

Left-Wing Publisher's Books Used Against Reds

London Observer.

BONN—Rowohlt, West Germany's best-known book publishing house has been thrown into turmoil by the disclosure that its books are being used by Bonn's Defense Ministry for psychological warfare against East Germany.

Some 22 left-wing authors are threatening to sever their connections with the firm unless they are allowed to participate in its management. Rowohlt has already lost two of its top executives.

With the APO, Germany's new radical leftist opposition, threatening an anti-Rowohlt offensive, the firm was obliged to withdraw from the current Frankfurt Book Fair. An APO spokesman had warned that the firm's stands would be destroyed.

Ironically, Rowohlt has been more prepared than any other German publisher to serve as an outlet for revolutionary literature. Mao Tse-tung, Che Guevara, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rudi Dutschke have all appeared under its imprint.

While furthering the cause of the revolutionary left, Rowohlt, as it has now emerged, was also engaged in profitable business with the Defense Ministry. Two years ago the Ministry ordered a special 30,000-copy edition of "Into the Whirlwind," Evgenia Ginsburg's book about her prison experiences in Stalinist Russia.

The Ministry made no secret about the purpose of this order. The books were to be sent by balloons into East Germany. Rowohlt's owner, Heinrich Maria Ledig-Rowohlt, felt some initial misgivings, but he was reassured by his chief assistant, Fritz Raddatz.

Raddatz, who came to Rowohlt 10 years ago from an East German publishing house, has been the chief promoter of its left-wing books. The Ministry offer should be welcomed, he said; few people in East Germany were given a chance to read the Ginsburg book.

Ledig-Rowohlt and Raddatz claim they did not inspect the special edition printed on their presses.

Contract With Bonn Defense Ministry

Arouses Ire of Leftist Authors

This spring, Rowohlt supplied the Defense Ministry with another 20,000 copies of the book. Then came a new order for a book about economic reforms in Czechoslovakia written by an official of the Dubcek regime.

All would have gone smoothly if someone in East Germany had not sent a copy of the Ginsburg book to Nikolaus Neumann, a member of Rowohlt's literary staff and well-known left winger. He knew nothing of the deal with the Defense Ministry.

Inside a green plastic cover he found the Ginsburg text camouflaged as an ordinary notebook. With the novel came an invitation to East German readers to write to an address near Bonn. "Use a false name and disguise your handwriting," said the note.

Outraged by this discovery, Neumann protested strongly to the management. Ledig-Rowohlt claimed he had not been fully informed. He stopped delivery of the Czechoslovak book and ordered that profits from the Ginsburg deal be transferred to Amnesty International, a charitable organization which aids political prisoners.

This was not the end of the affair. The writer for the publishing house decided that the Defense Ministry blunder justified a request for participation in the management. They received no response. Subsequently, the Ginsburg story leaked to the press.

At a staff meeting, Ledig-Rowohlt made it clear that despite his radical sympathies he was not prepared to grant the request. In an angry outburst he announced that rather than see Rowohlt transformed into a collective he would prefer to sell out his controlling inter-

Ledig-Rowohlt's threat failed to impress the rebels. Joined by Rowohlt's left-wing authors, they continued to demand a share in the control of the firm.

Germany's left-wing intellectuals are divided over the issues involved. Some argue that Evgenia Ginsburg's book cannot be regarded as cold war propaganda because she remained a Communist despite her experiences. They see nothing objectionable about her book being made available to East Germans.

Others protest that such actions by the Bonn Defense Ministry only exacerbate tensions between East and West Germany. No left-wing publishing house, they say, should lend itself to such cooperation.

The most likely consequence of this affair is that the demands of the left-wing rebels will deprive them of a major publishing house willing to

print books with nonconformist views that have limited commercial appeal.

According to the Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit*, Ledig-Rowohlt has decided to withdraw his interest from the firm once the present crisis has been settled and Rowohlt's future is guaranteed. Already the clashes inside Rowohlt have led to the departure of two key men—the business manager, who was regarded as one of Germany's top experts in his field, and Raddatz.

So far, nine authors have severed their connections with Rowohlt. They accused the firm of "breach of confidence" by cooperating with the Defense Ministry in "subversive activities" directed against East Germany.

All were preparing a series of sexology books. In their statement they announced that they would try to realize their "political-sexological program" elsewhere.

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/08/23 : CIA-RDP88-01350R000200830026-5

Approved For Release 2005/08/23 : CIA-RDP88-01350R000200830026-5