

From Warriors to Workers to Warkers: (Y)Utopian Media, Supra-National Self-Management,
and Racialized Brotherhood in the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema

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ABSTRACT

From Warriors to Workers to Warkers: (Y)Utopian Media, Supra-National Self-Management, and Racialized Brotherhood in the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema

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In postwar Yugoslavia, the Communist-led People's Liberation Struggle during World War II was constructed as the country's threefold founding narrative: a resistance to the occupiers, a civil war against the collaborationists, and a revolution. Yugoslavia's was the second independent socialist revolution and first antifascist revolution in the world. As such, the revolution was integrated, and continuously re-articulated, in various aspects of Yugoslav development; most notably, its Marxist doctrine of workers' self-management and Cold War non-alignment.

As an assemblage of publications and conference presentations, this dissertation investigates the intertwining of the history of postwar Yugoslavia, cinema as the main medium of its socialist modernization, and Revolution as a complex modality of its politics and aesthetics. From highlighting peasantry as a revolutionary force to critical debates about the supra-, trans-, and extra-national nature of Yugoslav cinema to racialized, gendered, and increasingly neo-liberal hierarchies in Yugoslav society, this project concentrates on the country's often contradictory entanglement of identity and concrete utopian drive. It simultaneously constitutes material and intellectual resourcefulness as the linchpin of Yugoslav multi-media culture, particularly rich in its non-theatrical and useful incarnations.

I begin with conceptualizing the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle as a globally relevant supra-genre encompassing the cinematic representation of and interrelation between revolutionary precursors, war, and work in pre-WWII, wartime, and postwar Yugoslav Revolutionary space and history. In Chapter One, I explore how the 1950s international co-production model and generic hybridization helped Yugoslav filmmakers challenge the legacy of historical imperialisms, incorporate the Young Bosnian rebels and Kosovar Albanian national minority into supra-national socialism, and employ the western partners' know-how. Chapter Two considers the 1960s Yugoslav auteurs' departure from the Soviet role models as reflected in their complicated quest for a more egalitarian revolution, economic archive-based practices, and building a long-lasting international film festival community. Chapter Three focuses on the controversial Croatian filmmaker and diplomat Antun Vrdoljak who questioned Yugoslav revolutionary emancipation in his early films and contributed to British national devolution through the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange. Ultimately, this dissertation re-centers Yugoslav cinema as a socialist alternative to better known and seemingly more coherent film cultures, such as those in the USA, USSR, and UK.

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The late Cormac McCarthy was once asked why most of his opus consists of novels. He replied: “I’m not interested in writing short stories. Anything that doesn’t take years of your life and drive you to suicide hardly seems worth doing.” Although the present dissertation is more resemblant of a cycle of novellas charged with some scholarly ammunition than a proper novel, I now understand the writer of *Blood Meridian*, which is all the more the reason to pay tribute to those who stood by my side.

First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to my committee, beginning with my supervisor, Prof. Masha Salazkina, who encouraged me to take a leap of faith and join the doctoral program in the first place. Masha’s patient, confident, and committed guidance led me to improve this project and expand my thinking at every step along the way. Her own research served as a signpost, confirming that I was on the right track. She’s been a constant and invaluable resource for me throughout this process and I truly cannot thank her enough for her time and dedication.

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for a less than flattering cursory reference to Pier Paolo Pasolini in the dissertation, but that he will not forget his amusement with my out-of-character justification of the 1930 Stalinist paranoia in an undergrad class. I trust Zdenko will understand my allegiance to Crvena zvezda rather than Željezničar.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
Flashback Montage: Preface.....	3
Establishing Shot: (Film) Historical Context of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle	8
Close-Up: Research Questions and Chapter Breakdown.....	34
Panorama: Yugoslav Supra-National Cinema	54
Low-Budget: Political Economy of Yugoslav Self-Management	62
American Shot: US Influence on Yugoslavia and Socialist Neo-liberalism.....	75
Jump Cut: Yugoslav Racialized Hierarchies and Anti-Colonialism	86
Long Shot: (Y)Utopia and Revolution.....	92
Tracking Shot: Research Methodology	99
CHAPTER 1: RESISTING AND ADAPTING IMPERIALISMS AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE YUGOSLAV REVOLUTIONARY CINEMA	106
Section 1: The Unseen Shots: Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Colonialist Aspects of Unmade Co-Productions about the 1914 Sarajevo Assassination	107
Section 2: A Yugoslav “Lemon Tree in Siberia:” Adapting US-American Imperialism in the Partisan Western <i>Captain Leši</i> (1960, Živorad Mitrović).....	137
CHAPTER 2: YUGOSLAV NEW FILM’S QUEST FOR A NEW REVOLUTION	157
Section 3: Some Revolution You Are!: <i>The Ambush</i> (1969, Živojin Pavlović) as a Reflection of the 1968 Student Protests	158
Section 4: Economics of Shortage and the Archival Impulse in Revolutionary Socialist Cinema	180
Section 5: The Belgrade FEST, or What Happened When Peckinpah Met Wajda.....	204
CHAPTER 3: THE NATIONAL(IST) CHALLENGE TO THE YUGOSLAV REVOLUTION	221
Section 6: From Supra- and Extra-Nation to Post-Revolution: Late 1960s Critical Debates about the Nature of Yugoslav Cinema	222
Section 7: Asymmetric Nationalism: The Case Study of the 1971 Cinematic Exchange between Croatia and Great Britain	237
Section 8: Peasants, Vampires, and Partisans: British Cultural and Political Racialization of the Balkans and Yugoslavia	277
Section 9: Conceptualizing Croatian National Cinema in <i>Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970</i> and Beyond....	285
Section 10: Between Homeland and Fatherland: Antun Vrdoljak’s Counter-Revolutionary Subversion in Films about WWII Croatia	293
CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	324
SOURCES	348
PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS INCLUDED IN DISSERTATION	391

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABiH	Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine (Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
AFŽ	Antifašistički front žena (Women's Antifascist Front)
AJ	Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archive of Yugoslavia)
ASIFA	Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (International Animated Film Association)
BF	Bosna Film
BFI	British Film Institute
EC	European Communities
FIAPF	Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (International Federation of Film Producers Associations)
FJF	Festival jugoslovenskog filma (Festival of Yugoslav Film)
HDA	Hrvatski državni arhiv (Croatian State Archive)

HSS	Hrvatska seljačka stranka (Croat Peasant Party)
JNA	Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija (Yugoslav People's Army)
JVuO	Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini (Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland)
KPJ	Komunistička partija Jugoslavije (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)
LFF	London Film Festival
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NDH	Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)
NFT	National Film Theatre
NOB	Narodnooslobodilačka borba (People's Liberation Struggle)
NOP	Narodnooslobodilački pokret (People's Liberation Movement)
OZNA	Odeljenje za zaštitu naroda (Department for People's Protection)
SKJ	Savez komunista Jugoslavije (League of Communists of Yugoslavia)

SKOJ	Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije (League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia)
SUBNOR	Savez udruženja boraca Narodnooslobodilačkog rata (Union of the Associations of Fighters of the People's Liberation War)
YRC	Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle

INTRODUCTION

The Paris Commune failed because it was not built by peasants. Only revolutions made by peasants turned out well: Russian, Chinese, ours [i.e. Yugoslav], and Cuban. However, the leaders of these revolutions were never peasants. They came from the bourgeoisie. Peasants' reasons for joining a revolution are never identical to the reasons of the revolutionary leaders. Peasantry is something that goes about, crawls, tumbling like a devouring amoeba, yet forced to be part of the revolution. Only geniuses like Mao Zedong and Tito managed the peasantry with due caution. Whereas fanatics, unlike them, despised peasants.¹ (Živojin Pavlović, 1985)

DIMITRY (played by Zlatko Burić): I have a joke: 'Do you know how to tell a communist? It's someone who reads Marx and Lenin. And do you know how to tell an anti-communist? It's someone who understands Marx and Lenin.' Ha-ha! It's Ronald Reagan. Funny guy!

THE CAPTAIN (played by Woody Harrelson): 'Never argue with idiots, they'll only bring you down to their level and beat you with experience.' Mark Twain.

DIMITRY: Ronald Reagan, he said also, 'Socialism works only in heaven where they don't need it, and in hell where they already have it.'

THE CAPTAIN: 'Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of a cancer cell.' ... That's Edward Abbey.

DIMITRY: 'The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money.' Margaret Thatcher.

THE CAPTAIN: You're going to like this one: 'The last capitalist we hang will be the one who sold us the rope.' Karl Marx.

DIMITRY: Oh, shit! Okay, okay... Okay. A classic: 'The most powerful single force in the world today is man's eternal desire to be free and independent.' Kennedy.

THE CAPTAIN: 'Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in ancient Greece. Freedom for slave owners.'

DIMITRY: I know: Vladimir Lenin! School. (chuckles) Russian capitalist and an American communist.

THE CAPTAIN: On a two-hundred-and-fifty million dollar luxury yacht.

(*Triangle of Sadness*, 2022, Ruben Östlund)

¹ Unless otherwise stipulated, all translations in this dissertation are author's.

I was a rather withdrawn kid, without brothers or sisters, often alone, and in the '90s there was no Internet or computers, nor was there much talk about mental health, so I guess the only exit was talking to myself. Dialogue, that is. The essence of theatre. At the same time, I'm not coming from a particularly affluent family, so I couldn't go to music school, horse riding classes, or French courses. Perhaps I could've become a renowned cellist, like Jacqueline du Pré. I don't know. Reading and writing cost nothing. I have no talent for painting and I don't have developed work habits for law studies. Kids from the working class are the real punks (*pankeri*). Inherently inscribed in them is the gift of laziness, which is the first line of defense against the capitalist hell. And voila, I've become a dramaturge. Success through inertia.
(Vedrana Klepica, 2020)²

² Gvozdenović 2020.

Flashback Montage: Preface

The year is 1993. I'm a kid growing up in Belgrade, the capital of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the so-called Third Yugoslavia, that comprises two republics, Serbia and Montenegro. Her predecessor and my birth country, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, also known as the Second Yugoslavia/socialist Yugoslavia, is dying a protracted and agonizing death. Wars are raging in former Yugoslav republics, Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The Battle of Vukovar is over, the Siege of Sarajevo in full swing.

Every evening, my family watches TV news: mutilated corpses, tears, tanks, buildings looking like the surface of the Moon, camouflage uniforms, greasy beards, grenade launchers, burned vehicles, traumatized children, puddles of blood on the streets. We watch Croatian nationalist politicians: Martin Špegelj, Luka Bebić, Šime Đodan, and the “star” of the last chapter of my dissertation, Antun Vrdoljak. And Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on repeat. Every evening.

Third Yugoslavia is governed by the regime of Slobodan Milošević, a one-time banker close to US business circles, then the leader of the Serbian Communists who rode the wave of Serbian nationalism in the late 1980s and, together with the leaders of other Yugoslav republics, began burying the Second Yugoslavia.

Because of Milošević's regime's involvement in the Yugoslav Wars, adamantly denied by the regime itself in the state-run Serbian media, the United Nations Security Council imposed a long-lasting international embargo on Third Yugoslavia. Nobody seems to understand, in that wider world on TV, what a crime international embargo is. Why do we *all* have to suffer? Why can't they just stop wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina? I don't understand why the

“international community” does not get rid of Milošević. Help overthrow him in a military coup, or something. Put him in prison, as they would eight years later.

As a result of the embargo, Third Yugoslavia is experiencing a historic hyperinflation, comparable to the hyperinflations in Weimar Germany, early postwar Hungary, and contemporary Argentina. Virtually every day, the state prints worthless banknotes. When adults receive their monthly salaries, the next day they can't buy a matchbox with that money. Many people smuggle gasoline into the country and then sell it in plastic bottles on the street.

Food is scarce. Very scarce. Store shelves empty. One morning my father went to the store to buy a loaf of rationed bread, but by the time he got there, there was none. He came back home, desperate and ashamed: he could barely look my mother in the eye. Fortunately, there was still some stale bread that my mother could mix with a bit of milk to feed my younger brother and me before sending us to school, her stomach in knots.

One day my mother sends me to the store to buy bread. It's the last throws of winter. An empty street. I pass by a black-and-white stray dog. Suddenly, he jumps and almost bites my leg. I scream and he walks away. I didn't tell my parents about the incident, or entertain a thought that the dog could have been rabid. There was hardly any food for people, let alone dogs.

Through my family apartment's window, I observe pensioners rummaging through the waste disposal containers, looking for scraps of food. This recurring image makes me think about the children of these starving elderly people: is it possible that none of them has children living in Belgrade or Serbia that could somehow help them?

I like going through my family photo albums. One day I find a black-and-white photo of my mom, her family, and a young Black man who rented an adapted apartment in their family home. She says that his name was Winston and that he came to Yugoslavia from his homeland,

Tanzania, to study as part of the Non-Aligned Movement's academic exchange. My mom thinks that Winston left to fight in the Uganda-Tanzania War. Her family never heard back from him.

I like watching movies and TV shows on Serbian TV channels. There is no new content because of the embargo, but I am absorbed by the broadcasting cycles of Billy Wilder and Alfred Hitchcock, Humphrey Bogart and James Cagney. I like Barbara Stanwyck's demeanor. I'm slightly intimidated by Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond.

On Sunday mornings, after the broadcast of the state TV network's news show about the Yugoslav Army, I like to watch old Partisan movies and TV shows. My favorite, with its iconic theme³ composed by a jazz musician Milivoje 'Mića Coltrane' Marković who was allegedly inspired by Isaac Hayes's even more iconic theme from the blaxploitation classic *Shaft* (1971, Gordon Parks), is the show about the audacious and a bit outlandish Belgrade resistance fighters during WWII, *Otpisani/The Outcasts aka The Written Off* (1974-1975, Aleksandar Đorđević).

My father and I often talk about the history of socialist Yugoslavia and chess. He is proud that I am already playing chess better than him. My father has little reason to like the Communists who governed socialist Yugoslavia. At the same time, he is more than ready to admit that the overall social standard in the socialist era was much, much higher than in our post-socialist presence. In the socialist era, he briefly served as president of a small communal chess club. This was a time when various state institutions and self-managed enterprises invested a lot of money into Yugoslav sports in general and chess in particular. Chess was an important sport for the Yugoslavs enchanted with its cerebral beauty and war-like symbolism, especially on those occasions when Yugoslavia could shine in the Cold War arena heavily dominated by the Soviet chess culture. My father and I often talk about the brilliant, if controversial US player,

³ "Milivoje Mića Marković - Otpisani" 2012.

Robert ‘Bobby’ Fischer, who just a year ago, in 1992, broke the UN sports sanctions by playing a rematch against Boris Spassky in Yugoslavia. This happened 20 years after their World Chess Championship match in Reykjavik, one of the biggest Cold War sports spectacles. Fischer was the star of the famous team match USSR vs. the Rest of the World, hosted by Belgrade in 1970. After the 1992 rematch, the United States issued a warrant for Fischer’s arrest and he never returned to his homeland.

We also talk about another chess idol of my father’s, Viktor Korchnoy, who defected from the USSR after the Soviet chess federation decided that a younger generation of players, led by Anatoly Karpov, was to restore the glory of the Soviet chess in the wake of Fischer’s 1972 triumph. My father admires Korchnoy for his defiance and the tenacity with which he took on the Soviet establishment, making a great comeback against Karpov in their match in 1978. One of Korchnoy’s friends and seconds, Serbian screen-writer Branislav ‘Brana’ Crnčević, published a book about him in Zagreb in 1981. (Later, Crnčević will become a good friend of Slobodan Milošević and an advocate of the innocence of Radovan Karadžić before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.) Sometimes I’m not sure whether the Cold War world was small, or socialist Yugoslavia was big.

In 1993, I still don’t know that six years later, like most citizens of Third Yugoslavia, I will be bombed for 77 days by one of the most powerful military alliances in the history of humankind, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; supported and, indeed, spearheaded by US President Bill Clinton’s administration.

Many, many Kosovar Albanians will have endured much worse trials and tribulations than mine, both before and during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

Still, I will be a witness to NATO's contribution to the "balkanization" of the post-socialist Balkans. Among other things, I will observe how NATO cynically treated their civilian victims, including a 3-year old Milica Rakić and the workers of Radio Television of Serbia, as "collateral damage."

Throughout the nightmarish 1990s, the socialist Yugoslav Revolution will remain in the background of my life, though never completely suppressed.

The street I live on is named after Vladimir Rolović, a Yugoslav revolutionary and diplomat, high ranking officer of the notorious State Security Administration (UDBA) and former head of the infamous Goli Otok political prison (a Yugoslav gulag island, if not exactly a Gulag Archipelago). In April 1971, Rolović, then Yugoslav Ambassador to Sweden, was attacked and mortally wounded in the embassy in Stockholm by two members of an Ustaša terrorist organization, the Croatian National Resistance.

I also often traverse with my parents the best known Belgrade boulevard, the Boulevard of Revolution, which leads from the Federal Assembly in downtown to the semi-rural suburbs. Or, is it the other way around?

Establishing Shot: (Film) Historical Context of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle

Foreword: *This sub-chapter is a revised and translated version of the article “Jugoslovenski Revolucionarni Ciklus kao izazov teoriji filmskog žanra” [“Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle as a Challenge for the Film Genre Theory”] submitted for publication in the journal Hrvatski filmski ljetopis [Croatian Film Chronicles] in fall 2022. It serves as an entry point into the topic of this dissertation: the intertwining of the history of postwar Yugoslavia, cinema as the central medium of its socialist modernization, and Revolution as a complex modality of the country’s politics and aesthetics. Building upon Ranko Munitić’s theorization of Yugoslav film about revolution, the sub-chapter looks at what I call the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle as transcending traditional film genre divisions and capturing the continuity of the Yugoslav Revolution in the pre-WWII, WWII, and postwar eras. After relating the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle to Masha Salazkina’s topoi of world socialist cinema and indicating the Cycle’s link between war and work, the sub-chapter proposes various ways in which the Cycle could be associated with global revolutionary cinemas.*

As the bulk of this manuscript-based dissertation consists of the analyses of the made and unmade Yugoslav films about revolution, this sub-chapter establishes the main parameters of understanding the Cycle as a supra-genre to which these films belong. The sub-chapter thus opens the way for the subsequent outline of the research questions, literature review, and other components of the dissertation introduction.

Introduction

In the preface to his book *Živjet će ovaj narod: jugoslavenski film o revoluciji* [*These People Will Live: Yugoslav Film about Revolution*], published in Zagreb in 1974, film critic and

theoretician Ranko Munitić writes that the book stems from his essay “Od *Slavice* do *Neretve*” [“From *Slavica* to *The Battle of Neretva*”], published in the Zagrebian film journal *Filmska kultura* in 1969. The editor of the journal, Stevo Ostojić, had commissioned Munitić’s essay⁴ to mark the 50th anniversary of the Komunistička partija Jugoslavije (KPJ, Communist Party of Yugoslavia), renamed into Savez komunista Jugoslavije (SKJ, League of Communists of Yugoslavia) in 1952. Munitić’s essay was dedicated to the genre of films about the *NOB* (Narodnooslobodilačka borba, People’s Liberation Struggle), the Yugoslav Communist-led armed struggle against the Nazi-fascist occupation in World War II. Between writing the essay and the book, Munitić had encountered a methodological problem in the films that “examine and evaluate the significance of that period [i.e. *NOB*] through the prism of today’s experience” (1974, 5), which led him to conclude that the genre terms such as “the *NOB* film” and “Yugoslav war film” were inadequate and limited. Munitić was interested in whether Yugoslav films about the postwar era, also known as *films on “contemporary themes”* (Goulding 2002, xii), pursued the spirit of the *socialist revolution* which, together with the *resistance to the occupiers* and the *civil war against the collaborationists*, manifested the threefold nature of the Yugoslav Communist mythology of WWII (Wachtel 1998, 133). This is how Munitić started thinking about a broader category “jugoslavenski film o revoluciji” (Yugoslav film about revolution) encompassing the *NOB* films and numerous (related) films on contemporary themes.

In his book, Munitić argues that the Yugoslav film about revolution does not constitute “a uniform film genre” due to the existence of a large number of “different stylistic and dramaturgical prototypes,” such as the “drama of [the stream of] consciousness,” psychological

⁴ Munitić also contributed to the 1977 volume *Rat, revolucija, ekran* [*War, Revolution, Screen*], dedicated to Yugoslav film about war and revolution, edited by Ostojić and later translated in English, French, and Russian.

drama, “epic spectacle,” thriller, action film, comedy, etc. It is also impossible, Munitić continues, to cohere Yugoslav films about revolution around “a common problematic” (1974, 6). For instance, *Kota 905/Point 905* (1960, directed by Mate Relja) focuses on “the seemingly uncertain fate of its protagonist,” *Balada o trobenti in oblaku/Ballad about a Trumpet and a Cloud* (1961, France Štiglic) “attempts to analyze the integrity of human conscience and consciousness,” while *Tri/Three* (1965, Aleksandar Petrović) “uses a purely meditative platform to search for the principles of human nature which would resist even the hopelessness of the existential apocalypse.” Lastly, Munitić concludes, it seems hard to identify a common thematic denominator connecting *Pohod/The Trek* (1968, Đorđe Kadijević), *Uzavreli grad/Boom Town* (1961, Veljko Bulajić), and *Ponedjeljak ili utorak/Monday or Tuesday* (1966, Vatroslav Mimica) as films about the liberation war, industrialization, and the postwar Yugoslav intellectual respectively.

In a longer section, crucial for this dissertation, Munitić writes that the NOB is “historically and poetically inextricable from what followed, not only because what followed was an organic continuation of the [liberation] struggle in other domains, but also because the meaning, that is, the spirit of the [revolutionary] movement remained the same” in “a broader revolutionary movement and advancement once exercised by a gun and a bomb, yesterday by a pickaxe and a bulldozer, today by social and economic self-management reform.” The protagonists of Yugoslav films about revolution are the “agents and children of Revolucija [the Revolution] which has been singular and unique regardless of different forms of its dialectic materialization.” Yugoslav Revolution “is not only the legacy, but also the soul of a people, not only a heroic evocation, but also an indispensable intellectual stage of the cognition of oneself and one’s world,” while its “diversity, practical infiniteness, and poetic broadness” make the Yugoslav film

about revolution “the most complete and mature form of the socialist film that emerged in this country.” For Munitić, “[f]ilm inspired by [the NOB] is only one component of ciklus [the cycle]⁵ about the revolution,” which should include “everything that is directly or indirectly—but fundamentally—related to the thematic and notional continuity of the revolution, with its historical, philosophical, and humanistic dimensions” (1974, 7).

The cited passage reflects Munitić’s conceptualization of supra-national Yugoslav cinema, his personal investment into the cinematic vision of the Yugoslav Revolution,⁶ and clever use of Marxist hermeneutics. Following the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, Munitić abandoned his earlier views about Yugoslav cinema and revolution by writing about the “Serbian century of film” (1999) and the Partisan film (*partizanski film*) which he somewhat pejoratively labeled as “partizanac” (2005, 261-270). Munitić’s revisionism could be explained by his conformist position in post-socialist Belgrade which was marked by the resentment towards Yugoslav Revolution, although this does not justify his contribution to the national(ist) dismemberment of Yugoslav cinema deftly criticized by Jovanović (2012).⁷ Munitić’s case, far from unique in (post-)Yugoslav context, shows that people and times may change, but texts remain open to new readings and interpretations.

⁵ Although Munitić does not elaborate on his use of the term “cycle” as a category broader than genre, it seems plausible that he borrowed it from literary theory and history. For example, with regards to the national mythology of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, Serbian epic poetry recognizes 3 cycles of epic poems: pre-Kosovo, Kosovo, and post-Kosovo. There are, of course, well-known literary cycles in other cultures as well, such as *The Ring of the Nibelung*, the epic cycle about the Trojan War, and the Arthurian cycle, in addition to contemporary literary cycles centered on their protagonists, such as Arthur Conan Doyle’s cycle about Sherlock Holmes.

⁶ Munitić was a volunteer assistant director on *Prometej s otoka Viševice/Prometheus from the Island of Viševica* (1964, Vatroslav Mimica) and the screenwriting collaborator on *Okupacija u 26 slika/Occupation in 26 Pictures* (1978, Lordan Zafranović).

⁷ For a more refined understanding of the paradigm of national cinema, see the notion of “national belonging” in White 2004.

Through a critical revalorization of Munitić's theorization of Yugoslav film about revolution, this sub-chapter formulates the supra-generic Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle (YRC, I will explain further down the reasons behind the capitalization) as one of the most original contributions Yugoslav cinema made to world film culture. In so doing, I aim to complement and deepen the literature about the Yugoslav war film (Čolić 1984) and Partisan film and culture (Jakiša and Gilić 2015) which, without denying its existence, does not pay the Yugoslav Revolution the attention it deserves.

From Warriors to Workers

Yugoslav Revolution is an ambiguous phenomenon. It is significant as the *second* independent and effective socialist revolution, after the October Revolution and before the Chinese and Cuban Revolutions; in addition, the Yugoslav Revolution was the *first* effective antifascist revolution, one that was very much shaped by the experience of the Yugoslav Communist participants in the antifascist struggle in the Spanish Civil War (see, for example, Pavlaković 2016). The revolution was built into the foundations of the Second Yugoslavia and its culture, from the constitutional preambles and monuments to the revolution,⁸ to the names of streets and institutions (e.g. Museum of the Revolution of Nations and Nationalities in Belgrade), to rituals of revolutionary mobility (Baković 2021), to the constant flow of books about the revolution and revolutionaries.⁹ Revolutionary legitimacy helped socialist Yugoslavia resist both Nazi-fascism and Stalinism, develop self-management as an original and comprehensive Marxist doctrine, and participate in the establishment and work of the anticolonialist Non-Aligned

⁸ See: www.spomenikdatabase.org

⁹ For example, Jakopović 1976; Jelić 1979; Čalić 1982; Vranicki 1985; Sretenović 2020.

Movement (NAM). In a manner close to Munitić's organicist articulation of the Revolution, Gal Kirn (2019) elucidates the revolutionary independence and *continuity* of the Yugoslav Partisans, postwar self-managed workers, and the proponents of non-alignment as a potential bulwark against capitalist exploitation and statist violence. Thus is reaffirmed one of Munitić's central arguments about the representation of work in Yugoslav films on contemporary themes as a reflection of the representation of war in the NOB films (for more about the cyclical coupling of war and work, see the below segment about world socialist cinema).

On the other hand, in the post-socialist era, Yugoslav revolution has become a neglected, still under-researched, misunderstood and frequently resented and hated phenomenon.¹⁰ Such a negative perception of the revolution was enhanced by the failure of the leading Yugoslav revolutionary generation to develop "market socialism," with elements of neo-liberal capitalism, as a path towards the realization of the revolutionary utopia, especially after 1965 economic reform which resulted in rising social inequality and the first wave of unemployed Yugoslavs migrating to the west as "guest workers."¹¹ An equally important factor in the undermining of the revolutionary project have been anticommunism and nationalisms, particularly in their historical revisionism inspired by the broader critique of the Yugoslav Communist revolutionary terror.

¹⁰ An interesting counterpoint to this trend can be found in the documentaries *Pejzaži otpora/Landscapes of Resistance* (2021, Marta Popivoda) and *Muzej revolucije/Museum of Revolution* (2021, Srđan Keča), directed by filmmakers born towards the end of socialist Yugoslavia who treat some aspects of the legacy of Yugoslav Revolution as a much needed alternative to the plight of the post-Yugoslav "transition" towards corrupted neo-liberal quasi-democracies.

¹¹ Of course, the failure of Yugoslav socialism was not mitigated by the effects and results of the Cold War, or the fact that Yugoslavia, as a relatively small country, could not have combined elements of socialism and capitalism in the same scope, or with the same set of global consequences, like China a few decades later.

Comprehending the significance of the Revolution for postwar Yugoslavia is inseparable from understanding the function of film as the first important socialist medium. Similarly to the Soviet Union, socialist Yugoslavia developed in parallel with its cinema. In his 1971 address to the League of Film Workers of Yugoslavia, film director Aleksandar Petrović argued that Yugoslav cinema was created as a result of the “revolutionary changes” that established the postwar film culture as an organized structure, independent from the largely individual film initiatives in the interwar Yugoslav monarchy (Sudar 2013, 18). In 1987, Petrović noticed that a comprehensive history of Yugoslav cinema would reflect the history of Yugoslav society as a whole (3). Petrović’s statements are all the more important given his affiliation with Yugoslav modernist¹² filmmakers, largely known as belonging to the Yugoslav New Film (*jugoslovenski novi film*), who gained recognition in the 1960s by clashing with the aesthetics and the revolutionary experience of the previous generation of Yugoslav filmmakers. Yugoslav modernist auteurs were, for the most part, children and passive witnesses during WWII, remembering the war and revolutionary violence with much less pathos and piety than their older colleagues. However, that does not mean that Yugoslav modernists were mere liberal dissidents, as they are often misleadingly portrayed (e.g. Goulding 2002 and Schober 2013). Writing about the conformism and relative apoliticism of an even younger generation of Yugoslav filmmakers, the Prague Group,¹³ Ivan Velisavljević (2013, 16) notes that Yugoslav modernists (Dušan

¹² Reaching its heyday in the 1960s in various parts of the world, modernist cinema was a heterogenous body of cinematic work characterized by narrative elements such as the alienation of the abstract individual, the role of chance, and open endings; generic conventions such as wandering/travel, mental journey, and the closed-situation drama; and the general proclivity towards stylistic minimalism and/or experimentation and self-reflexivity (for more about cinematic modernism, particularly European, see Kovács 2007).

¹³ Named after the Prague film academy FAMU attended by Goran Marković, Goran Paskaljević, Lordan Zafranović, Srđan Karanović, Rajko Grlić, Vilko Filač, Živko Zalar, Predrag Popović, and, a bit later, Emir Kusturica.

Makavejev, Živojin Pavlović, Aleksandar Petrović, Želimir Žilnik, Bahrudin ‘Bato’ Čengić, Vatroslav Mimica, and others) were, despite all their ideological deflections, “leftists, whose criticism was a consequence of their discontent with the *direction* of Yugoslav socialism after the revolution—hence their films frequently deal with revolutionary thematics, disappointment with communist ideals, relationship with Stalinism, etc.” The modernists were actually pursuing their own, new revolution, which they closed in on during the 1968 student protests in Belgrade. The next section shows that even before they entered professional arena, some Yugoslav modernists, in concert with their older colleagues, were already pondering the cinematic magnitude of the revolution.

Both Liberation and Revolution

Yugoslav film about revolution was not just a product of a single film critic’s inventiveness,¹⁴ but also Yugoslav filmmakers’ preoccupation with the polymorphous nature of WWII in the occupied Yugoslavia. This is vividly illustrated by the minutes of the meeting organized by the Yugoslav Association of Film Producers in December 1960 in Belgrade. The focus of the meeting was screenplays about the NOB in the run-up to the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the People’s Liberation Struggle, as well as a more analytical overview of 47 NOB films produced since 1947. The meeting gathered a significant number of “film workers,” i.e. filmmakers, of different generations from various Yugoslav republics. The majority of the older filmmakers in attendance participated, in one way or another, in the NOB and revolution, while

¹⁴ In addition to Munitić, other Yugoslav critics wrote about the convergence of Yugoslav cinema and revolution. For examples, see the dissertation section “From Supra- and Extra-Nation to Post-Revolution: Late 1960s Critical Debates about the Nature of Yugoslav Cinema.”

younger filmmakers, such as Dušan Makavejev and Aleksandar Petrović, had a vivid memory of the same historical turbulences.¹⁵

In one of the first presentations, historian and screenwriter Slavko Goldstein from Zagreb praised his Belgrade collaborator and the chairman of the meeting, director Živorad Mitrović, whose popular action-driven Partisan Westerns *Ešalon doktora M./Doctor M.'s Echelone* (1955) and *Kapetan Leši/Captain Leši* (1960) had reinvigorated the public interest in the NOB films. Goldstein noted that the Americans created the Western, Russians created the film about revolution, while Yugoslavs could use the genre of the NOB film to create “our own film style” (*Stenografske beleške...* 1960, II/1). This idea was supported by Vjekoslav Afrić, the director of the first Yugoslav feature and NOB film, *Slavica* (1947).

The discussion quickly turned to the necessity of connecting the NOB genre with a broader understanding of the Yugoslav Revolution. Director Jovan Živanović seconded the presentation of his younger colleague, Dušan Makavejev, who argued that the NOB film should not be treated as the war film, but as the film about revolution which should represent “the roots of what is happening in our country,” that is, the beginnings of the ongoing Revolution (“*Stenografske beleške...*” 1960, IV/1). An unnamed discussant concurred with Makavejev’s thesis that there should be a strong organic connection between the NOB films and films on contemporary themes, for “in the films about [the NOB] we must feel that the struggle was led in the name of the upcoming world, while ... contemporary films [should] speak about the world that came to be and exists today...” (IV/4). The same discussant suggested that the pre-WWII history of

¹⁵ Importantly, Petrović did join the Yugoslav Partisans in 1944, when he was only 15 years old, and fought against the German occupiers and their collaborators for six months. Ingrained in his memory was “the river Sava covered with corpses of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, communists of all nationalities, murdered in the Independent State of Croatia and intentionally thrown in to float downriver, often with little boards around their necks ‘explaining’ the reasons for their execution” (Sudar 2013, 23).

Yugoslav people could be adapted for the screen to underline the historical continuity of Yugoslav Revolution, adding his support for the screen-writer Frida Filipović's critique of the representation of women in the NOB films as either "biological units obstructing the struggle" or "a warm lyrical wave softening the brutality of war" (V/2).

The issue of the purpose of the NOB films had stimulated the Slovenian screen-writer Vitomil Zupan to speak about the revolutionary spiritedness which moved the Partisans to sacrifice their lives for the bright postwar future "even if they did not believe, like Japanese kamikaze or Mohammedans, that they will go to heaven postmortem" ("Stenografske beleške..." 1960, 17). Makavejev quipped that in 1955 there were more former Partisans than at the end of the war, alluding to the lucrative privileges that came with the title of war veteran. He added that the year 1941 was seared in his childhood memory with images of people sitting in downtown Belgrade taverns, while dead patriots and members of the resistance movement hanged on the lamp posts.

After Makavejev's war reminiscences, the discussion turned to the educational function of the film about the NOB and revolution, also discussed by Munitić (1974, 30). Aleksandar Petrović criticized the revolutionary mythology of the early postwar films as narrowly centered on the conflict between the Partisans and the German occupiers. According to Petrović, the film *Daleko je sunce/The Sun is Far Away* (1953, Radoš Novaković) had brought new thematic horizons, mostly under the influence of French existentialism, which were then imitated by a great number of subjectivist dramas about the NOB. However, Yugoslav moviegoers found these more psychologically nuanced films too arcane and instead embraced the more entertaining war action films such as those directed by Mitrović. In a typical modernist manner, Petrović concluded that producing crowd-pleasing films should not limit the artistic ambitions of

Yugoslav filmmakers (“Stenografske beleške...” 1960, IV/1). Slovenian director Jane Kavčič responded to Petrović’s presentation by noting that psychological war films were tailored for a niche audience preferring a more cerebral content, whereas action war films were more suitable for the young moviegoers (27).

In one of the most interesting presentations at the 1960 meeting, the aforementioned Radoš Novaković advocated for a distinction between the NOB film and the war film genre in general as well as the connection between the NOB films and the films “reflecting the changes produced as a direct consequence of the victory of our revolution” (Novaković 1979, 14). Allowing that Yugoslav filmmakers tended to repeat shabby plotlines, Novaković nevertheless deemed superficial the viewpoint of the renowned French film historian Georges Sadoul who thought that too many war films had been produced in Yugoslavia. For Novaković, WWII conflicts were more obviously than is usually the case, the extension of our revolutionary struggle, started much earlier and then continued with an increasing intensity during the war. In a word, the war events in Yugoslavia were simultaneously fateful political and social changes, in such a significant and revolutionary scope that it is hard to find a point of comparison among other peoples, at least European. With a caveat: while in many countries the end of the war meant the cessation of a certain kind of politics and a certain tendency of social development, in our country, on the contrary, the victory enabled an even more consistent implementation of the revolutionary postulates that drove [our] struggle (14).

Novaković’s last remark was most likely referred to those Eastern European states where socialism was established as a result of the Soviet liberation, rather than the victory of an autochthonous revolutionary movement. Novaković criticized the propensity of some Yugoslav filmmakers, influenced by “certain western philosophers,” to depict Partisans so pessimistically as to render them essentially non-revolutionary. Without questioning the market logic behind the viewers’ preference for Yugoslav comedies, Novaković advised that the NOB film be supported as an authentic Yugoslav genre which could represent the country abroad. In the same breath, he called for the raising of the production standards, particularly in the wake of speculations that

some NOB films had been produced because the genre's political and social significance promised a preferential treatment by Yugoslav film critics (15-16). In sum, Makavejev's and Novaković's presentations foreran Munitić's elaboration of the Yugoslav film about revolution as well as the comparative value of this supra-genre on the international stage, to be discussed in the following section.

From the revolution to the Revolution

In the Soviet Union, the legacy of the October Revolution and the Russian Civil War was captured in the historical-revolutionary genre (историко-революционный жанр). The Soviet film encyclopedia, (Karaganov/Капаганов 1987, 155-156), constitutes the historical-revolutionary film in a wide range from the newsreels of the Revolutionary era to topical documentaries (e.g. *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*, 1927, Esfir Shub, and *Three Songs about Lenin*, 1934, Dziga Vertov) and revolutionary spectacles such as *Mother* (1926, Vsevolod Pudovkin), *October* (1928, Sergey Eisenstein), and *Arsenal* (1929, Oleksandr Dovzhenko), to Socialist realist biopics *Chapaev* (1934, the Vasilyev brothers) and *Shchors* (1939, Oleksandr Dovzhenko and Yuliya Solntseva) and postwar productions such as *The Communist* (1958, Yuliy Raizman), *The Flight* (1971, Aleksandr Alov and Vladimir Naumov), and *Lenin in Paris* (1981, Sergey Yutkevich and Leonid Eidlin). Film historian Naum Kleiman (2017) holds that the theme of the revolution crucially shaped the revolutionary cinematic language of the Soviet avant-garde: for instance, Sergey Eisenstein abandoned the detective and melodramatic storylines in *Strike* (1925) in favor of emphasizing the people as a creative historical force. In the early 1930s, Kleiman adds, the historical-revolutionary film dispensed with its proclivity for formal experimentation which means that, due to its contamination with other genres (e.g. biopic and

adventure film) and return to the classical narrative structure, we should talk about the historical-revolutionary theme rather than the genre. A similar way of thinking about the historical-revolutionary theme exists in the literature about the Soviet visual art (Orlova/Орлова 1964).

To tease out the distinction between the Soviet historical-revolutionary genre and what I call the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle, an offspring of Munitić's theorization of the Yugoslav film about revolution, it is first necessary to comment on Munitić's use of capitalization. Namely, in both Russian and Serbo-Croatian, in phrases denoting historical revolutions, the word "revolution" is usually written with the lower case lettering: for example, the October Revolution is written as "Oktobarska revolucija" (Serbo-Croatian) and "Октябрьская революция" (Russian). When Munitić uses the capitalization, i.e. "Revolucija", he distinguishes between the "revolucija" as a relatively brief process of the Yugoslav Communist revolutionary ascension to power at the end of WWII, and the "Revolucija" which encompasses both the wartime "revolucija" and postwar Yugoslav revolutionary development through re-construction, self-management, and socio-political and cultural reforms. When extrapolated to the Yugoslav film about revolution as a supra-generic category, i.e. "ciklus" (cycle), Munitić's understanding of "Revolucija" feeds into the organic unity of the representation of war in the NOB films and the representation of work in the films on contemporary themes/postwar period. In Yugoslav films on contemporary themes, then, work becomes—to paraphrase Carl von Clausewitz's famous analogy between politics and war—the continuation of war by other means. Following in the footsteps of the above examined 1960 meeting of Yugoslav film workers, especially the observations about the necessity of connecting the revolution to its pre- and post-revolutionary temporalities, I supplement Munitić's theorization by including the films about the pre-

revolutionary history into the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle (YRC) as linking the prewar, wartime, and postwar continuity of the Yugoslav Revolution.

Hence the crucial difference between the Soviet historical-revolutionary film and the YRC is the temporal and phenomenological framework of the cinematic grounding of the October “revolution” and the Yugoslav “Revolution.” On the one hand, Soviet films such as Grigoriy Kozintsev’s and Leonid Trauberg’s *The Union of the Great Cause* (1927) and *The New Babylon* (1929), about the 1825 Decembrist revolt and the 1871 Paris Commune respectively, outline the historical predecessors of the 1917 revolution in a manner corresponding to the below mentioned films of the YRC about the historical predecessors of the Yugoslav revolution. On the other hand, the majority of Soviet historical-revolutionary films focus on the 1917-1923 period, thus treating the October “revolution” as a brief and *finished* process which, as consequential as it had been for the subsequent Soviet decades, still belonged to the past. The relegation of the revolution to the past is also implied through the use of the attribute “historical” in the name of the historical-revolutionary genre. By contrast, not only does the YRC extend the duration of the revolutionary transformation of Yugoslav society to the postwar decades, but it also ties that transformation to the revolutionary processes and ideas of re-construction and self-management. This is why the word “Revolutionary” in the phrase “Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle” needs to be capitalized in Serbo-Croatian as well (*Jugoslovenski Revolucionarni Ciklus*). The long duration and continuity of the Yugoslav Revolution in the country’s cinema can thus be expressed as an equation:

pre-war (revolutionary predecessors) + (revolutionary) war + (postwar revolutionary) work = Revolution

Needless to say, we should not minimize the importance of the historical-revolutionary film for the YRC, discernible in the influence of the Soviet montage on the “Serbian cutting” (Vučićević 1998, 37-38), not to mention the underexamined impact of the Soviet genre on the early postwar Yugoslav films.

The YRC should also be considered against the backdrop of the more recent research on the socialist film, an entity mentioned by Munitić as well. In *World Socialist Cinema: Alliances, Affinities and Solidarities in the Global Cold War* (2023), Masha Salazkina studies the collaboration of international filmmakers and the films screened at the Tashkent Festival of African and Asian Cinema, established in 1968 and expanded in 1976 to Latin American cinema. In the heterogenous formation “world socialist cinema” that amalgamates the Cold War-era films of socialist orientation produced in the Second and Third Worlds, Salazkina identifies three encompassing “topoi:” *industrial modernity*, which is understood as the driving force of socialist development; *cultural heritage* (includes ethnographic films, adaptations of literary classics, and historical epics); and *armed struggle* (includes films about wars, revolutions, resistance to the occupier). The importance of Salazkina’s topoi lies in overcoming narrow genre classifications and interweaving national film cultures with internationalist tendencies in world socialist cinema, in addition to recognizing the dialectical entwinement of the topoi. Put differently, world socialist cinema postulates the significance of armed struggle not only for achieving the state independence and national emancipation, but also for the economic progress through industrial modernity which, in turn, becomes the point of departure for a brighter economic future and the coveted military security. In this constellation, the films about the cultural heritage tend to re-construct the past that engendered overall socialist progress.

Salazkina's topoi could be easily detected in the YRC, which underlines the integration of the Cycle in the world socialist cinema. To illustrate my point, I will use the filmographies of Veljko Bulajić and Vatroslav Mimica, two directors who, after participating in the NOB and the revolution, worked across Yugoslavia and occupied official positions in socialist Croatia. Among their films about the armed struggle, such as *Kozara* (1962), *Kaja, ubit ću te!/Kaya, I'll Kill You!* (1967), *Bitka na Neretvi/The Battle of Neretva* (1969) and *Македонски делот од неколот/The Macedonian Part of Hell* (1971),¹⁶ a special place is occupied by *Prometheus from the Island of Viševica* (1964) as a film about the long duration of the Yugoslav Revolution. Alongside *Happy End* (1959) and *Rat/War* (1960) as films about nuclear danger, Bulajić and Mimica tackled the cultural heritage of the revolutionary antecedents in *Atentat u Sarajevu/The Day that Shook the World* (1975), *Seljačka buna/Anno Domini 1573/The 1573 Peasant Revolt* (1975),¹⁷ *Čovjek koga treba ubiti/The Man to Destroy* (1979), and *Posljednji podvig diverzanta Oblaka/The Last Mission of Demolitions Man Cloud* (1978).¹⁸ In addition to *Uzavreli grad/Boom Town* (1961), an emblematic film about industrial modernity, Bulajić directed *Vlak bez voznog reda/Train Without a Timetable* (1959) and *Obećana zemlja/The Promised Land* (1986) about the revolutionary "colonization" of Vojvodina with peasants from the poorer parts of Yugoslavia. Filming the reconstruction of a city hit by an earthquake in *Skoplje '63* (1964), Bulajić

¹⁶ Mimica thought that "the most important achievement of this film" was the visual "treatment of the masses through close-ups," which was "the somewhat forgotten experience of the early Soviet [historical-revolutionary] film" (Stojanović 1976, 27).

¹⁷ During WWII, Mimica fought in the Partisan unit "Matija Gubec," named after the leader of the 16th century peasant revolt which Mimica considered a "revolution" that preceded the socialist "Revolution." Mimica situated the peasant revolt in the "unceasing revolutionary turmoil" which delivered first tangible results after moving from rural to urban environments in the English Revolution and the French Revolution (Stojanović 1976, 29).

¹⁸ The film stands out as a refined portrayal of the geo-historical scope of the Yugoslav Revolution, from its links to the Spanish Civil War to the suppression of the memory of the Revolution in the gentrified late socialist Zagreb.

contributed to the documentary about solidarity as another common form of the socialist cinema. This partial overview of Bulajić and Mimica's filmographies adds to the thesis about the organic continuity of the pre-revolutionary history, war, and work in the YRC.

Before moving onto the theoretical conceptualization of film cycles and their difference from the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle, I want to mention another telling example of the interrelationship between the world socialist cinema and the YRC. Salazkina makes note of socialist films about dams as symbols of industrial modernity: documentaries *A Village Smiles* (1971, S. Sukhdev, India) and *Film Essay on the Euphrates Dam* (1970, Omar Amiralay, Syria) and Soviet-Egyptian co-productions about the building of the Aswan High dam, *The People on the Nile* (1968) and *One Day, the Nile* (1972), directed by Youssef Chahine. The Yugoslav context supplies a parallel in the opus of Hajrudin Krvavac, a former Partisan who—even after serving a sentence in the Goli Otok prison established primarily for the incarceration of Yugoslav Stalinists after the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split—espoused his loyalty to the revolutionary ideals in popular Partisan Westerns *Valter brani Sarajevo/Walter Defends Sarajevo* (1972) and *Most/The Bridge* (1969) and numerous documentaries about the postwar modernization, including films about the Bosnian-Herzegovinian hydropower plants, such as *Kako se rađa hidroelektrana* (1970), *Sistem hidroelektrana na Trebišnjici* (1971), *Hidroelektrana Rama* (1975), *HE Čapljina* (1983).

From the cycles to the Cycle

In the academic literature on film genres, there is a consistent interest in film cycles which, for example, Zoë Wallin (2019, 1) defines as “groups of similar films that are produced, circulated, and consumed in a concentrated time period. As a result of this identifiable life span,

cycles hold a traceable outline of initiation, increase, and decline.” Hollywood film cycles, which emerged under that name in the late 1920s studio system, appear truly diverse, e.g. the girl reporter pictures,¹⁹ anti-prejudice pictures,²⁰ biblical epics,²¹ beach party pictures,²² etc. A particularly interesting cycle is formed by the films about the 1969-1971 revolutionary youth rebellion: “Studios such as MGM, which invested heavily in these films hoped that these productions would finally bring the young people to the box office in large enough numbers to reverse the industry’s economic downward spiral” (Bodrogkhozzy 2002, 38). In contrast to Amanda Ann Klein’s focus on the narrative analysis of the low-budget exploitation cycles (2011), Zoë Wallin follows Richard Nowell (2010) in his interest in the industrial dynamics of film cycles which depend on the viewers’ demand and the distributors’ strategies as much as on the producers’ decision-making. In general, the US-American researchers avoid the trans- and a-historical implications of the fixating and universalizing concept of genre, opting instead for the more focused optics of the film cycles which oftentimes consolidate films of various genres.

The likeness and distinctiveness between the Hollywood cycles and the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle can also be considered through the vocabulary definitions of the polysemic terms “cycle”²³ and “revolution.”²⁴ The link between cycle and revolution is most obvious in astronomy where cycle denotes “the period in which an astronomical phenomenon repeats in the same sequence” (e.g. the lunar phase), while revolution signifies “the trip of an astronomical

¹⁹ For example, *Front Page Woman* (1935, Michael Curtiz), *Smart Blonde* (1937, Frank McDonald), *His Girl Friday* (1940, Howard Hawks).

²⁰ *Crossfire* (1947, Edward Dmytryk), *Intruder in the Dust* (1949, Clarence Brown), *Storm Warning* (1951, Stuart Heisler), etc.

²¹ *Samson and Delilah* (1949, Cecil B. DeMille), *The Ten Commandments* (1956, Cecil B. DeMille), *Ben-Hur* (1959, William Wyler), etc.

²² *Beach Party* (1963, William Asher), *Don’t Make Waves* (1967, Alexander Mackendrick), *The Sweet Ride* (1968, Harvey Hart), etc.

