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WAYS TO OVERCOME THE SCREENWRITING CRISIS IN UKRAINIAN CINEMATOGRAPHY OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1920s

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V. Myslavskyi, N. Markhaichuk. Ways to overcome the screenwriting crisis in Ukrainian cinematography of the second half of the 1920s

The relevance of the article. The history of Ukrainian cinematography of the 1920s is generally well studied. The relevance of this work lies in the fact that there are almost no works in Ukrainian film studies that examine the state of screenwriting in Ukraine during its birth and formation.

Problem statement. After the end of the Soviet-Ukrainian (“civil”) war, which led to the Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine, there was an urgent need to reorganize the work of the entire cinematographic industry. With the organization in 1922 on the basis of the All-Ukrainian Film Committee of the All-Ukrainian Photocinema Administration (VUFKU), the heads of the new film department began to establish sustainable film production, but encountered the problem of a chronic shortage of film scripts.

At this time, the “new” Ukrainian cinematography, for completely external reasons, experienced an acute shortage of screenwriters who had experience in cinematography. Film production, which was growing rapidly and unwaveringly, constantly lacked scripts that would be acceptable from an artistic point of view and at the same time be acceptable to the party bodies from an ideological perspective. Let’s note that there were essentially too many scripts, and film factories were literally “drowning” in the so-called “script flow”. But in this “flow” only a small part turned out to be suitable for implementing from an ideological point of view. Therefore, from the second half of the 1920s, it became increasingly common to talk about a “script crisis”, which was more ideological than creative.

When the VUFKU began its work, “Soviet film dramaturgy” actually did not exist yet. Therefore, the directors turned to an old, time-tested source —

literature. On the basis of literary works, they sought to make films more or less close to the spiritual and social trends of the time.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the controversy surrounding the “screenwriting crisis” in Ukraine stopped. It was then that the management system of the film industry in the USSR was finally transformed. A clear vertical of soviet management with the film center in Moscow is being formed. Ukrainian cinema finally loses its autonomy and Ukrainian film factories start working with scripts approved in Moscow.

Keywords: *Ukrainian cinematography, screenwriting crisis, VUFKU, cinema of the 1920s and 1930s.*

В. Н. Миславський, Н. М. Мархайчук. Шляхи подолання сценарної кризи в українському кінематографі другої половини 1920-х рр.

Історія українського кінематографу 20-х рр. ХХ ст. в цілому вивчена добре. Актуальність цієї праці полягає в тому, що в українському кінознавстві практично відсутні розвідки, у яких аналізується стан сценарної справи в Україні в період її зародження та становлення.

Після завершення радянсько-української («громадянської») війни, яка призвела до більшовицької окупації України, постала гостра потреба в перебудові роботи всієї кінематографічної галузі. Після організації в 1922 р. на базі Всеукраїнського кінокомітету Всеукраїнського фотокіноуправління (ВУФКУ) керівники нового кіновідомства розпочали налагоджувати стале кіновиробництво, але зіткнулись із проблемою хронічної нестачі кіносценаріїв.

У цей час «новий» український кінематограф, з цілком об’єктивних причин, відчув гострий дефіцит сценаристів, які мали б досвід роботи в кінематографі. Кіновиробництву, яке швидко і непохитно зростало, постійно бракувало сценаріїв, що були б

прийнятними в мистецькому плані й водночас влаштовували партійні органи в ідейному аспекті. Зауважимо, що, по суті, сценаріїв було пребагато, і кінофабрики буквально «потопали» у т. зв. «сценарному потоці». Але в цьому «потоці» лише незначна частка виявлялася придатною для постановки з ідеологічної точки зору. Відтак, з другої половини 1920-х рр. дедалі актуальнішою ставала «сценарна криза», яка більшою мірою була ідеологічною, а не творчою.

На початку 1930-х рр. полеміка довкола «сценарної кризи» в Україні припиняється. Саме тоді остаточно трансформується система управління кіногалузі в СРСР. Формується чітка вертикаль союзного управління із кіноцентром у Москві. Український кінематограф остаточно втрачає свою автономію, і українські кінофабрики починають працювати зі сценаріями, затвердженими в Москві.

Ключові слова: український кінематограф, сценарна криза, ВУФКУ, кіно 1920–1930-х років.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The history of Ukrainian cinematography of the 1920s is generally well studied. The relevance of this work lies in the fact that in Ukrainian film studies there are almost no works in which the state of the screenwriting business in Ukraine during its birth and formation was presented as a scientific problem. Ukrainian film expert Larysa Briukhovetska in her work “Interrupted flight. Ukrainian cinema of the VUFKU period: an attempt at reconstruction” (2018) only indirectly touches on the development of screenwriting in the Ukrainian cinema of the 1920s (Briukhovetska, 2018, p. 520–521). In the works of other well-known researchers of Eastern European cinematography of the studied period (Denise Youngblood, Maria Belodubrovskaya), the problem of script crisis in the Ukrainian cinematography of the 1920s was also not a leading one.

Denise Youngblood in the book *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s* (Youngblood, 1993, p. 94–98) also examines actor and script stereotypes in Soviet cinema. As the author rightly points out, it was very difficult to change Soviet stereotypes, since they were determined by politics, and not by the taste of the audience (for example, in American cinema) (Youngblood, 1993, p. 95). The priest could never be a positive or even a neutral character — the state policy of atheism forced the authors to use such

clichés. The film “Earth” by Oleksandr Dovzhenko was scolded precisely for the wrong, according to critics, approach to the interpretation of the image of the priest. We should also note the stereotype in the portrayal of Ukrainians, not only in Russian, but also in Ukrainian cinema. Some screenwriters and directors who worked in Ukrainian cinema (as a rule, Muscovites) were far from understanding Ukrainian culture. Therefore, in their films, Ukrainians were intentionally fake (*vyshyvanka*, *hopak*, etc.).

