

HISTORICAL SCIENCES

THE FILM "SHADOWS OF FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS": THE IMPACT OF UKRAINIAN CINEMA ON CULTURAL LIFE OF UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES

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Ukrainian cinema plays a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, affirming national identity, and fostering collaboration among various Ukrainian groups in the United States. The impact is manifested through various aspects, such as the portrayal of Ukrainian traditions, language, and history in films, which can strengthen the diaspora's connection to their native culture. Additionally, Ukrainian films provide a platform for discussing themes related to Ukraine's history and contemporary issues, essential for maintaining a shared identity among Ukrainians worldwide.

The cultural life of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States is closely intertwined with films from Ukraine. At numerous film screenings abroad, Ukrainians gathered around Ukrainian films, developed a style of reviewing them in the pages of their press, promoted Ukrainian culture to higher institutions in North America, museums, and philharmonics. Through Ukrainian productions, they created an image of Ukrainians, Ukrainian immigrants, and Ukraine as a whole.

In the mid-20th century, the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States closely followed all news that could shed light on the events and life of the Ukrainian SSR. The term "Ukrainian poetic cinema" may not have been known overseas, but films of that period were discussed by prominent Ukrainian figures in the U.S. in the emigrant press. From 1964 to 1979, the North American diaspora learned of only three films in the poetic genre and saw only one – "The Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" [2, p. 1].

The Ukrainian diaspora in the U.S. always reacted keenly to events in the contemporary Ukrainian SSR and films depicting the homeland and the native land they had left behind. Therefore, their perception of films and events from the poetic era of Ukrainian cinema is of interest to historians, art critics, source researchers, film experts, biographers, those studying U.S. themes, film history, the Ukrainian diaspora, Ukrainian art, prominent figures of the Ukrainian

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diaspora, Ukrainian public figures, dissidents, journalism, and, of course, Ukrainian poetic cinema.

The oldest newspaper in the world in the Ukrainian language, "Svoboda", belongs to the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States. This newspaper is the only regular publication of the diaspora that actively covered the topic of Ukrainian poetic cinema. Its archives allow us to navigate the history of the poetic wave, biographies of directors, actors, film crews, events from 1964 to 2023 worldwide, the perspective on the poetic cinema wave within the country of origin, and the attitudes of prominent public figures towards it. This also enables the comparison of views and perspectives on the phenomenon of the cinema wave from the Ukrainian intelligentsia, Soviet authorities, European censors, and the Ukrainian diaspora in North America. From the films of the poetic cinema era, "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" was presented at international film festivals in Argentina, Italy, Greece, France, the USA, and Australia [6]. It was the only film of the poetic wave of Ukrainian cinema that was exported beyond the borders of the Soviet Union and shown to the Ukrainian community in the USA during those years, arising certain debates among diaspora members regarding the film's reception as either Soviet propaganda or part of the dissident movement.

The film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" proved to be extremely popular among Ukrainian Americans. The film captured attention and became a favorite among a broad audience, especially within the immigrant community. Its unique and expressive aesthetics, deep content, and ability to recreate Ukrainian cultural heritage contributed to its status as a cult film for the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States. It became a source of pride and a crucial element in the celebration and preservation of cultural identity among Ukrainians in a new socio-cultural environment. Additionally, it brought together various Ukrainian groups, contributing to the development of the diaspora's cultural life.

The film, created by Parajanov, was first presented to the public on September 19, 1966, in New York. According to the publication "Svoboda" on September 21, 1966, the concert hall was completely filled, predominantly with Ukrainians, indicating a successful reception among the audience. However, some members of the Round Table Club expressed criticism, but overall, "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" received a positive response from Ukrainians in the diaspora.

The second screening for the diaspora in the United States took place at the "Paths of Culture" camp (East Chatham, New York) at the end of August 1966. In this camp, writers, poets, musicians, actors, journalists, artists, and diaspora artists participated. As reported in the newspaper on August 30, 1966, "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" was shown alongside films "Earth" and "Zvenigora" by Oleksandr Dovzhenko.

In an article in "Svoboda" on February 16, 1968, the Ukrainian Student Circle in Winnipeg, Canada, was mentioned, which sponsored the film screening at the University of Manitoba in late November-early December 1967. It was noted that the university theater, where the film was shown, was attended by over 500 students, university faculty, and the general public. The film generated significant interest among representatives of various faculties and communities, especially students and professors of the Arts faculty [3, p. 3].

