

The Dynamics of Socialist Realism in Early Yugoslav Film (1945-1956) in View of Literary and Political Influences

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Abstract

In the time frame covering the initial, immediate post-WWII years (1945-1948), stretching into the following Cominform period (1948-1956), this thesis aims at analyzing Yugoslav cinematography with a primary focus on the domestic Partisan film genre which largely manifested the affirmation of the regime and, to that end, adopted the elements of socialist realist legacy. My attempt is to trace the oscillating development of this artistic style from the years of its firm grip on Yugoslav culture into the period of conditioned relaxation. In doing so, an important prism of observation is not only the domain of contemporary political processes, but also debates in the literary sphere, namely the Conflict on the literary left, which embodies both of these aspects. In this manner, I will demonstrate how Partisan film, despite being the official genre, experienced some fundamental changes occurring on the threshold of liberalizing tendencies. The subject will also be observed through various Soviet-Yugoslav relation shifts, the alterations on the level of cinematographic institutional organization, and the influence of Agitprop and film censorship.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandpa Jere.

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Introduction

A poverty-ridden state of socialist Yugoslavia (DFY/FNRY¹), following its formation after the Second World War, struggled with establishing the elementary means of physical survival. In those early stages Yugoslavia was necessitated to side with the countries of the Eastern bloc, but Yugoslav communist leader Josip Broz Tito became growingly reluctant to accept Stalin's domination in the Cominform which, followed by a number of allegations from the Soviet side, ultimately resulted in a formal expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Communist bloc by the issuing of the Cominform Resolution in 1948. The independent Yugoslav "road to socialism" became widely known as Titoism, which was underscored by rough criticism of Stalinism and the Soviet Union. This drove Yugoslavia into a unique geopolitical position between the two blocs and into the so-called "Third way" position, which affiliated with neither of the conflicting global superpowers – the US or the USSR.

The post-World War II Yugoslav state aimed at constructing a cinematography that would tell the intended story and transmit the political message. With the abandonment of stern Stalinism, and by following the ideas of Yugoslavism, supranational unification and identity building, the new state demanded a new myth, especially in order to produce a collective memory through re-examination of the past and emphasizing the glorious Partisan victory. Not long after, the communist government sought the means for its legitimization and recognized the strong potential that film was offering, mostly condensed in its accessibility to the large masses. The affirmation of the regime that was pursued became mainly manifest in

¹ From its official declaration at the Second Session of the Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, the state was named Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY), which lasted until 1945, and is then replaced by the name of Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRY). Later, in 1963, it transformed into Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the title that clung the most and to which Yugoslavia is usually referred.

the Partisan film genre, reminiscent of the local anti-fascist guerilla struggle and Tito's elevation to demigod status during World War II.

This thesis observes Yugoslavia's cultural domain and its tossing and turning under a myriad of different pressures and influences. As hinted in the title, the theoretical and cultural concept that will be underscored in this entire thesis is the concept of socialist realism, a type of artistic orientation adopted, arguably without exception, by literally all former Eastern European socialist regimes. The prominence of this concept, as will be shown throughout, is owed to its compatibility with firm state policy normally instigated by socialist regimes. In fact, some might claim that socialist realism, in most of its prominent forms and manifestations, actually came as an outgrowth of state autocracy.

Special attention in this thesis is given to film production - Partisan genre and the NOB war genre in particular. Though no longer in its infancy, the medium of film gained prominence across the globe, and in the specific context of socialist regimes, it allowed the governing regimes and parties to legitimize their own rule and monopolistic authority over the populations of the countries by establishing their prophetic mythos within the scope of socialist realism. Film is conceived during that time as the ultimate means of propaganda, and for that, and its high dependency on state funding in order to be developed, it is granted *sui generis* status in terms of its artistic development when compared to other art forms. As a particularly expensive form of art, especially in socialist regimes, where it owed its existence to governmental intervention, and with its immense capacity for inculcation, film development in its form and content had to lag behind the artistic ingenuities of the age, the reason for this being that state control over it was primarily interested in a political agenda, not an artistic one. The novelty I bring forth in this thesis is the portrayal of the development of Yugoslav film next to the discussions and controversies of the artistic circles, the literary

one in particular, which tried to shake off the aggression of a restrictive concept such as socialist realism at the stage when film production was in its earliest infancy and scarcely affected by it, or not at all. As my depiction of the historical circumstances will demonstrate, it took Yugoslav cinematography almost five years to depart from the most aggressive form of socialist realism - Zhdanovism,² - even though it had political cause to do so as early as the Tito-Stalin split in 1948. Since film industry is a very convenient area for the exertion of state control, film development in socialism owes as much to political progressions and upheavals as it does to artistic ones. This thesis pays attention to both.

This consideration is especially interesting in the time period that I am observing (1945-1956) and the political turmoil which Yugoslavia underwent. As Yugoslavia left the fold of Eastern European socialist countries, it had every reason to reinvent its doctrine, and to use up film as its conveyor. Some reinterpretations of the doctrine came soon, but a corresponding reform of the ideas conveyed by cinema almost seemed overlooked until 1953 and the appearance of the film *The Sun is Far Away*, which was the first to break with the tradition of stern socialist realism on Yugoslav film. Hence, I give a thorough overview of the historical developments surrounding film and all its prominent influencers to shed some light on this matter.

Another novelty of this thesis lies in its emphasis on film review. Not only will I be looking into the interplay between the literary sphere and the cinematic sphere, and their combined relationship with the political sphere, but I will also make the move to individual films and their forms and contents. I chose three particularly important films for the interpretation of artistic tendencies in Yugoslavia manifesting themselves on the film screen: *Slavica* (1947), *The Sun is Far Away* (1953) and *Don't Turn Around, My Son* (1956). The

² Zhdanovism, a conception adopted in the Soviet Union in 1946. It will be given closer attention later in the thesis, especially in the opening chapter.

interpretation of these three films will not, of course, be vacuumed and isolated from the historical context they are shown to be reflecting. In fact, the time space of six years between *Slavica* and *The Sun is Far Away* is shown to be very stagnant in terms of development, regardless of the many shifts and turns happening in other domains of art, since the films during this time follow a strict formulaic pattern of socialist realism. The films are analyzed comparatively in order to grasp the historical changes underpinning them. The final chapter of this thesis, which scrutinizes those films, is, in my view, its focal point, as it is my own contribution to the considerations by moving from the general story to the particular one, that is, from macro to micro analysis. This is not to claim that the separate artistic plain of film is unmoved by developments in other domains of art, such as literature, which is for that reason given a lot of attention in this thesis, especially in the third chapter. My results show that film development and its artistic form and content correspond to other artistic domains, but in an abated fashion, and that, not corresponding to what popular belief proposes, overt tendencies for modernization and liberalization on the film screen from the 1960s, have their roots in the film from 1950s.

One other important consideration and influence in this matter not coming from politics or other domains of art is, of course, film itself – coming from different countries and socioeconomic contexts. As a country gradually deviating from Stalinist socialism, Yugoslavia came to be under cultural influences of many different countries both in the West and in the East. Credit will be given to those cultural influences and cinematographies when it is due.

Finally, in order for film reviewing to tell us a consistent and comprehensive historical tale and in order to demonstrate the overlaps and cleavages between the film and literary worlds in Yugoslavia, plenty of theoretical and empirical data will have to be provided. This

fulfillment is provided for in the opening two chapters. The first chapter is a very wide account of the different theoretical bases relevant for my discussion and the proper understanding of the subject matter. I start with discussing the origins of socialist realism in Marxist aesthetics by showing the systematic role of aesthetics in the totality of Marxist theory. My further theoretical explanation concerns the (very rough) translation of Marxist theory into socialist realism and its most extreme version, Zhdanovism. Finally, I endeavor to show the practical application of Zhdanovism on Soviet cinematography, as well as those in the Communist bloc, with an attention to detail as much as the scope of the chapter allows. A short glance is given to the theory of Italian neorealism, which was often claimed to have been influencing various film production tendencies of the time.

The second chapter offers a closer look on the political and administrative cultural contexts in the early years of the Second Yugoslavia. First, I take a look at the disagreements between different authors with regard to conceptualizing the time frame at hand and dividing it on the basis of artistic progressions and changes. I then provide an overview of Yugoslav developments concerning cinematography organization in the first five years following the war, and after that, an account of the Tito-Stalin split and the many consequences it had on Yugoslav cultural tendencies. I end the chapter by examining the specificities of the Yugoslav censorship system.

The latter chapters delve deeper into the subject matter and the primary intentions of the thesis. The third chapter looks into the famous Conflict on the literary left, the intellectual impetus that shook up Yugoslav artistic culture in its entrenched indoctrination. I start off by explicating the positions that clashed in the conflict and the stakes the debate had in the historical context, and then move on to portray the two most prominent protagonists of the debate – Miroslav Krleža and Milovan Đilas.

The final chapter is of paramount importance to the thesis. It starts its inquiry into the details of the Yugoslav Partisan genre by attempting to fully grasp the position of socialist realism within Yugoslav cinematography, as well as the notions of war and revolution. My focus then moves to the specific problem – the individual and comparative analysis of the aforementioned films which improves our understanding of the subject matter by showing us how the predominant ideologies and aesthetical suppositions came to life in film pieces in particular. I thoroughly investigate into each of the films and its underlying intentions and ideas, explain the surrounding cinematographic context as well as the biographical one, and I compare these representative films of the age in order to highlight the tensions marking cinematographic development. I finish the chapter by offering a glance at further developments which took place following the time period under scrutiny.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Guidelines for Marxist Aesthetics, Socialist Realism and the Eastern European Cinematographic Context

The body of this thesis will be dealing with the ideas of socialist realism in artistic expression, with closer attention paid to film production in the opening years of the second Yugoslavia. The following chapters will deal with controversies surrounding this ideal in art, generally conceived, and its uneven manifestation and progression in different art forms (namely, literature and film). The theoretical context of socialist realism is provided by Marxist theory, or, more precisely, Marxist aesthetics. As a materialist theory based on economic determinants, Marxism, as far as its original doctrine is concerned, pays little attention to aesthetic issues, or reduces them to issues of materialist determination. The discussions in Yugoslav, Soviet, and other socialist contexts that dealt with these theoretical gaps, resulting from a lack of attention in Marxism on art and aesthetic issues, were ripe with controversy and conflict, as the third chapter of this thesis will demonstrate. Socialist realism may however be considered merely an interpretation of Marxist aesthetics. In order to understand the background of this theoretical framework, I will firstly look into the conception of Marxist aesthetics.

1.1. Marxist Aesthetics against the Background of Marxism as a Socioeconomic Theory

Marxist theory, at least in its original form in the writings of Marx and Engels, primarily faces readers with terms such as ‘historical materialism’, ‘class struggle’, ‘class consciousness’, ‘alienation’, ‘use value’ or ‘surplus value’, and certainly more often than ‘art’, ‘beauty’, and ‘aesthetics’. This is not to say the latter terms are without mention in the

totality of the theory, but the small attention they do receive materializes when the former concepts are already in place. Therefore, I start my portrayal of Marxist aesthetics by offering a famous quote of Marx's claims about history and historical materialism, since, as will be shown, art is, like most other things in Marxism, a function of history and historical development:

“In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.”³

In historical materialism, it is claimed that there are three levels of socioeconomic determinacy – forces of production, relations of production, and superstructure. Forces of production are thought to be at the very base of social determinacy, and although the relations of production (and as we shall see, superstructure) may come to slow down their development, they retain their primacy in the pyramid of social change. To clarify, the level of the forces of production, which consist of the concrete material “tools” for production and knowledge to use them in appropriate ways, determine the manner in which individuals will

³ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1904)., pp. 11-12.

relate to one another. The forces of production, which include manual labor power and technological power, as well as the expertise of the workforce to apply this technology in the production of consumable goods, are expected to grow over time, and, thus, shorten the time it takes for products to be manufactured. If we take this constant advancement as a social fact, forces of productions will inadvertently cause changes in the way individuals and groups organize labor. It is thus said that the forces of production condition the relations of production, which represent relations of effective power over people and forces of production, or to put it bluntly, relations of ownership. Finally, and most importantly for this thesis, relations of production similarly condition the rise of the so-called superstructure. The superstructure includes the “institutions” of society in the widest understanding of the term – culture, state (i.e. public bodies), moral norms, social rituals, roles, etc. When relations of production become conflicted with the material forces of production in society, i.e., when they start slowing down the growth of technological advancement, as well as when the oppressed class becomes conscious of this and its own power, social transition, or revolution, ensues, leading up to socialism and communism as the most advanced socioeconomic and political systems. The development of class consciousness, or its prevention, is especially tied to the workings of the superstructure.⁴

Where would art be placed in such a socioeconomic conception? Art, as an outgrowth of ‘consciousness’, which is determined by “men’s social existence”, would simply be lumped into the category of superstructure, the end point of the process of social determinacy, together with social norms, ethics, religion, or law. Roughly put, serfdom societies would produce serfdom art, capitalist societies would produce capitalist art, and socialist societies would produce socialist art, and aesthetic value could be made sense of only within the

⁴ Gerald Allan Cohen, *Karl Marx’s Theory of History: A Defence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)., pp. 28-85.

superstructure raised on particular economic relations. Theoreticians, other than perhaps sociologists, historians and anthropologists, would not take independent interest in art, since art thus conceived is merely an impotent reduction of its techno-economic surroundings.

Not merely, though. If what Engels says is true, then the superstructure is not inert, but exists to provide legitimacy to its established relations of production. Insofar, just like religion is opium for the masses in Marx, anesthetizing the society to conform to the existing relations of production and maintain its power relations, so may art be seen to serve a social function:

“Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure – political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form.”⁵

Furthermore, Marx elsewhere notes that there may be something uneven in the relation between socioeconomic historical progression and artistic development over time:

“Is Achilles possible side by side with powder and lead? Or is the Iliad at all compatible with the printing press and steam press? (...) But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment. (...) The charm their art has for us does not conflict with the primitive character of the social order from which it had sprung. It is rather the product of the latter, and is rather

⁵ Friedrich Engels, “Letter to Joseph Bloch (1890)”, in *Marx and Modernity*, Robert J. Antonio, ed. (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470756119.ch8/summary>, pp. 72-73.

due to the fact that the unripe social conditions under which the art arose and under which alone it could appear can never return.”⁶

Even though the paragraph suggests that the creation of art is still tied to a specific time period, and cannot emerge in forms different to what the socioeconomic epoch prescribes, it allows the possibility of enjoying forms of art not arising from it. And since art, as part of the superstructure, participates in social determination, it may be utilized to help develop a class consciousness inside a bourgeois state, or, conversely, harm the consciousness of citizens within socialism. In practice, propaganda machines would simply ignore Marx’s claim that artistic works cannot arise in forms incompatible to their socioeconomic contexts, so censorship and prohibition of supposedly “bourgeois” work were commonplace, even if, within the theoretical doctrine, one could not conceive of a bourgeois piece emerging in a proletariat society, and vice versa. From a pragmatic standpoint, such an understanding fits perfectly into a policy of political control over forms of art, which primarily serves as function to historical development and revolution in leading up to a perfect society. Stalin’s regime, as well as other socialist regimes, particularly favored this understanding of the artistic domain, as it allows conceptualizing art as a weapon of socialist legitimization.

Why realism? Engels considers the portrayal of reality of the proletariat as the best means of stimulating class consciousness:

„But I think that the bias should flow by itself from the situation and action, without particular indications, and that the writer is not obliged to obtrude on the reader the future historical solutions of the social conflicts pictured (...) a socialist-biased novel fully achieves its purpose, in my view, if by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, breaking down conventional illusions about them, it shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world, instills doubt as to the eternal character of the existing

⁶ Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 310-311.

order, although the author does not offer any definite solution or does not even line up openly on any particular side.⁷ (Engels, from a letter to Minna Kautsky)

Engels' endorsement of realism in art is, however, interpreted in a manifold of ways when put to practice and utilized to control art production in socialist regimes. Socialist realism that arose from the Stalinist context tends towards reality only in its portrayal of "bourgeois oppression", and combines this with heroism and idealism about the socialist project aiming to inspire and agitate the proletariat. It can hardly be justified that this formula was directly inherited from the Marxist theoretical legacy.

These considerations were later translated into a conception of Marxist aesthetics. As Mitchell notes, there were essentially four components of Marxist aesthetic theory: the primacy of use value over exchange value,⁸ the role of art realism in the making of history, the goal of a classless society, and the uneven development between art and forces of production, as well as their emerging relations.⁹ Within this conception, censorship of art, or any other kind of its control, could be easily justified if some state committee's interpretation of an art piece did not match the perceived goal of the Party – the ever-escaping ideal of social revolution. Likewise, funding of art would be granted to those proposing ideologically purest projects, under the justification of best aiding the revolutionary cause. As will be shown later in the thesis, and especially in the third chapter, the area of art in highest demand of resources, namely film, remained longest in the clutches of socialist realism, since it was the "official" artistic orientation of the Parties. The film industry could not survive without investors, and the only one large enough back then in Yugoslav socialism was the state, which

⁷ Maynard Solomon, *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), p. 67.

⁸ Exchange value was often considered vulgar by the Marxists since it represented only the value some good received due to its status among market actors, while the 'use' in 'use value' was readily interpreted not as something down-to-earth, like providing entertainment, but serving some higher political goal. The wording of Marxist theory, taken out of context, was easily adapted for political purposes.