Denise Youngblood also notes that due to ideological pressure, it was difficult for Soviet authors to develop “real” characters for the screen (Youngblood, 1993, p. 94). However, there were exceptions in Ukrainian cinema. In films shot in the genre of psychological drama, the authors were able to show the voluminous characters of their heroes. As an example, we can cite the excellent acting works of Ivan Zamyckovskyi in the film “Two Days” (1927) by Heorhii Stabovyi and Amvrosii Buchma in the film “The Night Carriage Driver” by Heorhii Tasin (1928).

Denise Youngblood writes that the actor’s “problem” in Soviet cinema arose mainly because of bad scripts with “cardboard” characters. The author explains this problem with the “script crisis”, which was part of a larger crisis of Soviet cinema — the issue of control over the film process (Youngblood, 1993, p. 97–98). Indeed, total state control of all film production cycles, from writing the script to its on-screen embodiment, had a negative impact on the quality of the films produced. In his research, Volodymyr Myslavskyi analyzes in detail ideological control and the influence of censorship on the artistic level of films.

To strengthen the centralization of ideological control by the state, according to Myslavskyi, the introduction of so-called “thematic planning” was used (at first, “planned planning” was implemented, and in the mid-1920s “thematic planning”) (Myslavskyi, 2018, p. 93). The introduction of “thematic planning” was explained by the “controlling bodies” as an overproduction of films on historical topics (the October Revolution and the Soviet-Ukrainian War) and a shortage of films on modern topics reflecting the current problems of Soviet society. After the state was able to fully control the ideological and thematic orientation of Soviet

film production, the quality of films deteriorated, since the main criterion was not the artistic side of the film, but the ideological side. The thematic plan was supposed to become for scriptwriters a certain index in creativity, an organizing principle in the selection and interpretation of themes.

In addition, these so-called thematic plans had an excessively detailed distribution of topics that included both the most urgent problems and secondary issues. And similar insignificant problems were grouped into separate, independent topics. This construction of the plan led to the disorientation of scriptwriters, who could ignore the main themes, because the secondary themes, in their opinion, seemed simpler, clearer and easier to them (Myslavskiy, 2018, p. 93). Inviting professional and amateur writers to write scripts, orienting them so that the films agitated “with their artistic content, and not superficially”, the developers scrupulously determined each topic, that is, in fact, they took the position of propagandists of schematism (Myslavskiy, 2018, p. 95).

Let us emphasize that problems with the quality of script material, as well as active discussions about overcoming the script crisis were held both in Ukraine and in other republics of the state newly founded by the Bolsheviks. However, the authors of this article purposefully avoided a comparative analysis of these processes, since the problems caused by the script crisis were previously analyzed in detail in the work of Volodymyr Myslavskiy “History of Ukrainian cinema 1896–1930: facts and documents” (Myslavskiy, 2018, c. 473–500).

Presentation of the main research material.

After the end of the Soviet-Ukrainian war, which led to the Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine, there was an urgent need to reorganize the work of the entire cinematographic industry primarily ideological. With the organization in 1922 on the basis of the All-Ukrainian Film Committee of the All-Ukrainian Photocinema Administration (VUFKU), the heads of the new film department began to establish sustainable film production, but encountered the problem of a chronic shortage of film scripts.

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growing rapidly and unwaveringly, constantly lacked scripts that would be acceptable from an artistic point of view and at the same time be acceptable to the party bodies from an ideological perspective. Let’s note that there were essentially too many scripts, and film factories were literally “drowning” in the so-called “script flow”. But in this “flow” only a small part turned out to be suitable for implementing from an ideological point of view. Therefore, from the second half of the 1920s, it became increasingly common to talk about a “script crisis”, which was more ideological than creative.

When the VUFKU began its work, “Soviet film dramaturgy” actually did not exist yet. Therefore, the directors turned to an old, time-tested source — literature. On the basis of literary works, they sought to make films more or less close to the spiritual and social trends of the time.

In particular, V. Hardin, who was invited by the VUFKU for collaboration and became one of the first directors in Soviet Ukraine, relied on literary sources in his works. V. Hardin’s first work for the VUFKU was the picture “Mr. Enniok’s Last Stake” (1922), with the script written by H. Vechora based on O. Green’s famous story “The Life of Gnor”. O. Green’s story, devoted to a traditional romantic theme, lacks a clearly expressed social idea, and all interest is focused exclusively on skillfully and clearly defined psychological motives of the characters’ behavior. However, according to the filmmakers of the early 1920s, the story in this form was too “insignificant”, it lacked intensity. And in order to avoid these “flaws” in the picture, “The Life of Gnor” was subjected to a decisive reworking. Enniok turned into a great manufacturer, Gnor into an engineer from a cohort of workers. There is a class struggle between them — Enniok defends the interests of the bourgeoisie, and Gnor — the proletariat. The line of rivalry between the heroes for Carmen remains, but recedes into the background.

In the same year, 1922, V. Hardin released the picture “A ghost wanders through Europe”, with a script by H. Tasin based on the “The Mask of the Red Death” by E. Poe. At the same time, E. Poe’s work was subjected to even more drastic changes than O. Green’s story: the scriptwriter excluded the mystical flavor from the story and completely changed the plot (!). Prince Prospero from E. Poe’s

story appears in the film as the emperor of a fictional state. Together with his entourage, he does not lock himself in his castle from the plague epidemic (originally — “Red Death”), but moves to an island in a remote corner of the country, practically running away from the people who rebelled. There he does not have fun at balls, as in E. Poe’s story, but meets the daughter of a local fisherman and dies at the hands of the rebels as a result of the rebellion raised by the fishermen.