²³ www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=11847

²⁴ www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=52629

body (satellite, planet, star) around a central astronomical object (planet, star, galactic center).”

The astronomical definition of revolution is distinct from the now dominant meaning of revolution as a radical and/or sudden transformation typical for political and social revolution, as the astronomical revolution ends with the return of the astronomical body to its initial position within the circular spatial structure and, thus, represents the absence of change. According to the sociologist Todor Kuljić (2018, 271), it was Nicolaus Copernicus who established the dominant modern meaning of revolution as he “began the overturn of theology by the telescope.” Kuljić argues that, following the Copernican heliocentric revolution and the 17th century English Revolution, the new understanding of revolution as primarily social and political phenomenon engendered theories about cyclical, spiral, and irreversible post-revolutionary temporalities. Kuljić posits that it is still too early to resolve the contemporary dilemma of the 20th century European social revolutions as *either* irreversible *or*, given the 1990s restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe, cyclical upheavals, “[i]f the historical advancement is not understood as linear and short-term, but as a long-term spiral of periods of unevenly sequenced socioeconomic breakthroughs, stagnations, and progress” (271). Therefore, Munitić’s usage of the term “cycle” seems justified, not only due to its overcoming of generic boundaries and its emphasis on the cyclical historical link of war-work, but also because of the impression that the Yugoslav Revolution ended with the retreat, rather than the definitive defeat, of socialism and the “return” to capitalism. Finally, if the US film cycle determines a phenomenon with a relatively brief life span, then the long duration of the Yugoslav Revolution in the pre-WWII, WWII, and postwar period, should be distinguished in the name of its cinematic formation as the *Cycle*.

It should be emphasized that the notion of the film cycle appears in postcolonial Algeria as well, albeit in a different form than in Hollywood. This is important because of the Yugoslav

influence on Algeria through the Non-Aligned Movement and individuals such as Tito's personal cameraman Stevan Labudović who filmed the Algerian Revolution, the fifth independent world socialist revolution, and trained Algerian filmmakers (Aduši/Hadouchi 2016). In a 1970 interview, Ahmed Rachedi, the head of the Algerian monopoly state production organization ONCIC from 1967-1973, talked about the film cycles in a way arguably shaped by the Yugoslav ideology of liberation and revolution as well as its cinematic representation:

The first years of our cinema have been dedicated to the illustration of our liberation struggle, which has been heroic. That allowed film makers to acquire a revolutionary conscience. It was a stage and not an end. We will make more films about the liberation struggle. One day we will begin a cycle of social films. But given the stage we are at, every Algerian filmmaker must begin by making a film about the war (Armes 2006, 81).

In addition to the Soviet historical-revolutionary genre and the Algerian cycle(s), the YRC could be compared to other international cinematic corpuses about revolution. This would be a valuable contribution to the pertinent literature about various revolutionary cinemas²⁵ which usually investigates films: 1) produced in brief revolutionary periods, 2) thematizing a temporally limited process of the revolutionary rise to power; or 3) presenting a distinctive, revolutionary approach to film production, distribution, and exhibition (e.g. Third Cinema). Among these titles, special attention deserves the study of revolutionary cycles as discrete phases of the postwar history of Chinese cinema (Wang 2014) which fuse the "17 years" (1949-1966) and the Cultural Revolution into an era of an intense public debate about the directions of the Chinese revolutionary transformation. Another important counterpart to the YRC could be found in the Vietnamese revolutionary cinema that features a number of already discussed features, from resisting (the French and US) colonialism and imperialism to building a socialist society.

²⁵ For example, MacBean 1975; Gabriel 1983; Buchsbaum 2003; Chanan 2004; Pick 2010; Chan 2019; Lord et al. 2021.

Man-Fung Yip (2019) recognizes a number of other traits of the Vietnamese revolutionary cinema to be related to the Yugoslav revolutionary cinema: experimentation with market-oriented film production, utilization of film as the medium *par excellence* of socialist modernization, the influence of Soviet cinema, thematization of the betrayed revolutionary potential of the peasant guerrillas/partisans, iconic representation of the landscape, etc.

Two more qualities of the YRC that deserve to be singled out are its formal and interpretive pluralisms. Munitić persuasively demonstrates that, in addition to feature fiction films as the most dominant form of the YRC, we must take into account short films and documentaries about revolution such as *Majka, sin, unuk, unuka/Mother, Son, Grandson, Granddaughter* (1965, Mladomir ‘Puriša’ Đorđević) and Krsto Škanata’s oeuvre. Building upon Munitić’s remark about the “diversity, practical infiniteness, and poetic broadness” of the Yugoslav film about revolution, I argue that the YRC should include even those audiovisual works where the Yugoslav Revolution appears as “just” a background narrative motif. Likewise, the YRC must encompass a plethora of non-theatrical films and TV films and series about the war, self-management, and other aspects of the Yugoslav Revolution. Variegated productions such as *Kuda idemo ne pitajte/Where We’re Going Don’t Ask* (1966, Tom Gotovac), *Sumorna jesen/The Grim Fall* (1969, Zvonimir Bajsić), *Jagoš i Uglješa/Jagoš and Uglješa* (1976, Bahrudin ‘Bato’ Čengić), *Papirna/The Paper Factory* (1978, Aleksandar Jevđević) and *Bolji život/Better Life* (1987-1991, Mihailo Vukobratović and others) more or less directly paint the attempt of creating, and/or the historical twilight of, various aspects of the Yugoslav revolutionary utopia. In the light of the innovative study *Cinema by Other Means* (Levi 2012),²⁶ it is obvious that

²⁶ Writing “a tale of the multiple states or conditions of cinema, of a range of extraordinary, radical experiments not only with but also ‘around’ and even without film,” Levi focuses on “the extent to which the separation of film and cinema—but also the multiple modalities of their imaginative re-alignment—had, in fact, already been practiced throughout the era of cinematographic normativity; during those

hybrid texts such as the 1933 Marxist-Surrealist epic poem for children *Podvizi družine "Pet petlića"* (English translation *The Fine Feats of the 'Five Cockerels' Gang* published in 2022), written by one of the early postwar Yugoslav film officials, Aleksandar Vučo, and accompanied by Dušan Matić's photocollage illustrations and captions, deserve to be integrated into the YRC. The same applies to the rich production of "useful cinema" (Wasson and Acland 2011) in Yugoslavia, including the output of the JNA's²⁷ military film studio Zastava Film which could be productively connected to Alice Lovejoy's thoughtful study of Czechoslovak Army Film studio (2015).

In a broad range of different perspectives on the Yugoslav Revolution, Munitić foregrounds critical films about the revolutionary violence (e.g. *Zaseda/The Ambush*, 1969, Živojin Pavlović) and self-managerial dilemmas (*Licem u lice/Face to Face*, 1963, Branko Bauer). Critical films can be found in the historical-revolutionary genre as well (*Commissar*, 1967, Aleksandr Askoldov), but their presence in the YRC is so strong that Munitić considers even *Kad čuješ zvona/When You Hear the Bells* (1969) and *U gori raste zelen bor/The Pine Tree in the Mountain* (1971) as films about revolution. Today, though, these films, directed by Antun Vrdoljak and emphasizing inter-confessional as well as inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts in WWII, seem more like a contestation of the revolution. In essence, the YRC is a rather flexible collection absorbing even films about the counterrevolution in the occupied Yugoslavia (*Čovek iz hrastove šume/The Man from the Oak Forest*, 1964, Miodrag 'Mića' Popović; *Praznik/The Holiday*, 1967, Đorđe Kadijević) which only bolsters the complexity of the Cycle.

(scarcely past) 'pre-digital' days when film was still widely accepted as the material-technological foundation of the phenomenon that is the cinema" (2012, xiii).

²⁷ Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija (Yugoslav People's Army).

The Ongoing Revolution, and Where is America in All That?

Writing about the stability and durability of film genres, Nikica Gilić (2016, 48) notes that the effort that various institutions (production companies, media, distributors) invest into the genre classification remains futile if the viewers do not recognize a particular genre as such. On the one hand, Gilić's observation draws our attention to the Yugoslav film about revolution as a product of more or less elitist obsessions of film producers, critics, and scholars. Further research could demonstrate whether or not film viewers could recognize Yugoslav films about revolution as such. Lest we forget: a lot of time may pass between the first examples of a genre and its discursive formation, as in the case of the Western. Genres may also be discovered, as in the case of the "process genre" which represents labor processes (Skvirsky 2020).

On the other hand, the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle exposes the limited imagination of the concept of film genre and its primarily consumer-oriented classifications that, for example, direct viewers towards comedy or horror depending on their need for laughter or a scare. To be fair, film genres have played an important role in shaping global film cultures and facilitating the cross-fertilization of seemingly distant cinematic traditions. Nevertheless, the YRC shows that we can think about film beyond specialized genres to connect, in the given case, the representation of war, work, and the historical roots of the long duration of the Yugoslav Revolution. What is more, bearing in mind its relatively modest yearly output, Yugoslav cinema developed a high degree of mutualism whereby a large share of its production in different forms and genres was more or less directly devoted to the Revolution, while the YRC simultaneously reflected and projected the past, present, and future of socialist Yugoslavia. This kind of symbiosis between the (supra-)national cinema and its central thematic preoccupation is particularly important as a distinctive feature of marginalized film cultures struggling for their

place on a world stage still dominated by Hollywood. A good example of this symbiosis is Lebanese national cinema that has primarily focused on the representation of the Lebanese Civil War and its consequences (Khatib 2008).

The YRC could also be juxtaposed to the cinemas of nation-states that have the experience of non-socialist revolutions. In this context, the most salient point of comparison would be the United States of America, the country that based so much of its historical identity on the Founding Fathers as the leaders of the American Revolution, yet failed to produce a significant body of cinematic work about the Revolution itself. Most films and TV shows about the American Revolution(ary War) are focused on more or less celebratory biographies of the revolutionaries, adventurous depictions of the revolutionary feats, and similarly fashioned topical documentaries.²⁸ The two best known films on the subject—a British-US co-production *Revolution* (1985, Hugh Hudson, starring Al Pacino) and the anti-British *The Patriot* (2000, Roland Emmerich, starring Mel Gibson)—employ a symptomatic figure of the *reluctant revolutionary* protagonist, who avoids any involvement in the revolution until absorbed by its centripetal force.²⁹ In contrast to the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle which is centered on and fascinated by the Yugoslav Revolution as—at the very least, an attempt at—a profound *social* Revolution, the cinema produced by and in the US has been curiously uninterested in a deeper exploration of the American Revolution. Is the US cinema, perhaps, anxious that exposing the

²⁸ For instance, *Daniel Boone* (1936, David Howard), *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939, John Ford), *Sons of Liberty* (1939, Michael Curtiz), *The Howards of Virginia* (1940, Frank Lloyd), *John Paul Jones* (1959, John Farrow), *1776* (1972, Peter H. Hunt), *Bicentennial Minutes* (1974-1976), *A More Perfect Union* (1989, Peter N. Johnson), *The Crossing* (2000, Robert Harmon), *National Treasure* (2004, Jon Turteltaub), *John Adams* (2008, Tom Hooper), *Turn: Washington's Spies* (2014-2017), and *Hamilton* (2020, Thomas Kail). A notoriously racist director D. W. Griffith made two films about the American Revolution: *The Heart of a Hero* (1916) and *America* (1924).

²⁹ I would like to thank my charming wife Mason, an expert in American Studies, for a number of the following observations and for writing this footnote.

American Revolution as a *political* revolution—that is, a revolution that rejected British colonialism in order to continue the politics of multifarious exploitation and elimination of women, Native Americans, Black People, and others—would undermine the very foundation of the (predominantly white) US-American (settler) identity?³⁰ Is the US cinema reluctant to show that the American Revolution was not a revolution at all, especially in comparison to the Black Power Revolution that was stifled by Richard Nixon’s presidential administration?³¹ What is the relationship of the US culture, including cinema and media studies, towards the rich history of the Black Power Revolutionary Cinema, as compellingly examined in the documentary *Is That Black Enough for You?!?* (2022, Elvis Mitchell)? Answering these questions would require a separate study, but in this context I want to highlight a telling discrepancy between the cinematic underrepresentation of the American Revolution and the relative overrepresentation of the Vietnam War, better known as the Resistance War against America in Vietnam itself. The Vietnam War film is an important sub-genre of the US war film, one that conveniently helped the US to present itself, through the figure of the traumatized US soldier, as a war victim rather than an imperialist superpower. In his short essay about the excess of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Jean Baudrillard reproached Francis Ford Coppola’s film as “the extension of the [Vietnam] war [*by*] *other means*,³² the pinnacle of this failed war, and its apotheosis” (1994, 59, italics added).

³⁰ The eminent African-American Marxist historian Gerald Horne (2014) convincingly argues that the 1776 rebellion of the white American colonists was a “counter-revolution” that aimed to oppose the abolition of slavery by the British colonial metropole. See also Horne’s book *The Counter-Revolution of 1836: Texas Slavery & Jim Crow and the Roots of U. S. Fascism* (2022).

³¹ Here I refer to a question as old as the study of revolutions itself: has *any* historical revolution—and they can be as diverse as the French, October, Mexican, Yugoslav, Egyptian, Iranian, and many, many others—been a true revolution? In addition to the aforementioned books by Gerald Horne, the revolutionarity of the American Revolution within the global revolutionary framework is productively contested by the Scottish Marxist historian Neil Davidson in his book *How Revolutionary Were the Bourgeois Revolutions?* (2012).

³² Importantly, this dissertation will explore the significance of the cultural and political production *by other means* in the context of Yugoslav cinema and Yugoslav Revolution, albeit in a material context fundamentally different than that of the production of *Apocalypse Now* (with an important exception of

In short, US cinema—with Hollywood as its major exponent—has yet to produce a corpus about the American Revolution that could be, in terms of sheer cultural impact, compared to Vietnam War films such as: *Hearts and Minds* (1974, Peter Davis), *Apocalypse Now*, *Platoon* (1986, Oliver Stone), *The Deer Hunter* (1978, Michael Cimino), *Casualties of War* (1989, Brian De Palma), *First Blood* (1982, Ted Kotcheff), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989, Oliver Stone), *Full Metal Jacket* (1987, Stanley Kubrick), *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987, Barry Levinson), *Hamburger Hill* (1987, John Irvin), *Da 5 Bloods* (2020, Spike Lee), and many others.

To conclude, the briefly sketched comparisons between the YRC and other international cinemas that came into existence during and/or addressed revolutionary phenomenon should contribute to one of the central aims of this dissertation: showing that revolutionary cinema and cinema about revolution is not just a tool of propaganda for the revolutionary regime, but an indispensable epistemological tool for studies of revolutions, socialist and non-socialist alike. If further comparative research of various global revolutionary cinemas maintains a critical distance towards both critics and apologists of revolution—as this dissertation aspires to do in the case of Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema—then we will get a step closer to the recognition and affirmation of the international significance of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle.

the Yugoslav war spectacles such as *The Battle of Neretva*): where Coppola employed material excess to suppress numerous US-American failures in the Vietnam War, Yugoslav culture used “other means” to overcome various material shortages and perceived deficiencies.

Close-Up: Research Questions and Chapter Breakdown

Socialist Yugoslavia? Again?!

Why should we care about the history of a country that ceased to exist more than 30 years ago? After an entire library's worth has been published about it, a significant part in English to boot?

What else could we possibly learn from all those Yugoslavs, Albanians, Aromanians, Bulgarians, Bunjevci, Croats, Czechs, Goranci, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Muslims, Roma, Romanians, Russians, Rusyns, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenians, Šokci, Turks, Ukrainians, and others that once lived together in 6 Yugoslav republics (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia), and 2 provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo & Metohija)?

Relative to the first part of the dissertation introduction which focused on the connection between the representation of war in the NOB films and representation of work in Yugoslav films on contemporary themes, the rest of this dissertation privileges the perspective and effects of the NOB films and film projects about the antecedents of the Yugoslav Revolution. But, this does not mean that the centrality of labor to Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema will be neglected. The NOB and revolution involved plenty of work, from sabotaging the enemies' infrastructure to nursing the wounded Partisans to finding, producing and preparing food to securing shelters for orphans and refugees, and so on and so forth. Likewise, in postwar Yugoslav society, and cinema as its key cultural component, work was arguably conceived as war *by other means*, from industrialization as war against underdevelopment, to electrification as war against literal and cultural darkness, to urbanization as war against rural backwardness and housing shortage, etc. Furthermore, as we will see, Yugoslavia's postwar self-managed factories and other enterprises

came to be organized as Partisan units *by other means* in the Cold War context in which the non-aligned Yugoslavia could never be quite certain that it would not be attacked, occupied, and dismembered again. Even the work of Yugoslav “film workers” developing Yugoslav cinema was often colored by discourses of struggle and conflict, internal and external alike.

There are, of course, other reasons to focus on the NOB/Partisan film in this dissertation. Proportionally speaking, of all European countries occupied by the Axis powers, Yugoslavia had the largest victorious resistance movement. The People’s Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, initially consisting of members, allies, and sympathizers of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, gradually gained a wide popular support, especially after being recognized and supported by the Allies at the Tehran Conference. The integrity of the movement better known as the Partisans, led by Josip Broz Tito, proved crucial in securing worldwide recognition and respect for postwar Yugoslavia, particularly in its pursuit of Cold War “third way” politics. In addition to resistance to the occupiers and socialist revolution, during WWII a particularly fierce civil war was fought between the Partisans on one side, and a wide range of (para)military nationalist forces on the other. Those counted amongst the latter sooner or later became Axis collaborators: the royalist Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini (JVuO, Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland, aka Chetniks), Serbian State Guard and United Militant Labor Organization (aka *Zbor*), the Croatian Home Guard (aka *domobrani*) and the “national revolutionaries” Ustašas, the Kosovar Albanian Balli and Vulnetari, and the 13th *Waffen* Mountain Division of the SS Handschar (1st Croatian), to name just the most notorious.³³

Unsurprisingly, socialist Yugoslavia developed a multifaceted war remembrance culture with the

³³ Mark Biondich’s *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* (2011) provides a broad geo-historical overview, including the regional history of WWII. For the Yugoslav-centered history of WWII, consult Tomasevich 2002.

declared goal of teaching younger Yugoslav generations the legacy of the WWII freedom fight and protecting the formative idea of *brotherhood and unity* of Yugoslav nations:

During the war and until the 1948 split with Stalin, brotherhood was generally understood to refer to the ‘fraternal struggle’ of the various nations of Yugoslavia to free themselves from fascist invaders and internal traitors. But this brotherly struggle was always seen as having been subsumed by an essential unity that derived, in theory, from the partisans’ shared belief in communist ideals and the fact that they worked under the umbrella of Tito’s party (even if ties had frequently been quite tenuous during the war). *The story of the war in this interpretation was, one might say, the postwar Yugoslav creation myth* (Wachtel 1998, 133, italics added).

As the most emblematic Yugoslav genre, the NOB/Partisan film was one of the central pillars of the country’s war remembrance culture: “Between 1947 and 1990, there were 890 feature length films, out of which 250 were on the theme of the National War of Liberation” (Munitić in Sudar 2013, 97). Virtually all central studios and smaller production units in all Yugoslav republics and provinces had produced an abundance of NOB films which, defying many preconceptions of socialist cinema, display a striking diversity of war representations—from war spectacles to generic hybrids to art films. Concurrent with their commemoration of WWII, the NOB films presented a platform for playing out the many tensions of postwar society, in particular the national issues reflected in the debate about “organic Yugoslavism” (the idea that nations in the federalist Yugoslavia should keep their right to nationhood and self-determination) and “integral Yugoslavism” (the idea that there should be a more or less unified Yugoslav supra-nation) (Ramet 2005).

Instead of the more common chapter-based dissertation format, this dissertation adopts a manuscript-based format and assembles a collection of relevant articles, book chapters, and conference presentations that I have published, submitted for publication, and prepared for submission since the beginning of my PhD studies. Mea culpa for any and all repetitions and reiterations that inevitably migrate from one chapter and section to another. For the most part,

repetitions and reiterations are due to the required concision of individual texts which, in turn, necessitates reminding the reader of the crucial contextual elements of the history of socialist Yugoslavia and its cinema. Given its manuscript-based format, the current dissertation does not aim to supply a comprehensive history of Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema. Rather, it seeks to answer a number of questions that extend over its chapters and sections, cross-pollinate one another, and appear in a more or less pronounced form throughout the text.

As mentioned in the foreword to the first sub-section of the introduction, this dissertation explores the intertwining of the history of post-war Yugoslavia, cinema as the central medium of its socialist modernization, and Revolution as a complex modality of the country's politics and aesthetics. The following set of research questions motivates my research:

- a) What was the role of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema in the country's identity-, nation-, and state-building? More specifically, in what ways did cinema contribute to or question the formation of (supra-)national identities in socialist Yugoslavia? How and for what purposes did Yugoslav filmmakers invoke or subvert the origins, manifestations, and consequences of revolutionary violence and Revolutionary transformation as part of identity formation?
- b) Bearing in mind that postwar Yugoslavia was a socialist state with a more or less market-driven economy, what role did its cinematic culture play in addressing the extraordinary achievements and multifarious contradictions of self-management as an integral component of its Revolution? What was the significance of various individual, group, and institutional players (including film critics, public intellectuals, politicians, government agencies, war veteran associations, film trade organizations, and moviegoers) in the articulation of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema, construction of the war and revolutionary remembrance, and reflection of the postwar socialist development and crises?

c) What was the trans-national impact of Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema in terms of its position on the global film festival circuit, agency in cultural diplomacy, and tendency towards multifaceted hybridization with international film cultures? Did it upset or reinforce Cold War cultural and political relations? And what was the import of the interaction between Yugoslav film and other media and arts such as television, music, and literature?

This dissertation consists of 3 chapters divided into 10 sections. Its central timeframe covers the period from 1945 to 1972, including important events and processes observed from a diachronic viewpoint, such as the introduction of self-management in the wake of the Tito-Stalin Split, the 1961 establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement (co-founded by Yugoslavia as its only European member state), the 1965 Yugoslav economic reform, the 1966 fall of Aleksandar Ranković as the proponent of centralized Yugoslavia, 1968 student protests, and the Croatian Spring (1967-1971). The mid-1960s, in particular, mark the beginning of intense debates and developments transforming socioeconomic and national relations within Yugoslavia, thus mirroring the growth of Yugoslav cinema and its increased international visibility as well as disputes over its supra-national character.

Chapter 1 examines examples of resistance to and adaptations of historical imperialisms as the foundational quality of Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema. The chapter concentrates on the 1950s and early 1960s as the period of intense development of Yugoslav socialism in general and Yugoslav cinema in particular. In the first three postwar years, Yugoslavia was widely considered as one of the most reliable and resolute member states of the socialist Eastern Bloc. In 1948, however, the long-brewing conflict between the Yugoslav leadership and Stalin came to a head due to Yugoslav independent revolutionary politics which refused to follow the political and economic diktat from Moscow, and did not hesitate to challenge the military primacy of its

former western Allies (e.g. over Yugoslav pretensions on the Italian city Trieste and Yugoslav involvement in the Greek Civil War). Although Yugoslavia attempted to smooth out its relations with the Soviet Union as the leading socialist state, Stalin decided to eject the country out of the Eastern Bloc, thus making an example of its recalcitrant communist government. Until Stalin's death in 1953, Yugoslavia had to dread a Soviet-led military invasion. This is why the Yugoslav leader turned to the west for much needed economic aid and diplomatic support amidst the intense international isolation.

The United States in particular became interested in propping up Yugoslavia as an independent socialist state to be followed by the Soviet "satellites" in the Eastern Bloc. However, this does not mean that Yugoslavia turned into a mere western or US satellite: for example, in 1957, Tito's regime formally recognized East Germany, much to the chagrin of West Germany and its allies.

In parallel, balancing between the Cold War capitalist and socialist camps and assisting global anticolonialist movements, from diplomatic support to military and cultural exports, the Yugoslav leader Tito formulated the agenda of international "peaceful co-existence" and, together with Jawaharlal Nehru (India) and Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), co-founded the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961: "Nasser, like other political leaders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, viewed Tito as an outstanding role model because the struggle against colonial rule was also part of Yugoslav history, as [Yugoslav people] had freed themselves from [the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman as well as the Axis powers'] imperial rule in an earlier era" (Calic 2019, 188). The NAM fought for "disarmament, the abolishment of nuclear weapons, decolonialization, and a more just New International Economic Order" (188).

The early 1950s saw Yugoslavia expressing its independence through the idea of self-management which, in contrast to Soviet statism, sought to develop a direct workers' democracy within their factories and enterprises and, gradually, in other segments of Yugoslav society. Although Yugoslav Communist elite and the growing managerial class continued to assert their authority and expertise in navigating the country through the Cold War, the working class was highly motivated to participate in Yugoslavia's rapid development and, when necessary, oppose the elites through strikes. Thanks to the broad social élan and successful Yugoslav maneuvering between and cooperation with the Cold War blocs and the non-aligned world, by the early 1960s, Yugoslavia transformed from an underdeveloped, predominantly agrarian, and war-torn country into an increasingly industrialized and urbanized state and, indeed, a veritable "economic miracle" studied throughout the globe. The overall standard of living of an average Yugoslav citizen rose exponentially, including access to free healthcare and education, leisure, and growing gender equality.

By the mid-1960s, in terms of internal national policy, the concept of "Yugoslav socialist patriotism" seemed to prevail and, instead of creating a Yugoslav supra-nation, strove towards developing and affirming all, including previously marginalized, Yugoslav nations (*narodi*) and nationalities (*narodnosti*).³⁴ The sense of unity of Yugoslav nations and nationalities, workers and peasants alike, was fostered and emphasized.

³⁴ "Magyars [that is, ethnic Hungarians], Albanians, and eight other groups were officially recognized as nationalities (*narodnosti*). Although they were also represented in the political bodies, they had a different status than the constituent peoples [nations] of Yugoslavia. The right to self-determination was argued to have already been fulfilled for the [Kosovar Albanians] through the existence of Albania and for the Magyars through Hungary. Therefore, they were not given their own republics and the right to secession. Minorities without national homelands, such as the Roma, Jews, and the Vlachs, were considered to be ethnic groups. They also enjoyed special protective rights. The optimistic expectation was that ethnic differences would disappear of their own accord as socialism progressed" (Calic 2019, 169).

Yet, there were certain pressure points in the Yugoslav success story, perhaps most visible in the country's traditionally Muslim population as an important element for Yugoslavia's standing among the Muslim countries in the NAM. On one hand, Bosnia-Herzegovina enjoyed a special status among Yugoslav republics insofar as it came to recognize the Muslim (today better known as Bosniak) nation as one of the constitutive nations of the republic. The process of the Muslim/Bosniak emancipation was accompanied by the modernizing and secularizing development of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a stronghold of the WWII Partisan resistance and a multinational encapsulation of Yugoslavia. On the other hand, until the mid-1960s, Kosovar Albanian calls for national autonomy within Serbia were met by police control under the aegis of the most powerful Serbian politician, Aleksandar Ranković. The perceived "backwardness" of Kosovo as a region was matched by depopulation of Yugoslav rural areas, in large part driven by the growing living standard and employment opportunities in the cities and towns.

In the first two decades of socialist Yugoslavia, especially until the rise of television in the early 1960s, cinema was the key new medium to register and reflect its progress. In addition to building a film theater network and diversifying production formats, Yugoslav cinema paid special attention to the NOB/Partisan film as its authentic genre, with films about industrialization and urban life eventually coming to the fore. In general, the 1950s have been viewed as the period during which Yugoslav filmmakers learned the film craft through practice as the first local film schools were established towards the end of the decade. Filmmakers from larger cultural centers, such as Belgrade and Zagreb, worked in and helped in building film production in smaller and less developed parts of Yugoslavia. The domination of Soviet cinema in early postwar Yugoslav movie theaters gave way to the popularity of Hollywood and

European productions. Utilizing its colorful locales, political independence, and relatively low production costs, Yugoslavia began to attract international co-productions.

In the dissertation Section 1, I survey the 16-year long efforts of the production company Bosna Film from Sarajevo to co-produce a film about the 1914 Sarajevo Assassination that triggered the Great War. From 1952 to 1968, Bosna Film negotiated with various international partners—from Hollywood, Austria, West Germany, Italy, and other parts of Europe—in an attempt to make a film that would present the Young Bosnian assassins as opponents of the Austro-Hungarian imperialist and colonialist occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the antecedents of the socialist Yugoslav revolution. The objective of the section is to reconstruct the ways in which Bosna Film aimed to learn through trial and error how to overcome underdevelopment and reconcile its self-managed business model with socialist memory culture and state-building in the Cold War context. Section 2 interrogates how a Belgrade filmmaker Živorad Mitrović adapted the genre of Hollywood Westerns, as the expression of the white settler colonialism and a tool of the US-American cultural imperialism, in his Partisan Western *Captain Leši* (1960). Mitrović's film sought to integrate the Kosovar Albanian national minority into the essentially supra-national revolutionary Yugoslavism by condemning the Ottoman and, less directly, Serbian imperialisms in Kosovo. In contrast to Bosna Film's rejection of commercialization, Mitrović embraced Hollywood role models and West German co-production support to produce a popular, if culturally appropriating, movie about the Yugoslav revolution.

Chapter 2 considers the critique of Yugoslav revolutionary mythology in the cinematic output and cultural labor of the Belgrade auteurs of Yugoslav New Film that emerged in the second half of the 1960s, in parallel with Yugoslavia's shift towards market socialism and political decentralization and liberalization. Following the "economic miracle" period of

Yugoslav developmentalism, the early 1960s brought some of the first indicators of relative stagnation which, in turn, spurred a public debate about the future direction of Yugoslav socialism. The more developed northeast republics and provinces (Slovenia, Croatia, and Vojvodina), led by a younger generation of “liberal” Communist politicians and local managerial class, argued that their profit-driven economies had to be prioritized if Yugoslavia was to benefit from its inclusion into the world economy. By contrast, the less developed Yugoslav republics and provinces, led by the majority of the older revolutionary generation of Yugoslav politicians, maintained that the centralized federal apparatus should continue to re-distribute the revenue from the more developed regions and allocate investments into their economies: “By this point, both the rich and poor republics were constantly leveling accusations at each other. The former accused the latter of parasitism and mismanagement, and the latter the former of neglect and exploitation” (Calic 2019, 216).

The elites of the more developed parts of Yugoslavia ultimately prevailed in the 1965 economic reform when the federal government “removed state controls on production, prices, and wages and ended state investments and subsidies. From now on, the Yugoslav system was to function according to the laws of capitalism,” or, as it came to be known, “market socialism” (Calic 2019, 214). The following year, in 1966, the push for liberalization affected Yugoslav politics as well. The aforementioned Aleksandar Ranković was forced to resign over accusations of illegal surveillance of Yugoslav politicians, including Tito himself. As the main proponent of centralized Yugoslav government, Ranković was the last obstacle to greater independence and particularism of the liberal Communist elites within individual Yugoslav republics and regions.

The 1965 economic reform turned out to be an unsuccessful experiment that produced inflation, growing social inequalities, and staggering unemployment. The latter problem was

mitigated by allowing the unemployed Yugoslav workers to look for work abroad, mostly in Western Europe, but it was generally perceived as the failure of the Communist regime's policies. Domestic problems overshadowed the golden age of postwar Yugoslav diplomacy as reflected in its continued pivotal role in the NAM and successful balancing between the Cold War blocs. Yugoslavia supported the Algerian Revolution and sided with the Soviet Union in supporting the Arabs in the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War, but condemned the Soviet-led crushing of the Prague Spring as a social movement that followed the Yugoslav liberal Communist model.

In addition to market socialism, the post-1965 period corresponded with the ascension of the Yugoslav New Film, an art/auteurist cinematic variation of the contemporaneous *new wave* movements spreading from France to Eastern Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary) to Japan. Fighting for an opportunity to switch from amateur to professional filmmaking, prominent representatives of the Yugoslav New Film, such as Belgrade auteurs Živojin Pavlović and Dušan Makavejev, tactically reproached the aesthetics of the older generation of Yugoslav filmmakers as “false,” “propagandistic,” and, what is particularly ironic, “dilettantish.” Concurrently, Yugoslav New Film ironically commented on the work of their youthful idols—the Soviet film avant-garde—and, most importantly, criticized the Yugoslav revolutionary elite for their historical legacy of violence, postwar privileges, and putative betrayal of socialist ideals. In this regard, Yugoslav New Film tended to align with the principles of the younger, and more liberal, political and managerial classes, though these classes could come under the filmmakers' scrutiny as well. Generally speaking, the representatives of Yugoslav New Film worked from within the cultural establishment and aimed at improving the country's revolutionary socialism through various forms of “social critique.”

“Social critique” was the buzzword of the cultural and social trends in late 1960s Yugoslavia, reaching their apex in the week-long 1968 student protests in Belgrade and other parts of Yugoslavia. Part of the global 1968 revolutionary movements, the Belgrade student protests urged the Communist regime to alleviate the consequences of the 1965 economic reform and restore a more egalitarian social program. In a clever tactical maneuver, Yugoslav leader Tito used his charisma and admitted that students were right in criticizing the misguided measures of his regime. Tito thus bought enough time to respond to mounting internal and external pressures, resolve the most salient economic problems, and neutralize the political and intellectual opposition, including Yugoslav New Film, in the early 1970s.

In a nutshell, Tito’s regime welcomed and tolerated liberal tendencies in post-1965 Yugoslavia as a form of domestic and international promotion of the country’s innovative socialism as more humanistic than its Soviet counterpart. To this end, the regime established international cultural festivals and programs in Yugoslavia and applauded the awards bestowed to critical and polemical Yugoslav films on the international festival circuit. The latter phenomenon epitomized the period: international festivals, primarily in the west, embraced Yugoslav films as a signal of greater liberty in a socialist country; the Yugoslav regime benefited from the international perception of its benevolence towards social critique; and Yugoslav auteurs essentially used international festivals as a platform for placing their product, thereby emulating the post-1965 Yugoslav economy’s attempt to entrench itself on the global stage. However, as soon as the ethos of social critique undermined the authority of the Communist government, Tito’s regime made a conservative turn and quashed dissent, albeit less violently than in the early postwar years.

In Section 3, I scrutinize Živojin Pavlović's feature *Zaseda/The Ambush* (1969) in relation to his engagement in the 1968 Belgrade student protest as a "failed" revolution. Pavlović's exposure of the lust for power within the Communist bureaucracy and the Yugoslav revolutionary terror during and after WWII are juxtaposed to his admiration for and prejudice against peasants as a revolutionary force. While Pavlović and his producer Dušan Perković used the accolades won at the international film festivals to legitimate their provocative productions, my analysis shows that Pavlović remained attached to Yugoslav revolutionary idealism despite his subjection to censorship and persecution.

After Pavlović's rejection of Sergey Eisenstein's revolutionary aesthetics in *The Ambush*, Section 4 compares how Pavlović's peer, Dušan Makavejev, learned from Eisenstein and, even more so, Dziga Vertov how to turn the shortage of film stock into the fundamental tenet of his collage cinema. My study shows that the archival impulse helped Vertov to cut down budgetary expenditures and integrate film stock into the plethora of material resources that were part of the construction of the Soviet revolutionary utopia. Makavejev, in turn, borrowed profusely from the global film historical archive to master budgetary limitations, transform the film viewer into the ultimate editor, and playfully challenge the growing contradictions of the Yugoslav Revolution. The chapter ends with Section 5 about the history of the Belgrade International Film Festival FEST, which was established in 1971 with the goal of resuscitating moviegoing in the Yugoslav capital and promote the non-aligned country as a meeting point between the Cold War blocs. I spotlight the contribution of Yugoslav New Film, including Makavejev and Pavlović, to advancing revolutionary ideas and political provocations at the first FEST, to be followed by the festival's progressive decline after Tito's death.

Chapter 3 deals with the same period as Chapter 2, the late 1960s and early 1970s, but instead of filmmakers from Belgrade and Serbia, it focuses on a filmmaker from Croatia, the second largest Yugoslav republic. In the post-1965 wave of decentralization and liberalization of Yugoslavia, Croatia had the most pronouncedly liberal Communist leadership. Economically, they wanted to stop the re-distribution of parts of Croatian income into other parts of Yugoslavia and, instead, invest it into the Croatian economy; politically, they wanted more autonomy from the federal decision-making in Belgrade; culturally, they wanted to promote Croatian national identity and, in particular, relieve postwar Croatia of the atrocious legacy of the Ustaša regime that governed the Independent State of Croatia during WWII. Crucially, although Croatian liberal Communists espoused a civic nationalism that sought to integrate Serbs as the largest national minority in Croatia, they also tended to join forces with various Croatian nationalists. This alliance led to the liberal-nationalist period known as the Croatian Spring (1967-1971). Whereas the Croatian liberal Communists never repudiated socialism as the dominant political model, at the peak of the Croatian Spring there were numerous signs of rejection of the Yugoslav Revolution as a hegemonic historical project that thwarted Croatian national ambitions.

The Croatian Spring had significant implications for the international positioning of Yugoslavia as a whole. After the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 to suppress the Prague Spring, which was led by local liberal Communists and inspired by independent socialisms in Yugoslavia and Romania, the hard-line Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev often suggested that liberal trends, including the Croatian Spring, put socialism in Yugoslavia in danger. Such comments put Tito's regime on the years-long alert for a Soviet-led invasion, thereby repeating the Yugoslav experience in the wake of the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split. Just like 20

years prior, Tito relied on the support of the US-UK coalition to deter the Soviet military intervention.

In the interest of the “Free World,” the US and UK generally encouraged all forms of liberalism, including liberal nationalism, in socialist Yugoslavia. However, the Anglo-American coalition ultimately backed away from further liberalization and potential destabilization of Tito’s regime because Yugoslavia was an indispensable neutral zone in the Cold War. The UK’s stance vis-à-vis socialist Yugoslavia was particularly fraught ever since the Conservative British Prime Minister Winston Churchill pragmatically supported the Partisans as the most reliable resistance movement in the occupied Yugoslavia and thus paved the way for Tito’s rise to power. Subsequent decades saw Great Britain underpinning Tito as a counterweight to Soviet domination, while turning a blind eye to Yugoslavia’s anticolonialism. The British principled support of the liberal-nationalist tenets of the Croatian Spring came with its own share of ambiguity as it coincided with the onset of the etho-nationalist violence of the Troubles.

Tito’s aforementioned conservative turn and his quashing of political and intellectual opposition in the early 1970s included the ousting of the Croatian liberal Communists, followed by the same treatment of their peers in other Yugoslav republics. However, the defeat of the liberal Communists did not bring a defeat of their political ideas as they were essentially incorporated into the new Yugoslav constitution, adopted in 1974. The constitution practically confederalized Yugoslavia by assigning state-like prerogatives to its republics and provinces. While it was not the main cause of Yugoslavia’s implosion in the early 1990s, the constitution definitely served as the Pandora’s box of its centrifugal nationalisms in the 1980s. To counteract the negative repercussions of market socialism, the 1974 constitution introduced a more bureaucratic state-wide economic model, but the series of international economic turmoils,

compounded by Yugoslavia's stagnating economy and debt crisis, pushed the country towards its self-disintegrating trajectory after Tito's death.

The third and final chapter of this dissertation revolves around the (post-)socialist Croatian filmmaker, cultural diplomat, and nationalist politician Antun Vrdoljak and his active participation in the Croatian Spring. First, in Section 6, I dissect the late 1960s critical debates about the nature of Yugoslav cinema, starting from the 1968 polemic between film critics Ranko Munitić, who argued that the country's cinema was a more or less coherent supra-national cinema, and Slobodan Novaković who argued that Yugoslav cinema was a collection of national/republican (that is, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian-Herzegovinian, etc.) cinemas. Re-assessing the Munitić-Novaković polemic against the backdrop of flourishing nationalisms and rising economic inequalities caused by market socialism, I point out that certain Yugoslav critics conceptualized Yugoslav cinema as an extra-national, i.e. revolutionary and socialist, cinema. I close the section by discussing the 1969 debate between Yugoslav cineastes and the Italian Marxist film scholar Guido Aristarco in which the former spoke about Yugoslav cinema as "post-revolutionary."

Section 7 zeroes in on the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange co-organized by Vrdoljak as an advocate of Croatian national cinema and Ken Wlaschin, a US-expatriate-turned-UK-film-curator and long-term program director of the London Film Festival and National Film Theatre. On the one hand, I investigate how Wlaschin employed Croatian cinema to advocate for the creation of differentiated national cinemas within Great Britain (that is, English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish cinemas) as an economically rational response to the subordination of British cinema to Hollywood productions. On the other hand, I posit that the inferiority complex surrounding Vrdoljak's focus on theatrical film as the nucleus of Croatian cinema could have

been productively problematized if the said nucleus was instead located in the Croatian non-theatrical short animation and useful cinema, both relatively superior to their British counterparts. This, of course, would have had other profound implications for the conceptualization of Croatian national cinema, seeing as Croatian animation, unlike Vrdoljak, promoted and celebrated Yugoslav revolutionary socialism.

Section 8, a revised conference presentation titled “Peasants, Vampires, and Partisans: British Cultural and Political Racialization of the Balkans and Yugoslavia,” complements the picture of British imperialism as painted in Section 7 and outlines the importance of Winston Churchill’s pragmatic backing of Yugoslav Partisans as the most useful resistance movement in the WWII Balkans. Another conference presentation, Section 9, examines the contradictory formulation of Croatian national cinema in the English-language *Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970*, published by the the Association of Film Workers of Croatia for the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, and compares it to the topical writings about Croatian national cinema in the post-socialist era.

Finally, Section 10 elaborates on Vrdoljak’s films *Kad čuješ zvona/When You Hear the Bells* (1969) and *U gori raste zelen bor/The Pine Tree in the Mountain* (1971) as his contestation of Yugoslav revolutionary mythology. Drawing on the political sustenance of two revolutionaries and military generals turned Croatian nationalist dissidents, Ivan Šibl and Franjo Tuđman, Vrdoljak made films about WWII as a bloody civil war which failed to bring about the promised revolutionary utopia to Serb and Croat peasants. Reflecting on the international success of *When You Hear the Bells* and the intricate depiction of intercommunal rural violence in Vrdoljak’s films, the section considers the filmmaker’s nationalist views as mobilizing his

promotion of Croatian national cinema and, a few decades later, Croatian nation-state independence.

This dissertation introduction is strategically designed as a scaffolding. As such, when removed after reading, it should ideally open additional vistas on the complex building called Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema. Therefore my ambition in the remainder of the introduction is not to detail each and every segment of the subsequent chapters and sections. To illustrate my point, if the chapters mostly focus on the relationship between Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema on the one side and the cinemas of the United States of America, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland on the other, the remainder of the introduction foregrounds various aspects of Yugoslavia's relations with the west in general and the US in particular as, arguably, the most prominent *differentia specifica* of Yugoslav socialism and its cinema. While I will specifically expand on the Yugoslav-British context in Chapter 3, throughout the entire dissertation I bring out relevant points of connection between socialist Yugoslavia and Soviet Union and their cinematic cultures.³⁵ In terms of the internal context of Yugoslav culture and politics, the rest of the introduction narrows in on the material and intellectual role played by the most developed Yugoslav republic, Slovenia, in order to amplify my chapters and sections about the film culture in and across Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia (including Kosovo & Metohija as Serbia's increasingly autonomous province in the socialist period). In order to continue to flesh out the complexity of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema, the introduction makes use of political economy, studies of nationalism, political and cultural histories, and history of ideas as helpful and salient tools for unpacking the

³⁵ In so doing, I do not mean to exhaust all links between the first and second socialist revolutionary societies.

rest of the dissertation. In addition, I draw on studies of ethnicity, race, and gender to shed light on the blind spots of my object of study.

Also, there are a number of other statements, events and processes that affected and molded, in one way or another, this dissertation since the beginning of its assemblance. I will list some here in no particular order.

More than ever after the end of the Cold War, words like *socialism* and *revolution* have again become part of the mainstream Anglophone political discourse and imaginary, in large part due to the popular movements around Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn and the realization of many US millennials that, most likely, they will have lived shorter and more precarious lives than, say, their baby boomer compatriots.

On August 11-12, 2017, the Unite the Right rally took place in Charlottesville, Virginia. The rally gathered the neo-fascists, neo-Nazis, neo-Confederates, Klansmen, white nationalists, alt-right, and far-right militias. An American of likely Croatian descent, Peter Cvjetanovic, has become the viral poster boy of the rally's tiki torch march (Simon 2017). The rally was met by a counter-protest in opposition to the Unite the Right's overt white supremacist ideology. US President Donald Trump stated that there were "very fine people on both sides."

In early 2023, the flags of socialist Yugoslavia were seen waving at mass antifascist rallies in Florence, Italy, mere months after the leader of the right-wing Brothers of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, became the first female prime minister in Italian history.³⁶

36

www.reddit.com/r/RevolutionaryUnity/comments/118f2hu/massive_antifascist_demonstration_in_florence/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf;
www.reddit.com/r/RevolutionaryUnity/comments/118wozg/firenzi_antifascisti_massive_antifascist/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf.

On March 15, 2019, a white supremacist terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, took 51 lives and left 40 people injured. The shooter, Brenton Harrison Tarrant from Australia, described himself in his manifesto as an ethno-nationalist, an eco-fascist, and a “kebab removalist” in an inciting reference to the genocide of Bosnian Muslims during the Bosnian War (Coalson 2019). Tarrant also cited Anders Behring Breivik, the Norwegian far-right terrorist who killed 77 people in two attacks in 2011. In his own manifesto, Breivik attacked the “cultural Marxism” of the Frankfurt School, while supporting the Scorpions, a criminal Serbian paramilitary unit active in the Yugoslav Wars, and referencing Srđa Trifković, a Serb American intellectual, politician, and foreign affairs editor of the paleoconservative magazine *Chronicles*.

In 2021, Elke Kahr, a politician of the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ), was elected mayor of the second-largest Austrian city, Graz. Much like the Austrian capital, Vienna, Graz has a significant portion of ex-Yugoslav citizens and labor migrants.

The events of the January 6 United States Capitol attack showed that the possibility of revolution- and civil war-adjacent mass violence in the US should not be entirely discarded in the years to come.

In February 2022, while I was teaching an undergraduate course titled Aspects of National Cinemas: Contemporary Russian Cinema at Concordia University, Vladimir Putin used “de-Nazification” as a justification for further Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, he insisted that Ukraine was a creation of the Bolshevik revolution and its leader Vladimir Lenin.

In brief, this is a temporal context in which, I feel and think, we should revisit Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema to see what exactly in its historical entanglement of socialist revolution, mass wartime violence and speedy postwar development, (supra- and extra-)nationalism, anti-

imperialism and anticolonialism, as well as antifascism and racialization, could arouse our interest and/or concern today.

Panorama: Yugoslav Supra-National Cinema

My research aims at responding to and, indeed, updating one of the most influential works in contemporary humanities and social sciences, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006 [1983]), precisely because its lasting significance lies in studying the phenomenon of modern nations through history of revolutions and media, two notions central to this dissertation. Famously, Anderson starts his book by asking why states with pronouncedly Marxist governments, such as China, Vietnam, and Cambodia, waged wars against each other along national lines. These wars presented a conundrum given that Marxism, in its many shapes and forms, purported to privilege the revolutionary interests of working people over nationalism. In 1983, Anderson asked with a good deal of (unitended) historical foreshadowing that would explode in the Balkans not even a decade after the publication of his book: "Who can be confident that Yugoslavia and Albania will not one day come to blows?" (2). If he only knew that Yugoslavia had a much more powerful enemy in its own, domestic nationalisms than in Hoxhaist Albania.

Anderson argues that nationhood started emerging as a consequence of, and following from, the French and Spanish-American Revolutions, accompanied by the Industrial Revolution. He associates the birth of modern nations to three interrelated factors: decline of the divinely-ordained legitimacy of monarchical dynasties; spread of mass vernacular literacy; and the emergence of print capitalism. Whether concerned with the monarch's body and figure, written vernacular, or printed media, all three factors are fundamentally mediatic in nature. To be sure,

Anderson (2006, 54) acknowledges the “much underestimated and understudied” import of non-printed media, such as radio, for national movements in the Vietnamese and Indonesian revolutions. Anderson, however, was more attracted to printed media because of his backward-looking perspective interested in the past origins of nations and nationalism, concomitantly privileging the cognitive framework of capitalist modernity.

But, what happens if we turn to a more recent past and adopt a more future-oriented perspective of the progress-driven socialist societies to expand our understanding of the intertwinement of nationhood and media? This dissertation argues that we need to shift away from the bourgeois revolutions in the 18th and 19th centuries and re-consider the epistemological threshold provided by the first effective socialist revolutions, the 1917 October revolution and the Yugoslav revolution. First, these socialist revolutions resulted in the creation of Soviet and Yugoslav *supra-national cultural identities*, soon to be addressed in greater detail. Second, although geo-historical predecessors of the Soviet Union and socialist Yugoslavia—the Russian Empire and the interwar Yugoslav kingdom respectively—had had a considerable print culture, in both of these monarchies it had been largely inaccessible to huge swaths of their populations.³⁷ Both Soviet and socialist Yugoslav governments saw an opportunity to employ cinema as a new medium of their revolutionary projects, a medium that they could use to address their citizens while simultaneously conducting mass literacy campaigns. Therefore, in the Soviet and socialist Yugoslav cases, instead of Andersonian print capitalism, we need to talk about what I call *audiovisual socialism*.³⁸

³⁷ Mentioning “a long tradition of producing graphic novels in socialist Yugoslavia for didactic and educational purposes,” Piškur and Balmazović (2023, 174) note that “in 1948 the rate of illiteracy among the Yugoslav population aged ten and over was 35 per cent.”

