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PECULIARITIES OF DEVELOPMENT OF POST-SOVIET SCREEN ART IN GEORGIA

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After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the early 1990s, the Soviet period ended in Georgia and the building of independent state began. The country faced difficult challenges. The Georgian society was not prepared for the transition from the Socialist system to the Capitalist political and economic one. Social situation was very complicated. There was a shortage of essential necessities in the country. Citizens tried to clear up the situation and gathered on the streets and different grounds for listening to various political groups and leaders. The country was covered with rallies and strikes. Georgia, with its long-standing tradition of statehood history, after the decline of the Soviet Union, had since commenced its first independent steps.

In Georgia, a multi-ethnic, small Caucasian country, immediately upon gaining independence, there have again appeared the conflicts between the centre and Sukhumi and Tskhinvali regions.

Separatist movements started in the regions populated by Abkhazians and Ossetians and soon bloody clashes broke out between the governmental army and local armed secessionists. The Georgian state troops left the regions after 13 months of combat operations (1992–1993). The Georgian jurisdiction in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali has been suspended, and the separatist authorities have controlled the situation.

Professor Revaz Gachechiladze describes the post-conflict period in Abkhazia as follows: *the Georgians in Abkhazia (there were almost 250 thousands of them before the war) were totally expelled. This is called ethnic cleansing. A large part of them came to Georgia, and a part was scattered abroad. Only 50 thousand people have returned to the Gali district, desolated Sukhumi and adjoining areas with panic and confusion, and an uncertain number has fled, via the hardest pass, to Svaneti, a region with snowy and*

frozen weather. People were staying away [3, p. 365].

In the last decade of the past century, a significant part of Georgian population left the country due to social and other problems and fled to foreign countries.

Because of such difficult conditions in Georgia, it was impossible, unreal and unrealistic to preserve the field of art in the form such as it had existed in the Soviet Union. The Georgian state and society had to seek ways to adapt to a new life.

In the young country, where there were still gunfire and the need for greater efforts to stabilize the situation, in the last century, since the mid-1990s, the situation had been slowly coming under control.

Overall, despite the severe economic situation, unresolved territorial conflicts, optimism did not desert the population of Georgia.

In contrast to neighbouring republics, few people in Georgia wept over the Soviet Union. Independence of the country, which the Georgians always dreamt about, has become a natural state for the majority.

By the late 20th century, according to all public opinion polls, even when the majority of respondents thought that Georgia moved "rather in wrong than right direction", the same people expressed the belief that "the situation will be improved in the next year".

A retrospective study analysis considers such an expectation probably exaggerated. However, optimism still worked to save the nation [3, p. 389].

In 1995, a new Constitution was adopted, and the political force, which won the parliamentary elections hold in the same year, put the country in a new political reality. A war-torn country was slowly stabilizing, and the Georgian state has launched cultural policy regulation with the peace process.

After the new parliamentary elections in 1999, the legislation on films was passed on

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December 5, 2000, and the Law of Georgia on State Support of National Cinematography was launched. Being based on the same law, the Georgian National Film Centre started functioning in April 2001.

Under the same law, the essence of a national film was defined as follows:

Article 5. National film.

1. A film is considered national, if it meets the following conditions.

a) a film is created in the state language of Georgia;

b) a film's producer is a citizen of Georgia or a Georgian-registered legal entity;

c) the authors of a film are Georgian citizens;

d) the number of people who are not citizens of Georgia does not exceed 30 percent of a film's crew's composition (producers-directors, producers-cameramen, sound engineers, actors, costumers, editors, and leads of actors);

e) production, replication, rental and display of a film make up at least 50 percent of the total volume of works carried out by film organizations registered in Georgia.

2. As nationalized shall be considered a foreign-language (shot not in the state language) film, if this foreign-language film is based on the specificity of storyline and this film satisfies the requirements first paragraph of this article and other.

3. The national film can be considered of co-production of the film if it is shot in cooperation with foreign film organizations in accordance with the terms of agreements and conditions.

4. A specific film with the requirements set forth in this article. The issue of conformity of the project and its solution are implemented in accordance with the law and national film regulations [1].

Such steps from the Georgian government has resulted in positive outcomes. One of the main problems for filmmakers due to the lack of funds was partially solved. The state claimed to be willing to finance a film project with a maximum of 75 percent in the case of this project's winning in a competition, or 100 percent in the case if it is ordered by the state. It is true that not all cinematic projects

that would have been financed would have been given state funds, but the introduction of this funding rule was definitely a step forward in terms of Georgian reality.

Article 9. Cinema state financing.

Rules and conditions.

1. One of the basic forms of film support is its state funding.

2. Annual cinema state financing of national films. The relevant assignments are planned on the organizational code of the Georgian Centre from the expenditure part of the central budget.

