

SECRET

6 November 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: C/OCR/GR/FB
ATTENTION : []
VIA : CI/OA
SUBJECT : Soviet Film, SON (A Dream)

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3020
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

[] 1. This is in reference to a telephone conversation between [] of your office and [] of SB/PO/M on 31 October.

2. Transmitted herewith is a Soviet Ukrainian-language feature film entitled Son (A Dream). It is composed of 2 reels of colored 16 mm. film. The film is being loaned to your office to permit a reproduction for CIA's permanent retention.

3. Son was produced by the Dovzhenko Film Studio in Kiev, directed by V. Denisenko. The screen play by Dmytro Pavlychko is based on Son, a satiric fantasy by the 18th Century poet Taras Shevchenko, which he wrote in St. Petersburg in 1844. Shevchenko sees himself in a dream flying to St. Petersburg, then the capital of the Russian Empire. A savage scene with Tsar Peter I and Tsarina Catherine II and their entourage follows. The tsar slaps the face of one of his highest advisors, who follows suit by kicking his subordinate, who in turn slaps one of the lower rank. In the subsequent melee, all in the entourage have been slapped by a superior, yet all exclaim "Hurrah for the Tsar and Tsarina." In a following scene, the monument of Peter I is shown, with an inscription by Catherine II, "To the first from the second." Shevchenko comments that the first crucified the Ukraine, and the second finished off the poor orphan. When in 1847 Shevchenko was arrested and sentenced to 10 years of hard labor, Son prominently figured as an exhibit of his slanderous writings directed against the tsar, his family and against the political and social structure of the Russian Empire.

Son. Pavlychko's script includes the main events of Shevchenko's Son. Shevchenko is presented as a young, strong-willed and

SECRET

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

SECRET

talented intellectual, vehemently opposing the then existing political and social order. Throughout the play Shevchenko displays an ardent love for the Ukrainian people and disdain toward the tsarist regime and its supporters. Portions of this film dealing with 18th Century events remind the Soviet Ukrainians of the present plight of his country, as for example, the scene in which an incensed tsar adds to Shevchenko's sentence a stipulation that he be permitted no pen or paper during his imprisonment.

4. Son was released for showing to Soviet audiences in the early summer of 1965. It was recalled from the film theaters shortly thereafter, again released for a short while and again recalled. There are no indications that the film is being shown currently. It is believed the analogy with present conditions in the Ukraine is so striking that it would serve no good purpose to show it to Soviet citizens.

5. In view of the sensitivity of the channel through which the film was obtained, it is requested that CIA's copy of the film be classified "Secret No Foreign Dissemination" for a period of two years, and that consideration be given at that time by this office to downgrade the classification and approve it for foreign dissemination.

6. Please address any inquiries you may have concerning this memorandum to [] in room 4D38, extension 6638. A copy of this memorandum is being filed in file no. 74-124-29/3 and may be referred to for record purposes concerning the film in the future.

[CSB/PO/M]

Attachment:
as stated

Distribution:
Orig & 1 addressee
1 CI/OA
~~1~~ 74-124-29/3
1 Dmytro Pavlychko 201
1 SB/PO chrono

*Note for SB records
film obtained from
Academy / 2, who
obtained it from a
collaborator in Australia
who obtained over the
from Soviet source*

SECRET