

APPROVED FOR RELEASE AR 70-14 HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

DISPATCH		CLASSIFICATION SECRET	DISPATCH SYMBOL AND NO.
TO INFO			HEADQUARTERS FILE NO.
FROM Chief, SR via Chief, WE	DATE 1 APR 1959		RE: "43-3" - (CHECK "X" ONE)
SUBJECT Distribution and Exploitation of various Russian Editions of Dr. Zhivago			MARKED FOR INDEXING
ACTION REQUIRED Soviet reaction to reception of the book and comments on the significance of the Pasternak affair.			NO INDEXING REQUIRED
REFERENCE(S)			INDEXING CAN BE JUDGED BY QUALIFIED HQ. DESK ONLY
<p>1. With the coming of the tourist season and the summer international fairs and festivals, we have been thinking about books which Soviet citizens would like to receive and which would, at the same time, produce a psychological impact upon them. We are acquiring a number of such books in Russian and English and these are available at Headquarters. The one book, however, which we feel will be of greatest interest to Soviet readers in 1959 is Pasternak's <u>Dr. Zhivago</u>. With this in mind we are forwarding by sea freight 5 copies of the Michigan edition of the book in Russian.</p> <p>2. While the storm over the Pasternak affair has now subsided, the effect it has had upon Soviet writers, intellectuals and students continues to grow. The regime's outraged reaction to the rewarding of the Nobel Prize and the expulsion of Pasternak from the Writers' Union, demonstrated that Khrushchev's attitude toward the writers and intellectuals was not very different from Stalin's. The intelligentsia's reaction to the harsh treatment of Pasternak has been one of veiled and silent protest. The First Secretary of the Writers' Union, A. Surkov, admitted in his closing address to the Congress that the Pasternak affair had "disoriented progressive writers and put in their hearts some doubts about the rightness of our decision". A few of the better known writers such as Sholokhov and Ehrenburg have protested against the heavy-handed treatment given Pasternak and have let it be known that they do not believe that writers should be placed in a strait-jacket singing only the glories of the system. A number of the younger Soviet writers have attempted to separate themselves and their writings from any controversial issues. The great majority of writers seem to be confused as to just how far the artist can go within the boundaries of "socialist realism".</p> <p>3. There is little doubt that Pasternak's position as a writer and poet has been enhanced by the regime's heavy-handed attempts to silence him and to prevent the public from reading his works. He has already become a symbol for every Soviet writer who wishes to express his own ideas and convictions. Even members of the "apparatus" who have officially condemned Pasternak have managed by ingenious means to read parts of <u>Dr. Zhivago</u> and have commented favorably upon its literary value. For many Soviet students he has become something of an intellectual hero: it is now a matter of intellectual pride to know as much as possible about the latest works of the forbidden poet. In spite of the personal risks involved, many students have been able to get clandestine copies of the controversial novel. Reports indicate that parts of <u>Dr. Zhivago</u> had been hand copies and are circulating among the students. Other reports state that clandestine copies of the book have been selling for one to two thousand rubles.</p> <p>4. In view of this wide spread interest and demand for the book, we are attempting to make various editions of it available to Western travelers or officials who will have contact with Soviet citizens. Most of the 1,100 copies of the Mouton edition of <u>Dr. Zhivago</u> already have been passed to Soviets. We are, therefore, replacing this edition with the Michigan Russian edition of the book. Since this edition was published in the United States, it is particularly well suited for passage to Soviets</p>			
FORM 10-57 53 (40)	USE PREVIOUS EDITION. REPLACES FORMS 51-28, 51-28A AND 51-29 WHICH ARE OBSOLETE.	CLASSIFICATION SECRET	PAGE NO. CONTINUED

