

BULLETIN
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Center for Soviet & East European Studies

College of Communications and Fine Arts
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NO. 15



From the Fresco of SHOTA RUSTAVELI
In the Monastery of the Cross, Jerusalem.

20-1
P1

AN ARMENIAN GEORGIAN CONTRIBUTION

We are not so much concerned with past history; but, inevitably it seems, that these two extraordinary peoples are inter-related: the Armenians and the Georgians. This came to me quite clearly when I discovered that the new Soviet film genius, Sergo Paradjanov, who created a world sensation with his film *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors*, turned out to have been of Armenian extraction, living with his family for centuries in Georgia and eventually making the best Ukrainian film since the days of the great Dovzhenko.

Then he followed it up with a masterpiece, *The Color of Pomegranates* dealing with the history of the great Armenian poet Sayat Nova, who became the court minstrel to the King of Georgia in the eighteenth century. So again, there was a link up between Armenia and Georgia. So, we in the West, are learning about a great Armenian poet through a film, even though that film, at the moment, has been banned by the Soviet authorities. The outside world now knows that a great masterpiece was created by Paradjanov from Georgia about the great poet of Armenia who also lived in Georgia. Sayat Nova, the court minstrel and bard, exiled by his King to monastic celibacy, still a poet, becomes a Bishop and when the Persians besieged Tbilisi he joined his flock in the cathedral and defied their demands that he reject Christianity and become a Muslim. He hurled at them his last poem ending with:

"Never will I forsake my Church. Never will I recant Christ!"

They dragged him out of the sanctuary and killed him on the steps of the Cathedral. Today a plinth stands there with one of his verses:

"Not everyone can drink my rushing spring—
my waters have a very special taste.

Not everyone can read my writing—my words
have a very special meaning.

Nor believe it easy to overthrow me—
my foundations are as firm as granite."¹

¹ Translated from Brusov's Russian by Herbert Marshall

How that can be said about Paradjanov today!

At the same time, of course, the great poet of Georgia is known to the outside world, the famous Shota Rustaveli, who lived some 800 years ago, in a court that rivalled Queen Elizabeth I of England in the brilliance of the men around famous Queen Tamara. Shota Rustaveli has remained for Georgians one of the highlights of their whole cultural history. I had translated, in the sixties, some extracts from his classic poem, "The Knight in the Tiger Skin" which was published in Moscow in the thirties. I came across a poem

written to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Shota Rustaveli by a modern Georgian poet, Irakle Abashidze, whom I had met in Moscow. He commissioned me to translate his great poem called "In the Footsteps of Rustaveli" about the life and death of Shota Rustaveli. The interesting thing is that as the life of Sayat Nova in *The Color of Pomegranates* parallels the life of Sergo Paradjanov and his struggles in the Soviet Union; so, the life of Shota Rustaveli, parallels its author Irakle Abashidze, a leading Soviet poet from Georgia. Rustaveli fell foul of the other members of the courtly elite and was banished and died in exile in Jerusalem, according to legend. Abashidze fell foul of the Stalinist regime and was exiled for nearly 15 years (as far as one can find out these well-kept secrets). So his writings about the tragedy and exile of Rustaveli really, of course, reflect what happened to him in Soviet society.

So I have attempted a translation of which I was to present at the 800th anniversary celebrations of Shota Rustaveli. I had been invited by the Union of Writers of Georgia and the General Secretary Nonashvili and the President, Irakle Abashidze. But, at the last minute, the powers-that-be refused to invite me or to give me a visa to go there because of my frank criticism of Soviet treatment of its intellectuals.