³⁸ Anne Norton (1993, 9) suggests that the “Declaration [of Independence] spoke the [American] nation into being.” I argue by analogy that cinema shot into being Soviet and socialist Yugoslav supra-national cultures.

Additionally, as Veljko Vujačić argues in his book *Nationalism, Myth, and the State in Russia and Serbia: Antecedents of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia* (2015), the “Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were the only two countries that fully implemented the system of ethnoterritorial federalism” (10). Both socialist states sought to limit the hegemonic impulses of their largest nations, Russians and Serbs respectively, and promote the cultural, educational, and linguistic autonomies of smaller nations and ethnicities. Soviet and Yugoslav policies of economic redistribution and investment into the less developed ethnoterritorial units within their federal systems resulted in the greater upward social mobility of ethnic middle classes. While both Soviet and Yugoslav political elites guaranteed the right to national self-determination, neither expected that this right would contribute to the dissolution of the first socialist states.

There were important differences between Soviet and Yugoslav federalisms though. One of the Yugoslav republics, Bosnia-Herzegovina, had no titular nationality. Instead, over time, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims were recognized as the three constitutive nations of the republic, with the aim of inhibiting Serbian and Croatian nationalist pretensions on Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory. Unlike the Soviet Union, “where union republics were legal carriers of the right to self-determination, the Yugoslav constitution left unanswered the question of whether that right pertained to republics or ‘nations/peoples’” (Vujačić 2015, 13). The third distinction was related to “personal nationality:” “In the Soviet Union, the internal passport system turned ethnicity into an ascriptive trait on the individual level, thus serving as a basis for implementing preferential treatment in education and cadre selection. By contrast, in Yugoslavia personal nationality was self-declared on census forms and thus a matter of subjective choice” (13). Last, but not least,

In sharp contrast to the overlap between Soviet and Russian institutions in the USSR and the residual status of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (RSFSR) as the territory left over when national and autonomous republics had been carved out from union territory, Yugoslav communists extended federalism to Serbia ... to prevent Serbs from becoming a *Staatsvolk* on the Soviet-Russian pattern. The creation of

two autonomous provinces in Serbia, Vojvodina [with a significant Hungarian minority] and Kosovo [dominated by Kosovar Albanians], served the same purpose (Vujačić 2015, 14).

In other words, in contrast to the Soviet Union, where “Soviet Russia” had been conceived as the center and source of the revolutionary transformation of other Soviet republics, in postwar Yugoslavia Serbia was treated as yet another *federalized* unit. Although Serbs had been the most dominant nation in the Partisan units across wartime Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina; in the postwar period, they were perceived by the Communist regime as a potentially hegemonic and disintegrative national factor. Concomitantly, for a long time the Serb cadres dominated the JNA and Yugoslav police structures. Serbs were given the status of a constituent nation within Croatia, while the same status was granted to Croats in Vojvodina. Yet, the fact remains that, except Serbia, no other Yugoslav republic had autonomous provinces with increasingly republican prerogatives, even if such a status could have been awarded to the regions with a specific historical identity, such as Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia (Vujačić 2015, 236).³⁹

Another point of reference for the long evolution of the nationality policy of Yugoslav Communists had been their main internal enemy: the interwar Yugoslav monarchy. Yugoslav Communists developed their concept of Yugoslavism in response to the processes in and state-building programs of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians (from 1918 to 1929), renamed into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941). Ruled by the Karađorđević dynasty from Serbia, the interwar Yugoslavia at first treated Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians as “‘tribes’

³⁹ Another distinction between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was in the official language policies. Whereas Russian became the medium of cultural Russification of the smaller Soviet republics, in Yugoslavia Serbo-Croatian (or Croato-Serbian) language aimed to unite Yugoslav people on a more dualistic linguistic platform. To be sure, I do not wish to extol Yugoslavia in this regard (see Section 3 for the Serbo-Croatian linguistic conflicts). Rather, it is important to note that in the Soviet Union there was no attempt to emulate the Yugoslav model and create, say, a Russo-Ukrainian (or Ukrainian-Russian) official language.

[*plemena*] of a single ‘trinominal nation’ [*troimeni narod*]” (Nielsen 2014, 27). Interwar advocates of “unitary Yugoslavism” argued that the South Slavs “constitute an ethnic whole” without being a single nation, whereas supporters of “integral Yugoslavism” held that a single Yugoslav nation was to be created by obliterating the distinctions between Yugoslav nations via national homogenization. Alternatively, proponents of “federalist Yugoslavism,” including Yugoslav Communists, acknowledged “the political and cultural particularity of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians” (17).⁴⁰ In postwar Yugoslavia, the Communist regime came to recognize the existence and distinctiveness of smaller Yugoslav nations (such as Montenegrins, Macedonians, Muslims) while generally suppressing excessive Croatian nationalism. Under the influence of the below mentioned chief Yugoslav ideologue, Edvard Kardelj, the Communist government eventually abandoned the idea of creating a single Yugoslav nation due to the already completed formation of numerous nations in socialist Yugoslavia (Jović 2009, 80). How did, then, all these national and supra-national ideas inform postwar Yugoslav cinema? Before answering that question, I will briefly chart the various ways in which cinema came to be adopted as the vehicle of socialist Yugoslav development.

Commenting on the “embeddedness of cinema in the [state-planned] *movement of industrial modernization*” in the early postwar Yugoslavia, Hrvoje Turković (2011) notes that “cinefication”—the building of a “technically equipped statewide film theater network”—was accompanied by the construction of production studios and diversification of production via the creation of companies specialized for: live-action feature films; short films (documentary and

⁴⁰ Importantly, as per Vujačić (2015, 222), the flexibility of the Communists’ interwar national program was on full display in its modifications “from the initial endorsement of a unitary Yugoslav nation (1919-21) to the recognition that Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians constituted three distinct nations (early 1920s); the open espousal of the ‘national liberation movements of oppressed nations’ (1926-35); a conditional reversal to Yugoslav patriotism during the Popular Front period (1935-39); and renewed attacks on ‘Western imperialism’ after the Stalin-Hitler Pact (1939-1941).”

live-action); educational and children's films; newsreels; animation, and so on (109-110). The newly established extended system of Narodna tehnika (People's Technique) spurred the development of children and adults' amateur cinema, alongside the auto-moto associations and societies for aeromodelling, amateur radio, amateur photography, gliding, kayaking, and the like, "with a growing number of regional [film] clubs and school chapters or, indeed, school [film] clubs" (110).

Socialist Yugoslav cinema sprung out of the rich wartime and revolutionary Partisan "counter-archive" that included and combined music, poetry, theatre performances, posters, photography, and cinema. In his extensive study of the counter-archive, Gal Kirn (2020) relies on Pavle Levi's concept of "cinema by other means" to tease out multimedia forms such as Partisan "film documents," "film cases," "sounds of resistance as the first film inscription," candid camera, film as a combination of photo exhibition and literary script as well as design and poetry, and "photo exhibitions with filmic effect." Kirn not only reconstructs the media contribution of numerous female Partisans united in the AFŽ (Antifašistički front žena, Women's Antifascist Front) but also shows that many Partisans (Žorž Skrigin and Radoš Novaković to name just a few) made their first filmmaking steps during WWII and then went on to become prominent filmmakers and cultural officials in postwar Yugoslavia.⁴¹

Another strong incentive for socialist Yugoslavia to adopt film as its central medium was that it could claim to be the cinematic "ground zero" of the region's cultural realm due to the modest and mostly documentary, if otherwise valuable, early cinematic output before WWI; interwar exhibition "colonized" by the European and Hollywood productions; and *film culture in*

⁴¹ See also studies of Yugoslav Partisan photography (Konjikušić 2022) and Partisan art and cultural politics (Habjan and Kirn 2016; Miletić and Radovanović 2017).

*the absence of film production*⁴² in the interwar Yugoslavia whose royal regime showed little interest in cinema in general. On ideological grounds, the postwar Yugoslav productivist ethos excluded films such as the first Croatian talkie *Lisinski* (1944, Oktavijan Miletić) and the first Serbian talkie *Nevinost bez zaštite/Innocence Unprotected* (1943, Dragoljub Aleksić), which were both produced during the occupation.

Socialist Yugoslavia advanced the significance of film in one of its most remarkable cultural events, the Festival jugoslovenskog filma (FJF, Festival of Yugoslav Film), which was held annually in the Croatian coastal town of Pula (hence often referred to as the Pula film festival). Established in 1954, the FJF vacillated throughout its history between screening all Yugoslav features completed between the two festival editions and selection-based programming. The festival benefited from the grandeur of its central venue, an open-air cinema in the Pula Arena (ancient Roman amphitheatre built between 27 BC and AD 68), as well as Pula's vibrant Adriatic setting that attracted numerous guests from the entire Yugoslavia and abroad. Pula was also close to Tito's summer residence on the Brijuni Islands, which meant that the Yugoslav leader, an avid movie buff in his own right, often attended the festival, or previewed the selection, and thus unofficially influenced the festival jury.

The FJF was one of the oldest film festivals in the world and—together with the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (founded in 1946) and the international Beogradski festival dokumentarnog i kratkometražnog filma (Belgrade Festival of Documentary and Short Film, established in 1960 as the FJF's offspring)—one of the few film festivals in the Eastern Bloc

⁴² I borrow this concept from Enrique Fibla Gutierrez's PhD dissertation (2019) about noncommercial film cultures in interwar Spain. In the interwar Yugoslav context, the concept covers the range from short films produced by Mihajlo Popović and Stevan Mišković (both active as postwar cinematographers and informal mentors to younger socialist Yugoslav filmmakers) to Boško Tokin's film criticism to avant-garde experiments with "cinema by other means" (Levi 2012).

until the early 1960s (Moine 2018, 34-35). In contrast to the older festivals (e.g. Venice, Cannes, and Edinburgh), which had been designed as *international* events, the FJF arguably became the first *supra-national* film festival in the world. This, however, does not mean that the festival imposed an artificially uniformed notion of Yugoslav supra-nation, or that it aimed at abolishing national cultures existing within the Yugoslav federation. On the contrary, the FJF supported the development of the republican film centers (located mostly in the capitals of Yugoslav republics, but also gradually including film production in smaller cities such as Novi Sad and Split). As Yugoslavia moved towards cultural decentralization/devolution, especially since the mid-1960s, a public debate had developed around the existence of national/republican cinemas within Yugoslav cinema (see Chapter 3), but the FJF nevertheless kept its Yugoslav designation. Moreover, the FJF contributed to the international perception of the cinema produced in Yugoslavia as *Yugoslav cinema*, rather than a collection of national/republican (e.g. Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian-Herzegovinian, etc) cinemas, the only notable exception being the international promotion of Croatian national cinema in the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, to be analyzed in Section 7.

More problematically, Yugoslav cinema has tended to be effaced and “dismembered” in the post-socialist period. In his critique of anti-Yugoslav and antisocialist revisionism, Nebojša Jovanović (2012) condemns the practice of “cinematic delimitation” according to which each post-Yugoslav state should appropriate a number of films produced in Yugoslavia for the new national canon. Jovanović concurs with Dina Iordanova that in the case of both Yugoslav and British cinemas, the nation signifies not ethnicity, but the state. He criticizes the “ethno-national dictum” tied to the paradigm that “postulates the socialist Yugoslavia as a totalitarian state in which a dogmatic and corrupt regime tyrannized its subjects” by setting up a gap between the

ruthless State and the subversive Artist: “[A]nything that Artist does could be acknowledged as politically subversive, while nothing that non-Artist does can suffice to be recognized as critical and relevant.” Jovanović likewise lambastes international scholars who deliberately exclude “subversive” Yugoslav filmmakers from what they perceive as propagandistic film movements. Jovanović does not exculpate the Yugoslav government from shelving problematic films or persecuting provocative directors, but points to the fact that many of the subversive filmmakers continued to work despite their oppositional views. This, in turn, means that Yugoslav cinema, like Yugoslav society at large, was more pluralistic and oftentimes driven by market considerations rather than ideological demands: “[t]he power was administered via a complex net of agencies and institutions, which neither necessarily shared the same goals nor interpreted the ideological principles in the same way.”⁴³ Jovanović’s emphasis on the envelopment of ideology and market considerations provides an ideal segue into the following discussion of Yugoslav self-management.

Low-Budget: Political Economy of Yugoslav Self-Management

The spirit of the official Yugoslav postwar doctrine, self-management (*samoupravljanje*), organically grew out of the Yugoslav resistance to Hitler and Stalin, first in the NOB and then throughout the fallout from the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split. The latter marked the first instance of “heresy” in the international Communist movement that, despite all efforts of the Yugoslav regime to account for its independent politics, eventually resulted in the “excommunication” of Yugoslavia from the Eastern Bloc due to “Yugoslavia’s involvement in the Greek Civil War, its federation project with Bulgaria and its influence in Albania, as well as ... the existence of the

⁴³ See also Tomislav Šakić’s arguments about the coherence of Yugoslav cinema in Section 6.

Yugoslav Army and civil bureaucracy of Yugoslavia, which had been created not by the emissaries from Moscow but by the Yugoslav Communists themselves during the [NOB] and were therefore considered unreliable by Moscow” (Jakovina and Previšić 2020, 8).

After Yugoslavia lost over 10% of its population and experienced practically apocalyptic material devastation in WWII, the well-trained and reinvigorated Communist-led NOP (Narodnooslobodilački pokret, People’s Liberation Movement) pursued its own small-scale “permanent revolution” by making territorial claims against practically all of Yugoslavia’s neighbors. Confronted with the fierce opposition of both the Soviets and the US-UK coalition, Yugoslavia had to abandon its “regional imperialism” (Dragišić 2020, 37) and switch to building its own “socialism in one country.” It should be noted that, while Yugoslav early Cold War foreign policy displayed certain imperialist features, it was very much based on the idea of building a broad socialist Balkan Federation—the idea having taken root among the Balkan leftists even before WWI—as the most effective bulwark against the imperialism of the “great powers.” After it was forced to jettison its wider regional ambitions, Yugoslavia had to prepare for a long and exhausting struggle to survive between the Cold War blocs, leaning more towards the west by signing the Balkan Pact with the two NATO members, Greece and Turkey, in 1953. The Tito-Stalin Split had far-reaching global repercussions, particularly for Mao Zedong who depended on Stalin’s aid in the final stage of the Chinese Communist Revolution. Constantly fending off accusations that he was the “Asian Tito,” Mao became increasingly frustrated with the Chinese dependence on the “big brother” in Moscow, ultimately following Tito and doing “what Stalin feared the most. He took China away from the Soviet Union” (Stopić and Yunxiao 2020, 248).

The complex process of Yugoslav reorientation towards self-management in the complicated Cold War landscape is captured in Susan L. Woodward's seminal history of Yugoslav political economy, *Socialist Unemployment* (1995). Woodward detects a tension between the necessity of the speedy postwar development of the Yugoslav economy on the one hand, and the exigency of financing the JNA as a guarantor of state security. Yugoslavia was thus seriously disadvantaged in comparison to predominantly social-democratic states such as Austria and Sweden that maintained military neutrality and thereby effectively wrote their military expenditures off, while carving up their niche in the global economy.

Woodward meticulously reconstructs how the postwar Yugoslav socio-economic order was torn between two organizational models that originated in the Partisan warfare of the NOB: the "liberal/Slovenian" and the "developmentalist/Foča" models. The two models mirrored considerable differences between Yugoslavia's more developed northwest and less developed southeast that existed in the pre-WWII and bled into the postwar periods. During WWII, the higher level of development in Slovenia allowed the local Liberation Front (consisting of Christian Socialists, Liberals, and Communists) to create a "self-government" on the liberated territory based on "regional economic self-sufficiency and thus autonomy in economic policy" (Woodward 1995, 58-59). Conversely, the Foča model represented "impoverished, supply-deficit, and heavily embattled regions, where the constant threat of starvation among the rising numbers of landless, poor, orphans, and refugees competed with the demands of an army for food, supplies, and sanctuary" (60), forcing local liberation committees to resort to austerity and often sensitive measures of redistribution.

Oscillating between the needs of its unevenly developed regions, Woodward argues, socialist Yugoslavia was constrained by the demands of the western states as its main economic

partners and had to constantly adjust to the Cold War dynamics. International governments and global economic institutions applied economic policies which developed sub-imperial relations *within* Yugoslavia, instead of turning the country into the Balkan sub-empire as contemplated by Yugoslav political elite in the early postwar period.⁴⁴ To briefly illustrate, by maintaining its status as the most developed republic in socialist Yugoslavia, Slovenia was able to achieve almost full employment: while on the one hand Slovenia fought against the brain drain into neighboring Austria, on the other it “imported” and exploited an Albanian workforce from the “underdeveloped” Kosovo, thus contributing to the Third-Worldization of the province.⁴⁵ After a significant rise of the Yugoslav gross domestic product from 1957 to 1961, when the country raced with Japan for the top global ranking in this category (Pantić 2021), the more developed republics such as Slovenia and Croatia started asking to retain their income (primarily, the foreign currency from exports and tourism) and prevent it from redistribution by the federal Yugoslav authorities for investment into the development of regions such as Kosovo. These initiatives eventually resulted in the abolition of the Federal Investment Fund in 1963 and the transfer of its jurisdictions to individual republican governments and, increasingly, their banking sectors.

Speaking from a more ideological perspective, self-management was introduced in 1950 to oppose Stalinist statism and aimed at realizing the Marxist-Leninist idea of the “withering state” via “debureaucratization through workers’ councils; decentralization of management,

⁴⁴ The concept of sub-empire has gained considerable traction not only in historical, but also in contemporary geo-economic analyses, especially in the case of the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). For example, see Bond et al. (2021). While sub-imperial positioning helps the BRICS to contest the economic superiority of the west, it also allows the exploitation of smaller and poorer states by the BRICS.

⁴⁵ In 1988, Slovenian GDP per capita was double Yugoslavia’s, but almost 8 times higher than the Kosovar GDP per capita (Pantić 2021).

politics, and culture; and democratization of all aspects of life” (Calic 2019, 179). Initially developed by one of the Party’s chief ideologues (soon-to-become the best known Yugoslav dissident), Milovan Đilas (from Montenegro), as well as the economic mastermind Boris Kidrič (from Slovenia), self-management went back to the workers’ councils from the early Soviet era in an attempt to forge a direct workers’ democracy.

After Kidrič’s premature death and Đilas’s fall from grace (to some extent prompted by the fruits of his intellectual cooperation with the Welsh Labour politician Aneurin Bevan), it was one of Tito’s closest collaborators, Edvard Kardelj, who took up the mantle of the ideological development of self-management, most notably with regards to the national question. As a political scientist Dejan Jović remarks in his sophisticated history of Kardelj’s political ideas and their (often unintended) consequences, *Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away* (2009), the Croat-Slovenian Tito and Slovenian Kardelj opposed the interwar integral Yugoslavism that strove to create a unified Yugoslav nation.

Both Tito and Kardelj saw integral Yugoslavism as an instrument of the Great Serbian bourgeoisie, centered around King Aleksandar I Karađorđević, that “exploited the working class as a bourgeoisie and concomitantly exploited the small Yugoslav nations for the sake of the Great Serbian ideology” (Jović 2009, 56). Well before the royal Yugoslav regime recognized the ethnic distinctiveness of Croats and Slovenians, the Tito-led KPJ established the Communist Party of Slovenia (in 1936) and the Communist Party of Croatia (1937), thus raising the banner of the “national-liberation movement” and creating Communist parties in the other Yugoslav republics after WWII.⁴⁶ During the war, in addition to national liberation, the multifarious

⁴⁶ Here lies another difference between the national policies of socialist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union: until the very end of the USSR, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, as the largest territorial and administrative entity of the Union, did not have its own Communist Party. While this fact certainly served to keep the lid on Russian nationalism, it also indicated the enmeshment of Russian

liberation program of the Communist-led Partisans entailed liberation from the foreign imperialism and capitalist exploitation, as well as from state violence. In the words of one of the most prominent Yugoslav economists, during the NOB “nobody considered dying for the state ownership and the Party monopoly [on power]. Actually, such an idea would be deemed grotesque by the participants in the revolution” (Horvat 1989, 9).

After Yugoslavia weathered the storm of the early Cold War and became—relatively speaking—one of the most developed socialist states by the early 1960s, Kardelj started arguing that Yugoslavia needed to further its national goals in the spirit of self-management. He posited that “Yugoslavia had helped [its nations] to reach the level at which they wanted to have their own nation-states, staying in Yugoslavia as long and only as long as it suited their common interests,” concluding later, in 1970, that these interests were “the common defense policy,” “the revolutionary transformation of the country,” and “a common market area” (Jović 2009, 62). This does not mean that Kardelj was a Slovenian separatist though, as he “referred to American policy toward Vietnam as a good example of what would happen to small independent states after the potential disintegration of Yugoslavia” (64). Nor was Kardelj a mere advocate for nation-states as such, because “republics and provinces [in Yugoslavia] were also ‘withering away,’ [so] their leaders often complained about too much ‘localism’ and ‘logic of self-sufficiency’” (80).

Kardelj gained more ground to implement his ideas after the momentous 1966 ousting of Aleksandar Ranković, the Vice President of Yugoslavia, its former interior minister, and the highest ranking SKJ official from the largest Yugoslav republic, Serbia. Favored by the Soviets

nationhood and the broader Soviet project, from the Soviet overpowering of Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Red Army invasion of Georgia to Stalin’s resort to Russian Orthodoxy as an affective tool in the Great Patriotic War.

as the potential successor to the aging Tito, Ranković was perceived as the proponent of a centralized and strong Yugoslav state apparatus. After Ranković's fall, Kardelj's policy of decentralization received support from both Tito, who wanted to resolve the national question once and for all, and a younger generation of liberal-minded Communist leaders within the Yugoslav republics. In 1969, Kardelj proclaimed that socialist Yugoslavia was "a self-managing community of working people, nations, and nationalities" (Jović 2009, 78), rather than just a federation or confederation. Moreover, socialist Yugoslavia was on the road to develop "a society without a state, classes, or parties" (73) and thereby finally overcome its main historical antagonists, the interwar Yugoslav monarchy and the statist Soviet Union. As "the idea of a Yugoslav nation was condemned as 'great-state, nationalistic, unrealistic, and profoundly harmful and reactionary,' people who wanted to declare themselves as ethnic Yugoslavs could in the 1971 census register only as 'undeclared/Yugoslavs,' not as a separate ethnic group" (79).

The process of the withering away of the state was to be supervised by the SKJ and unfold over the course of several generations, but it "was relentless. And it began with the revolution itself" (Jović 2009, 78). Kardelj's vision of Yugoslavia as "a self-managing community of working people, nations, and nationalities" thus circled back to the Yugoslav Partisan liberation struggle and its revolutionary self-management as the main source of ideological inspiration. With the eclipse of the revolutionary generation, however, Kardelj's ideas became open to multiple interpretations and manipulations: "when Yugoslavia collapsed in the late 1980s, all of its republics (with the possible exception of Slovenia) collapsed too: various regions and even municipalities went their own ways and rebelled just as the republics as a whole rebelled against the federation" (80).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See also Hilde Katrine Haug's *Creating Socialist Yugoslavia: Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question* (2012).

What was the economic foundation of self-management, initially envisioned by Kardelj's Slovenian peer Kidrič? As Rade Pantić writes in his essay "From Culture during 'Socialism' to Socialist Culture" (2018), in contrast to the capitalist "treat[ment of] the labour power as a production cost" that ought to be reduced, in Kidrič's planned economic model, "that part of the [relative surplus] value which has been alienated from the worker is fixed, increasing the labour productivity ... [and] the worker's income." In turn, "the tendency of workers to increase their own income to the detriment of the investments ... is channeled by the existence of a central plan and its investment funds" (207), such as the aforementioned Federal Investment Fund.

Pantić argues that the Yugoslav shift to a more capitalist "market socialism," especially after the pivotal 1965 economic reform, was a consequence of the class struggle between the *bureaucracy* (i.e. the political class) and *technocracy* "made up of non-productive workers, such as directors, managers, work supervisors, the marketing sector, etc." Particularly influential in the export-oriented western Yugoslav republics, the technocracy viewed economic policy "through the narrow lens of the interests of their own enterprise and advocated for the abolition of the portion of value which went to the central planning authorities, for a generalization of market relations and for the political decentralization of the state." Pantić adds that the "working class failed to make use of this conflict between two fractions of the ruling class to further strengthen their power," aligning for the most part with the technocrats and viewing the planning bureaucracy as "a parasite eating its way through a portion of their income" (2018, 207-208).⁴⁸ Drawing on Samir Amin's dependency theory and Catherine Samary's theorization of postwar Yugoslavia as a "post-capitalist" rather than just a socialist society, Pantić (2021) places the same onus on the capitalist tendencies of Yugoslav technocracy in his empirical investigation of

⁴⁸ For a more elaborate overview of Yugoslav self-management practices, see Musić 2011. For a comparative microhistory of two self-managed factories in socialist Serbia and Slovenia, see Musić 2021.

how socialist Yugoslavia strove to overcome the peripheral position of the interwar Yugoslav kingdom in the global economy and how the collapse of socialism resulted in the restoration of the peripheral status of the post-Yugoslav region. Likewise, Gal Kirn (2010) links the self-managerial ideas of Yugoslav technocracy to the beginning of the post-Fordist era and the rise of neo-liberalism.

Initially replicating the model of a self-sustaining wartime Partisan unit, individual self-managed enterprises became the nuclei of the military doctrine of *opštenarodna odbrana i društvena samozaštita* (all-people's defense and social self-protection), adopted in 1969 to prevent the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Yugoslavia after the 1968 crushing of the Prague Spring. The new doctrine "reintroduced universal conscription and obligatory military-training courses in high schools and universities. Firms and local governments ... were obliged to maintain stockpiles of necessities and weapons and to require persons employed in the public sector to undergo regular, active training in the reserves" (Woodward 1995, 276). However, after the 1965 reform effected growing inflation and economic instability, workers in self-managed enterprises were much less willing to adopt the Partisan war logic in their everyday work, opting instead for the protection of their workplace privileges and moratoriums on hiring new workforce.

This refusal to "recruit" new workers was, as Susan Woodward contends, a culmination of the very flexible approach to employment in postwar Yugoslavia, which alternated between allowing unemployed workers—mainly from the less developed rural areas—to migrate from one workplace to another, and, when economically necessary, offering more steady employment. In this regard, Yugoslavia differed from other socialist countries whose governments committed to full employment. To mitigate the post-1965 economic crisis, marked by the growing number

of workers' strikes,⁴⁹ the Yugoslav government allowed its unemployed workers to look for jobs in countries such as West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Sweden (as well as Canada and the US). Moreover, the Communist regime encouraged labor migrants' remittances as a boost to the Yugoslav living standard and focused on maintaining the migrants' attachment—at least emotional—to their socialist homeland. Nevertheless, the labor and brain drain had a profound impact on the Yugoslav public perception of the Partisan-cum-self-management project, strikingly captured at the end of the short documentary *Revolucija koja teče/The Ongoing Revolution* (1971, Jovan Jovanović) in a brief rant of an embittered former Partisan and participant of the Battle of Sutjeska:

In 1943, in the encirclement at Sutjeska, ... if somebody from a troop, a batallion, or a brigade, I mean, if a fighter said: "Yes, comrades, it's true that we're going to get out of this encirclement, defeat these Germans, drive them out of our country, come out on top as winners, and build a socialist self-managed society, but after 25 ... years, these ranks, these troops, these batallions will give people, or their sons and daughters, who will go to Germany or the western world to make a living," rest assured that that fighter would not get just a bullet in his forehead, but a fusillade.

Similarly critical and pessimistic projections of Yugoslav labor migrants, best known as "guest workers" (*gastarbajteri*), or the Yugoslav "seventh republic" as they were frequently called, were present in other films. To give just one example, the short documentary *Specijalni vlakovi/Special Trains* (1972, Krsto Papić) "focused on the journey of [Yugoslav] migrants who had signed up for work abroad at the employment offices, through their arrival in Munich," where "German power manifested in ways reminiscent of the Nazis, as illustrated in a humiliating scene where a German doctor issues verbal orders to a worker clad only in his underwear, to establish his fitness for employment" (Le Normand 2021, 70).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Workers' strikes and protests were represented in Yugoslav films even before 1965. See *Boom Town* (1961) and *Face to Face* (1963).

⁵⁰ For the West German perception of Yugoslav "guest workers" and other migrants, see Molnar 2018.

Accordingly, problems of rising unemployment and inequality in Yugoslavia were increasingly brought into relation with its economy's shift towards capitalism, a process officially denied by the country's bureaucracy that, due to its privileges, came to be labelled as the "red bourgeoisie." In the volume *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia: (Post)Socialism and Its Other*, its editors conceive of *cultural capitalism* in which "culture is seen as the determining location of heterogeneous, malleable capitalism in locally specific, yet transnationally reverberating ways" (Jelača et al. 2017, 8). The volume contains perceptive analyses of the "masochism" of postwar Yugoslav peasants who migrated to cities in search of work, but remained emotionally attached to their villages, as suggested by the lauded Yugoslav crime film *Ritam zločina/Rhythm of a Crime* (1981, Zoran Tadić) (Jukić 2017); and of gendered framings of the figures of male miners (celebrated for their labor feats, but socially marginalized) and female folk singers (judged for their alleged "loose morals," often left without state-sponsored access to healthcare and social care, and viewed with suspicion for raking in cash from their gigs) (Petrović and Hofman 2017). The most pertinent chapter of the volume for my dissertation is Gal Kirn's examination of the classic film on contemporary themes, *Kad budem mrtav i beo/When I am Dead and Gone* (1967), directed by the protagonist of the dissertation's Section 3, Živojin Pavlović.

Emphasizing that Yugoslav art, including cinema, started addressing the contradictions of the country's market socialism before its politicians and philosophers, Kirn (2017) notes that Pavlović's road movie about a provincial tone-deaf male singer Jimmy the Boat—with references to *À bout de souffle/Breathless* (1960, Jean-Luc Godard)—displays a spectrum of precarity, from labor and housing shortages, to informal and seasonal labor, to the "immaterial" labor of cultural managers and journalists, to settings such as hotel rooms, collective rooms for

seasonal workers, and bars (147-148). Pavlović's film targeted Yugoslav bureaucracy for their "cynical attitude" about the unemployment, "as it was supposed to be only 'short-term' and perceived as a 'voluntary choice'" (149). Kirn points out that Jimmy the Boat's seemingly senseless death at the hands of a corrupt manager actually came after Jimmy's rebellion and standing up "for himself and consequently for others" (154), thus anticipating the reflection of the 1968 student rebellion in Pavlović's critique of revolutionary mythology in *The Ambush*.

Rade Pantić, however, complicates the seemingly unproblematic stance of Yugoslav New Film's social critique by going back to the inauguration of Yugoslav socialist modernism in Miroslav Krleža's repudiation of Socialist Realism in 1952. Pantić (2018) argues that in Krleža's new formulation of artistic autonomy, the "problem of the emancipation of the working class and the building of socialist culture is replaced with the problem of the original cultural contribution the Yugoslav peoples can make to the development of a universal European culture ... [and integration] into the post-war Euro-American modernization narrative and politics of recognition" (211). As a result, "diverse political fractions" in the self-managed Yugoslavia harnessed "the cultural sphere to impose their hegemony, just as various groups of artists and cultural workers used them to denounce colleagues and to build their own careers," while nurturing "the illusion of the existence of a struggle for opinion and of a plurality of individual styles" and effectively "preventing an alliance between cultural workers and the working class" (214-215).

The auteurs of the Yugoslav New Film were thus more inclined to criticize the older, generally more pro-Soviet Yugoslav bureaucracy, rather than the pro-western technocracy. The auteurs' emergence on the post-1965 world festival circuit corresponded with the intensified efforts of liberal technocracy to anchor Yugoslav economy to international, preferably lucrative

western, markets. In fact, both producers and directors associated with the Yugoslav New Film followed the liberal economic logic by using international festivals to promote their provocative art films to both Cold War blocs and then sell these films to international distributors. This business strategy was in part dictated by the ascension of television in Yugoslavia as the medium that dwindled moviegoing, as well as typical auteurist condescension towards Yugoslav popular film as “kitsch.”

Yugoslav New Film auteurs’ preoccupation with the personal, sometimes even solipsist, perspective and selfhood fit well with Yugoslav cinema being the vanguard of self-management economics and the precarization of Yugoslav artists⁵¹ and filmmakers. Film director Jovan Živanović claims that it was Edvard Kardelj who allowed the establishment of smaller production companies in the early 1950s, after Živanović himself invoked a newly adopted law on small enterprises. The first accomplishments of the Serbian production company UFUS (co-founded by Živanović), such as the Austro-Yugoslav co-production *Die letzte brücke/Poslednji most/The Last Bridge* (1954, Helmut Käutner), paved the way for the opening of similar production units in other Yugoslav republics (Miloradović 2010, 90-91).

Yugoslavia thus paralleled the trajectory of Eastern European socialist states in which larger film studios led by dramaturgs gradually gave way to smaller project-based units run by producers and directors (for a comparison with modes of production in Poland, Czechoslovakia, GDR, and Hungary, see Szczepanik 2013). However, unlike their Eastern European colleagues, Yugoslav filmmakers had to grapple with the domination of international cinema, especially Hollywood, in domestic film theaters since the mid-1950s (occasionally, as in the case of Živorad Mitrović’s popular Partisan Westerns, Yugoslav filmmakers were able to learn from and

⁵¹ See Katja Praznik’s *Art Work: Invisible Labour and the Legacy of Yugoslav Socialism* (2021).

capitalize on their greater exposure to foreign film products). At the same time, the “above-the-line” filmmakers (directors, cinematographers, screenwriters) in Yugoslavia were turned into freelancers (Kirn 2017, 148-149) and were encouraged to work for multiple companies and in various parts of the federation, not to mention international co-productions. But, precisely because of their flexible and precarious status, rare were the examples of filmmakers who did not hold other jobs, usually in academia, media, and cultural and political institutions. While box office failures were not automatically treated as career-ending moments, a sink-or-swim mentality was developed whereby Yugoslav filmmakers were expected to look for various sources of financing (including, for example, municipalities, enterprises, and the army), and generally maintain a frugal and responsible approach to filmmaking. Notions of self-interest and personal accountability were part and parcel not only of self-management, but also of the wider gradual ascent of neo-liberalism that penetrated Yugoslavia through western influences on its politics, economy, and culture. The main source of neo-liberal tendencies in Yugoslavia was the United States of America, thus warranting a closer look at the role of the US in Yugoslav history.

American Shot: US Influence on Yugoslavia and Socialist Neo-liberalism

There would be no Yugoslavias without the decisive impact of the United States of America. This seemingly bombastic statement does not mean that I intend to contest the agency and primacy of Yugoslav people and nations in the creation and destruction of different iterations of Yugoslavia. Nor do I wish to minimize the influence of countries other than the US in this context.⁵² At the same time, however, this dissertation aims to show how various countries,

⁵² For instance, a recently published monograph (Balikić 2022) explores the role of French and British intellectuals, including historians Wickham Steed and Robert Seton-Watson, in the creation of First Yugoslavia.

especially empires such as the US, were heavily invested in the existence and nature of socialist Yugoslavia and consequently interacted with and shaped its history and culture.

Consider, for instance, the crucial influence of US President Woodrow Wilson on the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians at the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920). After illuminating the Western European racialization of Eastern Europe in his *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (1994), historian Larry Wolff details in his more recent book, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe* (2020), how President Wilson navigated the complicated process of the post-World War I constitution of new states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia that rose out of the ruins of German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires. Wilson was influenced by Mihajlo Pupin, “a Serbian American scientist who not only made important contributions to the technology of long-distance telephone communications but also advised the American peace delegation on Serbian matters [as intimately linked to the creation of interwar Yugoslavia], in this case contributing to the long-distance operations performed in Paris upon the map of Eastern Europe” (Wolff 2020, 144). Pupin was not the only Serb American scientist who hailed from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to make revolutionary advancements in the US, and by extension global, media and technology. The other scientist was less politically active than Pupin, but still aware of his roots: his name was Nikola Tesla. Both Pupin and Tesla came to the US as part of the massive late-19th century immigrant wave from Southeastern Europe (Brunnbauer 2016).

Woodrow Wilson’s preoccupation with the political future of Eastern Europe was tied to his concern that the mostly Slavic peoples of the region would be absorbed by the Soviet Bolsheviks if their national needs were not properly met. At the same time, we should take into account that Wilson’s paternalism towards (the not-quite-white) Eastern Europeans was racially

motivated.⁵³ This was understood by contemporaneous Eastern European political activists as well. For instance, Polish national leader Ignacy Jan Paderewski wrote to Wilson after the US entered WWI in October 1917: “You are the foster-father of the chiefless land” (Wolff 2020, 1). As the US President, Woodrow Wilson also marked his name in film history by making the racist spectacle *The Birth of a Nation* (1915, D. W. Griffith) the first film to be screened in the White House.

Wilson was not the last US president to show interest in the fate of the Yugoslav people. For example, after World War II, US aid prevented famine in the newly established socialist Yugoslavia as it worked hard to rise from the ashes of the wartime devastation. My father, born in 1944 in then still occupied Vojvodina, often recounted to me the amazement of his peasant parents when they received powdered milk and eggs from the US. My father’s family, like millions of other grateful Yugoslavs, referred to the aid as “[Harry] Truman’s eggs.”

The US empire should obviously not be idealized. After all, it sponsored socialist Yugoslavia as a not-quite-socialist state, one that was supposed to inspire the Eastern Bloc states to liberalize their economies and political systems and experiment with capitalism. Interestingly, the US support of Yugoslav Communists during WWII and until the Tito-Stalin split was not a foregone conclusion. For example, Twentieth Century Fox produced the feature *Chetniks! The Fighting Guerrillas* (1943, Louis King) which supported the conservative royalist JVuO (Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini, Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland), aka the Chetniks, as *the* resistance movement in the occupied Yugoslavia. Based on exploits of the Chetnik leader,

⁵³ Even so, Wilson’s recognition of political subjectivity of Eastern Europeans came as an improvement in comparison to one of his presidential predecessors, Theodore Roosevelt. In 1903, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to the US reported on his discussion of the Austro-Hungarian colonialist occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with President Roosevelt: “I think he wonders whether and how the methods that we applied in our occupied provinces could be useful in the Philippines” (Hajdarpasic 2015, 178).

General Dragoljub ‘Draža’ Mihailović, *Chetniks!* was pulled out of circulation after Mihailović was sentenced to death for war crimes and collaborationism and executed by the Yugoslav Communist government in 1946.

The US influence on Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin split was both fundamental and comprehensive, leading the historian Tvrtko Jakovina (2002) to label the Yugoslav brand of socialism as a “socialism [based] on the American wheat.” The US presence in Yugoslavia was especially palpable in the cultural sphere as the socialist state opened itself to all sorts of exchanges with and imports from the western superpower. The dissertation Section 2 draws on Radina Vučetić’s (2018) notion of “Coca-Cola socialism” in her study of the 1960s Americanization of Yugoslavia as a process involving the ever-growing popularity of US products ranging from jazz to jeans to Warhol to Hollywood Westerns.

In addition to Vučetić’s research, this dissertation benefits from Carla Konta’s book-length investigation of US public diplomacy in socialist Yugoslavia from 1950-1970 (2020). Focusing on the operations of the US government agencies such as the USIS (United States Information Service) in their Belgrade and Zagreb branches, Konta examines various examples of US soft power, including the effects of “Croatian cultural leaders” becoming “assiduous visitors of USIS from the 1950s onwards” (2020, 32). One of the biggest Americanophiles among Croatian cultural leaders was the film director Krsto Papić whom I reference as directly involved in the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange. Konta’s book, then, further elucidates the concerted effort of the US and the UK to mould the non-aligned Yugoslavia in accordance with their Cold War interests. In this respect, the US policy towards Yugoslavia was fashioned by one of the most prominent American diplomats and policymakers of the entire Cold War era: George F. Kennan.

A one-time US ambassador to the Soviet Union, Kennan developed a strategy of containment of the Soviet Union, arguing that the US must poke into the Soviet supremacy over the Eastern Bloc by stimulating and deepening divides between the Kremlin and recalcitrant socialist states such as Yugoslavia and China. In May 1961, Kennan was appointed by President John Kennedy as the US ambassador to Yugoslavia, where he stayed until July 1963. Both Yugoslav leader Tito and his generally pro-western minister of foreign affairs, Koča Popović, remained suspicious of Kennan's diplomatic agility which rested on a threefold objective:

to assist Yugoslav national independence; to 'exert an influence' over its 'present and future leadership' by pushing its institutions 'along more democratically representative and humanistic lines,' with increasing ties to the West; and to extract 'maximum benefit' from its significant role as 'a disturbing influence upon the political and ideological unity of the Soviet-dominated international Communist movement.' Indeed, Yugoslavia remained a model for the 1956 Budapest uprising and the 1968 Prague Spring (Konta 2020, 171).

Kennan's views of socialist Yugoslavia informed the international policy of one of the most consequential US Cold Warriors, Richard Nixon, who makes a cameo appearance in Chapter 3, devoted to the liberal nationalism of the Croatian Spring. In 1970, President Nixon paid an official visit to Tito in Belgrade to send the message that Yugoslavia had US support and that Washington would not allow a Soviet-led invasion of Yugoslavia. Nixon provided the same kind of diplomatic support to another Communist leader and Tito's friend who was also concerned about the Soviet-led aggression, the Romanian Nicolae Ceaușescu. To secure Yugoslavia's non-alignment, Nixon seemed more than happy to provide yet another tranche of loans for the struggling Yugoslav economy and tolerate Tito's occasional diplomatic cheekiness. The latter included the Yugoslav leader's lighting up a Cohiba cigar, a gift from Fidel Castro, in the Oval Office in late 1971, a month before Tito ended the Croatian Spring.

Communist leaders like Tito and Ceaușescu were particularly important to US foreign policy before Nixon's biggest diplomatic breakthrough, his 1972 visit to China, which provided

a geopolitical alternative for Mao's regime after the 1960s peak of the Sino-Soviet split and opened the door for the adoption and adaptation of neo-liberalism during Deng Xiaoping's "reform and opening" era. It is hardly a coincidence, then, that it was the 1971 Nixon Shock that, while aiming to stabilize the US economy at the time, arguably contributed to the blossoming of financialization and other pernicious aspects of contemporary neo-liberalism. In the global constellation that started to emerge during Nixon's presidency, neo-liberal tendencies in countries such as Yugoslavia and Romania, with a total population of less than 40 million people, took a back seat to the gradual introduction of neo-liberalism in socialist China. This became even more evident in the 1980s when, following Tito's death, Yugoslavia entered a turbulent decade of austerity and "stabilization" dictated by the Washington Consensus,⁵⁴ while Ceaușescu paralyzed the Romanian economy to pay off the country's external debt before being executed in 1989 for his dictatorial crimes. Bearing all this in mind, it is advisable to take a closer look at the cross-pollination between Yugoslav self-management, socialist neo-liberalism modeled by influences from the west in general and the US in particular, and a market-driven economy as particularly relevant for Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema.

According to the book *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*, written by the economic historian Johanna Bockman (2011, 4), "neoliberalism avidly supports all of the following:

1. competitive markets
2. smaller, authoritarian states
3. hierarchical firms, management, and owners
4. capitalism

⁵⁴ See Ana Podvršič's online lecture in English (2023).

Someone who supports only one of these elements, even competitive markets but not the others, is not necessarily neoliberal.” Building on the case studies of Yugoslav self-management and Hungarian “goulash communism,” Bockman maps out how socialist economists actively participated in the formulation and implementation of neo-liberal ideas and policies in a transnational expert dialogue underpinned by neoclassical economic theory, while Yugoslavia acted as a founding member of the World Bank.

Yugoslav and Hungarian entanglements with, and contributions to, the history of neo-liberalism are unsurprising, as Hungary and most of Yugoslavia (today’s Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina, coastal parts of Montenegro, and, from 1878, Bosnia & Herzegovina) had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, consequently, the same market of ideas. According to Quinn Slobodian’s cogent book *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*, it was the profound frustration with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (and other empires that vanished at the end of WWI) that led members of the Austrian School, including Ludwig von Mises and an Austrian soldier in WWI, Friedrich von Hayek, to develop neo-liberal theory in the US. Slobodian (2018) shows that, far from popular beliefs about their staunchly anti-statist orientation, the Austrian founding fathers of neo-liberalism sought to weaponize certain state prerogatives to foster “what they called the meta-economic or extra-economic conditions for safeguarding capitalism at the scale of the entire world” (2). In doing so, Austrian neo-liberals identified decolonization as the main enemy of their vision of globalism, so they fought for the “encasement [of global capital], not liberation [of the colonized people]” (5). Alongside von Mises and von Hayek we must add the Austrian-Japanese aristocrat, Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, as one of the main intellectual architects of what became the European

Union, to fully appreciate the upper-class elitist, neo-liberal, and neo-colonialist strain of the EU.⁵⁵

In addition to the shared history of neo-liberalism, there are, of course, other points of connection and tension between the Austro-Hungarian Empire, socialist Yugoslavia, and the European Union. Born in the Dual Monarchy, Josip Broz Tito fought for the Empire on the Serbian Front and the Eastern Front in WWI before getting captured and joining the October revolution. British historian A. J. P. Taylor called Tito “the last Habsburg” precisely because of his effort to resolve multinational frictions inherited from the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires and interwar Yugoslav kingdom, which led some scholars to argue that the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia was part of the broader historical “fall of empires” (Jović 2009, 30-31). Furthermore, interwar revolutionary ideas of leading Yugoslav Communists, most notably Kardelj’s, were less informed by the Comintern than by “the revisionism of the Austromarxists,” including “constitutional recognition of the nationality issue, the alliance with peasant and middle groups, and commitment to the smallholders’ right to land ownership” (Woodward 1995, 48-49). The above discussion of Kardelj’s post-statist ideas as a driving force of Yugoslav market socialism and 1960s liberalization provide a linchpin for a comparison, if asymmetric, with the role of the state and supra-national organizations in the “free market” ideology of the Austrian theorists of neo-liberalism.

Yet, as much as the Yugoslav ruling classes deserved criticism for allowing greater social inequalities to develop as a result of their shift towards market socialism, they were still

⁵⁵ A recently published lexicon, *Decoloniality in Eastern Europe* (Vilenica 2023), collects a host of critical concepts—from techno-imperialism in contemporary Romania to the peripheral selves in post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina as the EU protectorate—that bespeak the colonialist thrust of the EU and cognate neo-liberal projects, on top of intra-Eastern European racist and imperialist hierarchies.

considerably more committed to social justice and collective advancement, locally and globally, than the von Miseses, von Hayeks, and von Coudenhove-Kalergis of the world. Plus, lest we forget, Adolf Hitler was an Austrian who fought for the German Empire in WWI. His racist resentment against Yugoslavs in general and Serbs in particular exploded after the Yugoslav coup d'état on March 27, 1941, which forced Hitler to invade Yugoslavia and, importantly, postpone Operation Barbarossa. How obsessed Hitler was with the Yugoslav people and their history is aptly illustrated by the famous photograph showing the Nazi dictator in front of a birthday gift that he received from the German military after the invasion of Yugoslavia: a plaque that commemorated the spot from which Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and thus “heralded freedom” (Bazdulj 2013). The history of atrocities of the Third Reich in WWII has notably overshadowed and marginalized the genocidal thrust of the Austrian-led occupation of Serbia during WWI (for more about the latter, see Mitrović 2007).

Now, how did neo-liberal ideas bleed into the socialist Yugoslav economy and, more specifically, Yugoslav cinema? To answer this question, we should turn to the self-management of the production company Bosna Film as examined in the dissertation Section 1 and determine where it fits in with the broader postwar economic trends. In their valuable contribution to the Yugoslav business history, Ljubica Spaskovska and Anna Calori (2021) analyze the transnational reach of two major Yugoslav enterprises, Energoinvest from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Pelagonija from Macedonia, in the late socialist era. The authors' focus on two smaller Yugoslav republics helps explain the republics' motivation behind establishing conglomerates that learned from western economic know-how, while working in the non-aligned Global South and maintaining loyalty to revolutionary socialism. The example of Energoinvest is particularly instructive: it was founded in 1951 by the Bosnian Jewish engineer and entrepreneur Emerik Blum. Educated in

interwar Prague and Vienna, Blum joined the Partisan resistance after years-long imprisonment in the Croatian Ustašas-run concentration camps, including Jasenovac.

Blum insisted that ever since its foundation, Energoinvest “was able to remain competitive or economically viable because it looked beyond the small Yugoslav market” (Spaskovska and Calori 2021, 418). In 1968, Blum “decided to engage [one of the best known neo-liberal US consultancy firms] McKinsey in a large project aimed at the overhaul of the company’s internal structure. Energoinvest’s managers wanted to introduce business models that would allow them to be as competitive as other Western corporations.” Seeking to persuade Energoinvest’s general workers’ council, the company’s central self-managerial body including the rank and file, to hire “the costly McKinsey,” Blum argued that

social relationships in Yugoslavia may be different from those in other countries, but our enterprises must be organised like those in other developed societies. This is a matter of expertise. Since we do not have it, let us be frank, we must buy it, just as we buy licenses to make products patented elsewhere. What is more, we must buy the best. That we can do only in the U.S. ... Our motto must be the liquidation of amateurism (Spaskovska and Calori 2021, 419).

