

Document Citation

Title	Old and new
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1930 May 14
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Eisenstein, Sergei (1898-1948), Riga (formerly Russia), Latvia
Film Subjects	Staroe i novoe (The old and the new), Eisenstein, Sergei, 1929

The General Line

OLD AND NEW

(Silent)

(RUSSIAN MADE)

Produced by Sovkino. Distributed by Amkino. Alternate title, "The Struggle of the Soil." Scenario and directed by M. Eisenstein and Gregory Alexandrov. Photographer, Edward Tisoe. At Cameo, New York, week May 2. Running time, 80 mins.

Distinctive piece of propaganda product. Nothing unusual from the Russian viewpoint, the latter having gone in for that artful sport in a big way for some time past. Here, however, dropped a niche or two in overlooking entertainment. There isn't any from a theatre point of view.

What perhaps weighted the film with consideration was the personnel of its directorial end. After viewing the film it looks like the big ballyhoo made for Eisenstein and his probable employment by Paramount strikes as another piece of propaganda by and in behalf of the present film makers.

By this it isn't meant that Eisenstein is a flop. It does mean he has been touted too high from the results achieved here. What he has accomplished has been done before and better by Americans.

In essence it amounts to posing a bunch of Russian peasants, than whom the Russian film makers can select no more expressionless group anywhere, shove them before a camera, and shoot at angles while the characters stand still. The result will then show two things at alternating intervals. Face always rigid, and only the eyes and mouth twitch. Twitched one way it's glum and. Twitched another it's grim humor.

But when the characters are in motion the acting is nil. To photograph such persons in standstills only takes trick camera work, and that's where the Russians have been fooling most everybody on their ability. When it comes to love interest, they do the general flopperino in a big way. This film has no love interest.

Story is sliced in situations that start with a poor peasant woman who goes co-op and leads an army of farmers into modernity through Sovietism and machinery.

Usual play on titles is made to get

across the propaganda situation. But in general not offensive, though smeared rather thick and in one spot taking an unusual big slap at the Greek Church.

Something funny about this is that the theatre projected a disc accompaniment that sounded like a Hebrew chant, although may have been Latin or Greek. Wasn't clearly enunciated.

What the aim of the propaganda is may be self-evident, but can't be entered into here. On the film's technical end the photography is unusually clear and well done, with one or two beauty spots. In story it takes a boomerang kick, seemingly, when American-made machinery is shown as the key to the farmers' heaven.

Henry Ford and his tractors are really the heroes of the film. And he's a billionaire, or near enough.

May 14 '30