It should be noted that the heroes of these and other similar films did not appear as specific persons. They were infinitely far from reality and represented only an abstract illustration of a social state (manufacturer, worker, emperor, fisherman, etc.). The time and place of action, setting and atmosphere of the paintings were also conditional. Even in V. Hardin’s film “The Locksmith and the Chancellor” (1923), which was based on the play of the same name by A. Lunacharskyi and received favorable reviews from critics, the brand of schematicism and abstractness could be traced in the images of all the heroes of the picture.

The free processing of primary sources by the scriptwriters was explained by the fact that they were looking for images of a “new hero” within the limits of a modern theme, which correlates with the requirements of the “new time”. According to contemporaries, the supporters of the new, already Soviet film production actively perceived the revolution, but reflected it in their works not in real events and images, but in revolutionary symbols. In the future, the art of cinema strove in every possible way to free itself from abstract symbolism and reflect the realities of modern life. There was also an opinion that scriptwriters are mostly unsuccessful playwrights.

Volodymyr Zatonskyi, People’s Commissar of Education of the USSR in 1922–1924 (now recognized as one of the executors of the Holodomor in Ukraine), instilled the opinion that the Soviet community needed paintings of various genres, but with “revolutionary proletarian leaven” and a decent artistic level. In particular, stating that Soviet playwrights and scriptwriters have the task of “giving good scenarios”, he insisted, in accordance with the new socio-cultural realities of his time, that “as long as there are no such plays,

it is better to limit ourselves to species, scientific pictures, demonstrations of certain events of the current moment, than to poison the mind with the adventures of American detectives or sentimental, thoroughly bourgeois dramas — this product of bourgeois culture and, worse, the product of its decay. We need to learn from the bourgeoisie the ability to exert our influence with the help of such a powerful weapon as cinema” (Narkompros USSR Zatonsky, 1923, p. 10–11).

Cinema organizations tried to overcome the acute lack of “ideologically high-quality” scripts that was in 1922–1923 by actively involving the public. Thus, in September 1922, a screenplay competition was held, announced by the Odesa branch of the VUFKU (Screenplay contest, 1922, p. 22). The following year, 1923, the VUFKU once again announced a script competition (Production work of the VUFKU in Odesa, 1923, p. 11). According to press reports, scripts for the VUFKU competition were received in large numbers: by October 5, 1923, the VUFKU had 42 scripts at its disposal (Chronicle, 1923, p. 24). However, according to the results of the competition, only one film was produced — the adventure picture “Ukrasia” (1925), presented the same year at the Paris International Exhibition. From October 1929 to April 1930, the board of the VUFKU decided to hold a competition once again for the best film script on topics from the approved thematic plan: anti-religious youth in the revolution, socialist competitions, the collective farm, newcomer at school. A total of 6 prizes were established: one — 3000 rubles, two — 2250 each, and three — 1500 each (Contest for the best script, 1929, p. 14; Contest for a script, 1930, p. 8). However, apparently, even this measure did not give positive results.

The scientific script commission (founded in 1923) paid special attention to the technical improvement of script development with the tasks set by the party for Soviet film production. This commission was supposed to grow into a laboratory in which it was planned to establish research work “on the development of new forms of the script and the study of the psychology of the viewer”, with the aim of revealing his preferences. For this purpose, a special survey of the audience and discussions after the end of the sessions were planned (Kino, 1923, p. 216).

However, the work of the commission did not play a special role. As before, there was a catastrophic lack of acceptable scenarios. In 1924, at the request of Z. Khelmno, the chairman of the board of the VUFKU, from January 1 to July 1, about 60 scripts were submitted to the VUFKU for consideration by various literary groups and individual authors, among which only three were suitable for production (Helmno, 1924, p. 2). In a report at the congress of artists, the People's Commissar of Education of the USSR M. Skrypnyk reported that in 1924, 1065 scripts were submitted, among which 833 turned out to be unsuitable, 116 were accepted for production, and the rest were put to the archive (Skrypnyk, 1927, p. 59). According to O. Shuba, the chairman of the board of the VUFKU, in the 1924/25 financial year, 295 scripts were sent to the editorial department of the VUFKU; in 1925/26 — 772, and during 9 months of 1927 — 466. Among the scripts sent, only 5% were recommended for production (Shub, 1927, p. 4–5). So, in 1928, it was planned to produce 39 films. However, during 7 months, only 4 scripts out of the required 40 were approved. Among the 50 previously sent scripts, not a single suitable one was found (VUFKU in despair, 1928, p. 9). In May, at the Odesa Film Factory, among 60 available scripts, only 5 (!) turned out to be suitable for production (E. K., 1928, p. 12).

According to the correct opinion of the critics of the time, in pre-revolutionary Russia, the production of the film depended entirely on the director, who was responsible for both the content and the production of the film. In the new Soviet film production, a different approach to film production was needed, which the old cadres were not able to provide (Ways of work of the VUFKU, 1924, p. 3). O. Brik, one of the theorists of the Soviet avant-garde, rightly pointed out that any Western director, cinematographer, artist could successfully work in Soviet cinema, but no Western scriptwriter, even the most experienced, could make an ideologically suitable script (Brik, 1927, p. 11).