Blum’s developmentalism paralleled Yugoslavia’s initiatives in corresponding international organizations, including the Ljubljana-based International Centre for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries (Spaskovska and Calori 2021, 418). Because of his perceived overreliance on US expertise, Blum was accused by some Communist officials in Belgrade of “going capitalist” (420). Ultimately, Blum prevailed and his associate at McKinsey, “Croatian-born, newly appointed partner, and MIT graduate Charles Shaw,” carried out the ambitious project of dividing “41 daughter companies [of Energoinvest] into six groups according to branch, outputs, and functions” (419) which, in turn, increased the conglomerate’s efficiency and international competitiveness. After retiring from Energoinvest in the early 1980s, Blum served as the mayor of Sarajevo and played a leading role in the city’s organization of the

1984 Winter Olympics. In hindsight, this event was supposed to put Sarajevo (and, by extension, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia) on a rather short list of globally renowned cities and states. Winter Olympics, like other similar mass events, are notoriously expensive and demanding for their organizers, which means that they have been historically organized by affluent western countries, including westernized states such as Japan and South Korea, or powerful states such as Russia and China. It thus becomes clear that Blum's comprehensive entrepreneurial and political vision aimed at situating Sarajevo and Yugoslavia as part of the west.

Blum's business ideas are crucial for understanding how as early as the 1950s, as my dissertation Section 1 charts, the director of the Sarajevo production company Bosna Film, Salomon 'Moni' Finci, approached negotiations with international partners involved in the co-production projects about the 1914 Sarajevo Assassination. Similarly to Blum, albeit on a much smaller scale, Finci sought to learn from his more experienced international partners' know-how in order to improve Bosna Film's human resources and technical base. Likewise, Finci looked "beyond the small Yugoslav market" in an attempt to boost the growth of Bosna Film and benefit from the increasing number of international co-productions filmed in Yugoslavia.

Both Blum and Finci belonged to the surviving members of the Bosnian Jewish community decimated by the Holocaust. While their brand of developmentalism searched for the most advanced ways of growing the postwar Bosnian-Herzegovinian economy, Blum and Finci did not forget their attachment to the Yugoslav Revolution. A "fervent communist himself, Blum was an advocate of self-management as 'the most revolutionary change in the social relations amongst people'" (Spaskovska and Calori 2021, 421). After leaving Bosna Film in 1957, Finci became the director of the Museum of Revolution in Sarajevo, organizing museum exhibitions throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, and published about the revolutionary history, most notably

about the Battle of Sutjeska in which he took part.⁵⁶ Both Blum and Finci demonstrated the ability to engage with, and reconcile, the revolutionary ideology, debates with workers' councils and the upper echelons of the SKJ, and foreign partners. Additionally, Finci's 1950s management of Bosna Film reaffirms the image of Yugoslav cinema as the vanguard of socialist Yugoslav experimentation with, and application of, capitalist economy. After this sub-section touched on issues such as Woodrow Wilson's racialized perception of Yugoslav people and neo-liberal resistance to decolonization, it is a good moment to delve deeper into the socialist Yugoslav engagement with problems of race and racialization, both in terms of engagement with the emphatically anti-colonial projects such as the Non-Aligned Movement and perpetuation of elements of racial capitalism.

Jump Cut: Yugoslav Racialized Hierarchies and Anti-Colonialism

While the history of socialist Yugoslavia in general and its disintegration in particular is usually viewed through the prism of studies of nationalism, the more recent research on the Balkan history adopts the analytical lens of studies of race. In a provocatively titled article "Abolition of a National Paradigm," Dušan Bjelić (2022) persuasively criticizes Benedict Anderson and Maria Todorova's "raceless imaginaries" in their concepts of modern nations and balkanism by comparing racializing projects in the Latin American *mestizaje* and the interwar Yugoslav eugenics which "aimed at the ethno-racial *serbianization* of Slovenians and Croats" (257). Bjelić admonishes Anderson's gendered notion of "deep, horizontal comradeship" and "fraternity" as formative tenets of nationhood, asserting that by marginalizing and oppressing Roma, migrants, Muslims, and other minorities, "national paradigm, as an articulation of [the

⁵⁶ monifinci.com

homogenized ethno-racial *sameness*] and unity, systematically conceals ... that nations are racialized rather than imagined communities” (242). Reproaching Todorova’s integration of the Balkans into European racial sameness, Bjelić argues that “[i]n Anderson and Todorova’s register, the radical cut with feudalism eliminates racism from nationalism” (245). Bjelić instead advances Cedric J. Robinson’s emphasis on medieval racial wars as crucial for the constitution of the slave trade and capitalism, especially in the “Black Adriatic” dominated by the Ottoman, Venetian, and other empires.

Piro Rexhepi’s *White Enclosures: Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route* (2023) brings another radical intervention against the racist, sexist, and queerphobic discourses surrounding the Balkans. Focusing on various ways in which (Bosnian, Albanian, and Roma) Muslim identities have been either appropriated or marginalized and suppressed by Euro-American normativism, the author demonstrates how the film *Variola vera* (1982, Goran Marković) thematized the 1972 epidemic of small pox in Yugoslavia, the index case having been a Kosovar Albanian *hajji*, to expose the failure of Yugoslav revolutionary socialism to fully integrate Muslims in general and Kosovar Albanians in particular, associating these identities instead with terroristic and biological threats.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Rexhepi sheds light on the 1980s religious and decolonial dissident activism of the post-socialist Bosniak leader, Alija Izetbegović, and the poetess Melika Salihbegović (who wrote a letter to Ayatollah Khomeini expressing her desire to join the Iranian Revolution). Inspired by the famous revolutionary intellectual Frantz Fanon and Pan-Islamism, both Salihbegović and Izetbegović viewed “the Cold War developmental discourses and practices in both camps as continuations of colonial

⁵⁷ In her history of the 1972 epidemic, Radina Vučetić (2022) juxtaposes the epidemic-induced racialization of Kosovar Albanians to the robust response of the Yugoslav state that stopped the epidemic by vaccinating 18 million citizens of Yugoslavia.

projects that [they] believed required historical critique of what *human, civilization, and development* had come to mean in the modern world” (Rexhepi 2023, 50). Rexhepi’s research both complements and complicates my dissertation research, insofar as it reinforces my scrutiny of the Austro-Hungarian colonialist occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Section 1, illuminates the revolution’s paternalism towards Muslim peasants in Section 10, and brings to the fore the racialization of Kosovar Albanians through the Yugoslav adaptation of the white-centered Hollywood Westerns in Section 2.

Rexhepi’s study of the socialist Yugoslav prejudices towards its Muslim population suggests that the Yugoslav legacy in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) needs to be examined more critically. As international relations scholars Jelena Subotic and Srdjan Vucetic (2019) make abundantly clear on the basis of their extensive research, the concept of race “was not an important analytical or political category in Yugoslav communist thought and practice,” opting instead for dichotomies between “socialists and non-socialists, oppressed and non-oppressed, weak and strong” (727-728). The authors assert that Yugoslavia “performed” its solidarity with the Third World countries while reiterating its “leading” role and primacy within the NAM. Mentioning exceptional instances of Yugoslav genuine solidarity with the decolonizing world, Subotic and Vucetic nonetheless conclude: “Although it sided with countries like India, Egypt, and Ghana in challenging the world order politically and economically, the Yugoslav state, leaders, and citizens nevertheless participated in, and contributed to, the ideologies and practices of global white supremacy” and perpetuated the “familiar patterns of global white ignorance” (738).

Bearing in mind this sharp critique of the often “race-blind” Yugocentrism in the NAM, we should also acknowledge positive, if frequently complex and contradicting, traits of the

Yugoslav position within the movement. In his introduction to the volume *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement* (2023), Paul Stubbs writes about the Yugoslav “liminal hegemony” that co-formulated the NAM’s “support for decolonization and articulation of antiracism, alongside pressure for a new economic order, a world free of nuclear weapons, and a rejuvenated United Nations” (27-28) and provided, for instance, its Partisan struggle as a role model for the MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) (5). Along similar lines, in *The Darker Nations*, Vijay Prashad points to the kinship between the war-themed publications of the anticolonial leader Amilcar Cabral, supported by the NAM, and the already mentioned Yugoslav ideologue Edvard Kardelj. Writing about the struggle “for peaceful co-existence and for peace,” Cabral

made it clear that “to co-exist one must first of all exist, so the imperialists and the colonialists must be forced to retreat so that we can make a contribution to human civilization, based on the work, the dynamic personality and the culture of our peoples.” In his study of socialism and war, the major theorist of peaceful co-existence, Edvard Kardelj, made a distinction between the wars of the powerful and the wars of the weak. The former had to be condemned at all costs, while the latter could be defended in context (Prashad 2007, 103).

In the cultural realm, the Yugoslav contribution to the history of the NAM is most salient in what art historian Bojana Videkanić (2023a, 136) termed “non-aligned modernism,” involving “Yugoslav artistic heterogeneities under socialism—the cohabitation of multiple, and sometimes seemingly opposing artistic currents, its lively and varied artistic infrastructure made up of professional and ‘amateur’ institutions (galleries, schools, associations, exhibitions, etc.), and modes of artistic dissemination and presentation that rested on robust state support.” Non-aligned modernism fused influences from the Three Worlds and included practices such as the 1975 exhibition *The People’s War of Liberation in the Work of Yugoslav Artists* in Algeria (Videkanić 2023a, 150-152) and institutions such as the Josip Broz Tito Gallery of the Non-Aligned

Countries, which opened in 1984 in Titograd “to combat the cultural hegemony of the large and powerful nations” (Videkanić 2023b, 68).

What is most important to recover from these exchanges is what socialist Yugoslavia and its post-socialist, semi-colonized successors could learn *from* and *with* the decolonizing world, not just how Yugoslavia affected it. A good case in point is the legacy of Zdravko Pečar, a Yugoslav reporter and diplomat who supported the Algerian National Liberation Front and earned respect from the Algerian revolutionaries and their affiliates, including Frantz Fanon (Aduši/Hadouchi 2016). Pečar and his wife Veda established an art collection which, in turn, served as the foundation of the Museum of African Art, “promoted as the only anticolonial museum in Europe” upon its opening in Belgrade in 1977. While endowed with “grand ideas of anticolonialism, equality, solidarity, and humanist ideals,” the museum had been “almost completely based on Western models” until 2017 when it was “reconceptualized through the exhibition and publication *Nypia kor ndzidzi*” (Piškur and Balmazović 2023, 160-161).

The complexity of Yugoslavia’s attitude towards race in the international context is augmented by specific forms of local racialization. Writing about the relationship between the postsocialist and postcolonialist experiences and discourses, Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery (2009, 25) note that studies of racism based on the “color line” should be complemented with Foucault’s concept of “biopolitics,” that is, “techniques, expertise, and subjectivity with respect to the vitality of bodies and populations ... in relation to capitalism and empire.” To this end, Chari and Verdery borrow Étienne Balibar’s notion of “class racism” based on the “naturalization of class inequality through conceptions of sub-humanity” (26). Class racism is evident in Živojin Pavlović’s treatment of peasants as “something that goes about, crawls, tumbling like a devouring amoeba, yet forced to be part of the revolution” in Section 3 and

Antun Vrdoljak's depiction of the Orthodox (Serb) peasants as brutal warriors deeply suspicious of technological modernization in Section 10.

Another useful concept that Balibar and like-minded scholars supply is *cultural racism*. In the Yugoslav context, it can serve to designate the conflict between urban and rural populations, especially in those cases where revolutionaries from the mountainous Montenegro and Herzegovina terrorized and dispossessed the bourgeoisie in the cities. Cultural racism existed within the members of the same class as well. For example, the Communist regime "colonized" peasants from the poor and war-torn parts of Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina by bringing them into postwar Vojvodina, which was depopulated after the flight and ostracization of the Volksdeutsche. Local Vojvodinian peasants ridiculed and resented the "colonists" for keeping their livestock inside the homes that had once belonged to the ethnic German minority.

To sum up, racializing projects have been carried out both with respect to the already recognized nations and nationalities in socialist Yugoslavia as well as those whose political subjectivity came to be recognized in the socialist period. Likewise, as the queer British historian Catherine Baker contends in her book *Race and the Yugoslav Region* (2018), Yugoslav nations have been racialized by various external imperialist and colonialist actors and engaged in racializing enterprises against each other. Speaking of the latter, Milica Bakić-Hayden (1995) identified "nesting orientalisms" whereby each nation in Yugoslavia tended to replicate broader global prejudices and look down upon their neighbors in the east and the south as primitive and backward. Therefore, in this dissertation, I consider the cross-national and -class brotherhood in Yugoslav "brotherhood and unity" as *racialized brotherhood*. How was, then, socialist Yugoslavia able to assume its revolutionary utopian image in the light of such pronounced

hierarchies and divisions? The following sections canvass Yugoslavia's contradictory unity to begin to answer that question.

Long Shot: (Y)Utopia and Revolution

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is informed by a number of scholarly considerations of utopia and revolution. In the first instance, it draws on the critical-utopian reflections of Darko Suvin, a Zagreb-born scholar and poet of Jewish descent who participated in the Yugoslav revolution as a young Communist militant. Having spent most of his teaching career at McGill University in Montreal, Suvin has been a prolific author on a wide range of subjects, including Bertolt Brecht, Japanese theatre, political epistemology, critical and narrative theory, and, most notably, science fiction and revolutionary utopianism.⁵⁸ It is within the latter field that the author framed his collection of essays *Splendor, Misery and Possibilities: An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia* which seeks to recover socialist Yugoslavia as a “Concrete Utopia” (Ernst Bloch)⁵⁹ where “*self-government* [was to be] logically and politically super-ordinated to self-management in production” (Suvin 2016, 16). Following in Susan Woodward's footsteps and analyzing how socialist Yugoslavia sought to overcome the interwar underdevelopment and semi-colonial status in the world economy,⁶⁰ Suvin identifies its three “founding singularities:”

⁵⁸ For example, writing about William Morris' *News from Nowhere, or an Epoch of Rest: Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance* (1891), Suvin (1983, 46) referred to its narrative as the “first realistic revolution in utopian fiction.”

⁵⁹ Bloch uses the term Concrete Utopia “for two distinct reasons: Firstly, because he believes that Utopia always already exists. It is all around us in what he called the--largely unconscious--*Vorscheine* (pre-illuminations/glimpses) of a better world. Secondly--but in dialectical alliance rather than logical contrast--it is because its existence is only an as yet impossible potentiality” (Thompson 2012, 33-34). Concrete Utopia presents an alternative to “the privatization of utopian hope, the fundamental neo-liberal contention that individualist aspiration and ruthless competitive consumerism is the only thing that will bring ultimate happiness” (44).

⁶⁰ In 1939, the annual income per capita in the Yugoslav kingdom, “one of the poorest countries in Europe,” had been \$96. At the same time, the per capita income in Egypt was \$85, while in Germany it

the anti-imperialist revolutionary movement rooted in a “solve-it-yourself-on-the-spot” Partisan mentality; the workers’ self-management system as “a direct continuation of the creative imagination from the partizan war, now redefined in terms of the protagonist’s do-it-yourself political economy” (31); and the promise of “plebeian democracy” obstructed by the new ruling class consisting of the political class and, especially since the mid-1960s, technocratic-managerial class. In comparison to Pantić’s critique of the capitalist tendencies of Yugoslav techno-managers, Suvin stresses the unwillingness of the country’s bureaucracy to reform itself and allow the flourishing of the bottom-up democracy. While acknowledging the “it-is-not-yet” limitations of his utopianism inspired by Yugoslav aspirations towards self-government, he believes that “one must bet on some analogue of [its Marxist garment] being cleansed and renewed for reuse” through “a marriage of work and poetry” (317). For Suvin, the Communist regime in Yugoslavia was a two-headed Janus that “drew its legitimacy first from the revolutionary achievements of plebeian upward mobility, which changed the life of millions for the better, and the attendant defence of independence (the latter was absent from Soviet satellites), but then, as emancipatory horizons waned, increasingly from the population’s standard of living” (37).⁶¹ The regime’s restriction of “*diversity in unity* (where a poor One splits into Two in order to become a rich One) practically amount[ed] to the loss of active and informed proposals from below for adjusting, and if need be changing, the course” (316).

Suvin’s emphasis on the revolutionary materialist achievements and unity echoes in other pertinent theorizations. As my dissertation illuminates Yugoslav war cinema as an intricate cultural field, cultural materialism of Suvin’s friend and the champion of cultural studies,

was \$520 (Suvin 2018, 23). See also *The Third Reich and Yugoslavia: An Economy of Fear, 1933-1941* (Hadži-Jovančić 2020).

⁶¹ On the topic of consumerism in socialist Yugoslavia, see Patterson 2011 and Dimitrijević 2016.

Raymond Williams (2005 [1980]), constitutes a guide that constantly reminds us that there is more than just discourse, or more than just the economy, and that the work of research and analysis can not assume the relationships between the ideological, economic, cultural, etc. Rather, it is tasked with discovering and articulating those very relations. Williams' warming presence in this dissertation is further reflected in his concept of the "long revolution" (1992 [1961]) which he understood as the interlacing of the long history of democratic, industrial, and cultural revolutions, all entailing and informed by profound transformations in the use of technologies and various modes of communication. In other words, written amidst the unfolding Digital Revolution, my dissertation turns to the legacy of the Yugoslav Revolution at the moment when the urgency of climate change and damage incurred by neo-liberal capitalism and the rise of neofascist political tendencies necessitate a return to the revolutionary way of thinking and acting as *politics by other means*. (That is, if it is not already too late for revolutions in the age of surveillance capitalism and the Anthropocene.) Furthermore, Williams' interest in the changing nature of ideas and concepts, exemplified in his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), supplies one of the sturdiest theoretical underpinnings of my research.

Namely, this dissertation has developed as a study in *unity* and *union*, or, rather, *dis-unity* and *dis-union*. The dissertation chapters look at how Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema interacted with cinematic cultures produced in and by the *Union* of Soviet Socialist Republics, *United* States of America, *United* Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland, and, to a lesser extent, European *Union* and its predecessors. The key link between socialist Yugoslavia and these states

and entities, all of which either tried or are trying to preserve and/or rethink their internal unity, is the official Yugoslav ideology of “brotherhood and unity.”⁶²

To unpack how the idea of dis-unity was rendered in the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema, as well as how it both shaped and was shaped by the interaction with the inter-national states and entities invested in the idea of dis-unity, I rely on a methodological toolkit borrowed from Reinhart Koselleck’s conceptual history, the Cambridge School of the history of political thought (represented by the likes of Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock), and Hayden White’s interventions into the narrative nature of historiography and what he dubbed “historiophoty,” meaning “the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse” (White 1988, 1193). At first, this may seem an odd choice given that the aforementioned historians and theorists were primarily interested in studying textual sources entailing a high level of philosophical abstraction and the accompanying scholarly apparatus. Here I benefit from the impetus provided by my MA thesis supervisor at the Central European University, Prof. Balázs Trencsényi, the principal coordinator of the comprehensive research project “*Negotiating Modernity: History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*.” In particular, my research profits from the consideration of representations of national cultures and related political ideas (see, for example, Ersoy et al. 2010). In addition to dis-unity, my dissertation explores the history of other concepts and ideas, including but not limited to: socialism, supra-nationalism, revolution, etc. I regard this methodological approach as appropriate precisely because the history of 20th century political projects in general and socialist

⁶² The cognacy between socialist Yugoslavia on the one hand and the USSR, UK, US, and EU is reflected in neologisms used in popular and academic discourses: YUnion, YUtopia, EUtopia, YUrope, United States of Yugoslavia, etc.

states in particular is, as Mikhail Epstein (2021) aptly put it in the title of the second volume of his history of the late Soviet Russian thought, a history of “ideocracy.”

Indeed, maintaining unity was crucial in revolutionary socialist societies, such as postwar Yugoslavia and China, because there were no easily available blueprints for how to build socialism in their geo-historically specific contexts. Or, when these blueprints seemed available, as in the case of the October Revolution, their usability was impeded by conflicts between Belgrade and Beijing on the one hand and Moscow, as the revolutionary center, on the other. Postwar Yugoslavia and China therefore had to exercise *unity in contradictions* in their socialist worldmaking. Here I rely on Arif Dirlik’s insightful essay (2014) on Chinese post-socialism and its capacity to return to socialist ideals in the contemporary era.

Dirlik’s essay helps us grasp how Mao Zedong understood the role of experimentation, flexibility, and change in Communist thought which has often been reproached for its tendency towards dogmatism. Analyzing Mao’s 1937 essay on the pivotal importance of the concept of contradiction—written as “a theoretical justification for change in revolutionary policy after the Japanese invasion of China, which shifted the ‘primary’ contradiction from class struggle to national struggle” (Dirlik 2014, 274-275)—the author suggests that for Mao “[r]evolutionary practice was no longer predictable from theory; rather, the latter became a guide to ‘reading’ situations in the activity of making revolution.” Relatedly, the revolutionary contradiction presents a world of “ceaseless confrontation and conflict, where unity may be understood only in terms of its contradictory moments and where no entity is a constant because it has no existence outside its contradictions or a place of its own other than in its relationship to other contradictions” (276).

By comparison, Tito and Yugoslav Communists upheld and defended unity when they downplayed the class struggle in favor of national liberation struggle, a strategic decision that helped them attract non-Communist forces to the NOB and win the much needed British support for their multi-national resistance movement. In like manner, Yugoslav Communists practiced unity in resorting to the elements of capitalism in their developmentalist economy, thus insisting on the ideological contradiction that had them expelled from the Eastern Bloc in the first place. Unity in contradictions translated into the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema as well, from the thematic preoccupation with preserving or undermining multinational unity during and after WWII, to Dušan Makavejev's construction of coherent films out of seemingly disparate and heterogeneous film materials. Fundamentally, my study of unity in contradictions in the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema contributes to what Berger and Weinbauer (2023) call a third phase in the historical studies of revolutions, marked by the interest in cultural and trans-national contexts, as opposed to the second phase, that is, the structural sociological approach inaugurated by Barrington Moore and his disciples Charles Tilly and Theda Skocpol.

At the core of my study of Yugoslav revolutionary unity in contradictions are the politics and aesthetics of "by other means." Throughout this dissertation I will have teased out and made references to different modes of Yugoslav "by other means" culture, from the above mentioned Partisan "counter-archive," to Živorad Mitrović making Partisan films by adapting and integrating the genre tropes of Hollywood Westerns, to Makavejev borrowing from film archives to make a feature film, to revolution as politics by other means, to Wasson and Acland's "useful cinema" as a means of establishing a national cinema "by other means." Furthermore, building on Suvin's argument about the "solve-it-yourself-on-the-spot" Partisan mentality as mirroring the do-it-yourself self-managed political economy, my dissertation investigates Yugoslav

Revolutionary Cinema to enrich what Aleksandra Kaminska (2016) calls *cultures of creativity* and *maker culture*, a phenomenon that grew out of an even better known do-it-yourself (DIY) culture in the US.

Learning from Woodward's depiction of continuity between the self-sustained Partisan unit and the postwar self-managed enterprise, as well as the previously discussed link between the representation of war in the NOB films and the representation of work in films on contemporary themes—including the representation of war as work by other means and vice versa—I argue that instead of separate mentalities of warriors and workers, we need to talk about the *warker* mentality in the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema and related socialist revolutionary cinemas. I coined the neologism *warker* on the basis of the phonetic and morphological similarity of English and Serbo-Croatian words for work (*rad*) and war (*rat*), and worker (*radnik*) and warrior (*ratnik*) respectively. Another impetus for the neologism came from Salazkina's linking of cultural heritage, industrial modernity, and armed struggle in world socialist cinema. Ideally, the figure of the *warker* should be used as a signpost for understanding how Yugoslav "film workers" employed cinematic invention that stemmed from the authentic historical memory and experience of war poverty and borrow from the more affluent foreign film cultures to create a unique revolutionary cinema. Moreover, the very term "film worker" helps us distinguish between Yugoslav film workers and, say, Hollywood filmmakers. As for the resonance of the socialist "by other means" culture, let it be noted that in the recent film about the Black Power Revolution, *Judas and the Black Messiah* (2021, Shaka King), its protagonist—Fred Hampton Sr., the assassinated deputy chairman of the national Black Panther Party and the founder of the Rainbow Coalition—quotes Mao Zedong (and, by extension, paraphrases von Clausewitz): "Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed."

Tracking Shot: Research Methodology

The *spiritus movens* of this dissertation is my extensive research conducted at the Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo, Croatian State Archive and the associated Film Archive in Zagreb, and the Archive of Yugoslavia and library of the Yugoslav Cinematheque in Belgrade. Over the years, I found the critical and scholarly focus on Yugoslav filmmakers as auteurs and the meaning of their film narratives lacking, so I became interested in how various Yugoslav media outlets, film companies, and organizations and institutions (including the government committees, censorship bodies, film worker associations, and so on) thought about, shaped, and responded to Yugoslav cinema. Archives in the post-Yugoslav realm are fascinating, if often frustrating repositories that contain a lot of research gems as well as a good deal of inconsistencies and material gaps. There are several reasons for the latter qualities: disappearance and discarding of archival sources during the Yugoslav Wars, the slow and gradual updating of archival funds related to socialist Yugoslavia, and the occasional lack of bureaucratic awareness regarding the preservation of archival material (as opposed to the Soviet research context where, I was told, copies of a single source could frequently be found in multiple archives). Rare were the cases where I could either find a lot of material about a single topic, or be so lucky to skim through a higher number of archival funds, courtesy of forthcoming archivists (as in the case of, for example, Section 1 and Chapter 3). Therefore, in addition to piecing together the archival puzzle, I relied on the abundance of press sources, from film reviews to event reports to interviews with filmmakers, as well as critical and polemical essays published in Yugoslav film journals such as *Filmska kultura* (Zagreb), *Filmograf* (Beograd), and *Sineast* (Sarajevo). Even when not directly cited, TV interviews with and documentaries about Yugoslav film and filmmakers proved to be an indispensable tool for historical contextualization.

The same applies to critical monographs about individual Yugoslav directors and actors. Less commonly, an individual filmmaker, such as Pavlović, was so concerned with his legacy as to leave a rich published archive about his life and oeuvre. Occasionally, I was able to unearth valuable information in unexpected places, such as in the online memoriams of Ken Wlaschin.

Archival research has helped me to supplement the narrative and stylistic analysis of film texts with industrial and institutional analyses, including materialist interrogations of the Yugoslav film production system and techniques such as the Serbian cutting. In addition to the history of ideas mentioned in the previous section, another common thread running through the dissertation is film festival studies as closely related to the larger field of the history of cultural diplomacy. During the Cold War, the main temporal framework of my dissertation, inter- and supra-national film festivals were sites of intense cultural exchange and conflicts, as well as catalysts of the more ephemeral, but nevertheless influential, events such as the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange.

Most sections of this dissertation consist of essays honing in on one or two films, filmmakers, film debates, or festival(-like events). While organically derived from the case study format in edited volumes and journals where most of the sections were or will be published, this approach allows me to avoid the broadness of English-language surveys of lesser known national cinemas, many of which dedicate only a paragraph or two to individual films. Some sections are slightly revised for clarity and updated, but I decided against too many interventions because I would like the reader to follow the development and modifications of my views of and arguments about Yugoslav cinema.

While not offering a totalizing account of history of Yugoslav cinema, this dissertation is very much invested in its cultural geography vis-à-vis its situatedness in the wider international

context as well as intra-Yugoslav overlappings and distinctions (from urban film centers such as Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Zagreb, to predominantly rural regions like Kosovo, eastern Serbia, and Banija). Although definitely not foregoing the focus of the New Cinema History (Biltereyest et al. 2019) on film exhibition, programming, and reception—especially in sections dedicated to film festivals and events—I turn to Yugoslav filmmakers as guides through the country’s (cinema) history to continue upsetting the clear-cut binary between the “totalitarian” State and the “free-spirited” Film Artist. I am also interested in how these filmmakers, as *de facto* members of the Yugoslav cultural elite, tackled the popular movement of the Yugoslav Revolution.

That said, central to my research perspective is the issue of gender and, more specifically, masculinity. The history of the Partisan movement is unimaginable without women’s key contribution, yet the abolition of the AFŽ in 1953 occluded a thorough depatriarchization of Yugoslav society and led post-socialist feminist scholars to rightly write about the “lost revolution” (Dugandžić and Okić 2016) and the “feminist challenge” to the socialist state (Lóránd 2018). The “growing sexualization” of the female Partisan (*partizanka*) in Yugoslav culture was noticeable from the 1960s onwards (Batinić 2015, 243).

Most commonly, women could find work in Yugoslav film production as actresses and editors, much like in many other global cinemas. Until the late socialist period, the only notable woman director was Sofija ‘Soja’ Jovanović whose primary focus on colorful period comedies and mostly humorous narratives about WWII queered the Yugoslav mainstream and constituted an example of “women’s minor cinema” (Jelača 2020). The Croatian Jewish screenwriter, Zora Dirnbach, gained prominence as the co-writer of the first Yugoslav feature about the Holocaust, *Deveti krug/The Ninth Circle* (1960, France Štiglic). Overall, however, Yugoslav cinema

functioned as a men's club. In her pathbreaking feminist critique of Yugoslav cinema, Vesi Vuković (2022) examines frequent employment and exploitation of woman's body as an object of violence and metaphor for nation in the Yugoslav New Film. At the same time, comparing herself to "a stateless person" in the wake of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Vuković stresses her personal attachment to the "heritage of Yugoslav Partisan women" and the rights and opportunities that Yugoslav women won in socialism: women's suffrage; legal rights to inherit, seek employment and education, to get married and divorced; and significant reproductive rights (2022, 9; 15-16). And while socialist Yugoslavia could have definitely done more for LGBTQ+ liberation, including a more scrupulous reassessment of "the Communist revolutionary asceticism and the Partisan wartime puritanism" (Dota 2017), as early as the 1950s Yugoslav cinema featured "antagonisms, aporias and paradoxes" in the representation of sexuality, such as "the communist activist in drag, the vindication of the glamour, a homosexual priest as the good guy in the film aiming at the clergy, symptomatically different strategies in depicting the femininity and masculinity from one genre to another" (Jovanović 2014, 228-229). Following up on my article "What is a Man without a Pistol and a Penis" about the cinematic representation of feminized and disabled male warriors in Serbian films about WWI (Batančev 2013), this dissertation delves deeper into how the revolutionary and war violence determined the frequently masculine outlook of Yugoslav filmmakers and their cinematic worlds.

Like Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, in the chapters that follow I study the history of socialist Yugoslavia and its cinema as remnants of its revolutionary utopia. Unlike Karl Marx's optimistic, future-oriented historical teleology, Benjamin's historical method, based on the image and montage rather than systematic argumentation, and his integral historical vision are geared towards remembering the plight and defeats of previous generations waiting for our

“reparation for past injustices and the achievement of their social utopia” (Löwy 2005, 32).

Benjamin’s reinvention of collective struggle, then, provides a model for reevaluating Yugoslav collectivism in all of its complexity. For Yugoslav people once remembered that they had been attacked by the Nazi-Fascist coalition in 1941 as a collective, that they were almost attacked as a collective by the USSR in 1948, and that—lest they want to be *disunited*, *impoverished*, and *semi-colonized* as their post-Yugoslav successors have become—they should at the very least consider recovering and maintaining some of their collective revolutionary unity. Granted, socialist Yugoslavia failed due to both error and vice, but the core of the Yugoslav Revolutionary project seems just the kind of Benjaminian meaningful historical defeat that needs to be re-examined. In that sense, I study the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema as *the* medium of socialist Yugoslavia not only because it was the main cultural instrument of the country’s modernization, but also because it has been *the* medium to communicate with and remember people who lived and thrived and/or suffered and died for and because of the Yugoslav Revolution.⁶³

I choose to close this introduction on a related, if more personal note. Having produced this manuscript as a migrant scholar in Canada, I want to draw the reader’s attention to a graphic novel *Fatherland* (2014), authored by the Yugoslav-Canadian artist Nina Bunjevac, to attain a more profound experience and understanding of the history of Yugoslav Revolution. *Fatherland* arguably belongs to the pinnacle of the non-fiction and/or auto-biographical graphic novels, alongside works such as Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* and Joe Sacco’s *Palestine* and *Safe Area Goražde*. Like the better known specimens of the genre, it deals with the fallout of revolutions and war conflicts. Equally importantly, *Fatherland* is a story about being split between socialist Yugoslavia and Canada.

⁶³ Here I include victims and targets of “revolutionary justice,” from the Communist purges in Serbia in 1944-45 to the summary executions and massacres at Bleiburg and Kočevski Rog.

In *Fatherland*, Nina Bunjevac narrates about the troubled life and death of her father Peter who barely managed to survive the Ustašist pogroms in the rural NDH (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, Independent State of Croatia) in his childhood. Peter's father was killed in the concentration camp Jasenovac and, shortly after WWII, Peter's mother died of tuberculosis, an illness that she contracted from her abusive husband. After finishing a military school in Split, Peter was arrested for drawing graffiti in support of Milovan Đilas, the dissident who criticized the Yugoslav regime for betraying the revolutionary ideals. Having served a 3-year prison sentence, Peter moved to Thompson, Manitoba to work as a miner, just like his Serb grandfather had in Noranda, Québec. Nostalgic for his fatherland, Peter started corresponding with his future mother-in-law, Momirka, a virtuous former Partisan who intimately shared Peter's support of Đilas but remained loyal to Tito's regime.

Eventually, Peter was won over by the nationalist Serb diaspora in Canada. In 1966, an anti-Communist terrorist organization Freedom for the Serbian Fatherland was established in the US by a Serbian Orthodox priest, Stojiljko Kajević, and journalist Dragiša Kašiković. The following year, the organization carried out a series of synchronized bomb attacks on Yugoslav diplomatic missions in Ottawa, Toronto, New York, Washington, Chicago, and San Francisco. Soon thereafter, Peter joined the organization, now led by one of the best known Serb terrorists, Nikola Kavaja. Exhausted by Peter's conspiratorial lifestyle, his wife moved back to Yugoslavia with their daughters, Nina and Sarah, while leaving their son behind with her ex. In 1977, Kašiković and his 9-year old daughter were assassinated by the Yugoslav State Security in Chicago. Shortly after that, Peter Bunjevac died under mysterious circumstances while making bombs in a Toronto garage.

Nina Bunjevac once stated: “I only belong to one tribe. The displaced children of Yugoslavia” (Obradovic 2015).

Ditto.

I am a displaced child of Yugoslavia and a survivor of its prolonged collapse.

CHAPTER 1: RESISTING AND ADAPTING IMPERIALISMS AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE YUGOSLAV REVOLUTIONARY CINEMA

Better a grave, than a slave! Better a war, than the pact!
(Protesting slogan against the Yugoslav accession to the Tripartite Pact, March 1941)

Death to fascism, freedom to the people!
(Yugoslav Partisan motto)

Section 1: The Unseen Shots: Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Colonialist Aspects of Unmade Co-Productions about the 1914 Sarajevo Assassination

Foreword: *A revised version of my specialization examination essay, this essay was published in 2022 in Studies in Eastern European Cinema, following the journal's call for papers dedicated to Eastern European co-productions. The material was also presented at the conference Shadow Screens: Unmade, Unseen, Unreleased Film and Television held at Sheffield Hallam University in 2022.*

The essay examines how, from 1952 to 1968, a small Bosnian-Herzegovinian studio Bosna Film attempted to make an international co-production about the 1914 Sarajevo Assassination that triggered the Great War. In keeping with Salazkina's topos of cultural heritage in world socialist cinema, the Bosnian film company sought to portray Young Bosnians as historical forerunners of the socialist Yugoslav revolution, celebrating their resistance to Austro-Hungarian imperialism and colonialism. Concurrently, Bosna Film condemned the Young Bosnian assassins' "terrorism" at a time when Josip Broz Tito's regime fought against the terrorism of the Yugoslav nationalist diaspora and worked hard on strengthening ties with the west as an underpinning of Yugoslav economic development.

This, however, does not mean that Bosna Film was ready to sacrifice Yugoslav revolutionary history for commercial success. On the contrary, the company confronted their partners' purported exploitation of Yugoslav production resources and inclination toward narrative modifications of history as promising to attract a larger international audience. Examples of Bosna Film's collaborations demonstrate the uneasy negotiation of socialist memory production,

state-building, international cultural promotion, and sustainable business development that aimed to make the most of their transnational partners' professional competence.

Bosna Film's co-production negotiations with partners from capitalist countries need to be set against the backdrop of Yugoslavia's international isolation after the Tito-Stalin Split, especially in the early to mid-1950s when the western support was critical for Yugoslavia's survival. As demonstrated below, this fact was not lost on Bosna Film's partners, particularly the Hollywood director Siodmak who obviously thought that Yugoslav companies did not deserve much creative latitude in co-productions.

Things get even more interesting with respect to Bosna Film's Austrian, West German, and Italian partners. Not only was Austria the successor state of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that once occupied and colonized Bosnia-Herzegovina, but from 1945 to 1955, Austria itself was occupied by the UK, the US, the Soviet Union, and France. This explains why Austrian co-producers were so interested in shaping their historical representation in the Sarajevo Assassination co-production independently and through Siodmak. In other words, it is safe to assume that the Austrian co-producers did not want another negative vision of the Sarajevo Assassination to be used as a justification for the continued Allied occupation of Austria. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that the occupation of Austria ended after the Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement orchestrated by Khrushchev and Tito. As a result of the rapprochement, Austria lost its strategic military significance for the Soviets as well as the west and could enjoy its newly granted military neutrality as a low-maintenance status in comparison to Yugoslav Cold War militarism.

As for the Yugoslav readiness to forgo then recent history of the German WWII occupation, especially its bloody terror in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it can be best explained by the

Yugoslav pragmatic decision to prioritize economic cooperation with West German producers over the recent war memory. The same logic applied to Italian co-producers: after the Italian Fascist occupation of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav-Italian postwar conflict over the Trieste Zone, Italy became one of Yugoslavia's main foreign trade partners, even providing the production technology for the incipient Yugoslav car industry.

Postwar Yugoslav developmentalism was clearly at play in Bosna Film's business strategy as the company worked to extract as much value as possible from its better known international partners while simultaneously avoiding exploitation. In fact, Bosna Film had to "import" directors outside of Bosnia for its first three features: Major Bauk (1951) was directed by Nikola Popović from Serbia, Stojan Mutikaša (1954) by Fedor Hanžeković from Croatia, and Hanka (1955) by Slavko Vorkapich, a Serb American editor and director who previously worked in Hollywood. Small wonder, then, that Bosna Film associated both its co-production's narrative and business model with the discourses of the rapidly de-colonizing world which saw the roots of its own problems in underdevelopment and dependency on foreign import. Likewise, it makes sense that Bosna Film defended the interests of Yugoslavia as a whole and Bosnia-Herzegovina as its republic rather than its individual nations which speaks to the stronger federal and republican identity, especially in the 1950s.

This section contains a longer passage about Meša Selimović's revolutionary trauma that I added to the published article's text.

Introduction

In Sarajevo on June 28 1914, a member of Young Bosnia,⁶⁴ Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the Austro-Hungarian heir apparent, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and inadvertently murdered the Archduke's spouse Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg. The history of the Sarajevo Assassination has captivated generations of international scholars and artists: despite not being the main cause of the long-brewing cataclysm, the assassination has been linked to the beginning of World War I, the collapse of four empires, and the "provincialization" of Europe; to name just a few putative unintended consequences of Princip's act. The assassination has inspired fierce debates about the causes of and responsibility for WWI and drawn tendentious comparisons of the Young Bosnian assassins and contemporary terrorists (Miller-Melamed 2019, 102-104). Questions of the revolutionary continuity between the assassins and Yugoslav Communists and the colonialist thrust of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1878-1918), which failed to integrate local (Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox) population and antagonized the expansionist Kingdom of Serbia after the 1908 Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, have become corollary subjects of historical dispute.

This article scrutinizes the efforts of the Sarajevo company Bosna Film to co-produce a film about the Sarajevo Assassination between 1952 and 1968. Following a summary of the Austro-Hungarian occupation and colonization of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the historical imprint of the Sarajevo Assassination, I probe Bosna Film's pre-production collaborations with Austrian, West German, and Italian producers. An analysis of Bosna Film's original and translated

⁶⁴ Modeled after cognate nationalist youth organizations (Young Italy, Young Turks, Young Ireland, etc), Young Bosnia was "the name given to loosely connected secret student organizations based in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the eve of the First World War. Heterogeneous groups and individuals were amalgamated by a shared resentment of Austria-Hungary, a will to create a state of South Slavs [led by the Kingdom of Serbia as an imagined Piedmont], and similar intellectual role models, which included theorists of nationalism, socialism, democracy, and anarchism" (Vojinović 2018, 1964).

documentation (screenplay treatments, minutes, correspondence, etc.) serves to reinscribe unmade co-productions into the history of film industries, challenge the preconception of Eastern European producers as presumably subordinate to their western partners, and account for the Sarajevo Assassination as a historically paramount and ostensibly commercial cinematic event. The tenacity with which Bosna Film, a fledgling socialist company, held accountable eminent foreign partners in the struggle for Yugoslav national, cultural and economic interests throws into sharp relief post-socialist Eastern Europe as a region exploited by runaway productions and Europudding co-productions frequently imbued with cultural racism towards Eastern Europeans. This case study, then, shows that anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist Yugoslav self-fashioning can serve as inspiration for resistance to western domination in the post-socialist era.

The Proximate Balkan Colony

In her consideration of the entangled relationship of postcolonialism and balkanism, Maria Todorova (2009) furnishes a theoretical underpinning for this essay. Todorova ironically posits the Sarajevo Assassination as “the great crime of the Balkans” and “their original sin” leaving “an indelible mark on all assessments of the region” produced by numerous western intellectuals (118). Her understanding of balkanism as “express[ing] the idea that explanatory approaches to phenomena in the Balkans often rest upon a discourse or a stable system of stereotypes that place the Balkans in a cognitive straightjacket” (193) is reflected in certain aspects of the unmade Sarajevo Assassination co-productions, such as the stereotypical depiction of orientalized and backward Sarajevo and Bosnia, invocation of the assassins’ profoundly non-western irrationality, and foreign co-producers’ positioning themselves, to various degrees, as experts on the adequate

presentation of the “messy” Bosnian-Herzegovinian history to the virtually ignorant Western audience.

However, in contrast to Todorova’s reluctance to acknowledge the Balkans as a postcolonial region (195), my research builds upon a group of historians pointing to the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s paternalistic treatment of Bosnia-Herzegovina as constituting a “proximate colony” (Donia 2015) through the exclusion of local populations from colonial government institutions; strict control of the education system and disenfranchised population; exploitation of the province’s economic resources without appropriate investments into its development; and long-standing refusal to recognize Bosnia-Herzegovina as a “crownland” legally equal to other parts of the empire (Ruthner 2015). Moreover, in the best known Yugoslav history of the Sarajevo Assassination and Young Bosnian political thought (Dedijer 1966), colonial subordination of Bosnia-Herzegovina is prominently featured as the motivation for Young Bosnian violence. The awareness of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian colonial experience has shifted the focus from Austro-Hungarian imperialism in Bosna Film’s early 1950s project about the Sarajevo Assassination, to the anticolonialist discourse of the later co-production efforts. It seems plausible that this shift was in part propped up by contemporaneous anticolonial struggles which fostered the establishment of the emphatically anticolonial Non-Aligned Movement, co-founded by Yugoslavia in 1961.

The plans for the Sarajevo Assassination co-production indicate a series of strategic decisions about the narrative adaptation of history. Since the background of the Sarajevo Assassination could not be conveyed in all of its intricacy, Bosna Film and their partners developed screenplays underlining the conflict between Franz Ferdinand as the personification of the Austro-Hungarian occupation and Princip along with his two main fellow assassins, Nedeljko

Čabrinović and Trifko Grabež. The assassins came to be seen as the representatives of a Young Bosnia that conceptualized its heroism through various assassinations and assassination attempts in violent “anticipation of an imminent revolutionary future” (Hajdarpasic 2015, 151). In postwar Yugoslavia, the communist government inaugurated Young Bosnia as their autochthonous predecessors in the struggle for freedom and equality of all Yugoslav nations, while dismissing assassinations and small-scale violence as damaging to the aims and objectives of a mass revolutionary movement (Čolović 2014).

However, even in their denunciation of assassination, postwar Yugoslav cultural elite admitted that, from the Young Bosnian perspective, “Franz Ferdinand did not become the target because of his character or politics,” but because, to quote Princip himself, “he was the incarnation of power in Austria-Hungary” (Vojinović 2018, 185). For all his attempts to transform and recentralize Austria-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand remained committed to preserving and expanding the empire in general and his royal power in particular. That filmmakers spotlighted Franz Ferdinand rather than the more bellicose part of the Austro-Hungarian military and political elite around him can be explained by the relative historical obscurity of the Sarajevo Assassination in the global postwar framework as well as familiar narrative optic about a group of young radicals acting against an individualized oppressor. Ultimately, the question of how much historical background should be incorporated into the Sarajevo Assassination project was directly related to Bosna Film’s desire for international promotion of Yugoslav history and culture and the realization of a potentially lucrative co-production as a promising, if not always satisfactory, production model.

Self-Managing the Co-Production

Smaller than the two largest Yugoslav studios, Avala Film in Belgrade and Jadran Film in Zagreb, Bosna Film was founded in 1947 as the central Bosnian-Herzegovinian studio. In its first decade, Bosna Film saw an incremental growth in annual production (from 2 films in 1947 to 13 in 1958, including short and documentary films) and struggled to improve its technological base (Stenografske bilješke 1960, 42). Initially, the development of Bosna Film corresponded with the focus of the planned socialist economy on increasing the number of modernized film theaters, educating filmmakers, and gradually growing film production.

After the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split, Yugoslavia pursued a comprehensive reorganization based on the self-management doctrine and a foreign policy of balancing between the Cold War blocs. Introduced in 1950 and evolving over the next few decades, self-management pioneered “the concept of a socialist market economy, in which ownership is neither private ... nor solely in the hands of a centralized state,” entrusting instead the workers of each company with its management through elective organs such as workers’ councils and management boards (Goulding 2002, 34). Self-management sought to debureaucratize and decentralize the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as the leader of the struggle against Stalinist imperialism (33). By extension, the early self-managed Bosna Film aspired to co-produce a film about the Sarajevo Assassination as the culmination of Young Bosnian resistance to another, albeit more historical, form of imperialism.

The reformed Yugoslav film production relied on artistic councils, comprising 8 to 12 members, usually filmmakers, artists, and cultural administrators. Within individual film companies, artistic councils were responsible for approving screenplays, selecting film crews,

and recommending awards for distinguished filmmakers (Parenta 2015, 228). However, the majority of practicing filmmakers, ranging from screenwriters to sound technicians and production assistants, were “freed from direct employment in technical and production enterprises and were granted the right to negotiate contractual arrangements with film studios for the realization of scenarios and film projects” (Goulding 2002, 36). As further evidenced, the exchange of free agents was important not only for the professional advancement of local filmmakers, but also for contracting filmmakers from different parts of Yugoslavia and abroad as well as encouraging ambitious co-productions.

The key novelty of the 1956 Basic Law on Film was the replacement of Yugoslav state subsidies to film with a system of taxes on film admission tickets and a greater emphasis on box office revenue, thus boosting interest in the financial benefits of international co-productions: “1954 marked the first year that Yugoslavia entered into coequal financial and artistic feature film production with foreign studios, and by the end of the decade, nineteen coproductions had been completed—many of them with the Western countries” (Goulding 2002, 37). Co-productions were to contribute to establishing Yugoslav cinema as a self-sustainable production model that participated in cultural state-building with a minimum of government interventions.

Significantly, though, Yugoslav cinema maintained an ambivalent relationship to the notion of international co-production. The first major film shot in postwar Yugoslavia, the Soviet-Yugoslav *U planinama Jugoslavije/In the Mountains of Yugoslavia* (1946, Abram Room), was marginalized after the Tito-Stalin Split. One of the film’s stars, Vjekoslav Afrić, went on to direct the first Yugoslav feature, *Slavica* (1947). The success of Austro-Yugoslav co-production *Die letzte brücke/The Last Bridge* (1954, Helmut Käutner) at the Cannes film festival was one of Yugoslav cinema’s first moments of international recognition, despite internal Yugoslav disputes

over the film's historical accuracy (Milić 2007). Yet, from the early years of postwar Yugoslav cinema, there had been voices suspicious of co-productions for potential commercialization at the expense of artistic quality. In 1961 and 1963, the Sarajevo film critic Aco Štaka (1986, 62-64) argued that the co-production model was a major cause of embezzlement and exploitation of Yugoslav resources. However, as elaborated below, the leadership of Bosna Film was determined to negotiate their conception of the co-production, hoping that compromises made with their partners would yield a globally relevant film and discourage yet another historically misguided foreign production about the Sarajevo Assassination.

