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An insider's perspective into life under Communist Russia at SMC Museum of Art

By Kara Navolio



Leninism: Our Banner, V. Ivanov, The Hollingsworth Collection

during this period are an attempt to replace the religious iconography of Christianity with Communist Party ideas. "Images of Saints were being replaced by cosmonauts and the farm worker," explains Museum Director Lauren MacDonald. "What the people should venerate was being changed by the imagery." Other common heroic figures were the border guards, soldiers, and strong women workers. One poster depicting Lenin states, "Live by Lenin's ideas and grow up as a Communist, to bring new glory to the country."

Among the collection are some posters created by a group called the Fighting Pencil. They used satire to focus on social problems of the '60s and '70s, like alcoholism, violence, laziness and corruption. Other posters show messages directed at bringing children up as good communists or comparing the prosperity of socialism to the oppression of capitalism and the west.

The exhibit is a very visual and powerful lesson on Russian history from 1945 to 1991, with English translations for each piece and helpful background information posted throughout. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday with free admission for all. Public tours are offered on Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m., and can also be arranged at other times for school groups by calling John Schneider at (925) 631-4379. Saint Mary's professors will offer informative art chats at 1 p.m. on February 28, March 21 and May 1. The show closes on May 20. For more information, visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum.



Increasing the Field is the Main Goal..., Solovjev, The Hollingsworth Collection

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