In order to get out of the situation and quench the “script hunger”, in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa, in accordance with the planned tasks of the VUFKU, groups of writers were created to create scripts. In addition to independent authors, they included the following organizations: “Proletkult”, “Potoki”,

“Komunkult”, “Lef”, “Hart”, the film faculty and film studios (Kino-chronicle, 1924, p. 5). Attempts were also made to involve the public in a sincere and broad discussion of the scenarios of future productions. In mid-September 1924, a reading of one-act scripts was held at the Odesa Film Factory with the involvement of public organizations (Public reading of screenplays, 1924, p. 19). At the beginning of February 1925, a meeting of an initiative group of playwrights and scriptwriters was held in the House of Arts. The possibility of creating the Society of Playwrights, Screenwriters and Composers was discussed (Visti VUTsVK, 1925). In May 1925, a section of film scriptwriters was created at the “Stanok” literary circle under the leadership of S. Waiting (Teatral'naja nedelja, 1925). On April 7 1925, the Third All-Ukrainian Congress of the Union of Peasant Writers “Pluh” adopted a resolution on strengthening ideological work on the literary front, within which it was decided to take an active part in the creation of Soviet films and that the Central Committee of “Pluh” entered into closer cooperation with the editor of the VUFKU (Cultural Construction in the Ukrainian SSR: 1917–1927, 1979, p. 443).

In the second half of the 1920s, a heated debate broke out on the pages of the press about the causes of the “script crisis” and ways to overcome it. Along with film workers and thorough articles, Ukrainian writers and scriptwriters D. Buzko (Buzko, 1927b, p. 232–337; Buzko 1927a, p. 10–14; Buzko, 1929, p. 132–133) and V. Radysh stand out (Radysh, 1926, p. 6).

They noted that there are several reasons of the “script crisis”. One of them was the irrational, wasteful and therefore unprofitable scriptwriting management of the VUFKU. Dozens of examples testify that the scripts were bought by film agencies after passing all the stages, but for various reasons were never staged. The editors of the Odesa Film Factory, as a rule, accepted for production only one of the two scripts already accepted and paid for by the VUFKU. Later the percentage of scripts that the film factory refused to produce was constantly growing. Despite the catastrophic lack of scripts and being aware of the responsibility for refusing to stage already purchased scripts, in the first half of 1927 the management of the Odesa Film Factory

informed the board of the VUFKU that 25 scripts sent by it were not suitable for staging (Starskyi, 1927, p. 12). In 1928, the situation did not change. According to the director of the Odesa Film Factory P. Neches, the board of the VUFKU sent to the film factory 50 scripts approved by the editors of the film department for production. But when the directors reviewed these scripts at the factory, they were rejected and returned (VUFKU in despair, 1928, p. 9).

It is worth emphasizing that it was not so easy to “push through” the script. Before getting to the film factory, the script was approved by several authorities. But even before it was reviewed, sometimes five, and sometimes more months passed (Shamin, 1927, p. 11). Naturally, such bureaucratic red tape contributed to the “script crisis”. The director of the Odesa Film Factory P. Neches reported on a case when the screenwriter had to go through 65 authorities before his script was finally approved (VUFKU in despair, 1928, p. 9). On several occasions, the authors of the provided scripts did not receive a response from the editors for months, and the received ones often did not justify the refusal to purchase the script (Eichys, 1926, p. 7).

Let's note that the film factory itself was placed in abnormal conditions in terms of working with scripts. The VUFKU editorial office was detached from production, which created bureaucracy and delays in the consideration of scripts. And although in the future, before making a certain decision about the script, the VUFKU sent it to the film factory for withdrawal, this innovation played almost no role in overcoming the “script crisis”. Due to the low quality of the scripts offered by the VUFKU, the Odesa Film Factory had to reduce the pace of production — only 4 of the 8 directing groups remained. P. Neches was even forced to appear in the press with a proposal to grant the film factory the right to independently accept and purchase scripts. He also offered to create his own script workshop at the factory (E. K., 1928, p. 12).

However, in the mid-1920s, there was an opinion that writing a script was so simple and so profitable that anyone could do it. And since a significant number of prominent writers, for various reasons, were in no hurry to realize their work in the cinema, the VUFKU, instead of directing all its efforts to

attract writers to film work, managed to get help from the outside. This stimulated an unorganized influx of scripts, as a result of which the editorial departments of film organizations were bogged down with a huge amount of script material of not the best quality. (Lifshyts, 1926, p. 1). “Submitting a manuscript to a publishing house and receiving a fee for it is natural and simple,” — noted the playwright A. Piotrovskyi. — To make a work for a movie and then wait for “passing the authorities”: artistic bureau of factories, board, Repertory Committee — it is complicated and connected with reworks and refinements and only to a small extent guarantees a writer real remuneration. Under the existing system of contracts and the lack of consistency in the requirements of the mentioned “authorities”, literary work for cinema can be likened to a kind of “lottery” (Piotrovskyi, 1928, p. 6).

M. Skrypnyk also emphasized that due to the reluctance of writers to start writing scripts, due to the lack of a clear legal definition of their copyrights (notes about plagiarism in Ukrainian cinema and lawsuits in this regard repeatedly appeared in the press), people who do not know the specifics of film production (Maiorska, 1927, p. 12; Edelshtein, 1929, p. 2). Over time, the writers did suggest that the VUFKU send the petition to the VUTsVK to issue a decree prohibiting people who have nothing to do with cinema and literature from writing scripts (Zahorskyi, 1928, p. 12), since, as noted by the Ukrainian novelist and screenwriter D. Buzko, according to the statistics of editorship from more or less qualified writers or cinematographers-artists, you could always expect material suitable for staging. Of course, there were surprises, but only as an exception (Buzko, 1927a, p. 10).