The story behind the writing of "In the Footsteps of Rustaveli" is very intriguing. It appears that Irakle Abashidze and some other archeologists went to Israel and asked for the help of the Jewish-Israeli archeologists to find out about a legend that the great Shota Rustaveli ended his days in Jerusalem in a one-time Georgian monastery. Well, it was verified by these Israeli archeologists who helped these Soviet citizens, despite the attitude of the Soviet government to them. They found out that this monastery, Georgian centuries ago, had eventually, some way or the other, come under the domain of the Greek Orthodox church. They had, hitherto, prevented any research that might have indicated the monastery really didn't belong to them originally. However, in this more sophisticated modern era, they eventually agreed and Abashidze and his colleagues were shown what the Israeli archeologists had discovered behind the cover-up painting on the wall, a fresco actually of Shota Rustaveli himself.

On the basis of this extraordinary discovery, Abashidze excitedly wrote this poem on the life and death of Rustaveli ending up in the holy city of Jerusalem.

I am printing here some extracts from this extraordinary and beautiful poem, which I may say, has been badly translated into Russian but beautifully translated into Ukrainian by Mikola Bazhan. I had the assistance of the author and of his fellow poet, Georgi Nonashvili to help me understand the original. Then, through my good friend, Professor David Lang of the London School of Oriental Studies (the only English-speaking expert on Georgia I could find), I obtained the help of George Sassoon, the son of the great poet Siegfried Sassoon, whose speciality is Georgian. He it was who did a transliteration and a literal translation for me. On the basis of all this advice and explication, I tried my best to create a poem in the English language that approximates to the original. However, "through a glass darkly."

And I leave the reader to judge for himself the import of this beautiful poem.

GEORGIAN

IRAKLI ABASHIDZE, (1909-), born in the village Khoni, Georgia. Graduate of University of Tbilisi. He began

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publishing his works in 1928. He became first secretary of the Writers Union of the Georgian SSR in 1953. The book of his collected works *Novye stikhi* (The New Poems) was published in 1938, cycles of poems "Tsvety Gurija," (The Flowers of Gurija), "Noch' okhotnikov" (The Hunters Night), "Pesnja zhatvy" (The Harvest Song) in 1950-1951. The book *Na beregakh Ganga* (On the Shores of the River Ganges) was published in 1959. He was imprisoned during the Stalin period, therefore the gap of publication from 1938 to 1950. His latest epic "Palestina, Palestina" (Palestine, Palestine) about the Great Georgian Bard Shota Rustaveli who was an exile from his native land, reflects Abashidze's own inner exile. All characteristic traits of Abashidze's poetic talent are fully reflected in it—a sincerely lyrical tone, truthfulness and spontaneity, clearness of form, a lofty simplicity and poetic craftsmanship. A beautiful translation has been made into Ukrainian by Mikola Bazhan.

The Original Georgian Text
"The Voice in The Belfry"

ქჲმ სამრეკლოსთჲს

KHMA SAMREKLOSTAN

„—შენ გეაჭები,
შენს ვედრებას,
გულით ნათმენი,
სად წამოსული
მონა შენი,
მონა ყარბი:
არ დაუკეტო საქართველოს
პონტის კარები,
არ მომიკვეთო
შენ ჭვარს
მიწა, შენით ნათელი.

რად მეჩვენება
უამი კირთა მოახლოების,
რისხვა განგების,
შემოწყრომა მალალ სამართლის.

რატომ ჩანს შავად
უსაზღვრობა აღმოსავლეთის.
რად მესმის გლოვა
შორი ქართლის სამრეკლოების.

რად მესიზმრება
ხმალი, ტარში გადამსხვრეული,
ტანჯვა, გოდება,
ბედშავობა, ცრემლი მალული,
რად დამდევს ლანდალ
ბედწამხდარი ჩემი მამული,
მამული, შენს ჭვარს მოწყვეტილი
და დამწყვედეული.

აკმარე კირი,
მტრის მონობა,
სპარსი, არაბი;
აშორე ცრემლი,
ურჯულობა,
წარღვნა, ქარაფი;
შენ გევედრები,
შენს დიდ გზაზედ
ლოცვით მარები:
არ დაუკეტო საქართველოს
პონტის კარები“.

