

International Student Film Festival as A Means of Legal Education: Proposal for Holding the Event in Russia

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Abstract: The article analyses the global trend of introduction of technologies, such as “e-learning”, “tele-learning”, “multimedia education” and, particularly, the use of juridical movies in educational activities, as well as in the system of measures of legal education and legal awareness of broad layers of population. In the Russian Federation the state policy in the sphere of legal literacy and legal awareness of citizens is implemented since 2011. Among the measures of this policy, there have been named the creation and distribution of creative projects accessible for non-professional perception, informational materials providing basic legal knowledge and forming a legal culture and legal consciousness of citizens. Russia and other countries are introducing a variety of innovative forms of education and upbringing of the fundamentals of the legal culture. The article analyses the results of the First International Student Film Festival conducted in 2014 by the Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) of the National Research Tomsk State University. The range of its themes was limited so far only by the boundaries of criminalistic science. However, in the future, perhaps, it will expand in the direction of other legal sciences. The festival organizers are going to hold it every year in spring in Siberia, in Novosibirsk and invite participants from around the world and propose to consider this project not only as an innovative tool of training of the future lawyers, but also as an effective form of legal education and legal upbringing of the broad layers of the population.

Key words: Legal Education • Legal Nihilism • Criminalistics • International Film Festival • Student Juridical Films • “E-learning”

INTRODUCTION

In the Russian Federation, in conditions of ongoing reform of the legal system, we understand not less than in other countries, how significant is the problem of improving the means of legal education, legal upbringing and legal awareness of the residents. “Today, particularly sharply the question arose about the revival of a complex system of legal education of Russian citizens at a new level. According to recent sociological surveys, 60% of the population sorely lack not only the information about the laws being adopted in the country and their

clarification, but also elementary reference information about the location of the judicial, legislative and executive bodies, ways of contacting them and getting consultations. If the very fact about the need of strengthening the work in the field of legal propaganda is beyond doubt, the question of how to solve this problem massively and comprehensively is still open, the search for the most effective forms of implementation of this noble initiative is being continued” [1].

And priority here, of course, was and still is the work with young people. In Russian society, in comparison with the period of non-stability and total legal nihilism of

the '90s of the last century, the atmosphere of universal condemnation of illegal behaviour and domination of moral norms has gradually been revived among younger people. The legislative work, primarily, ensures this trend. Thus, the Federal Law of 29 December 2012 No 273-FZ "On Education in the Russian Federation" proclaimed priority of the rights and freedoms of a man, his free development, the upbringing of legal culture, creation of conditions for self-fulfilment of every man, free development of his abilities (Art. 3), as one of the basic principles of state policy and legal regulation of relations in the sphere of education.

From the point of view of the principles of educational process at higher law schools it seems necessary to be giving to students not only knowledge in the field of law, but also to educate them in the spirit of respect for the law, justice, intolerance to all manifestations of illegal activities. It is definitely a true point that "A lawyer with a low level of general culture and morality – is an absolute failure in the work of any law school" [2].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is impossible not to mention the important methodological aspect of the problem. In the important legal act adopted not so long ago—"Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the field of legal literacy and legal awareness of citizens" (approved by the President of the Russian Federation May 4, 2011), legal education and provision of legal information to the citizens (sub-point 2, point 14, sub-point 1, point 15) were named among the basic goals and main directions of the state policy. "The creation and distribution of creative projects *accessible for non-professional perception*, informational materials providing basic legal knowledge and forming legal culture and consciousness of citizens. ..." (sub-point 2, point 19 of Basic Principles) have been included into the list of measures of this policy.

In the context of "accessibility for non-professional perception", it is advisable to proceed from the following paradigm. As far back as in the 17th century, the famous theologian and teacher Jan Amos Komenský advised to start any training activity "with contemplation of things, rather than their verbal description". In support of his thesis, he accompanied his educational publications by illustrations [3], [4]. Taking into account the achievements of IT-technologies, such terms have become an integral part of educational activity (and, accordingly, of didactic means) as: "e-learning", "tele-learning", "multimedia learning", etc. Although in

scientific literature the discussions about the usefulness and harm of such innovations in didactics began not so long ago [5] and still they are far from completion, it is undeniable that legal science as well as legal education must not and are not entitled to ignore the obvious trends.

To be more exact, it is no longer a question of trends, but of modernization (and, perhaps, of a change) of a paradigm of educational activities. As it was rightly pointed by E. Hilgendorf, in many sectors, a computer and multimedia tools have replaced the book and a growing number of young people experience difficulties understanding the voluminous texts. In many areas of life, the live speech is replaced by images. The author is categorical: instead of passively putting up with this phenomenon, a university education ought to pick up this trend and learn how to manage it [6]. Speaking of growing lag between the entire system of education and other areas of activity (in line with this trend), E. Hilgendorf writes about a particularly deplorable state of legal education in home country (Germany) and all over the world: "Methods of teaching in jurisprudence have remained almost unchanged since the days of the imperial supreme Court" [7]. It is thought that in Russia and in other countries, in context of this situation, the things do not look any better.

