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Film's portrayal of suffering might be good for the soul

By Mike Grant Staff Reporter

The Foreign Film Series' 'Diary for My Children," set in post-war Hungary, begins with the orphaned Juli meeting her foster mother "Aunt" Magda at an airport. From the moment they meet friction between the two almost demands a confrontation.

Movie Review

Juli is a shy, melancholy teenager who fantasizes about her deceased parents. We later learn her father probably died in a Soviet prisoner camp and her mother died of a long illness.

Magda is an editor for a governmentbacked newspaper. She has an obsession with order and discipline, which she expects Juli to adopt. Juli is, in effect, Magda's own political prisoner.

Seeking understanding elsewhere, Juli becomes friends with Magda's dying father, a factory manager named

As Juli becomes more and more defiant of Magda's will, we learn more and more about each character.

Juli's parents, we learn, raised her in party position. a Bohemian lifestyle, which explains pressive rules.

than fight in the resistance, for which Magda constantly derides the old man.

The most interesting comparison is the similarity of Magda and Janos' lives. Janos is the most likeable character in the film.

While both lost loved ones during the war, Magda seems to have internalized her bitterness into her brutal career drive.

But Janos, is more sensitive to other people's problems because of his past sufferings. He tries to reunite Juli with her relatives which helps lead to his being ousted from his position in the Communist party and his imprisonment.

Hungary is struggling to grow out of World War II's rubble and although Magda and her sycophant friends continually preach austerity, they are living off the many riches expropriated from the wealthy.

Despite the surrounding poverty, Juli is able to attend fashion shows and movies for free because of Magda's high and 9 p.m.

In one of the most amusing scenes, her rebelliousness toward Magda's re- Juli is invited to a birthday party of the son of a high party official. Magda's grandfather appears to have At the official's sumptuous mansion, played it safe during the war, rather Juli is treated to exotics like bananas and touch dancing.

Behind all this is the political environment of the time, with workers' productivity contests and the harsh, heavyhanded government propaganda, which gives the movie a gothic atmosphere.

"Diary for My Children" is, for the most part, a good movie. The performances are good and the black and white cinematography blends in well with documentary footage.

But this is no "Gidget Grows Up" Hungarian style. Since it deals with the effects of a brutal, repressive government across three generations, it deals with brutal, repressive subjects. There is no escapism here, just honest drama about how people living under repression cope with life.

But a little suffering may be good for the soul of the viewer every once in awhile, so I would recommend it.

"Diary For My Children" is playing at the Sheldon Film Theatre today at 7

'Invasion USA' good matinee, but not worth the full ticket

By Tom Mockler Staff Reporter

"Invasion USA" is a bit like a rich man's "Red Dawn", but I mean that only in the most positive way. It probably didn't require a much larger budget, but it is a much better film. Of course, that still leaves a lot of ground for improvement, but it provides decent matinee action material.

Movie Review

The star of "Invasion USA" is Chuck Norris, who is sort of a poor man's Clint Eastwood. That is not intended as a put-down, since I like Clint Eastwood and the comparison is warranted by the similarities of the characters they play.

Chuck Norris is actually a pretty fair actor, although his films have tended to carry a grade "B" label. Both East-wood's and Norris' characters tend to provide a "lone justice" element to a society gone wrong. Their characters seem to operate within a fairly narrow range, but both men have enormous box office appeal.

I have never seen Chuck Norris in a film before, but after seeing "Invasion USA," I can understand his box office appeal. The man is a star in the purest sense of the term.

One of the reasons I felt "Red Dawn" lacked credibility is that the premise of a full scale land invasion of the United States is simply unbelievable. While the promos for "Invasion USA" would have you believe that the same sort of event occurs in this film, that is slightly misleading. A small band of terrorists (no more than a thousand) land off the coast of Florida (presumably from Cuba) and start randomly blowing things up.

They pose as civilians, police officers and National Guardsmen and try to cause widespread chaos and civil unrest, and turn citizens against authority. I got the impression their ultimate aim was something greater, but I can't remember the film telling us what that

While I found this mini-invasion a little hard to swallow, the film never tries to convince us that this could really happen, thus the suspension of disbelief into the fictional world becomes easier.