⁹ Stanley Mitchell, "Mikhail Lifshits: A Marxist Conservative", in *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, Andrew Hemingway, ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2006), p. 32.

conditioned cinematography's ideological lag compared to other areas of art. Also, insofar as film artists had to follow an ideological line, their jobs were quite dangerous. As Kenez shows in the Soviet example, it was hard to please the ideologues, since films were easily proclaimed counter-revolutionary, formalist, containing bourgeois elements (such as Protazanov's *Sorok Pervyy* [The Forty-first]), or they would be considered uninteresting enough to appeal to the masses they were meant to educate, in case they strictly followed the Party's ideological line. For these reasons, even the biggest names of Soviet cinema, such as Sergei Eisenstein, Lev Kuleshov, Dziga Vertov, Aleksandr Dovzhenko, and Vsevolod Pudovkin, faced hard criticism and dangerous accusations.¹⁰

A hard accusation for a piece of art during the time was that it is formalist. Proponents of social realism would condemn the notion of art for the sake of art as a decadent idea, holding that the absence of functional agitation in artistic and cultural work is unworthy of attention. They would claim that sources of inspiration ought not to be found in intimate poetry or prose or spiritual legacy, but in motivations such as the liberation struggle and the restoration of the country, Marxist theory and workers' solidarity. In an attempt to convey the true cultural legacy to the laborers and peasants, the Party aimed at organizing free theatre, folklore, music, film and other kinds of shows.¹¹

¹⁰ Peter Kenez, "The Cultural Revolution in Cinema," *Slavic Review* 47, no. 3 (1988): 414, doi:10.2307/2498389, pp. 415-419.

¹¹ Miodir Gatalović, "Between Ideology and Reality: Socialist Concept of Cultural Policy of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (League of Communists of Yugoslavia) 1945-1960," *Istorija 20. Veka* 27, no. 1 (2009): 37–56., p. 37.

1.2. *Zhdanovism*

An especially strong version of socialist realism practiced on the film screen, Zhdanovism, associated with the Soviet Party ideologue Andrei Zhdanov, considered art to be an ideal “weapon of struggle”.¹² This doctrine, officially adopted in the Soviet Union in 1946, propagated three elements of socialist realism - *ideinost*, *narodnost* and *partiinnost*¹³ - as standard features for asserting the quality of films. Yugoslav films, which will be paid closer attention to in the chapters to come, adopted Zhdanovist elements, like the extensive simplification in plot design, a linear narrative style, and a stereotypical portrayal of characters, to name just a few. The reason why Tito and the Party were not ready to abandon these methods after the Tito-Stalin split, even for the sake of artistic expression, was the idea that employing “intellectual” elements, such as the use of flashbacks or complex characters, would confuse the audience, rendering them incapable of receiving a full political message, and prompting them to deviate from the communist line. As Solomon points out, Zhdanovists considered that the rejection of complex art “is also common to revolutionary movements, resulting from the popular role which art undertakes.”¹⁴ But he also notes that Zhdanovism, though heavily appealing to Marxism, is not rooted in the theoretical frameworks Marx and Engels proposed, as nowhere did they suggest the creation of artificial exemplary models or following only functional ends. A Zhdanovist tendency towards censorship in socialist regimes is also under question considering Marx’s “Comments on the Latest Prussian

¹² Michael Jon Stoil, *Balkan Cinema: Evolution after the Revolution* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982) , p. 47.

¹³ These Russian terms stand for: ideology, nation and Party members, as elements considered crucial for the perception of art with requirements of simplicity and traditional clarity. Stoil, *Balkan Cinema*, p. 29.

¹⁴ Solomon, *Marxism and Art*, p. 236.

Censorship”,¹⁵ as is their appeal to Lenin, who insisted on freedom from censorship even in post-revolutionary situations.¹⁶

As stated, the Yugoslav film industry adopted Zhdanovism from the Soviets following the end of the Second World War. To see the ideal through, it needed to establish and command offices and committees both for censorship, and agitation and propaganda, the latter of which was founded as early as March, 1945. The Agitprop branch, chaired by Milovan Đilas, was in charge of theatres, orchestras, singing companies, galleries, film, literary and cultural events, magazines, etc. Of all those, the Party considered film to be the most flexible and influential artistic means for the purposes of agitation, propaganda, and public inspiration. The reasons for the abandonment of Zhdanovism should only partially be sought in the heated debates questioning the supposedly rigid format of Marxist aesthetics, which were already under way, as the third chapter will show, but in the political conflict between Tito and Stalin from 1948, which instantly instilled trouble in the ranks of the Yugoslav ideologues, who not only lost a model to call upon, but needed to figure out Yugoslavia’s very own ideological set-up that would depart from USSR socialism and overcome it. Even so, the Zhdanovist version of socialist realism remained the unofficial cultural stance of the authorities and their agencies for some time after the split, since it was not certain whether the falling out between the regimes would last. As a more static artistic form controlled from the center and dependent, film would have to wait for its ideological updates.

It might be said that the understanding of socialist realism as truly depicting reality rests on the condition of internalizing the Marxist prophecy of the glorious times of socialism and translating it into factual form. If we truly believe that breaking from capitalism to

¹⁵ Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship," in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat, ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997) , pp. 67-92.

¹⁶ Solomon, *Marxism and Art*, p. 237.

socialism is a historical inevitability (and a glorious one at that), then an artistic portrayal of a country transcending its pre-socialist state through revolution is nothing short from demonstrating a glorious reality. As Stalin stated in 1932, “the artist ought to show life truthfully. And if he shows it truthfully, he cannot fail to show it moving to socialism. This is and will be socialist realism.”¹⁷ In other words, for a devoted socialist, who believes the socialist prophecy is a historical inevitability, showing it on film is not propaganda, but historical truth unveiling itself in front of the very eyes of the proletariat, regardless of whether it supposedly already happened or not. This understanding was particularly true of Zhdanovism. Zhdanov believed that the main purpose of art was to “depict reality in its revolutionary development”.¹⁸ Socialist Yugoslavia would follow this formula in its opening years.

1.3. The Context of Eastern European Film in Socialist Realism

In Soviet film, Zhdanovism as a doctrine first took effect with the resolution “On the film *A Great Life*” in 1946. The resolution charges this film by Leonid Lukov, which was a sequel to a Stalin Award winner from 1939, with falsely portraying the Soviet people as backward drunkards, focusing on people who are alien to Soviet ways as inhabitants of the Donets Basin where Germans resided, painting a picture of Red Army soldiers as unwilling to help their fellow soldiers on the battlefield and miners’ wives indifferent to the plight of the wounded, etc.¹⁹ The resolution triggered an avalanche of bans and censorships against avant-

¹⁷ David Lloyd Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 161.

¹⁸ Andrei Zhdanov, “From Speech at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers 1934,” in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, by Vassiliki Kolocotroni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Mira Liehm and Antonin Liehm, *The Most Important Art: Soviet and East European Film After 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 47, 49.

garde titles such as Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible, Part II* (1946), Pudovkin's *Admiral Nakhimov* (1946), and Kozintsev's *Plain People* (1945). The Party demanded the portrayal of strong, uncompromising, and relentless figures who took no spare time in doubting their decisions faced with some difficult moral predicament.

Liehm claims that in searching for models for new Soviet films under socialist realism, Ermiler's *The Great Turning Point* from 1946 is the first one that comes to mind. The turning point from the title refers to the Battle of Stalingrad, depicting a young general outmaneuvering an older one with the help of new methods passed down to him from the great leader.²⁰ Another model example, claims Liehm, is found in Chiaureli's *The Vow* (1946).

Other Eastern European socialist regimes followed suit with the Soviets. In the German Democratic Republic, the newly founded film group DEFA (Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft) was under direct supervision of Soviet authorities. Zhdanov's ideas were echoed as early as at DEFA's very founding, when Soviet advisor, Colonel Tulpanov, stated that DEFA's primary goal is a political one - to educate people in ways of true democracy and humanism.²¹ The directors under DEFA, however, managed to uphold the previously fostered avant-garde spirit. It would take some time until DEFA's agitation and propaganda machines under the doctrine of socialist realism would consolidate within the new state (1949), but once they did, East Germany suffered severe artistic restrictions.

Czechoslovakia's rich new realist tradition following the end of the Second World War, floating between inclinations towards socialism and individualistic avant-garde, came at a halt in 1948, just as Yugoslavia came to sever its ties with its Soviet patron. Following that

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 50-52.

²¹ Ibid., p. 76.

split, the Soviet Union desperately tried to exert pressure on Czechoslovakia, but the country did not seem like it would endorse Zhdanovism any time soon. In spite of Czechoslovakia's specificity in that region owing to the democratic, liberal tradition and developed industry, and its dreams of a unique socialist road not yet paved, came to an end in the latter part of 1948, when Soviets made sure that the Communist Party is more firmly rooted; Zhdanovism could finally enter the scene. Almost all avant-garde directors working prior to the takeover committed suicide or fled the country. Zhdanovist officials quickly dealt with Czechoslovakian cinematography's neorealist (*The Silent Barricade*, 1948) and intellectualist (*The Poacher's Ward*, 1948) tendencies. Liehm, however, notes that from the formula filmmaking that was to ensue following the entrenchment of the Party in the country, the Czechs and Slovaks still managed to accomplish something. She states, for instance that *Katka* (1949), a film depicting Slovak girls leaving the countryside with the intention of going into industry, came out surprisingly impressive. The Zhdanovist regime, however, was very strict about passing films and giving them blessing. Even the Stalinist hard-liner E. F. Burian and his film *We Want to Live* (1950) came short for being "overly formalistic and naturalistic".²²

To name one more example of an (d)evolving socialist cinematography, the Poles, following the Second World War, produced films that were heavily marked by their tragedy and loss, commemorating the sacrifices taken against the force of Nazi Germany. Films such as *Forbidden Songs* (1947), *Treasure* (1949), *Border Street* (1949), and many other (since Polish film industry grew quite rapidly), convey the Polish (and Jewish) story of struggle and loss. Polish cinematography too, however, took a turn towards socialist realism at the 1949 Congress at Wisla, following the strengthening of the Polish Workers' Party. The congress took time to criticize successful Polish postwar films, as well as Italian neorealism. Some of

²² Ibid., p. 102.

the films made under the neorealist trademark, such as Jerzy Zarzycki's *Warsaw Robinson* (1948), had to be remade and adapted to the new conditions of socialist realism. The film in question got a new title – *Unvanquished City* (1950) – and, for the most part, a revamped storyline proving a political point.²³

Even though political circumstances and pressures led these and other Eastern European socialist countries into taking up socialist realism, it is clear from these examples and periods preceding socialist realism that Yugoslavia's cinematography had many models and artistic conceptions to aspire to even after its departure with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the departure from Zhdanovism did not necessarily entail a departure from realism itself. At the time of the split, a highly notable realist movement was already in full flight – Italian neorealism, which had already made significant influences in certain countries, including those of socialist Eastern Europe. Italian neorealism found itself at odds with socialist realism, mostly because the latter was part of a political project, so its proponents reengaged in conflicts between artistic movements for the achievement of ideological dominance and prestige. Socialist realists charged Italian neorealism for skewing the picture of reality, expectedly, in its revolutionary socialist image. The neorealist debate, prompted by masterpieces in this golden age of Italian cinema (1944-1952) by Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio de Sica, and Luchino Visconti, was far more skeptical about the relation of film image and reality than the prophetic optimism of socialist realism. The framework of the debate operates on several observations made by Casetti.²⁴ Neorealism was seen as a means of reestablishing the cultural identity of a country that just got out of war – in that sense, neorealism deals with what historically precedes it. Furthermore, he notes that the function of cinema was not abandoned either, but just in the straightforward form acknowledged by socialist realists.

²³ Ibid., pp. 112-119.

²⁴ Francesco Casetti, *Theories of Cinema, 1945-1995* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), p. 24.

Casetti also echoes Cesare Zavattini's point that the war and the struggle for the achievement of liberation reestablished an appreciation for the real, which is where the impetus lies for bringing life and film together. The focus here, then, is on the hard facts of life, not on the real as socialism would see it. It does not mean realism cannot be politically critical, as there is obviously bias in what it comes to portray, but neorealism in its Italian version attempts to follow a principle of capturing life as it is, not capturing imagination coming into reality. The depiction of reality as materialized fact is tantamount.

Chapter 2: Political and Administrative Circumstances for the Development of Yugoslav Cinematography

2.1. Chronological Divisions and Their Complexity in the First Decade of Socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1955)

In the first post-WWII decade, which is the primary chronological focus of the thesis, several different timelines and periodical divisions exist with regard to art and film, which sometimes overlap or at other times clash, owing to proposals by different authors and dependent on the subject of study or prism of observation for their criteria. Ljubodrag Dimić bases the temporal scopes on his inquiry of the Agitprop phase lasting between 1945 and 1952.²⁵ Daniel Goulding sets the time frame according to the changes and development in the domain of film, thus proposing the administrative period (1945-1950), and the period of decentralization and mold-breaking (1951-1960).²⁶ Čolić focuses on film as well as Goulding, but on the war genre, imagining a somewhat different, more stylistic solution: heroic romanticism followed by de-romantization.²⁷ ²⁸ Sveta Lukić approaches the subject from a Yugoslav post-war literary aspect, and distinguishes phases of the initial socialist realist stage from 1945 until 1950 (the poorest in thought and spirit,²⁹ but richest with administrative interference and intermediation), and the period from 1950 to 1955, the period of polemics in the struggle against socialist realism and dogmatism, in the search for cultural and social liberation. It is equally worthy to consider here Lasić's chronological and stylistic divisions.

²⁵ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Agitprop kultura: agitpropovska faza kulturne politike u Srbiji 1945-1952* (Beograd: Izdavačka radna organizacija "Rad," 1988).

²⁶ Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience, 1945-2001* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. xi.

²⁷ Milutin Čolić, *Jugoslovenski ratni film* (Beograd: Institut za film, 1984), pp. 170-194.

²⁸ They are, according to Čolić, further developing into Antiheroic romanticism, and Tragism in the years to follow.

²⁹ Sveta Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature: A Sociopolitical Approach* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), pp. 9-13.

Stanko Lasić likewise occupies a literary standpoint, but rather with respect to the discussion belonging to the Conflict on the left: the stage of “social literature” (1928-1934), the stage of “new realism” (1935-1941), the stage of “socialist realism” (1945-1948), and the stage of “new orientations: the collapse of the literary left” (1949-1952/1953);³⁰ the focus of this chapter is placed on the latter two, as an introduction into properly setting up the sociopolitical context for understanding artistic controversies, examined in the final two chapters. I would, conversely to Goulding, claim that, on film, the mold-breaking is by no means achieved as early as he mentions - the more drastic changes occurred after the end of the Conflict on the left and the reforms.

Another perspective can be proposed bearing an ideological mark, so that one could justifiably refer to the administrative period until the Tito-Stalin split as Stalinism as well as rising Titoism, which is, by Western theorists, claimed to be the “independent, national” Tito’s road to socialism, also implying the notions of “de-Stalinization”, “liberalization” and “democratization”.³¹ In the short period after the split one can talk of Stalinist measures in Yugoslavia in direction of anti-Stalinism, for sustaining Titoism, as I discuss later in this chapter. The period of reforms during the years 1950-1952 subtly abandoned the rigid methods of these policies and doctrines, at least in their severity. This is, however, not to say that in the later years of Cominform there were no totalitarian traces of socialist governance.³² A special emphasis in this thesis will regard how these traces tampered with film development and its idiosyncrasies compared to other art forms.

³⁰ Stanko Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952* (Zagreb: Liber, 1970), p. 27.

³¹ Josef Kalvoda, *Titoism and Masters of Imposition* (New York: Vantage Press, 1958) , p. 97.

³² The cases of political exile can be drawn attention to even in the period of reforms, for instance of alleged Cominformists within CPY in 1949 and 1950, or Đilas's in 1954 due to the unsuitable liberalizing tendencies, or in the film sphere the cases of banned domestic films in 1951 and 1952, which will be discussed later.

2.2. The New Forms of Organization in Yugoslav Cinematography (1945-1950):

To a great extent, cultural conditions were determined by political and economic factors. During the years of rehabilitation in the conditions of harsh shortages, a young Yugoslav state, just emerging from the disasters of WWII, was deprived of any infrastructure, production system, film equipment, trained professionals, and without a pre-existing film tradition, which was, by comparison, existent in its other newly-formed socialist counterparts, such as Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Even during the war, in 1944, the Department for propaganda of the main headquarters (*generalštab*) was charged with the task of forming an improvised film section to distribute the films from the Allies, establish cinema ticket prices, and supervise small film production. However, these early, but resourceful war arrangements were in 1945 replaced by the establishing of the Film Company of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. As the exclusive state film enterprise, it was recorded as the first attempt at centralized cinematographic organization, founded for production and distribution of domestic and foreign films and for the management of cinema activities. Along with the program of nationalization introduced in 1946, the same year in June, the Committee for Cinematography was established as the highest state organ for the development of film with Yugoslav writer Aleksandar Vučo at its head, personally appointed by Tito.³³ With this slight transformation of the structure, the central government committed more firmly to granting support for film industry, and next month it could already ascertain that 60 newsreels and 27 short and educational films were made. The new federal Committee for Cinematography soon formed separate regional committees for cinematography and distribution in each of the six republics: the largest was Avala Film in Belgrade, Jadran Film

³³ Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, pp. 4-7, 36-37.

in Zagreb, Triglav Film in Ljubljana, Bosna Film in Sarajevo, Vardar Film in Skopje, and Lovćen Film in Budva.³⁴ Two film production houses were established on a federal level: Zvezda Film in Belgrade specialized in newsreels, and Zora Film in Zagreb specialized in educational films, while import and export was entrusted to the independent firm Jugoslavija Film (earlier existing only as a small import company).

The five-year plan, introduced in 1947,³⁵ found its main goal in establishing a national institution for film that would allow Yugoslavia to stand on its feet, but its other tasks concerned the developing of a network of cinemas and projection halls, or building up a film production organization.³⁶ The government made a decision that during the first five-year plan, the primary investment would be the building of a “film town” in Belgrade. However, the project was never fulfilled, primarily due to the objections of the leaderships on the republic level, and the attitudes of a part of the federal government. They also overoptimistically imagined that the Central Film Studio in Belgrade would be able to produce 20-25 feature fiction films per year, constituting the first half of the planned domestic industry, while the other half would be covered by republic production (20%), import (30%).³⁷ Notwithstanding their unrealistic assumptions in planning, the reasons for CPY’s³⁸ weak cinema production were also the existence of a multitude of small enterprises too dependent on republic administration. The next step in stabilizing cinematography Tito took himself, stressing his personal role in opening the doors to popular American films by meeting on October 1949 with the representative of American film producers and an

³⁴ Richard Taylor et al., *The BFI Companion to Eastern European and Russian Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2008), p. 268.

