

THE ARCHIVAL IMAGE OF THE “HEROES OF SHIPKA” MOVIE

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present the Bulgarian-Soviet production of the first for both cinematographies feature film about the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 called “Heroes of Shipka” in the light of the discovered archival traces of it in the Central State Archives.

“Heroes of Shipka” is designed and realized as a model and template for the Bulgarian national cinema but with a Soviet script, production and performance, with Bulgarian funding, and on Bulgarian property. Written archival traces of the film allow the detection of a more visible part of the relations and dependencies in an otherwise co-production. However, official written documents of Bulgarian institutions solely do not unilaterally outline the three stages of influence and dependence. The first one is the effective selection of the theme of the RussoOttoman War of 1877-1878. The second one is the using of the topic of the second “liberation” of Bulgaria in 1944 and for maintaining the myth of the double liberators. The third one is in the form of a mutual team and a Soviet school for qualification of Bulgarian filmmakers. The written documents also allow us to discover details which show the ambiguity of this dependence and give examples for the Bulgarian active role in the process and for the Soviet help and protection, not only imposed but often wanted.