

# Publishers Weekly

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Among visitors to the ninth Jerusalem International Book Fair was Prime Minister Menachem Begin, seen here with Racheli Edelman of Schocken Publishing. For the complete fair report see page 30

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## THE WEEK

Editor: Madalynne Reuter

# "Snapping" Authors Ask For First Amendment Precedent

The legality of libel suits by religious organizations is being challenged by Lewis Siegelman and Flo Conway, authors of the Lippincott book "Snapping: America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Change."

Siegelman and Conway, currently contesting a \$3-million libel suit by the Church of Scientology (*PW*, March 26), have filed a motion for dismissal of the suit, contending that the First Amendment bars such action. In what is viewed as a novel and important legal argument, the authors claim that the First Amendment's free speech, free exercise and establishment clauses (separation of church and state) forbid religious associations from charging libel. Such actions are essentially disagreements about religious beliefs and practices lying beyond the jurisdiction of the courts, asserted the authors' attorney, Melvin L. Wulf.

Edward A. Miller, vice-president and general counsel for Harper & Row,

found Wulf's contention "intriguing and persuasive," noting that no precedent has been established for such an argument.

In addition to arguing First Amendment provisions, the 33-page motion disputed the libelous nature of each of the passages cited by the Scientology suit, contending that the disputed statements concern matters of religious doctrine and statements of "protected opinion." Further it was maintained that, as organizations, religious associations have no right to claim compensation for damage to reputation.

Wulf described the Scientology suit as a "theological dispute dressed up to look like a libel suit" in his motion, arguing that the suit was intended to "harass the defendants and to intimidate them and others who dare hold unfavorable opinions about the plaintiffs and their religion." He asked the court to defeat the plaintiff's "in terrorem" purpose.

Siegelman and Conway were recently informed that the September publication of a Delta paperback edition of "Snapping" has been delayed pending approval from Doubleday's legal department—despite the existence of an indemnity clause in the Doubleday contract. Commenting on this and other difficulties created by the suit, Siegelman told *PW*, "The whole point of their suit is to harm us professionally, financially and emotionally." He described himself as outraged that "after so many years of documented harassment, the publishing industry still lacks the courage to take a united stand against such tactics." The bulk of his support has come from Harper & Row. Wulf and such civil liberties-oriented groups as Ramsey Clark's law firm, he noted, "Someone has to take a stand against manipulation by these groups," he stated, "and we, as authors, are taking the initiative."

The Scientologists are preparing a defense. Said a spokesperson, "That Siegelman continues to assert his own rightness by pleading harassment will never relieve him of his responsibility as a journalist to report facts."

## Silver Burdett Head Disperses Textbook Publishing Myths

The elhi textbook publishing industry is "probably the only highly competitive industry whose prime market is governmental agencies, that receives no subsidies, and that is subject to many restrictions like those placed on public utilities, but without any of the concomitant benefits."

Textbook publishing is hedged about by an incredible tangle of laws, administrative regulations and customs unlike those imposed on any other commercial venture.

To look at the tangle intelligently, one needs to understand that much of the attitude toward elhi publishers on the part of lawmakers, the general public, department of education personnel at the state or local level, various groups of concerned citizens and educational practitioners is based on myths—myths that, regrettably, publishers themselves have done little to dispel. With this introduction, John H. Williamson, president, Silver Burdett Company, listed and dispelled some of these major myths at a two-day

## Control Data to Publish Soviet Art Books

Soviet art books have now been added to the shotguns from the U.S.S.R., soccer balls from Hungary and furniture from Yugoslavia that Control Data Corporation is importing to the West in order to sell more of its computers to the Eastern European countries by satisfying their countertrade requirements.

Control Data announced the formation May 26 of Control Data Arts, a publishing and distribution service to market what it calls "the most comprehensive collection of Soviet art books and printed materials in the Western Hemisphere." Printed materials include reproductions and postcards from Russian museums.

The Minneapolis-based computer and financial services company signed an agreement with Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga, the Soviet foreign trade organization, to serve as Western Hemisphere publisher for Aurora Art Publishers of Leningrad and several other Soviet publishing organizations. In the United States books will be distributed

representation will be directed by Thomas Allen & Son of Markham, Ontario. Export representation to the remainder of the Western Hemisphere will be handled by Kaiman & Polon, Inc., of Fort Lee, N.J.

The fall list includes a limited edition of "Rembrandt Etchings" from the collection of Moscow's Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, containing 96 facsimile reproductions and a catalogue description of the museum's entire collection of 225 works. Other titles include "The Hermitage Museum: Western European Painting of the Thirteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," "Bolshoi's Young Dancers," "Early Russian Icon Painting" and "Architecture of the Russian North."

National sales manager is Robert A. Livingston, former president of Livingston Publishing Company of Philadelphia and consultant in international publishing. Control Data Arts offices are located at 8100 34th Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55440; (612) 853-7059.

Publishing and distributing Soviet art books, Control Data says, is its latest project in a two-year effort to bring diverse noncomputer products from Eastern Europe to satisfy countertrade