To better understand the Yugoslav urge to invest in a new vision of the Sarajevo Assassination, it is necessary to examine the French production *De Mayerling à Sarajevo/Sarajevo* (1940, Max Ophüls), the best known pre-Cold War film including the assassination. Directed by a famous German-born director who fled Nazis, the film is a peculiar propaganda piece about the romance and marriage of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Hohenberg. Ophüls' film minimizes Franz Ferdinand's conservatism, militarism, and bigotry towards Hungarians and Slavs (Deák 1990, 66, 71-73; Okey 2007, 236). The film fails to mention the French alliance with the Kingdom of Serbia before and during WWI, while briefly featuring Young Bosnians as feverish terrorists trained by a (presumably Black Hand⁶⁵) Serbian officer. Although the film includes the fact that the Serbian ambassador warned the Austro-Hungarian government of the rumored assassination, it nevertheless problematically suggests that if the

⁶⁵ A shorthand for the nationalist Serbian secret society Unification or Death (Ujedinjenje ili smrt), headed by the colonel Dragutin 'Apis' Dimitrijević, which played the crucial role in the May Coup. Before the Sarajevo Assassination, the Serbian government led by Nikola Pašić treated the Black Hand 'with utmost suspicion, not just for its potentially damaging effects on foreign policy, but because it deemed that the Black Hand's real aim was the subversive overthrow of the constitutional monarchy and democratic government' (Roberts 2016, 29). Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež received some training and logistics support from certain members of the Black Hand, though it is unclear whether the Black Hand conceived of the original plan to assassinate Franz Ferdinand (33-34).

incredibly enlightened Archduke had not been assassinated, there would have been no WWI. The film ends with a reference to “the sons of 1914” who rose to defend Europe from Hitler’s invasion. Produced during the early stages of WWII, Ophuls’ *Sarajevo* sought to sound a call to arms for anti-fascist Central Europeans, but in so doing, misrepresented both Franz Ferdinand and the Balkan people confronting imperialism in WWI, thus leaving ample space for a Yugoslav cinematic interpretation of the Sarajevo Assassination.

Critically, however, 1950s Yugoslav cinema generally, let alone Bosna Film, was still relatively inexperienced with big-budget historical productions and global distribution compared to the era of expensive Yugoslav spectacles such as *Bitka na Neretvi/The Battle of Neretva* (1969, Veljko Bulajić) which were financially supported by a long list of Yugoslav firms and army as well as foreign co-producers and distributors. Therefore, when Austrian and West German co-producers considered collaboration on the Sarajevo Assassination film, Bosna Film saw the opportunity to benefit from their partners’ know-how. But, in addition to divergent views on the cinematic adaptation of history, the subsequent pre-production process eventually caused the Yugoslavs to mistrust their co-producers from Austria and West Germany, the successor states of the popularly perceived former occupiers and war enemies of most South Slav nations in two world wars.

From Hollywood to Sarajevo via Vienna and Hamburg

The first major filmmaker to have considered a co-production about the Sarajevo Assassination with Bosna Film was a German Jewish exile to Hollywood, Robert Siodmak. Best known for his film noirs, Siodmak probably became interested in the topic after finishing

Ultimatum (1938), the last film directed by his dying compatriot, fellow exile and great Expressionist director, Robert Wiene. A French-Austrian (or German)⁶⁶ co-production, *Ultimatum* is centered on the melodramatic post-Sarajevo Assassination narrative about the marriage of a Serbian military officer and an Austrian-born woman that is broken by the humiliating ultimatum issued by Austria-Hungary to Serbia during the July Crisis. Sharing a number of features with the WWI classic *La grande illusion/The Great Illusion* (1937, Jean Renoir), including the stars Erich von Stroheim and Dita Parlo, *Ultimatum* nevertheless suggested that “[World War II was] inevitable” (Jung and Schatzberg 1999, 188), thereby challenging both Renoir’s idealism and Ophüls’ glorification of imperial rulers.

As in practically all subsequent pre-productions concerning the Sarajevo Assassination, Siodmak’s film was set to premiere on the anniversary of WWI (marking either the beginning or end of the war). However, from the very beginning, Bosna Film questioned the validity of Siodmak’s vision. In September 1952, Bosna Film had hired a writer and former Young Bosnian, Borivoje Jevtić, to be the second reviewer of the film treatment *Sarajewo*, written by the accomplished Viennese (screen)writer and Siodmak’s frequent collaborator, Johannes Mario Simmel (with Jevtić’s assistance during Simmel and Siodmak’s visit to Sarajevo). Among other aspects of the treatment, the first reviewer was critical of its balkanist exoticization of Sarajevo and Bosnia (Marković 1952, 5/551). While Jevtić admitted that the treatment focused on Princip and his co-conspirators had improved, he strongly objected to a plethora of details essentially exculpating the Archduke from his imperialist views and actions. Jevtić also mentioned his conversation with Siodmak in which he highlighted the main flaw of the previous treatment, i.e.

⁶⁶ The film was produced by Films Ultimatum (Paris), Robert Wiene himself and Pan Film (Jung and Schatzberg 1999, 223), but ‘it cannot be clarified anymore whether it is in any way related to the Viennese Pan Film or the Berlin Paneuropa of earlier days’ (181).

the absence of correlation between the assassination and Austro-Hungarian oppression of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Siodmak responded that the film had to be entertaining rather than historically accurate, since most of the world audience knew very little about WWI, let alone the assassination itself. The Sarajevo Assassination co-production could help Yugoslavia, Siodmak remarked, to unsettle the US-American stereotypes about the country as yet another version of USSR—a timely observation given the Yugoslav struggle for international support amid the Tito-Stalin Split. Feeling a great moral obligation to his late and surviving Young Bosnian friends, Jevtić acknowledged that some compromise with Austrian co-producers was necessary, but required that his role in the writing process be advisory because he did not want his name attached to Siodmak and Simmel's concept (Jevtić 1952). Jevtić's critique signaled the difficulty of striking a balance between the memory of Young Bosnia, Bosna Film's business goals, and the international image of Cold War Yugoslavia. Siodmak's insistence on the universality of the film's story implied the advisability of downplaying the connection between Young Bosnian revolutionary spirit and Yugoslav socialism as potentially provocative for the Cold War audiences in the west.

In fact, it is due to the far-reaching importance of the co-production that criticism of the foreign partners continued to be formulated by Bosna Film's institutions in conjunction with Yugoslav political officials. The December 1952 minutes of Bosna Film's artistic council show the company's director, Salomon 'Moni' Finci, countering certain Council members' arguments about co-productions as merely sources of financial gain and the danger of Siodmak's cinematic exploitation of Young Bosnia. Finci defended co-productions for lowering production costs and enabling local filmmakers to learn the craft from experienced foreign directors—thus emulating

the development of Mexican national cinema⁶⁷—in order to promote Yugoslav national cinema abroad. Though somewhat concerned about Siodmak's potential lack of patience for Bosna Film's poor technical support, Finci nevertheless argued that the most recent draft of Simmel's screenplay sufficiently criticized Austrian imperialism and that, in addition to the English and German versions of Siodmak's film, there could be a Yugoslav version with more historical details (Razmatranja 1952, 1-7/517-523). A few weeks later, Bosna Film was informed that a number of members of the Central Committee of the SKJ had, at Finci's request, commented on Simmel's screenplay. Having received no principal objections, Bosna Film notified its foreign partners that the pre-production would resume (Zapisnik 1952, 1/526). The debate between the artistic council and Finci exhibits the dynamic decision making process whereby the socialist company's director relied on the authority of "higher ranking comrades" to support his perspective on the development and international advancement of Yugoslav cinema as well as his confidence in the seasoned foreign filmmaker as the most suitable director of Bosna Film's most ambitious project up to that point.

In 1953, without explaining Simmel's withdrawal, Siodmak sent a prolific French screenwriter, Jean Ferry, to Sarajevo for a week-long research stay. In an elaborate letter mailed to Finci after his sojourn, Ferry wrote rather ambiguously about the assassins as "martyrs for freedom," "pure beings," and "children," who should be portrayed as ordinary men rather than idealized heroes (1953, 2/384). Perpetuating balkanist stereotypes about the irrational Slavic assassins' soul as incomprehensible to the rational western viewer, Ferry concurred with Siodmak that the generally ignorant world audience would have to be given an essentially

⁶⁷ Finci most likely referred to the influence that Hollywood and transnational filmmakers such as Sergey Eisenstein and Luis Buñuel exerted on Mexican cinema. For more on the popularity and impact of Mexican culture in Yugoslavia, see McKee Irwin 2010.

deideologized spectacle about the oppressor and the oppressed (9/391). Ferry described Franz Ferdinand (to be played, funnily enough, by Erich von Stroheim) as mentally unstable, yet gentle to his family. Duchess Sophie was portrayed as a kind mother marked by the “silly sentimentality” typical of “some Austrian women,” even though the Duchess came from the Czech lower nobility. Interestingly, Ferry painted General Oskar Potiorek, Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as likely allowing the assassination to start a war against Serbia (Ferry 1953, 7-9/389-391). It remains to be confirmed whether “the representatives of Austrian and [West] German [film] distribution put pressure on Siodmak and, through him, Ferry as well, not to allow ‘compromising’ Ferdinand as a representative of Germanic military glory” (Štaka [1966] 1986, 175). While Ferry’s dichotomy between the oppressor and the oppressed informed subsequent co-production efforts, his concept manifested national and gendered generalizations and stereotypes in his and Siodmak’s engagement with the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, all under the banner of knowing how to produce a commercial and universally acceptable film.

In parallel with the script development, Bosna Film pursued various co-production partnerships. A 1953 contract draft between Bosna Film and Vaduz-based G.B. Productions, subcontracting Real Film (Hamburg) as a production intermediary, stipulated that G.B. would facilitate the annulment of Bosna Film’s 1952 contract with its previous partners, Centropa (Vienna) and Portland Film Productions (Hollywood). Siodmak was contracted to direct two versions of the film, German and English, leaving the Yugoslavs an option to dub or subtitle the German version (Ugovor 1953, 1). Bosna Film had to guarantee that the shooting script, created by G.B. and confirmed by both companies, would be approved by the Yugoslav government, probably to preempt censorship. The filming was to take place in Sarajevo and, to a lesser extent,

Vienna and Hamburg. With most personnel supplied by G.B. Productions, the total production and distribution budget was estimated at USD700,000 to which Bosna Film contributed USD165,000 (2-3); as a reference point, *From Here to Eternity* (Fred Zinnemann 1953) had a USD2.5 million budget (Eagan 2010, 473).

According to a contract draft from 1954, when Siodmak was replaced by an Austrian Swiss director Leopold Lindtberg, the film *Sarajevo* “with a single international composite track” was to be co-produced by Wiener Mundus Film (Vienna) and Real Film (Hamburg)—providing and paying most of the creative and technical personnel—and Bosna Film which accepted covering the costs of filming in Sarajevo (Ugovor 1954, 1). The film, slated to premiere in 1955, was expected to be financed from a loan provided by West German, Austrian, and Yugoslav banks. Austrian and West German partners secured the rights to the revenue from German-speaking countries and regions and 72% of the total global revenue, whereas Bosna Film was to receive 28% (2-3). It may seem that Bosna Film ended up in the inferior position relative to its partners, but, as the analysis of financial negotiations in the next section shows, the Sarajevan company kept more leverage in a co-production with two partners rather than only one, to say nothing of the opportunity—specified in the above contract drafts—for the local personnel to gain experience in collaboration with their foreign colleagues.

After prolonged negotiations, Siodmak lost interest in the project, partly because G.B. Productions, having heavily invested in 3D productions, gave up on shooting the film in 1953 (Prevod). Lindtberg and Robert Thoeren’s attempt to revive the co-production backfired after Thoeren unexpectedly sold his *Sarajevo Assassination* screenplay draft developed with Bosna Film to its Austrian partner, Wiener Mundus, which independently transformed it into *Um Thron*

und Liebe/For Throne and Love (1955, Fritz Kortner),⁶⁸ starring Klaus Kinski as Čabrinović. In Yugoslavia, Kortner's film was categorized as "fake and kitschy" and "a major failure" that "nobody wanted to watch, not even in Austria" (Štaka [1966] 1986, 174). Further discussion of Bosna Film's 1957 co-production negotiations corroborates that the Yugoslav perception of *For Throne and Love* was shaped by the resentment of Thoeren's plagiarism which caused a temporary postponement of Bosna Film's co-production plans. However, the Yugoslav impression that Austrians financed a self-serving production was arguably exaggerated, for Kortner's film proved to be quite controversial in Austria (Fritsche 2013, 73). For the Yugoslav cultural mainstream, Kortner's film was not a desired celebration of Young Bosnia and unequivocal condemnation of the Austro-Hungarian imperialism personified by Franz Ferdinand. For their Austrian counterpart, Kortner's film was not an exaltation of Habsburg imperial glory. Frustrated by the attempt to reach a historic consensus with their Austrian partners 40 years after the Sarajevo Assassination, Bosna Film turned to the birthplace of Giuseppe Mazzini, a major Young Bosnian role model, in a renewed effort to bring to the screen Princip's fateful deed.

A Matter of Pride and Profit

After the post-WWII normalization of diplomatic relations and establishment of bilateral cooperation between Yugoslavia and Italy in 1954, Italian popular culture, "perceived as less consciously propagandist and dangerous than American popular culture," quickly gained ground in Yugoslavia (Rolandi 2015, 281). Italian cinema "was regarded as a model in Yugoslavia for

⁶⁸ According to the film's IMDb web page, it seems that Thoeren, unsatisfied by the changes of his screenplay, asked to be credited under the pseudonym Franz Werner. Both Kortner and Thoeren were exiles to Hollywood. The latter, a prolific (screen)writer, was best known for co-writing the story for *Some Like It Hot* (1959, Billy Wilder) (Fritsche 2013, 72).

many reasons: it was politically acceptable, but at the same time appealed to the masses” (285). For example, Gillo Pontecorvo directed the Italian-French-Yugoslav *Kapò* (1959), while Alberto Lattuada directed another Italian-French-Yugoslav co-production, *La steppa/The Steppe* (1962). Meanwhile, Veljko Bulajić, Yugoslav director of the 1975 co-production about the Sarajevo Assassination, would hone his craft in Cinecittà and continue to collaborate with Italian filmmakers. Certain commercial co-productions, such as peplum spectacles, contributed to the codependent relationship of Italian and Yugoslav cinema:

From the late 1950s, Italian movie enterprises were the biggest foreign investors in the Yugoslav film industry. ... Cinecittà found it convenient to rent out its own studios to Americans and rent considerably cheaper Yugoslav studios for its own productions. ... However, co-productions with foreign partners also raised an issue [in Yugoslav public] about what they perceived as an inferiority complex affecting the Yugoslavs. While films were formally co-productions, foreign partners controlled the products, providing directors and actors, while Yugoslavs usually provided lower technicians, supporting people, and animals for historical movies (Rolandi 2015, 286-287).

Importantly, however, Yugoslavia could be viewed not only as an economically “inferior,” but also more politically liberal production environment, as in the case of Giuseppe De Santis, a prominent leftist ostracized by the Italian government (Vitti 1996, 97), who directed the Golden Globe Award-winning co-production *Cesta duga godinu dana/The year long road* (1958) in Yugoslavia.

Before turning to Bosna Film’s first attempts at collaboration with Italian filmmakers, it is important to introduce a celebrated Yugoslav writer and the artistic director of Bosna Film since 1947, Mehmed ‘Meša’ Selimović. His 1960 dramaturgical explication offers a revealing interpretation of the Sarajevo Assassination: “Rejecting assassination, that *individual terrorist act*, as a method of solving political and national problems, we still give recognition to the *noble intentions* of the young assassins whose *suicidal action* was intended to draw the world’s attention to the *horror* of the Austro-Hungarian *occupation*” (Serhatlić Agarević and Klepić

2018, 78, italics added). Selimović's repudiation of individual terrorism reflects the socialist establishment's anxiety about the rising threat of anti-Yugoslav assassinations and other violent actions (Tokić 2020), simultaneously minimizing the significant history of assassinations committed or planned by Yugoslav communists, especially in the interwar period while assassination was still a Party-sanctioned political tactic.⁶⁹

A longer digression is in order here to account for the complexity of Meša Selimović's fashioning of Young Bosnian assassins as the predecessors of the Communist-led Yugoslav revolution during and shortly after WWII. Born in 1910, Selimović joined the KPJ in 1943 and became the political commissar of the Tuzla Detachment of the Partisans. As Boris Dežulović (2012) details, after the liberation of Tuzla at the end of 1944, Selimović was profoundly traumatized when his brother Šefkija Selimović, a Partisan officer, was court-martialed and executed for "stealing" confiscated furniture from the public storage that he ran. In truth, Šefkija only borrowed the furniture to welcome his wife, a surviving prisoner of the Jasenovac concentration camp, but his comrades interpreted the loan as theft, punishable by death according to the strict revolutionary moral codex. Even Teufik 'Budyonny' Selimović, Šefkija's and Meša's brother and a high-ranking officer of the new Communist government's security agency OZNA, refused to save Šefkija.

⁶⁹ In 1921, Alija Alijagić assassinated Milorad Drašković, the Minister of the Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and the author of Obznana, the 1920 decree banning the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The assassination was co-organized by Rodoljub 'Roćko' Čolaković, a high ranking postwar Yugoslav politician, who appeared in the 1974 docudrama *Zašto je pucao Alija Alijagić?*, retrospectively calling the assassination a result of the assassins' 'tragic misapprehension' that terrorist acts would accelerate the global communist revolution. A few weeks before the assassination of Drašković, an October Revolution veteran, Spasoje Stejić, had tried to assassinate the anti-communist prince regent Aleksandar Karađorđević. Another attempt on Karađorđević, in 1922, was stopped by the Party official as an act of individual terror detrimental to the communist revolutionary agenda (Očak 1979, 140).

After the war, Meša Selimović was haunted by Šefkija's death until he transposed it into his magnum opus and a thinly veiled critique of the revolutionary terror, the novel *Derviš i smrt* (1966, translated in English as *Death and the Dervish*). To avoid censorship and persecution, Selimović set the novel's existentialist narrative in the Ottoman era, thus following the example of his friend Ivo Andrić, the only Yugoslav winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1961). (Coincidentally, Andrić was the only person who knew both Gavrilo Princip and Adolf Hitler, the two men who triggered two world wars: Andrić had been a member of Young Bosnia who went on to become the Yugoslav ambassador to Germany and, as such, was present at the signing of Yugoslav accession to the Tripartite Pact in 1941. Following the Axis Powers invasion of Yugoslavia, Andrić returned to Belgrade where he successfully eschewed all invitations to collaborate with Serbian Quislings and became a fellow traveller of the Communist regime after the war. In return, he was awarded with numerous sinecures, including that of a state film censor.) After *Death and the Dervish* quickly became a canonical work of Yugoslav literature, Selimović moved to Belgrade in 1971, following alleged disputes with certain members of the Bosnian political elite who were less than pleased with the allusions to Šefkija's tragic fate in his novel. Having become a member of the SANU (Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts), in 1976, Selimović sent an official autobiographical note to the institution stating that he was born into a Muslim family from Bosnia, but that he considered himself a Serb and a Serbian writer. In the same note, Selimović insisted that he considered the literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to which he also belonged, only a smaller literary center, not a separate literature of the Serbo-Croatian language. It is plausible to assume that the trauma surrounding the death of his brother Šefkija and the aftermath of his novel's success influenced Selimović's self-declared association with Serbian

literature, while he simultaneously remained loyal to the ideals of Yugoslav socialist revolution. In 1974, *Death and the Dervish* was adapted into a Yugoslav film, directed by Zdravko Velimirović. Closing a symbolic circle connected to the representation of Young Bosnians as revolutionary freedom fighters, in 1985 Velimirović directed the Mozambican-Yugoslav co-production *Vreme leoparda/Time of the Leopards* about the anticolonial war in the African state. The film bears a strong resemblance to the Partisan film, the genre dominating Velimirović's filmography.

Going back to Selimović's work on the Sarajevo Assassination co-production. Following in the footsteps of Siodmak's screenwriter Ferry, to escape the pitfalls of "national propaganda," Selimović insisted that the assassins be portrayed as common people rather than larger-than-life heroes. His conception of Austria-Hungary as a brutal colonial force in all but name was grounded in Ferry's contrast between the oppressor and the oppressed, though Selimović held that the cinematic spectacle should not overshadow the Young Bosnian revolutionary resistance. Selimović concluded that some signs of Franz Ferdinand's chivalrous fearlessness should not excuse his embodiment of the occupation (Serhatlić Agarević and Klepić 2018, 78-79). In sum, Selimović appropriated Ferry's ideas to elude the excessive glorification of the assassins and compress their rich history into a feature film, but decided not to address more challenging aspects of the assassinated couple's lives, such as their strained relationship with the institutions of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and Franz Ferdinand's hesitance to enter a conflict resembling the Great War for the fear of Russian protection of Serbia (Rauchensteiner 2014).

The first Italian filmmakers to approach Bosna Film for collaboration were the leftist screenwriter/director Aldo Vergano⁷⁰ and his producer Giuseppe Fatigatti. 1957 meeting minutes (Stenografske bilješke) disclose the Yugoslavs' disappointment with *For Throne and Love* and their former Austrian partners' refusal to substantially modify their conceptualization of the assassination. As Bosna Film's leading negotiator, Selimović proposed that Ferry's screenplay draft be developed into the final screenplay. Selimović's stress on the keyword "occupation" as a stronger and ideologically still unproblematic variation of Ferry's term "oppression," spontaneously resonated in Vergano's comment that more attention should be given to Young Bosnians' struggle for national independence, much to Selimović's delight. When Selimović mentioned taking into account not only bare historical facts, but also Princip's dilemma about the moral justness of assassination, Vergano readily accepted the idea, adding that he had faced the same quandary in 1925 while planning the assassination of Benito Mussolini.⁷¹ Considering that the first Yugoslav color film premiered in 1957, Fatigatti's plan to co-produce the Sarajevo Assassination film in color and Cinemascope was ambitious. However, the co-production was not to be as Vergano passed away in 1957.

Notwithstanding the loss of the cooperative director with a curious track record as a would-be assassin, Bosna Film was still resolved to continue the production development. The company's archive contains a translated treatment "The Sarajevo Assassination" penned in 1957 or 1958 by "Pinnelli [i.e. Tullio Pinelli],⁷² Pazzolini [i.e. Pier Paolo Pasolini],⁷³ and [Dario]

⁷⁰ Vergano's involvement in the project was initially mediated by the aforementioned Rodoljub Čolaković (Stenografske bilješke 1957, 3/644). Vergano is best known for his neorealist film about Italian partisans, *Il sole sorge ancora/Outcry* (1946).

⁷¹ Vergano also planned another attempt on Mussolini in 1938 (Liehm 1984, 66).

⁷² One of the most prolific Italian screenwriters and frequent collaborator of Federico Fellini.

⁷³ Pasolini probably worked with his colleagues in the so-called *botteghe di scrittura* (screenwriting workshops), common in the 1950s Italian cinema, where writers usually agreed on 'a film's major theme or idea that had political and moral undertones' (Romanelli 2019, 324).

Fo,⁷⁴ in collaboration with either Selimović (Štaka [1966] 1986, 176), or Antonio Pietrangeli⁷⁵ (Melan 2013, 42). The 1957 meeting in Sarajevo showed Pietrangeli's intention to direct a co-production in Technirama in two versions, Yugoslav and Italian. Pietrangeli wanted to make a film about the resistance to tyranny, humanely treating both the assassins and the assassinated. But, once again Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Hohenberg were rendered a romantic couple, equally persecuted by the Habsburg court and Young Bosnia. Bosna Film asked for significant changes of the treatment which were promised by the Italian side, but never materialized (Štaka [1966] 1986, 175-176).⁷⁶

Around this time Jean-Paul Sartre, probably inspired by the existential dilemmas of the Young Bosnian assassins, showed keen interest in writing a screenplay about the Sarajevo Assassination. Both Marko Ristić (1957), a renowned Surrealist author and *Kulturträger*, and a Yugoslav cultural attaché in Paris (Šegedin 1957) made inquiries on Sartre's behalf. However, Bosna Film was already committed to their new partner and one of the most distinguished European and Hollywood producers, Agostino 'Dino' De Laurentiis, who rejected Sartre's offer, alluding to the failure of his most recent film, *Les sorcières des Salem/The Crucible* (1957, Raymond Rouleau) (Kravić 1957).

De Laurentiis' cooperation with Yugoslav studios was characterized by complex negotiations of historical subjects. Bosna Film garnered a significant profit as one of De Laurentiis' partners in the Italian-French-Yugoslav adaptation of Pushkin's *The Captain's*

⁷⁴ A leftist theatremaker and the recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize in Literature, Fo briefly worked as a screenwriter in the 1950s.

⁷⁵ Recognized for directing Italian-style comedies. His screenwriting opus includes uncredited contributions to Luchino Visconti's neorealist films.

⁷⁶ In 1959, Pietrangeli contacted Ingrid Bergman to play Duchess Sophie suggesting that 'the most important [Italian] production company' would soon start 'shooting the film, if necessary, even completely abroad' (Maraldi 1991, 53), but the plan never came to fruition.

Daughter, La tempesta/Tempest (Alberto Lattuada 1958) (Izvještaj 1960, 3-4). Soon thereafter, De Laurentiis threatened to move his production of the WWI film *La grande guerra/The Great War* (1959, Mario Monicelli) to Yugoslavia which, in turn, helped him to fend off the accusations of antipatriotic portrayal of Italian soldiers (Kezich and Levantesi 2004, 140-142). The film's less than flattering depiction of the Austro-Hungarian army only strengthened De Laurentiis' reputation in Bosna Film. However, in the case of *Jovanka e le altre/Five Branded Women* (1960, Martin Ritt), an Italian-American co-production about Yugoslav Partisans punishing women who consorted with Nazis, the Yugoslav authorities "refused to collaborate on the film or even to authorize the shoot. [De Laurentiis] realized that in this region, the partisan war was considered *a quasi-mystical event, a story that couldn't possibly be told by a foreigner*" (Kezich and Levantesi 2004, 143, italics added). The inability to re-create a Yugoslav historical myth could have been De Laurentiis' experience with the Sarajevo Assassination project as well.

When in 1962 or 1963⁷⁷ the Bosna Film representatives met De Laurentiis' close associate Lattuada in Sarajevo, they praised the aforementioned Lattuada's *Tempest* as a film about the popular struggle for freedom and, as such, a potential template for the Assassination film (Stenografske bilješke n.d., 13-14). Accompanied by De Laurentiis' brother⁷⁸ as a budget specialist, Lattuada presented a synopsis about a young Bosnian woman married out of convenience to a Bosnian representative in the Cisleithanian Imperial Council. In Vienna the woman meets her lover, an Austrian officer reassigned to Bosnia. Observing the officer's ferocity towards her compatriots, the woman experiences a swell of patriotism, especially when she is assigned as a companion to Sophie Hohenberg during the visit to Sarajevo (1-7).

⁷⁷ The approximate year of negotiations is deduced from Lattuada's remark that he did not want to enter 1964 without a finished film about the assassination.

⁷⁸ This could be either Alfredo De Laurentiis, the production manager of *Tempest*, or the more reliable Luigi De Laurentiis (Kezich and Levantesi 2004, 51-52).

Contrary to Lattuada's deideologized individual-centered melodrama designed to make the Sarajevo Assassination accessible to global audience, the Bosna Film representatives wanted to foreground a historical narrative of the assassins against the backdrop of a crowd-pleasing melodrama (*Stenografske bilješke* n.d., 7-9). Slavko Mićanović—author, popular historian of the Sarajevo Assassination, and one of Bosna Film's negotiators—insisted that Bosnia-Herzegovina was a disenfranchised Austro-Hungarian colony without any Council representative in Vienna.⁷⁹ The Bosna Film team noted that the assassins were not vicious killers as portrayed by the foreign press, but sensitive youngsters who fired at Franz Ferdinand as a symbol of the ruling system, leaving no doubt about the significance of Young Bosnian anticolonial resistance (15-24).

Another point of contention between De Laurentiis and Bosna Film was the idea of co-producing the film with an unidentified American company (*Stenografske bilješke* n.d., 26-28). Lattuada expressed concern about the Yugoslavs' ideas getting lost in the American penchant for spectacle, while De Laurentiis' brother worried that the film would be turned into a Western. The Italians did not want to relinquish the profit from the US market, offering instead the film to be overwhelmingly co-produced by De Laurentiis, filmed in the Viennese studio, and distributed in such a way that the Italians got the Italian (and, presumably, western) market, while Bosna Film would receive revenue from the Eastern European market, after both partners covered their production expenses (*Stenografske bilješke* n.d., 37-44). For Bosna Film, however, it was a matter of pride and profit that the film be shot primarily in Sarajevo as well as co-produced and distributed by three equal partners. The desire of Bosna Film to both account for the accuracy of

⁷⁹ When the Diet of Bosnia and Herzegovina opened in 1910, '[s]uffrage was limited and those who had the right to vote were choosing only part of the members of [the Diet], while others were appointed by the governor [of Bosnia-Herzegovina]. The Government, appointed by the emperor was not accountable to [the Diet]; Vienna could veto every decision' (Vojinović 2018, 175).

historical representation and profit from the studio's larger co-production investment may have contributed to De Laurentiis' abandonment of the project.

The last, but far from least, significant aspect of negotiations between Yugoslav and Italian producers was the issue of gendered celebrity casting. Lattuada was happy to inform Bosna Film that "Soraya had been an empress and now she should play the woman who wants to become an empress at all costs," i.e. Duchess Sophie (Stenografske bilješke n.d., 36/346). The actress in question was certainly the Princess of Iran, Soraya Esfandiary-Bakhtiary, who De Laurentiis unsuccessfully groomed for an acting career after her 1958 divorce from Mohammad Reza Shah (Kezich and Levantesi 2004, 159). The co-producers likely considered not only Soraya's photogenic appearance and royal status, but also a number of parallels and differences between her and Sophie Hohenberg's lives. A daughter of a Bakhtiari nobleman and German Christian mother, Soraya, much like Sophie, was maligned by her husband's family. But, in contrast to Sophie who had four children in the marriage dictated by the Habsburgs, Soraya was practically forced by the Shah to divorce him as she could not have children. Crucially, though, the co-producers did not seem to take into account that Soraya had been a reluctant, Eurocentric queen who proposed to stay married to the Shah if he had agreed to abdication and a likely exile to the west (Milani 2011), whereas Sophie Hohenberg does not seem to have desired the crown "at all costs" any more than public respect and happy family life with her husband, an heir apparent by happenstance. The episode about Soraya and Sophie encapsulated how a host of international male filmmakers ventured to exploit the two women's difficult experiences and alleged lust for power as well as the unrest of the Belle Époque Bosnians-Herzegovinians without fundamentally comprehending their trials and tribulations.

More consideration, at least towards Sophie Hohenberg's fate, was shown by Orson Welles, who spent considerable time working in Yugoslavia. In 1967, the management of Bosna Film faced the dilemma of producing the film with Carlo Lizzani who secured production support in Italy, or Welles who seemed more lucrative on the world market (Zapisnik 1967). A year later, Welles sent his synopsis "The Sarajevo Assassination" to De Laurentiis without Bosna Film's approval (Pismo 1968). In a conversation with a Yugoslav film critic (Munitić 1997a, 18), Welles said that, after extensive archival research, he believed that the Habsburg court allowed Franz Ferdinand to be assassinated. Welles abandoned the project upon realization that the first assassination attempt on June 28, i.e. Čabrinović's hurling of a hand grenade at the Archduke's car, targeted the allegedly pregnant Duchess as well. Although Sophie Hohenberg's pregnancy at the time of her death has never been confirmed, and despite the fact that the assassins expressed regret for her death, Welles's qualms at least acknowledged that the Duchess' personal tragedy unfolded on the world-historical stage.

Echoing numerous aspects of the unmade co-productions, the Sarajevo Assassination continued to fascinate (post-)Yugoslav and international filmmakers, thus expanding my research into two further articles about the realized historical films. The first will focus on a Yugoslav production *Sarajevski atentat/The Sarajevo Assassination* (1968, Fadil Hadžić), connecting the assassins with the WWII resistance movement; and the Yugoslav-Czechoslovak-West German co-production *Atentat u Sarajevu/The Day that Shook the World* (1975, Veljko Bulajić), co-written by the blacklisted Paul Jarrico and starring Christopher Plummer as Franz Ferdinand. Portraying the assassinated couple as thoughtful parents and the assassins as audacious yet impulsive teenagers, Bulajić's spectacle was conceived as a contender for the Academy Award, proclaiming the assassination as the beginning of the 20th century rather than a

precursor to the Yugoslav socialist revolution. The second article will look at three productions premiered around the centenary of WWI: Austro-German TV co-production *Das Attentat/Sarajevo* (2014, Andreas Prochaska), Serbian production *Branio sam Mladu Bosnu/The Man Who Defended Gavrilo Princip* (2014, Srđan Koljević), and Bosnian-French co-production *Smrt u Sarajevu/Death in Sarajevo* (2016, Danis Tanović). Reopening the question of Austro-German responsibility for the start of WWI, Prochaska's film is based on the conspiracy theory that parts of the Austro-German elite organized the assassination as a pretext for a quick invasion of Serbia. Koljević's legal drama thematizes Rudolf Zistler's defense of the assassins on the grounds of the illegality of the 1908 Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a nominally Ottoman province. Tanović's film, set in dysfunctional post-Yugoslav Bosnia-Herzegovina, involves a local journalist interviewing various interlocutors, including Princip's descendant, about the controversial legacy of the Sarajevo Assassination in the wake of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. In this context, the Yugoslav Wars "delineated a symbolic, closed circle in time and space that can be described as from Sarajevo 1914 to Sarajevo 1992" (Dakovic 2001) within which international filmmakers still grapple with the aftereffects of the short 20th century.

Conclusion

The study of Bosna Film's unmade co-productions demonstrates that the company could not agree with their international partners on how to reconcile commercial interests with the Yugoslav perception of the Sarajevo Assassination as the forerunner of their socialist revolution rather than just the trigger of WWI. If the failure of Bosna Film's cooperation with Austrian and West German companies may be associated with disparate historical views of the countries

representing former WWI enemies, then the experience with Italian filmmakers showcases the volatility of the negotiating process with partners ranging from ideological allies to more business-oriented producers. While Yugoslavs wanted the Young Bosnian assassins to be rendered as freedom fighters, their partners in general seemed to have been more interested in how to generically ‘package and sell’ the story to the global spectator. However, the co-producers failed to find middle ground on the issue of the representation of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Hohenberg on the one side and the Young Bosnian assassins on the other. The co-producers’ declared desire to bring to the screen fleshed out characters rather than manichean heroes and villains proved a stumbling block, even if everybody eventually agreed that Franz Ferdinand was not just a ruthless tyrant.

For Yugoslavs, the assassination was a terrorist act but one justified by the Young Bosnians’ noble anti-colonialism. The discourse of Austro-Hungarian colonialist occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina prevailed in Bosna Film’s conception of the Sarajevo Assassination, partly because Young Bosnian fascination with revolution, socialism, and anarchism seemed unpalatable to most of their partners from the Cold War capitalist countries. At the same time, the Yugoslavs’ aspiration to shape the narrative of the production was accompanied by their impulse to defend their contribution from financial exploitation by foreign co-producers. By prompting their partners to conduct historical research and hammer out the co-production contracts in Sarajevo, Bosna Film demonstrated its capacity to not only negotiate on an equal footing with, but also learn from their well-versed foreign partners—as in the case of adopting and modifying the narrative contrast between Franz Ferdinand and the assassins—which was one of Bosna Film’s declared objectives. The study of the unmade Sarajevo Assassination co-productions rewrites film production history by outlining how a socialist Yugoslav studio criticized and challenged

numerous famous international filmmakers, while proudly insisting on the country's anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist orientation.

Section 2: A Yugoslav “Lemon Tree in Siberia:” Adapting US-American Imperialism in the Partisan Western *Captain Leši* (1960, Živorad Mitrović)

Foreword: *The material in this section was presented at the international conference Transnationalism and Imperialism: New Perspectives on the Western, organized by the Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3 in 2018, and the CSF Seminar Media History from the Margins held in Switzerland same year. It was then published in the volume Transnationalism and Imperialism: Endurance of the Global Western Film (2022, Indiana University Press), edited by the organizers of the Montpellier conference, professors Hervé Mayer and David Roche.*

The previous section explored how the Bosnian film company resisted the commercialization of the Sarajevo Assassination as an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist act foreshadowing the Yugoslav Revolution. By contrast, this essay posits that the Belgrade filmmaker and production company that made Captain Leši adapted the genre tropes of Hollywood Western, as the vehicle of the US-American imperialism, to wrestle away the Kosovar Albanian national minority from the Ottoman and Serbian imperialisms and integrate them into the supra-national revolutionary Yugoslavism. Although Captain Leši could not avoid a certain degree of cultural appropriation of the marginalized Kosovar Albanian minority, I argue that the film’s writer/director Živorad Mitrović eschewed the common racialization of “underdeveloped” Kosovo by making an entertaining film that conveniently sidestepped the rising Kosovar Albanian demands for political autonomy.

Namely, two years before the premiere of Captain Leši, in 1958, a nationalist Kosovar Albanian dissident Adem Demaçi, aka “Balkan [Nelson] Mandela,” was imprisoned for the first time for his anti-Yugoslav activism. This was the first major sign of the simmering Albanian

discontent in postwar Kosovo. Kosovar Albanians became increasingly frustrated with the fact that, although they had a national majority in Kosovo, they were still ruled with an iron fist by the most powerful Serbian politician and second most powerful Yugoslav politician, Aleksandar Ranković. The lack of political representation and national autonomy was linked to Kosovo's low socioeconomic status. Despite federal investments into the region, Kosovo largely remained the source of cheap resources, material and human alike, as the region's mines and labor force fueled the industrial production in the more developed Yugoslav republics. When migrating to other parts of Yugoslavia, Kosovar Albanians could usually find jobs as niche craftsmen (bakers and confectioners) or in labor-intensive occupations (miners, construction workers, stokers).

Over time, Kosovar Albanian social standing would improve with the introduction of "national quotas" in education as the Yugoslav version of affirmative action. However, Kosovar Albanians continued to appear as a racialized minority in Yugoslavia, even after Kosovo received its much coveted autonomy. For example, they were often stigmatized with an othering ethnic slur and frequently referenced as a "tribe" rather than a nation, higher birth rates among Kosovar Albanians were related to their dominant historical Muslim cultural and religious background and general "backwardness," etc.

But, in 1960, the issues concerning the status of Kosovar Albanians were still not at the forefront of Yugoslavia's rapid socioeconomic development, boosted as it was by the country's non-aligned global position in general and cooperation with the west and the US in particular. The popularity of Hollywood films, especially Westerns, in Yugoslavia provided a template for one of the most skillful and prolific Yugoslav film craftsmen, Živorad Mitrović, to successfully apply the Hollywood formula in his blockbuster Captain Leši. A self-taught filmmaker who grew up on American popular culture, Mitrović saw a potential in the Hollywood genre for a more

inclusive mode of representation of Kosovar Albanians. Additionally, though he came from Belgrade (Serbia), Mitrović worked across the entire Yugoslavia. For example, in 1958, he directed the first Macedonian color feature and one of the first Yugoslav color films, Miss Stone, based on a true story of the kidnapping of the American Protestant missionary Ellen Maria Stone by the turn-of-the-century pro-Bulgarian Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. Film color as a new technology in Yugoslav cinema helped Mitrović in Captain Leši to depart from the oftentimes tragically intoned black-and-white Partisan films and render a new, colorful and masculine, version of the supra-national Yugoslav revolution and its overpowering of the WWII nationalist collaborationists.

Introduction

The Partisan Western was a hybrid of the most emblematic genre of socialist Yugoslavia, the Partisan film, and the Western. In postwar Yugoslavia, the People's Liberation War was represented as a threefold "founding myth" (Goulding 2002, 11): a resistance against the Axis powers, a socialist revolution, and a civil war fought between the Communist-led Partisans and various local Quislings. Unsurprisingly, the goal of the multifaceted Yugoslav war remembrance culture was teaching younger generations about the legacy of the People's Liberation War and preserving "the brotherhood and unity" of Yugoslav nations.

The topos of civil war emerges as a link between the Partisan film and the Western. Building on Will Wright's well-known, if reductive, structuralist approach to the Western, Peter Stanković (2015, 253) discerns three principal characters of the 1970s Partisan Westerns—the Partisans, the Germans, and *narod* (people/nation)—which resemble Wright's types of the gunman, ranchers, and homesteaders, the main difference being that in the Partisan Western the

characters are mostly collective. Accordingly, “the representation of Quislings as utterly incompetent soldiers appears to be primarily in the function of systematic discrediting of the Partisans’ ideological opponents” (254). A Yugoslav edition of Jean-Louis Rieuepeyrout’s book *Le Western ou le cinéma, américain par excellence*, prefaced by André Bazin, was published in 1960 and provided a timely definition of the Western as “any movie of action-based, adventurous, military character with a plot set in the Western areas of the United States” that focused on the conflicts between the wilderness and civilization, settlers and Indians, and representatives of the law and violent men (Vučetić 2018, 64). Rieuepeyrout’s definition of the Western emphasized the genre’s military dimension, which was particularly important for then emerging Partisan Westerns.

This chapter investigates how the Partisan Western *Kapetan Leši/Captain Leši* adapts US-American cultural imperialism and approaches the WWII conflict between the Partisans and Kosovar Quislings in order to symbolically absorb Kosovar Albanians into the postwar supra-national Yugoslav project. My overview of the Americanization of Yugoslav culture and a historical background of nationalism in Kosovo and Metohija (henceforth Kosovo) will set the stage for the narrative, iconographic, and production analysis of the film, coupled with the juxtaposition of *Kapetan Leši* and related Hollywood and Eastern European Westerns. In conceptualizing the key terms of this volume, I follow Chapman and Cull’s dictum that “[t]he American empire is not a formal empire of territorial acquisition but an informal empire of political and economic influence” (2009, 17). Furthermore, although it would be questionable to describe *Kapetan Leši* as a post-Western due to its enthusiastic and unquestioning appropriation of the genre, González’s understanding of the transnational dimension of post-Westerns is applicable to *Kapetan Leši* insofar as the film “use[s] features from the Hollywood Western

genre and establish[es] a political relationship between space and national identity, by using locations situated in cardinal points different from the West precisely to question the identities and foundation myths of the countries where they are made” (2016, 5).

Better Partisans and Ballists than Cowboys and Indians

The 1948 Tito-Stalin Split was the crucial turning point in postwar Yugoslav history, ushering in the country’s self-management doctrine that combined elements of the market-driven economy and socialist ideals of equality, as well as the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement as an alternative to Cold War polarization. Josip Broz Tito’s government went through different periods of proximity to the USSR and USA, which, in turn, resulted in different forms of political, economic, and cultural cooperation with the superpowers.

In her investigation of the Americanization of 1960s Yugoslav culture, Radina Vučetić (2018, 8) supplements Tomlinson’s conceptualization of US-American cultural imperialism with her own view of Americanization as “a phenomenon that with the help of nonpolitical symbols and stereotypes, and by its own insistence on its nonpolitical nature, carries out American political plans and achieves its objectives.” Vučetić adds that the Americanization of Yugoslavia was by no means a unilinear transfer, but a complex process involving adaptation and hybridization of US-American cultural forms. This is also the case of Partisan Westerns. Indeed, the wide popularity of US-American cultural products in post-1948 Yugoslavia included the domination of Hollywood films. Both Tito and the ordinary moviegoer favored Westerns—*Rio Grande* (1950, John Ford), *High Noon* (1952, Fred Zinnemann), and *Shane* (1953, George Stevens) in particular were big hits. Numerous Western co-productions were filmed in

Yugoslavia, leading a Yugoslav stunt double, Gojko Mitić, to become a major transnational star of East German *Indianerfilme* (a Western sub-genre featuring Native Americans as protagonists and white settlers as antagonists). The Yugoslav press reported on the activities of the John Wayne fan club in Zagreb, popularity of Karl May's novel *Winnetou* among Yugoslav youth, local impersonators of cowboys and sheriffs, and other Western-inspired phenomena (Vučetić 2018, 64-68).

It is in this context that the writer/director of *Captain Leši*, Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović (1921-2005), came to the fore. Born in Belgrade, Mitrović published original Western comics in the interwar period in order to pay for English lessons and a subscription to *American Cinematographer* and *The Hollywood Reporter* (Crnjanski 2004). Having directed a few documentaries about the postwar modernization of Kosovo, Mitrović made his feature debut with a Partisan Western set in WWII Kosovo, *Ešalon doktora M./Doctor M.'s Echelone* (1955). This story about the combat between the Partisans and the Kosovar branch of the Balli Kombëtar, henceforth the Ballists, was a box office success, and the critical acclaim Mitrović received for "replacing the tired, pathetic Partisan epic with a lively and attractive action-filled spectacle" (Munitić according to Vučetić 2018, 69) enabled him to direct Partisan Westerns such as *Obračun/The Shootout* (1962), the sequel to *Kapetan Leši*, and *Brat doktora Homera/Doctor Homer's Brother* (1969) which combined the iconography and the final showdown from Sergio Leone's Spaghetti Westerns *Per un pugno di dollari/A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo/The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966) (Vučetić 2010, 144).

Mitrović's model for producing attractive films about the ideals of the freedom fight and revolution demonstrated how to transform bureaucrat-run Yugoslav cinema into a network of profit-oriented production units—a self-declared objective of the Yugoslav government since the

mid-1950s (Miloradović 2010, 90-91). The influence of Mitrović's production model is visible in Partisan Westerns like *Diverzanti/The Demolition Squad* (1967), *Most/The Bridge* (1969), *Valter brani Sarajevo/Valter Defends Sarajevo* (1972), and *Partizanska eskadrila/The Partisan Air Fleet* (1979), all directed by Hajrudin 'Šiba' Krvavac (Vučetić 2010, 144-46), as well as Predrag Golubović's *Bombaši/Bombers* (1973) and *Crveni udar/The Red Strike* (1974). More importantly, "[Mitrović's] 'imported' poetics with local themes had a pedagogical role, as film magazines of the day reported. It would guide children toward playing Partisans and Ballists instead of the traditional cowboys and Indians, and it was also thought that films like *Kapetan Leši* would lead young people to share the ideals represented by the captain rather than those of Tarzan" (Vučetić 2018, 71).

Mitrović himself argued in 1982 that the goal of his films was to compete as much as possible with the most popular foreign films (Kurjak-Pavićević 1982): in other words, to compete with the products of US-American cultural imperialism. This, however, does not mean that Mitrović's approach to the genre was the result of his being a Party member, for "we need to get rid of the binary logic of 'either party hack, or dissident master,' and permit the possibility that party members were also capable of criticizing their society" (Jovanović 2015, 288). In fact, Mitrović's early career focus on Kosovo gave him an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective on the province's nationalisms.

The 1389 Battle of Kosovo is an ideal event to study the complicated history of ethnic nationalism in Kosovo evoked in *Captain Leši*. The battle has been mythologized by Serbian nationalists as the collapse of the medieval Serbian Empire (Čolović 2016). During the 500-year Ottoman yoke in the wake of the battle, a growing number of mostly Muslim Albanians had populated Kosovo to the point that the Serbianization of the province became a virtually

impossible mission in the interwar Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians (from 1929 known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), whose creation in 1918 marked the definite end of Ottoman imperial rule of the province. The effort to establish Serbian domination in Kosovo, one marked by strong imperialist overtones during and after the First Balkan War,⁸⁰ in the long run led to the WWII backlash spearheaded by the above mentioned anti-Communist, anti-Yugoslav, and anti-Greek Albanian collaborationists, the Ballists. After the Yugoslav Partisans finally received the support of the Allied forces, an increased number of Kosovar Albanians joined the Partisans when the new Communist government promised Kosovo the right to self-determination in a new Yugoslav federation (Vickers 1998, 137). But when the Yugoslav leadership remained unwilling to press Serbian Communists to give up on Kosovo, Kosovar Albanians focused on limiting Serb migration to Kosovo and gaining cultural autonomy.⁸¹

The mythology of the Battle of Kosovo echoes the Western mythology analyzed by Richard Slotkin, particularly in terms of framing the 1389 battle as the Last Stand of Serbian Christendom against the Ottoman invasion. The myth of Kosovo as the cradle of Serbian national identity was utilized by the turn-of-the-century Kingdom of Serbia to expand its southern frontier at the expense of the weakened Ottoman Empire, and thus effectively oppose similar territorial ambitions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the lead-up to World War I. It should be stressed, however, that the impact of the Battle of Kosovo and its US-American counterpart, Custer's Last Stand, differ insofar as the latter, albeit a resounding defeat of the US

⁸⁰ See, for example, *Srbija i Arbanija: jedan prilog kritici zavojevačke politike srpske buržoazije* [Serbia and Albania: A Contribution to the Critique of the Conqueror Policy of the Serbian Bourgeoisie], a 1914 book written by the leader of the Serbian Social Democratic Party, Dimitrije Tucović.

⁸¹ While this section employs *Captain Leši* to look at the entanglement of Ottoman and Serbian imperialisms, postwar Yugoslav supranationalism, and Albanian nationalism, the history of Kosovar Albanians before, within, and after socialist Yugoslavia is full of additional complexities outlined in volumes such as Malcolm 2002, Mehmeti and Radeljić 2017, and Hetemi 2020.