Earlier we already reported the position that the didactic means of legal sciences and their educational and applied "products" are lagging significantly behind the achievements of modern scientific-technological progress in terms of presentation format, the circle of recipients, means and methods of communicating with the "end user". Introduction of a paradigm of priority creation and widespread distribution of multimedia cross-industry products (electronic memos, manuals, booklets, films and other kinds) accessible for perception of lawyers as well as of the broad layers of population, into all legal sciences, with the usage of modern information and Internet technologies is one of the most important directions for further development of legal sciences and the whole system of legal education [8].

It seems that in Russia, the above-mentioned requirements of the Russian legislation are quite consistent and even imply allowing for these important global trends in educational activities in general and in legal education in particular. But the problem should be viewed even broader. In our opinion, the paradigms and technologies of "e-learning", "tele-learning", "multimedia education" must take a firm place not only in legal education as such, but in the system of legal education and legal awareness of the broad layers of population.

Problems of legal education of the population in various spheres of legal relations are being paid great attention in many countries as well as at international level. Therefore, some developed countries including Russia are implementing large-scale international projects on anti-corruption education of the population¹ [9], in countries of Western Europe (Germany, UK, etc.) a lot of attention is paid to education in the field of environmental law. Special sections are devoted to this problem in textbooks [10], [11]. In the US, much attention is paid to legal education in terms of the prevention of delinquency of the violent type.

Similar work is carried out in Russia. Besides traditional forms (grant programs, conferences, academic competitions, contests and so on), the leading law schools of the country are searching, finding and successfully implementing new and innovative forms of education and upbringing of the foundations of legal culture “since legal education and legal upbringing are intended to provide exclusion of one-sidedness in the educational process through harmonious moral, legal, patriotic and even ideological education of young citizens of the country” [12].

RESULTS

The team of teachers and specialists of the Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) of the National Research Tomsk State University (Russia, Novosibirsk) is also inclined to search for really not ordinary forms of legal education and legal upbringing. And one of these unusual forms was found in 2014. Here we speak about the idea of holding an international festival of student films on legal topics.

This project is planned to become an annual event and it is further considered how to devote every next festival to different legal sciences. However, it was decided to devote the first and the next (in 2015) film festival to one of the favourite legal sciences for Russian students – criminalistics. As it is known, the peculiarity of this science and academic discipline lies not only in the applied character of expertise, knowledge and skills, which is very important for young people seeking to assert themselves in practice, in enforcement of law, but also in certain important moral foundation, because: “The interest of criminalistics to a crime, a criminal and defence counsel is caused by aspiration to create scientific means to eventually promote learning of the truth in criminal

proceedings” [13]. Besides, the criminalistics is considered in some sense a science free from politics, governmental and other boundaries, because two types of activities which it is examining: criminal and criminalistic (the activity of law enforcement authorities on preventing and combating criminality) have trends common to any countries, regions and nations.

Thus, the search and establishment of truth in every criminal case using modern technical, tactical and strategic tools, methods and techniques that are universal for any country - that's what favourably distinguishes criminalistics and describes its moral foundation and versatility in the matter of fight against criminality. Students – the young people of new formation free of ideological settings of previous generations, might sense this peculiar feature of criminalistic science especially sharply. That's why the interest to this Film Festival on criminalistics of young people of different cities and regions of our country as well as from our neighbouring countries was very high. Each movie was being made mainly by the students themselves, since this had been a requirement of the organizing committee of the festival. Practically everything – from scripts and film direction up to the actors' performances and film editing – bears the imprint of free creative work of law students thus studying the norms of criminal law, criminal procedural law, criminalistic means and methods. With that, it was apparent that each team had not forgotten to consult with the acting law enforcement officials: investigators, prosecutors and operational staff – so that no part of the plot was divorced from practice.

Along with that, one of the important requirements of the organizers of the festival was that every film must have contained the elements of legal education to ensure the formation of a high level of legal culture of the broad layers of population, the tradition of absolute respect for the law, the rule of law and justice, decency and integrity as the dominant model of social behaviour. Also, the contents of each film must be aimed at overcoming of legal nihilism in society of our country as well as in society of any other country.

