

REEU newsletter

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"ANDREI RUBLEV" TRIUMPHS OVER ATTEMPTS AT SUPPRESSION

by Edith Clarke

This was originally intended to be a simple article announcing a free public showing of the Russian film, "Andrei Rublev," at 7:15 p.m., on May 12th in 120 Kane Hall on the U.W. campus. However, the mysterious circumstances which surround this film so intrigued me, that I have decided to write a fuller account.

"Andrei Rublev" is considered to be an important film which inspired other Soviet directors, yet few Americans have seen it. I have, but only in the severely edited version which was shown at the Movie House theater a few years ago. I found it highly interesting, somewhat disjointed (probably a result of the editing), and memorable. I have puzzled over certain scenes repeatedly since that initial viewing and I am eager to see the film again. What I could not understand at the time was why "Andrei Rublev" has a reputation as politically controversial.

Nevertheless, "Andrei Rublev" has had a turbulent history for that very reason. It was made in 1965-66 by director Andrei Tarkovsky, who collaborated on the screenplay. (Tarkovsky's other films include "My Name is Ivan" and "Solaris." One critic has called him "The most profound film artist of the postwar generation, ... the only contemporary Soviet director who deserves comparison with Eisenstein.") The film was shown privately for the Moscow cultural community in 1966. Mounted police surrounded the Dom Kino (theater) when the film was shown. "Andrei Rublev" was unacceptable to the censors and was shelved for several years while they repeatedly urged cuts which Tarkovsky refused to accept. Finally the film was released in France, in 1969.

In that year, "Andrei Rublev" was shown in five theaters in Paris. A review of the film was published in the December 13, 1969 issue of the New Yorker. Mysteriously, the pages on which that review appeared have been removed from all of the copies of that issue which I checked in two U.W. libraries and in the Seattle Public Library. There was no evidence of cutting, the pages simply weren't there. Puzzled and intrigued, I called the New Yorker office to

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ask whether the review had actually been published. The librarian there confirmed that it had and read portions of the review to me.

According to the New Yorker's reviewer, Janet Kleiner, "Andrei Rublev" was considered by Soviet authorities to be "ideologically ambiguous." It was suspect for its "pre-revolutionary Slavic Mysticism" and its religiousness. This attitude was probably responsible for the Soviet refusal to submit "Rublev" in the Cannes Film Festival in '69. The film's French distributor, however, screened it out-of-competition at the Festival. The highly favorable reception which "Rublev" received indicates that it would probably have been a prize-winner had it been an official entry.

That was 1969. The film was not released in the Soviet Union for another three years, and then only for a limited distribution. In 1973, a severely edited version of "Andrei Rublev" was shown at the New York Film Festival. This version has since been screened occasionally in the U.S.

"Andrei Rublev" is based on the life of Russia's greatest icon painter, who lived from 1360 to 1430. It portrays that period vividly. The 15th century was a time of conflicting barbarism and intense piety. Scenes of a brutal Tartar raid and a moonlit pagan "rite of spring" remind the audience that Christian values had a tenuous hold on society. Yet, in contrast, a Christian procession and the casting of a huge church bell affirm the dedication of individuals and of community resources to the Orthodox religion.

Within this milieu, Tarkovsky shows Andrei Rublev as a man who seeks to combat violence with brotherly love, beauty, and goodness. Tarkovsky intended Rublev as a hero who personified themes that have their modern counterpart in contemporary Soviet society. "Andrei Rublev" demonstrates its director's belief that "Sooner or later, someone always appears in Russia who will stand up and speak the truth."

"Andrei Rublev" has no overt political message, yet the emergence of the Soviet dissident movement in the 1970s shows that Tarkovsky was right. The Soviet government's effort to suppress this film has not succeeded, but we can understand why the attempt was made.

Apparently even Soviet film officials now accept their defeat. A new print of "Andrei Rublev" is available which contains the 40 minutes of film cut from the earlier U.S. version. It is this new print which will be shown on May 12th by the REEU Center's Outreach Program. You can strike a blow for artistic freedom and against the cloak and dagger methods of whoever removed those New Yorker pages from Seattle's libraries by attending our free presentation!



