

Dr. Zhivago - Memo

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HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS
AR 70-14

27 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Exploitation of Dr. Zhivago

1. At the time of the OCB agreement that [redacted] would not exploit the publication of Dr. Zhivago, the position of Boris Pasternak, its author, was such that any obvious cold-war association of Pasternak with the West brought with it a risk of personal reprisal against him or his family.

2. It was decided that exploitation of Dr. Zhivago would be undertaken solely by this Agency, because of the sensitivity of the operation, and that the hand of the United States Government should not be shown in any manner. [redacted]

3. This Agency has proceeded, in line with this directive to exploit Dr. Zhivago where it has proved feasible to do so, bearing in mind the security considerations.

4. In one form or another, including full-length and condensed books and serials in indigenous languages, this book has been spread throughout the world, with assistance from this Agency in a number of areas where interest might not normally be great. [redacted]

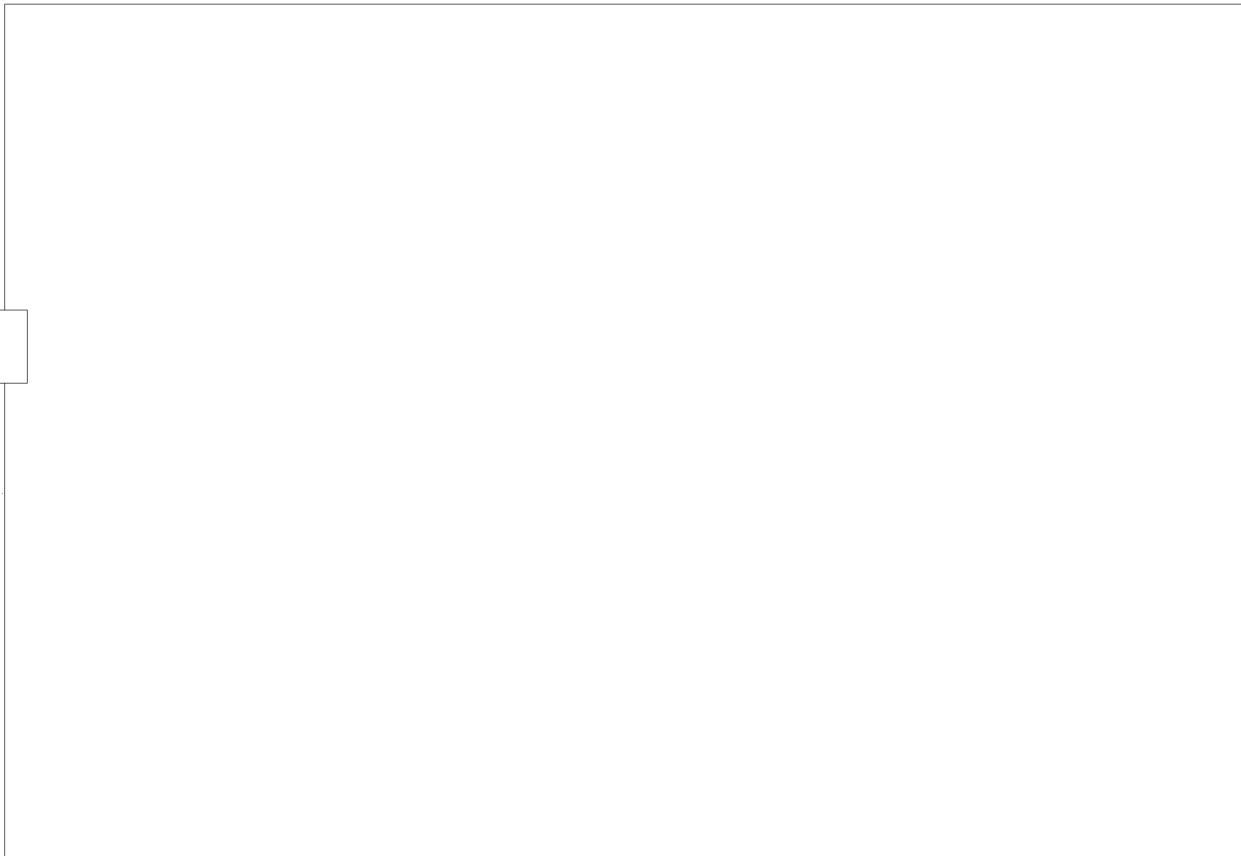
[redacted]

reviews and critical articles on the book and its author, including a long article, with pictures of Pasternak and the British edition, in *Elita*, a pro-Soviet English-language magazine. This article, while anti-Pasternak, revealed by its appearance that interest in Dr. Zhivago was widespread [redacted].

[redacted]

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10. Meanwhile a new attempt to get a cheap [redacted] export edition [redacted] is being made. Although cheap, it would be a full-length edition. The full-length edition is preferable because the promotion of this book is as literature, not as cold-war propaganda, in line with the original verbal policy guide lines.

11. SR Division believes that the original premise on which the clandestine exploitation of Dr. Zhivago was launched is no longer valid, namely, the possibility of personal reprisal against Pasternak or his family. SR Division's view is that the world-wide discussion of the book and Pasternak's own subsequent statements have shown that his personal position has not become worse. In other words, an all-out overt exploitation of Dr. Zhivago would not harm Pasternak, more than he has already harmed himself. If there is no longer any personal danger to the author, it may be well to review the OGB policy decision to determine whether [redacted] should not now begin to exploit the book as literature.

12. I would therefore recommend that

- a. The original policy on which exploitation of Dr. Zhivago was based be reviewed at the appropriate level;

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b. Overt U.S. exploitation of this book be made on the basis of a full-length edition in English

[Redacted]

c. No attempt be made to put out a U.S.-sponsored abridged edition, which would become a cold-war article no matter how painstakingly it was edited.

[Redacted]

Distribution:

- Orig : [Redacted]
- 1 : [Redacted]
- 1 : [Redacted]
- 1 : [Redacted]
- 1 : [Redacted]
- 1 - clipboard
- 1 - chrono

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7. In other areas of the world, in which [redacted] was anxious to have Dr. Zhivago published, the area divisions were canvassed for their reactions. The areas have since been partially or wholly covered by indigenous publication, although not in the range of languages desired [redacted]. Nevertheless, in the judgment of those in this Agency who know the field best, there has been adequate if not thorough coverage. Moreover, those indigenous publishers who could make a commercial use of this book in their own languages have, by and large, done so. [redacted]



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