



The Zhivago Affair: The Kremlin, the CIA, and the Battle Over a Forbidden Book

Peter Finn, Petra CouvÉE

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Drawing on newly declassified government files, this is the dramatic story of how a forbidden book in the Soviet Union became a secret CIA weapon in the ideological battle between East and West.

In May 1956, an Italian publishing scout took a train to a village just outside Moscow to visit Russia's greatest living poet, Boris Pasternak. He left carrying the original manuscript of Pasternak's first and only novel, entrusted to him with these words: "This is *Doctor Zhivago*. May it make its way around the world." Pasternak believed his novel was unlikely ever to be published in the Soviet Union, where the authorities regarded it as an irredeemable assault on the 1917 Revolution. But he thought it stood a chance in the West and, indeed, beginning in Italy, *Doctor Zhivago* was widely published in translation throughout the world.

From there the life of this extraordinary book entered the realm of the spy novel. The CIA, which recognized that the Cold War was above all an ideological battle, published a Russian-language edition of *Doctor Zhivago* and smuggled it into the Soviet Union. Copies were devoured in Moscow and Leningrad, sold on the black market, and passed surreptitiously from friend to friend. Pasternak's funeral in 1960 was attended by thousands of admirers who defied their government to bid him farewell. The example he set launched the great tradition of the writer-dissident in the Soviet Union.

In *The Zhivago Affair*, Peter Finn and Petra Couvée bring us intimately close to this charming, passionate, and complex artist. First to obtain CIA files providing concrete proof of the agency's involvement, the authors give us a literary thriller that takes us back to a fascinating period of the Cold War—to a time when literature had the power to stir the world.

(With 8 pages of black-and-white illustrations.)

From the Hardcover edition.

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