3. The rules and conditions of distribution of cinema for this law and other regulations shall be determined based on law and other normative acts and according to provision of competition worked out by the National Film Centre and approved by the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia.

4. The National Film Centre conducts the distribution of state funding according to provision of competition and relative to existing agreement between a film's producer, distributor or demonstrator.

5. Film state funding is targeted and it cannot be used for other purposes except by the Georgian legislation and the goals set out in a relevant agreement.

Article 10. Production of a national film State funding

1. The National Film Centre creates a commission of experts consisting of creator workers and relevant experts. Experts commission activities are carried out on the basis of the commission's regulations approved by the director of the National Film Centre and by the Ministry of Culture of Georgia.

2. The National Film Centre on the basis of the judgement of the commission of experts makes a decision to finance a national film (project) and allocate funds to the film's producer.

3. A share of state financing in a national film's production generally does not exceed 75 percent of the overall cost estimates of the film [1].

By creating the National Film Centre, it became possible for Georgian cinematogra-

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phers to find financing, to promote cinema development and to work in the fields of film industry to have access to international film festivals and film forums.

Although many projects take part in the competition for films announced by the Film Centre, the victory is only a small part, but the state financing in this form should be considered a positive phenomenon for the country's low income of cinematographers. Since the establishment of the National Film Centre (Film Centre) has participated in the financing 140 films [4].

In the Post-Soviet period, the hindrances of the development of cinema art were the failure of pre-existing cinema network, which led to alienation of audience, difficulties to find financing, the high cost of expensive imported cinematographic equipment, the process of hemorrhage of film professionals abroad. However, new faces have appeared in the Georgian cinema who tried to look at the last century's environment of the 1990s with a new interpretation.

At the present stage, the cinematography created by Georgian filmmakers succeeds at international film festivals. In recent years, some important film cinemas have been established in Georgia. We will select those films for the most painful issues for Georgia – the bloody confrontation in Abkhazia and the social problems in the country.

In 2015, the viewers saw the film *Moira* by film director Levan Tutberidze. The film's action evolves in a small seaside town. A young former prisoner tries to start his life from the beginning. In the family, his younger brother and a father in the wheelchair live. Mother has gone to Greece and earns money by her songs. The main character of the film, along with his brother, buy a small fishing boat by bank credit. And by catching and selling fish in the Black Sea, he plans to help his family. Criminals use the fishing boat to take people illegally to the border with Abkhazia, where the part of the people are waiting for death. Young people die because of confrontation with criminals. People who have the same fate will meet in Georgia as a block. (Directed by Levan Tutberidze. Producers – Levan Tutberidze and Nikoloz Abbramashvili. Screen-

writers – David Pirtskhalava, Giorgi Kobalia and Levan Tutberidze. Leads – Paata Inauri and Giorgi Khurtsilava. Cameraman: Gorca Gomez Andreu.)

The film *Corn Island* (2014) by the filmmaker Giorgi Ovashvili is Abkhazia-themed. The river Enguri separates Abkhazia from the rest of Georgia. Spring flooding forms a small island with rich in the middle of the river. An elderly Abkhazian grandfather assisted by his orphaned teenage granddaughter takes possession of the island, builds a simple hut, and plants corn, trying to reap a harvest. They ensconces a wounded Georgian soldier who takes refuge on the island and protects him from his pursuers for a time. At the end of the summer, flooding destroys the island. The feature that there is almost no dialogues in it characterizes the film. Unfortunately, in bloody conflicts, sign language is more understandable.

Giorgi Ovashvili's film meets a goal in all directions and does not leave anyone indifferent – neither the enemy, nor the one who loves. Neither those who dedicate to him and those who understand his language. Nor those who view life from one shore, who see nothing around them except one direction, and for whom Abkhazia, man, kindness, forgiveness are empty and meaningless words.

First of all, it shows that the island of Giorgi Ovashvili, just as a corn island, is not threatened, and this is the most important thing, – writes the film critic Lela Ochiauri in a review of the film [2, p. 37]. (Directed by Giorgi Ovashvili; screenplay of Nugzar Shatayadze, Giorgi Ovashvili, and Rolof Ian Minebu; producers – Nino Devdariani, Aike Gorechka, Karla Stojáková, Sain Gabdulin; co-producers – Gábor Ferencz. Cinematography by Elemér Ragályi. Leads – Ilia Salman and Mariam Buturishvili.)

