repudiated any connection with the Richards book in a paid advertisement in the New York Times, December 9, 1966.

provided Guy Richards in his book containing in many parts misrepresentation of truth and distortion of facts."

Romanoff is quoted throughout the book, extensively at times, from detailed and apparently lengthy interviews he had with Richards.

The Tsarevich wrote that he "cancelled him or other self-appointed so-called authors, investigators, etc."

"I have no responsibility," he wrote in the advertisement, "for libelous contents of said books concerning other persons or authorities. A legal action for liable (sic) and damages re: my person will be taken; the presumption of a copyright by Guy Richards is lawless."

Romanoff said that he had been "informed about the harm forms and other persons" which would be caused by the publication of the book. In the advertisement he did not say who had so informed him. "During the last months," he wrote he had intervened "via letters, telegrams, phone calls and also personally by: Chief of Security of CIA, FBI and by other U.S. Authorities in order to prevent the machinations" of the self-appointed author.

"For reasons beyond my control" he added the book was published. He did not state what action the U.S. authorities had instigated.

Though it may at first glance seem curious that a book in support of a man's claims to be the Tsarevich and recounting his strange underground story, would be repudiated by him, Richards does not think it quite so odd. He has had many talks

with Romanoff, knows his personality (which he describes a number of times in the book as difficult), and thinks the advertisement not too unusual. There remains terrific pressure on the defector and his family. A double agent constantly faces certain risks even after exposure; one can easily imagine the pressures exerted on quadruple agents.

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out about the book seems to have a certain curiosity. I learned about the book from the CIA.

I have been in touch since September with a man calling himself A.N. Romanoff, who was apparently the man known to the CIA in Poland as Michal Goleniewski. Not having heard from him for several months I called the CIA for any late developments before I began writing a story about the defector's claims. I was told, of course, that the agency did not talk about rumors, former employees or even acknowledge that a certain person had ever been employed by them. In short, Mr. Goodwin, a CIA press relations representative, informed me that the agency's policy was an eternal "no comment." However, he asked, was I aware of a recent book published on the subject of Goleniewski-Romanoff?

He said he couldn't remember the title exactly but he thought it was written by a New York newspaperman, Guy Richards. He proceeded to tell me some biographical data on Richards which I thought not a little odd considering the aforementioned faults in his memory. Goodwin then went to look on his bookshelf for the book. He was sure it was there. After a moment he returned to the phone. He did not have the book but he would have one of his ass-

for me and call back. I checked through Books in Print before the CIA called back. I also had time to check all the libraries in the Washington area. None of them had the book—except the Library of Congress.

When Goodwin did call back he confirmed the information I already had. I asked him if he had found the book. "No," he said, "it seems to have disappeared."

I suggested that whoever had removed the book from his bookshelf might have been making trips to various libraries around town.

"Why would anybody want to do that?" retorted Goodwin.

"I don't know," I said. "You've read the book."

Two days later I had a copy of IMPERIAL AGENT from the publishers, Devin-Adair, in New York.

Why, indeed, Mr. Goodwin.

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The bare facts speak for themselves. A man who supplies us with some of the most valuable intelligence data we have ever received worked at great personal risk, behind the Iron Curtain, for nearly three years, in the belief he was dealing with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. He belonged to an anti-Bolshevik organization which had infiltrated most foreign intelligence agencies, including the Russians'. This organization helped him gather the data he sent us. When he was obliged to flee to the West, he got promises and commitments from someone he thought represented Mr. Hoover. His principal desire, when he arrived, was to see Mr. Hoover. But after five years in this country he has yet to meet Mr. Hoover. After five years in this country he has yet to be questioned by any Congressional committee. — from IMPERIAL AGENT: The Goleniewski-Romanoff Case by Guy Richards.

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