³⁵ The general objectives of this plan were to overcome economic and technological backwardness, as well as strengthen and stabilize economic and military power; “Yugoslavia- the First Five-Year Plan,” mongabay.com, Accessed June 1, 2013, http://www.mongabay.com/history/yugoslavia/yugoslavia-the_first_five-year_plan.html.

³⁶ Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, p. 5.

³⁷ Goran Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom: Sovjetski kulturni uticaji u Jugoslaviji 1945-1955* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2012), pp. 255-256.

³⁸ Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

American motion picture industry official visiting in Yugoslavia, Eric Johnson.³⁹ The effect of the conversation arrived quickly, and in 1949, 18 Soviet films were imported together with 19 American ones, while only a year after not a single Soviet film was imported, but 33 American ones were.

Decentralization in the 1950s meant the acquisition of independence for many cultural institutions and organizations, while the position of artist changed dramatically. The second reorganization of Yugoslav film industry occurred with the workers' self-management law,⁴⁰ which was appropriated in 1950 at the initiative of Boris Kidrič⁴¹ and Milovan Đilas. This act was influenced by the economic stagnation induced by the break-up between the USSR and Yugoslavia, and by Yugoslavia's attempt to distance itself from the Soviet concept of social development. The concept of self-management, implying that ownership is neither private nor in the hands of the centralized state, was also seen as necessary to protect the integrity of CPY as an advanced force, which prevents the socialist system from becoming totalitarian. Tito attempted to codify a reinterpretation of Marxism-Leninism and demonstrate how SFRY does not have a centralized system like the USSR, but that the state had lessened its involvement and, theoretically, granted the workers' councils in individual enterprises a level of autonomy and authority in production and wage affairs. However, in practice, these workers' councils had almost no influence, neither in the workers' relations, nor in the distribution of profits. With the self-management law, all the filmmakers lost their permanent employment and acquired a status of "free film workers", which meant that they received payment only in the

³⁹ Radina Vučetić, "Amerikacizacija jugoslovenske filmske svakodnevice 60-ih godina 20. veka" [Americanization of Yugoslav Film Reality in the 1960s], (PhD diss., University of Belgrade, 2011), p. 127.

⁴⁰ The full name of this legal act from June 27th, 1950 was: "The Basic Law on Management of State Economic Companies and Higher Economic Associations from the Side of Working Collectives".

⁴¹ Boris Kidrič was a member of Yugoslav Politbureau in charge of the Yugoslav economy, and, along with Kardelj, a leading Slovenian politician in Tito's Yugoslavia.

process of particular film making, as part-time workers.⁴² Though free workers became protected by the new contract system, social security and pension funds, the relation of a firm to creative film teams was far from resolved, and the absurdity of tying the film workers to 2-3-year long contracts only made it worse.⁴³ Or when Croatian director Branko Bauer was later considering the status of free film workers, he stated that self-managing granted cinematography the status of no-man's land.⁴⁴

The political system moved towards federalism, as each republic was given greater autonomy. As Yugoslavia became decentralized politically and economically, the film industry followed suit. With the establishment of this new decentralized organizational scheme, the Committee for Cinematography, which had been the centralized guiding force in the early development of film, was formally disbanded in April, 1951, in favor of the decentralization of film structure. Nevertheless, it recorded some noteworthy accomplishments.⁴⁵ The expansion of the number of production firms came about after the introduction of the status of free workers and self-management. Vardar Film from Skopje released *Frosina*, the first Macedonian motion picture, in 1952, and Bosna Film from Sarajevo released *Major Bauk* in 1951.⁴⁶ However, the mentioned process of developing the network of film production led to a variety of problems concerning the excessive disintegration and atomization of production firms causing their difficult financial positions due to the rising of the costs for individual firms.⁴⁷

⁴² Ivo Škrabalo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj 1896-1997: pregled povijesti hrvatske kinematografije* (Zagreb: NZ Globus, 1998) , pp. 154-155.

⁴³ Arhiv Jugoslavije [The Archives of Yugoslavia]. AY, F 405, Savez za kinematografiju PKJ, File 42/7, pp. 45-46; File 5, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Ivo Tomljanović, „Kinematografija se ne tretira kao umetnost (razgovor sa Brankom Bauerom),“ *Borba*, July 9th, 1981.

⁴⁵ Taylor et al., *The BFI Companion to Eastern European and Russian Cinema*, p. 268.

⁴⁶ Petar Volk, *Istorija jugoslovenskog filma* (Beograd: IRO Partizanska knjiga Ljubljana, OOUR Izdavacko-publicisticka delatnost Beograd, 1986)., p. 8.

⁴⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije [The Archives of Yugoslavia]. AY, F 405, Savez za kinematografiju PKJ, File 42/7, pp. 17-18

The law on self-management and the establishment of “free workers” has changed the financing of projects. Each republic now had to extract a certain amount from their budgets for film production. Thus, the film workers oriented themselves to audiences in seeking out a potential for delivering film out of crisis. Probably one of the main events which designated the overcoming of the crisis was the founding of the first film festival in Pula, initially named *Filmska revija* [Film review], in 1954. A response from the audience was noteworthy and, as such, it served as a huge incentive for further development of cinematography. What added to the significance of the event is that Tito was not only present at the venue, but personally sponsored it.⁴⁸ A group of well-informed and professional film theorists, who contributed to the maturing of Yugoslav film, were also responsible for terminating the harsh period for cultural production. Primarily, their platform was the Slovenian magazine *Film* and the Croatian magazine *Film Review* issued in Zagreb together with a Party newspaper of the Association of Yugoslav film workers.⁴⁹ Free associations of film workers were created in each republic and the Union of Film Workers of Yugoslavia was founded at the end of 1950. As the state set out to create a unique system of socialism through reforms, members of the cultural sphere sought to free their work of dogmatic propagandistic formulas and gain greater artistic control.⁵⁰

After June 1950, in the new, tri-partite constellation – film production, film trade, film distribution – decentralized and separated these three constituent film activities. The film production area was further divided into Companies for film production (studios), later organized as The Association of Film Companies, while another category of division concerned The Union of Film workers (which gathered all the republic free film workers’

⁴⁸ Ivo Škrabalo, *Između publike i države: povijest hrvatske kinematografije 1896-1980* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1984), p. 175.

⁴⁹ Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, pp. 42-43.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

associations). In the early 1950s, film production remained heavily dependent on subsidies allocated by the State film fund. Newly formed economic chambers, both on federal and republic levels, limited the film producers. Although the actual income administration was transferred to the Republic Committees, the Committees for cinematography or “Film Boards” continued to determine the amount of subsidy for each script submitted to them by an enterprise. These chambers had their ideological leadership in the form of Commissions, again governed by the Party. The artistic Council of each filmmaking company determined the suitable subject and the Writer’s Council notified Writers and directors of the proposed productions. After the writers submitted their scripts for review, the Artistic Council forwarded those which had been approved to the appropriate Republic Film Board together with requests for subsidies and priority status. The Film Boards would then determine the level of subsidy for each production. This entitlement gave the Board the veto over film content, though not directly but in the form of power to reject funding. After the completion of the projects the process continues with distribution to each republic and potential export only after permission of the State Commission for Cinematography.⁵¹

2.3. The Tito-Stalin Split and the General Issues it Created

The reasons for the break-up with the Soviets were manifold. Tito was dissatisfied with his inferior position to Stalin in the hierarchy of the communist movement. Also, he had ambitions outside Yugoslavia and wanted to establish a Yugoslav-dominated Balkan federation with Greece, Albania and Bulgaria. Stalin's fear concerned a potential for the increase of Tito's power in the region, but the official accusations were made only on

⁵¹ Stoil, *Balkan Cinema*, pp. 48-49.

ideological grounds. Preceded by a formal exchange of letters and correspondences of Stalin and Molotov with Tito and Kardelj, on 28th of June the Cominform adopted a Resolution accusing the Yugoslavs of ideological deviations from Marxism and socialism, and, consequently, CPY was expelled from the Cominform.⁵²

In 1948, the split with the Cominform occurred as *vis major*, the moment of shock, and the conviction that there must have been confusion about the information at disposal, or at least that the conflict is of ephemeral nature, persisted. It brought the breaking of one myth, and the previous magnetism between Yugoslavs and Stalinist socialism ceased to exist, drastically changing the picture of Yugoslav intelligentsia.

The late 1940s and early 1950s constituted, in Stoil's words, "a grim period in the Balkan region", characterized by mass purges of any political enemies (usually pro-Stalinists), forced collectivization and rampant police terror.⁵³ In the totalitarian environment, in which each written or spoken word in favor of Stalin was considered a direct threat to the regime, the Russophiles and any "intellectual militants" unsuitable to the Party were severely punished, sent to concentration camps (for instance on Goli Otok⁵⁴), or put to death. In all of Yugoslavia, more than 55 000 "Cominformists" were registered, but the best known cases of political figures to have been blacklisted from the Party, are Andrija Hebrang⁵⁵ and Sreten Žujović.⁵⁶

⁵² Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Tito: Yugoslavia's Great Dictator: A Reassessment* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1992), pp. 53-54.

⁵³ Stoil, *Balkan Cinema*, p. 121

⁵⁴ Goli Otok, a barren, uninhabited island in northern Adriatic Sea, is still a symbol of communist repression, which from 1949 until 1956 served the regime as a top-secret prison and labor camp for incarcerating all political opponents.

⁵⁵ Hebrang was a secretary of the central committee of CPY (Central Committee of Communist Party of Croatia), who after being accused of not stressing Yugoslavism, sliding into separatism and of being Stalin's spy, got arrested in 1948, and soon after disappeared. He was most likely executed.

⁵⁶ Both Hebrang and Žujović (later in 1950, Rade Žigić, Stanko Opačić and Dušan Brkić also got excluded from the Party) were accused of supporting Cominform's Resolution, because they opposed sending the letters of the

The future of the new revolution was sprouting on the ruins of the Stalinist monolithic past. The problem was, it did not yet know about the existence of any other monolith than Stalinism – the faith was shattered, and that required the systematic purification from the germs of skepticism and alertness to spotting any signs of it. This orientation was actually a prolongation of the old pattern. The line of terror gained the old and widely familiar form – it was the line of Stalinist defense from Stalinism through methods of cohesion and unity. The undertaking of the negation in this form was not official, but it was considered a matter of practical immediacy, or how Ristić⁵⁷ reflected on the situation:

“Totalitarianism is not simply one doctrine, but political reality. What is totalitarian is not Marxism but the Stalinist state. (...) Artistic conformism of the Zhdanovist type is not imposed in Yugoslavia, where there is a fight against the subjugation of artistic thought, and those acts are by no means the consequence of a fight against Marxism, but actually a result of the fight against a negation of Marxism.”⁵⁸

The current concept of revolution would slowly be replaced by a new one. In short, the last stage of conflict occurs on the contradictory basis of social and spiritual structure: files of UDBA⁵⁹ and Workers’ Council (two symbols of Stalinist-like operations).⁶⁰ As Marko Ristić similarly maintains as early as 1952:

“The Yugoslavs need to understand that our criticism of the Stalinist type of bureaucratic tyranny still cannot be properly unified and fused on ideological grounds, let alone be equated with the “classic” *a priori* reactionary anticommunist critique of the Soviet system. Therefore, the burden of shaping the

Central Committee of CPY to Moscow after their first formal allegations. Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999), p.290.

⁵⁷ Marko Ristić was a Serbian writer and a representative of surrealism, who was in his attitudes on art and artists close to Krleža. (more in the chapter to follow)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.170-171.

⁵⁹ State Security Administration, Yugoslavia's very own secret police force.

⁶⁰ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, pp. 52-55.

criticism and accusations carry a serious moral weight because they are determining not only our enemy but us and our future.”⁶¹

After the conflict with the Cominform, the social use of artistic creation influenced the Party to demand everyday struggle against the pressure coming from the Cominform. However, the task was of affirmative rather than negative tendency – not to depict the clash with the Soviets, but by using the theory of reflection and method of socialist realism to create the works “about our current reality which contests all other forces.”⁶²

2.4. The Changing Relationship with the Soviets in Political and Film Spheres

The Yugoslav communists fostered an incredible amount of trust and reliance in the entirety of production, cultural values, and economic and political models emerging from the Soviet Union in the immediate post-war years. In the sphere of culture, the aim was, in the words of the Soviet instructor, to create the “art for the masses” - heavily ideologically imbued, simultaneously attractive and available. As the officials recalled, “all of our strains should be directed to furnishing our country with fine Soviet films.”⁶³ However, as Tito began to openly defy Stalin, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform in 1948. With Tito's break from Stalin, the country claimed the status of a non-aligned and liberalized socialist state pursuing its own political, economic and cultural agenda.

Isolated from the Communist bloc, Yugoslavia's communists decided to create a distinctive system of socialism based on the Marxist-Leninist paradigm of economic self-

⁶¹ Marko Ristić, *Politička Književnost. Za ovu Jugoslaviju, 1944-1958*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1958), p. 164.

⁶² Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, pp. 244-245.

⁶³ AY F-180 Komitet za vladu kinematografije FNRJ, F 1, Kratak referat o situaciji u kinematografiji FNRJ. [A Short Essay on the Situation on Cinematography in FPRY]. 1946.

management and political decentralization. Economic reforms were initiated in 1950, including the gradual replacement of a central planning system with the law of self-management by which the workers' councils acted as decision-making bodies and were given a considerable amount of autonomy.⁶⁴ For instance, as part of a report on the creative work in the USSR connected to Yugoslavia earlier in 1948, Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow prepared the ballet from the Yugoslav National Liberation Struggle [NOB] called *Jedna porodica* [One Family], and the Soviet ambassadors pleaded with the Yugoslavs to send them the play by Oskar Davičo, but later that year, all these culturally-friendly relations would be ceased.⁶⁵ The activities of the Society for Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with the USSR, which was established in Belgrade in 1945 by many famous intellectuals, communists and Russophiles, were reduced to zero in the spring of 1949.⁶⁶ Before the conflict, a large number of Soviet staff and professionals would come to work in Yugoslavia, and assist Yugoslav projects but, more importantly, spread influence. Even then the Yugoslavs were at times reluctant to accept their suggestions and initiatives. As Bilandžić mentions, “the mistake from the Yugoslav side lied in considering Soviet professionals as advisors whose advice they can turn down or even give themselves the right to point to the deformations within the USSR, convinced it is a part of their international communist responsibility.”⁶⁷ However, the Yugoslavs always needed to compensate for the lower economic position with respect to the USSR. Because of the lack of Yugoslav cine-production and its post-war economic weaknesses, Soviet cinema prevailed from 1945 to 1949. The radical shift occurred at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of CPY in December 1949, where they suggested new ideas and ways of understanding cultural policy and socialist policy in general. And as the final chapter will show, a paradigm

⁶⁴ Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama* (Quebec City: McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP, 1996), p. 72.

⁶⁵ AY F-314 Komitet za kulturu i umetnost vlade FNRJ, File(3-11), January 5th, 1948, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for information. To Committee for Culture and Art. p. 3.

⁶⁶ Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, p. 153.

shift in film production depended more heavily on such political fluxes than on cultural ones. In the course of 1949, the import of Soviet films had stopped, which was to a degree compensated for with the import from the West and domestic production.⁶⁸ However, the new position of Yugoslavia in the international order, and its “Third Way”, frequently led to the absurd situation in the field of culture: although the decision about the turn to the West was made among the Party leaders, the same Party members and institutions simultaneously stressed and suggested the necessity for inclinations toward the Soviet model.⁶⁹ Hence, many people were caught up in the chaotic state of confusion generated by sudden ideological shifts.

Let us now observe this transition from one specific angle, in the case of cinematographic cooperation between the USSR and Yugoslavia, in Abram Room’s film *U planinama Jugoslavije* [In the Mountains of Yugoslavia] (1946), while considering the evaluations of the same film cooperation prior to and after the split. In general, Soviet workers justified their interference and control of Yugoslav cinematography on the need of preventing the deviation from the “right” path. The team of Soviet filmmakers involved in film production on Yugoslav soil enjoyed tremendous popularity. Throughout the two-year period of production of *U planinama*, they were even provided with a residence in Dedinje, the wealthiest neighborhood in Belgrade. As friends turned enemies, this debut film of the two regimes was not eagerly mentioned anymore, because the Yugoslav communists were by no means pleased with its political aspect in those circumstances. Namely, the script for the film created in the midst of the celebration of the Soviet-Yugoslav brotherhood⁷⁰ was found on three elemental political points from the Soviet perspective: 1) that the rising against the Axis

⁶⁸ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, pp. 184-188.

⁶⁹ Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, p. 242.

⁷⁰ The film ends with a victorious parade of the Soviet and Yugoslav armies with the flags of both countries and the masses cheering “Tito-Stalin! Moscow-Belgrade!”

forces occurred in July 1941 when the USSR was attacked, not in April with the invasion on Yugoslavia; 2) that the participation of the peasants played a decisive role for the success in the war; and 3) that the victory of Yugoslav Partisans came only because of the help from the USSR.⁷¹ Not surprisingly, after 1948, the film obtained a negative function - of an indicator of loyalty to Tito and the Party.⁷²

Furthermore, as the film was officially cast aside as a failure, Yugoslav filmmakers who participated in the mentioned mutual film project later reflected on Room's film in a purely negative light. Vjekoslav Afrić, the director of *Slavica* (1947), publicly explained the motives for the creation of that film in the first place: "During the whole period of filming of *U planinama Jugoslavije*, we were not pleased with the manner of interpretation of our NOB.⁷³ This Stalinist method in delivering our reality strongly offended us. So, simply out of spite, I started working on *Slavica* (...) and this mood did not abandon me even when we left the Soviet team and started our own film."⁷⁴ Afrić omitted that, at the time, not a single film could have been made without the permission of the Party. However, this political aspect of *Slavica* was the main reason why this film was not only approved, but later often gladly mentioned, as the "first" domestic feature film, whereas *U planinama* was cast into oblivion. Although *Slavica* is given this status of the "first" expectedly, since the new regime did not want to keep the old memory for the Kingdom, Kosanović mentions that in the time span from 1918 to 1941, 45 official films were made (but only four of them were entirely saved).⁷⁵

⁷¹ Volk, *Istorija jugoslovenskog filma*, pp. 136-138.

