

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Amerika's point was missed by *Alligator*

Editor: I'm rather bemused by *The Alligator's* Feb. 23 editorial concerning "Amerika." Your comments on the miniseries were so out of tune with what actually was shown that I can only give you the benefit of the doubt and assume you wrote your editorial without actually bothering to watch it.

Having invested 14½ (!) hours in this daring and intellectual film, let me correct you.

First, you seem to think "Amerika" portrayed Russians as "militaristic Soviet marauders" and an "evil Red horde." Far from it. The two main Russian characters, Colonel Andrei (played winningly by Sam Neill) and his superior officer, were by far the most compassionate, intelligent and interesting characters in the miniseries. They consistently evinced a deep respect for America and its traditions

and seemed to mourn the loss of freedom more than anyone else.

Secondly, you claim "Amerika" was an irresponsible film that aggravated Cold War tensions, though you are willing to allow ABC might just have used "bad judgment." This is ludicrous.

The Soviet Union regularly runs rather amateurish documentaries that lash out at the United States and make "Amerika" look like an ode to Mother Russia. The Discovery Channel (which recently ran 60 hours of uncut Soviet television) and "Nightline" have highlighted this fact.

However, you are correct in one respect: "Amerika" is completely unrealistic. The Soviet Union, for obvious reasons, could not subjugate our heavily armed and expansive country so easily. That is why the controversy surrounding the miniseries is unfounded.

"Amerika" is not meant to be — as its detractors claim — a cautionary

tale about the big, bad Ruskies. Rather, it uses this dramatic plot to ask tough questions about ourselves.

Writer/Director Donald Wrye says Americans are politically apathetic, unconcerned about the rest of the world and show a lack of understanding and empathy toward other cultures, including the Soviet Union.

This message is presented time and again throughout the film in simple, humanistic terms. It is almost the exclusive focus of the final, thoughtful episode that aired Sunday night.

There was a minimum of gun play. There was no Red-baiting. There was no paranoid call to arms. "Amerika" was an intelligent, restrained and daringly unsensational film. It's a pity *The Alligator* didn't watch it. You missed a thought-provoking miniseries. And your editorial would certainly have been very different.

Michael Giltz
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