Published by Izd. "Literatura da Khelovneba"
Tbilisi, Georgia USSR 1966

THE VOICE IN THE BELFRY

I turn the last page of Thy Holy Word
I believe and pray: Oh Lord of Creation!
Hearken to my fervent prayer, Oh Lord!
Respond, oh God, to my earnest supplication.
I pray, Oh God, bar not the sea-gates
Of my native land. . Heed their plight, Oh Lord!
My righteous people do not segregate
From this our world, by Thee enlightenéd.
Here kneel I, this prayer creating,
Not by office nor monastic habit weightéd.
Why is it then, that bloody labour unabated,
Heaven's anger, Last Judgment's doom
Over me inexorably looms?
Oh why does darkness rise up from the sunrise?
Why do I dream my Motherland is stricken down,
And bitterly beats the bell, and into the skies
The mournful voice of Georgian belfries sound.
Oh why does it seem the night is filled
With nightmares, and striking through the darkest murk,
A sword is thrust into the rock up to the hilt
And agonising cries unendingly heard?
And ravens hover, over-sated and haughty,
Low over castle ruins circulating,
And the shadow of my Georgia haunts me,
From God and the universe utterly isolated.
Do not put out the candles in my Georgian house,
Do not put my Motherland to shame!
Save her, oh God, from serfdom and the knout!
Rescue her, Oh Lord, from curses and from blame!
To my Georgian land bar not the sea-gates,
Let not freedom-loving folk enslaved be,
My righteous people never segregate
From this our world enlightenéd by Thee!

The Voice in the Twilight of the Monastery
of The Cross

ქჲმ ჭჲუნიც მონასტრის ბინდში

KHMA DZHVARIS MONASTRIS BINDSHI

„ — დამამხოებელმან
 მე საწუთრომ
 დამამხო, თამარ!
 დიდება ღვთის მადლს,
 ჩემს ჳირს
 წამლით არ ეწამლება;
 გასრულდა ჩემი
 უღაბური სულის წამება,
 გასრულდა ჩემი ხეტიალი
 ტრამალ და ტრამალ.

მეფეო ჩემო,
 მზეო ჩემო,
 ხმელთა გამთბობო!
 ვაი ცრუ სოფელს—
 აღარც მეფევ,
 აღარც მნათობო;
 არლარას შვეტრფი,
 არას ვეძებ,
 არას მოველი,
 დავთმე სოფელი,
 აქ აღვსრულდი
 შენზე მგლოველი,
 გამომეღვიძა
 და სიზმარი იყო ყოველი.

მხოლოდ მას მარადს
 ღმერთს ვავედრებ
 სამარის კარად
 ჩვენს მართალ მამულს,
 მის კლდეთა დგმას,
 მის წყალთა დენას;
 ეს ლოცვა ჩემი
 ათას წლებში
 ფარვიდეს ფარად
 მის უკვდავ მთა-ბარს,
 უკვდავ მაჯას,
 მის უკვდავ ენას“.

THE VOICE IN THE TWILIGHT OF THE MONASTORY OF THE CROSS

Like this fleeting world, oh Empress Tamara
 I too have come to destruction now.
 Glory be to God in the highest, Tamara,
 No medicines can cure my affliction now.

The last tempest has burst in my mountains,
 My last thunder and lightning has raged,
 My world-wanderings will never be completed,
 My desolated spirit never be assuaged.

Oh, my Empress, oh, my sun, oh, my love . . .
 Woe is me!
 No more Empress, no more sun . . .
 No more love for me!!

For nothing do I seek now, falling prostrate to the ground
 For no-one do I wait now, all this world I have renounced,
 Here found I fulfilment, for thee mourning,
 Recalling in my vigil thy beauty and thy glory.

Through this gate I came, into this Holy cell,
 And here I died . . .
 But then I awoke and understood
 It was all a dream.