⁷²One case in particular supports this. When the generals returned to Yugoslavia in 1948, after their education in the USSR, they were sent on a "vacation" to the Adriatic summer resort Miločer, but they were actually, under conditions of isolation subjected to ideological purification and political testing through, among the rest, the imposed discussion about Room's film. Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, p. 253.

⁷³ The name "Narodno-oslobodilački rat/ borba" – NOB or War of Liberation reflects how the Partisans referred to their participation in the Second World War.

⁷⁴ Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, p. 188.

⁷⁵ Dejan Kosanović, *Kinematografija i film u Kraljevini SHS/Kraljevini Jugoslaviji: 1918-1941* (Beograd: Filmski centar Srbije Beograd, 2011), p. 126-127.

2.5. The Mechanisms of Film Censorship

The conflict with the Cominform had opened up a series of complex ideological, theoretical and practical political issues, many of which were related to cultural policy. Tighter planning was followed by increased work of the Agitprop (department of agitation and propaganda, with Milovan Đilas as their leader) apparatus, with a scope of control including the work of universities, drama groups, choirs, and their repertoire, organization of cultural life in towns and villages, films and theaters, literary journals and cultural sections of newspapers. From the formal record of the Agitprop meeting in 1948, in a discussion over agitation through separate departments – for the matters of countryside, for press, schools, publishing and culture in general – it was advised to “harshly take a direction of reading *Borba* [The Battle] and central republican papers, as continuous work on all the locations where people gather in larger amounts should be used for agitation and propaganda.”⁷⁶ as part of the attempt to prevent idealessness and apoliticism in cultural life.⁷⁷ Its main sections were in charge of the questions of villages,⁷⁸ schools, publishing activity, culture, agitation and press.⁷⁹

The interest of agitprops and ideologues in “higher” art was understandable in the prewar period because the Party contained the intellectual elite, and work on literary

⁷⁶ AY F 147, Savezna komisija za pregled filmova, File 5, February 5th, 1948.

⁷⁷ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 30.

⁷⁸ The Party and Agitprop often aimed at the rural areas, and developed special propaganda measures and investments into education for villages due to the fact that most of the peasants were Partisans in the NOB and they, in general, were vital as part of the population constituting around 67 % in 1948. Regardless of the intense propagation of industrialization, the country remained attached to the soil in many ways.

⁷⁹ AY F 507, Arhiv CK SKJ, (VIII) K-4, “Report from the meeting of Agitprop CK KPJ held on November 26th, 1948 with the question of organization of Agitprop”.

magazines and periodicals represented one of the few legitimate channels of activity for the barred Party. Such surveillance was also valid during the unconsolidated period immediately after WWII and for some time after the Cominform expulsion, when a new socialist society had to be defended.⁸⁰ The leading functionaries censored literature at all levels from recruitment of editors to editorial boards, and to the selection and revision of texts. Under the scope of Agitprop personnel's jurisdiction was also the public criticism of theatrical performances, changing style and repertoire through ideological checking and banning. In the verbal period of censorship when there was no bibliography of Yugoslav literature for the years 1945-1950, direct censorship was a direct Soviet influence. The major censors were distinguished prewar communists.

Also, the creation of artistic unions, unknown to interwar Yugoslavia, was a very convenient institutional form by means of which Party spread its influence and ideology among the artists. An especially important factor was that the membership in these unions provided material security as well as the opportunity for publishing or presenting the work. However, the union accepted only the type of artists who were favorable to the communists and who themselves participated in the NOB, while the rest of them were simply expelled during the frequent revisions and filtrations.⁸¹ In addition, an important method which the Party managed to utilize was bringing the artists out of their enclosed ateliers and into the open spaces of construction terrain, factory halls, and fighting arenas, where they had their exhibitions.

Film censorship was established as one of the first offices after the liberation of Yugoslav territory by the Partisans and the Red Army. Only film art in Yugoslavia was "honored" with the fact that an entirely new institution was founded for its sake, the Federal

⁸⁰ Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 94-95.

⁸¹ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 196.

Commission for Film Review,⁸² in charge and in control of everything being filmed and imported, with a highly organized and systematic bureaucratic mechanism developed for this purpose. In the beginning, control was held by a special commission composed of representatives of the Ministry of Defense, Information and Education, because there was no educated staff in the form of film critics and censors.

Miloradović distinguishes three main types of censorship at work back then. “Small knife”, or formal censorship, was dealing with the processes of cutting and changing parts of the film. The next two were considered more severe - “big knife” censorship via financing, that is, rejection of financing, existed wherever the films were made, while “self-censorship” was a consequence of threat and pressure from the censorship officials.⁸³

Beside the censorship on the federal level there were also Art Councils founded as adjuncts to the film companies, usually national organs and manifestations of decentralist tendencies. These bodies, consisting of around 10 members, had a variety of tasks: to select the material, to appoint directors, cameramen, producers for each domestic film, to determine the quality of work and, in the end, decide whether the work is eligible to be released or not.⁸⁴

The reports made about the work of the Federal Commission for Film Review in the past years with Dedijer, Vučo, Bogdanović as members on a plenary meeting, resulted in a new decision - the fining for the films released without previous permission would be up to 15 000 dinars.⁸⁵ All the films from domestic state companies (for import, domestic production and distribution) underwent this process. First, the production companies would submit their

⁸² The institution changed its name frequently. Censorship Commission with Film Company of DFY (Democratic Federal Yugoslavia) becomes Commission with Committee for Cinematography of FNRJ government in 1949, and Federal Commission for Film Review in 1953.

⁸³ Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, p. 258

⁸⁴ “Odgovornost umjetničkih savjeta u filmskim preduzećima“ [The Responsibility of Art Councils in Film Companies], *Vjesnik*, 1952., p. 8.

⁸⁵ AY F 147, File 1, Zapisnik sa plenarnog sastanka Savezne komisije za pregled filmova. [The report from the Plenary Meeting of the Federal Commission for Film Review].

films to the Federal Commission, pay for the review depending on the length of a film. The Commission issued a certificate with which all film copies had to be stamped. During the procedure of viewing and evaluating, the director was not allowed to be present. The members of the Commission (at their plenary compositions numbering around 40 persons) would construct their comments and objections, while the president noted them down. Those points were not further discussed, but only formally conveyed to the director.⁸⁶ Censors were also on the other hand not in a situation to easily ban the films, because the imported ones were paid for in foreign currency which was difficult to acquire. Censoring was thought to be a duty of highly delicate responsibility, considering its aims not only to preserve ideological purity, but economic value as well.

While it was clear that the huge Soviet market could enlarge its success, but also was in a position to amortize every lack of one, Yugoslavia, on the other hand, did not possess an adequate market for film production which would pay off. However, there were cases when the Party acted as if this did not represent any problems; under central attention was ideology, and not financial returns. The president of the Committee for Cinematography, Vladislav Ribnikar, with an explanation of “high seat demand” required from the Zvezda Film authorities that the script of the film *Priča o fabrici* [A Story about the Factory] be changed, which disappointed Aleksandar Vučo, director of the company, since this implied making the film again from scratch. Ribnikar simply responded that the assets are at his disposal as long as he needs them.⁸⁷

For the functioning of the mechanism of film censorship the most important directive was the *Uredba o cenzuri kinematografskih filmova* [The Decree on the Censorship of

⁸⁶ Ranko Munitić, “Zabranjene igre Yugo-filma” [The forbidden Games of Yugo-Film], *Yufilm danas – jugoslovenski filmski časopis br 2-3* [Yufilm Today – Yugoslav Film Magazine], 1999. p. 247.

⁸⁷ Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, p. 259; Škrabalo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj 1896-1997*, p. 141.

Cinematography] signed by Tito and the minister of education Ribnikar in 1945. It was a short, but intimidating and repressive piece of documentation granting censorship the status of an integral element of film production and stating that censorship institutions are composed of state officials exclusively. It was confirmed that the members of the Commission are appointed by the President of FNRJ as a suggestion from the Committee for culture and art. The fact that Tito himself appointed the members already attributes enough significance to this institution. Yet, the road the censors had to take, juggling the potential of political or ideological detriment and desired economic benefits, with the constant threat for their own existence, was steep and narrow.

The criteria for film censorship in Yugoslavia could be categorized into two major groups, the first formed by ideological orientations, and the second relating to foreign policies. Ideology, in short, sanctioned the themes of monarchism, anarchism, church, democracy, and civil rights, sexual topics, as well as violence or criminal instances.⁸⁸ It was characterized by a tendency of “training” the taste of the public and shaping of a “new man”. Political routes were altering faster than the ideological matrix so that their validity as a censor criterion was of shorter life span.

Although official censorship was introduced as early as the formation of the state of Yugoslavia in 1945, it was not used as a method of control and power exposure until 1952. It was first applied to the satire *Ciguli Miguli* [Fiddle Diddle], which premiered in “late” 1977, and displayed an undisputed evidence of contemporary “political mood”.⁸⁹ *Ciguli Miguli*, a satire about an excessively devout Party secretary, was accused of promoting the bourgeoisie

⁸⁸ AY F 507 VIII), Ideološka komisija CK SKJ, File II/2-b, 1947-1955 Plenary Meetings.

⁸⁹ Škrabalo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj 1896-1997*, p. 157.

and perceived as too rigid a critique of communism in general.⁹⁰ It should be noted that, even with the existence of an institution which regulated the processes of censorship, a frequent form of repression was not actually formal prohibition, but what was known under a Croatian expression as “putting in bunkers”,⁹¹ and usually without any explanation, so the ill-fated films simply disappeared from the public eye.

The other example of a forbidden film, but also a long forgotten one, is a ballet satire *Tajna dvorca I.B.* [The Secret of Castle I.B.] (1951), which was not premiered until 1992. The plot and characters are based on an allegory for the Cominform assembly in Bucharest in 1948, when the state members issued the Resolution (I.B. stands for Informbiro or Cominform). The film ironizes both the aristocratic tradition and the new communist dogma, best exemplified in ingratiating behavior and uniforms of Party delegates. Although the film was not a serious provocation but a “kitsch” joke, the Party system did not tolerate such a deviation.⁹²

⁹⁰ “Filmovi u bunkeru: Što su nam drugovi branili da gledamo,” jutarnji.hr, accessed April 21st, 2014, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/filmovi-u-bunkeru--sto-su-nam-drugovi-branili-da-gledamo/218209/>.

⁹¹ The meaning of the expression: casting by the wayside, storing in underground storage rooms.

⁹² “Nacional otkrio – Zabranjeni i izgubljeni hrvatski film,” nacional.hr, accessed April 28th, 2014, <http://www.nacional.hr/clanak/12004/nacional-otkrio-zabranjeni-i-izgubljeni-hrvatski-film>.

Chapter 3: The Polemics among the Literary and Official Circles: the Conflict on the Literary Left

This chapter investigates the processes occurring in the literary domain, with the inclusion of dominant figures and emphasizing their role and influence on the position that art was taking in the observed period. For this purpose, I am also briefly taking into account the pre-war period as to demonstrate the basis for the phenomenon of the Conflict on the left and point to the fundamental opposition between the group of *Pečat* [The Seal] expressing a critique of CPY, and on the other hand, *Književne sveske* [Literary Volumes] expressing the attitudes of the Party. The intention behind shortly observing the pre-war period is to show that there was a lot of opposition, even at that time, to the ideas that would later take shape in socialist realism. The emphasis is placed on the conspicuous personality of Miroslav Krleža, editor of *Pečat*, and his opponent, one of the founders of *Književne sveske*, a Party member and ideologue, Milovan Đilas.⁹³ Some space in the text will also be granted to the major turning points condensed in the Congresses of the Union of the Yugoslav Writers which, to a large degree, determined the direction later in the Conflict. Finally, the analysis in this chapter displays the heterogeneity in artistic life under the opening years of the socialist regime and unevenness between different art forms, caused by the Party's share in controlling film production.

⁹³ For the CPY even more importantly, Đilas was the editor of a newspaper *Borba*, the Party's significant propaganda channel.

At the end of the 1920s, modeled upon the literature of the USSR, socially engaged literature emerged in Yugoslavia. From the moment of its appearance, socialist realist literature caused different interpretations, which, ultimately, led to the well-known Conflict on the literary left.⁹⁴ The conflict occurred among the Yugoslav writers in 1928 and lasted until 1952,⁹⁵ and concerned the interpretations of philosophical, scientific and artistic issues. However, the quarrel went beyond literary questions, well into the political domain, which supposed to provide the bases for executing the revolution. In his book *Sukob na književnoj ljevici* [Conflict on the literary left], Stanko Lasić aimed to reflect on and publicly reveal the complex tectonics of the 25-year-long discussion. First and foremost, in his analysis, as the fundamental basis for the structure of the conflict – and *a priori* position - Lasić exposes the absolutely harmonious synthesis of two entities: art and revolution. Lasić's underlying idea is that all aesthetic concepts include revolution, either in form of action or reaction; and vice versa, the revolution is in desperate need of art. The central question is what the function of art should be in the revolution and the function of revolution in art. The conflict was not only about defending freedom and autonomy of art against socialist realism, utilitarianism, political pragmatics, or totalitarianism of the revolutionary Party. It was more than that - it was also a matter of defending the revolution.⁹⁶ To many participants, the revolution was important as much as art, since they were aware that in discussing art it is necessary to talk about revolution.⁹⁷ Yet, it is important to note that they were separating the notion of “revolution” from the aspects of socialist realism, the latter being distinguished from socially engaged literature.

⁹⁴ Marija Radovčić, “Milovan Đilas u *Sukobu na književnoj ljevici*,” (MA diss., University of Zagreb, 2013).

⁹⁵ This timeframe is chosen by Stanko Lasić. The year 1928 is taken because it represents a certain turning point in political life (Stjepan Radić is assassinated, the parliamentary system is broken), while in the artistic field the year is marked by the gathering of the left-oriented writers around two literary types of aesthetics: social literature and surrealism. 1952 is the year when Krleža held a famous speech in Ljubljana on the Third Congress of the Union of Writers, which is considered as a definite point in the Yugoslav denouncement of dogmatic socialist realism.

⁹⁶ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, p. 19.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Since the governing CPY viewed artistic creation from a position of practical politics and historical moment and considered art as one of the elements of revolutionary activity, art was demanded to fulfill the tasks of its preparation. These attitudes were exposed in the official magazines such as *Mlada kultura* [Young Culture], *Umetnost i politika* [Art and Politics], *Naša stvarnost* [Our Reality], and, finally, *Književne sveske*. The conflict arose when part of the communists challenged socialist realism and objected to the Stalinist treatment of art that placed it in the exclusive service of the revolution. As an opposition to those officially supported magazines, the group of intellectuals that gathered around the progressively liberal magazine *Pečat* stressed the nature of creativity which ought not to be subdued to utilitarianism. All of the above listed magazines except for *Naša stvarnost* clashed with *Pečat*, but *Književne sveske* expressed a direct opposition to the editors and publicists of *Pečat* which was confirmed in the essay about agitation and propaganda delivered on the Fifth National Conference by Boris Kidrič. The Party encouraged the thriving of the “young proletarian culture”, and emphasized that the artist “should not wait for better times to come”, but create freely in the “infinite possibilities offered by Marxism-Leninism.”⁹⁸

3.1. *Pečat* vs. *Književne sveske*

The case of *Pečat*, and its clash with the officially supported *Književne sveske*, marks a very important and sensitive point in the complex relationship between the Party and the liberalizing intelligentsia. The group around Krleža’s and Ristić’s *Pečat*, called *pečatovci* [The Sealers], relentlessly emphasized the unwillingness to transcribe the aesthetic issues into politics. These notions connect to the idea of tendency in art – stated by Krleža in “O

⁹⁸ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, pp. 34-35.

njemačkom slikaru Georgu Groszu” [About the German painter Georg Grosz]: “the tendency cannot be harmful to the artistic creation (...) and there is no such thing as indifference of an artist (towards class struggle and society), because an artist is by default immersed into reality and its construction”.⁹⁹

Krleža’s polemical document which filled a double issue of *Pečat*, “Dijalektički Antibarbarus” [Dialectical Antibarbarus] defends the “dignity of the social tendency” imagining the dignity of left literature, which is consequent and faithful to the truth, aiming to prove that free will or ideological conviction were no guarantee for the value of artistic work, because the intensities are conditioned by personal mood. Krleža is positive that idealess or tendenciousless art is non-existent, “for the Art is not entirely clear what it wants, but if it wanted something at all then it wanted its SELF...”¹⁰⁰ The Party responded with *Književne sveske*, which marked the beginning of the end of the Conflict on the left. Initiators of *Književne sveske*, Đilas and Kardelj, decided to publish Koča’s text “Ratni ciljevi Dijalektičkog Antibarbarusa” [War goals of Dialectical Antibarbarus], which openly criticizes Krleža’s “Dijalektički Antibarbarus”. Despite representing the Party line, Popović’s text differs from the rest because it does not attempt to invalidate Krleža’s literary work. From the *Pečat* group, Ristić was, along with Krleža, the most attacked author, primarily due to his essay “San i istina Don Kihota” [The Dream and Truth of Don Quixote].¹⁰¹ Krleža recoiled because he again found himself isolated, having as a fierce opponent an organized and militant Party. Even if Tito nowhere explicitly mentioned Krleža due to personal sympathies for him, Krleža knew that the charges were pointed at him. As a response to the allegations and criticisms, Krleža states: “The chase, which runs today against *Pečat* and its associates

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Vlado Mađarević, *Krleža i politika: analitičke rasprave i dokumentarni fragmenti iz Krležinih eseja* (Zagreb: Spektar, 1984), p. 206

¹⁰¹ Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 60-66.

Ristić and Bogdanov, is directed at me, while the phrases that Ristić and Bogdanov preach idealism and surrealism with covert political intentions, and spread Trotskyism, are all simply ridiculous (...) defamations which are actually pointed exclusively against my personality and my literary works.”¹⁰²

The discourses, which are irreconcilable and refuting each other by two opposing understandings of the essence of human existence, can be roughly compressed in Krleža’s statement that the truth is the single most important ideal of all the disciplines, and Kardelj’s maintaining that skepticism is the perennial venom.¹⁰³ Đilas and Kardelj were claiming that this is not about aesthetic issues, but the different (threatening) visions of revolutionary flow, or even a hidden revision which does not dare to reveal itself (implying the work of *pečatovci*).