Army, could not fundamentally hinder the project of closing the US-American frontier. In contrast, to this day the conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo remains unresolved. Whereas the US-American Western, even in its revisionist iterations, continuously demonstrates the dominance of the settlers, *Captain Leši* moves away from the mythology of the Battle of Kosovo in the attempt to incorporate Kosovar Albanians into the supra-national Yugoslav state. The Western comes into being as the US-American genre par excellence precisely because there is no doubt regarding the triumph of the white settlers, while Mitrović's film can only emulate its US-American generic model without presenting a universally agreed-upon resolution of Kosovar national conflict. In 1960, the year of *Captain Leši*'s premiere, Kosovar Albanian nationalism was still far from its culmination, but it seems the film indicated its disintegrative power. With the exception of a deserter Helmut, *Captain Leši* does not feature Germans as the Partisans' archenemies, which is all the more reason to conclude that the film addressed Kosovar Albanian nationalism as a potential threat to Yugoslav federalism.

A Hero from Down South

The story of *Captain Leši* starts at the end of WWII, with an ethnic Kosovar Albanian Partisan captain, Ramiz Leši, seeking to destroy the remnants of a Ballist squad led by the notorious Kosta and Leši's brother Ahmet, whom Leši considers a traitor. Upon learning his brother had refused to kill anyone, Leši saves his brother who reveals he was forced to join the Ballists to protect their Leši bey family. In the end, Ahmet helps his brother Ramiz who is posing as an undercover Ballist, shoots Kosta, and returns with Leši to their family estate.

Early Yugoslav Partisan films, including *Captain Leši*, share a common feature with the national cosmogenesis of early Westerns, for in the world of the Western “from the groups of different nationalities, languages, religions and ethical systems . . . an integrated society was supposed to be created, a new nation, a new setup” (Turković 1985, 140). An important aspect of the Western’s national cosmogenesis is the harmonization of an individual and a collective through which the hero finds his place in society and acquires meaning for his personal sacrifice. As Benedict Anderson remarks, “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible . . . for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (2006 [1983], 7). The notion of horizontal comradeship is particularly relevant for the history of conflicts such as the American Civil War represented in Hollywood Westerns and the civil war in occupied WWII Yugoslavia represented in Partisan Westerns. The process of national cosmogenesis, marked by a socialist prefix, takes place in *Kapetan Leši* as well, with the new Yugoslav state relying on the ideological conversion of masculine heroes in trying to reconcile different nations, religions, and cultures.

Moreover, the Yugoslav state is ready to forgive the heroic comrade his crudeness, as in the scene when Leši attempts to seduce a teacher and one of the few Serb characters in the film, Vida. Coming from Belgrade and looking like a typical blonde schoolmarm, Vida reminds Leši of his duty towards collectivism by asking him to lend the family piano to a local school, but at that stage, Leši is still not politically “mature” enough to give up on his brother’s aristocratic inheritance. The Serb teacher is akin to the settlers from Hollywood Westerns in that she comes from the capital to educate a provincial soldier (Leši) on how to organize a new government,

which means that, in *Captain Leši* at least, Serbs are ready to construct a supra-national identity with Kosovar Albanian communists.

Similarly, the strong State in Mitrović's film appears ready to forgive the repenting Ballists, such as Leši's brother Ahmet, for passively supporting the nationalists. Although Ahmet's main excuse for joining the Ballists was his family's safety, his social status is very close to the pro-Islamic Kosovar Albanian beys, who backed the Ballists to preserve their land ownership. The beys had dominated both Albanian lower classes and the oppressed Christian population, and remained by and large loyal to the Ottoman Empire during its multicentury occupation of Kosovo (Vickers 1998, 44-67). In *Captain Leši*, Mitrović essentially transposes the archetypal Western conflict between the rich landowners and poor farmers into the Balkan context, the difference being that the land in Kosovo (and the rest of Yugoslavia) was to be collectivized, at least temporarily. In other words, *Captain Leši* strives to transform the national conflict between Kosovar Serbs and Albanians into an act of emancipatory class struggle by the Kosovar Albanian peasantry against their beys as the last representatives of feudal forms of economic exploitation associated with Ottoman imperialism. *Captain Leši* thus transforms WWII nationalist strife into a socialist revolution that seeks to integrate Kosovar Albanians into a supra-national Yugoslav federation.

The symbolic thrust of the outlined generic transposition depends on the configuration of national representation. Nikica Gilić (2015, 240-241) suggests that "Kosovar Albanians and other minorities were sometimes treated in Yugoslav films in the nationalist manner similar to the treatment of American minorities in the Western genre." Gilić emphasizes the fact that, in *Captain Leši*, an ethnic Serb (Mitrović), working for a Belgrade company (Slavija Film), directed a predominantly Serb and Macedonian cast, with some Kosovar Albanian actors. Trans-

national (and trans-ethnic) cooperation was a staple of Yugoslav cinema in which, for instance, a Serbian director would be hired by a Slovenian studio to direct a Croatian star. However, Gilić's conflation of national and racial minorities in Yugoslav and US-American cinema notwithstanding, it should be noted that, in the first postwar decades, there was a short supply of skilled actors and technical personnel in Kosovo. And even though the charge of linguistic hegemony should not be discarded, given that Albanian characters in *Captain Leši* speak Serbian, the situation changed in the 1970s and 1980s when the first productions in Albanian began to appear as a result of more substantial Kosovar political autonomy granted by the 1974 Yugoslav constitution.

Another set of Western conventions pursued in *Captain Leši* concerns the genre's iconography. For example, the smoky and noisy tavern frequented by Leši and his friends is reminiscent of the saloon in *Rio Bravo* (1959, Howard Hawks) (Vučetić 2010, 138). After defending his Walter Brennan-like sidekick Šok in a customary fistfight, Leši follows the curvaceous red-headed tavern singer and hooker with a heart of gold, Lola, for a one-night stand in her room on the tavern's upper floor. Hurt that Leši does not return her love, Lola falls for his Ballist enemy, Kosta, only to sacrifice herself in the end and help Leši capture Kosta's squad, thereby fulfilling her destiny in the well-known Western trope of the saloon B-girl (Bazin according to Vučetić 2010, 139). The film's rendition of Leši's hometown, Prizren,⁸² combines visual cues of old Ottoman Balkan towns on the one hand, and settlements on the Mexico-US border on the other. Long shots, in turn, reveal characters who "ride on horses through canyons

⁸² The choice of Prizren as Leši's hometown is highly symbolic as it had been both a capital of the medieval Serbian Empire and the birthplace of the League of Prizren, officially the League for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nation, established in 1878 in response to the territorial expansion of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro confirmed at the Congress of Berlin. Though the League was suppressed by the declining Ottoman Empire, it has served as a historical cornerstone in the development of Albanian nationalism.

and gulches, attack one another from behind boulders, and gallop through landscapes identical to the prairies in the Wild West” (Vučetić 2018, 70), all captured in Kosovo and central Serbia. The rocky hideouts used by Ballists and the eerie earth pyramids of Đavolja varoš (lit. Devil’s Town)—the setting of the final showdown—bear a strong resemblance to picturesque landscapes from *Broken Arrow* (1950, Delmer Daves) and *Naked Spur* (1953, Anthony Mann). Costume design is another prominent feature of *Captain Leši*, as Partisans in spotless military uniforms fight against dirty and merciless Ballists, wearing Albanian folk costumes which highlight their conservative nationalism. Thus, the Ballists’ opposition to the Partisans’ integrationist and federalist political agenda echoes the conflict between the South and the North in the American Civil War. Lastly, Leši’s protagonism is underscored by his skillful gunplay and riding a white horse.

Film color played a significant role in *Captain Leši*’s transnational reach.⁸³ Mitrović and his colleagues must have been attracted to the colorful 1950s Hollywood Westerns they saw in Yugoslavia, but it is possible they could not afford the kind of film stock favored by Hollywood, so they opted for the more available alternative. Filmed in vivid and optimistic Agfacolor, *Captain Leši* was clearly meant to appear in stark contrast to the more dramatic black-and-white 1950s Partisan films. Only three Yugoslav films, including *Captain Leši* and its sequel, were made with Agfacolor (Koshofer n.d., 3-4), which was first produced in Nazi Germany, and then in West and East Germanies, as an alternative to Kodak and the like (Diecke 2019, 211-14). According to a Yugoslav journalist (Jajčanin 1961) irritated by the film’s international commodification, *Captain Leši* had an unidentified West German co-producer negotiating a

⁸³ I would like to thank Josephine Diecke, a PhD student working on the research project *Film Colors: Technologies, Cultures, Institutions*, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, for kindly pointing me to the sources on the color of *Captain Leši*.

larger role for a Yugoslav-turned-West German actress Selma Karlovac aka Elma Karlowa. It is very likely that the same producer secured Agfacolor stock from the Leverkusen factory, along with the participation of another West German actor, Rainer Penkert, who played a key role of Leši's brother, as well as in the distribution of the film in West Germany under the title *Auf der Spur der Verräter*. The film was actually pre-sold to the West German company for DM170,000, with an option for the global distribution to be bought by the Hollywood studio MGM for USD400,000, meaning that *Captain Leši* alone was worth almost the entire yearly export of all Yugoslav films to West Germany (Batančev 2014, 372). *Captain Leši* thus contributed to building a transnational bridge between cultures of socialist Yugoslavia and capitalist West Germany, which is striking because of the way in which the film quite literally rendered socialist Yugoslav revolution more colorful and appealing to the Western European audience.

Ideologically speaking, *Captain Leši* lacks the characters of political commissars, as well as images or slogans related to the Yugoslav leader Tito, so it could be argued that the director wanted to avoid propaganda. That said, the Yugoslav army plays an important role in the film, much like in the Partisan spectacles from the 1970s and 1980s, when it was positioned as one of the three pillars of Tito's Yugoslavia, together with the Communist Party and Tito himself (Zvijer 2011, 85-103). Consequently, Leši stands for a soldier of the people's Partisan army who, despite his larger-than-life proportions, remains uninterested in the world of high politics. The idea of Yugoslavism in the film comes from below (the hero who is close to the people and rejects his family wealth), not from above (Tito or the Party representatives). In *Captain Leši*, Kosovar Albanians organically accept the ideology of supra-national socialism which effectively neutralizes the aforementioned Kosovar Albanian nationalist backlash against Serbian domination. This assumption is reflected in the film's popularity among the audience and film

critics alike, with only occasional complaints about Mitrović's generic hybridization as a "lemon tree in Siberia" (Lisinski according to Vučetić 2018, 71). Captain Leši became "the Yugoslav Flash Gordon or Tom Mix" (Deneš according to Vučetić 2018, 72), spawning one of the first Yugoslav sequels as well as a comic book series and popular song (Batančev 2014, 377). Having been compared to Gary Cooper for his portrayal of Leši, Aleksandar Gavrić "attained the status of one of Yugoslavia's first film stars" and "was the first Yugoslav actor to appear on the cover of the magazine *Filmski svet*, heretofore 'reserved' only for the stars from the West" (Vučetić 2018, 70). *Captain Leši* was popular not only in West Germany, but also in Algeria (Batančev 2014, 373). Overall, Mitrović successfully adapted the Western topoi of US-American imperialism for his contribution to Yugoslav national debate. A more elaborate comparison of *Captain Leši* with its Hollywood predecessors and Eastern European analogues in the next section will amplify the film's specificity in the genre's transnational milieu.

Marx and May

While there seem to be no explicit sources on *Captain Leši*'s role models, it would be hard to overlook the influence of John Ford's œuvre on Mitrović (Vučetić 2018, 69), especially the emphasis on the military dimension of state-building in Ford's *Cavalry Trilogy* (1948-1950), embodied in the strong and righteous officers played by John Wayne. It is important, though, to keep in mind that the *Cavalry Trilogy* takes on the clash of the US state and Native American tribes, a racially charged conflict decided long before its cinematic rendition, whereas *Captain Leši* presents an ideologically imbued civil war between communist and nationalist Kosovar Albanians as reflecting the undecided confrontation between Kosovar Albanians and their

Yugoslav and Serbian opponents. Moreover, *Captain Leši*'s plot recalls, in some respects at least, that of *The Searchers* (1956, John Ford) inasmuch Leši's anxiety about his brother's joining the ideologically impure Ballists parallels Ethan Edwards's obsession with his niece's abduction by the Comanche. There are also telling differences between the two films. The protagonist of *The Searchers* is a defeated Confederate soldier who arguably seeks to return to the fold of his white settler identity; by comparison, Captain Leši is a war victor who does not hesitate to cooperate with other nations in building postwar Yugoslavia.

It is tempting to note that *Captain Leši* was not tailored to the pattern of postwar Hollywood Westerns in which "[a] confident vision of the grand sweep of American history as an inevitable, onward march of progress is lost" (White 2011, 23). However, as Matthew Carter (2015, 224) has convincingly demonstrated in his critique of the sharp division between "classic" and "revisionist" Westerns, "the cinematic Western metamorphoses according to the exigencies of a given time and the visions of individual artists, but as a whole it has refused any defined pattern of continuous development." Moreover, Janet Staiger posits that "[t]he argument that earlier Westerns—c. 1930-60—are instances of a somehow more 'pure classical genre,' is to suggest narrative simplicity and even mono-ideological naivety" (according to Carter 2015, 34). Clearly, there is no need for a strict classification of *Captain Leši* when its main antecedents resist falling into categories such as strictly "optimistic" or "pessimistic" Westerns. This rings even more true when comparing the Partisan Western to other Eastern European forays into the genre.

Unlike the DEFA-*Indianerfilme*—e.g. *Spur des Falken/Trail of the Falcon* (1968, Gottfried Kolditz), *Osceola* (1971, Konrad Petzold), *Tecumseh* (1972, Hans Kratzert)—*Captain Leši* is not an ironic modification of the Western. Tim Bergfelder (2005a, 203) contends that in East German *Indianerfilme* ". . . Karl Marx rather than [Karl] May, the international solidarity of the

oppressed, and anti-imperialist sentiments provided the answer to the quest for identity,” even if some of these films represented “resistance against socialism as ‘a form of alien domination’,” with the implication that they “may have been open to multiple and even resistant, ideological readings.” By contrast, *Captain Leši* did not play on anti-imperialist and anti-US-American sentiments. When Mitrović claimed he wanted to compete with Hollywood Westerns, it was only because he saw a way of using the genre’s popularity to promote rather than contest socialist Yugoslavism.

Writing about other subgeneric cognates of the Partisan Western, Vincent Bohlinger (2014, 307) labels the classic *White Sun of the Desert* (1970, Vladimir Motyl), set in Turkmenistan, a Soviet Western “to distinguish [it] from the European Red Westerns that predated, rather than influenced the film.” There are multiple connections between *Captain Leši* and *White Sun of the Desert*: the focus on the revolution and civil war in the “underdeveloped” province, gunfighting, a soldier as the main character, etc. The protagonist of the Soviet film is Russian by origin, and thus a representative of the majoritarian part of Soviet identity; his rivals are the Basmachi guerrillas, whom the film situates “in the place of the Indians, as the darker-skinned Other representing savagery and wilderness, and positions the burgeoning Soviet state as ‘civilization’” (310). Historically, the Basmachi stood up to the Russians as imperial oppressors, but “[s]uch objections are, unsurprisingly, not given voice in the film, in ways similar to the indigenous tribes of American Westerns” (311). Crucially, “[t]he choice of the Basmachi as enemies reflects an attempt at strategic sensitivity toward non-Russian Soviet cultures; they were used because they were a *political* group, not an ethnic group. The Basmachi, in fact, comprised various ethnicities, but any mention of specific Muslim groups was written out of the script in order to avoid complications” (313). This mirrors Mitrović’s decision to avoid any emphatic reference to

the Ballists' nationality, framing them instead as collaborators and bandits. The reluctance to name and potentially stigmatize recalcitrant nations evinces the desire of socialist states to incorporate these national minorities into their supra-national cultures and efface an imperial and colonial legacy, thus running counter to the tendencies of many US-American Westerns.

In her analysis of 1970s Hungarian Westerns about pre-20th century roving bandits fighting against the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, Sonja Simonyi (2014, 223) identifies the idiosyncrasy of the region where these outlaws operated: "The *puszta*, a large stretch of flatland spreading across eastern Hungary, fulfills an important role in the national imaginary, celebrated as the site where nomadic Hungarians are thought to have settled in the ninth century, a physical space designated as the birthplace of the Hungarian nation." To a varying degree, Hungarian Westerns demythologize the romantic, nationalist image of the Hungarian outlaw, thereby correlating with the similar treatment of Kosovar Albanian nationalists in *Captain Leši*, not to mention the Yugoslav film's deconstruction of Kosovo as the hotbed of Serb and Albanian national myths.

All in all, while there is no evidence that *Kapetan Leši* directly influenced subsequent Eastern European Westerns, there is an obvious likeness of generic structures transferred and employed to think through the issues of imperialism and supra-national integration. Additionally, the regional Westerns benefited greatly from transnational cultural exchanges within Europe, further exemplified by Simonyi's mention of Yugoslav-born Bulgarian Djoko Rosic, the star of Hungarian Westerns.

Conclusion

As Vučetić (2018, 304) argued, “attractive American forms, especially in terms of mass culture, were the ideal frameworks for ‘packaging’ content that suited [Yugoslav] authorities,” while consumerist culture, “Americanization and the orientation toward the West were used as ‘shock absorbers’ for problems facing Yugoslav society, and above all it was nascent nationalism that needed to be ‘absorbed’.” *Captain Leši* appends this conclusion by showing that US-American cultural imperialism manifested by the Hollywood Western was refashioned from a serious threat to the popularity of the Partisan film genre to a useful representational form in Yugoslav national debates. Furthermore, certain facets of *Captain Leši*’s narrative and reception suggest that a danger greater than US-American cultural imports came from the feudal and bourgeois subjugation of Kosovar Albanian peasants in the Ottoman Empire and Kingdom of Yugoslavia. *Captain Leši* also offers historical initiative to Kosovar Albanians in building a socialist society in which Serbs would be their partners rather than masters, even if this proposition came with a note of cultural condescension towards the “underdeveloped” province.⁸⁴

In the complex world of Yugoslav supra-national cinema, *Captain Leši* appeared too early to effectively dispute the representation of Kosovar Albanians by non-Albanian filmmakers. On the

⁸⁴ Interestingly enough, although Mitrović was one of the most prolific Yugoslav filmmakers, in addition to being a highly ranked cultural official, *Captain Leši* was censored by the central Yugoslav film censorship body from 1944-1971, Savezna komisija za pregled filmova [Federal Film Review Committee]: “In the wake of the upheaval of the Kosovar Albanian nationalism in the late 1950s, the censors first inexplicably banned the export of the film, only to have their interventions proposed after the producer announced a potential financial loss. The censors’ changes had not endangered the integrity of *Captain Leshi*; in fact, some of them even improved or clarified certain aspects of the film, thus destabilizing the theory of non-contestable totalitarian censorship” in the socialist world (Batančev 2014, 379). Nevertheless, the censors could not help reinforcing the image of Kosovo as “a small and backward province.”

other hand, the transnational co-production with a West German partner was based on commercial interests, which was yet another indication of the influence of the US-American way of life. In the genre's wider transnational context, *Captain Leši* eschewed the anti-imperialist and anti-US-American connotations of the *Indianerfilme*, while sharing its affinity for militaristic state-building, avoidance of political alienation of ethnic minorities, and its repudiation of older national myths with John Ford's classics, Soviet *White Sun of the Desert*, and Hungarian Westerns respectively. In the end, a concentrated dose of the Western's individualism, embodied in the exceptional Leši, infused the foundational myth of the WWII freedom fight with spectacular entertainment and radiant appeal, but ultimately fell short of establishing a stable historical image of Kosovo.

CHAPTER 2: YUGOSLAV NEW FILM'S QUEST FOR A NEW REVOLUTION

You know, Don [Rickles] and I made a picture together in Yugoslavia. It's called *Kelly's Heroes*... Yugoslavia. Oh, God. Never forget... One of the few places in the world where you can still enjoy yourself without having a good time.
(Aristotelis 'Telly' Savalas, 1974)⁸⁵

Where does it come from, this striving of America to make other nations happy—against their will?
...
Twenty years [after WWII], Belgrade youth weekly *Mladost* conducted polls trying to find out who were the heroes of the contemporary young. At the top of the list: Che Guevara and John F. Kennedy.
(Dušan Makavejev, 1980, original text)

⁸⁵ Telly Savalas Roasts Don Rickles, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPp5RHpk5E&t=1s>

Section 3: Some Revolution You Are!: *The Ambush* (1969, Živojin Pavlović) as a Reflection of the 1968 Student Protests

Foreword: *The material for this section was presented at the 3rd International Conference on Balkan Cinema The Great War(s): Our Story, held in Bucharest in 2018. It was then presented at the regional conference Umetnost Živojina Pavlovića: priče, svetovi, mediji [Živojin Pavlović's Art: Stories, Worlds, Media], co-organized by the Belgrade Institute for Literature and Art and my alma mater, the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, in 2018, and subsequently published in the conference proceedings in Serbian. Mining Pavlović's rich literary and cinematic archive, I trace his uncompromising critique of revolutionary violence in *The Ambush* to his youthful disillusionment with Communist ideology, abandonment of the Soviet revolutionary cinema as an aesthetic paragon, and, most importantly, the romantic failure of the 1968 student revolution. Pavlović's anti-populist auteurism is characterized by a mixture of fascination with and disdain for peasants as a revolutionary force, thus clashing with the optimistic projections of the peasantry in *Captain Leši* and mainstream Partisan films. However, despite his perennial struggle with censorship and ideological persecution, Pavlović remained faithful to pursuing, rather than renouncing, a better and more just revolutionary transformation of Yugoslavia.*

From a broader historical perspective, and in contrast to the dissertation's Chapter 1 as a mirror of successful Yugoslav developmentalism, this dissertation section is centered on the crisis of the post-1965 Yugoslav socialism. After the 1966 ousting of the Communist hard-liner Aleksandar Ranković and the unsuccessful economic reform that plunged Yugoslavia into economic instability and rising unemployment, Živojin Pavlović found himself as a member of an in-between generation: on the one hand, he started criticizing the bureaucratic dogmatism of the

older revolutionary generation that he blamed for the Yugoslav shift towards capitalism and intense social crisis; on the other, Pavlović supported the Belgrade student rebellion in 1968 as a challenge to the Yugoslav Communist regime, but ultimately found the students too feeble to exert social change. Therefore, in *The Ambush*, he resorted to a fierce critique of the Stalinist roots of Yugoslav revolutionary terror and his insistence on pessimism, subjectivity, and personalism as a subversion of the Yugoslav collectivist mythology and banal nationalist instincts. Generally speaking, using film as a philosophical tool, Pavlović indulged in his life-long fascination with violence, from role models such as French and Hollywood noir and Luis Buñuel to his own trademark representations of sexual violence as a reflection of social tensions. For the Yugoslav auteur, revolutionary leaps, even at their best, could not conceal or fundamentally transform the animalistic and destructive features of human condition.

Introduction

Zaseda/The Ambush (1969) was the fourth feature directed by Živojin Pavlović and, by his own admission, his most personal and favorite film (Pavlović 1990b, 90). Taking into account the film's indirect references to Pavlović's youth, political and artistic views, as well as his perception of the 1968 student protest in Belgrade, *The Ambush* can be approached as Pavlović's intellectual autobiography. Therefore this chapter contextualizes *The Ambush* with regard to Pavlović's autobiographical and self-referential publications, such as his autobiography *Planeta filma* [*The Film Planet*]; diaries *Izgnanstvo I* [*Exile I*] and *Ispljuvak pun krvi* [*A Bloodful Sputum*]; Pavlović's interviews published by the press and in the books *Dva razgovora* [*Two Conversations*], *Jahač na lokomotivi* [*A Locomotive's Rider*], and *Jezgro napetosti* [*The Nucleus of Tension*]; essays on cinema, politics, and history collected in the volume *Đavolji film* [*Devilish Film*]; and essays about

friends and collaborators in *Belina sutra* [*Whiteness of Tomorrow*].

A note about this heterogeneous collection of historical and literary sources. The majority of *Dva razgovora* is a recording of a 19-hour long interview that took place over the course of three days in Pavlović's Belgrade apartment in 1982. Questions were posed by the film critic Nenad Polimac and director Zoran Tadić from Zagreb, as well as three Belgrade filmmakers: Nedeljko Despotović, former Pavlović's student Slobodan Šijan, and Nebojša Pajkić, Pavlović's assistant at the Belgrade Faculty of Dramatic Arts. The interviewers did not abide by the methodology of oral history and instead frequently commented on Pavlović's work. The interview encompassed the chronology of Pavlović's life from his birth until the last film that he directed, with follow up questions mostly focusing on the eclectic international influences on Pavlović's cinematic oeuvre. Throughout the interview, Pavlović strove to describe and clarify numerous controversial moments in his career.

Planeta filma likewise covers Pavlović's life in a chronological manner, adding a few travelogues related to his guest appearances at the international film festivals. A few longer segments are devoted to Pavlović's experience with censorship, anecdotes from the film sets, and unmade projects. Since his early 20s, Pavlović had expressed dissatisfaction with postwar Yugoslav society. Some of his first invectives can be found in the diary *Izgnanstvo I* (written with interruptions from 1956 to 1962) in which he mocks Serbian Communist officials Petar Stambolić and Milentije Popović (Pavlović 1999, 96-97). The diary was not printed until 1999, which is understandable given its harsh criticism of the Serb mentality and Josip Broz Tito's personality cult. *Ispljuvak pun krvi* is Pavlović's diary about his experience of the 1968 Belgrade student protest. The contents of the diary will be scrutinized more closely in the sub-chapter about the influence of the student protest on the production and reception of *The Ambush*. The diary was so controversial

that it could not be published until 1984 and even then its first edition was banned and destroyed (Gajer 1990). It was finally published in 1990 before the collapse of Yugoslavia.

This essay investigates Pavlović's writings to determine how *The Ambush* embodies the filmmaker's life story and worldview. For example, during the filming of *The Ambush*, Pavlović deliberately used a long-take directing style diametrically opposed to that of Sergey Eisenstein in order to symbolically refute the political and aesthetic views associated with his early idol. I will demonstrate that *The Ambush* represents a subjective vision of the revolutionary war through which Pavlović articulates his critique of Yugoslav collectivism based on the mythology of the People's Liberation Struggle. In keeping with his revolutionary apostasy, the director emphasizes the animalistic aspect of the human being fighting for the ideals of liberty and equality. Pavlović deserves our attention for his perseverance and the ways in which he imperiled himself in order to advance his subjective historical experience.

A New Man for the New Film

Born in 1933, Živojin Pavlović witnessed the bloody WWII conflict between the Partisans and Chetniks in the small central Serbian town Jagodina. Soon after the war his family moved to rural eastern Serbia where he set *The Ambush*. Enchanted with rural daily life, Pavlović was shocked by the violence of postwar collectivization and the Informbiro period. Nevertheless, his fascination with Soviet cinema led him to become a member of the SKOJ.⁸⁶ Pavlović's faith in communism was fundamentally shaken after the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 (Jovanović 1988). His conflict with the SKJ culminated in 1957 when the pedagogical and Party committees

⁸⁶ Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije (League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia), the youth wing of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia from 1919 to 1948.

decided that he could not be admitted to the Belgrade art academy organization due to his endorsement of the “anarchic, destructive, and individualistic painting.” Pavlović in turn felt relieved after parting ways with the Party which he came to view as a “social monster” (Pavlović 1999, 291).

At the end of the 1950s Pavlović became a member of the amateur Belgrade Cinema Club (Kino Klub Beograd), the stronghold of young filmmakers interested in formal experimentation and social critique. In addition to making short films and participating in passionate debates after the screenings of international films at the Yugoslav Cinematheque, Pavlović published film reviews and essays, particularly for the magazine *Danas* where he collaborated with Dušan Makavejev, Aleksandar Petrović, and Branko Vučićević. Pavlović and his colleagues represented the Belgrade branch of Yugoslav New Film (*jugoslovenski novi film*), an informal group of filmmakers later re-branded as the Black Wave due to their allegedly dark and critical portrayal of Yugoslav socialism. Dušan Stojanović (1969, 170), the leading Yugoslav film theorist, saw the capacity of “transformation of a collective mythology into a plethora of private mythologies” as the fundamental feature of the Yugoslav New Film. As further demonstrated, the notion of “private mythology” was particularly relevant for *The Ambush*.

Searching for an alternative to the mainstream Yugoslav films about war and revolution, Pavlović praised Andrzej Wajda’s *Kanal* (1957) for depicting war as a brutal event (Pavlović 1996, 82-86). What Pavlović admired the most was Wajda’s ability to endow his film with “unpleasant images” climaxing in the absurd death of the Warsaw WWII resistance fighters portrayed as ordinary people rather than larger-than-life heroes. Pavlović was particularly fascinated with the famous long take at the beginning of *Kanal* when the voice-over foreshadows the imminent demise of the protagonists at the hands of the faceless enemy. Wajda’s directorial vision set the

stage for Pavlović's further exploration of revolution as *destruction*.

The notion of revolution as destruction existed in Pavlović's life experience and writings well before seeing *Kanal*. Besides the aforementioned childhood memory of WWII atrocities, the Yugoslav director recalled his public cursing of the "enemies of the state" at the postwar staged trials, when he acted as an unwitting witness to the expropriation and extermination of the bourgeoisie (Pavlović 1990b, 193). These memories inspired Pavlović to ruminate on potent organic metaphors of revolutionary violence. In his 1957 essay dedicated to early Soviet films about the October Revolution, Pavlović (1996, 93-95) advanced that the essence of revolution is destruction caused by the revolutionary's "organic detestation" of his own position. In his 1957 diary Pavlović (1999, 409) described revolution as "a relief of suppressed urges. ... [I]n circumstances in which psychological tension caused by physical devastation is brought to the tipping point, [the death drive] surfaces as irrational ecstasy. The character of this discharge is destructive." The same line of thought is present in the filmmaker's consideration following the 1969 premiere of *The Ambush*: "Revolutions ... are the fruit of biological necessities, whereas ideas that emerged alongside them are requisite narcotic attacks on human conscience which is supposed to complete [the revolution]" (Pavlović 1990b, 34). Organicist metaphors of destruction consistently appeared in several Pavlović's films about revolution,⁸⁷ just as metaphors of decay populated his films on contemporary themes, in which anti-heroes wander through urban peripheries.

In essence, Pavlović's concept of destruction exposes the irrational historical forces contrasting the proclaimed victory of rationalistic projects such as industrialization, electrification, and urbanization in the official Yugoslav political discourse. At the very foundation of the accelerated postwar modernization, there was a seemingly logical preconception that propensity

⁸⁷ In addition to *The Ambush*, see also *Hajka/Manhunt* (1977) and *Nasvidenje v naslednji vojni/Farewell in the Next War* (1980).

for violence and self-destruction would disappear once all Yugoslav citizens got access to electricity, running water, and paved roads. It should therefore come as no surprise that a mechanistically oriented Communist regime, whose main objective was *building* the “brotherhood and unity” of Yugoslav people harshly responded to the filmmaker who pinpointed the underlying forces with a great potential for *destroying* the fragile Yugoslav utopia. To foster a more ambiguous perception of WWII, Pavlović first had to undermine the dominant forms of its representation in Yugoslav cinema, that is, what he viewed as the embellishment of history qua “revolutionary kitsch” (Pavlović 1996, 148). Arguing against the whitewashing of certain instances of Partisan brutality, Pavlović (156) attacked the penchant for anecdotalism and “pyrotechnical exhibitions” of Veljko Bulajić, the so-called regime director of spectacular *Kozara* (1962) and *Bitka na Neretvi/The Battle of Neretva* (1969).

Pavlović’s offensive—followed by his Yugoslav New Film peers—against the older Yugoslav films about war and revolution resembles the strategy of the French New Wave cohort, who started as critics of the older generations of French filmmakers before turning to filmmaking. Granted, Yugoslav film production in the 1950s was marked by technical imperfection, but this was still a decade of professionalization and education of the country’s film cadres. It was actually the Young Turks of Pavlović’s generation that engendered the bias about the Manichean divide between the “good” Partisans and “bad” occupiers and collaborators in the early Yugoslav films. On the contrary, numerous 1950s Yugoslav films shed light on sensitive political and moral dilemmas of the Yugoslav Revolution (Jovanović 2014). Pavlović himself confirmed that some of his negative criticism was published during the heat of his struggle to gain the opportunity to direct his first feature film (Pavlović and Pajkić 2001, 56). The battle between him and directors like Veljko Bulajić was yet to happen.

Pavlović's Road to Revolution(ary Film)

In 1961 Pavlović won the Yugoslav competition for the production of a short film with his colleagues from the Belgrade Cinema Club, Vojislav 'Kokan' Rakonjac and Marko Babac. The federal Ministry of Culture organized the competition to "de-bureaucratize and refresh" Yugoslav cinema by offering a chance for young auteurs to cut their teeth (Pavlović and Pajkić 2001, 48). Pavlović, Rakonjac and Babac joined their films into an experimental omnibus *Kapi, vode, ratnici/Drops, Waters, Warriors* (1962) and sold it to a Sarajevan company Sutjeska Film which then made significant revenues at the box office. The film was booed by the audience at the annual Festival of Yugoslav Film in Pula, but it won the festival's award for the best debut. This was the moment that informed Pavlović's attitude towards the film audience as an "amoeboid body aimlessly crawling all over the place, without anyone understanding how and why it reacts the way it does" (Pajkić, Polimac et al. 1985, 14). Throughout his entire career Pavlović insisted that he did not care about making crowd-pleasing movies. On the other hand, Pavlović stressed that almost all of his films succeeded at the box office, having won producers' support with modest budgets and tight production schedules (Šömen 1986).

It was the filmmakers' frugality that motivated Sutjeska Film to produce another omnibus by Pavlović, Rakonjac, and Babac, *Grad/Town* (1963), the only film in socialist Yugoslavia to be banned by a court order. The main reason for the ban was "an unauthorized screening in a Belgrade film theatre" and the film's pessimism contradicting "the social reality." In the 1980s, Pavlović claimed that an internal conflict between the management and a group of workers in Sutjeska Film triggered the ban, though a film critic Bogdan Tirnanić (2008, 33-39) argued that the persecution of *Town* was inspired by Tito's 1963 speech which rather vaguely criticized "futile

intellectuals” for their pessimism.

During the filming of *Town*, Pavlović’s first independently directed feature film was greenlit by Ratko Dražević, the newly appointed director of the largest Yugoslav studio Avala Film. A retired major of the Yugoslav security agency OZNA and one-time spy in the United States (Pavlović 1983, 346), Dražević launched a series of ambitious international co-productions attracting the likes of Orson Welles and Nicholas Ray to Yugoslavia. Dražević also supported Yugoslav New Film, most notably *Skupljači perja/I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967, Aleksandar Petrović), the first Yugoslav feature to be awarded at the Cannes Film Festival. Dražević co-opted prominent Serbian writers-turned-nationalist intellectuals Dobrica Ćosić, Antonije Isaković and Borislav ‘Mihiz’ Mihailović into Avala Film’s Artistic Council charged with approving (and discreetly censoring) screenplays and films. Initially encouraged by the reformed studio, Pavlović centered his feature debut *Povratak/The Return* (1966) on a pessimistic story about a former convict rejected by an unforgiving society. However, after a test screening, Dražević and the Artistic Council shelved the film for four years due to its “inappropriate representation of the socialist reality” (Pavlović 1996, 205).

Although discouraged by this turn of events, Pavlović was by no means defeated. He directed his next two features *Buđenje pacova/The Rats Woke Up* (1967) and *Kad budem mrtav i beo/When I Am Dead and White* (1968) for a smaller production company FRZ Belgrade. Seeking to bypass Yugoslav censorship, Pavlović’s flexible but cautious producer, Dušan Perković, first offered these films to international festivals. This turned out to be a smart move as Pavlović’s films won awards in Karlovy Vary and Berlin, thus acquiring prestige back home (Pavlović 2002, 71-72). Pavlović could then choose the subject of his next film without any creative restraint. In fact, Perković advised Pavlović that the end of his first film about the Yugoslav revolution, *The Ambush*,

should be tragic (86). Using the positive aura around his name, Pavlović started filming *The Ambush* for FRZ Belgrade only three months after the fateful end of the 1968 Belgrade student protest.

Echoing the 1968 Student Protest

The seven-day student protest at the University of Belgrade in June 1968 revealed the depth of the Yugoslav socioeconomic crisis. At first, students took to the streets to protest their poor living standard, demanding a decrease of the unemployment rate and a return to the ideals of social justice soon thereafter. At the very beginning of the protest Pavlović had doubts about the students' political maturity: "Many, including myself, think that the majority of our youth uncritically adopts everything that their families and society impose as the 'appropriate developmental trajectory.' ... A minority follows trendy follies—from "sexual revolution" and addictive hippie-nirvana to the rebellion à la Che Guevara and singing protest songs against the Vietnam War" (Pavlović 1990a: 27-28). The filmmaker's scepticism towards the political potential of Yugoslav youth could be reflective of his own early postwar political illusions. Nevertheless, upon seeing the scale of the protest, Pavlović changed his views and, together with his erstwhile censor Borislav 'Mihiz' Mihailović, proposed sending a message of solidarity with the protest. Signed by almost 50 intellectuals, the message was read in public on the second day of the protest, June 4:

TO STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

It is with great excitement and admiration that we are following your struggle which has become a make-it-or-break-it issue for every honest person in this country. We wholeheartedly support your determination to proclaim not only your specific student demands, but also to open and advance important questions of freedom, truth and justice in our socialist society (63).

Soon dynamic debates started taking place at the University's Rectorate, mostly focusing on the reform of Yugoslav society. Numerous intellectuals, including Pavlović, publicly addressed the Student Assembly. However, Pavlović's statement on June 6, in which he warned that "changes can not be expected from the leaders of the League of Communists because that is not in their interest" (121), was met with indignation among some of the gathered students. They did not seem to share Pavlović's radical views or his doubt that the ruling nomenklatura could transform itself. It is possible that these students could not have seen a viable political alternative, especially when the government fulfilled some of their demands. Equally important was the fact that students failed to articulate the terms under which the protest should cease (Popov 2008, 93-99). Finally, the tension eased after Tito's famous televised speech on June 9, in which the Yugoslav president broadly agreed with the students who "took [the speech] as a sign of support of their ideas" and peacefully disbanded the protest (102).

This epilogue reassured Pavlović that Yugoslav society was still incapable of any substantial transformation. Yet, already in 1969 he noticed a few valuable characteristics of the 1968 protests: "They were materially inconsequential and suffered a romantic defeat, a terrible defeat, but they were incredibly important. I think they were as important as the year 1948. ... On the other hand, it is important that within our youth an *emotional opposition* was formed and is still being formed" (Pavlović 1990b, 39-40, italics added). For Pavlović, the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split was the last instance of social dialectics in Yugoslavia before 1968. All the more so because even 20 years after the notorious Goli Otok labor camp and prison was established with the aim of "political re-education" of Yugoslav Stalinists and anti-communists, the legacy of the first ideological heresy in the state socialist bloc remained a taboo. One of the reasons why Pavlović started comparing 1948 and 1968 was the latter a former prisoner of Goli Otok, Nikola

Čučković, sent to the Belgrade students in order to expose the brutal torture of his former inmates. The filmmaker was so impressed by the insider's perspective that he included Čučković's unabridged letter in *Ispljuvak pun krvi*. In a society which systematically silenced the traumatic experience of the Goli Otok prisoners, many of whom had been distinguished revolutionaries, Pavlović recognized the significance of suppressed, unofficial and, most importantly, *personal* history. No wonder that the original title of Pavlović's diary about 1968 was "Subjektivna istorija poraza" ["A Subjective History of a Defeat"] (1990b, 39-40).

In addition to the "emotional opposition" of the Belgrade students, it could be argued that *The Ambush* resonates with the critical Marxist ideas of the Yugoslav Praxis School which influenced the leaders of the 1968 student protest as well as Pavlović's colleague Makavejev. Pavlović himself was not a staunch advocate of any political theory *per se* which meant his films were not exactly "a bait for constructive critical action on the part of the masses to challenge the apparatchiks" (DeCuir, Jr. 2010, 89). Nevertheless, the "merciless criticism of everything existing," coined by young Marx and adopted by the Yugoslav Praxists, is definitely discernible in *The Ambush*. Similarly to the Praxist "criticism of Yugoslav Stalinism" (Popov 2003, 37), Pavlović exposed the Stalinist bureaucratization of Yugoslav revolution, to be further addressed in the analysis of the film. Other important Praxis terms borrowed from young Marx, dehumanization and alienation, are reflected not only in the imprisonment and torture of insubordinate revolutionaries, but also in the suppression of their human potentials (45). The protagonists of *The Ambush* are alienated from their service to the revolution: after the victory, Vrana is uncertain why he fought in the war, while Zeka tries to satisfy his own selfish needs. Finally, the Praxists proposed that the basic political concepts should not be the society and

state, but a working individual striving for a form of “personalism” (47) which corresponds with Pavlović’s understanding of subjective historical experience.

When Pavlović started filming *The Ambush* he was 35-year old, still a “promising” director with one banned and one temporarily shelved film in his portfolio. Emboldened by the success of his last two films, Pavlović remained wary of the reforms promised by Tito’s regime, especially in light of the ever-shrinking maneuvering space for social critique. The 1960s commercialization of Yugoslav cinema had brought an increase of conventional films, mostly popular comedies derided by the adherents of auteurism, while the state apparatus and Tito himself started supporting big-budget spectacles such as *The Battle of Neretva* in hopes of attracting and educating young Yugoslavs who had not participated in, nor remembered the revolution. Pavlović’s producer Perković, at the top of his game, admitted that the production of auteur films became unsustainable in the face of growing production costs and the competition with the rising new medium, television, leading to his branching out into film distribution (“Dijalog sa producentima” 1969, 43). The onslaught of political and financial constraints made Pavlović raise the stakes in *The Ambush*, going so far as to identify himself with the film’s protagonist Vrana (Pajkić, Polimac et al. 1985, 34). Quite expectedly, Pavlović’s subjective and extreme vision of war and revolution clashed with official Yugoslav history.

Camera as a Weapon

Pavlović’s screenplay for *The Ambush* was based on the motives of two short stories: *Po treći put* by Antonije Isaković (1958), an already mentioned member of Avala Film’s artistic council which shelved Pavlović’s film *The Return*, and *Legenda* by Pavlović himself (1963). The film’s

action is set in Knjaževac (a small town in eastern Serbia where Pavlović lived as a teenager) during the last days of WWII when the Partisans' victory was no longer questioned. Situating the action outside of the spatial and temporal realms of the battlefield is frequent in films which do not treat war as spectacle. See, for instance, the Yugoslav film *Jutro/Morning* (1967, Mladomir 'Puriša' Đorđević) set in the first postwar days, and the Soviet film *The Ballad of a Soldier* (1959, Grigoriy Chukhrai) about a soldier's home leave. Both films, much like *The Ambush*, show the moral dilemmas of warriors deprived of their heroic auras and confronted with the peacetime uncertainty.

The protagonist of *The Ambush* is a 19-year old ethnic Croat Ive Vrana⁸⁸ who joins his cousin in Serbia after surviving the Fascist massacre of his family. Pavlović changed Vrana's original nationality to cast a talented Croatian actor Ivica Vidović, the co-star of another critical film about the Yugoslav revolution, *Kad čuješ zvona/When You Hear the Bells* (1969, Antun Vrdoljak), that premiered the same year as *The Ambush*. Interestingly enough, both films were co-produced by the aforementioned Dušan Perković and featured provocative representation of peasants as historical actors incompatible with grand revolutionary ideals. In 1945 Vrana joins OZNA, the newly established Yugoslav secret service tasked with eliminating the "internal enemies" of the new revolutionary government. Vrana is soon disillusioned by seeing the Partisan commander Zeka looting, raping and eventually unceremoniously dying after defeating the local Chetniks. In the end, Zeka's achievements are appropriated by a bureaucrat Jotić, while a group of clueless peasants execute Vrana because he does not have personal documents.

From the very beginning of the film Vrana represents an alien, his Croatian dialect sounding softer and boyish, almost "unmanly" in comparison to the rougher dialect of eastern Serbian

⁸⁸ "Vrana" means "crow." The character's nickname refers to the Serbo-Croatian idiom "white crow," an equivalent to the English "black sheep."

peasants. By featuring Aromanian and a number of other Serbian and Montenegrin dialects in *The Ambush*, Pavlović alluded to the the guaranteed right to self-determination and secession introduced in the 1963 Constitution of Yugoslavia and national conflicts sparked by the 1967 Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language. *The Ambush* thus foregrounded the multinational roots of the Yugoslav revolution and the consequent instability of the postwar Yugoslav state.

In addition to his linguistic alienation, Vrana has to endure his comrades' mockery of his relationship with Milica (played by one of the best known Yugoslav stars Milena Dravić), daughter of a bourgeois stripped of his civil rights at a staged trial similar to those frequented by the young Pavlović. A seemingly romantic couple, Vrana and Milica talk only of violence. Ironically, their first kiss takes place at a local cemetery where Vrana awkwardly gifts Milica a necklace with a five-pointed star despite knowing her bourgeois origins. The act of giving an ideological symbol rather than a more common locket with a photograph is imbued with depersonalization. Yet Vrana's paradoxical behavior is actually consistent with his materialistic sensitivity. A soldier without property, Vrana nonetheless opposes the violent expropriation of peasants' food to be shipped to the Sarmian Front. Vrana's reaction to nascent Yugoslav collectivization completes his profile of the linguistic, emotional, and ideological alien in the new revolutionary homeland, thereby drawing a parallel between him and the rebellious and disoriented students of 1968.

Vrana's antipode from head to toe is Zeka, a sexual abuser and drunkard with considerable experience in guerilla fighting. Zeka abandons political ideals, if he had any to begin with, to pursue his selfish interests. To prevent Zeka from becoming a one-dimensional villain, Pavlović assigns him the role of father figure to Vrana. When Zeka dies in a shootout

with the Chetniks, his fame is hijacked by the ruthless police officer Jotić, a careerist and coward who leaves the wounded Zeka for dead behind enemy lines.

It is Jotić's character that triggers unprecedented cinematic images of Yugoslav revolutionary violence. Without a court trial Jotić kills railroad workers whom he accused of theft; the property of Milica's family gets confiscated, the Party headquarters are set on fire, communist officials kill three peasants, etc. According to Pavlović, Jotić enhances his power by bureaucratizing revolutionary ideals:

The tragedy of revolution does not occur in the process of revolutionizing history and time, but in the period of consolidation of the captured power, that is, in the process when a revolutionary holds power in his hands, trying to transform a destructive turbulence such as revolution into an order and system (meaning, an everyday routine). This is a process whereby a revolutionary devolves into a bureaucrat. As aptly argued by Camus in his masterpiece *The Rebel*, in his devolution the revolutionary converts from a heretic and rebel into a policeman. Having converted into a policeman, the bureaucrat protects taboos produced during his devolution (Ajanović 1989).

In other words, the bureaucrat protects the prohibition of free speech as it pertains to his participation in the revolutionary violence. Unsurprisingly, the causes of revolutionary violence in *The Ambush* are often banal, whereas deaths—Vrana's in particular—seem arbitrary and absurd. There is no higher teleological sense behind the Partisans' self-sacrifice, while the "everyday routine" continues with weddings and celebrations of Jotić's fabricated courage. Life does not follow the logic of the official, "heroic" history.

Along similar lines, *The Ambush* questions the narrative mold of previous Yugoslav films about war and revolution. The Nazis—the archetypal enemy of the Partisans—are conspicuously missing from Pavlović's film. Nominal enemies are the Chetniks, portrayed as anything but a decent and dangerous rival. More importantly, the rivalry between the Partisans and Chetniks suggests that WWII was not a liberatory, but a civil war. Contrary to the mainstream spectacles featuring peasants, industrial workers, and other classes as allies (Zvijer 2011, 117), the

revolutionary state subordinates and terrorizes peasants in *The Ambush*. Throughout the film the peasants are often cursed and belittled. Even Vrana's last words are the curse of the peasants' mother, preceded by a line directed at the peasants preparing to execute him: "Some revolution you are!" Commenting on the links between his portrayal of the peasants and revolutions, Pavlović noted:

The Paris Commune failed because it was not built by peasants. Only revolutions made by peasants turned out well: Russian, Chinese, ours [i.e. Yugoslav], and Cuban. However, the leaders of these revolutions were never peasants. They came from the bourgeoisie. Peasants' reasons for joining a revolution are never identical to the reasons of the revolutionary leaders. Peasantry is something that goes about, crawls, tumbling like a devouring amoeba, yet forced to be part of the revolution. Only geniuses like Mao Zedong and Tito managed the peasantry with due caution. Whereas fanatics, unlike them, despised peasants (Pajkić, Polimac et al. 1985, 38).

