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THE MEDIA

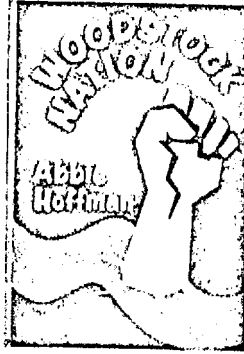
Write On!

At first meeting, it seems like a highly peculiar publishing partnership. On one side, the shrillest and angriest voices of the New Left—eager to drag down the capitalist system. On the other, New York City's oldest and most distinguished book publishers—equally eager to drive up corporate dividends. And yet, despite what seem to be diametrically opposed aims, the two sides are joining together in a flourishing new industry: publishing the progress of the "revolution" for mutual profit.

Over the past few years, major publishers have added to their lists of respected establishment authors such names as Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale, H. Rap Brown, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. More recently, in the aftermath of the Chicago conspiracy trial and amid the growing interest in women's liberation, publishers are gearing up for large press runs of some two dozen radical new titles, including Tom Hayden's "The Trial" (a defendant's analysis of the events in Judge Hoffman's courtroom), Kate Millet's "Sexual Politics" (a treatise on anti-feminism in literature) and Diane Schuler and Florynce Kennedy's "Abortion Rap" (personal testimonies of women caught in the abortion morass).

More than anything else, perhaps, the unusual alliance between the revolutionaries and the publishers results from the rise of a new group of radical, young editors determined to pry open the doors of their publishing houses and admit the Movement. Among them are Danny Moses, 34, an eloquent and long-haired senior editor at Simon and Schuster who edited Jerry Rubin's anarchist tract "Do It!"; Joyce Johnson, also 34, a senior editor at McGraw-Hill who chased down Abbie Hoffman three years ago and talked him into writing "Revolution for the Hell of It" and has just edited "Abortion Rap"; Random House senior editor John Simon, 35, who has edited Black Panther Bobby Seale's autobiography, "Seize The Time," and 27-year-old Random House senior editor Christopher Cerf, who edited Abbie Hoffman's "Woodstock Nation" and is perhaps the most influential of the Movement's fifth column—at least partly because his father is Random House board chairman Bennett Cerf.

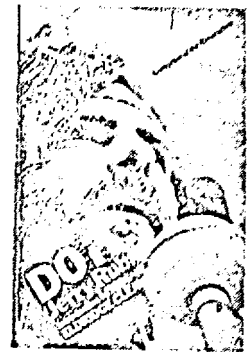
"Publishers used to take a self-limiting attitude," says young Cerf, a former editor of the Harvard Lampoon. "They'd say, 'Young people don't read that much so we won't publish a lot of stuff that would be of interest, primarily to the young.' And, of course, that attitude was self-fulfilling. Fortunately, the houses have come to realize that kids do love to read." Some of publishing's older hands contend that what the kids really love to do is buy such books, perhaps as much to carry around as badges of membership in



Christopher Cerf



Joyce Johnson



Danny Moses



Newsweek—Bernard Gotfryd



Newsweek—Robert H. McKelroy



Newsweek—Robert H. McKelroy

to read. Sales, at any rate, have been impressive. In two years Cleaver's "Soul on Ice" has sold more than 1.4 million copies and Rubin's "Do It!" has sold 200,000 just since last spring.

Smash: A fat part of the profits, of course, ends up supporting the revolution. Rubin got a \$10,000 advance from Simon and Schuster for "Do It!" and will receive a much larger, although undisclosed, advance on a second book now in the works. McGraw-Hill has reportedly offered Eldridge Cleaver a \$350,000 advance for a sequel to "Soul on Ice," which will, among other things, explain how he jumped parole and slipped out of the U.S. into Cuba and then into Algeria. Abbie Hoffman has earned about \$50,000 from his first two tomes, "Revolution" and "Woodstock Nation," and has reportedly received another \$25,000 for the movie rights to "Revolution." "I give the money to needy projects," says Hoffman, "like the Panthers and Al Fatah. But I don't want to get pegged as a philanthropist. I just want to smash the state. We're ripping off the Establishment, using them to promote the revolutionary consciousness."

The irony of it all has not escaped the publishers, but ironies—especially ideological ones—are hardly the stuff on which the business bases its editorial decisions. As for the radical writers, the message needs the medium. "These people want to be heard," says Simon and Schuster's Moses, "and it's like do you prefer to have your work run off on a mimeograph machine and passed out on the street corner or printed up with 200,000 copies sent out all over the nation. The writers are simply following a pattern established by other radical, underground artists, like the rock groups. The Jefferson Airplane, for example, has records on RCA, which is the 23rd largest

defense contractor in the United States."

Occasionally, however, the alliance does show signs of strain. While Bennett Cerf was escorting a distinguished woman guest through Random House's new steel and glass building in midtown Manhattan recently, he decided, on the spur of the moment, to stop off at Christopher's office and introduce the guest. Cerf opened the door and saw—lying on the floor, his shirt off, holding a suspicious-looking cigarette in one hand and a pencil and legal pad in the other—none other than Abbie Hoffman. "That's not my son," Cerf sputtered. "That's not my son." Abbie looked up, grinned and said, "Hi Dad."

That bit of mischief was forgivable, perhaps, but now Hoffman is about to make a statement that the publishing industry may finally find too much. For his next put-on literary performance, Hoffman and yippie comrade Izak Haber are putting together a tract with the inviting title, "Steal This Book." But despite the obvious risks, several publishers have already offered five-figure bids for the rights.