

Preface: **Recent Soviet Film** **—One Critic's Choice**

Glasnost—*Soviet Cinema Responds* is the result of many hours in darkened theaters making notes to the glow of a penlight, of numerous interviews with Soviet directors, actors, actresses, and film industry officials, and of my personal observations made during a trip to the Soviet Union in 1987 for the 15th International Film Festival in Moscow.

The Soviet film industry produces some 130 feature length movies in an average year. In addition to this, the recent outpouring of works, delayed by censors, held in cold storage in the pre-glasnost era and now released, makes the choice of directors and film works to be included in a text such as this an onerous task.

The text is structured as a series of three essays, and a filmography of the directors of the glasnost cinema. Throughout the book, still photographs and reproductions of Soviet poster art help to illustrate the work. These images have been reproduced through the courtesy of Sovexportfilm.

The first essay, "The Age of Perestroika," outlines the changes that have occurred in the cinema of the U.S.S.R., provides some historical observations on the socialist realist tradition and the legacy of Stalinism, and takes a look at the influential film educator and director Mikhail Romm, whose students are now transforming the Soviet motion picture medium. The second, "Youth in Turmoil," is a somewhat sociological view of films about youth—the most dynamic and socially revealing of present productions. The third, "Odysseys in Inner Space," examines the new direction in Soviet Cinema as a focus on the inner world of individuals—a journey of philosophical dimension that brings East and West closer in their perceptions and their values.

The filmography is a guide to the works of some of the most significant contemporary Soviet directors and to the effects that glasnost and perestroika have had on their lives and their art. This section is intended to complement the essays and to provide a guide for interested researchers. (Many of the films discussed herein have had their original, Russian titles rendered into English in several semantically different ways upon translation. Thus a single Soviet film may be released in the West under several different titles. To aid in the identification of these films for our readers who may not speak Russian, the filmography contains a listing of all the alternate titles – in English – for a particular film. Where this confusing situation has arisen, the various titles will be listed together, separated by a typed slash; the title which enjoys the greatest currency will be listed first.) Our approach, while giving a comprehensive listing of all a director's films, is selective in its discursive intent—abbreviated discussions center around the contemporary cultural transition.

I would like to thank my editor, Robert Allington, of the Creative Writing Department at the University of Victoria, who collaborated with me from the book's inception, suggested stylistic and research approaches, honed the text, and brought the manuscript to camera-ready copy. What we have attempted to do here is record a social revolution, not as it has affected the discussions in the Party conferences of the U.S.S.R. or the international arena, but as it has changed the aesthetic form of cinema.

I am also indebted to Louis Menashe, professor of Russian History and PBS television producer, and to David Paul, East European cinema scholar and critic, who read the text prior to production and provided helpful commentary.

Some years ago when I attended a film workshop at the Center for Soviet and East European Studies at the University of Illinois, Professor Ludmila Pruner, an expert on the work of Andrei Tarkovsky and a wonderfully informed specialist on cinema in the U.S.S.R., inspired in me an interest in contemporary Soviet film. It was from her that I first learned of the marvelous works of such film directors as Kira Muratova and others who subsequently gained prominence in the Age of Perestroika. If *Glasnost—Soviet Cinema Responds* can inspire others as Professor Pruner did me, I shall be most gratified.

N. V. Galichenko,

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