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[Redacted]

HR70-14

Executive Registry
[Redacted]

25 November 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Publication of the Russian Edition of
Dr. Zhivago

1. This memorandum is for information only.
2. SR first became interested in the possibilities of a Russian edition of Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago in the Fall of 1957. In November of that year, Giangiaco Feltrinelli, an Italian communist publisher, announced that he had obtained the original Russian manuscript from Pasternak and that he would publish it in Italian. Reports [Redacted] indicated that the manuscript had been smuggled out of the Soviet Union and that the book probably would not be published in the USSR.
3. In January 1958, [Redacted] the original Russian manuscript of Dr. Zhivago. A first reading of the manuscript indicated that this was a great literary work which would produce a psychological impact upon Soviet readers. In the early months of 1958, discussions were held between representatives of SR and IO Divisions and with members of the [Redacted] to determine how a Russian edition of the book might be published. It was decided that, if at all possible, the book should be brought out by a legitimate publisher.
4. A considerable effort was made to find such a publisher.

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16. There have been a number of articles in the European press regarding the mysterious Frenchman, distribution of the book to Soviet visitors at the Vatican Pavilion, and the copies that have been smuggled back into the Soviet Union. [redacted]

[redacted]

17. The University of Michigan has announced that it will publish a Russian edition of Dr. Zhivago. [redacted]

[redacted] the Michigan edition will be on the market the first week in December. [redacted]

Michigan University Press will publish the book without having a copyright from Feltrinelli. [redacted] Kyrill Schabert, President of Pantheon Books, Inc., has engaged a New York lawyer to sue the University for Feltrinelli. Mr. Fred D. Wieck, Director of the University of Michigan Press states, however, that he has been informed by legal counsel (Weil, Gotshal & Manges) that all rights to the book are vested only in Pasternak and that Feltrinelli has no greater copyright than anyone else. Michigan is, therefore, prepared to engage in a legal dispute with Feltrinelli and feels that it will win any suit which Feltrinelli might bring against them.

[redacted]
Acting Chief, SR Division

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5. While efforts were being made to find a publisher who could obtain the rights from Feltrinelli, it was decided to explore the possibility of having the manuscript typeset in the United States in order to expedite the publication and make it available for the Brussels Fair. It was felt that the manuscript could be typeset in the U. S. and that photo offset negatives and reproduction proofs could then be sent to a European publisher who had obtained the copyright from Feltrinelli.



7. In June 1958, discussions were held with [redacted] and the latter stated that he could arrange to have the typesetting completed by 1 August 1958. Representatives of the Commercial Division and the Legal Counselors Office assisted SR in drawing up a contract and in providing us with a New York lawyer, [redacted] [redacted] who was to represent the Agency in this project. According to the final contract which was signed by [redacted] and [redacted] the latter was to arrange for the typesetting and manufacture of reproduction proofs and to find and designate a European publisher.

8. [redacted] completed his first two tasks, but he did not find a European publisher. Contrary to instructions given him, he contacted [redacted]

[redacted] copy of our reproduction proofs to [redacted]

[redacted] Upon learning of this, [redacted] was told that we were deeply concerned about his breach of contract and unethical conduct. He was asked to get the set of reproduction proofs back [redacted] as soon as possible.

9. Efforts were made to prevent [redacted] from using our reproduction proofs, and if possible, to prevent or delay any publication of Dr. Zhivago in the Russian language. In August 1958, a representative of SR went out [redacted] and held discussions with [redacted] In these discussions, the following reasons were given for not wanting [redacted] to publish the book:

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UNCLASSIFIED

INTERNAL ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Dr Zhivago Memo

FROM:

NO.

DATE

25 November 1958

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1.

ADD/P

NOV 26 '58

2.

3.

4.

5.

The Director

11/26

6.

7.

Dr

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

ATTACHED

1 to 5

These details on the Russian edition of Dr. Zhivago deserve your reading on an FYI basis.

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CONFIDENTIAL

INTERNAL USE ONLY

UNCLASSIFIED

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a. Publication of the Russian edition of Dr. Zhivago in the U. S. would lessen the effectiveness of the book and would seriously harm relations of the U. S. with other governments involved in this operation.

b. The author, Pasternak, specifically requested that the book not be published in the United States for his personal safety and other reasons.

c. If the book were published by [redacted] the Italian publisher, Feltrinelli, who holds all publishing rights, could bring suit. Lawyers in the publishing business had advised us that Feltrinelli would have good grounds to bring suit against [redacted]

d. We had reason to believe that [redacted] was given reproduction proofs in an unorthodox manner and that these proofs are in fact the property of the U. S. Government.

10. [redacted] agreed not to use our reproduction proofs and to delay publication of the book until after the European edition appeared.

to the manuscript
11. In July 1958, before completion of the typesetting in New York, we received a report that a Dutch publisher, Mouton, was corresponding with Feltrinelli regarding publication of the Russian edition. [redacted]

[redacted] Mouton was, in fact, planning to publish the book and that Mouton had a copy of the original Russian manuscript. Reportedly, Mouton also had obtained the Russian copyright from Feltrinelli. Since there was no rights problem, [redacted] Mouton would be willing to publish the book by 15 September if [redacted]

It was also requested that [redacted] we obtain the first 1000 copies off the press. Mouton agreed to these conditions. The typesetting was completed in July, [redacted] the negatives and reproduction proofs were forwarded [redacted] on 1 August.

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12. The printing of the book was accomplished in early September and we obtained the first thousand copies which were distributed to [redacted]. About 500 copies of the book were given to soviet visitors at the Brussels Fair and the remaining number were distributed to SR assets for covert distribution. It was assumed that Mouton would distribute the remaining number of books through his own normal publishing channels.

13. [redacted] there had been a disagreement between Feltrinelli and Mouton on the handling of the publication. An investigation revealed that an employee of Mouton was supposed to see Feltrinelli at the Frankfurt Book Fair in August to make final arrangements for the publication. The employee failed to see Feltrinelli but, assuming that Feltrinelli would have no objections to the publication, gave his approval for the printing. When Feltrinelli heard that the book was being distributed at the Vatican Pavilion, he immediately labeled it as an illegal edition brought out without his approval.

14. At a press conference in The Hague on 2 November 1958, Feltrinelli elaborated upon how the illegal edition of the book was published. Supposedly, an "unknown Frenchman" gave an employee of Mouton a set of reproduction plates and ordered a thousand copies of the book. These books were than illegally distributed at the Brussels Fair. Feltrinelli announced that Mouton will print for him a new legal edition of the book. This will be a limited edition of 5,000 copies and is scheduled to be on the market on or about 1 January 1959.

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