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9 July 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

VIA:

SUBJECT: Request for Authorization to Obligate up to
 from AEDINOSAUR

1. It is requested that SR Division be authorized to expend up to from its D&TO project AEDINOSAUR to cover the costs of publishing a Russian language edition of Boris Pasternak's book, "Dr. Zhivago."
2. The book was published in Italian by Feltrinelli in April 1958 and is expected to be available in English this fall. The Soviet Union has rejected the novel for publication in the USSR. SR Division is anxious to have the book available as soon as possible for distribution in Russian to Soviet nationals traveling abroad, especially to those attending the Brussels Fair. Representatives of this Division and the General Counsel's Office are currently negotiating with a cleared publishing agent in New York City to arrange for European publication of the book in Russian so that the edition will be available for distribution by 1 September 1958 at the latest.
3. Pasternak's 700-page novel, "Dr. Zhivago" is considered to be the most heretical literary work by a Soviet author since Stalin's death. Pasternak's humanistic message--that every person is entitled to a private life and deserves respect as a human being, irrespective of the extent of his political loyalty or contribution to the state--poses a fundamental challenge to the Soviet ethic of sacrifice of the individual to the Communist system. There is no call to revolt against the regime in the novel, but the heresy which "Dr. Zhivago" preaches--political passivity--is fundamental. Pasternak suggests that the small, unimportant people who remain passive to the regime's demands for active participation and emotional involvement in official campaigns are superior to the political "activists" favored by the system. Further, he dares hint that society might function better without these fanatics.
4. Pasternak is recognized by non-Soviet critics to be the greatest living Russian writer. His originality of poetic expression and his disinterest in political themes brought him into disfavor with the Stalinist regime in the 1930's. Rather than submit and become an unwilling instrument of the party, Pasternak withdrew into silence to harbor bitterness

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against those who tried to interfere with his work. He ceased publishing after 1932 but earned a good living by translating foreign literature. Following the denigration of Stalin at the 20th party congress in 1956, Pasternak submitted his novel for publication. The Union of Writers refused publication of the manuscript, accusing Pasternak of using his "great gift" to "resuscitate in the soul of our people ideals which have been dead for a long time." Meanwhile, Pasternak had given copies of the manuscript to the Italian Communist publisher Feltrinelli and to other visitors from abroad, who were asked to arrange for English and French translations. Pasternak also informed his foreign publishers that they should ignore any letter he might write under duress requesting that the manuscript not be published.

5. SR Division has already paid [] to the New York publishing agent for the Russian type setting, which will be completed by 11 July. Preparation of the photo offset plates, to be finished by 18 July, will cost an additional []. An exact estimate of additional publication and distribution costs cannot be made now because these arrangements are still under negotiation. However, SR Division intends to guarantee the purchase of 6,000 copies of the novel for operational distribution. This purchase may cost up to [], depending on the unit cost of the edition. If the Division sells the photo offset plates later to the New York publishing agent for [] (as now contemplated), the Division's net expenditure for the Russian language edition of "Dr. Zhivago" will be at least []. To provide a margin for special contingencies in this matter, an additional [] may be needed. Therefore SR Division is requesting approval to obligate up to [] for this undertaking.

Chief, SR Division

CONCUR:

Chief, []

Date

APPROVED:

DD/P

Date

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