Notwithstanding a certain degree of interpretive flexibility in Pavlović's historical contemplation—after all, Tito, Mao, and Fidel Castro were all born to peasants/farmers—the ending of *The Ambush* begs the question: if Vrana is not a fanatic despising peasants, but an idealist who honestly fought for their liberation, why do three peasants kill him without properly checking his identity? Pavlović (1990b, 63) said the peasants do so because of their "biological conformism" which prevents them from allowing Vrana to escape their grasp. The peasants' biological conformism may stand for the destructive irrationalism that Pavlović exposed in his films about revolution. Vrana's absurd death indicates that the revolution did not bring a definite victory of socialist progress, only a prolonged break before the new bloodshed, thus fully transposing Pavlović's notion of the (common) people as a "speculative abstraction" characterized by "a constant of distorted atavisms" (Pavlović 1999, 531). The inner tension of revolutionary legacy peaks in the closing scene of *The Ambush* featuring a parade of disabled WWII veterans walking side by side with the able-bodied cheerful youngsters. While local officials applaud a tableau commemorating the Partisan victory, with Vrana's girlfriend Milica posing as its centerpiece,

Stalin's massive portrait serves to remind the viewers of Tito's erstwhile adherence to the Soviet leader.

Pavlović's challenging of the conventional Yugoslav vision of the war and revolution was furthered in his directorial style. Just like Pavlović's previous films, *The Ambush* was shot in black-and-white film, then still used in Yugoslav cinema (though much less so than in the 1950s). The monochromy invoked a grimmer image of the war, avoiding the optimistic use of color in films like *Captain Leši*. *The Ambush* was filmed in only 16 days (Pajkić, Polimac et al. 1985, 38), mostly due to the subtly orchestrated long takes with a foreground made up of primary action with secondary action unfolding in the background. In contrast to *The Ambush*, the cinematography of the mainstream Yugoslav films about war and revolution was marked by shorter takes and more frequent cuts. Although Pavlović did not explicitly address his rationale for the use of long takes, it seems plausible that he wanted to avoid potential "interventions" on his material, including significant re-cutting and censorship.

In his programmatic essay "Nišani!" ("Aim!"), published in 1961, Pavlović poetically writes about the necessity of filming documentaries in which people in front of the camera would not know that they are being filmed. Pavlović guides his colleagues on how to capture the authenticity of human life: "Stealthily, like a sniper, let the film artist aim the lens at life's navel; let barrages of celluloid drill the body from all sides; once again, on the screen it will be resurrected in its unadulterated splendor" (1997, 185). This passage could be applied to a fiction film as well, not least because Pavlović harnesses film camera in *The Ambush* as a symbolic weapon "shooting" at the perpetrators of revolutionary crimes. Pavlović's shots at the revolutionary myth were not blanks, causing a strong echo among his opponents.

The Auteur in the Ambush

A film as provocative as *The Ambush* could be financed in late 1960s Yugoslavia because of the contemporaneous liberalization and decentralization of the country's political and economic system, as well as Pavlović's success at the international festival circuit and the relative liberalism of his producer Perković. But what about its theatrical release? My investigation of the archival sources of the Federal Film Review Committee (Savezna komisija za pregled filmova), the central Yugoslav institution for film censorship from 1949-1971, yielded no evidence of censorial intervention in *The Ambush*. This should be taken with a grain of salt due to the incompleteness of the Committee's archival fund. Either way, it seems more plausible that the film was submitted for the 1969 Festival of Yugoslav Film (FJF) in Pula without censors' approval. At the time, instead of selecting its lineup, the FJF screened all Yugoslav features completed between the two festival editions. Pavlović (2001, 112-113) claimed that the festival director Petar Volk "cunningly devised a plan to screen *The Ambush* in a small theatre instead of the [Pula] Arena [i.e. the famous ancient Roman amphitheatre used as the main festival venue]," probably because of the lukewarm reactions to the test screening before the festival. The problematic film was thus formally screened for a small number of viewers, making its impact less significant. Pavlović's producer managed to get *The Ambush* on the screening list of the Venice festival where it received praise from the Italian leftist press. In 1969, however, the Venice festival did not award any film which led Pavlović to believe that *The Ambush* became an easy target for its Yugoslav critics precisely because the film failed to gain international traction (Nikodijević 1995, 22).

In the fall 1969, when *The Ambush* was scheduled for theatrical release in Yugoslavia, the Ideological Committee of the SKJ's Central Committee organized a roundtable condemning the

pessimistic tendencies of the so-called Black Wave. Soon thereafter, the public prosecutor requested to see the film and, much to Pavlović's surprise, issued the following statement: "*The Ambush* is an anti-communist film, but also a high quality work of art" (Pavlović 2002, 100). A group of less prominent politicians, present at the special screening for the public prosecutor, was also impressed by the film. When asked what they thought about it, the politicians replied: "This is a perfect work and we will not intervene, but do not screen it" (Pajkić, Polimac et al 1985, 39). *The Ambush* was never officially banned, but its producer obeyed the "instruction" of the authorities and shelved it until 1990, that is, the twilight of socialist Yugoslavia.

To be precise, before the shelving, *The Ambush* was released in Knjaževac, a small town where it was filmed, as well as Slovenian capital Ljubljana where it was met with positive reactions from the audience (Pavlović 2002, 100).⁸⁹ The short theatrical life of *The Ambush* fit the government's tactic: instead of banning a controversial film, a limited release provided an excuse to pull the film from theaters due to a "lack of viewers." Curiously enough, before the discreet ban on the wide release, *The Ambush* was bought by the JNA (Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija, Yugoslav People's Army) and screened for the military conscripts across Yugoslavia (Nikodijević 1995, 21). The lack of coordination between the Yugoslav Army and the public prosecutor could be attributed to the gradually formulated official strategy for addressing the critical aspects of the Black Wave. The limited release in Yugoslavia was not the only time *The Ambush* was made public before its eventual de-shelving. In 1983, the film was sent to and screened at a Pavlović retrospective in France (Pavlović 2002, 101), once again confirming that some Yugoslav films were suitable for screening abroad but not locally and vice versa. At the

⁸⁹ *The Ambush* was also screened at the inaugural edition of the Belgrade International Film Festival FEST in 1971 as part of the provocative festival selection. The history of the FEST is analyzed in the dissertation Section 5.

same time, the screening of controversial Yugoslav films abroad reinforced the international perception of the relative liberalism of the Yugoslav government in comparison to other socialist states.

Despite the shelving of *The Ambush*, Pavlović continued directing and even won the first prize for *Rdeče klasje/Red Wheat* at the 1971 FJF. This was one of the four films Pavlović directed in Slovenia where he eventually became one of the most esteemed filmmakers of Slovenian national cinema. His was an experience shared with a number of artists and intellectuals in Yugoslavia who, once ostracized in their domicile republic, found safe haven in other parts of the federation. A safe haven that Pavlović definitely needed in the wake of the campaign against the Black Wave.

Losing the Battle, Winning the War

In 1973, a student of film directing Lazar Stojanović was imprisoned for “hostile propaganda” and an offense against the image and work of Josip Broz Tito in his transgressively anarchic diploma film *Plastični Isus/Plastic Jesus* (1971). Stojanović’s supervisor Aleksandar Petrović was forced to leave Yugoslavia together with the fellow representatives of the Yugoslav New Film-turned-Black Wave, Dušan Makavejev and Želimir Žilnik. The Party apparatchiks at the Belgrade Faculty of Dramatic Arts sought to humiliate Pavlović by degrading him from the position of Professor of Film Directing to the Supervisor of Teaching Aids. Much to his opponents’ dismay, Pavlović accepted the new appointment without any complaints (Munitić 1997b, 129), offering no resistance or public defense of his critical opus.

An atypical dissident who refused to immigrate or act as a martyr, Pavlović (1990b, 201) explained that he was fully aware of the consequences of his actions: “It should be noted that any—even if just remotely—autonomous creation is a sign of disobedience. You have to take a beating. Your persistence proves your point.” When asked how he managed to continue directing after so many obstructions in his career, Pavlović remarked that the “[a]nswer lies in persistence. Nolens volens, no society is immune to culture and cultural activity” (114). Both statements feature persistence as a keyword which definitely helped Pavlović endure persecution, especially because he could always turn to writing as his second vocation.

It is also very likely that Tito’s regime accomplished its goals in terms of breaking the Black Wave, so there was little interest in the implications of Pavlović’s latter films. Most importantly, Pavlović had no inclination towards anarchism, much like *The Ambush* was not a counter-revolutionary film. On the contrary, Pavlović criticized Tito’s regime while remaining loyal to communism as a lofty, if perhaps unattainable goal (Simić 1990). The director of *The Ambush* suggested that Yugoslav society should have re-examined and re-articulated the revolutionary project rather than disappear in its negation.

Section 4: Economics of Shortage and the Archival Impulse in Revolutionary Socialist Cinema

Foreword: *Stemming from my presentation at the 2022 SCMS (Society For Cinema and Media Studies) Annual Conference and a paper draft that was recommended for publication by the jury of the SCMS Caucus on Class Essay Award, this section was developed into an article to be published in Summer 2023 issue of the online journal The Projector: A Journal of Film, Media, and Culture. Unlike previous sections that focus, by and large, on how individual film narratives reflected on and represented the Yugoslav Revolution, this one examines the dearth of film stock as a formative tenet of archive-oriented filmmaking in the first socialist revolutionary states, the Soviet Union and postwar Yugoslavia. Comparing how the re-used and appropriated archival footage informed the production practices and theoretical considerations of the seminal Soviet documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov and his Yugoslav disciple Dušan Makavejev illuminates the economics of shortage as an underlying principle of the socialist cinema, which questions the material excess of dominant modes of media production.*

This section foregrounds Makavejev as another representative of the Belgrade branch of the auteurist Yugoslav New Film who, just like his colleague Živojin Pavlović, moved from amateur to professional filmmaking. Both Makavejev and Pavlović belonged to a younger generation of Yugoslav filmmakers that emerged in the 1960s and criticized the mythology and setbacks of the Yugoslav Revolution, though without repudiating its emancipatory accomplishments. Likewise, Makavejev and Pavlović consolidated their childhood experience of war poverty and their traineeship in amateur cinema into low-budget features that did not have to depend on either moviegoers' preferences or large producers' investments. Moreover, Makavejev's inventive

blending of documentary and scripted cinema turned him into the best known Yugoslav filmmaker abroad and one of the juggernauts of the global late 1960 and early 1970s revolutionary cinema. In addition, this section continues to tease out one of the common threads of this dissertation: the transnational complexity of Yugoslav cinema both within the Yugoslav federation and in juxtaposition with the broader international context. After the examination of Bosna Film's negotiations with its Austrian, West German, Italian, and US partners, and Živorad Mitrović's adaptation of the Hollywood Western tropes in Chapter 1, the following piece concentrates on Yugoslav filmmakers' ironic dialogue with revolutionary Soviet cinema as an important, though not the only, source of inspiration for both Pavlović and Makavejev. Last, but not least, Makavejev's creative overcoming of budgetary constraints will reappear in Chapter 3 as a practice instructive for the constitution of Scottish national cinema.

Introduction

The Soviet Union and postwar Yugoslavia were the first two states created in the wake of effective socialist revolutions. Both political entities underwent periods of severe destruction, extreme material shortages, and international isolation to protect their revolutionary visions, as the 1917 October Revolution was followed by the Russian Civil War (1917–1923), while the Yugoslav Revolution, forged during the Axis occupation in World War II, had to resist the pressure of the Eastern Bloc after the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split. The latter, caused primarily by the Soviet condemnation of the Yugoslav independent revolutionary politics, marked the first fracture in the international communist movement and put Yugoslavia on the path towards its pursuit of the doctrine of self-management and non-alignment during the Cold War. Notably, both the Soviet Union and socialist Yugoslavia made use of market practices more readily

associated with capitalism—1920s New Economic Policy and post-1965 economic reform, respectively—to deal with material shortages and accelerate economic advancement. These periods corresponded with dynamic cultural developments, particularly remarkable in cinema, which the two states adopted as the main vehicle of socialist modernization. Whereas Soviet avant-garde filmmakers sought to expand the sensory potentials of the cinematic medium in addition to presenting idiosyncratic revolutionary ideas prior to the ascent of Stalinism, a new generation of Yugoslav filmmakers emerged in the 1960s to join the tide of the New Wave cinematic movements and offer a searing reminder of the unkept promises of the Yugoslav Revolution. What remains understudied is how the experience of material shortage, specifically, the lack of film stock, shaped a more frugal, archive-oriented approach to filmmaking in both USSR and Yugoslavia, thereby tacitly challenging the immoderation and profusion of dominant media cultures.

This essay examines the interplay of cultural economics and production/editing practices in the cinematic and discursive output of Dziga Vertov and Dušan Makavejev as proponents of archive-oriented filmmaking in the interwar USSR and postwar Yugoslavia. Vertov is globally recognized as one of the greatest innovators of documentary cinema in general, with his masterwork *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) standing out for its revolutionary exploration of editing, cinematography, and other expressive capacities of the cinematic medium. Makavejev rose to international prominence in the late 1960s due to his imaginative mixing of scripted and documentary cinema and collapsing of multiple boundaries, between highbrow and lowbrow art and media, cultural and ideological production on both sides of the Iron Curtain, political and visual pornography, and so on. While not avoiding the contrast between Vertov's enthusiastic support of the socialist state-building project, typical of the many Old Leftists, and Makavejev's

New Left piercing criticism of both socialism and capitalism, I am more interested in the overlaps in their concepts of archival filmmaking. My investigation considers how material resourcefulness in Soviet and Yugoslav cinema brought about both Vertov's utilization of the film archive and the patchwork structure of Serbian cutting, Makavejev's montage technique born in scarcity as an offspring of Vertov's often (financially) poor cinema. In this study, I focus on the closeness of Vertov's and Makavejev's frugal filmmaking as epitomizing materialist concerns in socialist cinema, thus welcoming further investigation of, and comparisons with, similar models of non-socialist economical media production.

By bringing to the fore the material component of Vertov's and Makavejev's productions, that is, the ways in which the lack of film stock inspired Vertov and Makavejev to reframe appropriated and found footage, this essay contemplates the potentiality of the socialist mode of production in opposition to the dominant capitalist production system. In the first part of the essay, I start with a definition of a socialist economics of shortage and a historical contextualization of Vertov's concept of editing base. Moving onto Lenin's theory of the de-alienation of labor and the consequent introduction of film stock into the realm of raw materials in Soviet Union, I discuss the implications of "recycling" old footage in Vertov's films. The second part begins by setting Makavejev's early works against the backdrop of Yugoslav state film production, followed by a theorization of Serbian cutting and a comparison of Makavejev's cinema to that of his role models, Vertov and Eisenstein. The final section of the article indicates the ways in which Vertov's and Makavejev's usage of the archive-based filmmaking could point to a more sustainable model of media production.

A few notes on the terminological application of the archive in this essay. As Joshua Malitsky states in his perceptive analysis of the archival aspect of 1920s Soviet documentary

cinema, until 1936 “Soviet film studios were known as ‘film factories’ (*kinofabriki*),” which symbolically equated Soviet filmmakers (and other cultural producers) with factory workers in general (2004). In the mid-1920s, the Soviet regime started looking for the means of subduing the chaos, improvisational tactics, and material shortages of the Revolutionary era—including the shortage of film stock experienced by Vertov and other Soviet filmmakers—in favor of establishing a better organized and more efficient (and controlled) production system. In the realm of film production, this push effected a transformation of the “film factory” into the “film factory-archive,” as Malitsky, inspired by contemporaneous Soviet filmmakers’ debates, dubbed it (2004). A turning point in this process was the success of Esfir Shub’s *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927), based on the archival and found footage from (pre-)Revolutionary times and widely considered the first compilation documentary in film history. Shub’s film was embraced by Soviet critics as a viable alternative to Vertov’s documentary *One Sixth of the World* (1926), which was deemed too expensive due to Vertov’s improvisational filming method that resulted in wasted film stock,⁹⁰ and too hermetic for the mass audience unaccustomed to Vertov’s fast-paced editing and experimental cinematography. As Malitsky explains, “While Vertov wanted to continue to shoot film and sought to use the archive for flexibility in editing and in aiding overall production efficiency, Shub’s almost total reliance on archival material prompted calls” for “a centralized multi-purpose factory-archive for film production and storage” (2004). Shub’s archive-based working method led to Soviet filmmakers’ fascination with the “raw” and “second-hand” material that was already filmed and watched by others and, as such, considered “more interesting than the finished film” (Yampolsky and Spring 1991, 166).

⁹⁰ In 1927, Vertov was fired from Sovkino because of “[w]hat was thought to be the excessive cost of the *One Sixth* production to the studio” (MacKay 2007, 42).

Editing and re-editing the “raw” and “second-hand” material into multiple new films became congruent with the Soviet impetus towards constant restructuring and alteration of reality, with the filmmaker turned into an archivist progressively dependent on the “themes that grew out of the material” (Yampolsky and Spring 1991, 166). According to Malitsky, the new emphasis on the archival “raw” footage matched the wider Soviet industrial deployment of Taylorism which sought to “eliminate inefficiency and waste of both materials and labour power” (2004). In parallel, Soviet filmmakers were urged to shift away from Vertov’s objective to “transform viewers’ base perceptions through a cinema challenging laws of space and time” to a new role as the “engineer of human souls” in the rising Socialist realism, “now concerned with transforming the psychology, the ‘superstructural’ aspect of the audience” (Malitsky 2004). Vertov was expected to limit his excessive use of the film stock and apply the experience of the stock shortage in his Revolutionary-era newsreel series *Kinonedelia* (1918–1919) and *Kinopravda* (1922–1925) for the more economical, Shubian use of the archive.

For Makavejev and his collaborators, the archive was, first and foremost, the Yugoslav Cinematheque (Jugoslovenska kinoteka), also known as the Yugoslav Film Archive. Thanks to the non-aligned position of their country, Yugoslav filmmakers and cinephiles were able to watch and discuss films from all over the world. Furthermore, it is in the vaults of the Yugoslav Film Archive that Makavejev found the first Serbian talkie *Nevinost bez zaštite/Innocence Unprotected* (Dragoljub Aleksić, 1943), a film that was shelved by the postwar Yugoslav government because it was produced during the German occupation—but imaginatively incorporated into Makavejev’s 1968 eponymous readymade film.

Interwar avant-garde art and thought, ranging from Marcel Duchamp’s readymade art to Walter Benjamin’s essays to DaDa manifestos to Dziga Vertov’s films, presented an abundant

archival repository for Makavejev and his collaborators who were “not concerned with documenting life but rather [with] that documentation which is performed by others” (DeCuir, Jr. 2011). Global media production provided a non-hierarchical archive from which Makavejev could borrow to overcome material constraints and produce exuberant revolutionary films that differed from the mainstream Yugoslav film production reliant on classical narration and enthusiastic endorsement of the country’s revolutionary mythology. In so doing, Makavejev capitalized on the experience of material shortage that he shared with one of his favorite filmmakers and mentors, Dziga Vertov.

Less is More: Vertov’s Film-Thing

Contrary to capitalist economy that is based on the rule of surplus, socialist economy is defined by the rule of shortage (Kornai 1992, 228-301). Within socialist “centralized planning,” company managers were supposed to meet targets, namely, the quantities of everything that the Party wanted to be produced. Central planners would provide the agenda to be executed along with the estimation of how much money and raw materials were needed for the successful implementation of the plan. In practice, however, materials would not arrive on time or in the right amounts. This meant that managers had to demand more materials than actually necessary so as to keep production going even if something went wrong:

Every manager, and every level of the bureaucracy, padded budgets and requests in hopes of having enough, in the actual moment of production. (A result of the bargaining process, of course, was that central planners always had faulty information about what was really required for production, and this impeded their ability to plan.) Then, if managers somehow ended up with more of some material than they needed, they hoarded it. Hoarded material had two uses: it could be kept for the next production cycle, or it could be exchanged with some other firm for something one’s own firm lacked. These exchanges or barbers of material were a crucial component of behavior within centralized planning (Verdery 1996, 21).

To illustrate, let us imagine the manager of a socialist shoe factory getting a certain number of shoes to be delivered to the shops. Having calculated how much he would need under ideal conditions, “[h]e adds some for wastage, knowing the workers are lazy and the machines cut badly; some for theft, since workers are always stealing nails and glue; some to trade with other firms in case he comes up short on a crucial material at a crucial moment; and some more for the fact that the tannery always delivers less than requested” (Verdery 1996, 21). More than expected, centralized production was dependent on bargaining between the center of economic planning and the management of the socialist enterprise.

It is important to note, however, that the economics of shortage as described above was more characteristic of developed socialism than of the years immediately after the first socialist revolution. One factor that played a significant role in the early Dziga Vertov filmmaking, alongside the DIY handiwork and resourcefulness,⁹¹ was the endemic shortage of film stock that could not have been produced in revolutionary Russia or easily imported from the then hostile western democracies (MacKay 2018, 196, 213). The lack of film stock, that basic ingredient of every film production, haunted in one way or another both Vertov and his much younger colleague in socialist Yugoslavia, Dušan Makavejev. As we will see, this came to be one of the crucial distinctions between economics of shortage in socialist cinema and economics of profit in Hollywood where the stock deficit was hardly ever a problem.

⁹¹ Writing about the ability of Vertov’s brother and collaborator, Mikhail Kaufman, to overcome the lack of film equipment through constructing makeshift devices, John MacKay observes that “[b]etter evidence of backwardness vis-à-vis the capitalist opponent, about whose endless supply of new and improved cinema technology the Soviets knew a great deal, is hardly required. Yet in another sense, this *kustarnichestvo*, or artisanship, expressed a persistent, never entirely devalued *democracy* of talent and skill, a tacit extolling of the capacity of human beings ... to produce new and useful things with their hands and minds out of the materials and even the detritus fluxing and refluxing out of the capitalist world” (2017, 807–808).

Vertov's difficulties with securing a stable material foundation for film production in the Revolutionary era coincided with his effort to challenge the capitalist mode of production in general and the dominance of Hollywood narrative cinema in particular. While "taking a fundamental position against *all* fiction film" in 1922, Vertov could still admire "the dramatizations of American Pinkertonism for their rapid shot changes and close-ups" (Roberts 2007, 40). With time, Vertov grew critical of

"bourgeois photo-plays" and "sentimental melodramas" that had to be replaced by documentary films, i.e., films without actors, sets and scripted stories. ... Vertov was [therefore] labelled 'extremist,' even 'eccentric,' while working outside the mainstream of common film production which, by and large, complied with the same concept of dramatic feature cinema that characterized production before the Revolution (Petric 1982, 7).

Moreover, as Maurizio Lazzarato argues in his cogent analysis of Vertov's cinematic output and writings about cinema,

Vertov interpreted the Soviet revolution not only as the general collapse of power and of capitalist institutions in Russia but also as a collapse of the human and its world. Cinema was immediately understood as a machinic expression of forces—assembled in different ways with human forces such as seeing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking—capable of opening up new forms of subjectivation (2019, 20–21).

Lazzarato concludes that

All the polemics between Vertov and Hollywood, as well as his more nuanced controversy with Sergei Eisenstein, were organized around the need for the revolution to subtract cinema from its images and representation. Vertov wanted to explode the technological assemblage and the division of labor in cinema, because both fold the forces of time with the forces within the human back into mere representation and image (2019, 24).

Vertov's revolutionary instincts were clearly at play even during the rise of Socialist realism when he built upon Esfir Shub's archival filmmaking with the aim of protecting his creative autonomy. In a 1936 programmatic text, Vertov put forward his vision of a well-organized production system—the Soviet "creative laboratory" as opposed to the US-American "dream factory," though Vertov's employment of the word "laboratory" may also imply his

striving towards a more artisanal and independent mode of production, free of the factory routine. Having complained about the impossibility of recording sound and doing synchronized shooting in locations without the source of alternating current, Vertov emphasized the time wasted on “promises and resolutions” coming from the studio executives, much like the Soviet factory managers had to deal with the frequently unsound directives of central planners ([1936] 1984, 138).

In what looks like an attempt to avoid the bureaucratic control in the Stalinized Soviet cinema, Vertov offered a list of objectives to be pursued by the creative laboratory. The third objective concerned the qualities of the new editing base and is of particular interest here: “Not temporary, but permanent. Not random, but carefully adapted. Not anonymous, but bearing the author’s signature. Not immobile, but constantly engaged. A film archive of a director’s documents on file” (1984, 141). Vertov frames the new editing base as a pillar of the film archive that would contribute to the “elimination of the director’s wastage of film stock thanks to a continuous production process involving a series of themes and to the possibility of using footage not being employed in a particular theme” (1984, 142). In Vertov’s ambition to establish a dynamic film archive that was to be employed in developing several interconnected films, we can hear a last-gasp cry of the filmmaker who once had a big enough budget to travel across the entire Soviet Union to shoot *One Sixth of the World* and then adopted the criticism of his expensive experimentation to regain his creative independence. Vertov’s notion of the “constantly engaged” editing base shows how, after all, he came to utilize the dialectics of scarcity as best as possible under the given circumstances: if he could not have filmed new images, at least he was able to re-contextualize the archival footage.

In this regard, Vertov drew on his experience from the October Revolution, particularly his newsreel series *Kinonedelia* (1918–1919), which involved so much re-appropriation of the archival footage that because of “the variety of uses to which it was put, we must speak of the newsreel as a set of processes—involving restoration, reuse, archiving, and so on—rather than as a set of finished film-artifacts” (MacKay 2018, 211). The footage from older *Kinonedelia* issues was used by Vertov and his colleagues for the new issues of the same newsreel series and was combined with “material from other sources like [the Provisional Government’s newsreel series] *Svobodnaia Rossiia*” (MacKay 2018, 223). After “the exigencies of war” and “severe shortage of film stock” discontinued *Kinonedelia* in 1919 (MacKay 2018, 233), “a number of Vertov’s post-1922 works—several of the *Kino-Pravdas*, *Stride*, *Soviet*, and *Three Songs of Lenin*—ma[d]e use of footage from the series” (MacKay 2018, 197), mostly from the Russian Civil War and of Lenin. We have reason to believe that Vertov recycled the footage from *Kinonedelia* even in his lost film *History of the Civil War* (MacKay 2018, 228). The pervasiveness of Vertov’s Revolutionary-era recycling practices thus prepared the filmmaker to demonstrate in the post-Revolutionary period, that is, after Esfir Shub’s resounding success with the archival appropriation in *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*, that no one shot is condemned to exist only within one film sequence.

For it was the Revolutionary era that endowed Vertov’s filmmaking with a profound sense of the materiality of the film stock: one could easily see how the very physical and habitual acts of holding the filmed footage as well as cutting the frames and editing the same footage into multiple films must have made the Soviet filmmaker perceive the celluloid as cognate to other materials that Soviet workers used in their everyday industrial production. It is not by chance, then, that Vertov considered himself a shoemaker rather than a filmmaker. Vertov’s idea of *kino-*

veshch' ("film-thing") advances the materiality of cinema as following Lenin's idea of de-alienation of labor:

In a 1919 discussion of "the revolutionary mode of labor" (работа по-революционному), Lenin defined communism as a politics of everyday matter: "Communism begins when among *simple workers* there emerges a selfless concern [забота – the same word used by Erenburg's LeBon to describe revolutionary affect] about protecting *every pood of grain, coal, iron* and other products that belong neither to the worker personally nor to those who are 'close to him' [близким], but those 'at a distance' [дальным], i.e. the entire society in its totality" (Fore 2010, 376, original parentheses).

Devin Fore proposes that Lenin conceived of communism as "a new affective organization"

based on responsibility for the product of labor as well as an activity of establishing links

between people separated by vast spaces. Hence Vertov's fascination with highlighting *objects*

rather than primarily *humans* as in traditional narrative cinema,⁹² and connecting dispersed

Soviet nations and working collectives. There are two more implications of Lenin's statement for

Vertov's cinema: first, if the products of labor belong to all people, that leaves room for

abolishing the bourgeois concept of copyright, which in turn means that no art work is to be

deemed untouchable and unalterable;⁹³ and second, film was no different than grain, coal, or

iron, in that it could change its form and purpose: "Itself neither matter nor substance, cinema

was instead a constructive means for connecting and binding substances, a means for catalyzing

interactions between diverse and seemingly incommensurate objects" (Fore 2013, 3). In the

⁹² Fore contends that Vertov renounced the "superficial anthropomorphism of bourgeois humanism, with its strict epistemological division between person and thing, subject and object," superseded by "Vertov's intense cathexis of objects, which seem to beckon him with the arms of a lover." Vertov's fascination with the symbolic objects of the Soviet industrial modernization is "not fetishism at all, for it is an erotic attachment to the very aspect of the object—its human and social complexion—that fetishism seeks to disavow. Indeed, for Vertov, it is precisely because objects are the products of human labor and because they are media of social intercourse that he loves them with such devotion and intensity" (2013, 30-31).

⁹³ In the early Soviet Union, translation of any literary work could be done without the author's consent, and the translator was granted a separate copyright on the translation. This provision was, already before Soviet times, motivated by the desire to ensure an economically viable way to translate works between the many national languages of the country (Newcity 1978, 22).

1920s Soviet Union, film essentially became yet another object of manual labor, just as a piece of iron could become a sword in the hands of a skilled blacksmith. Because the Soviet state strove towards accelerated modernization, new media forms were “denuded of the aura of naturalness that they enjoyed in the West” (Fore 2010, 379). Common to all Soviet avant-garde artists was the urge to deconstruct media and study their components. It should then come as no surprise that Vertov ultimately acknowledged the playfulness entailed in his re-appropriation of the old film footage.

Here we need to pause and briefly reflect on the propensity for reuse not only in Vertov’s work, but also more widely in socialist economy. One of the main differences between capitalist and socialist economies is that capitalism’s aims are compatible with the planned obsolescence of its products, while socialist economies place more emphasis on repairing and/or long-lasting products. Capitalism, though, has not always exploited planned obsolescence: for example, in the past, the label “made in USA” was asserted as the guarantee of high-quality, long-lasting merchandise, whereas in the recent decades, global neoliberal capitalism has opted for less quality and more goods bought every year. In state socialism, on the other hand, it was not always possible to buy a new pair of shoes and so the old one had to be repaired. It was, then, the appeal of the collage and two or three old things becoming one new thing that helped Vertov and his contemporaries overcome the restraints of the stock shortage. Another feature of 1920s Soviet artists that assisted them in employing collage as a fruitful *modus operandi* was their firm rejection of a division between the grandeur of art and the banality of everyday objects: for example, Russian Futurists preferred cars and street lights to museums. In capitalism, the past is often commodified as an indication of snobbish aloofness. In Vertov’s socialist cinema, by contrast, the past becomes an integral part of the present, thereby reflecting the Soviet

understanding of materiality as presupposing the equality of people and objects, nature and technology. If, under capitalism, a human being can look stylishly *retro* wearing a shabby jacket full of deliberately incorporated and designed patches, a socialist film can benefit from the economic consolidation of diverse archival footage.

As a result of recurrent material reconfigurations, the meaning of archival footage in Vertov's documentaries is never fixed. For example, the pathos of the funeral procession after Lenin's death in *Kinopravda No. 21* (1925) is juxtaposed with Vertov's short animation about Lenin's legacy (Feldman 1973, 37). Rather than invoking end times, the Soviet leader's death is presented as a moment of recollection and contemplation, but even more so as the starting point for the realization of Lenin's ideas. Ten years after *Kinopravda No. 21*, Vertov was commissioned to make *Three Songs of Lenin* (1934), only this time around the aesthetic constraints of Socialist realism prevented him from using the same mixture of heterogeneous cinematic forms. But Vertov refused to succumb. The sequence of Lenin's funeral, which could have easily become yet another confirmation of the vulgar cult of personality, is framed by more poetic images of the Soviet people celebrating Lenin. One could argue that Vertov did not have any other choice for *Three Songs of Lenin* as there was limited footage of Lenin's funeral. However, the same cannot be said for his earlier films:

The snarling, taxidermied dog from *One Sixth of the World*, for example, reappears at the beginning of *Man with a Movie Camera*, where, situated now among an array of dormant commodities that will soon spring to life, it assumes a different, more volatile countenance. ... [T]he *Eleventh Year*, a film about the reanimation of cultural vestiges, was itself assembled out of the material remains of the two larger projects that flanked it chronologically, *One Sixth of the World* (1926) and *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) (Fore 2013, 13).

For Vertov, filmmaking was a lifelong "continuous editing process" and a "continuous production process" that treated each and every frame with great respect (Fore 2013, 13). This view derived from Vertov's universalist faith in the power of collectivism and multitude instead

of individualism and singularity. The essence of Vertov's universalism was succinctly captured by Vertov's brother, Mikhail Kaufman, who stated that "the point of editing, in the full sense of the word, was not only to have an image in every frame, but to produce ... an *interpretation* of images," stemming from the belief that "all the facts and phenomena which in life are torn apart both temporally and physically can also conjoin" (Kaufman 1979, 62). Because Kaufman referred to the shots of people raising their hands in America and others responding in Moscow, it becomes clear that Vertov's cinema wanted to unite both people around the world and all their film images, that is, to achieve the full harmony of human kind, nature, and artifacts. Vertov's interest in the materiality of the film stock inspired numerous international filmmakers to appropriate and re-signify already produced audiovisual content.⁹⁴ Among these filmmakers was Dušan Makavejev whose unique interest in cutting and collage as a means of mastering budgetary constraints helped him not only produce a vibrant critique of the unfulfilled potential of Yugoslav revolutionary socialism, but also posit the film viewer as the ultimate film editor.

Film as a Holiday Tree: Makavejev's Viewer-Editor

Dušan Makavejev was a champion of the 1960s Yugoslav movement *novi film* (New Film), re-branded the Black Wave in the early 1970s due to its dark portrayal of Yugoslav socialism. He was born in 1932 in Belgrade to a (White?) Russian immigrant father Sergije/Sergey Makavejev and a Serb mother Jelka (née Bojkić), the first woman with a university degree in veterinary medicine in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After studying

⁹⁴ The long list of filmmakers influenced by Vertov in this regard includes Chris Marker (see Howe 2012), the Dziga Vertov Film Group involving Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin (Goodwin et al. 1970), Ken Jacobs (Turvey 2011), and Perry Bard (Feldman 2009).

psychology and theatre directing, Makavejev made four short films under the auspices of the amateur Belgrade Cinema Club. Then, “[f]rom 1958 to 1964 Makavejev completed thirteen documentary films in which he continued to experiment with expressive-realist montage structures and surrealist-inspired film collages” (Goulding 1994, 211). Soon thereafter, Makavejev found himself working for the largest Yugoslav film studio, Avala Film, run by Ratko Dražević and Dražević’s advisor, Borislav ‘Mihiz’ Mihailović. According to Makavejev’s colleague, Aleksandar Petrović, Dražević and Mihailović “pledged themselves to regenerate the cadre of film directors” (Sudar 2013, 62). However, that does not mean that the young debutants were showered with big budgets. Makavejev himself reported that Avala Film management was too busy with money-draining international co-productions, often involving Hollywood producers, and that all he got was a camera and the film laboratory service; but, most importantly, without any control from above (Mortimer 2009, 96–97).

Already in his second feature, *Ljubavni slučaj ili Tragedija službenice PTT/Love Affair, or the Tragedy of the Switchboard Operator* (1967), Makavejev makes a reference to Vertov when two protagonists watch Vertov’s *Enthusiasm* (1931) on TV before consummating their relationship. Nothing strange, one would think, as so many films on TV have been an integral part of sexual foreplay in other films. But Makavejev does two things differently: first, instead of screening *Enthusiasm* on TV, we actually get to watch a part of Vertov’s film in “unmediated” form and for much longer than expected; and second, by choosing the particularly violent sequence of destruction of the Orthodox churches in the USSR—that Vertov himself borrowed from Shub’s *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (Mortimer 2009, 102)—Makavejev departs from Vertov’s idealism and unequivocal faith in the bright future of socialism. On the one hand, Makavejev ironically turned Vertov’s, and by extension Shub’s, archival documentary cinema on

its head, to question rather than celebrate revolutionary destruction. On the other hand, given the budgetary constraints that Makavejev had to grapple with, the questions arise: did Makavejev give thought to the economics of shortage and, if so, what was the difference between his and Vertov's approach to the issue? The following segment of the essay will demonstrate that, by drawing from a heterogeneous pool of film elements, Makavejev and his collaborators turned the economics of shortage into the core principle of their filmmaking, going so far as to transform the film viewer into a viewer-editor who was not bound by the already configured sequence of frames projected on the screen. The disparate film materials Makavejev incorporated into his films encouraged the viewer-editor to link and re-edit in his/her head various parts of the film regardless of the actual film editor's cut (for example, the viewer-editor could choose to connect shots or parts of the film from its beginning with those from its ending).

Despite their collage structure, Makavejev's first four feature films are rather short: 78, 68, 75, and 85 minutes respectively. The Yugoslav auteur never had access to the big budgets that his colleague Veljko Bulajić, for instance, spent directing war spectacles. Following his debut film, *Čovek nije tica/Man Is Not a Bird* (1965), Makavejev realized that, to reach the length of a feature film in his next film *Love Affair*, he had to use materials as diverse as fictional melodrama; a quasi-documentary sexologist and criminologist's lecture and voice-over; footage from Vertov's *Enthusiasm*; a parodic pseudo-documentary on the problems of rat infestation and extermination; and a brief *belle époque* pornographic film. Makavejev's next film, *Nevinost bez zaštite/Innocence Unprotected* (1968), incorporated Serbian collaborationist WWII newsreels; excerpts from the above mentioned 1943 Dragoljub Aleksić film; interviews with the aged Aleksić and his crew members; as well as a series of *tableaux vivants* featuring the aged Aleksić. For his best known film *WR: Misterije organizma/WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971),

Makavejev used pieces of a fictional quasi-didactic story; documentary footage of the late 1960s US counterculture; excerpts from Soviet socialist-realist film *The Vow* (Mikheil Chiaureli, 1946); shots from a Nazi propaganda film about mental health institutions; and the images of political rallies in Mao Zedong's China.

Makavejev studied the editing theories of Eisenstein, who saw dialectical montage as “a method aimed at engaging the viewer to respond to shot juxtapositions in an active but exact fashion, generating precise concepts and ideas” (Levi 2007, 33). Yet Makavejev departed from Eisenstein, seeing montage as “dialectical first and foremost insofar as it *destabilizes* the singularity and certainty of textual meaning and invites a number of possible responses from the viewer” (Levi 2007, 33). Makavejev also envisioned editing in ways that contrasted with Vertov. If Vertov sought to destabilize the spectator's *perception* by, among other things, drawing on the transformative capacity of archival footage, Makavejev set out to unsettle not only the spectator's *understanding of ideology*, but also the *normalized power relations* of film production and consumption. Here is how Makavejev describes his vision of the film viewer as the ultimate film editor:

If you have a number of disparate things in the film, if one scene is connected not only with the preceding one and the following one, but connected also with a dozen others, ... then *according to your own mood, according to your own interest* in politics, or sex, ... or humor, you will see different shapes. ... Some people are strongly moved by Stalin, other people are moved by sexual freedom. So you have ... shapes that are overlapping, overlapping shapes. ... [T]his borderline experience with this double image is actually your emotional content put into some shape that is really something else (Lopate and Zavatsky 1972, 21-22, italics added).

Thus, the viewer of Makavejev's film also becomes an editor of sorts, choosing which configuration of shots actually constitutes a film: “Link-ups accumulate in a kind of geometric progression as the film goes on, so that gradually the spectator's analytical consciousness begins to connect everything, the parts constantly forming new significant patterns” (Wood according to

Mortimer 2009, 97). It would not be an exaggeration to say that Makavejev's conception of the viewer-turned-editor uninhibited by the power relations of the film apparatus echoes the broader Yugoslav vision of the self-managed worker unrestrained by the capitalist exploitation or statist control.

Makavejev and his collaborators' fascination with Vertov and Eisenstein resulted in a specific mode of editing that became commonly called *Serbian cutting*. The term appeared relatively late in the 1990s. In a sarcastic reference to the western perception of Serbian war atrocities during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the co-writer of *Love Affair* and *Innocence Unprotected*, Branko Vučićević maintained: "If Serbs are fond of slaughtering people, there must be a method of film cutting that corresponds" (1998, 36). Vučićević retrospectively named and conceptualized Serbian cutting in a biting reaction to both war crimes perpetrated by Serb nationalists and Western media's racialized representation of Serbian people as "Balkan butchers/cutthroats." The method of Serbian cutting is informed by the correlation of displaced archival sources, the meaning of which "can be political only when it does not let itself be easily stabilized and when it does not rely on any single source of authority, but rather, empties it or decentralizes it" (Minh-ha according to DeCuir, Jr. 2011). Makavejev's films consequently fall into a category of "collective assemblage" (Deleuze and Guattari), which "rejects 'the tyranny of meaning' in favor of collectivizing content (and form)" (DeCuir, Jr. 2011).

Like Vertov's cinema, the spirit of collective labor in Makavejev's films overshadows the perceived entrepreneurial individualism of mainstream capitalist film production.⁹⁵ Moreover,

⁹⁵ In Makavejev's *Innocence Unprotected*, the acrobat-turned-filmmaker Dragoljub Aleksić and his actors, accordingly supported by the archive film journal, talk about Aleksić manufacturing sandals with plywood soles during WWII, which, in turn, enabled him to produce his 1943 movie. Aleksić himself stressed that women wearing those sandals never imagined that by doing so they basically co-produced the first Serbian talkie. Not only was this a curious example of indirect crowdfunding in cinema production, but it was yet another (if unconscious) nod towards Vertov and his followers as "cinematic

while Makavejev's criticism of ideological dogmatism, embedded in his use of Serbian cutting, had given him a notoriety in his socialist homeland and eventually forced him to emigrate to the west, Makavejev never converted to capitalist values. On the contrary, after satirizing both sides of the Cold War in *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* and *Sweet Movie* (1974), Makavejev used his Australian-produced film, *The Coca-Cola Kid* (1985), to launch a fierce Marxist attack on US imperialism and the Hollywood mode of production, which left no room for experimental techniques like Serbian cutting (Sudar 2014).

One of the fathers of Serbian cutting, Vučićević, has defined it as “[u]sing existing material, as in archive footage, to substitute as original footage within a movie scene” (1998, 38). Serbian cutting was born by chance, specifically, due to Makavejev's discontent with a scene in his 1967 film, *Love Affair*, which prompted him to combine it with an old pornographic film found in the Yugoslav Cinematheque (Vučićević 2014, 85). Once they realized the benefits of a new cutting technique, Makavejev and Vučićević were quick to use it not only for aesthetic purposes, but also for financial gain: when the West German buyers complained about *Love Affair* not being long enough for a feature, “a few minutes of footage from [Makavejev's] documentary *Parada/Parade* (1962) were inserted as additional compensation” (Vučićević 2014, 86). Even the theoretical foundation of Serbian cutting was based on a misunderstanding of Eisenstein's montage of attractions,⁹⁶ which the Yugoslav filmmakers came to wrongly perceive as “the joining together of two viewpoints in disparate frames” (Vučićević 2014, 86).

shoemakers.” Particularly interesting is the fact that Aleksić's film was produced by a seemingly apolitical rope walker in a country occupied by Hitler's Germany.

⁹⁶ An attraction, a term Eisenstein initially related to theatre, is “any demonstrable fact (an action, an object, a phenomenon, a conscious combination, and so on) that is known and proven to exercise a definite effect on the attention and emotions of the audience and that, combined with others, possesses the characteristic of concentrating the audience's emotions in any direction dictated by the production's purpose” (Eisenstein 1924, 34–35).

In keeping with his humorous and outwardly easygoing attitude, Makavejev has reminisced about his approach to the editing of *Innocence Unprotected* (1968): “So I used that old film [i.e. Aleksić’s 1943 *Innocence Unprotected*], and I inserted interesting material into it, decorating it like a [holiday] fir tree. That was the theory behind the Serbian cutting. Basically, when you are making a film, and you feel something is missing, you simply insert something interesting. No one is going to ask why it is there. People simply just watch it” (*Misterija Makavejev* 2012). Makavejev describes his films as a holiday fir tree, the colorful symbol of Christmas in postwar capitalism and New Year as its secular counterpart in numerous socialist countries, including Yugoslavia. At the same time, Makavejev wants his audience to believe that almost any combination of images, if only attractive enough, can end up in his films. In truth, this artistic freedom is based on long and careful consideration, for it is “a variation of Eisenstein’s and Vertov’s ‘associative montage,’ but with an ironic removal” (Stojanović 2014, 78).⁹⁷

Speaking of the two Soviet role models, although other researchers demonstrate that Eisenstein could be implicitly critical of the Party line and its revolutionary legacy (see, for example, Neuberger 2019), it is worth noting that Makavejev used the knowledge or misreading of Eisenstein’s montage techniques “to subvert the ideology they were designed to impose” (Hoberman according to Daković 2014, 81). Another distinction between Makavejev and Eisenstein is that Makavejev never had the substantial financial support that Eisenstein had enjoyed, despite all his problems with Stalin’s regime. Because the director of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1928) did not have to recycle bits and pieces of his own or others’

⁹⁷ Associative/associational montage is also known as overtone montage: “Eisenstein views emotional combinations constructed from the psychological associations of different shots, or an ‘associational montage,’ as a means of sharpening or heightening a situation emotionally. He suggests, in a 1929 Marxist dialectical analysis, that if two successive shots show different subjects (i.e., workers being shot down and the slaughter of a cow) with identical associations (slaughtering), then what he calls ‘emotional intensification’ is produced” (Raz, Hagin et al. 2013, 288).

films, it can be argued that Eisenstein's production model was much closer to that of the mainstream US filmmakers as he basically created his own Hollywood, while Vertov and Makavejev had to inventively circumvent budgetary limitations. In that sense, Vertov and Makavejev are more emblematic socialist filmmakers because they operated within the system of economics of shortage.

The Final Cut?

Further investigation of the economics of shortage in socialist cinema could have implications for analyzing a contemporary media economy that is increasingly reliant on various kinds of content and intellectual property. Vertov and Makavejev's work reinforces the need to question the impact of media on the environment, from the environmental damage done by film productions (Vaughan 2019) to the "climate extraction" and potential infrastructural abandonment as a built-in feature of data centers (Brodie 2020; Brodie and Velkova 2021). Although this essay does not advocate for a moratorium on new media production, it does point to the blind spots of the technophilic celebration of digital technologies, specifically their affordability in comparison to older media such as the film stock. The perceived affordability of new media tools generates ever growing IP traffic and various forms of digital data in the Zettabyte Era as well as the dizzying proliferation of audiovisual content produced by various streaming platforms, even if most of that content struggles to garner significant viewership.

The contemporary media landscape is further complicated by the limited access to media content: for example, streaming services such as YouTube, Netflix, and Disney+ prefer to control the conditions under which an extremely limited selection of films and TV shows is

made available to their patrons. The seemingly limitless proliferation of audiovisual content coupled with the corporate limitations on access to IP point to the need to go back to Vertov and Makavejev's archival impulse and recycling practices in order to re-imagine the idea of *media frugality* as a response to the costly oversaturation of the new media content. Put differently, Vertov and Makavejev's approaches to filmmaking show that cutting down often lavish budgets for new productions and bypassing copyright could still leave ample space for creating media content based on re-editing already existing content. An alternative model of media dissemination and consumption can be seen on the Russian social network VK (vk.com), probably the largest online archive of mostly pirated audiovisual content from all over the world. Setting aside problematic aspects of piracy, the sheer abundance of moving images available on the VK invites inquiry into the rationale behind wasting resources on producing new moving images when there is already so much content waiting to be seen and/or productively and imaginatively recycled and re-edited. While the obsession with novelty in the dominant media industry does not seem likely to lose its allure anytime soon, one cannot but imagine the likes of Vertov and Makavejev in the rabbit holes of the VK, looking for creative and economical models of employing its practically boundless archive.

In the end, it is worth pointing out that it was profound materialism with which both Vertov and Makavejev imbued film stock as the basic element of every film production. Both were socialist film workers rather than capitalist filmmakers, in that they never hesitated to borrow and recycle the footage from their previous work or their colleagues' films.⁹⁸ Vertov and Makavejev treated film as no different than coal, wood, or textile; in other words, as a substance

⁹⁸ In contrast to the seemingly cognate practices, such as sampling in the music industry, Vertov and Makavejev's cinema forgoes the concept of copyright and allows the re-use and re-editing of larger segments of individual films. Instead of using samples of already successful music to increase the profits, Vertov and Makavejev's reliance on the archive seeks, above all, to reduce the production costs.

from which a better socialism could be built and maintained by the re-use of already existing “raw” and “second-hand” film material instead of insisting on the production of new, never-before-seen films based on the never-before-used footage. Most importantly, both Vertov’s notion of filmmaking as the “continuous editing process” and Makavejev’s vision of the viewer as the ultimate editor empower an economics of shortage and its accompanying allies—imagination and humor—in the perennial struggle against excessive media production and consumerism. In the end, by subverting the capitalist ideology of *always producing new* products, Vertov and Makavejev have pointed to the strategy of resistance in *frequently recycling old* but nevertheless compelling film elements.

