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Russia Officially Recognizes 'Star Wars' as Film Classic

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"Star Wars" made the list of officially recognized "foreign classics" by the Culture Ministry.

Despite a revival of Cold War tensions, the Russian government formally advised its citizens to watch a Hollywood sci-fi classic.

"Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope" made the list of officially recognized "foreign classics" by the Culture Ministry. Episode IV was the only only one of the six feature films in the Star Wars canon to make the cut.

The list comprises 100 films the ministry formally recommends to Russian citizens, which makes it a rough analogue of the U.S. National Film Registry.

The list is heavy with Hollywood fare, also comprising "Citizen Kane" (1941), "Cabaret" (1972), "Bambi" (1942), "Apocalypse Now" (1979), "Titanic" (1997), "Gone With the Wind" (1939) and "Scarface" (1983).

But it also includes German, French, British, Polish, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, Spanish,

Hungarian and Yugoslavian films, the ministry said in a news release on Monday.

Non-U.S. foreign films to have made the cut include "Seven Samurai" (Japan, 1954), "Ashes and Diamonds" (Poland, 1958), "An Andalusian Dog" (France, 1929), "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (Germany, 1920) and "Bicycle Thieves" (Italy, 1948).

The Culture Ministry, headed by ultrapatriotic former PR consultant Vladimir Medinsky, has experienced a radical tightening of the political screws of late, most notably in the film industry.

The ministry has denied screening permits to several acclaimed foreign films over alleged indecency, and increased ideological oversight over state-supported cinema, throwing more money at patriotic projects at the expense of more ideologically ambiguous films.

The government also banned expletives on screen, which has already led to denial of screening permits to several high-profile productions, including Cannes-winning "Leviathan" by acclaimed director Andrei Zvyagintsev.

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