In 1927, M. Skrypnyk published interesting information about the number of all authors who submitted scripts to the VUFKU editorial office from October 1, 1926 to March 1, 1927. Out of 337 authors, there were more or less permanent ones — 35, i.e., 10%; episodic — 74, i.e., 18%; accidental — 268, i.e. 72% (Skrypnyk, 1927, p. 58). As for the number of screenwriters who were accepted into the production, they were distributed as follows: 40% were writers, and 60% were directors and other film workers who knew film techniques and adapted literary works into scripts (Piotrovskyi, 1928, p. 6).

However, the issue of the relationship between script authors, editors, actors and directors remained unresolved. Some scriptwriters protested that the films did not meet their screenplay intentions. Due to this, there was a discussion about who is the author of the film — the author of the script, the director or the editor. Scriptwriters emphasized that they lay the foundation for cinema, that without a script, cinema cannot exist, but the directors, in turn, insisted that without reworking the script, without its cinematographic correction, no script can be realized into a film.

The history of the production of the scripts of “Taras Triasylo” by V. Radysh (1926; dir. Petro Chardynin) and “Provocateur” by O. Dosvitnyi (1927; dir. V. Turin) most vividly testifies to the abnormality of poorly established relations between the authors and the VUFKU. Both scripts were changed so much during the production that both scriptwriters filed lawsuits against the VUFKU.

The relations between the VUFKU and the Collective of Directors, Writers and Scriptwriters (KORELIS) were also not well established, which gave reason to reproach the film department for ignoring cooperation with Ukrainian writers. In particular, D. Buzko emphasized that “a war is starting between the Board of the VUFKU and “Korelis” — an organization of writers interested in cinematography. “Korelis” drags the Board to a public duel — to a public discussion of relations between writers and the VUFKU. The board responds to this challenge with proud disdain and... hospitably opens its doors to movie slackers, because they want scripts, but don't want to “bow down” to the writers. Thus, the following scripts were born: “Suspicious Luggage” and “Shadows of the Belvedere” by Zolin and “Case No. 128” and “Sorochnyn Fair” by Hurevych. The very fact of accepting up to two scripts from each of these unknown authors shows the fervor with which the VUFKU, neglecting Ukrainian writers, looked for help on the side” (Buzko, 1929, p. 140). And this is despite the fact that two years ago, the chairman of the board of the VUFKU, O. Shub, categorically stated that the VUFKU had set a goal of attracting the best forces of Ukrainian literature to work as permanent scriptwriters for joint development of scripts with directors and active participation in the production of films. Also, in his report of 1927, the

official called on literary public organizations to give their best efforts to work in cinema and to take this work seriously together with the VUFKU (O. SH., 1927, p. 4–5), because due to the involvement of poorly educated authors, the editor of the VUFKU sometimes had to actually make the entire script himself, create an “artistic thing” and receive 300 rubles for this work, while the author received from 1000 to 1500 rubles for his “illiterate writing”, and put his name in the script, which actually already belonged to the editor (Zahorskyi, 1928, p. 12).

However, if in the first half of the 1920s among writers there were hardly two or three brave writers who dared “tarnish their literary dignity” by writing a script, then in the second half of the 1920s almost all Ukrainian writers were “tarnished” thanks to passion for cinema. But almost every writer has a negative memory of cooperation with the VUFKU.

One of the first to fall under the pressure of the bureaucratic machine of the VUFKU was the writer P. Panch, who wrote a light and good humorous script “Red heifer” for the film magazine “Mahovyk”. The representatives of the VUFKU forced the author to redo the script many times and quite seriously considered it their right to give the author certain instructions, often of a ridiculously detailed nature. In addition, they sometimes even claimed that their names were submitted as the names of co-authors. Although, according to some writers, it was done by people with aplomb who had nothing to do with creativity. When the film “Red heifer” (1927; not preserved to this day) was released on the screen with all kinds of directorial revisions, P. Panch made a vow never to take on scripts in his life.

Such situations caused disdain for scriptwriting in literary circles. And since there was no peace and agreement between writers and the VUFKU, among the scriptwriters there were not enough leading Ukrainian writers (Buzko, 1929, p. 137–138).

According to D. Buzko, the VUFKU's disagreement with literary circles was always expressed in the director's unsuccessful reworking of scripts, with the exception of the reworkings of O. Dovzhenko, who was a good scriptwriter himself. Also, almost any employee of the VUFKU could give various instructions to the author of the script, which practically “managed” his work. Then the scriptwriter was subjected to the same “dictatorship”

by the Higher Film Repertory Committee (Buzko, 1929, p. 141).

Reviewing the scripts of 1927–1928, D. Buzko noted that they had “the same patterned mixture of new authors. There are also literary stars, not ours, of course (because we still have sight): Mayakovsky, Erdman. There are also newcomers who boldly start their literary career simply from a “difficult” (according to Lunacharskyi) literary form — the film script. The consequences of such boldness are, of course, sad. <...> The graduation year of 1928 has not yet ended. Most of this year’s films have not yet been screened. But, knowing them from demonstrations at the VUFKU, we have to state a sad fact: this year’s scripts are even worse than the previous ones. And, in addition, even the number of scripts suitable for staging began to fall rapidly. So, instead of development, we have a decay. And this is after we entered the period of prosperity in all other spheres of art” (Buzko, 1929, p. 141, 143).