For one thing only do I pray,
 On the threshold of the grave
 May God protect the mountains of my Motherland,
 The running of its rivers, the greening of its fields,

And in a thousand years let my prayer be heard;
 May he shield and guard its immortal pulse,
 Its immortal tongue,
 The music of its spoken word.

MICHAEL GLENNY JOINS THE CENTER

Professor Herbert Marshall, Director of the Center for Soviet and East European Studies, is happy to announce that through the good offices of the President and of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Mr. Michael Glenny from Birmingham University, England, has been invited to work at the Center as a Visiting Research Associate.

Mr. Glenny is a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, and did his post-graduate work at St. Antony's College, probably the leading center in England for modern Russian studies.

He is one of the outstanding translators of Russian prose in the English speaking world, and is particularly known for his translations of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Mikhail Bulgakov.

He has specialized in Soviet diplomatic history and is at the moment completing his Ph.D. dissertation, *Soviet Diplomacy 1920-1925 (with special reference to the career of L.B. Krasin)*.

In latter years he has turned his attention to the performing arts. This has brought him into contact with Herbert Marshall, and from time to time they have cooperated on various projects. He has written material which is included in Herbert Marshall's *Pictorial History of the Soviet Theater*. (New York: Crown Publishers, 1976.)

His current publications include the translation of *A Country Doctor's Notebook* by Mikhail Bulgakov, just issued in paperback by Bantam Books; his critical edition of *Five Plays* by Bulgakov will be published Bobbs-Merrill in the United States and by Eyre Methuen in England.

Mr. Glenny also speaks five languages: Russian, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

He will be assisting Professor Marshall in the running of the Center as a research institution and will be broadening its activities in the audio-visual area.

For Great Britain's unique institution "The Open University," Michael Glenny is just completing a course entitled *Soviet Literature and Politics*. He has also written the chapter on "The Soviet Theater" in *The Cambridge Companion to Russian Studies* (Editors, Professor D. Obolensky and Professor R. Auty), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, (publication date, 1976).

With the Center he will be developing an audio-visual program on the relation between art and propaganda in the Soviet Union, entitled *The Cinema of Pseudo-Fact*. He will also be cooperating in the work on the major project of the Center, namely the translation and editing of the *Collected Works of Sergei Eisenstein*.

Mr. Glenny is available for consultation by teachers or students who may be interested in his expertise in the Soviet area, also to give special lectures by arrangement.

He can be found daily at the Center for Soviet and East European Studies, telephone 453-5174.

SIU SEMINAR ON:

"The World History of the Jewish Theater" November 30–December 2

The Center for Soviet and East European Studies announces a special seminar on "The World History of the Jewish Theater." This project is now in full swing and has the following professorial colleagues cooperating:

1. Professor David Lifson, author of *Yiddish Theater in America*. He will discuss "The Image of the Jew in Western Drama."
2. Professor Tom Bird, Department of Slavic Languages, Queens College City University of New York. He will discuss "The Yiddish Theater in the Russian Empire (to 1917)."
3. Professor Zeev Raviv, Clark University, Framingham, Massachusetts. His topic is "A Century of Yiddish Theater and Goldfaden."
4. Professor Lewis Bernhardt of Rutgers University is specializing and will discuss "Ladino Drama of Sephardic Jewry."

Mordechai Rabinowitz from Santa Clara, California, Stevenson College, a prospective graduate assistant, will also be attending the seminar.

Members of the Center participating in the seminar are:

1. Graduate assistant, Ina Burko, who is working on "Research in the Yiddish Theater in the USSR (1917-1975)."
2. Professor Herbert Marshall, who will talk on "Personal Reminiscences of Solomon Mikhoels," chief director and actor of the Moscow State Yiddish Theater 1930-37 and 1942.

Each member will give a report on the work that he has done to date in his area of the history of the Jewish Theater and when he will be able to deliver his final contribution for the book.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF BALTIC DRAMA

An anthology of Baltic drama in translation and the first volume in a series to be published by the Southern Illinois University Press in August 1976, entitled *CONFRONTATION WITH TYRANNY*.

