

2 Hoffa Books Pose Publishing Problem

By HERBERT MITGANG

Two forthcoming books on the same controversial subjects — James R. Hoffa and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters' covert role in American political and criminal life — have pitted their authors and publishers in a behind-the-scenes contest, with possible broad implications for publishing independence or suppression.

Both publishing houses are now racing to reach bookstores early in October and, long before then, to try to sell magazine syndication, book-club and paperback rights. The decision about these rights could be decided in the next few weeks, with only one of the books expected to make it big.

Three publishing houses are actually involved: Simon & Schuster, New Republic Books, publishing affiliate of The New Republic magazine, and Paddington Press. When Simon & Schuster discovered that New Republic Books — which it distributes — had a book coming out on a similar theme to one of its own, it asked New Republic to postpone publication until next year. As a result, Paddington Press acquired the New Republic book and put it back into competition for the fall.

Troubles of Independents

At issue is not censorship, but a growing trend to contractual arrangements in which smaller publishers use larger ones to sell their books. The Hoffa books, according to the publishing community, point up the difficulties involved for independent houses in today's marketplace.

The first book is "The Hoffa Wars: Teamsters, Rebels, Politicians and the Mob" by Dan E. Moldea, to be published by Paddington, a small but vigorous independent house with offices in New York and London; its books are distributed by Grosset & Dunlap.

The second is "The Teamsters" by Steven Brill, to be published by Simon & Schuster, which is owned by the Gulf and Western Industries conglomerate.

Mr. Moldea is a 28-year-old investigative reporter. While going to the University of Akron and later doing gradu-

ate teaching at Kent State University, he worked part time as a truck driver and loader for teamsters' Local No. 24 in Akron.

He signed a contract for a book last September with New Republic Books of Washington, with publication scheduled for October. With the help of grants from the Fund for Investigative Journalism, he proceeded full time on his manuscript. He and his editor, Joan Tapper, worked closely and satisfactorily in shaping the book to meet the publishing date, according to both of them.

But there was an essential fact to be reckoned with: New Republic Books are distributed by Simon & Schuster, which had its own book, "The Teamsters," about to be listed in the same catalogue for this fall's list.

Offer Rebuffed

In the middle of last February, Mr. Brill called Mr. Moldea and offered to share some facts on two conditions — that "The Teamsters" be credited and that "The Hoffa Wars" be delayed until next year.

"Then the hardball started," Mr. Moldea said. "I told Brill that I didn't need his help and that I was willing to let the public be the judge."

The bad news came for Mr. Moldea in March, when New Republic informed him that Simon & Schuster would not distribute his book this fall in competition with "The Teamsters."

"We have a clause in our distribution contract with Simon & Schuster" Martin Peretz, New Republic publisher said, "saying that if a conflict arose between one of their books and ours, they could ask us to delay publication. There was no battle over it — it's there, in black and white, a clear stipulation. I very much regret it because it's a powerful book."

Because New Republic could no longer publish on its contractual time, Mr. Moldea talked to his lawyers, Michael Allen and Stephen Martindale, who put him in touch with Paddington. New Republic released the author and received back its advance.

"Early in April," Mr. Moldea said, "I flew up to New York from Washington to meet John Marqusee, Padding-



United Press International

James R. Hoffa

ton's publisher, who told me he would fight to keep the October publication date. He liked the book and doubled my advance to \$10,000."

Different Focuses

Richard E. Snyder, president of Simon & Schuster, said: "I was surprised when I heard that New Republic was selling its book to Paddington. We requested them to postpone it, not to sell it."

Publishing sources familiar with the contents of "The Hoffa Wars" and "The Teamsters" say that Mr. Moldea's book is more about Mr. Hoffa and that Mr. Brill's is more of a historical work. Both follow Lester Velie's "Desperate Bargain," published last year by The Reader's Digest Press. It covered labor corruption and Mr. Hoffa's career.

"The Hoffa Wars" includes information derived from and three and a half hour taped interview that Mr. Moldea was allowed to make with suspects in the case of the missing teamsters' leader.

This interview was conducted Oct. 25, 1976, in the hall of teamsters' Local No. 560, dominated by the recently convicted Anthony (Tony) Provenzano, in Union City, N.J. Included on the author's tapes was an interview with Salvatore Briguglio, who was killed March 21 by six bullets on a street corner in Little Italy.

Mr. Moldea writes in the "The Hoffa Wars" that he has been beaten and that his was vandalized during his investigations. He played a tape recording for The New York Times of a conversation he had with a reform teamsters' official that included warnings to him to "cool it" because his life was in danger.

Brill Cites Different Threat

Mr. Brill also says he has been threatened — by an official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation — for supposedly not sharing a taped "confession" about the Hoffa murder. "Please stress that I have no such tape — it's just not true," Mr. Brill said.

The Simon & Schuster author graduated from the Yale University Law School in 1976 and now writes a law column for Esquire magazine. "My book is less than 10 percent about Hoffa," he said. "In some respects, it's a very positive story about the teamsters. In fact, I've had an offer to go to work for the teamsters as a public-relations consultant — which I turned down."

To arouse interest, Simon & Schuster is resorting to the familiar technique of not divulging its contents before publication. However, Mr. Snyder permitted himself to describe the book as "definitive."

Publishing lawyers aid that a number of small houses availed themselves of the sales and marketing forces of the major publishers in an arrangement similar to that between New Republic and Simon & Schuster. The lawyers said that the attempted delay of the Moldea book was one of the first examples of possible loss of independence — with implicit censorship — where there is a conflict on a controversial nonfiction book.