The editors of the VUFKU explained the similar handling of the script material to the writers as follows: “Our directors have grown up, and you are giving the propaganda paper of the first days of the revolution...”. In fact, the directors not only did not “grow up”, but so far “grew up” only because all the directors, with the exception of one or two, according to D. Buzko, are “green film youth” who take their first steps in directing, having one or two staged motion pictures in the track record. And this “green film youth” with the desire to stage “super action movies”, want to have a film script with such a deep and original thought, which would be able to “take away” all the inevitable shortcomings of the future film due to the inexperience. And film scripts Only the VUFKU needed less than fifty were needed per year without taking into account the film factory being built in Kyiv (Buzko, 1927a, p. 11).

So, from all the material presented above, the following reasons for the “screenwriting crisis” can be pointed out: 1) lack of purposeful work of the VUFKU regarding the training of scriptwriters; 2) conservative attitude of some writers and even literary organizations towards film production; 3) the specificity of script creativity compared to the general literary and artistic creativity; 4) limitation of scriptwriters in choosing topics and repetition of

the same plots by several authors; 5) simplifying the interpretation of any relevant topic and some others.

In the 1920s, some contemporaries began to lean toward the idea of creating a script workshop at film factories, which became one of the organizational structures of film production, as well as editor, cameraman, director, etc. Proponents of this concept believed that the presence of permanent scriptwriters in film production cannot be avoided, and the assumption that the factory can directly deal with “authors from the outside” comes from an amateur’s idea of literary work. They also argued that writers who write short stories, dramas, novels are not always capable of writing scripts and, accordingly, criticized the idea that any writer can easily write a script. The argument for these ideas was that many writers do not understand the specific tasks that the script carries in film production, and treat the script as an anecdote that can either be told or shown on the screen. They proved that the scriptwriter primarily deals not with verbal material, but with visual material, which requires other methods of development. These methods do not come directly from writing, but must be implemented in the production process. “Authors from the outside” were assigned only the role of generating ideas for future films, since any cultured, literate person could do it, and no literary culture was needed for this. Such an opinion turned out to be partially justified, since some employees of the “writer’s workshop” offered scripts based on their own material, which for some reason was not published.

A. Piotrovskyi also considered it vitally important to improve the situation with the “screenwriting crisis” to create script workshops at film factories, or, as he called them, “literature cinematization laboratories”, but with the mandatory involvement of professional writers who were supposed to contribute to the creation of “literary raw material”, i.e., themes and librettos, creation of plots, characters, everyday problems and compositional nodes. Piotrovskyi also highlighted the need to increase the remuneration of scriptwriters, whose fee ranged from 1% to 1.5% of the film budget, while abroad this amount was from 5% to 10% (Piotrovskyi, 1928, p. 6).

The writer and scriptwriter M. Yatko supported his colleague: “There is only one answer — a script workshop. Only this can solve this issue, only this

will help us to bring our production out of the crisis. In addition, the script workshop is the only way to standardize the script work in a strong connection between the work of the Art Department of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and the production. <...> It is time to move from “artistic” disorder to the system of a factory, a plant, to a conveyor between the board of the VUFKU, the editorial board, which regulates the artistic part of film production, and the laboratory. <...> By the way, in such a system, it is also possible to use the “luck”, from which you can sometimes find an interesting topic that should be worked on in the script workshop. Therefore, at the VUFKU, the screenwriters should work, who would work on all stages of the script together with the directors according to the tasks of the Art Department” (Yatko, 1928, p. 2).

Ukrainian writer V. Radysh, who came to cinema in 1926 (in 1927–1929 he managed the artistic department of the Odesa Film Factory), outlined the ways to eliminate the “screenwriting crisis” in a report at the KORELIS meeting on April 17, 1926. They came down to the rationalization of script management, which had to be built taking into account the objective features of film production in general and the individualist, craftsman-scriptwriter in particular. In his opinion, the “wasteful” and “irrational” script management of Ukrainian cinematographers consisted in: 1) underestimating the objective conditions of film production; 2) in the “self-seeking” screenwriters and 3) in disdain for the authors’ creative interest. Recognizing this, V. Radysh proposed three methods of rational script management: 1) a method based on a course on the rational upbringing of a qualified craftsman-scriptwriter; 2) a method with a course on professionalization and proletarianization of the craftsman-scriptwriter and 3) a method of combined management. He was sure that the basis of the rational upbringing of a skilled scriptwriter should be a good average rate for a script worthy of production. The fee for the screenplay was supposed to allow the scriptwriter to live without much risk for six months, that is, until he finished work on the next script. In his opinion, a scriptwriter could write no more than two high-quality scripts per year, and should receive a decent salary in order not to look for part-time work elsewhere (Radysh, 1926, p. 6).

V. Radysh saw efficient script management in the ratio: 5 full-time scriptwriters for 10 directing groups. In addition, craftsmen scriptwriters should be involved for the work. He believed that such a method of combined script management would relieve the film industry of unwanted dependence on full-time professional scriptwriters, stimulate the influx of new qualified creative scriptwriting forces, make it possible to replace less qualified full-time scriptwriters with more qualified and talented ones, ensure the progressive development of scriptwriting, as creative competition between full-time professional scriptwriter and freelance scriptwriter (Radysh, 1926, p. 6).

In 1927–1929, a number of measures were taken at the state level aimed at overcoming the “screenwriting crisis” and the further normalization of all film production. The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U at the Robmys All-Ukrainian Committee plenum, which was held in January 1927, noted the weak ideological and artistic value of a large part of the films produced by the VUFKU and offered to draw the attention of the Narkomos and the VUFKU to the involvement of fresh forces in scriptwriting and directing work, that will be able to provide ideologically sound material (the Central Committee of the CP(b)U and the Plenum of the All-Ukrainian Committee of the Robmys Union on the activities of the VUFKU, 1927, p. 31).