It should be noted that in countries of Western Europe and America, as it was rightly pointed by D. Caudill, the movies, video, creation and use of educational juridical films have long been used as an important tool for primary and secondary education. However, the use of that means has not been spread widely enough, at the level of higher university education. Although, in the past

¹<http://www.sdcentras.lt/antikorupeija/en/tp1.htm>

decade several law schools of the UK have tried to integrate films and other audio-visual means in legal education² [14], [15], [16]. We know that a number of countries conduct student film festivals, but mainly at the level of event of a single university, with narrower tasks associated not so much with the legal education, as with the training of law students themselves⁴ [17]. Oftentimes, they are setting the tasks associated with the popularization of a certain type of legal relations⁵ [18].

Undoubtedly, all these tasks are extremely important. In one way or another, they make a definite contribution to the matter of legal education. However, we could not find in international practice the tradition of holding regular international student film festivals on legal matters aimed at legal education of broad layers of population of different countries. In any case, as we are aware, the Russian universities did not participate in such projects.

In this sense, proposed idea of holding a Film Festival pretends to be innovative and relevant on a global scale. Thus, in lean language of official reports and newsletters and in order to prompt cooperation, we hereby bring to attention of scientific community and the community of higher schools of law, forensic scientists and criminologists and law enforcement officials, the following information. On April 16-17, 2014, in framework of celebration of its 75th anniversary, the Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) of Tomsk State University conducted a large-scale and unique event - the first international festival of student films on criminalistics entitled "Golden Trace".

The aim of the Film Festival was to raise the effectiveness of legal education and legal awareness of students, master's students, post-graduate students of law schools and legal education of the broad layers of population - spectators, including users of the Internet [19] and their upbringing in spirit of respect for the law, justice and intolerance to any manifestations of criminal activity.

The organizing committee formulated the following objectives of the event:

- Creation of a system of production and wide distribution of educational films on criminalistics and other legal sciences for their use in educational process, in scientific and law enforcement activities,

as well as in the system of state policies for the development of legal literacy and legal awareness of citizens;

- Inter-university exchange, international and inter-regional cooperation in the field of legal education;
- Increase of efficiency of interaction of law universities with law enforcement and judicial authorities in Russia and other countries.
- Creation of necessary conditions and prerequisites for the successful formation of high legal culture, traditions of unconditional respect for law, order and justice, honesty and integrity as the prevailing model of social behaviour.
- Overcoming of legal nihilism of citizens in the area of criminal legal relations.
- Popularization of academic discipline and science "criminalistics" among broad layers of population.
- Increasing of students' interest to the study of not only criminalistics, but also of all the sciences of anti-crime cycle, detection and development of their creative abilities.
- Approbation and introduction of innovative forms of education of future lawyers.

The film festival had been held on the subject of the second section of criminalistic science (upon the scientific system adopted in Russia [20]) – upon criminalistic tactics. The video films created by teams of students under the guidance of teachers of law universities (faculties) had been admitted to take part in the contest programme. The films with the soundtrack in Russian were accepted, at this the first Film Festival. If the movie was shot in the language of the other country or national education, it had to be either duplicated or accompanied by subtitles in Russian. The next film festivals will be held in English and Russian languages. Organizers take on the obligation to translate English-language films for the Russian audience.

The movies containing propaganda of violence and cruelty, use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, calls for extremism, incitement to the ethnic hatred, social, religious, civil intolerance or otherwise contradicting the current legislation of the Russian Federation and norms of international law were not and will not have been admitted for participation in the film festival.

²<http://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/lawreview/vol82/iss3/6>

³http://ejlt.org/article/view/188/283#_ednref1

⁴https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/news/2054-2012-rough-cut-film-festival-highlights-penn-law#.VEs0e_1_uSo

⁵<http://law.fordham.edu/faculty/28606.htm>

The solemn opening of the film festival, demonstration of the contest works and finalization of results of the contest were held on 16 April, 2014, in one of the best cinema theatres of the Novosibirsk – cinema theatre “Pioneer”. In total, 16 films were presented by 12 institutions of higher education:

- Kazakh Humanitarian Law University (Kazakhstan, Astana);
- Tajik State National University (Tajikistan, Dushanbe);
- Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) TSU (Novosibirsk, Russia);
- Novosibirsk State Technical University (Novosibirsk, Russia);
- Russian Academy of Justice (Moscow, Russia);
- Buryat State University (Russia, Ulan-Ude);
- Altai Branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (Russia, Barnaul);
- Law Institute of Tomsk State University (Russia, Tomsk);
- Orel Law Institute of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation named after V.V. Lukyanov (Russia, Orel);
- Siberian University of Consumer Cooperation (Novosibirsk, Russia);
- Orenburg State University (Russia, Orenburg);
- Altai State University (Russia, Barnaul).

