

8 February 1954

NSC REVIEW
COMPLETED,
10/31/04

The Honorable Robert Cutler
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Bobby:

I have gone over your note of 5 February with the attached memos from Koons and Bromley Smith about "Silvery Dust." I am also trying to get the views of State, Defense, Lewis Strauss and Ted Streibert. I am inclined to feel that something should be done here and possibly we can discuss this at our OCB lunch. Meanwhile, we are working to develop a "cover story" so as to permit a wider showing of the film if we all decide this is wise.

Sincerely,

/s/ A.W. Dulles

Allen W. Dulles
Director

AWD:at:hea

Distribution:

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DOCUMENT NO. 29
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS C 2511
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HP 70-2
DATE: 2607/1 REVIEWER:

25X1

TOP SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 5, 1954

Dear Allen:

I have been thinking over that movie which you were good enough to show us.

What effective use, when usable, can be made of it?

We wish the "leaders" among our people to understand better the nature of the poison the USSR seeks to spread falsely in the world against the USA. These "leaders" are the intelligentsia, the youth, the teachers, the press - just as in other countries, though to a lesser extent.

The risk of showing the film generally in the US is that it might be misunderstood by the least educated classes who would not appreciate its significance; that it is technically so poorly and turgidly and falsely dramatically done that it would bore people.

But to the "leader" class, properly introduced, it should provide a shocking revelation of wicked distortion.

Therefore, I would think it should be shown to college groups all over the country - students and teachers; to press organizations; to foreign policy associations. A special showing first might be made for the Congress, and thereafter it could be released as a etc. film, obtained etc., and as first specially shown to personnel of the National Security Council and the Congress.

I think C. D.'s reaction would be most desirable to have.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Cutler
ROBERT CUTLER
Special Assistant
to the President

Document No. 29
 Review of this document by CIA has determined that

DIA has no objection to declass
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 Authority: HR 70-2

It contains nothing of CIA interest

Date 2/6/54 Reviewer

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

TOP SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 5, 1954

Mr. Cutler:

Agreed it might be desirable. However, effectiveness of film would depend on several things. It is much too long, and should be cut. To get the full effect of the dialogue, either subtitles should be added, or English voices dubbed. There should be a lead-in bit of film with a talk by someone, or a text explaining what we feel is the significance, or tragedy, of this sort of Soviet propaganda.

TBK

Above is Skip Koons comment, with which I agree: except that I do not think it should be cut. The film, as it is, with that impact, is important. I wouldn't cut an inch, or you'll be accused of tampering.

February 5, 1954

*See allan - show in the
reaction of Bromley
of New York. Looks
like I was wrong -
Bull*

GENERAL CUTLER:

My answer to the question which you asked in your letter to Mr. Dulles would be along these lines:

1. The showing of this film creates a dilemma. I do not believe it should be sponsored by the Government, since to do so tends to cast doubt on its undoubted authenticity. I doubt that any commercial distributor would consider showing it because of its lack of dramatic interest as a movie.
2. I doubt that there are very many intelligent people who would react strongly to the picture, since there has been such widespread distribution of far more horrible allegations printed in the Soviet press and reprinted in the United States. For example, the fraudulent documents and pictures portraying the behavior of U.S. troops during the intervention period in Siberia and Archangel. These documents and pictures were reprinted in Life and other nationally circulated magazines during the height of the "Hate America" campaign. Given the unbelievable level to which the Soviets descended in this campaign, I doubt that the incidents depicted in the movie would do other than confirm an opinion already held by intellectuals other than fellow travelers.
3. One reaction to this movie is unquestionably that of frustration. What can be done to stop it or to counteract it? Therefore, I doubt seriously whether the film should be shown without the addition of something indicating that there is a way to destroy this kind of poisoning of people's minds in the Soviet Union. Since to say that this can be done by Voice broadcasts would be quite inadequate, I doubt that those who see this picture would feel that the United States was responding appropriately.
4. In this connection, what would we want the people who saw this movie in the U.S. to do about it? Unless we can advance some feasible way of solving this horrible situation, I doubt that a response of "shock" could be translated into healthy support of current U.S. foreign policy. Certainly the behavior of Molotov in Berlin is adequate to convey the character of the Soviet Government. This behavior may raise questions as to whether we should even be talking to the Russians. The response to the movie might be even more conclusive on this point. Until such time as we are prepared to ask the American people to destroy the kind of people who permit the distortions in the movie, my personal feeling is that the U.S. should not sponsor the showing of this film.
5. This film is in effect raw material. Conceivably, it might be used to document a "March of Time"-type short showing Soviet mendacity. However, whether or not such a film should be produced and released is questionable in my mind.

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