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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

A Russian Film Premieres on YouTube

Alexei Krasovsky's "The New Year's Party" is a crowdsourcing hit

By The Moscow Times

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“The New Year’s Party”

Over the holidays over 600,000 Russians watched the premiere of a new film called “The New Year’s Party” directed by Alexei Krasovsky.

What made this unusual is that they watched it on YouTube and donated almost 3 million rubles to cover the production expenses.

The film is about a privileged family living in a country house in Leningrad during the blockade. The family patriarch works in a secret laboratory, which gives him and his family the right to special rations — all the canned goods, bread, and herring needed for the New Year’s table — even a freshly killed chicken.

As the husband and wife prepare for their party, their son brings home a starving young woman, their daughter brings home a mysterious man and announces that she is divorcing

her husband, and the matriarch frets and schemes about how to explain the family's abundance of food to the unexpected guests. The food turns out to be the least of the family's problems as no one turns out to be quite what they seem, and everything gets more complicated as the minutes draw closer to midnight.

The film, funded privately by crowdsourcing, was announced in October and immediately denounced by some deputies and television commentators, although no one had seen it or read the script. But the notion of a family feasting during the blockade famine was deemed "blasphemy," "trampling on sacred history" and "ridiculing the memory of our compatriots and the heroic history of Leningrad, Hero-City."

The filmmakers intended to release the movie online on Dec. 31, but they held it back until Jan. 3 after the period of mourning for the apartment house explosion in Magnitogorsk.

The film can be seen in Russian here.

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