On the eve of the First Party Meeting at the Central Committee of the CP(b)U, the 2nd plenum of the Robmys All-Ukrainian Committee was held, at which, in order to eliminate the “screenwriting crisis” of the VUFKU, it was recommended to create a permanent staff of scriptwriters with the involvement of representatives of plants, factories and villages in this work as well (About the state and prospects of the film industry, 1927, p. 6). At the very First Party Meeting at the Central Committee of the CP(b)U, it was noted that planning, which was very difficult to establish in Ukrainian production, was hampered by a chaotic and spontaneous influx of scripts. Scripts were sent by different authors on topics of their own choice; the best scripts went to production, and therefore, the subject of film production was not planned by anyone. The meeting recognized this state of affairs as abnormal

and suggested that the VUFKU, by attracting writers to permanent work, “create cinematographically educated scriptwriters”, who would form the backbone of the VUFKU script workshop, which, according to the participants of the meeting, would become the basis for the thematic planning of film production (S. L., 1928, p. 1).

But, since the directives of the plenum and the partner council remained unfulfilled, over time the Robmys All-Ukrainian Committee adopted another resolution, in which the VUFKU was ordered to establish full contact with the organizations of scriptwriters (VUARDIS and KORELIS) and to speed up the organization of the script workshop at the film factory (On the state of work of the VUFKU, 1928, p. 4).

In December 1927, the representatives of KORELIS, writers O. Vyshnia and V. Polishchuk, gave speeches at the meeting of the Board of the People’s Commissariat of Education of the USSR. The People’s Commissariat took note of their proposal to discuss in KORELIS the opinion of the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment regarding the law on cinema, which must be issued in Ukraine, and in which it is necessary to determine whether a film is a separate type of artistic work, and who is its author, besides the scriptwriter (On the copyright of film scripts: Decree of the People’s Commissariat of Education of the Ukrainian SSR dated December 31, 1927, 1928).

On the basis of the joint resolution of the All-Ukrainian Central Electoral Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR dated February 6, 1929 “On copyright” (On copyright: Decree of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR of February 6, 1929, 1929) the People’s Commissariat of Education of the USSR adopted the resolution “On copyright fees for public demonstration of dramatic, musical, cinematographic and other works”, in which an explanation was given about the payment of royalties to authors of scripts (On royalties for public performances of dramatic, musical, cinematographic, and other works: Resolution of the NKO of the Ukrainian SSR dated April 22, 1929).

On September 13 and 14, 1928, the All-Ukrainian Conference of Writers was held in Kyiv, devoted to

the discussion of the thematic plan of the VUFKU for 1928–1929. Famous Kharkiv and Kyiv writers took part in his work. In particular, V. Pidmohylnyi noted that the script has nothing to do with literature, and obviously, not all writers will be able to be scriptwriters. O. Dovzhenko noted that the writer should not interfere in the production of the script, but should only give the idea of the script. Design is the director’s business. As a result, the meeting adopted a special resolution (Writers and Ukrainian cinema, 1928, p. 15).

The first script meeting advocated the principles of close relations between cinematography and literature, as a result of which cinematography received solid support from literary circles. The second scenario meeting went further along the lines of practical implementation of the tasks set by the party on the film industry. Writers and representatives of various organizations engaged in cultural and educational work took part in the Second All-Ukrainian Scriptwriting Conference, convened by the VUFKU at the end of June 1929. Based on the analysis of the that situation, they discussed the issue of training new personnel for cinematography, scriptwriting, and the thematic plan for 1929–1930. The meeting emphasized the need for a strong relationship between cinema and literature for the successful creation of scripts. The meeting also discussed the issue of training scriptwriters in educational institutions and at the same time emphasized the need for thematic planning of film production.

Regarding the personnel issue, it was emphasized that the backbone of the new film production was made up mainly of people who came from other branches of art (painting, theater, sculpture, etc.), and therefore it lacked directors and actors who started their work in the field of cinema without heritage, traditions, skills from another art. Therefore, this method of replenishing the artistic personnel in the film industry could not satisfy the requirements of film production in the future. Therefore, there was an urgent need to create a system of permanent, systematic training of highly qualified and “cinematographically clean”, “without the burden of heritage” directors, cameramen, actors, artists, etc. (Medvediev, 1929, p. 110).

All this required the opening of a professional film institute in Ukraine, since the film technical school, which trained technical workers in the cinematographic industry (cameramen, directors, and partly film actors), did not justify itself due to an insufficiently serious attitude to this issue, as well as the lack of the necessary number of appropriate professors. Therefore, it was recommended to transfer the education system in film schools to a system of training only technical workers, namely cameramen, laboratory assistants, lighting technicians, etc.

The meeting also discussed the opinion of some cinematographers that literary forces and literature itself (in its pure form) cannot be used in cinema, as they have nothing in common with each other; corresponding practical conclusions were made, which amounted to the fact that literature should not work in cinematography, since cinematographic forces in general and scripts in particular must be drawn from other sources. The script meeting, which was mainly represented by representatives of Ukrainian proletarian literature, did not support this point of view. The majority expressed the need, at any cost, to attract as many representatives of literary organizations as possible to film production as soon as possible and with a more extensive front. However, other participants of the meeting proved that it was not possible to rely mainly on literary forces, but people who were not in any literary organization would be involved in the film process. However, this opinion was not supported by the majority of meeting participants. They did not receive support and attempts to separate literature from film art, to ignore the script as one of the independent types of dramatic creativity.