3.2. Miroslav Krleža

As Mađarević describes Krleža, he is a Marxist of critical spirit, and his work a sign of a rebel against all norms, habits and old-civic morale and mentality. As one of the first most fruitful pleaders of modern dominant expressionist stream in dramaturgy, Krleža exposes human spirit, “disappointed and disintegrated by the First World War cataclysm, the shipwreck of all the moral values and hopes of humanity”.¹⁰⁴ The treatment Krleža received from the Serbian literary critic Velibor Gligorić¹⁰⁵ differs considerably when he reproaches Krleža for his high tone of expressing opinions, and “the lack of one central, basic force, to

¹⁰² “Što je ostalo od sukoba na ljevici,” pecatmagazin.com, accessed January 17th, 2014, <http://www.pecatmagazin.com/2009/02/49-7/>.

¹⁰³ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, pp. 55-57.

¹⁰⁴ Mađarević, *Krleža i politika*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ Gligorić was along with Radovan Zogović the editor of *Umetnost i kritika*, CPY paper which clashed with *Pečat*.

unify all the exposed material”. However, Gligorić does acknowledge that Krleža gave an impetus to the modern protest against traditions, being “the first mighty hammer to have fallen down on the traditions of our literature rotting in (...) superficial aesthetics”.¹⁰⁶

By defending artistic freedom within the left movement, Krleža actually defended the general principle of human freedom, and all of his major literary works dating from this period (*Banquet in Blitva*, *On the Edge of Reason*, *The Return of Filip Latinovicz* and *Ballads of Petrica Kerempuh*) symbolize strong protests against any type of tyranny. According to Mađarević, the entire substratum of Krleža’s work reaches the final, all-encompassing point in the novel *Banquet in Blitva*, which displays the tragedy of the individual trapped in the politics of current times.¹⁰⁷

There were two front-lines or dimensions of Krleža’s struggle in the Conflict on the literary left: against shallow utilitarianism and against absolute autonomy of art.¹⁰⁸ What summarizes the majority of his theses is contained within the words: “Usud Čovjeka jeste politika” [Man’s destiny is politics] – proclaiming him an inevitable component in humanity’s social and artistic life. The literature cannot be isolated from the notion in which it is deeply immersed – reality. Krleža was most provoked by the simplistic understanding of tendentious or engaged art. The curiosity of the tendency in art laid in the fact that it needed to be defended from its left adepts who were applying it amateurishly and unskillfully, as well as from the right reactionaries.

In the pre-war time Krleža was boycotted by the Party as a “heretic”. He withdrew to solitary silence, where he spent all four years of war, responding neither to his former comrades’ calls to join the Partisans, nor to the proposals of Ustasha leader Pavelić to take

¹⁰⁶ Velibor Gligorić, *Kritike* (Beograd: Jugoslavija, 1926), pp. 39-45.

¹⁰⁷ Mađarević, *Krleža i politika*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, p. 55.

over a high position in the cultural life of NDH (Independent State of Croatia). After the war, from the status of *persona non grata*, Miroslav Krleža became favored by the regime under Tito's condition he remains silent about the pre-war debate, and as a close friend of Tito evolved into one of the most influential people whose books were published in numerous publications and his plays staged and performed across the country.¹⁰⁹

3.3. Milovan Đilas

One of the leading Party ideologues, Milovan Đilas, who was elected to Congress as a member of the Politburo of CPY, in his paper reports on agitative-propagandistic work noticed that the conflict with the Cominform carries along the danger of disbelief in Marxism in general. He pointed out that today's literary and aesthetic orientation is just a continuation of the struggle that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia waged since 1935, against the "decadent and anti-Party conceptions of absolute freedom of artistic creation."

After the conflict with Stalin, and especially at the beginning of the 1950s, Đilas's ideological transformation becomes triggered. In 1953 his fight for liberal views and faster democratization of Yugoslav society reaches its peak. From a fanatical supporter of Stalinist communism during the war, he becomes the leader of the struggle for liberalization of Yugoslav communism.¹¹⁰ He published a series of articles in Belgrade's *Borba* propagating his liberal ideas, where he tried to gather the wider Yugoslav intelligentsia, and among them

¹⁰⁹ "Kulturna knjiga jedne epohe," jutarnji.hr, accessed May 4th, 2013, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/-sukob-na-knjizevnoj-ljevici---kultna-knjiga-jedne-epohe/1100696/>. Slavko Goldstein, on Lasić's book and his personal meeting with Krleža.

¹¹⁰ This was, however, not a sole example of Đilas's shift. During the Conflict on the left, he went through his first transformation in 1932 from a simply left oriented young man into a fanatical communist. Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, pp. 197-200.

Krleža.¹¹¹ Đilas's case stemmed from militant stands which culminated in the Plenum of the Central Committee on January 20, 1954, when Oskar Davičo's poem *Čovekov čovek* was identified with "Đilasism" in art.¹¹² As the Party ideologue most concerned with artistic and aesthetic questions, he states the following in his book *Legenda o Njegošu*: "Leave politics to us, politicians, while we leave aesthetics to you, writers. It is obvious which of these is more important."¹¹³ From the beginning of Đilas's intensive campaign for liberalization, the Party leadership looked at it with concern and in 1954, he was convicted of harmful activities.¹¹⁴ At the Third plenum of the Yugoslav Communist League, Đilas is excluded from the League and removed from all his functions because of "anti-Party and anti-socialist" activities.¹¹⁵ The Đilas affair and "revanchism" culminated in "Party witch hunts".¹¹⁶

Krleža and Đilas were on opposing sides – Krleža as the central figure of the resistant dogmatic vision of art and Đilas as its fanatical advocate and one of the initiators of the final showdown within the Institute. However, their relationship is not one-dimensional but a complex one: in twenty years of conflict they grew closer; firstly as opponents, then associates, until the final split in 1954.

Through several left-wing magazines from 1934 until the end of 1939, Krleža was involved in a public debate against hard dogmatists led by Party ideologues Milovan Đilas and Edvard Kardelj. In 1952, Krleža intended to start a magazine *Danas*, conceived as continuation of his inter-war magazine project. After the failure of this project, Krleža joins

¹¹¹ It was a period of cooperation of Krleža and Đilas, whose relationship, because of the closeness of their fundamental views then, was acquitted of animosity from the previous period.

¹¹² Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 105-106.

¹¹³ Milovan Đilas, *Razmišljanja o raznim pitanjima* (Beograd: Kultura, 1951), pp. 46-47.

¹¹⁴ The direct cause of it was Đilas's article "Anatomy of a moral" published in January, 1954, in *Nova misao*, in which he protects Milena Dapčević and vehemently criticizes the Party bureaucracy.

¹¹⁵ Because of subsequent interviews and publishing books in the West where he criticizes the communist system he was convicted three more times and spent a total of nine years in prison.

¹¹⁶ Radovčić, "Milovan Đilas u *Sukobu na književnoj ljevici*", p. 44. Velimir Visković, "Životopis Miroslava Krleže," krlezijana.lzmk.hr, <http://krlezijana.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=1747>

Đilas's initiative in 1953 to launch *Nova misao* in Belgrade, and participates in the preparatory editorial meetings.¹¹⁷

3.4. The Writers between Socialist Realism and Opposing Theories in the Administrative Period

Early socialist realist novels by Maxim Gorky or, for instance, French communist writer Louis Aragon, as well as the established theoretical groundwork, left little space for Yugoslavia's *own form* of socialist realism to "fit the picture" and develop equally huge and significant literary works of that genre, contributing thereby to the international socialist realist scene. Besides, in contrast to the Soviet Union, where all the phenomena of literary variety were liquidated, Yugoslav Communist Party, even though it was involved in the creation of a new literature in a new society, did not insist on the principles of socialist realism too rigidly as far as literature was concerned. It rather applied a milder formula (publicized through Radovan Zogović's¹¹⁸ speech in 1946 which was of high importance for the first period of literary policy) called *national realism*,¹¹⁹ which mostly came about because of the need to express Yugoslavia's specific social circumstances through art.¹²⁰ After the year 1945 "canonized the victory of the art and revolution synthesis",¹²¹ new realism¹²² became the Party doctrine under the name of socialist realism.

¹¹⁷ Radovčić, "Milovan Đilas u *Sukobu na književnoj ljevici*", pp. 47-48.

¹¹⁸ Radovan Zogović was one of the most influential men of literary politics in the first years after the liberation, but later considered one of the literary Informbureauists in Yugoslavia, and as pro-Russian writer accused, and, as early as 1948 expelled from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

¹¹⁹ Goulding simply refers to it as the Yugoslav variant of Stalinist-Zhdanovist narrow so-called dogma. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema.*, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 102-103.

¹²¹ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, p. 46.

¹²² It proposes that art serves the people, not the Party; Carol S. Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia 1944-1953* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001).

Within the initial stage prior to the Tito-Stalin split, two phases intermingled, according to Lasić.¹²³ The first was the phase of a new cultural and literary life on the ruins of old structures, covering the years of 1945 and 1946, and was marked by the explicatory tone, as well as a diversity of attempts. The texts gaining prominence here were Krleža's "Književnost danas" [Literature today],¹²⁴ the report by Ivo Andrić on the First Congress of the Writers' Union, and "O našoj književnosti, njenom položaju i njenim zadacima danas" [About our literature, its position and tasks today] by Zogović. It was followed by the phase of violent ideologization of the entire cultural life, and art in specific in 1947 and 1948, characterized by a didactic and paternalistic tone. As texts most conspicuous and determinative of the direction in this period, the following should be noted: Čedomir Minderović's "O neposrednim zadacima naše književnosti i naših književnih radnika" [About the immediate tasks of our literature and our literary workers],¹²⁵ Zogović's "Primjer kako ne treba praviti 'primjere iz književnosti'" [An example how not to make 'examples from literature'"], and Marin Franičević's "O nekim negativnim pojavama u našoj suvremenoj književnosti" [About some negative phenomena within our contemporary literature].¹²⁶

From Yugoslav cultural heritage, the most favored was the tradition of socialist movement and its creators. Therefore, the works were being widely written about Svetozar Marković, Dušan Popović, August Cesarec, Otokar Keršovani etc., considered as important figures, and even heroes at that time.¹²⁷ From the representatives of social literature, prose, poetry or critique, the published authors include Radovan Zogović, Čedomir Minderović, Jovan Popović, Eli Finci etc. They mostly glorify the beauty of the socialist work and

¹²³ The first chapter brings a more detailed chronological outline, but varying from author to author.

¹²⁴ A fresh trend appeared stressing the need for a critical approach, published in 1945 in the first number of *Republika*, although this line of thought was not adopted at the time.; Miroslav Krleža, "Književnost danas," *Republika*, October-November, 1945.

¹²⁵ Čedomir Minderović, "O neposrednim zadacima naše književnosti i naših književnih radnika," *Republika*, year 4, no. 1, January, 1st, 1948.

¹²⁶ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, p. 49.

¹²⁷ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 66.

heroism, and claim that the process of reconstruction occurs in the writer himself, as in the entire society. The writers who stepped to the forefront just before the war, like Branko Ćopić, Vladimir Dedijer, or Dušan Kostić, evidently carry victorious enthusiasm. On the other hand, the older generation of writers, and most prominent pre-war surrealists, for instance, Marko Ristić, Aleksandar Vučo, Milan Dedinac, Oskar Davičo, are exposed to criticism and only by the negligence of their work in the previous period and proving their *partiinost*, can they now continue to create in a new political environment.¹²⁸

In this initial period, there was constant pressure to homogenize writers along ideological-aesthetic lines resulting in a dominant unified chorus that squeezed out any potential for a dynamic and polemic scene. The regime equalized a young man with the “new man” of socialism, while literary (as well as film) value was estimated on the basis of the level of *properly* reflecting reality.¹²⁹ Art became deprived of its autonomy and represented a mere task in the interest of society, whereas the rest of the styles and currents (especially expressionism and surrealism), or anything which social art clashed with before the war, were rendered utterly hostile and threatening. Anything not included in realism (judged to be the essence of art) was proclaimed formalism, subjectivism, schematism, bohemianism, decadence, or pessimism, and as such considered worthless and reactionary. The officials literally wiped away an entire generation which trudged into creative work from 1918. For instance, Miloš Crnjanski, Velmar-Janković, Dragiša Vasić and Tin Ujević as politically inconvenient subjects are just a few whose work was cast to oblivion. As Radovan Zogović wrote: “It is enough that a young reader gets used to meeting the names of traitors, decadents,

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

¹²⁹ Here, the notion of “reality” is to be taken in the prophetic socialist sense, as explained in the theoretical guidelines of this thesis.

rotten literature (...) to absorb their negative impact, that would further shape his consciousness and influence the development of his social and cultural life”.¹³⁰

The Cominform Resolution in 1948 undoubtedly opened the doors for a new artistic stage. According to Lasić, what was needed was the collision with the *purity* of this revolution, with its center – in order to sense that *this* revolution was not *the* Revolution. Thus, the period is the last attempt at reaching the synthesis of art and revolution, but in a new form.¹³¹ Furthermore, the regime itself faced loopholes in propaganda and socialist realist dogmas (as they symbolized Stalinism), which gave “the anti-dogmatists” greater space for public expression, since a large part of domestic dogmas needed to be officially dropped (or appear in different form) in order not to be associated with the current Soviet enemy.

The new breaking point was at the Second Congress of the Writers’ of Yugoslavia, from 26th until 28th of Dec 1949, in Zagreb. Oskar Davičo’s essay “Poezija i otpori” [Poetry and resistance] characterized the position of the writer towards socialism as that of a dishonest lover. Curiously enough, the text was read without repercussions in 1949 at the Serbian Writers Association, but was not published until 1951 in *Mladost*. The text is considered to have played a crucial role in the liberation of Yugoslav literature because it pointed the way for new developments. A similar task was accomplished in the Croatian case, with Petar Šegedin’s report “Naša savremena kritika” [Our contemporary criticism] at the Congress in Zagreb in 1949.¹³² Šegedin’s essay pleads for the liberty and individuality of art, anti-dogmatism, and ultimate separation from socialist realism, but because of his Partisan past and political orientation, the Party critics were trying to avoid harshness. *Politika* lists the repertoire of the Congress, which consisted of essays and reports of many famous authors of

¹³⁰ Radovan Zogović, “Može li izdaja da zastari,” *Borba*, December 23rd, 1946; Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, pp. 68-69.

¹³¹ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, p. 49.

¹³² Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 8-14.

the time. Among the most important were Ivo Andrić's opening words, Čedomir Minderović ("O stanju i razvoju naše književnosti" ...[About the development of our literature]), Velibor Gligorić ("O našoj savremenoj proznoj književnosti" [About our contemporary prose literature]), Milan Bogdanović ("O savremenoj jugoslavenskoj poeziji" [About the contemporary Yugoslav poetry])...¹³³ Literary and artistic freedom, at least in a limited sense, was heralded even in December, 1949, through Edvard Kardelj's presentation at the Slovenian academy of science and art, where he strongly opposed the pragmatic conception of the dogma, and expressed the first explicit critique of the Soviet model.¹³⁴

Actually, beside the works which present the doctrine of socialism and express the formulas that the Party propagated (art became treated as "national property"¹³⁵), there are no open and deeper discussions about the meaning of art until the beginning of the 1950s. Literary intellectual figures, who fit into the story of art liberalization, as Bošković has termed it, initiate the process of secularization of political and artistic life, as opposed to the Party sacredizing through the imposed, official ideas, dominant in the first, post-war years.¹³⁶

The absolute role model was knocked down when the Yugoslav intellectuals realized that the socialism in place was the enemy of creativity and humanism (experience of threat and poverty due to the Soviet blockade). But it did not automatically imply the defeat of all the principles of Stalinist socialism in general. The overall atmosphere, born out of the political situation and careful destalinization, proved to be constantly laden with the particles of concern over and uncertainties about socialist realism.

¹³³⁻⁴ "Drugi kongres Saveza književnika Jugoslavije," *Politika*, December 18 and December 24, 1949., accessed April 11th 2014, <http://www.zaprokul.org.rs/Media/Document/CasopisKultura/1183.pdf>

¹³⁴ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 255.

¹³⁵ From *Književne novine*, April, 27th, 1948, Đilas on a plenary meeting of National Assembly of FPRY: „Ekspoze ministra Đilasa o razvitku kulturnog života u Jugoslaviji“: „the cultural legacies can be rendered accessible to the wide masses only if they are the property of the state“.

¹³⁶ Dušan Bošković, "Intelektualci u vlasti: društveni obrasci u formativnim godinama Druge Jugoslavije" [The Intellectuals in Power: Social Patterns in the Formative Years of the Second Yugoslavia], *Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju* (Beograd: 2009), pp. 121-126.

3.5. Liberalization in the Period of Changes

Although the Party's preoccupation with art did not diminish, the period between 1950 and 1955 is known as the period of liberalization of Yugoslav society and culture from dogmatism. At this stage, the Conflict on the literary left was marked by a confrontation with the soc-realist Stalinist-Zhdanovist theoretical concept.¹³⁷

In the years after 1950, literary life became stronger, richer and more easily flowing. Davičo's novel *Pesma* [The Song] from 1952, an example of avant-garde prose, Lalić's *Svadba* [The Wedding], Šegedin's novels *Djeca božja* from 1946 and *Osamljenici* from 1947 represent strong examples of existentialist poetics, which dominated the scene through the motif of fear of manipulation and repressive government apparatus.¹³⁸

The key event for the spread of new ideas and views on culture and art was the Third Congress of Writers of Yugoslavia which took place on October 5th–7th, 1952 in Ljubljana. Following the direction of affirming superiority of Yugoslav socialism with respect to the Soviet form, Miroslav Krleža alleged that “we are in need of liberation from the schematized left Cominformist phrase...” Krleža, as one of the leading figures at the Congress, called for focus on freedom of creativity in public art and cultural life, and sought critical revision of all the values by replacing stiff ideological principles. He openly announced a new course in Yugoslav art and the rejection of the dogma of socialist realism.¹³⁹ However, Krleža, although advocating “art for the sake of art”¹⁴⁰ (or *lartpouarlartism*), is trying to balance out normative

¹³⁷ Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 94-95.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-14.