Another smart move in this film is that it is largely a one-on-one struggle between Norris (that is, his character, although the distinction is fuzzy) and his counterpart, Rostov, the Soviet agent organizing this invasion.

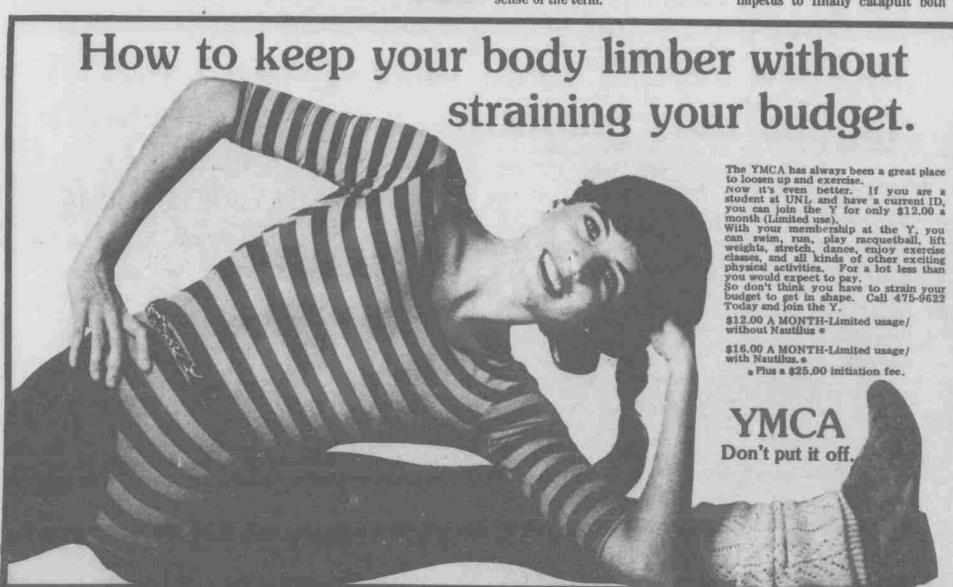
Richard Lynch, as Rostov, turns in a very credible performance, and provides the perfect counterbalance to Norris. This film could provide the impetus to finally catapult both of

them into "A" pictures. Instead of Chuck Norris singlehandedly trying to defeat the entire Soviet army, he is a secret government agent whose main mission is to dispose of Rostov. And while Rostov's mission is to oversee the invasion, he is too obsessed with trying to dispose of Norris to succeed with the invasion.

The film does not try as hard to espouse right-wing cold war views as "Red Dawn" did. There are bits of that kind of dialogue here and there, but they tend to be secondary to the action in the story. Also, instead of taking an idyllic backdrop like the foothills of the Colorado Rockies, much of the film seems to have been shot on the set of "Miami Vice", so that when the Rus-kies start talking about decadent Americans, it doesn't sound so terribly absurd.

Finally, by way of comparison with Clint Eastwood, Norris' best line in the film is "It's time to die". This isn't quite as effective as Eastwood's immortal "Go ahead, make my day," but it still possesses a certain supercelluloid quality.

This is not a great film, but I found it surprisingly good. I can't recommend shelling out the full admission price for it, but it's worth spending \$2 to see if you like good action pictures. Oh, yeah, there's a lot of violence in it too, but you probably already guessed that.



Osborne book tops UNL list of best sellers

The top 10 best-selling books last week in the University Bookstore in the Nebraska Union:

1. "More Than Winning," Tom Osborne; Nelson, \$12.95.

2. "Valley of the Far Side," Gary Larson; Andrews, McMeel and Packer; \$5.95.

"Lake Woebegon Days," Garrison Keillor, Viking Press; \$17.95.

4. "From Here to Fraternity," Robert Egan; Bantam; \$7.59.

5. "Thinner," Stephen King; New American Library; \$4.50. 6. "God Knows," Joseph Heller;

Dell; \$4.50. 7. "Dynamic Strength Training

for Athletes," Boyd Epley; William C. Brown; \$8.95. 8. "Symphony for the Devil," Phil-

lip Norman; Dell; \$4.50. 9. "Accidental Tourist," Anne Tyler; Knopf; \$16.95.

10. "Heaven," V. C. Andrews; Pocket Books; \$4.50.