Contents: Six plays by Algirdas Landsbergis, Antanas Skéma, Martins Ziverts, Gunárs Priede, Paul-Eerik Rummo, and Enn Vetemaa. Introductory essays for each play with suggestions for discussion. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian drama surveys with bibliographies of original, as well as English sources concerning the Balts. More than five hundred printed pages.

Among the essayists and translators are such Baltic scholars as professors George Kurman, Western Illinois University;

Algirdas Landsbergis, Fairleigh-Dickinson University; Rimvydas Silbajoris, Ohio State University; Juris Silenieks, Carnegie-Mellon University; Alfreds Straumanis, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale; and, Mardi Valgema, Herbert H. Lehman College.

The result of a year's work supported by the US Office of Education Ethnic Heritage Studies Branch and encouraged by the Association for Advancement of Baltic Studies, the book is designed to introduce the reader to as yet unexplored Baltic drama and, through it, to facilitate interethnic understanding.

As this book is a first in its field, the Publisher—Southern Illinois University Press, needs to determine the number of copies to be printed. For this reason a prepublication subscription is offered to interested individuals, educational institutions, and libraries. Subscription closes on February 15, 1976.

Confrontations with Tyranny at \$15.00 per copy. Make check payable and mail to: Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62901.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Washington University
Department of History
St. Louis, Mo.

"October 31, 1975
"President, SIU—Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois

"Dear Sir,

"Just a brief note to let you know that I was recently given an opportunity to use the most interesting archive of Mr. Herbert Marshall of your Center for Soviet Studies. As an author of a book on Russian artists during the revolution, I found the materials on Meyerhold, Eisenstein, and the little known English journalist Huntly Carter to be most useful in my research.

"I would like therefore to thank you and SIU for providing a unique research opportunity; Mr. Marshall in addition was generous with both his archives and his personal hospitality beyond the call of scholarly duty.

"Sincerely,
"Robert C. Williams
"Assoc. Prof. of History"

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Kuleshov on Film, Writings by Lev Kuleshov
Translated and edited by Ronald Levaco
University of California Press, 1975, paperback

Here are the essential writings of the Russian pioneer of cinema theory and a thought-provoking essay by Professor Levaco. It is a necessary addition to the library of anyone interested in the Soviet Cinema and in cinema aesthetics in general. I am glad to have been instrumental in its conception and birth, for this area has been long neglected in Soviet Cinema Studies.

In our previous bulletin, I had occasion to report a breaking of the Academic Code of giving credit when credit is due. Now I have pleasure in quoting from the acknowledgments of this important new book:

"Clearly, in terms of my particular tutorial in Soviet studies and the Soviet cinema, I must express my deepest gratitude to Professor H.P.J. Marshall, Director, Center for Soviet Studies in the Performing Arts, Southern Illinois University, under whose unique auspices and remarkable tutelage my research was unfettered, supported, and directed." (p. X)

The Birth of the Talkies: From Edison to Jolson

**By Harry M. Geduld
Indiana University Press, 1975**

It is fifty years now since the talkies were born. This book is the first complete authoritative account of its birth.

Particularly interesting is the account of the very early stages when the phonograph was created—before the silent film. Fascinating also are the diametrically opposite prognostications of experts: Thomas A. Edison, a genius if ever there was one, said, "The talking motion picture will not supplant the regular silent film." That was in 1913. But that other genius of the cinema and its greatest pioneer, David Wark Griffith said, "I think that the talking picture, when it is made into a rhythmic and cogent whole, will be an eighth art, a combination and synthesis of all the arts, and hence will be more flexible and useful to the complex twentieth century." That was in 1929.

And in Russia of those years Sergei Eisenstein was echoing those very words.

A book I heartily recommend to every serious student of the eighth art.

Herbert Marshall

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