¹³⁹ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 256.

¹⁴⁰ Yet, in 1933, in form of an essay “Predgovor *Podravskim motivima* Krste Hegedušića” [A Foreword to *Podravina Motifs* by Krsto Hegedušić], Krleža promotes a different standpoint – he rejects the idea of art as self-sufficient aesthetic activity: “Pure aestheticism is nonsense, because every art is tendentious and progressive (...); “Larpurlartizam,” krlezijana.lzmk.hr, accessed February 27th, 2014, <http://krlezijana.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=1780>.

socialist realist poetics with “ideologically skeptical and aestheticizing texts”, that is, the texts that aim at the other extreme. In response to these extremes, Krleža proposes his own form of socialist literature and art.¹⁴¹ Yugoslav artists should “express tendencies of dealing with the social issues in a left-oriented manner, and be anxious to get rid of not only right-wing aestheticizing,¹⁴² but also left, soc-realist recipes. It needs to be noted that, although Krleža is in this essay still phraseologically burdened with the current ideology, his programmatic presentation signifies the liberation from ideological shackles.¹⁴³ Krleža’s speech in 1952, together with Davičo’s speech in 1949, and Šegedin’s report from 1949, represents one of the post-1948 orientations which leans on the idea that authentic (and not only pragmatic) synthesis of art and revolution is necessary.¹⁴⁴ Marko Ristić joins them in those views, claiming that the defense of artistic freedom *per se* is nothing more than a deception and that only together with revolutionary activity the ideas of authentic expression can aim at their completion.¹⁴⁵ Their attitudes are similar to the new art phenomenon, called *socialist aestheticism* which appeared in 1952 and 1953 to fill the void left by cultural Stalinism. Lukić views it as the next legitimate phase in the literary development of socialist countries as they free themselves from Stalinism and socialist realism.¹⁴⁶

The circle of Yugoslav modernists was originally limited to those collaborating on the journal *Delo*, in 1955-56. Among them were former surrealists such as Oskar Davičo, Marko Ristić, Aleksandar Vučo and Dušan Matić joined by the writers Dobrica Ćosić, Radomir

¹⁴¹ Radovčić, “Milovan Đilas u *Sukobu na književnoj ljevici*”, p. 41

¹⁴² One of Krleža's central thoughts is that Yugoslav literature is blindly trying to imitate modern Western models, which he was very critical of. At the Plenary meeting of Yugoslav writers in 1954, Krleža talks about complete art and concludes that following the Western models actually means to fall apart while existing as a mere imitation.

¹⁴³ “Govor na kongresu književnika u Ljubljani,” *krlezijana.lzmk.hr*, accessed March 22nd, 2014, <http://krlezijana.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=373>.

¹⁴⁴ Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928-1952*, pp. 52-55.

¹⁴⁵ Ristić, *Politička književnost. Za ovu Jugoslaviju, 1944-1958*, p. 209.

¹⁴⁶ Socialist aestheticism does not need to influence a book’s aesthetic quality – it rejects the utilitarian or propagandistic role of art, but fails to describe a contemporary reality. Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, p. 176.

Konstantinović, while writers like Vladan Desnica, Petar Šegedin, Zvonimir Golob were outside of Belgrade and on the periphery of the modernist circle. *Delaši*, or members of the *Delo* group, in particular Davičo, according to Lukić, deserve credit for being the biggest risk takers in creative postwar literature.

Jovan Popović's accounts contained in the articles of *Književne novine* published in 1948 serve as an example of how the topic of war, the NOB and the preoccupation with a man in revolution, dominant in the early stages in Yugoslavia, was revered and elevated among his peers - not only as a simple war topic, but a role model for our nation, a topic that exposes "magnitude of humanity, national history, pride, heroism and deep connection to the people", enriching not only our literature, but contributing to the world literary currents.¹⁴⁷ A similar situation can be found on the screen when considering that the Partisan film genre is referred to as reflecting the "topics from (our) lives". However, after 1950, Yugoslav literature experiences a phase of experimentation, which demonstrated a different treatment of the previously established war and revolution theme - with considerable freedom of thought attached to it. The conspicuous accomplishment is made by Oskar Davičo's novels *Pesma* [A Song] and *Čovekov čovek* [A Man's Man] with inner monologues and psychologization. The human price of the revolution was treated freely in Ćosić's war-time epic *Deobe* [Divisions], similarly to the novel *Daleko je sunce* which was used for film adaptation, by Radoš Novaković, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

The activity of Dobrica Ćosić indeed furthered modernism by stressing the unity of form and content, but as early as 1952, he remained somewhat aloof from the main battle and from the activism of the "camp" he belonged to. Though he was able to speak about man's

¹⁴⁷ Jovan Popović, "Pisci pred tematikom oslobodilačkog rata," *Književne novine: organ Saveza književnika Jugoslavije*, year 1, no. 4, March 9th, 1948; Jovan Popović, "Velika godišnjica," *Književne novine*, year 1, no. 14, May 18th, 1948.

fate with greater insight because of experiencing the Yugoslav revolution, and was able to contribute to Yugoslav literary development in this manner, Ćosić was often rather a careerist who exemplified preferences of campaigning alone.¹⁴⁸ In his book *Korena*, Ćosić, akin to Meša Selimović or Ivo Andrić, deals with the theme of the village, and tries to make the old Serbian village a symbol of the past. But he, according to Lukić, exaggerates in elevating the virtues of the village, rendering his peasant characters capable of turning all armies and regimes upside down.

A completely different standpoint was put forth by writer Vladan Desnica in his short publications, in the magazine *Krugovi* [The Circles], whose editors were the main proponents of anti-dogmatism. Similarly, Desnica did not show propensity for any compromise that could damage the sphere of cultural liberties.¹⁴⁹ After 1952, young modernists, publishing in Slovenian *Beseda* [Conversation], Serbian *Svedočanstva* [Testimonies], *Tribina* [Forum], and Croatian *Krugovi*, granted pure autonomy and integrity to art while reducing the revolution only to social action.¹⁵⁰ In 1954, the crusade against dogmatism was continued¹⁵¹ in the literary sphere that hosted a livelier clash of opinions and differentiations between realists and modernists. On the one side, one group of writers gathered around the restored *Književne novine*, while the other group assembled around *Mladost*. The young writers stress that their goal was the “defense of dialectical principles of Marxist aesthetics from revisionist dogmatism.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁴⁹ Vladan Desnica, „Zapisi o umjetnosti,“ *Krugovi*. [The Circles], 6, 1952.

¹⁵⁰ Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, p. 127.

¹⁵¹ *Književne novine* started being published in 1948.

¹⁵² Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 258.

Chapter 4: The Partisan Genre and Film Analysis

4.1. The Life and Adaptation of Socialist Realism in Yugoslav Cinematography

When approaching the studies of Eastern European communist cinema of the 1950s, it is crucial to refer to Soviet socialist realism. In the Yugoslav context as well, in Čolić's words, "socialism has inaugurated the cultural, artistic and social profile of the films".¹⁵³ Most of them consciously imitated the Soviet style and plot development of the Soviet films containing the socialist realist doctrine. However, the relation between Yugoslav communism and socialist realism was far more complex than it appeared on the surface, and Soviet socialist realism, as mentioned earlier, never entirely dominated the whole of the Yugoslav cultural arena. Even in the immediate post-war years, the socialist realist model that survived on elements reaped from the Soviets was rather a result of dogmatic tone than inner inclinations. In a similar manner during the early stages, despite the Western cultural legacies were often declaratively repudiated for exemplifying vulgarism, pessimism, etc. (as the literary dynamic demonstrated in the second chapter), they infiltrated the cultural sphere in practice.

Soon after the break of the USSR-FNRY relations, in the midst of the ideological-political game that both sides were playing, Yugoslav communists were prescribing their version of socialism as "returning to the origins of Marxism", and attributing heavily criticized deviations to Soviet practice, among them the aesthetic doctrine of social realism – which became a regular object of defamatory news editorials in the mid-1950s. However, the question 'What after/instead of socialist realism?' was staring Yugoslav cinematography in the face, and the popular belief, as well as the belief of cultural officials lacking in expertise,

¹⁵³ Čolić, *Jugoslovenski ratni film*, p. 168.

was that cinema did not have any significant artistic tradition to draw tutorship from or any artistic practice to look upon as a model other than the Soviet. Another issue is that the film industry, in spite of its announced reforms, still relied heavily on funds coming from the center, which conditioned a lag in its ideological content taken against the cultural and aesthetic upheavals and polemics portrayed in the second chapter. After 1948, when Yugoslav cinema production suffered the syndrome of chaos in facing the new “obligation” to step away from the Soviet template, it glanced at varied poetic solutions or experiments in the upcoming period, such as Italian neorealism. With a lack of clear guiding model to look up to and facing a firm financial and ideological clutch of the center, what would film production shape up to be and how would it reinvent itself? What Pavicic deems as the safest and most academic type of solution was the practice of literary classics’ adaptations which were rendered often in an uptight manner.¹⁵⁴ In the peculiar case of Croatian cinema, the first obvious symptom of the new situation was the avoidance of war topics. Although Croatian cinema started its new life with naïve and pompous war dramas glorifying Partisan struggles, no war films were made in Croatia between 1950 and 1956, and other genres were introduced in their stead. Assumingly, the filmmakers did not know how to cope with war without a socialist realist pathos or black-and-white characterization.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Yet, in this respect, Yugoslavia was not unique. One might recall the Czech practice of transposing literature pieces to the screen (František Čáp), existent in the pre-war period, but also stretching well into the period after WWII.

¹⁵⁵ Jurica Pavicic, “Lemons in Siberia’: A New Approach to the Study of the Yugoslav Cinema of the 1950s,” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 6, no. 1 (2008): 19–39, doi:10.1080/17400300701850590., p. 22-24.

4.2. War, Revolutionary, and Antifascist Films in Context and Relation to Partisan Film

The war genre, in Tadić's claims, is most apt for propaganda exploitation, hence, most favored by the regimes considering its manipulative dimension. Furthermore, the preference of the war genre on an official level owes to the fact that key moments of a country's birth or survival are found in wars.¹⁵⁶ I take the Partisan genre as a subtype of the war genre, which can encompass a larger variety of topics, and also because the Partisan genre in the Yugoslav context pertains to a specific national experience. Furthermore, one might hold that the Partisan film genre is only an action-war subtype of National Liberation War films (in Yugoslavia popularly known as *enobe*¹⁵⁷ films), which could cover other genres, like existential or urban dramas with stories about the occupation forces as the background. However, I deem this a flawed perspective. The Partisan genre lived a life of conceptual oscillations, and these further divisions into subtypes only add confusion to the generally thin and blurred line between them. Namely, the genre varies from the early didactic, heroic and solemnly dramatized Partisan films that evolved into war drama with neorealist elements, again transforming into war action spectacles with elements of adventure and American westerns from the 1960s. As part of the revolutionary undertaking, Yugoslav film was not as much about art and beauty, drawing away from aesthetical controversies of the time, as it was based on the psychological and social phenomena of national pride and the memory of victory. The topics they covered and aspired to were the National Liberation Struggle [Narodnooslobodilačka borba - NOB], revolution, reconstruction, the first five-year-plan,

¹⁵⁶ Darko Tadić, *Propagandni film* (Beograd: Spektrum Books, 2009), pp. 27-28.

¹⁵⁷ This is taken from how the languages of former Yugoslavia pronounce the abbreviation NOB.

industrialization, road building, youth working actions,¹⁵⁸ and, above all, the portrayal of (historical) reality, in the idiosyncratic way socialist realism did, as was depicted in the previous chapters.

It is, of course, true that Yugoslavia and its surrounding region are not one-of-a-kind in selecting the Second World War theme to be transferred onto the screen – it was a strong tendency in Hollywood genre orientations, as well as in, for instance, Italy or France.¹⁵⁹ However, although antifascist and Partisan films of the Eastern and Southeastern European tradition superficially resemble “war films” produced in the West, the Western critics are fallible in equating the two types of war films, because that neglects the significance of the antifascist theme in the peculiarities of (South) Eastern European politics and culture. The antifascist film aims at educating the mass audience about the origins of the present regimes,¹⁶⁰ or at least inculcate in it the official versions promulgated by the ruling communist parties. Insofar, film as an art form falls back on the socialist realist conception of being in service of the revolution and socioeconomic betterment. It is, thus, of considerably different function and content from the Western narratives of WWII combats.¹⁶¹

As said, the antifascist film genre is characteristic of most of the countries in the period celebrating victory after WWII, but expressed according to the country’s mentality, political inclinations and purpose (for instance, in the Yugoslav context, the fight was not only led against the fascists – the NOB had to deal with both external and domestic enemies,

¹⁵⁸ From 1946, the youth working actions in the direction of the country’s progress and post-WWII reconstruction, based on the idea of voluntarism, also had another function - the mobilization of the society around the projects which could sustain the sense of collectivity replacing the role of Partisan struggle in the war.

¹⁵⁹ Apart from mentioning the French *La Bataille du rail* made by Rene Clement in 1946, or Italian examples of films with Partisan motifs, like Alessandro Blasetti's *Un giorno nella vita* [A Day in Life] in 1946, or *Penne nere* [Black Feathers], a 1952 war film directed by Oreste Biancoli, and even the Norwegian film of resistance, *Nødlanding* [Emergency Landing], it is even more curious to consider American cases of films with Partisan topics from other countries (Selander's *Fighter Attack* with the topic of helpful Italian Partisans, or Christian's *Guerrilla Girl* about the Greek revolutionary communist movement).

¹⁶⁰ The strong didactic aspect in the Yugoslav case is that even the schools sent their pupils to collectively watch domestic Partisan films as part of the curriculum.

¹⁶¹ Stoil, *Balkan Cinema*, p. 87.

and its fight also implied a struggle for a new and improved social, economic and political arrangement).¹⁶² Although having a different amplitude of developments and sequences than socialist realism, the features of heroism and romanticism, like the representations of a WWII hero, are shared across states: from Czech *Bílá tma* [White Darkness] in 1948 directed by František Čáp, to Aleksander Ford's *Ulica Graniczna* [Border Street] from 1949, or *Fall of Berlin* by Yuri Raizman and Yelizaveta Svilova made in 1945.¹⁶³

When the film production in Yugoslavia started, its crowning topic, the unique experience of the NOB did not have time to become historical, let alone the realistic grounds to obtain the status of legend or myth in such a short period. Still, contrary to those realistic expectations and anticipations, this authentic experience, despite its immediacy and separation from the one conveyed on the screens, in only a year or two, miraculously established itself as a myth. That is one of the reasons why Yugoslav filmmakers did not initially have to achieve deep artistic value to amuse the audience which enjoyed the freshness of their victorious and courageous reminiscences. The immediacy of the experience and the perceived function of cinema (and art) in the revolutionary struggle, as well as regime legitimization (as far as socialist realists in power were concerned), have successfully squeezed any aesthetic controversy out of the picture, at least as far as film was concerned. The resurrection of the united Partisan struggle on the screen was for that time sufficient to evoke national pride and enthusiasm, as well as the feeling of moral debt towards the Partisan casualties. Thus, the

¹⁶² Given its political impact, the antifascist film in other national cinemas in the Balkans, with the theme of struggle against Axis powers as well as against the domestic fascists, was a determinant factor in the process of moving towards socialist realism. However, the antifascist theme did not assume its universal importance in Balkan cinema before the late 1950s. Romanian cinema responded to the problem of the antifascist film only later, 15 years after the war, while in Bulgarian cinema, prior to 1956, it constituted only a third of the overall production and dealt with this topic by exposing the individuals who were indifferent to the wartime political situation until reluctantly drawn into the antifascist struggle. In Yugoslavia, by contrast, antifascist films constituted 80% of motion picture production prior to 1956.

¹⁶³ Liehm et al., *The Most Important Art: Soviet and East European Film After 1945*.

early films on the war topic of the NOB serve as homage to the Partisan victims suffered for the homeland.¹⁶⁴

The further significance of the Partisan genre was in serving as a trump card for Yugounitarianism, since Partisans appeared as supra-ethnic freedom fighters. Partisan war combat was thus frequently turned into legend of the mythical-historical genesis of the Yugoslav nation. Understandably, Partisan films were considered important state projects.¹⁶⁵ For instance, in the first six years of socialist artistic feature film production (that is, from 1947 and *Slavica* until 1953), half of the films made were part of the Partisan genre (12 out of 24). Also, reflecting on the past cinematic production in the country, but in a highly bright and elevated tone, Serbian writer and critic Stevo Ostojić emphasized the prevailing number of antifascist films (around 20) in Yugoslav cinematography between 1945 and 1955. In 1955, in the magazine *Film Review*, he reflected on the past 10 years of Yugoslav war/antifascist film production, whereby he proclaimed them pillars of Yugoslav cinematography:

“This is our great theme, the theme of The War of Liberation. A man (referring to Yugoslav Partisans’ role in WWII) would enter the fray voluntarily and with full awareness of what he was doing. Therefore, it is the role of the filmmakers to transfer these heroic actions and an unfailing, great topic of the NOB to the big screens.”¹⁶⁶

4.3. From Slavica to Don’t Turn Around, My Son

Each of the three films I have chosen for the analysis exemplifies different styles within the frame of the Partisan genre. Socialist realist tendencies exposed through *Slavica*

¹⁶⁴ Stephanie Baric, “Yugoslav War Cinema: Shooting A Nation Which No Longer Exists” (MA diss., Concordia University, 2001), p. 22.

¹⁶⁵ Even when the audience started losing interest in domestic film (especially in the transition from 1960s to 1970s), the Partisan genre remained cumulatively the most viewed genre.

¹⁶⁶ Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, p. 43 from *Filmska revija* (ed. Vatroslav Mimica).

