

Behind Mystery of Svetlana's Memoirs



Drew Pearson

Today's column is by Drew Pearson's associate, Jack Anderson

THE INTERNATIONAL intrigue over the premature publication of the memoirs of Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, is even stronger than so far has leaked into print.

The mystery man in the story is Victor Louis, a bespectacled 39-year-old Soviet journalist, whom U.S. intelligence has identified as a Kremlin agent.

The intrigue began after Svetlana's startling defection to the West. The State Department, not wishing to get involved officially, asked ex-Ambassador to Moscow George Kennan to keep Svetlana from stumbling into any pitfalls. He called in his next-door neighbor, attorney Edward Greenbaum, whose Madison avenue law firm obligingly took Svetlana under its wing.

★ ★ ★

SVETLANA had brought out of Russia her memoirs, but she also left a copy behind.

Greenbaum immediately parceled out the rights to Svetlana's writings to his own publishing clients.

Harper and Row, a Greenbaum client, purchased the book rights. The New York Times, another Greenbaum client, bought the first serial rights. Life magazine also purchased rights to print advance excerpts from the book. Although Life is not a Greenbaum client, it is in the family so to speak. Marian Sulzberger, daughter of the New York Times publisher, is married to Andrew Heiskell, the Time-Life board chairman.

How much these distinguished publications paid Svetlana hasn't been announced, but it's no secret that she became a millionaire capitalist quicker than

any Communist on record. Time magazine claimed she collected a record \$3.2 million from both American and British publishers.

Harper and Row set October as the release date for Svetlana's memoirs, and the New York Times planned a 12-installment serialization beginning in late September. Life magazine will print its excerpts simultaneously.

The autumn publishing date happens to coincide with the Soviet Union's 50th anniversary celebration, and the men in the Kremlin detected a plot. They concluded that the United States hoped to detract from the celebration by raising the ghost of Stalin by way of Svetlana's memoirs.

Soviet intermediaries first tried to persuade Harper and Row to change the publication date, but the publisher refused.

★ ★ ★

THEN VICTOR LOUIS suddenly appeared on the scene with the manuscript Svetlana had left behind, plus pictures from her family album. He offered these last May to Parade magazine, whose editor, Jess Gorkin, turned him down.

Louis finally peddled his bootleg manuscript to European publishers. To protect their copyright, the legitimate British publisher, Hutchinson and Company, rushed a Russian-language version of the book into print.

The highlights of Svetlana's story were picked up and printed around the world. Presumably this was the Kremlin's aim, since the story will now be stale news when the Soviets begin celebrating their 50th anniversary.

(Copyright, 1967)