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<p>by American travelers or officials. It would be quite natural for an American who speaks or reads Russian to be carrying and reading the book which has been number one on the best seller list for the past three months. He can always say that he purchased it before he left for his trip, or in the case of an official in Western Europe, that he received it from a friend in the U.S. For travelers who do not know a few words of Russian to justify their possession of the book, the Pantheon or Collins English edition can be used.</p> <p>5. Besides the Michigan edition, we are producing at Headquarters a miniature edition intended exclusively for clandestine distribution.</p> <p>It will appear as one or two volumes and should be completed around 15 April. We believe that because of its small size and ease of concealment this will be the best edition to give travelers going to the Soviet Union. We also intend to use this edition in contacts with Soviets abroad, particularly at the Vienna Festival. In passing the miniature edition, travelers can say that they purchased it or obtained it from someone who in turn bought it . Copies of this edition will be forwarded to you when they are completed.</p> <p>6. We feel that Dr. Zhivago is an excellent springboard for conversations with Soviets on the general theme of "Communism versus Freedom of Expression". Travelers should be prepared to discuss with their Soviet contacts not only the basic theme of the book itself--a cry for the freedom and dignity of the individual--but also the plight of the intellectual in the communist society. The whole Pasternak affair is indeed a tragic but classic example of the system of thought control which the party has always used to maintain its position of power over the intellectual. Like jamming, censorship, and the party ideological decrees for writers and artists, the banning of this book is another example of the means which the regime must use to control the Soviet mind. It is a reflection of the "Mekul'turnost'" the intellectual barbarity, and the cultural sterility which are features of the closed society.</p> <p>7. In discussing the Pasternak affair with Soviets we would like to stimulate their thinking and raise doubts about the tenets of "socialist realism" and the need for ideological controls over the artist. Perhaps a good opening to such conversations is to ask the Soviet interlocutor about the latest developments in Soviet drama, poetry, art, etc. A sympathetic but curious attitude toward the innovations and trends in the Soviet artistic world will usually set a friendly tone for the conversation. After discussing the latest artistic developments, a Westerner can inquire about what makes the works of Soviet writers such as Sholokhov, Pasternak, Magarita Aliger, Fedin, Leonid, and Katayev as great as they are. After discussing the works of these writers, he can ask what limits the party has placed upon artistic works. He can then ask why there should be any ideological limits or control over artistic expression, pointing out that the Westerner conceives of art as an activity in which the artist is constantly seeking new horizons. If he is not free to move in his chosen directions, the artist becomes atrophied and can no longer produce really creative works. He can ask why the writers and artists can sing only the praises of the communist system which the party seems to demand of them. He can point out that a true artist must be free to speak of the ideals as well as the iniquities of any society, to criticize capitalism or communism, in short to say what he believes to be the truth. A number of American and European writers such as Steinbeck, John dos Passos, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, Sartre, Camus, Alberto Moravia, Stephen Spender, and others have criticized as well as defended various aspects of life in their home countries. In the last analysis this is all that the great artists such as Pasternak and Sholokhov have asked of the regime. To deny them the freedom to express their ideas and convictions is an admission of the regime's weakness and fear of the intelligentsia.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">CS COPY</p>		
FORM 10-57 53a (40)	USE PREVIOUS EDITION. REPLACES FORMS 51-28, 51-28A AND 51-29 WHICH ARE OBSOLETE.	CLASSIFICATION SECRET <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; vertical-align: middle;"></div> CONTINUED PAGE NO. 2

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8. Soviets can be asked why they are not permitted to read Dr. Zhivago or any other literary work and judge its value for themselves. If the communist society is superior to any Western society, as its advocates claim, one may legitimately ask why it attempts to prevent the exchange of ideas whether they originate inside or outside the Soviet Union. Why, too, does the regime prohibit the import of most foreign journals and books? Surely after forty years of communism Soviet citizens should be mature enough to make up their own minds about what is good and bad art. In many cases answers to the above questions will be given according to the party line, but it may be worth posing them as a way of stimulating thought and raising doubts about the position of the intellectual in the communist society.

9. The above is not meant to be a diatribe on the subject of "Communism versus Freedom of Expression". It is obviously an over-simplification of an important but over-whelming theme. We include our thoughts here in the hope that they may be of some use in briefing travelers or officials who will have an opportunity to discuss Dr. Zhivago and the plight of the intellectuals with Soviets. We would appreciate any of the field's comments or suggestions for exploiting this subject. We would also like to know how many of the books have been given to Soviet citizens and their reactions to it.

27 March 1959

Enclosure: s/c
As stated above

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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