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# Kurosawa Slaps Soviets For Cutting Jointly-Made Film

By HAZEL GUILD

Frankfurt, Nov. 16.

Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa charged the Russians with damaging his last work and hurting his image by making cuts for the Italian version without his consent.

Kurosawa, in Frankfurt for the German premiere of his Oscar-winning Russian film "Dersu Uzala," charged that Sovexport lied to the Italian film distributors in saying that he permitted 20 minutes to be sliced from his two hour and 20 minute film, and that they also allowed the Italian distributors, EVI, to put in their own music which had no real connection with his work.

Because of this break with his contractual agreement with the Russians and because of this damage to his honor, Kurosawa explained that he will never again work with the Russians.

At a press conference called by Gloria Distributors, who are handling the German release of the Mosfilm-Toho pic, Kurosawa explained that he had just arrived from Rome, where he had found out to his dismay that his latest work, "Uzala," on which he spent four years in detailed preparation and production, had been cut without his knowledge or consent.

At a press showing in Rome of the pic which earned the Japanese film director his second Oscar, he was guest of honor and observed to his horror that scenes had been eliminated, and music had been added.

He demanded that the film not be released until it could be put back exactly as he had made it in the production which was completed in 1974, and personally worked with the distributors to make sure that the picture was restored to its original condition, sans the Italian-

added music.

The film's Italian premiere will be delayed a month, until mid-December, to be sure that it can be released as he had made it, he told the press in Frankfurt in a speech translated from Japanese into German.

He could not understand why Sovexport had double-crossed him and lied to the Italian distributors and how the Russians could allow this monumental film, based on the works of Vladimir Arseniev, to be distorted, he noted.

"The Italian version reveals lack of understanding for the Russian film and lack of sympathy for this great Soviet hero," he insisted. The Italian journalists on hand were shocked at these changes in his work, and also protested that the full version of the film, which has already appeared before mass audiences in Russia and Japan, should be shown in Italy, he added.

"I spent four years working on this project — two years in planning the details and creating the script (which Kurosawa co-authored with Russian scripter Yuri Nagibin, who was also on hand during the press conference), and two years on the filming," Kurosawa noted. Part of the filming was made during 40 degrees below zero temperature in Siberia, and the 66-year-old Kurosawa still suffers from a leg ailment incurred because of the terrible cold damp weather, he added.

Kurosawa has always felt close to Russian themes, having filmed Dostoevski's "The Idiot" and Gorki's "Lower Depths" but it was at the invitation of the Russians that he actually went to Russia and prepared "Uzala." It marked the first time that he had filmed outside of his Japanese environs.

The film cost somewhere around \$4,000,000, it's estimated, although because of the Russian production methods it's difficult to determine exact expenses. In the 70m version it's been viewed by 20,000,000 Russians, and is now being copied in a normal version so that more Russian cinemas, without the 70m equipment, can view it.

Kurosawa shook an angry finger at a Zurich newspaper critique, because the writer had called the film a "western," and he felt that it is completely involved with the mystique of the eastern world and not to be compared to an American cowboy and Indian production.

Kurosawa noted, too, that it is becoming impossible to work in his native land because Japanese films have become so commercial. He has spent the last six months

developing a new project on a Japanese theme, but no one is willing to risk the costs of filming.

He noted that even if he can no longer work in Japan and will not work in Russia, there are possibilities for him to create further films in the U.S., in Italy, Yugoslavia, France and England, and that he may consider making the artistic move to one of these countries.

Officials with Gloria Films in Germany assured that the pic will run in uncut and unchanged version in Germany, and that the East German DEFA film company has supplied the German synch version, working with Sovexport.

On hand for the German premiere were Maxim Munsunk, one of the two stars of the film, and the Soviet co-author Yuro Nagibin.

Nagibin explained that he was not disturbed that the film had been cut in Italy, even though he had not seen the cut version, because conditions are different in that country, Russia and perhaps it's necessary to shorten it.

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