Seattle's annual Saints Cyril and Methodius Day celebration will be held on Saturday, May 15th, at the Russian Community Center, 704 19th East, on Capitol Hill. The evening's festivities will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a delicious dinner of favorite Balkan dishes prepared by the Yugoslavia Restaurant. Dinner music will be provided by the Balalaika Trio.

The program of entertainment will begin at 8:00 p.m. Among the groups which will perform the music, songs, and dances of the Slavic peoples are the Radost Folk Ensemble, the Seattle Junior Tamburitza's, Klapa Sokoli, Izvor Folk Orchestra, Dobar Dan, Ruzice, Sonovi, Ostali Muzikaši, Johny Morović, and Zarya. Following the program there will be music for dancing provided by several of these groups. Refreshments will be available throughout the evening, including Slavic desserts and delicacies prepared by Lydia Barrett of the Kaleenka Cafe.

Admission to the Saints Cyril and Methodius Day celebration is \$3.50 for adults and \$8.50 for students and seniors. For information and reservations, call 543-6848 (days) or 523-5468 (evenings).

The Saints Cyril and Methodius Day celebration is planned and presented by the Slavic Club of the University of Washington.

MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY CONFERENCE HELD

Recent Soviet Policy Toward Western Europe: Implications for the Atlantic Alliance was the subject of a conference held at Battelle Research Center on April 23 and 24. The conference was the second in a series of three international meetings organized by the School of International Studies' Center for Contemporary Chinese and Soviet Studies. Professor Herbert Ellison was the Conference Chairman.

A select group of internationally known scholars presented papers and discussed the implications of recent Soviet foreign policy developments. Papers were presented by Gerhard Wettig, Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien in Cologne; Pierre Hassner, Centre d'Études et Recherches Internationales in Paris; William E. Griffith, M.I.T.; Trond Gilberg, Pennsylvania State University; Joan Barth Urban, The Catholic University of America; Benjamin Lambeth, Rand Corporation; and Robert Legvold, Council on Foreign Relations. Commentators included: Heinz Timmermann, Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche in Cologne; Stanley Hoffmann, Harvard; Michael Sodaro, George Washington University; Anglea Stent, Georgetown; Gregory Grossman, U. C. Berkeley; and John Keeler and John Reshetar of the University of Washington. Gary Bertsch of the University of Georgia, James Huntley of the Battelle Center, and Peter Sugar, Joel Migdal, Judith Thornton, Donald Treadgold, and Herbert Ellison of the University of Washington served as session chairmen.

Session papers will be published by the University of Washington Press. The papers of the first conference in this series (October 30–November 1, 1980) appeared recently. Titled The Sino-Soviet Conflict: A Global Perspective, that volume was edited by Professor Herbert J. Ellison and published by the U. W. Press.

FUN-FILLED RUSSIAN CAMP PLANNED

This year's Russian Camp, May 7th and 8th, will feature several new elements as well as the usual activities which make it such a popular event. One of these new additions will be an evening workshop for teachers. The workshop will feature two hours of presentations on methodology, a textbook discussion, and an update on national developments in Russian-language teaching. The workshop will be presented by Professor James Augerot of the University of Washington, Professor Edward Yarwood of Eastern Washington University, and Rosanne Royer, member of the national board of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages.

Another new twist will be in the skit competition. This year each school will present its own version of the same play, "Little Red Riding Hood." A Russian script, a taped reading of the play by a native Russian speaker, and a lesson plan for preparing the skit, have been provided for each teacher whose students will attend Russian Camp. Individuality is encouraged in the setting, costumes, and interpretation of each school's presentation, but the standardized script is intended to promote the language quality of the skit competition and to enhance this activity as a learning experience.

Other activities scheduled for Russian Camp include a scavenger hunt, folk singing and dancing, a performance by the Russian House Choir, lectures, films, a slide show, games, and workshops for making piroshki, pilmeni, Ukrainian Easter Eggs, and Polish paper-cutting.

Russian Camp will be held at Camp Wascowitz near North Bend. This setting is particularly lovely during the spring. The price of the overnight camp, which includes lodging, meals and snacks, and all craft materials, is \$20.00. For registration information call Dick Carter, Russian Camp Director, at 325-7449 after 5 p.m.

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Prof. Waugh
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