In 1971, in the issue dated November 19, a significant article was written about the Ukrainian Festival of Arts in Canada (August 30 – September 3, 1971) in Thunder Bay, Ontario. This festival provided Ukrainian artists and the Ukrainian diaspora with an opportunity to exchange ideas, showcase their creations, and explore contemporary art trends. The article included the names of diaspora artists. In the paragraph dedicated to films, Roman Kroiter from Montreal and Sviatoslav Novytsky from New York were mentioned. Films by these directors on Ukrainian themes were shown at the Thunder Bay festival alongside films from the USSR, such as "Dovbush" and "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" [1, p. 5].

On April 28, 1972, the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" was screened at Columbia University, New York [4, p. 1]. As reported in the "Svoboda" issue dated April 25, this became possible thanks to the Ukrainian Student Circle at the university. The film was shown in the university's Horace Mann Auditorium.

As reported in the "Svoboda" issue dated October 17, 1974, the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" was demonstrated at Harvard University. The screening took place from July 31 to August 6 as part of the Summer School of Ukrainian Studies at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. Before the screening, Professor Asya Humetska (University of Michigan) delivered a lecture on the creative work of M. Kotsiubynsky and a critical comparison of the original work and the film, generating significant interest among students of the summer school.

In the issue dated December 6, 1974, an announcement was published regarding the screenings of the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" in Yonkers, New York, on December 7, and in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on December 8. In Yonkers, the film was shown twice at St. Michael's School, and in Bridgeport, it was screened at the Ukrainian National Home hall. The screenings were organized by the Events of the Courses of Ukrainian Culture at Mercy College, New York. The proceeds from the screenings were intended for the establishment of a Ukrainian library at the college. Admission for adults was \$2, and for youth – \$1.25.

On April 25, 1975, in New York City, a divisional-military evening was held, organized by the Brotherhood Unit of Former Soldiers of the First

Ukrainian Division of the UPA. The occasion for the meeting was the reissue of the book "Battle under Brody." The meeting of former military personnel took place in the halls of the Literary-Artistic Club of the diaspora in New York. During the meeting, recordings of music by Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk, composed for the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors," were played. This was reported in the "Svoboda" issue dated May 23, 1975.

In the issue dated October 8, 1975, there is a report on the meeting of the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences (UVAN) at the Carpathia Inn, Hunter, New York [5, p. 3]. At the meeting of scholars, "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" was screened twice. Additionally, this film was discussed in the context of the adaptation of works by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, trends in contemporary Ukrainian culture, and the challenges of adapting literary works to film.

In the issue dated December 1, 1978, there was an announcement of the screening of "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" in New York City as part of the Ukrainian Film Festival on December 6-7. This event was part of the Week of Slavic Cultures in New York. The screening took place at the Ukrainian Institute of America.

In the issue dated March 25, 1977, it was reported that the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" would be screened at the Ukrainian Institute of America in New York City. The film was to be shown at the request of students from New York higher education institutions. The screening was scheduled for March 27.

Over the course of 60 years, the film has gathered Ukrainians around it and has been telling the story of Ukrainian culture to different generations of the diaspora. In the present day, for example, in 2018, the film was screened at the Ukrainian Museum, where adult tickets cost \$8, and for students – \$6. In 2021, "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" reappeared in the Ukrainian Weekly newspaper in the context of a children's summer Ukrainian camp and stories about molfars.

The younger generation has embraced the film as a symbol of Ukrainian culture and actively contributed to its dissemination. Students organized screenings at their universities and colleges, attracting the attention not only of Ukrainians but also of foreign students and professors. The film was often shown at Ukrainian festivals, schools, and other events. Through its screenings, funds were raised for Ukrainian libraries and student needs in North America. Most members of the diaspora highly appreciated the film, as evidenced by numerous screenings in various states of America, publications, and the regular interest of the diaspora newspaper, which expressed dissatisfaction with its "Soviet" or "Russian" designation by foreign publications.

Thanks to "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" directed by Paradzhanov, American students were drawn to the study of Ukrainian culture. In addition, the development and study were also facilitated by "Earth" and "Zvenigora" directed by Dovzhenko, which also became classics and universally recognized masterpieces of Ukrainian cinema.

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