

Trial on C.I.A. Right To Censor a Book Begins in Virginia

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ALEXANDRIA, Va., Feb. 27—

The trial involving the Central Intelligence Agency's power to prevent the publication of material concerning its activities began here today in United States District Court.

At issue in the case before Judge Albert V. Bryan are a number of deletions in the manuscript of a book, titled "The C.I.A. and the Cult of Intelligence," written by Victor L. Marchetti, a former employe of the agency, and John Marks, formerly with the State Department.

The deletions at first totaled 339, but they have been reduced to 163. They were made under the terms of an injunction brought against Mr. Marchetti by the C.I.A. last March.

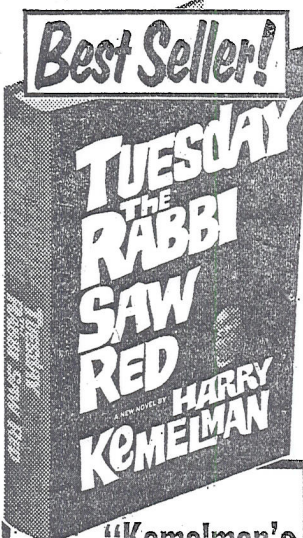
According to the injunction, Mr. Marchetti was prohibited from "disclosing in any manner" any classified information he obtained in his 14 years with the agency. Mr. Marchetti was also not allowed to reveal any classified information not "placed in the public domain by the United States."

The book reportedly contends that the agency has been "absolutely unsuccessful" in gathering information about the Soviet Union through traditional espionage techniques,

but that it has been "very effective" in the so-called third-world nations.

Floyd Abrams, a lawyer for Mr. Marchetti's publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., told the court today that "this is not simply an injunction case, but a First Amendment case" showing the "capricious nature of censorship" by the C.I.A.

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