(1947) would meet new trends in the overall period of (still curbed but gradually emerging) liberalization and deromantization in the tragic and existentialist dramas *Daleko je sunce* [The Sun is Far Away] (1953), with the central element of the psychological approach and inner conflicts, and *Ne okreći se sine* [Don't Turn Around, My Son] (1956), expressing dynamic action-chasing traits in combination with an intimate father-son relationship. I am opting for these three films also with respect to the particular treatment of a protagonist – while in *Slavica*, the two leading characters are straightforwardly positive, idealized heroes, in *Daleko je sunce*, the main character obtains the flaws and contradictions of human nature, and, finally, in *Ne okreći se sine* the central figure, though not suffering from a dilemma, is a victim of tragic circumstances. Furthermore, each of them is imbued with a different dominant emotion: *Slavica* with pride and bravery, *Daleko je sunce* establishing itself as the first NOB film with tragic content, and with anxious uncertainty and doubt, while *Ne okreći se sine* still continuing the line of human tragedy bears combination of suspense with love for a son.

4.3.1. *Slavica* as the Prototype of Heroic Romanticism in the Administrative Period

In the initial years of the regime, all attention was directed towards film newsreels, documentary¹⁶⁷ first-hand reports on, for instance, war-stricken villages and towns, and, educational films, which paved the way to post-WWII artistic film.¹⁶⁸ Coming to life in the period of various hardships in need to be overcome, *Slavica* was the first Yugoslav postwar film breaking the ice in artistic feature film production, and the film which retained legendary status up until today. Directed by Vjekoslav Afrić (1906-1980) in 1947, it opened the season

¹⁶⁷ Firstly, it was made only by putting together the recovered material/footage.

¹⁶⁸ Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, p. 220.

for films on the topic of the NOB, which marked the entire epoch. One of the reasons why *Slavica* became such a contemporary pet of the regime and audience¹⁶⁹ is because even without the required technological preconditions and professional cadres, Afrić managed to open the doors for the Yugoslav film production, which in practice meant finding and providing everything from scratch - from the camera and film tape, script and direction, to amateurs who needed to be turned into devoted film workers.¹⁷⁰ However, all that was successfully done was due to not only Afrić's resourcefulness, but to the overall euphoria and completely voluntary aid from ordinary people. The film quickly gathered over 10 000 voluntary statistes (making the production of the film appear more like a *radna akcija* (workers initiative) than an artistic undertaking, while the ship for the film was confiscated from Italian fishermen by the coastal guard, and adopted, together with approximately 70 sailboats of the fleet. The excitement continued and was even enhanced following the release of the film.¹⁷¹

The plot of this film between historical spectacle and melodramatic romance, covers the time span before, during and after WWII. As a setting, Afrić chose, for him, the well-known Adriatic coast (he was born on the island of Hvar) and the town of Split where he personally served as a Partisan. Through the love between the protagonists, Slavica and Marin, the film heroically portrays the participation of the Dalmatian people in the Partisan struggle and their numerous sacrifices suffered for the goal of ultimate liberation from the occupants. Slavica is a brave and defiant young Partisan woman devoted to the struggle against the enemy, which is used to set a classic example and role model of discipline and national priorities. Marin is a fisherman who, along with his fellow Partisans and Slavica, builds a boat to assist in their missions. The culmination point is the main battle waged on sea

¹⁶⁹ *Slavica* attracted almost 2 000 000 viewers from all republics of Yugoslavia. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁰ Braslav Borozan, „U spomen drugu – Vjekoslav Afrić,“ *Borba*, July 30th, 1980.

¹⁷¹ To illustrate this, it might be, for the moment, sufficient just to add that in the next decade, there was an outburst of the name Slavica given to newborn girls.

when Partisans win by miraculously managing to sink a German armed ship. This is preceded by the highly memorable scene of Slavica's tiny hands trying to block the holes on the wooden ship carrying her name, stubbornly defying a fully equipped fascist division. After the heroic death of Slavica, Marin and her parents, though devastated by the news, join the crowd in a triumphant march over which their pain transforms into enthusiasm arising from a revolutionary victory.¹⁷²

The film embodied numerous characteristics of socialist realism, primarily the signs of strong ideological charge which was pervasive in all cultural pores at that time, and inherited by and large from the Soviets. The characters are not separate individuals with personal problems, but symbols and prototypes of a nation or prescriptions of how the nation, and individuals as its outgrowths, should look like. In other words, collective identity and sentiment are placed above the individual. Furthermore, the name of Tito is famously spread and elevated, although the figure himself does not appear in any explicit form, only by word and with messianic reverence, with the purpose of raising patriotic and courageous feelings. In addition, the socialist films obediently and statically clung to the model of flat, black and white characterization throughout the entire plot – the good guys remained morally unchallenged; and similarly, the bad guys, such as reactionaries or collaborationists, kept their negative traits until the very last sequence. The characters in *Slavica* are painted in the same manner – Slavica, Marin, their families and fellow Partisans as positive characters, while the occupants and collaborators as plainly negative. In order to alleviate the stiff and unnatural schemes, the filmmakers often resorted to tragically resolving individual fates – a heroic death was supposed to evoke compassion, empathy and catharsis among the viewers, since this was rarely and hardly achieved by character development alone. Exaggeration and embellishment may also be listed as part of its repetitive formulaic traits.

¹⁷² Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, p. 17.

However, at the time it appeared, the film was considered as a charming, honest and mellow Partisan melodrama with fairly optimistic undertones, regardless of Slavica's heroic martyrdom. The film carries still palpable examples of loyalty to Russians present in, for instance, the exclamations such as "Russia entered the war!", accompanied by the sense of high enthusiasm. On the other hand, although the film expresses pan-Yugoslav character, it was extolled also because it radiated with a curious authenticity of the local climate, and the marching lines "Pjevaju mornari s Titovih lađa" [The sailors are singing from Tito's boats] became the first post-war hit, or *šlager*. It simultaneously displays not only the authentic culture and dialect of the Dalmatian region, but the peculiarities of Partisan rituals and traditions, such as Partisans singing heroic songs, dancing *kolo*, or the Partisan women portrayed as heroines with guns serving their "honor of duty". "Ideologically, this reality reflects part of the allure of the New Yugoslavia under Communist leadership which promised a classless society built upon sexual equality".¹⁷³ Although having a female figure as the protagonist and depicting a bi-gendered army was quite uncommon especially in light of other World War II films, this was an authentic element, since there were many women fighting on the side of the Partisans.¹⁷⁴

In analyzing the reasons why *Slavica* was acclaimed and the grounds on which it was criticized, it is worthwhile to consider Vjekoslav Afrić's background and life. Before devoting himself to film direction, he studied fine arts, and was an actor in a theatre. His dynamic acting life was interrupted by the Second World War at which point he joined the Partisans from Zagreb, where he became one of the organizers of the Theatre of National Liberation.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Andrew Horton, „The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Partisan Film,“ *Film Criticism*, Vol. 2 issue 2 (Winter 88/89): p. 20.

¹⁷⁴ Stoil, *Balkan Cinema*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁵ By founding the Theatre of National Liberation in the war conditions, the new government clearly expressed its determination towards the theatre, which was perceived as a strong tool for agitation. After the liberation, film became the art form "enjoying" the status of means for propaganda.

The public discourse of the time frequently refers to him in a form of an inextricable pair of identity features: a prominent filmmaker and revolutionary, or artist and (even more importantly) former Partisan.¹⁷⁶ This and the fact he received the AVNOJ [Anti-fascist Council of Yugoslav National Liberation] award - the greatest artistic acknowledgement in the country, possibly justifies the reasons for the initial positive feedback. One can justifiably doubt that the acclamation he received came exclusively from his talent, since, most likely, it came from the commitment and eligibility with the Party line, as well as from his status as a “real Yugoslav artist“, always preoccupied with the idea of artistic unity, especially if we consider his following statement: “same thoughts I had when I was a Partisan were fulfilling me at the stage we were filming our first film.”¹⁷⁷ In fact, aside from Afrić, the entire team of *Slavica* was mostly composed of Partisan actors, who took part in the revolution, and who, in a way, were already informed about the search for the art saturated with the Marxist and socialist spirit. Beside the fact that Afrić lived jointly for art and revolution, one element attributing to his public visage as a hero is saving the only remaining sample of the poem “Jama“ [Pit] by Ivan Goran Kovačić, which describes a personal tragedy of a Partisan fighter and his close fellow.¹⁷⁸

Apart from Afrić’s background convenient for the officials, and still considering the wide success the film experienced, one could ask: Was it despite naivety, or precisely as a result of naivety? It might be that, at the beginning, people who viewed *Slavica* could tolerate such projects as a result of wide enthusiasm and improvisation in the years of the very formation of Yugoslav cinematography. And later, pointing to the possible refinements in the taste of audience, as Raspor reports, even though Afrić kept repeating the identical formula in his later films *Barba Žvane* in 1949 and *Hoja! Lero!* in 1951 (which afterwards became a

¹⁷⁶ Avdo Mujčinović, “Borac za umetnost i revoluciju,” *Politika*, July 30th, 1980.

¹⁷⁷ Pavle Anagnosti, “Teatar nije vulgarna igra,” *Borba*, September 1st, 1979.

¹⁷⁸ Stevan Jovičić, “Pola veka *Slavice*,” *Politika*, May 3rd, 1997.

synonym for a dilettante film project with clusters of kitsch elements), the audience and criticism seemed to have outgrown that pattern.¹⁷⁹ Other official critics were stating that this is not the path cinematography should follow.¹⁸⁰ Although Eli Finci praised *Slavica* in an official communist paper *Borba* [The Battle] for elements of authenticity, its weaknesses and fear for the Yugoslav culture were equally emphasized.¹⁸¹

Slavica as well as its generation films like *This Nation Will Live*, *Immortal Youth*, or *On Our Land* reveal class, gender as well as martyrological patterns in the triumphalist heroic portrayal of Partisans and depiction of preferred values in films, for instance, socialism, egalitarianism, secular and multi-ethnic culture.¹⁸²

4.3.2. *The Sun is Far Away* and Novaković's Wriggle into Deromantization

After 1953, the situation in Yugoslavia was changing in accordance with foreign imports and internal reforms and, consequently, the Zhdanovist formula in the Yugoslav context soon began to suffer.¹⁸³ Several Yugoslav studios started to experiment with other genres, such as contemporary drama, thriller, comedy, social satires, animated films, and adaptations of literary works. Along with the expansion of the scope of the genres and topics, new styles of realism through the re-exploration of the war experience soon came to the forefront. Idealized epics of the first period with pompous scenes and speeches gave way to more intimate and realistic psychological war dramas, at times accompanied by brutally

¹⁷⁹ Vicko Raspor, *Riječ o filmu* (Beograd: Institut za film, 1952), p. 88.

¹⁸⁰ Škrabalo, *Između publike i države*, pp. 159, 169.

¹⁸¹ Eli Finci, "Problem naše filmske kritike" [The Problems of Our Film Critique], in *Film*, 1-2, 1949, pp. 50-58.

¹⁸² These elements of creating ideology on a film screen is discussed in more detail in Nemanja Zvijer's *Ideologija filmske slike*, although the author places the war films from the later period in the focus of analysis.

¹⁸³ Jovan Popović, as early as a year after the split, in 1949 calls for the new genres and perspectives stating that the theme of NOB had dried out and resulted in repetitive formulas and stereotypes. Jovan Popović, "Iskustva iz šest naših prvih umetničkih filmova i pouke za dalji rad" [The Experience from Our First Six Art Films and the Lessons for Further Work], in *Film*, br. 1-2, 1949, p. 3-49.

naturalistic scenes of war.¹⁸⁴ The revolutionary past in the films acquired a more tragic and humane dimension in the films to follow, by Radoš Novaković, Branko Bauer, Franc Štiglic, Vladimir Pogačić and Veljko Bulajić.

Čolić maintains that with a few deviations, from *Slavica* to *Daleko je sunce* [The Sun is Far Away], all the 11 films resemble each other to the extent of seeming that only one film was shot. Although capturing different stories, characters and settings, they bore the same spirit and viewpoints, dramaturgy, black-white techniques in characters' treatment, and expressive forms. Somewhat exceptional to this model are *Na svojoj zemlji* [On Our Land] which provides rather synthetic drama on war, *Besmrtna mladost* [Immortal Youth] standing out with a more deliberate treatment of the youth, *Dečak Mita* [A Boy Mita] exemplifying the autonomy of a hero, and *Bila sam jača* [I Was Stronger] with attempts to avoid motive clichés. Yet, those film innovations were not fundamental.¹⁸⁵ From *Slavica* in 1947, to 1953, the characters of Yugoslav war film had been shaped, almost without exception, unidimensionally, imagined and realized as monolithic units of clear and determined national orientation and unshakable progressive force. However, the deeper psychological insight in characters' treatment, which was boiling under the surface, was doomed to eventually erupt. Since this impulse could hardly be delivered among the hired, official cineastes, the "fresh juice" of new life came, not surprisingly, from the literary circles, and as partial result of the discussions from the Conflict on the literary left.

In 1953, the screen adaptation of Dobrica Ćosić's novel *The Sun is Far Away* presents an interesting undertaking by the film director Radoš Novaković with the script written by Josip Kulundžić. According to the general assessment by the critics and audience, the film possessed an up-until-that-point unique freshness, originality, truthfulness, proximity, and

¹⁸⁴ Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ Čolić, *Jugoslovenski ratni film*, p. 349-350.

simplicity in approaching the events from war and revolution, deprived of the burden of all prejudices, established terms, positive/negative divisions, or personal illusions. This is a film where, for the first time, Yugoslav cinematography witnesses the confrontations of elevated ideals with a down-to-earth struggle for survival.

In 1941, a small Partisan squadron is chased across the mountain Jastrebac, strongly outnumbered by German forces. Isolated and cut off from the higher Party and military authorities, Gvozden, Pavle and Uča each have different opinions on how to escape the pursuit of the enemies. The squadron decides to leave Jastrebac, but the peasant Gvozden objects to that because the people would be exposed to the mercilessness of Germans.¹⁸⁶ The commissar Pavle, despite the delicateness of the situation, insists on the subjugation to the order and decision of the Party headquarters. Gvozden is consequently executed after a quick trial, while everyone, especially the commissar, is aware of the tragedy and deeply experiences it. The basic idea of the film is the attempt at viewing the NOB more integrally, from its *darker* aspect, touching the core of man's flawed nature, and not merely exposing heroic traits and roles in the war. On the contrary, the film contains poeticized humane psychological drama which demands difficult decisions from the protagonists, to leave or to disband the squadron, condensed in the question that the protagonist of the film is asking himself: "Is it pointless to fight under all circumstances with everything at stake, or not?" However, what needs to be noted is that the dilemma does not appear as the result of a weakness, but as "logical disproportions between wishes and possibilities, initial drives and rationalization."¹⁸⁷ It arises in political commissar Pavle who is not hiding his doubts and uncertainties: "I take full responsibility for my squadron, even for my life...This is revolution...I know what I want..", but then he asks himself a question revealing internal

¹⁸⁶ Volk, *Istorija jugoslovenskog filma*, pp. 149-150.

¹⁸⁷ Ranko Munitić, *Živjet će ovaj narod: Jugoslavenski film o revoluciji* (Zagreb: RK Soh, 1974), p. 20-21.

conflict: “On the basis of what do you believe to be right?“, “Do you overestimate yourself and your own abilities?“ “Who am I if my squadron dies by my fault?“

Radoš Novaković (1915-1979) made seven documentaries and nine feature films, but he was also devoted to the theatre before film projects. He was a professor at the Film Academy, a critic, translator, film essayist and main editor of Yugoslavia’s first post-war magazine *Film*, and one of the founders and the first director of Atelje 212, which pursued trends of modern theater. In 1943 starts his continual work with a camera with which he shot the first documentary film of New Yugoslavia. He founded *Filmske novosti* [Film news], and filmed the Yugoslav first war newsreel, *Otkrivanje spomenika palim borcima* [Revealing the Monument to our Fallen Comrades], in 1944. His first artistic film was *Sofka*, for which he received the Federal Government award, followed by *Dečak Mita*, about illegal Partisan activities, which presented an attempt to get rid of the film stereotypes (indicatively enough, the script was written by Davičo), *Krvavi put/Blodveien* [The Bloody Path] made in coproduction with Norwegians, and *Pesma s Kumbare* [The Song from Kumbara].¹⁸⁸ Based on his influence and the official trust he received, one could expect that he would invest all his knowledge and talent into the affirmation of quite recent and ephemeral contents and themes. Yet, according to Čolić, Novaković was, unlike the majority of other directors, a firm and obstinately independent figure, who could simply not accept the belief that film was just applied ideology.¹⁸⁹ He was determined in rejecting every superficiality and conventionality. This is why, although Novaković’s films are said to evoke the glory and pain of the warriors, he does not subdue himself to the usual rhetoric and idealism of heroism. Surely, the NOB motif at the core of his films owes to the fact that he also participated in that war, but his evocations are still deeper and more illustrative.

¹⁸⁸ Čolić, *Jugoslovenski ratni film*, p. 40-41; Milutin Čolić, *Filmski portreti: Od Manakija do Makavejeva* (Beograd: Prosveta, 2007).

¹⁸⁹ Volk, *Istorija jugoslovenskog filma*, p. 148.

This war film individualizes the previously dominant collectiveness, and adopts the particularization of a broad perspective. It aims to show that the values of the revolution do not have to be in contrast to the film value of authenticity and particular creative interpretations of the humanistic traits. The film did not only represent a turning point in the transformation of this genre, or more subjective considerations of war and revolution. It also showed how the creative power of directing can exceed the limited dogmas of imperative terms. The film is not avant-garde or entirely unspecific of the epoch, but is still quite distinctive in its portrayal of people and events. It shows how the man of the revolution, when reduced to his personal traumas or emotional reactions, can by no means be isolated from his fellow combatants, or the struggle itself.¹⁹⁰ Metaphorically, even the title might imply the multilayered (and personalized) hardships of a path towards the goal of revolution.

