

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS EXHIBITION OF SOVIET POSTERS
AND MAY-DAY SKETCHBOOK OF RIVERA

On Saturday, May 1, an exhibition of special pertinence to May Day opens in the Acquisitions Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. This exhibition consists of acquisitions not previously shown: the May-Day Sketchbook of Diego Rivera--forty-four watercolors made in Moscow on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary celebration of the October Revolution--and a small group of Soviet posters of the present war and of the early 1930's.

At the invitation of the Soviet Commission of Public Education, Rivera went to Russia in 1928 to attend the Tenth Anniversary celebration with other members of a Mexican delegation of workers and peasants. From a place on the reviewing stand he saw the great procession file through the Red Square all day long and far into the night. He made numerous sketches, the best of which are direct reportage of a high order, revealing a particular sensitivity to pageantry and a quick eye for its detail and climactic action. The masses of moving, singing people, the swaying red banners, the endless waves of cavalry and tanks, the marching infantry--all the rhythm and tidal strength of the great occasion--are recorded in these quick sketches. The series of small 4 1/2 x 6" watercolors which comprises the May-Day Sketchbook is the gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to the Museum. Also shown is an oil painting of the Tenth Anniversary procession, executed by Rivera in 1928 and lent by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The part which Soviet artists today play in helping their country's war effort is shown in the group of five recent war posters. The most impressive of these is the Thunder Clap which shows a frightened Hitler and Mussolini cowering under a tattered umbrella as a bolt of lightning (composed of the flags of the USSR, Great Britain and the United States) strikes them. This poster is by Kukriniksi, the group name for three Soviet artists who also executed the large poster or satiric strip, Matriculation, 1941. The latter, together with Major Razuvaev's Raid, 1942 by Tcheremnykh, are posters combining

illustrations and running text or poems, and are on extended loan from the Embassy of the Soviet Socialist Republics, Washington, D.C.

The posters, Old Clothes Men and The Wedding Present, by V. Lebedev are satirical and scathing comments based on excerpts from the Nazi press. These also combine verse and illustration. The Wedding Present, for example, graphically depicts the Nazi decree that every newly married couple must purchase a copy of Mein Kampf, by showing a flabby Hitler with one hand pointing a pistol at the crippled bridegroom and with the other thrusting the Nazi bible at the couple. The two Lebedev posters and the Thunder Clap are the gift of VOKS (the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Moscow).

All of the war posters shown in the exhibition are used as display in "TASS windows." Inspired by daily TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) dispatches selected by editorial boards and worked out each day by artists, poets and writers, these "TASS windows" are displayed first in Moscow and later throughout Russia, at the front, in hospitals and in factories.

Also included are three pre-war posters, executed before 1931, which deal with the Five-Year Plan. They are the gift of Miss ^{Rosenfeld} ~~Rosenthal~~ of New York.

The exhibition will continue through June 13.