In its work, the script meeting relied entirely on the decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) on personnel, which referred to the involvement of proletarian and peasant writers in the permanent work on the preparation of librettos and scripts and the establishment of permanent contact between writers organizations and film organizations (Vorobiov, 1929, p. 2). Director of the Odesa Film Factory S. Orelovych supported the general opinion of the meeting and, in this regard, emphasized: "The experience of the Ukrainian film industry in recent years proved that the statement

that scripts should not be written by writers, but by some special category of people, called scriptwriters and has nothing to do with literature. <...> It is clear that not all literature can be a script, but a good script for a feature film is definitely literature" (Orelovych, 1929, p. 2).

Film expert and screenwriter M. Liadov noted the importance of reviewing the approach to the script issue by the directorate of the VUFKU. He noted that finally "one more mistake of the artistic policy of the Ukrainian National Academy of Arts has been corrected: contracts have been concluded for a number of scripts with representatives of modern Ukrainian literature — Slisarenko, Panch, Kopylenko, Johansen (the author of "Zvenyhora") and others. Currently, the "preparation" of scripts is carried out mainly in the order of loading of the script workshop at the film factory. Seven scriptwriters attached to the workshop work on the basis of approximate differentiation in various areas of subject matter and social and everyday material. The main sections of the thematic plan of the factory: working life, village and children's repertoire" (Liadov, 1929, p. 72).

However, the matter did not proceed beyond the talks. Director of the Kyiv Film Factory, P. Kosiachnyi, in the pages of the "Kino" magazine, presented arguments for getting out of the "screenwriting crisis", which at that time had already reached its peak. "The past experience has proven that it is impossible to orientate production only on a luck. It is necessary to attract the best literary forces to script workshops, closely and organically combining their work with production. It is necessary to distribute script workshops at the Kyiv and Odesa factories and at the same time quickly organize a script workshop in Kharkiv. Literary and artistic forces must help this cause, take on a firm order through the selection of the best forces for script workshops, through the production of an appropriate number of scripts by individual members of these organizations" (Kosiachnyi, 1930, p. 11).

But the problems related to the "screenwriting crisis" were obviously better seen "from the outside": "We want to say a few words about the script business of our cinematography. It must be stated that this case is in a catastrophic state. Despite the thematic

plan, the VUFKU lacks scripts with working themes. But even all those films that were released or that were supposed to be released, from the thematic point of view, cannot satisfy the requirements of the modern audience to any extent, not to mention their formal quality. The script workshop of the Kyiv Film Factory and the editorial board organized the script work in such a way that this organization only worsens the case. No systematic work on the processing of raw script material is carried out at the factory. The whole thing consists in non-periodic meetings of the art department, which accepts script material or rejects it. When amendments are proposed, they are so chaotic and often deny that the corrected script does not become better. Thus, the Robmys Union about the activity of “collective creativity” only repels from the factory those forces that could work in a different setting of this case. Then, of course, you won’t persuade people and save the situation with any contests. When a writer writes a novel or a story at his own risk, he is nevertheless sure that his work will not be lost; when he writes a script for the factory, he will necessarily meet a “dry” official approach and indifference and no help or advice, although each script requires the work of the entire artistic staff of the factory” (Vlasenko, 1930, p. 66).

The question of the fruitful interaction of cinema and literature appeared for the first time in the pages of the magazine “Kino” during the discussion “Ukrainian classics on the screen” (1927–1928). In particular, the participants of the discussion emphasized the difference between the literary image, which appears with the help of words, and the film image, which is created mainly with the help of plastic, visual means of expression. There were different points of view on the script and its nature. According to a certain group of contemporaries, the nature of the script is purely cinematic, and therefore the connection of the script with literature was categorically denied. Oleksii Poltoratskyi, Solomon Orelovych and others considered that the script was not a “literary product”. The idea of a “numerical” or “technical” script is born, to some extent, as a reaction to the method of creating a film on the editing table, in which the script was considered only “raw material”, a “semi-finished product” in the hands of an all-powerful director. But in the

“technical” script, the protocol-like, unmoved presentation of events, saturated with cinematic terms, destroyed the vivid imagery, reduced both its literary and cinematic qualities.

Conclusions. At that time, the Ukrainian desire for independence from the Bolshevik center in the national and cultural context helped Ukrainian artistic and literary circles to unite in order to use their creative potential to the fullest extent. This is how the Ukrainian cultural revival of the 1920s became possible, which for completely objective reasons received the infamous name “executed”. From the turn of the 1920s–1930s, feeling the danger posed by the original Ukrainian literature and drama, the Communist Party became more and more persistent in asserting its claims to full control of Soviet culture (including Ukrainian one) and set the goal of creating a new model of culture and arts that would fully serve its ideological postulates. And in order to achieve this goal, leading Ukrainian writers and playwrights, who, as our research shows, could lead Ukrainian film dramaturgy in their own way, in the 1930s, such as Ostap Vyshnia, experienced political repression, or, like Oles Dosvitnyi (1891–1934), Mark Johansen (1895–1937), Valerian Pidmohylnyi (1901–1937), Valerian Polishchuk (1897–1937), Oleksii Slisarenko (1891–1937) — physical destruction.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the controversy surrounding the “screenwriting crisis” in Ukraine stopped. During the 1930s it was then that the management system of the film industry in the USSR was finally transformed. A clear vertical of soviet management with the film center in Moscow is being formed the Soviet capital. Ukrainian cinema finally loses its autonomy and Ukrainian film factories start working with scripts approved by the central authorities, ideologically verified.

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