Although having a number of breakthrough ideas as director, Novaković seemed to have had difficulties dealing with the issues of oscillating rhythm and style. On the one hand, the greatness of the pangs of the revolution, impressive images of the squadron exposed to severe winter and merciless Germans, and on the other, static and empty images of burned villages, Party meetings, insufficiently expressed characters, speaker's explanations – are the elements that render the film quite unbalanced, according to Čolić.¹⁹¹ The flaw of the film is certainly the dramaturgical discontinuity of its frequently interrupted plot, its parts being left isolated from the context. The critics from *Slobodna Dalmacija* criticize the film for its slow pace, clumsy montage, forced aesthetic perspectives, poor external stylization and composition combined with over-psychologization to the point of making characters utterly unconvincing (although, for the most part, considered a positive development for the direction of cinematography in general, psychologization is, still not being exercised enough, as it is

¹⁹⁰ Munitić, *Živjet će ovaj narod*, p. 20.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

deemed exaggerated).¹⁹² Even the key moments, they claim, are unnatural in expression, such as the scene of Pavle's speech or Gvozden's death as the infamously selected remedy for disagreement and difference in opinion. Čolić claims there is only humane drama until the moments of Gvozden's death, which is soon, although accompanied with the achieved feeling of doom of war and morose atmosphere which hovers over the men, followed by a reporting of the movements of the squadron in the manner of a chronicle, lacking any dramatic flow. It does seem that deeply tragic moments initially excite compassion, but towards the end of the film soon sink into amorphous shapes.

Despite the criticism concerning its particular qualities and rebukes for creating a film that did not “live up” to its literary template, it was more or less unanimously stressed that in the works which were made after this one, one could sense a considerable amount of elasticity in approach to the war topics.¹⁹³ *Daleko je sunce* still enjoys a certain status of “first” in its own way and it brought into the picture a number of previously unspotted novelties. For the first time, the death on screen is not a heroic consequence of the fight with an enemy, but a consequence of defending one's own standpoint towards revolution, even at the expense of fighting one's own comrades. Gvozden's death represents the first step in demythologizing the revolution and constituting the individual, tragic hero of the revolution. The characters in general become less depersonalized obedient symbols or stiff, resolute, and invulnerable monoliths. Pavle's dilemma is the first inner conflict in the artistic interpretation of the NOB, which determines an important turning point in further treatment of the motives, with critical influence engraved on the future of Yugoslav film dedicated to revolution.

¹⁹² Aco Štaka, “Filmovi koje gledamo: Daleko je Sunce,” *Oslobođenje*, August 18th, 1954; Vojdrag Berčić, “Daleko je Sunce,” *Slobodna Dalmacija*, May 6th, 1954.

¹⁹³ Volk, *Istorija jugoslovenskog filma*, p. 150.

4.3.3. *Don't Turn Around, My Son* and the Further Departure from the Norm

Yugoslav revolutionary film acquires the new dimension in the film *Ne okreći se sine* [Don't Turn Around, My Son], by Croatian director Branko Bauer (1921-2002) who came extremely close to the deep psychological plunge in the war genre. The film was based on the script written by Arsen Diklić, and received the award “Zlatna arena” at the Third Pula film festival. In this film, Bauer skillfully developed a story about a communist escaping from a prison train on its way to a concentration camp. Upon returning home, this man finds out that his wife is under surveillance of a German officer, and that his underage son is sent to an Ustasha boarding school where he is being exposed to fascist inculcations and brought up to genuinely hate the Partisans. With a help of his friend, the father manages to retrieve his son from the camp, and reach the contact with nearby Partisan units at the edge of a forest. However, the German squadron, in pursuit for the missing boy and his father, soon finds them, and after the father tells his son to run to the forest without looking back, he goes to face their enemies and gets shot. The film ends with a memorable scene (which the director himself considers the most beautiful detail of the film) of the motorcycle without a driver circling around the father's dead body, while his son is departing towards his uncertain future, delving further and further into the forest. Other anthological scenes the critics have identified are the scene in which the child is learning how to handle the bayonet, and one with lyric atmosphere at the graveyard where the son is placing a flower on a wooden cross.¹⁹⁴

Bauer started his film career in 1949 as a documentary filmmaker,¹⁹⁵ but soon made his first well-received features – before *Ne okreći se sine*, he filmed his debut *Sinji galeb* [The Blue Seagull] in 1953 and *Milioni na otoku* [Millions on the Island] in 1955, both children's

¹⁹⁴ “Baze HR kinematografije: Bauer Branko,” filmski-programi.hr, accessed January 2nd, 2014, http://www.filmski-programi.hr/baza_redatelj.php?id=82.

¹⁹⁵ He also worked as editor and TV series director.

films. In general, he seems to have been highly confident in experimenting with different genres – apart from children’s adventure film, his territory covered melodrama, war drama, naturalist social-psychological drama, and comedy. The inspiration for the majority of his topics he found in the surroundings of the youth, and in simple observations of life, which, according to him, can be even richer than one’s own imagination.¹⁹⁶ Compared to Afrić and Novaković, Bauer entered the world of cinematography relatively late, in 1949, as an already mature man, under a different sense of tradition and inclination. One of Bauer’s idiosyncrasies is in the intensification of the poetic expression as the film progresses from the initial weak sequences to the emotional and visual climax at the end. It is an entirely opposite rendition from what one can witness in the previously analyzed Novaković’s film that deteriorates in film quality towards the end. Furthermore, the achievement of wholeness in the film was not such a frequent occurrence in domestic cinematography up to that point. As a resourceful storyteller and inventive visual narrator, Bauer is equally imaginative in adapting the pre-existing Western and Eastern film templates. As Hrvoje Turković notices,¹⁹⁷ he was the first director to apply the poetics of classic American narrative film, which could explain film production’s inclinations towards action and thriller, and why after this film, there are more frequent tendencies of adopting Western models (for part of the Partisan films to come), though not yet in a form of overt modernization.

Due to its wholeness and other elements, this tragic war action-thriller melodrama was well received by domestic and foreign audiences, and proclaimed as the best work of Yugoslav cinematography up until that point. Yet, there are a number of aspects for which the film is usually criticized for. Firstly, it is not yet liberated from the black and white contrasts among characters and political oversimplifications, with its focus towards the “psychological

¹⁹⁶ Anonymous, „Interview with Branko Bauer,“ *Mladost*, May 6th, 1962.

¹⁹⁷ Hrvoje Turković. “Branko Bauer – A Career on the Turn of Stylistic Periods,” *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis*, Accessed April 21st, 2014, http://www.hfs.hr/hfs/ljetopis_clanak_detail_e.asp?sif=1214.

motivation imposed by the moral responsibility”. Also, the critics often view the central figure of the father to be well-carried, but that the son’s role and other characters are somewhat shallower and less convincing¹⁹⁸ – demonstrating that, despite its Western elements, it still, retains part of the socialist realist legacy, for instance, in black-white characterization. Even though the film still uses up relatively modest modes of expression, it realistically evokes the atmosphere of occupied Zagreb, and leaves an effect on a viewer with its melancholic portrayal of an intimate father-and-son relationship, showing how loving care can save the boy from the jaws of perverse ideology.¹⁹⁹ In addition, the audience and critics expected stronger psychological drama, but received action scenes imbued with tension to which they were not used to yet. However, precisely in this way, as Škrabalo similarly argues, it heralded the new epoch of Yugoslav war films which would slowly reject their *realistic* burden in favor of action, spiced up with minimal and patterned psychologization.²⁰⁰

During the 1950s and stretching into the beginning of the 1960s, when Bauer was considered to be the most eminent filmmaker, he also made his famous *Tri Ane* [Three Annas] and the first Yugoslav political film *Licem u lice* [Face to Face]. However, with the seeds of modernism being planted more firmly, especially in the area of “auter film”, in this new atmosphere, he was attributed with the notion of “outdated”, “state” filmmaker, and a pursuer of classic narration.²⁰¹ This is a result of the changing currents in style, which affected many aspects of culture, and it was not easy for a filmmaker to conform artistically to the new movements and tendencies. However, Bauer’s film *Ne okreći se sine*, in a way announced a new direction in film, which will not necessarily come about immediately afterwards, but will

¹⁹⁸ Anonymous, “Ne okreći se sine,” *Yugopress*, November 15th, 1956.

¹⁹⁹ Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, pp. 53-54.

²⁰⁰ Škrabalo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj 1896-1997*, pp. 230-231.

²⁰¹ Even though Bauer was making films well into the 1970s, like the Partisan film *Boško Buha* (1978), and received the “Vladimir Nazor” award for his life work in 1981, he never retrieved his fame. Turković, “Branko Bauer — A Carrier on the Turn of Stylistic Periods”

certainly echo and prepare the taste of the audience for the new mixture of action and melodrama. More precisely, Bauer's line introduced the aspects of chase and hiding, as well as persistent action, which is followed, for instance, by Nikola Tanhofer's *Dvostruki obruč* [Double Circle] from 1963.

4.4. Later Inclinations of War Film and the Partisan Genre

In the years following my primary scope of inquiry, the war film and the Partisan genre took various directions in style and storytelling, and film became even more detached from socialist realism in which it once resided. One line considering the currents and developments of Partisan film is led by Žika Mitrović, especially in his *Kapetan Leši* [Captain Leshi] (1960), who selected the action Western as a plot model, and adopted it to the hill conditions along with numerous individual conflicts. A second line chose the epic war spectacle²⁰² depicting dramatically the moves of armies and battles. The examples can be found in *Kozara* (1962) by Veljko Bulajić, or *Desant na Drvar* (1963) by Fadil Hadžić, or the most expensive film projects - Bulajić's *Bitka na Neretvi* [The Battle of Neretva] in 1969, and Stipe Delić's *Sutjeska* [The Battle of Sutjeska] assembling global celebrities of the acting world. Generally, it is curious how the situation considerably changed for Croatian film and filmmakers. Given that right before the emergence of these other lines, there was a period of complete drought in Croatian production of Partisan films (1950-1955), notable achievements in the Partisan genre sphere are made by Bulajić, Lordan Zafranović, Antun Vrdoljak and Stipe Delić, who moved the arena of ideologically convenient films away from Serbian

²⁰² Nemanja Zvijer is referring to the war films produced in that period exclusively as spectacles. *Ideologija filmske slike* (Beograd: 2011).

studios. This might be the effect of influxes of *auter* film theories, and the *Crni talas* [The Black Wave] movement.

The period of antiheroic negativism and demystifications that ensued after deromantization, can be represented through the initially banned work of Miodrag Popović *Čovjek iz hrastove šume* [A Man from the Oakwood] from 1964, *Zaseda* [Ambush] by Živojin Pavlović from 1969, or *Uloga moje porodice u svjetskoj revoluciji* [The Role of My Family in the World Revolution] by Bahrudin 'Bato' Čengić from 1971. With their polemical characteristics, they demonstrate the theory and conviction that a man is a victim of fanaticism and dogmas, which all need to be negated and exterminated - the goal is to break and obliterate every existing norm. However, in general, the end of the 1960s is, according to Čolić, marked by everything acquiring its antipode: the hero becomes the anti-hero, optimism becomes pessimism. Primarily, the films are a general expression of skepticism in the humanity of NOB. For instance, in *Čovjek iz hrastove šume*, which provides philosophical interpretations of the inhumanity of war, Popović does not even differentiate between offense and defense in war, or between Nazis, Chetniks, or Partisans.²⁰³ Another important example of this line is the film *Tri* [Three] by Aleksandar Petrović, an anti-war film rendition of the 1941 occupation setting, depicting savagery and absurdity in a unique manner.

Tragism continues in the late 1970s and 1980s. This line critically reexamines the revolution with a pessimistic premonition, with a difference that it shifts from the "rational" to „intimate and personal". For instance, in *Do viđenja u sljedećem ratu* [See You in the Next War], by Živojin Pavlović, the war is just a surface on which he develops the somber idea about perspectives on general war ethics. Other cases are *Izgubljeni slučaj* [A Lost Cause] by Ante Babaja, with gloomy colored dreams and hopes as illusions, *Luda kuća* [A Mess in the

²⁰³ Čolić, *Jugoslovenski ratni film*, p. 194.

House](1980) by Ljubiša Ristić, where war is presented as hell which punishes everyone, and Zafranović's *Okupacija u 26 slika* [Occupation in 26 Images].

The later stages also record cases of banning films still within the domain of the NOB topic, but which were approaching the topic from a critical and highly skeptical angle, and as such were utterly inconvenient for the regime. Such a fate befell *Zaseda* by Živojin Pavlović, which portrays the Partisans as negative characters, and Vrdoljak's *U gori raste zelen bor* [The Pine Tree in the Mountain] (1971).²⁰⁴

These emerging new tendencies still show that the regime, despite the oscillations in the filters it was applying, and alternating between periods of relaxation with periods of rigid dogmatic and totalitarian methods,²⁰⁵ preferred those developments of Partisan genre that were not displaying humanization (*Daleko je sunce*), but rather commercialization best seen in the later period of 1960s and 1970s war spectacles.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 210.

²⁰⁵ Such is the case of Đilas's expulsion from the CPY.

Conclusion

As part of its own “experiment” and “independent path to socialism”, Yugoslavia was a host to numerous peculiarities in the economic, political, social and cultural domain. In the early stage the multiple aspects of culture were, no doubt, interlaced. It is true that cinematography, as recently established, inexperienced, and state-fund-dependent form of art, was in no position to promptly internalize the movements arising in literary life where anti-dogmatic stands were present much before film art even emerged in the Yugoslav setting. Yet, the changes pertaining to the liberation from socialist realism eventually reached the film sphere, and even within official genre – Partisan film – which was initially the firmest upholder of socialist realist principles and recognized as a strong agitation tool, experienced an influx of elements that did not constitute a part of the official ideology.

The thesis proposed that there was a connection between the changes in the cultural field and the fact that the Party organs oftentimes recruited intellectuals and writers who were the participants in the Conflict on the literary left. As a result, this practice, in large measure probable, allowed for the loosening of the ideological filter.

The Conflict on the left, centered on the main questions of what the role of art is in a society and if there should be such a role in the first place, is observed along with its main participants, and their contributions in the Conflicts on the left, as well as the larger context. Krleža's Ljubljana speech repercussions that brought an ease to the liberalizing tendencies (which were at that time greeted by the Party because of the ideological requirement to step away from the Soviet doctrine), and on the other hand, Đilas's case of being outcast from the Party after proposing democratization and liberalization measures (which were unfit for Tito's regime in that form), show the curious interplay of personalities in the varying ideological

setting. An even more curious fragment that was presented is their reversed political “fate” - Krleža being outcast in the prewar period and enjoying Party sympathies in the post-war period, and Đilas undergoing a transformation from a revolutionary to a dissident. Đilas’s case shows how in order to undermine Soviet dogmatism, the regime called for greater freedom in culture, but the officials reacted to any sign of autonomy going beyond the initial plans. Obviously, the regime had more interests in scoring points through a clash with the Soviets than securing Yugoslav culture and art a genuine internal freedom.

By placing the Yugoslav film production and some of its revered film titles under the magnifying glass, my research has shown that all kinds of oscillations were present in terms of degree when the central doctrine of socialist realism was concerned. Devoted Zhdanovist hard-liners were rare in Yugoslavia, but the doctrine of socialist realism remained strong on film, regardless of the literary wave which prophesized and set in motion its gradual downfall. Film’s cultural lag is to be expected under monopolistic state rule, as the trends of culture in different art forms always clash with notions of what is “best” or “detrimental” for society, and this is especially true under a devoted doctrine of socialism and socialist realism as its cultural policy. A rebellious work of art is less available to the filmmaker, who usually depends on more than one approval before he can set his project in motion. If the approvers are the very subjects being rebelled against, then the filmmaker within the socialist context remains a paralyzed agent. In a roundabout way and in weaker form, this fact confirms the Marxist claim about the emergence of certain forms of art in “alien” social contexts. Art may be free to emerge in these social contexts, but it is heavily hindered when some of its areas are concerned. Therefore, the production of film art generally in socialism, as is proved on the Yugoslav case, awaits the accommodation of novel artistic ideas, before they can be placed on

the reel. Such was the accommodation through the literary debates, which would later sprout in the domain of the Partisan genre.

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Pytlákova schovanka [The Poacher's Ward]. Directed by Martin Frič. Výroba: ČSR, Československý státní film, 1948.

Sinji galeb [The Blue Seagull]. Directed by Branko Bauer. Zagreb: Jadran Film, 1953.

Skarb [Treasure]. Directed by Leonard Buczkowski. Warsaw: Film Polski, 1949.

Slavica. Directed by Vjekoslav Afrić. Beograd: Avala Film, 1947.

Sofka. Directed by Radoš Novaković. Beograd: Avala Film, 1948.

Sorok Pervyy [The Forty-First]. Directed by Grigori Chukhrai. Moscow: Mosfilm, 1956.

Sutjeska [The Battle of Sutjeska]. Directed by Stipe Delić. Beograd: Avala Film, 1973.

Tajna dvorca I.B. [The Secret of Castle I.B.]. Directed by Milan Katić. Zagreb: Jadran Film, 1951.

Tri [Three]. Directed by Aleksandar Petrović. Beograd: Avala Film, 1965.

Tri Ane [Three Annas]. Directed by Branko Bauer. Zagreb: Jadran Film, 1959.

U gori raste zelen bor [The Pine Tree in the Mountain]. Directed by Antun Vrdoljak. Zagreb: Jadran Film, 1971.

U planinama Jugoslavije [V gorakh Jugoslavii; In the Mountains of Yugoslavia]. Directed by Abram Room, Eduard Tise. Moscow: Mosfilm, 1946.

Ulica graniczna [The Border Street]. Directed by Aleksander Ford. Łodz: Wytwórnia Filmów, 1949.

Uloga moje porodice u svjetskoj revoluciji [The Role of My Family in the World Revolution]. Directed by Bato Čengić. Sarajevo: Bosna Film, 1971.

Un giorno nella vita [A Day in Life]. Directed by Alessandro Blasetti. Paris: Orbis film, 1946.

Veliki perelom [The Great Turning Point]. Directed by Fridrikh Ermler. Moscow: Mosfilm, 1945.

Zakazane Piosenki [Forbidden Songs]. Directed by Leonard Buczkowski. Warsaw: Film Polski, 1947.

Zaseda [Ambush]. Directed by Živojin Pavlović. Beograd: Filmska Radna Zajednica, 1969.

Živjet će ovaj narod [This Nation Will Live]. Directed by Nikola Popović. Zagreb: Jadran Film, 1947.