

February 7, 1955

## 3-PLY DEAL ON '80 DAYS' IN TODD-AO

Negotiations have virtually been completed for the Michael Todd Co. production of Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days" in the Todd-AO process to be "laid off" as a Columbia release produced by Bill Goetz. It will be a three-way financing and sharing arrangement — Columbia, Todd and Goetz — with original release to be on a roadshow basis in some 60 to 70 worldwide key cities.

Todd's farming out "80 Days," and probably also the planned production of Rudyard Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King," which John Huston is to direct, to Allied Artists, is aimed to free him for full-time supervision of Tolstoy's

"War And Peace," which Robert Sherwood is writing and Fred Zinnemann will direct, and which Todd is now aiming as his first Todd-AO production.

Todd has an eight-picture Todd-AO franchise from Magna Theatres, the parent company. First picture in the Todd-AO process is the recently completed "Oklahoma," produced by Rodgers & Hammerstein and due to open at the NY Rivoli early in May. Under Todd's deal with Magna, his eight pictures, to be made in five years, are to alternate in release with Magna Productions or other franchises. Todd, obviously, has the right to farm out his own franchises.

February 14, 1955

Arthur Hornblow and Fred Zinnemann take the CinemaScope print of "Oklahoma" to NY next week. They've been working till 5 a.m. to complete it.

February 17, 1955

### 1st 'Okla.' Sneak

"Oklahoma," filmization of the Rodgers & Hammerstein legit smash, received its first public unveiling last night via a q.t. sneak preview run-off at the Fox Theatre, Riverside.

For preview, print of the CinemaScope version was used, as work is still being done on the Todd-AO version.

Sneak previewers say it was worth driving to Riverside thru the worst fog of the season to see "Oklahoma" . . . Shirley Jones heads to France next month on a good-willer for the film . . .

## "Reds Reveal 'War' Plans, Too"

Rome, Feb. 17. — Radio Moscow, monitored here today, announced plans are afoot in the Soviet Union to film Tolstoy's classic "War And Peace," on a "gigantic scale."

Statement was made straight-facedly, sans any reference to fact that already film industry circles in the Free World are buzzing over the three different, and competitive, filmizations of the novel — planned by Mike Todd, by David O. Selznick and by Dino de Laurentiis, the Italian producer.

Supposition, of course, is that since Tolstoy was a Russian (though pre-Communism variety), the Soviet wants to get into the act, but doesn't want to tip its enslaved peoples that once again it is copying an idea originated in the Free World.

February 20, 1955

## Peck Heading Up AO's Film Biz Division

New York, Feb. 20.—American Optical Co. has created a new division to handle its motion pix biz, with AO instrument division chief William F. Peck placed in charge.

AO's motion pictures products division will handle exploitation and commercial application of firm's pix products, including the Todd-AO tieup.

February 22, 1955

## Todd-AO Engineers O. O. Mpls. Theatres

Minneapolis, Feb. 22. — Todd-AO engineers have inspected a pair of RKO circuit downtown theatres here and also two United Paramount Theatres' houses.

Whatever deal is made for a local theatre to house "Oklahoma," if any, likely will be closed at the NY homeoffice of either circuit.

Rodgers & Hammerstein got their first look at the completed "Oklahoma" last night. A CinemaScope print was sneaked on Long Island

## Metro's Inside Track On Releasing C'Scope Version of 'Oklahoma'

New York, Feb. 22.—Metro appears to have the inside track on snaring the release of the CinemaScope version of the Todd-AO "Oklahoma." Todd-AO version will be roadshown in some 40 theatres throughout country before being released in C'Scope version. It's expected film will not be ready for general distribution for a year or more.

Metro's "insider" status is based on number of such factors as (1) picture was filmed on the Metro lot which, in itself, is an unusual procedure for the Culver City studio; (2) connection of Nicholas M. Schenck's brother, Joseph, with Todd-AO and Magna; (3) report that Metro is dropping its joint project with David O. Selznick to film "War and Peace," which Mike Todd plans to make in Todd-AO process.