In the auditorium of the cinema theatre, as jury members and honoured guests, there were present the well-known scientists-criminalists, the heads and officers of the investigative and other law enforcement agencies of the Siberian Federal District, the teaching staff of a number of law universities.

It hardly makes sense to describe the content of the films at the contest. Please, be assured – creative thinking of students, their creativity and sincere interest in the subject provided very impressive results. Therefore, it was very difficult for the jury to select the best ones. Yet the Grand Prix of the Film Festival was unanimously awarded to the film of students of Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) of Tomsk State University “The Theft on Kainskaya (street)”, filmed in the best traditions of the “Great Silent” movie.

Two sets of the highest awards were distributed by the members of the jury as follows:

I Place:

- Buryat State University. Faculty of Law. The film “Witness of the Crime”;
- Altai State University. Faculty of Law. The film “Tactical Methods of Verification of Testimony on the Spot”.

II Place:

- Russian Academy of Justice (Moscow). Faculty of preparation of specialists for judicial system. The film “Memory Knots (Interrogation by the Method of Cognitive Interview)”;
- Novosibirsk State Technical University. Faculty of Law. The film “The Tactics of Interrogation”.

III Place:

- Kazakh Humanitarian Law University. Higher School of National Law. The film “Tactical Techniques During Interrogation”;
- Tomsk State University. The Institute of Law. The film “The Psychological Aspect of Work of the Investigator during the Interrogation”.

There were awarded the prizes for the best actor, the best director, the best camerawork, the script, the editing. The people's choice award was taken to Dushanbe (Tajikistan), to Tajik National University.

As it was already mentioned, the organizing committee of the festival plans to create an open database of movies for use in the educational process and in the activities on legal education of citizens, legal upbringing of young people.

The second day of the festival, April 17, was dedicated to the work of the round table “Actual Problems of the Theory and Practice of Qualification and Investigation of Crimes”, where the reports were made by well-known scientists-criminalists, the Professors V.K. Gavlo, S.I. Davydov, Yu.P. Garmaev and teaching staff of Department of Criminal Law, Process and Criminalistics of the Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) of Tomsk State University. Right here, of course, the results of the first day of the festival were discussed. We hope that this - the conduct of the second day in the form of a scientific conference on a particular subject will also become a tradition in the future. The very idea of holding such an

event was highly estimated by all participants of the forum as being innovative, extremely useful and having great prospects. High organizational and technical level of the festival was noted, the creation of perfect atmosphere for communication between students, academics, practitioners and other spectators of the film festival.

The event dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the university became possible due the efforts of not only the team of teachers, students, staff of the Institute, but also thanks to scientific, material-technological and educational base already existing at the Institute, the traditions and high standards of educational activities established in the institution. Thus, it has been for many years now the Novosibirsk Institute of Law runs programmes on informatization, modernization, improvement of material-technological support of the educational process, strengthening of staff capacity of the university. The specialized criminalistic educational unit has been organised, the scientific research work of students encouraged greatly and the scientific schools are developing and emerging, in the first place – on criminalistics.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

By means of this message we would want to attract attention of all our colleagues and like-minded fellows – the representatives of the university and academic legal communities, heads and officials of law enforcement and judicial authorities in Russia and other countries – to the idea of holding an international film festival of student films as a form of legal education and legal upbringing of young people and all citizens.

The international student film festival on juridical subjects is planned to be made traditional. The next festival will be held in April of 2015 and it will be devoted to criminalistic science. The terms, conditions of participation and other issues related to the next film festival will be specified on the official website of the Novosibirsk Institute of Law (branch) of TSU⁶ [19].

In the future, as noted before, the organizing committee is considering a possibility of holding this film festival on other legal sciences, other areas, such as education on anti-corruption, environmental education, legal education in the field of civil and human rights of the population and so on.

We hope that next year even greater number of universities and their teams from different countries of the world will participate in this event. We invite delegations from all regions of Russia, CIS and foreign countries to visit Siberia. Please send your applications and films to our address. Come visit us with your movies or participate in the forum extramurally. The organizers hope that the programme of the film festival could be expanded by the films of students from leading law schools in Europe, Asia, North and South America, as well as by the films of practicing law enforcers, creative projects of amateur film studios, public organizations interested in enhancing the effectiveness of legal upbringing and legal education of the population. We hereby invite and hope to see leading legal scientists and experienced law enforcers from other countries as jury members and as honoured guests of the festival.

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize again that we propose to be considering this project not only as an innovative means of training of the future lawyers, but also as an effective form of legal education and legal upbringing of the broad layers of population as well as the basis for expanding international cooperation in the legal field. And surely, we heartily invite guests to visit the hospitable Siberian land and springtime Novosibirsk, the third largest city and the scientific, business, cultural and industrial centre of Russia.

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⁶www.nli.ru

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