When discussing the peculiarities of the Georgian screen art in the Post-Soviet period, we will select several interesting issues:

a) In the 1990s, in Georgia there appeared a profession of film and TV producer typical of Western cinematography. A producer is decisive for television and film organizational and financial issues;

b) Despite the success of Georgian films at foreign festivals, big business involvement

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was still rare in film history, partly because of the lack of cinemas in Georgia. That is why filmmaking was already expensive and then realizing it and getting financial benefits in Georgia were very difficult;

c) By creating the Georgian Film Centre, it was possible to fund film projects, although in recent years, projects is financed in part (maximum 75 percent), but this is a step forward;

d) The adoption of legislation in the field of cinema is defined by the importance of the role and function of the state;

e) Adaption of the legislation made it possible to form the public broadcasting independent from the state;

f) Georgia joined the Bologna process, the country's higher education institutions moved on the 3-level pattern of teaching (BA, MA, PhD), so it was possible for people interested in cinema and television professions to receive higher education at all three stages;

g) Georgian filmmakers were given the opportunity to obtain financing from commercial organizations for implementing projects;

h) In the Post-Soviet period, there have been established private TV companies; many of them have been closed soon, the part continues functioning;

i) The Post-Soviet period coincided with the rapid development of Internet and computer technologies; due to this the film- and television-making process has significantly diminished.

In Post-Soviet Georgia, the production of documentary films is much cheaper compared to feature films. Comparative supply is caused by the development of manufacturing

technologies. At the same time, the number of documentary film crew members is very small in comparison with one of feature films. Documentary films created in Georgia are mainly made for shows on TV.

The largest and most productive documentary film studio is a public broadcaster, producing 32 documentary films during a television season. The themes of the films are various [5].

Modern Georgian screen art exists in the epoch of Internet. The development of Internet made it possible to promote films via the Internet. In Georgia, there are various Internet sites, where you can watch films.

With the increase of Internet users, the number of viewers on the Internet grows. Although a share of financing from the state is insufficient, films created by modern Georgian filmmakers succeed at international film festivals.

Despite the problems, the Georgian state will gradually overcome difficulties and challenges and it will be possible to further develop audio-visual art in Georgia. Optimism gives us an opportunity to create films such those having been successful in recent years in Georgia.

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SUMMARY

In the post-Soviet period (1990s), the Georgian society was not prepared for the transition from the Socialist system to the Capitalist one, politically and economically. Social situation was very complicated. In Georgia, a multi-ethnic, small Caucasian country, immediately upon gaining independence, there have again appeared the conflicts between the centre and Sukhumi and Tskhinvali regions. Because of such difficult conditions in Georgia, it was impossible, unreal and unrealistic to preserve the field of art in the form such as it had existed in the Soviet Union.

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The Georgian state and society had to seek ways to adapt to a new life. After the new parliamentary elections in 1999, the legislation on films was passed on December 5, 2000, and the Law of Georgia on State Support of National Cinematography was launched. Being based on the same law, the Georgian National Film Centre started functioning in April 2001.

When discussing the peculiarities of the Georgian screen art in the Post-Soviet period, we will select several interesting issues:

a) In the 1990s, in Georgia there appeared a profession of film and TV producer typical of Western cinematography. A producer is decisive for television and film organizational and financial issues;

b) Despite the success of Georgian films at foreign festivals, big business involvement was still rare in film history, partly because of the lack of cinemas in Georgia. That is why filmmaking was already expensive and then realizing it and getting financial benefits in Georgia were very difficult;

c) By creating the Georgian Film Centre, it was possible to fund film projects, although in recent years, projects is financed in part (maximum 75 percent), but this is a step forward;

d) The adoption of legislation in the field of cinema has determined and strengthened the importance of the role and function of the state;

e) Adaption of the legislation made it possible to form the public broadcasting independent from the state;

f) Georgia joined the Bologna process, the country's higher education institutions moved on the 3-level pattern of teaching (BA, MA, PhD), so it was possible for people interested in cinema and television professions to receive higher education at all three stages;

g) Georgian filmmakers were given the opportunity to obtain financing from commercial organizations for implementing projects;

h) In the Post-Soviet period, there have been established private TV companies; many of them have been closed soon, the part continues functioning;

i) The Post-Soviet period coincided with the rapid development of Internet and computer technologies; due to this the film- and television-making process has significantly diminished.

In Post-Soviet Georgia, the production of documentary films is much cheaper compared to feature films. Comparative cheapness is caused by the development of manufacturing technologies. Documentaries created in Georgia are mainly made for shows on TV. Georgian documentary films are mainly created to show on TV.

Modern Georgian screen art exists in the epoch of Internet. The development of Internet made it possible to promote films via the Internet. In Georgia, there are various Internet sites, where you can watch films.

Thus, Georgia, which has passed through the most difficult way since independence, endures the problem with its territorial integrity – Abkhazian and Ossetian seperatists have not recognized the jurisdiction of the Georgian state. Despite difficult social problems, Georgia prospers in the development of screen art. Although a share of financing from the state is insufficient, films created by modern Georgian filmmakers succeed at international film festivals.