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24 April 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: SR Division Branch Chiefs

SUBJECT: Availability of Dr. Zhivago in English

1. As you know, Boris Pasternak's latest work, the scholarly novel Dr. Zhivago, was scheduled for publication in the USSR, and a copy of the manuscript had even been sent to the Communist Italian publisher Feltrinelli when the Soviet censors suddenly proscribed the book for its passive but piercing exposition of the effect of the Soviet system on the life of a sensitive intelligent citizen. Feltrinelli subsequently published the book in Italian, despite Soviet requests that it be returned "for revision." This month (April 1958) Pantheon Books is publishing Dr. Zhivago in English; but no Soviet edition in the original Russian has appeared, nor is there apt to be one.

2. This book has great propaganda value, not only for its intrinsic message and thought-provoking nature, but also for the circumstances of its publication: we have the opportunity to make Soviet citizens wonder what is wrong with their government, when a fine literary work by the man acknowledged to be the greatest living Russian writer is not even available in his own country in his own language, for his own people to read.

3. We are making efforts to stimulate the production of the book in Russian by some "non-political" and preferably non-American entity. Meanwhile we wish to distribute translated editions, and especially the English-language edition, as widely as possible within the USSR and to official Soviets abroad.

4. Please tell us how many copies of the book you can handle. Then, while you are informing [] the books will be procured through [] and given to you for forwarding to the field.

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