Section 5: The Belgrade FEST, or What Happened When Peckinpah Met Wajda

Foreword: *The following section is based on a revised version of the chapter published in the 2017 volume Cultural Transfer and Political Conflicts: Film Festivals in the Cold War, edited by Andreas Kötzing and Caroline Moine, that came out of the international conference in Leipzig in 2014. Centering on the establishment of the Belgrade International Film Festival FEST in 1971 and its history as a festival crossroad of the Cold War blocs, this section moves beyond the primary temporal scope of the dissertation to illustrate my argument about the extension of the Cold War into the 1990s collapse of Yugoslavia. As such, it serves as a multifunctional bridge into Chapter 3 that tackles the complex political and cultural agenda of the Croatian filmmaker Antun Vrdoljak who challenged Yugoslav revolutionary idealism in his films from 1969 and 1971 and promoted Croatian national cinema as a model for the national devolution of British cinema in the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange. The FEST shared the label of “festival of festivals” with the older London Film Festival which came to be used as a platform for the British “discovery” of Croatian national cinema. It is therefore interesting to observe how the FEST came into being at the height of the Croatian Spring as one of the most conspicuous political crises in postwar Yugoslav history.*

Fundamentally, the FEST has oscillated between its provocative aspects, such as Dušan Makavejev’s controversial film programming at the intersection of political cinema and pornography coupled with his organization of a symposium about film and revolution, and the general crisis of commercial moviegoing in the Yugoslav capital. The festival joined the family of other international Yugoslav cultural festivals established around the same time to promote Yugoslavia abroad and capitalize on its Cold War independence. In this regard, the FEST became a designated place for creative exchanges, and occasional diplomatic jabs, between the

filmmakers from both sides of the Iron Curtain. Much less attention was given to films coming from the Non-Aligned Movement, which speaks to the relatively Eurocentric orientation of the festival. In the festival's heyday, the 1970s, the state and commercial support of the festival enticed numerous international filmmakers and stars to Belgrade and contributed to the city's moderate glamorization. However, this trend waned after Tito's death in 1980 and marked the beginning of the festival's steady financial and cultural decline.

This essay will look at how the Belgrade International Film Festival—best known as the FEST—turned from a platform for cultural legitimization in Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslavia into an escapist vanity fair for Slobodan Milošević's Serbia. On the one hand, I argue that the FEST's Cold War history reinforces the image of Yugoslavia as a meeting point between the socialist east and capitalist west. On the other, I show that political turmoil around the festival in the 1990s clearly demonstrates the presence of the Cold War mentality in the Balkans well after this conflict had ended.⁹⁹ At the same time, the FEST's lack of a fixed identity and the festival management's reluctance to make it either more spectacular or more selective have reflected the absence of a coherent Yugoslav national and cultural policy. This chapter is based on my research conducted at the Yugoslav Film Archive's library, where a number of monographs as well as press clippings on the FEST's history can be found. The monographs widely cited in the text are written by Belgrade film critics who were, at one time or another, involved in the festival's organization and selection. The most useful source has proven to be Ivan Karl's book, which was printed in both Serbian and English with a vast number of photographs from the festival's and

⁹⁹ For more about Cold War dynamics at another Belgrade festival, the Yugoslav Documentary and Short Film Festival, see Dunja Jelenković's chapter "The Film Festival as an Arena for Political Debate: The Yugoslav Black Wave in Belgrade and Oberhausen, 1967-1973" in the same volume edited by Moine and Kötzing.

private archives. However, these monographs are all essentially different iterations of journalistic overviews, which means that a body of critical texts about the FEST has yet to be produced. At the moment, there is no specialized archive of the FEST.

In the wake of co-founding the Non-Aligned Movement and hosting its first conference in 1961, the Yugoslav government sought to put Belgrade on the world cultural map. The first Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) took place in 1967, followed by the first Belgrade Music Festival (BEMUS) in 1968. However, the FEST did not join this festival family as a result of a consistent strategy, but out of personal spite. At the end of the sixties, Yugoslav movie theater attendance had hit a historic low: “The media and the public cited many reasons for this, including the escalation of television and entertainment and a growing number of sports events” (Karl 2013, 12). In a series of articles published by the major Belgrade daily *Politika*, film critic Milutin Čolić asserted that the low quality of imported films caused the apathy among the moviegoers. Čolić even made a bet that he could attract the audience with a series of good reruns. In January 1970, he organized a small retrospective, “The Best Movies of 1969,” which had huge crowds of spectators stopping traffic in one of the city’s main streets while fighting for tickets. This prompted the Belgrade City Council to ask Čolić to establish an international film festival “whatever the cost” (Čolić 1997, 7).

Čolić proposed the “festival of festivals” concept, which involved screening films by the award winners and renowned participants of other reputable film festivals, “regardless of genre, origin, or expression.” The Belgrade festival of festivals was not the first of its kind as the Acapulco and London festivals screened only award-winning films, while the New York Film Festival spotlighted non-US-American cinema in a similar manner (Karl 2013, 13-14). Some Yugoslav filmmakers opposed the creation of the FEST out of fear that the event would siphon

too much money from the already tightened budgets of the state film studios, but Čolić reassured them that the new festival would be financed by a pool of sponsors, i.e. the largest Yugoslav companies (Čolić 1997, 7). Other Yugoslav filmmakers, including the Berlin and Karlovy Vary laureate Živojin Pavlović, suggested that the FEST be a competitive festival oriented towards a particular genre (war or erotic films). This idea was rejected, no doubt because Belgrade could not compete with Cannes or Venice in attracting the best films to have their premiere at the FEST (Čolić 2002, 9), but also because a narrow generic determinant might have seriously limited both the festival's appeal to local audiences (Čolić 1997, 9) and the number of international guests. The decision born out of this more or less understandable inferiority complex was that the FEST would have no competition or awards, but only selections that would provide moviegoers with a perspective on current trends in world film production.

The title of Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* was chosen as the festival's motto, implying a free, open, and critical film selection. At the beginning, however, catchy names were not enough to guarantee the festival's survival. Having no fixed budget, Čolić spent a lot of time bargaining with the foreign producers who were not willing to lower the price of films, while local distributors demanded money for their negotiating skills. Čolić was constantly on the phone pleading and making promises in order to advertise the FEST and advance its importance in cultural and business circles. His efforts seemed to have finally paid off after the FEST's admission to the Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (FIAPF). However, the key factor here was the support of the Yugoslav president, Josip Broz Tito, who was a passionate movie fan and an occasional producer of war films. Tito also enjoyed the company of celebrities and that was one of the reasons why stars like Orson Welles, Richard Burton, and Elizabeth Taylor were invited to Yugoslavia.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the Lumière brothers' invention and honoring the first FEST in 1971, Tito accepted Čolić's initiative to decorate distinguished filmmakers: Charles Chaplin, Laurence Olivier, Rene Clair, Mark Donskoy, John Ford, Luchino Visconti, Akira Kurosawa, Fritz Lang, Luis Buñuel, Ingmar Bergman, and Satyajit Ray (Karl 2013, 13-14). A closer examination reveals the spatial and artistic range of the list: represented were the varied styles of directors who came from different corners of the globe, thus enacting the Yugoslav ideology of internationalism and non-alignment, albeit with a noticeable Eurocentric leaning. All twelve decorated filmmakers were to some extent leftist, or at least progressive. Even though most of them did not come to Belgrade, all expressed their pride in receiving a medal from Tito, as he was respected worldwide for his role in the WWII freedom fight movement and his independent postwar politics.¹⁰⁰ On 8 January 1971, Tito's ability to collaborate with both sides of the Iron Curtain was met with the support of UNESCO, whose special envoy, Alberto Obligado, attended the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the first Belgrade public screening in 1896 (Karl 2013, 17).

During its first decade, the FEST took advantage of the country's foreign political position and relative economic stability to become the most important film festival in Southeastern Europe and a meeting point of the two world blocs, as it were. On the surface, Hollywood studios contributed to the FEST's reputation by considering Yugoslavia a respectable market and the only free country in Eastern Europe. Hollywood was attracted by the golden age of Tito's socialist modernity and saw yet another source of lucrative revenues. In this context it is worth noting that Stanley Kubrick, an anti-communist leftist, personally granted the right to screen *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) at the 1971 FEST, although the film had premiered three years

¹⁰⁰ Chaplin's reaction was particularly heartfelt: "Before the Marshal, who did not get his rank by decree, but in a fight against fascism, I, a soldier in that fight, stand still and salute" (Čolić 1997, 32).

earlier (Čolić 1997, 20). It was through breaking such film import barriers that Belgrade really felt it was catching up with the rest of the world.

The first FEST in 1971 had a number of different sections, of which the midnight program, called “Confrontations,” garnered the most attention. Its curator and director of the scandalous film *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971), Dušan Makavejev, described this program as “a kind of experiment aimed at determining how certain audiences relate to certain types of films,” ranging from those with pornographic elements to those about political turmoil (Karl 2013, 20). Makavejev’s affinity for shocking content should come as no surprise as he held a degree in psychology and was deeply interested in the media manipulation of both sex and political ideology. Quite expectedly, thousands of spectators rushed to taste the forbidden fruit at the first FEST: *Stille dage i Clichy/Quiet Days in Clichy* (1970, Jens Jørgen Thorsen), *Le Vent d’est/Wind from the East* (1970, Jean-Luc Godard), and the first Yugoslav public screening of the notorious Nazi documentary *Triumph des Willens/Triumph of the Will* (1935, Leni Riefenstahl), among others. To see how provocative the first FEST was, one need only read the volume “Film i revolucija danas” [“Film and Revolution Today”],¹⁰¹ edited by Makavejev and Lazar Stojanović,¹⁰² accompanying the festival’s symposium “Film u društvenim konfrontacijama”

¹⁰¹ The volume compiled 50 texts including the manifestos of the group *Feminists: A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles*, “Redstockings Manifesto,” “The Bitch Manifesto,” and Kate Millet’s “Sexual Politics: A Manifesto for Revolution;” interviews with Alfredo Guevarra, Abbie Hoffman, Jean-Luc Godard, and Leni Riefenstahl; essays such as Timothy Leary’s “Violence is Killing With Machines at a Distance” and Dorothy Todd Hénaut’s “A Report from Canada: Television as a Town Meeting;” excerpts from *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service*, Michael Shamberg’s and Raindance Corporation’s *Guerrilla Television*, Abbie Hoffman’s book *Steal This Book*, Diane di Prima’s *Revolutionary Letters*, Ignazio Silone’s *Emergency Exit*, and Buckminster Fuller’s “Man’s Total Communication System;” and Jean Vigo’s introductory speech before the screening of his *Zéro de conduite/Zero for Conduct* (1935). The scanned version of the volume in Serbo-Croatian with an appended bibliography is available at: archive.org/details/filmirevolucijadanasfest71/mode/2up

¹⁰² This is the same Lazar Stojanović mentioned in the dissertation chapter about *The Ambush* as the only Yugoslav filmmaker to be imprisoned by Tito’s regime, specifically for his iconoclastic film *Plastic Jesus*.

[“Film in Social Confrontations”]. Obviously fascinated by *Triumph of the Will*, Makavejev went so far as to openly compare fascist and communist atrocities, something hardly imaginable in the countries of real socialism (Vlajčić 2002, 16-17). Makavejev’s nonconformism was too much even for the moderately liberal Tito’s regime, but the Yugoslav ruler was still waiting for the right moment to unleash his anger.

Overall, the first FEST featured an impressive list of screenings, including older films which had not previously been imported to Yugoslavia: *MASH* (1970, Robert Altman), *Midnight Cowboy* (1969, John Schlesinger), *Easy Rider* (1969, Dennis Hopper), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969, George Roy Hill), *En passion/The Passion of Anna* (1969, Ingmar Bergman), *Tristana* (1970, Luis Buñuel), *Satyricon* (1969, Federico Fellini), *Ma nuit chez Maud/My Night at Maud’s* (1969, Eric Rohmer), *La caduta degli dei/The Damned* (1969, Luchino Visconti), *Zabriskie Point* (1970, Michelangelo Antonioni), etc. Equally interesting was the presence of international guests in the role of unofficial cultural diplomats. Frank Capra, for instance, avoided talking about the Vietnam War movies, but was quick to point out that “reactionary movies come from the communist countries” (Stojanović, Jovanović et al. 1971, 28).¹⁰³ The Soviet director Mark Donskoy talked to Belgrade film students about his acquaintance with Solzhenitsyn, while another Soviet, Grigoriy Chukhrai, criticized the decadent depiction of sex in western productions. Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper “scowled at [Chukhrai’s] words at the press conference.” Andrzej Wajda, who directed the Yugo-Polish co-production *Sibirska ledi Magbet/Siberian Lady Macbeth* (1962) and spoke Serbo-Croatian fluently, “when asked about the behavior of intellectuals during the political turmoil in Poland, said that he didn’t understand the question, provoking laughter from all assembled” (Karl 2013,

¹⁰³ Capra was a distinguished “fighter against communism” in Cold War Asia as well (Lee 2020, 19).

22-23). In general, the guests of this and later editions of the FEST were unwilling to engage in heated political discussions, opting instead for polite comments about the vibrant Belgrade atmosphere and the relatively non-commercial nature of the festival itself. Perhaps because of the emphasis on non-commercialism, the 1970s organizers did not establish a festival market for distribution and co-productions. If fostering a more dynamic exchange of films between the Cold War blocs seemed unlikely because of various restrictions, Yugoslavia might have benefitted from increasing the number of international (co-)productions filmed in the country.¹⁰⁴ But instead of attempting to strengthen the infrastructural and creative foundations of Yugoslav cinema, the FEST's nomenklatura were content with imitating, albeit modestly, the glamour of Cannes and Venice by hosting and fetishizing movie stars, especially actresses such as Claudia Cardinale, Liv Ullmann, and Monica Vitti. Despite Tito's proclaimed affiliation with the Third World and the sporadic inclusion of less known national cinemas on the FEST's program, there was no systematic effort to serve as an alternative to the Tashkent Festival of Asian, African, and Latin American Cinema.

To some extent, this focus on US-American and European cultures was predetermined by Yugoslavia having first been in the Soviet, and then the US-American sphere of cultural influence. An overview of renowned Yugoslav film journals (*Filmska kultura*, *Film*) and daily and weekly newspapers (*Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *NIN*) indicates a distinctive understanding of auteur theory amongst prominent film critics: in contrast to their colleagues from *Cahiers du Cinéma*, who regarded Ford and Hitchcock as more than just skillful craftsmen, Yugoslav critics,

¹⁰⁴ For more about the big-budget international co-productions shot in 1960s Yugoslavia, see *Cinema Komunisto*, and the documentary TV series *SFRJ za početnike/SFRY for the Beginners* (2012). Truth be told, Sam Peckinpah directed *The Cross of Iron* (1977) in Yugoslavia after having been a guest of the FEST, but there are no archival traces of institutionalizing international co-productions within the festival's framework.

although recognizing the importance of the classical Hollywood masters, were more prone to considering non-Hollywood cinema as the only guardian of cinematic art. With a few telling exceptions, for instance in certain texts in the Sarajevan film journal *Sineast*, the New Hollywood cinema was not met with critical enthusiasm. The Belgrade film students' talks with the likes of Capra and Francis Ford Coppola might have had an impact on aspiring Yugoslav filmmakers, but the word "genre" was either misinterpreted or held in contempt by accredited Yugoslav film critics. There is no doubt, however, that Eastern European filmmakers used the FEST to see otherwise unavailable films, as in the case of a Bulgarian director Ivan Andanov (Petek 1971, 72) and his Hungarian colleague István Szabó (Karl 2013, 40).

The first FEST was closed with a press conference announcing that "one country had officially objected to the FEST's alleged penchant for American cinema;" we might only assume which presumably socialist country it was. The festival organizers responded by pointing out the superiority of Hollywood over other national productions at the time. Before the beginning of the first FEST, Čolić said the festival would be seen as a failure if it attracted fewer than 50,000 visitors; but in the end 105,000 moviegoers attended the festival screenings over the course of nine days: "Up to that moment, no other cultural event in Belgrade had brought so many people together" (Karl 2013, 26).

From the very beginning, the FEST was under political fire. In 1972 the aforementioned selection "Confrontations" was condemned by the influential Yugoslav war veteran organization SUBNOR¹⁰⁵ for "the midnight screenings of films with scenes of guns and violence, drug abuse, and pornography, which attracted thousands of young people who had bought expensive tickets to watch those morbid pictures." The FEST's representatives astutely responded that

¹⁰⁵ Savez udruženja boraca Narodnooslobodilačkog rata (Union of the Associations of Fighters of the People's Liberation War).

“Confrontations” were meant only for accredited journalists and cultural workers interested in avant-garde films, and therefore no tickets had been sold. Notwithstanding this criticism, the FEST would go on to become a model for a similar Polish festival called “Konfrontacje” after Makavejev’s program (Karl 2013, 31; Čolić 1997, 18).

On the request of FIAPF in 1973, the FEST redefined its concept. The re-established Acapulco festival claimed its rights to being the “Festival of Festivals,” thus turning the FEST into something even more pretentious: the “Festival of the Best World Films.” This change was purely cosmetic, as the FEST’s program continued to be made up of festival winners. On a more positive note, the FEST was beginning to be recognized for its popular appeal, so much so that the director of the Berlinale, Alfred Bauer, accepted Čolić’s ideas about how to attract a larger audience and make the Berlin Festival less elitist (Čolić 1997, 17-18). More significant for the FEST’s future were behind-the-scenes purges of the festival’s organizers: Aleksandar Petrović and Dušan Makavejev were ousted as representatives of the Black Wave. Ironically, the Black Wave auteurs became famous in their home country after receiving accolades at the most prestigious international festivals in late 1960s.¹⁰⁶ The Yugoslav government took much pride in their international success and granted special status to the awarded filmmakers, but as soon as the political turbulence commenced, their achievements were proclaimed decadent, pessimistic, or simply subjective (Nikodijević 1995; Tirnanić 2008).¹⁰⁷ Only a few years before the 1975

¹⁰⁶ In 1967, *Skupljači perja/I Even Met Happy Gypsies* won the Special Grand Prize of the Jury and the FIPRESCI Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, *Kad budem mrtav i beo/When I am Dead and Gone* (Živojin Pavlović) received the FIPRESCI Prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, *Buđenje pacova/The Rats Woke Up* (Živojin Pavlović) won the Silver Bear for Best Director at the Berlin International Film Festival, while *Jutro/Morning* (Mladomir ‘Puriša’ Đorđević) won an award in Venice. In 1968, *Nevinost bez zaštite/Innocence Unprotected* (Dušan Makavejev) received the Silver Bear and the FIPRESCI Prize in Berlin, where in 1969, *Rani radovi/Early Works* (Želimir Žilnik) won the Golden Bear.

¹⁰⁷ The most extensive source in English about the Black Wave is De Kjur/DeCuir, Jr. 2011. DeCuir Jr.’s overemphasis on a deliberate political agenda in the Black Wave is denounced in Jovanović 2011.

Helsinki Final Act brought the ideology of human rights to bear on the socialist states, the west was still hesitant to criticize Yugoslavia for obvious political persecution, mostly because Tito did everything possible not to resemble Stalin. Never again, however, would the Black Wave filmmakers repeat their 1960s successes on the international festival circuit.

Mirroring the Cold War *détente*, the second half of the 1970s did not bring any tectonic shifts in the FEST's organization, and there were only occasional reminders of the global conflict. In 1975, Pier Paolo Pasolini stayed in Belgrade less than 24 hours, concluding that the FEST was not a worldly festival, a snobbish comment one would not expect from such a vocal leftist. Francis Ford Coppola confirmed that the Soviet minister of cinema had inspired him to make *The Godfather II* (1974), adding that he had no intention of filming *The Godfather III* (Karl 2013, 40). In 1978 the Soviet delegation openly protested the representation of the Vietnam War in *The Deer Hunter* (1978, Michael Cimino) and departed Belgrade. They soon repeated the same action in Berlin, but in neither of the festivals did their actions cause much excitement (Vlajčić 2002, 46-47). The same year, *Network* (1976, Sidney Lumet) was not screened at the FEST because Yugoslav distributors could not buy the film the year before, and then the production company United Artists banned sales to socialist countries. Following their precedent in Berlin and Cannes, Polish government vetoed the screening of the critical *Człowiek z marmuru/Man of Marble* (1978, Andrzej Wajda) in Belgrade. Fortunately, Wajda's film was screened at the opening festival ceremony the year after. George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977) was unavailable solely because of its high price (Karl 2013, 49).

In 1980, Milutin Čolić, the FEST's founder and director, was unseated because his working style, according to the official media, "contradicted the nature of self-management" (Karl 2013, 57). In other words, it was high time to create a typical Yugoslav (and socialist) collective body,

an inefficient seven-member selection committee. Roman Polanski could not hide his disappointment over the simultaneous translation of his film *Tess* (1979) (59). Unfortunately, reactions such as Polanski's were to become a hallmark of the FEST, as it had a long history of technical problems. It also serves as a succinct emblem for the place the FEST occupied in the family of international festivals: over the years it hosted numerous canonical filmmakers, while failing to meet even basic screening standards. The FEST, like Yugoslavia itself, attempted to overcome its shortcomings only to discover that it was just its relatively high 1970s standard of living, Tito's name, and the seemingly exotic Eastern European location that attracted the international celebrities. During the 1980s the FEST was losing its charm. Selection committees could not come up with a new concept after many films awarded at other festivals failed to appear in Belgrade. The number of guests decreased and the festival glitziness was gone.

Amongst opponents of the FEST's organization, the film critic Ranko Munitić was particularly vociferous. As early as 1972, he had warned that it was not enough to screen only festival winners, as accolades were no guarantee of quality (Munitić 1972, 196-197). A decade later Munitić was openly sarcastic when suggesting that the festival's slogan be changed to "the best films bought by Yugoslav distributors" (Munitić 1981, 108), and concluded that the FEST gave up on showcasing new cinematic tendencies and the vision of a brave new world by adopting an impersonal title, "International Film Festival" (Munitić 1982, 108). Munitić's colleague from Sarajevo, Nikola Stojanović (1980, 46), was more conciliatory, writing that the most important thing was not how films were classified in different festival programs, but that a "hungry cinephile" has the chance to watch as many films as possible. The metaphor of the hungry cinephile would re-emerge during the 1990s collapse of Yugoslavia in regard to the Sarajevo Film Festival.

Tito's death in 1980 was a turning point for both the festival and the country on the whole, marking the beginning of the political and economic crisis that paralyzed Yugoslavia. "Measures of economic stabilization and foreign currency issues" were the main reason why *Raging Bull* (1980, Martin Scorsese), *The Shining* (1980, Stanley Kubrick), and *Superman II* (1980, Richard Lester) were not screened at the 1981 FEST. Perhaps the best illustration as to how far sidetracked the festival was at the time is an episode with Jean-Luc Godard in 1986, when the French director was far past the peak of his fame. Godard requested that two of his films, *Je vous salue, Marie/Hail Mary* (1985) and *Detective* (1985) be screened in Belgrade, but canceled his visit nonetheless (Karl 2013, 63-64; 75).

At the end of 1980s there was a feeling that the FEST might be reformed and restored to at least a fraction of its past glory. The film offering was expanded and diversified, enriched by a plethora of sidebar activities. One of the most attractive segments of the 1989 FEST was the TV show *Festovizija*, which featured reports, interviews, documentaries, live television call-in shows, and films, and was broadcast all day long. In addition, a satellite TV panel featuring experts from Belgrade and Washington explored the then hot topic of video piracy. *Festovizija* was edited by Nebojša Đukelić, who soon became the FEST's selector. Working with filmmaker Aleksandar Petrović, Đukelić established the first and only Belgrade International Film Festival of Central European Film, which sought to provide an alternative to a market saturated with the pirate copies of Hollywood blockbusters (Karl 2013, 91). The short life of the Festival of the Central European Film coincided with Yugoslav politicians' refusal of a deal conceived by Washington and Brussels, according to which Yugoslavia would be saved and set on the road to joining the European Union. Regrettably, the desire of the FEST organizers to unify the Balkans

and put Central Europe on the cinematic map was no match for the overwhelming shortsightedness of politicians.

In early 1992, Slovenia and Croatia were well on their way to becoming independent states, while Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were preparing for their own referendums on independence. With tragic bloodshed looming large on the horizon along with the cessation of cultural and business communication, the organization of the FEST was uncertain. Thanks to the international standing of Emir Kusturica, however, Belgrade hosted Jim Jarmusch and Johnny Depp, who spent most of their time in the night clubs playing with the local bands. French directors Jean-Jacques Annaud and Marc Caro and the Russian Nikita Mikhalkov also appeared, and so for a short time it seemed that everything was just fine with both Belgrade and the FEST. This, I argue, is another turning point in the FEST's history, the attempt to normalize time out of joint. Symbolically, at the centre of this moment stood none other than Kusturica himself: an ethnic Bosniak by origin, he felt that Bosniak leaders had betrayed Yugoslav supranationalism and committed many crimes at the beginning of the Bosnian War, so he immigrated to Serbia, where he converted to Orthodoxy and (re-)adopted Serbian nationality (Wilkinson 2007). Back in 1992, Kusturica was still struggling with his aura as the last great Yugoslav director and the fame he achieved after winning his first Golden Palm in 1985. Kusturica's only US-American film, *Arizona Dream* (1993), proved to be a more bitter than sweet experience, leading him to believe that the US did not grasp the distinctiveness of European cultures. While his homeland was rapidly falling apart, Kusturica maintained his vision of an alternative glamour: with Jarmusch and Depp partying in Belgrade, Serbian society might have believed the dissolution of Yugoslavia would not be as long and bloody as it turned out to be.

Kusturica became enmeshed in what Slobodan Milošević and his elite gradually developed as a dominant belief, namely, that the west, led by the United States, was doing everything possible to destroy the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia and Montenegro, as the last bastion of freedom after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. For Milošević, the Cold War did not end in 1989, nor did it end in 1999, when NATO bombed the Third Yugoslavia. Even after all the devastation, Milošević's rhetoric remained thoroughly Manichean, depicting the fight between the bad, rich west and the poor, but proud and good east (Ramet 2002, 356). Milošević was confident that not only would his vision of morality prevail over western decadence, but that the whole world would realize that he was right once Boris Yeltsin's Russia stepped in to help Milošević's regime in its fight against the western Goliath. By winning his second Golden Palm in 1995, Kusturica indirectly contributed to a belief that is often forgotten: in the wake of Milošević's signing the Dayton Agreement and cultural triumphs such as Kusturica's in Cannes, many people, especially in the west, thought that Milošević would be pacified (LeBor 2002, 253). Unlike his Black Wave colleagues who had used Cold War film festivals to criticize Tito's nomenklatura, Kusturica utilized his victory in Cannes to restore some of the country's prestige that Milošević was rapidly depleting.

The decline of the FEST became evident with the rise of the Sarajevo Film Festival. The first Sarajevo Film Festival took place amidst the Siege of Sarajevo (April 1992–February 1996), one of the longest military sieges of a city in modern history. In this period Sarajevo was devastated by persistent bombing by the Army of Republika Srpska. There was little room for thinking about cultural events while people were dying and struggling with the plight of war. But the desire to live a normal life triumphed, and so the first Sarajevo International Film Festival was held for ten days in October 1993. Unlike Belgrade in 1992, though, Sarajevo could not host

international guests: it was “an event that completely embarrassed the UN, which found itself refusing, possibly on orders from the British government, to fly stars Vanessa Redgrave, Jeremy Irons, and Daniel Day-Lewis into the city for the event” (Turan 2002, 105). The war suffering of epic proportions endowed the Sarajevo Film Festival with significant symbolic capital: “While visits to more conventional festivals like Cannes or Sundance concentrate on [determining] what is new and different, the award-winners and trend-setters, Sarajevo promised a chance to examine the uses and purposes of film at ground zero, to get at the core of how the medium works and what it can mean to people no matter what their circumstances” (90).

That is to say, during the war Sarajevans craved films just as they craved food and clothes. In the eyes of Sarajevans, as well as of the international observers, Belgrade’s impassivity towards the destruction of the Bosnian capital constituted a loss of integrity. Sarajevo-born Kusturica epitomized this gap between the two cities: “To the people who remained in Sarajevo, it is the fact that Kusturica not only left but also did things like promote a Belgrade film festival while his birthplace was being bombed that caused the greatest anger against the director” (Turan 2002, 103). The legacy of the war turned Sarajevo into a new regional festival centre, while Belgrade’s FEST first had to grapple with the Cold War mentality of 1990s Serbia under Milošević, pervaded as it was with collective paranoia and irrationality.

In 1993 and 1994 the FEST was cancelled due to the international sanctions. While it resumed operations in 1995 and 1996, the most important moment in its recent history and the end of its Cold War era came in 1997. In November 1996, the opposition coalition Zajedno had won local elections in Serbia, but Milošević’s government tried to tamper with the results and then annul them. Civil and student protests broke out across the country and lasted for more than three months, particularly in Belgrade. The FEST was interrupted after a brutal police

intervention in the area close to the main venue when thousands of people were savagely beaten and blasted by water cannons. The following morning the FEST Council submitted their irrevocable resignations formulated in a statement condemning the police repression (Karl 2013, 118). The FEST continued as a film show after long negotiations, but that was the year the Belgrade film festival finally woke up from its apolitical hibernation. Today, while it has survived the demise of both Yugoslavia, for which it was once the showcase international film festival, and the Cold War, in which it served as an important oasis of international interaction, and while it might be deemed “successful and capable of self-preservation precisely because it [i.e. a film festival network] knows how to adapt to changing circumstances” (de Valck 2007, 35-36), the FEST has yet to get itself back on its feet with a redefined profile and target audience.

In retrospect, the FEST seems to have been a festival without a festival concept and a less affluent copy of Cannes and Berlin. Perhaps it was the obsession with Cannes glamour that Belgrade and Yugoslavia needed to emulate in order to feel more liberal and western. On the other hand, in the golden age of the FEST, an era without the Internet or video stores, where else would someone like István Szabó have been able to watch so many international films? Where would Sam Peckinpah have been able to analyze his own work with the kind of introspection that raised the bar of Yugoslav film criticism and theory? How else would Makavejev have been able to introduce pornography as a serious moral and political issue in Yugoslavia? Even though it seems hard to measure the impact that the FEST had on the cultural life of Belgrade or the region as a whole, it is impossible to underestimate its significance for Yugoslav culture at large and aficionados of both Hollywood and Tarkovsky.

CHAPTER 3: THE NATIONAL(IST) CHALLENGE TO THE YUGOSLAV REVOLUTION

Mel Brooks: We did a movie¹⁰⁸ in Yugoslavia. And we lived in Belgrade. The heart, the very heartland of Yugoslavia. We lived there, for six months, in Belgrade. The whole city is lit with a 10-watt bulb. I ate nothing but kasha, 3 times a day, though that was groats, wheats, it's mush, it's, it's... it! That's what it is. ... We lived there, in Yugoslavia, in the mud, in the fields. If you go to Yugoslavia, don't pack a horse and wagon, they have many of them there. Don't have to take that. Everything else, everything possible, take it. Leave a horse and wagon home. ... Actually, I don't wanna sound, you know, derogatory or pejorative about Yugoslavia, because they are great people, they are marvelous people. You know, seriously, if the Russians had attacked, or, you know, invaded Yugoslavia, like they did Czechoslovakia, the Yugoslavians would have fought and died to the last person. They just simply would not have... The Russians have incredible respect and a brush stroke of fear for Yugoslavia. ... They had a bit of a contretemps, there was, Russian ambassador came to straighten it out, but we were nervous for a few days, I mean, that there'd be a few bullets, but, they settled it.

Dick Cavett: Do you find that action of that kind would upset you?

Mel Brooks: Death?! Always. Always makes me nervous. Always. A little death, you know, you can't eat rice pudding...

(“Mel Brooks on Shooting in Yugoslavia | *The Dick Cavett Show*” 1970)¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ *The Twelve Chairs* (1970, directed by Mel Brooks), based on the eponymous literary classic by the Soviet authors Ilf and Petrov.

¹⁰⁹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=dk5ew2NhPuw&t=2s

Section 6: From Supra- and Extra-Nation to Post-Revolution: Late 1960s Critical Debates about the Nature of Yugoslav Cinema

Foreword: *This short section was first presented at the 2019 ASEES (Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies) Convention in Zagreb and subsequently updated and revised for the dissertation. It analyzes how a 1968 critical polemic about Yugoslav cinema as either a supranational cinema or a collection of national cinemas presented possible extra-national designations of Yugoslav cinema as a socialist, revolutionary, and humanistic cinema. The polemic built on the wave of post-1965 liberalization and decentralization of Yugoslav society as well as international festival accolades for the Yugoslav New Film. I relate the roots of the 1968 polemic about national cinemas in Yugoslavia to the surfacing of the national cultural issue in the mid-1960s Soviet Union. Concurrently, I submit Yugoslav supra-national cinema as preceding the more recent conceptualization of a supra-national European cinema in the construction of the European Union's culture.*

The section further relates the 1968 polemic to the 1969 debate between Yugoslav cineastes and Italian critics, led by Guido Aristarco, in which the Yugoslavs put forward the revolutionary experience of their culture, similarly to their Cuban comrades in the 1974 debate with Aristarco. What clearly emanates from the 1968 polemic and the 1969 debate is the confidence with which Yugoslav film critics started considering cinema in Yugoslavia as commensurate with international cinema, especially in terms of the former's more or less unique socialist and revolutionary dimensions. Ultimately, the 1968 polemic facilitated the post-socialist national(ist) dismemberment of Yugoslav cinema and allowed the "star" of this dissertation

chapter, Antun Vrdoljak, to take a stand against the Yugoslav Revolution in his films and subsequently promote Croatian national cinema on the international stage.

The 1967 Festival of Yugoslav Film (FJF) in Pula has gone down in history as the most competitive and, indeed, best edition of the festival. The 1967 selection was universally praised by Yugoslav critics as the coming-of-age of Yugoslav cinema in general, a view soon to be reinforced by the international film festivals that began recognizing and awarding Yugoslav films. This was also the first FJF after Aleksandar Ranković, who came to symbolize the hardcore bureaucratic wing of the SKJ and the police control of Yugoslav society, was removed in 1966. The 1967 FJF thus came to embody and represent a new sense of social liberty, including greater emphasis on social critique and addressing previously neglected and/or less prominent issues such as national identity and national rights in socialist Yugoslavia.

Two films screened at the 1967 FJF, *Skupljači perja/I Even Met Happy Gypsies* directed by the Belgrade-based Aleksandar Petrović and *Breza/The Birch Tree* by the Zagreb-based Ante Babaja, were singled out as directly influenced by a film that has come to be recognized as one of the key works of Ukrainian cinema: *Тіні забутих предків/Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1965), produced by the Dovzhenko Film Studios in Kyiv. The film's director, Sergey Parajanov, had provoked the bureaucrats who ran Soviet cinema with his emphasis on pictorial and cinematographic rather than narrative film elements. Additionally, Parajanov insisted on making films based on non-Russian national cultures: his subsequent features—*The Color of Pomegranates* (1969), *The Legend of Suram Fortress* (1985), and *Ashik Kerib* (1988)—drew on the Armenian, Georgian, and Azeri cultures respectively. An Armenian born in Georgia, Parajanov effectively queered the Soviet cinema by refusing to advance its ideological and

aesthetic postulates. He did so by eschewing Russian as the dominant language of Soviet cinema and culture and discarding any interest in Soviet socialism as such. Instead, Parajanov used his colorful, ornamental style to highlight and demarginalize non-Russian cultures. Parajanov's personal troubles had started with *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* as the film's international success corresponded with the rise of the Ukrainian national opposition to the Soviet regime. In 1973, Parajanov was sentenced to five years of hard labor on trumped-up charges related to his sexuality and eventually released after years of international protests and petitions, only to be imprisoned again in 1982 on a different set of fabricated accusations. Before his untimely death, Parajanov became one of the globally most celebrated filmmakers who worked in the Soviet Union.

In 1967 Yugoslavia, Parajanov's depiction of Ukrainian peasant culture in *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* inspired Aleksandar Petrović to set a precedent in Yugoslav cinema by directing *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*—a film about the Romani protagonists interacting with Serbs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and other ethnicities in the multicultural province of Vojvodina. Under Parajanov's influence, Ante Babaja tackled the world of Croatian peasants in *The Birch Tree*, making use of their dialect and naïve art. Both Petrović and Babaja collaborated with the same director of photography, Tomislav Pinter from Croatia, to accordingly transpose the poetic, ornamental visuals of Parajanov's Ukrainian DOP, Yuriy Ilenko, into their films.¹¹⁰ Petrović's and Babaja's films departed from the representational orthodoxy of the NOB films which, more often than not, stressed the unity rather than distinctiveness of various Yugoslav nations.

Additionally, Petrović's film exposed the social marginalization of the Romani people as the

¹¹⁰ Ilenko and Parajanov's use of painterly poetics also influenced *Innocence Unprotected* (1968, Dušan Makavejev) and *Slike iz života udarnika/Scenes from the Life of Shock Workers* (1972, Bahrudin 'Bato' Čengić). Both films were co-written by Branko Vučićević.

reverse side of socialist modernization. In his critical biography of Petrović, Vlastimir Sudar argues that although the filmmaker was not an ethnic Rom, he managed to break certain stereotypes in the representation of the minority by employing the focalization of the Romani, rather than white Yugoslavs, and by “the fact that most of the film is spoken in the Romany language, for the first time ever” in film history (Sudar 2013, 143). One of the protagonists of this paper, film critic Slobodan Novaković, witnessed Petrović and Babaja’s fascination with *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* upon seeing the film (Sudar 2013, 147). Films like *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* and *The Birch Tree*, in turn, shaped Novaković’s theorization of national cinemas within Yugoslav cinema.

This paper scrutinizes the late 1960s critical debate about supra-national Yugoslav cinema(s), thus complementing Tim Bergfelder’s oft-cited essay about European cinema at the intersection of national, transnational, and supranational paradigms. Focusing on British and German cinemas and publishing in 2005 when the European Union appeared a much less problematic idea than today, Bergfelder notes “the need to protect the vaguely defined yet strongly perceived European film heritage” (2005b, 316). Bergfelder legitimately reproaches the canonization of European art cinema at the expense of the continental popular cinema, including “low-brow” European co-productions. His remark about art cinema in Germany having become, thanks to dubbing, a generic rather than national category (328) could have interesting implications if reversed and then applied the other way around, to Yugoslav cinema about war and revolution as a potentially extra-national rather than just generic category. Although Bergfelder rightly accentuates “dispersal, incursion, and dissolving boundaries” (324) as well as migrations and diasporic identities as trademarks of European cinema, his synthesis is still fraught with the neglect of Eastern European contexts and biased polarization between cultural

centers and peripheries. For example, Bergfelder observes the increase of national sentiments “in countries which *see themselves* as either economically excluded or culturally independent from the *developments* of central and Western Europe” (319, my emphasis). Furthermore, the author’s position that “European cinema is more than just the sum total of separate and divergent film styles” (329) marked by translation and interpretive liberties begs the comparison to Yugoslav cinema where even the absence of huge linguistic barriers did not prevent a critical contestation of supra-national cinema.

The main point of contention in the 1968 polemic between Yugoslav film critics Slobodan Novaković and Ranko Munitić, the subject of this paper, was the concept of Yugoslav cinema as either a collection of republican, i.e. national cinemas (advanced by Novaković), or a more or less unified, i.e. supra-national, cinema (advocated by Munitić). Their polemic occurred after the removal of Ranković and the 1967 publication of the Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language when efforts were made towards building stronger self-management of individual Yugoslav republics as well as stimulating national cultures. The Novaković-Munitić polemic developed on the pages of the most prominent Yugoslav film journal, *Filmska kultura*. Published in Zagreb, the journal was, by and large, mainstream in terms of its political and aesthetic stances, generally favoring art cinema and auteurism over commercial genre productions. The fact that the journal was published in Croatia gave additional weight to the polemic about (supra-)national cinema(s) as it coincided with the attempts of Croatian political and cultural elites to gain more independence within Yugoslav federation during the early stage of the Croatian Spring.

The leading participants of the critical exchange were well established in their field. Novaković was the film critic of the SKJ’s official newspaper *Komunist*, while Munitić

contributed film reviews and essays to a number of newspapers and magazines across Yugoslavia and published a long list of books about cinema (mostly about animation, documentary and Yugoslav cinema). Novaković was based in Belgrade, whereas Munitić considered himself a Yugoslav owing to his mixed national family background and the experience of living in both Zagreb and Belgrade.

The first text in the polemic was Novaković's (1968a) lengthy reaction to a previously published article by Munitić which criticized the fragmentation of the still relatively young Yugoslav cinema into republican cinemas. Novaković argued that Serbian and Croatian cinemas, led by Belgradian and Zagrebian auteurs, occupied a distinct and more advanced position in comparison to Macedonian cinema, plagued by poor production management and reliance on auteurs from other Yugoslav republics, and Bosnian-Herzegovinian cinema, which was still too feeble for greater achievements. Novaković argued that, in general, auteurs first develop their personal affinities, followed by their "spontaneous grouping around certain *national* (meaning: jointly formulated!) aesthetic ... spheres" (1968a, 511). He added that auteurs from different Yugoslav regions were "proponents of a certain film sensibility, while simultaneously being representatives of a certain mentality of their region" (511). Novaković relied on a seemingly obvious, but crudely essentialist and structuralist dichotomy between Serbian auteurs as more *emotional* and Croatian auteurs as more *rational* filmmakers. For Novaković, the films of Belgradian auteurs showed their inclination towards verism, the picturesque, and expressive settings. Belgradian auteurs used fragmentary narration, collage, free associations, and accumulation of often contradictory emotions. Their Zagrebian peers, Novaković claimed, preferred symmetry, leitmotifs, and rational organization borrowed from games and other arts

(e.g. chess¹¹¹ and painting¹¹²). Novaković concluded that the benefit of national delimitation can be found “only in locating and defining distinct intellectual and aesthetic film *structures*, to be further perfected” in order to become “an organic part of their *national* cultures” in a productive process for the entire Yugoslav cinema (513).

In his response to Novaković, Munitić (1968a) underlined that he never denied the specificities of certain film groups and movements in Yugoslavia, such as the Zagreb School of Animation and the Belgrade School of Documentary Film, for Yugoslav cinema “has never been a homogeneous whole thanks to the free social and political climate of its emergence” (519-520). Munitić contended that “the oppositions and divergences in the aesthetic realm of [Yugoslav] cinema should serve its unification rather than the fragmentation of its structure in the social realm” which then leads to the competitive production of national differences (522). Munitić was critical of the abuse of “the republican key,” that is, the unwritten rule of national parity used in various spheres of Yugoslav public life, including the FJF where each year the winning film was supposed to come from a different republic, thus eschewing national favoritism. According to Munitić, this practice signaled the victory of political over aesthetic criteria, leading to the rise of nationalism artfully hidden behind the call for political and social decentralization.

In another critical review of Novaković’s conceptualization of national cinemas, a Belgradian critic Božidar Zečević (1968a), contested Novaković’s ahistorical comparison of the South Slav national literatures and cinema. Zečević pointed out that national literatures formed primarily in resistance to the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian imperialisms, while cinema “came up in the framework of *socialist* ... orientation. ... when our national cultures were, more than ever before, exposed to mutual influences, subjected to the general flow of the socialist

¹¹¹ Novaković’s indirect reference to *Rondo* (1966, Zvonimir Berković).

¹¹² Novaković’s indirect reference to Babaja’s *The Birch Tree*.

progress, ... and deprived of the narrow local framing” (527). National sensibilities in postwar Yugoslavia, maintained Zečević, had been subordinated to “a deep humanistic orientation,” that is, the country’s revolutionary socialism. To illustrate his point, Zečević mentioned Dušan Makavejev’s interview for the journal of the French New Wave critics, *Cahiers du Cinéma*. The French interviewers highlighted the perceived ethnic “exoticism” of eastern Serbia in Makavejev’s debut feature *Čovek nije tica/Man Is Not a Bird* (1965). In contrast to the French interest in Serbs, Aromanians, and “the primitive shepherds of Romanic descent,” Zečević venerated Makavejev’s feature debut as “the first great Yugoslav film” primarily because of its topical entwinement of fast industrialization and multinational socialist revolution in Yugoslavia. For Zečević, Makavejev’s narrative about a Slovenian engineer falling in love with a Serbian hairdresser while building a factory for export to South America, is first and foremost a story about the profound revolutionary transformation of Yugoslavia. Zečević argued that Makavejev’s technique of cinematic collage, seemingly chaotic and arbitrary as per Novaković, was actually based on a very rational organization of disparate audiovisual materials. Zečević consequently exposed Novaković’s dichotomy between the “rational” Croats and “fiery” Serbs as Orientalist and, as such, in keeping with the above mentioned musings of the French contributors to *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Zečević concluded that some stylistic idiosyncrasies shared by a number of filmmakers from a Yugoslav republic or region still do not represent Novaković’s “jointly formulated spheres,” let alone a national cinema. And even if Yugoslav cinema were to obtain certain contours of national determination, its most important quality would be progressive and humanistic orientation, i.e. its *extra-national* features.

Zečević’s contemplation about the extra-national character of Yugoslav cinema resonated in the insightful essay of the Zagrebian critic and filmmaker Rudolf Sremec (1968) who pointed out

that contemporaneous debates about national cinemas in Yugoslavia started amid unprecedented antibureaucratic, anti-statist, and self-managerial tendencies unknown in 1950s Yugoslav society. Sremec insisted that national cinema in Yugoslavia could not be compared to the national literatures produced by Yugoslav nations because Yugoslav cinema was predominantly shaped by socialism and revolution. Therefore Sremec held that the most adequate name for the country's cinema would be "the cinema of socialist Yugoslavia." He argued that "the cinema of Yugoslavia grew and developed in the spirit of gathering and resistance to the obsolete social structure, against the bourgeoisie rejected by the revolution" (539). Sremec further considered the notion of nation from an organicist standpoint: "Nation is a living organism, just like the nation's culture, an organism mortal just like any other, vital as long as there is enough strength to not only affirm [its] tradition, but also affirm itself in finding a new way [of development], providing there is enough representatives of the nation to point towards that way" (539). The author further suggested that there "[c]an not be socialism which, by overturning a national being and national culture, creates a supra-nation, but there can be such cultural formations created by [joint] stakes and shares of all nations..." (540). While using pointedly economic vocabulary in the era of national conflicts around the distribution of Yugoslav gross domestic product, Sremec emphasized that in the dynamic postwar environment nations absorb influences through various internal and external processes in "the increasingly [globalized] world," so there can be no discussion of the narrow "characterology" of local film centers. Therefore, contemporary nations are more determined by their relationship to "Vietnam, Third World, cybernetics, world demographic explosion, and space travel" than their national traditions. Yugoslav filmmakers, in particular, are much more associated with the socialist, internationalist cinema (541).

Among various reactions to the Novaković-Munitić polemic, one by Mira Boglić (1968), the film critic of the Zagreb newspaper of record *Vjesnik* and regular contributor to *Filmska kultura*, deserves special attention. Boglić's reputation as a journalist close to the Croatian political establishment is important in this context because of her editing of *Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970* at the peak of the Croatian Spring in 1971 (to be analyzed in the dissertation section below titled "Conceptualizing Croatian National Cinema in *Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970* and Beyond"). Boglić's contribution to the Novaković-Munitić polemic was circumspect. On the one hand, she praised Novaković's desire to openly discuss national issues, while on the other, like Sremec, she regarded Yugoslav cinema as close to "the permeation of national and international" (533), her use of the term "international" seeming akin to the contemporary use of the term "transnational." Opposing a forced unification of the diverse parts of Yugoslav cinema, Boglić instead advocated for the customary dialectical approach to culture according to which numerous film centers in Yugoslavia influenced each other. Interestingly, Boglić singled out a few Yugoslav directors (Veljko Bulajić, Živorad Mitrović, Branko Bauer, Fadil Hadžić) who could not be attached to a single national cinema mostly because they worked in multiple Yugoslav republics and provinces. However, in *Almanac of Croatian Film*, Boglić unequivocally incorporated Bulajić, Bauer, and Hadžić into Croatian national cinema, thus offering a rather inconsistent viewpoint of the national question. In other words, in 1968 Boglić was still not ready to adopt Croatian nationalism as wholeheartedly as she was during the peak of the liberal-nationalist Croatian Spring.

In a response to his critics, Novaković (1968b) argued that only those auteurs who practiced "modern" cinematic expression could be considered representatives of national cinemas in Yugoslavia. Novaković here referred to Yugoslav auteurs who could be associated with the

globally burgeoning *modernist* cinema of the 1960s. For Novaković, the work of identifying and analyzing structural distinctions between various aesthetics of modernist filmmakers was tantamount to the affirmation of national differences in the modern cinematic expression rather than to nationalist favoritism (549). The critic rather briskly repudiated the idea of Yugoslav cinema as a primarily socialist cinema because, he argued, socialism exists in many countries but is not determinative of the aesthetic features of national cinemas.

Munitić (1968b) did not hesitate to point out the fallacies in Novaković's argumentation: "... just like the national prefix can not prove a structure's modernism, the mere fact of this modernism needs not support the structure's national specificity" (560). Writing about the position of Yugoslav cinema in the global dynamics of modern(ist) cinema, Munitić described "modern cinema as an international phenomenon which, though definitely not anti-national or a-national, still remains, first and foremost, supra-national; that is, universally present and collectively constructed in the broadest possible sense;" put differently, Jean-Luc Godard, Dušan Makavejev, and Jerzy Skolimowski were closer to each other than Godard to Jean Renoir, Makavejev to Vladimir Pogačić, or Skolimowski to Andrzej Wajda. Munitić distinguishes between classic and modern cinema, "the former a collection of individual national chapters, and the latter ... existing as a unique international synthesis full of different auteurial visions, but inseparably grounded in the common sensibility and relation to the medium" (561). Munitić criticized Novaković for conflating auteur and modern(ist) cinema as there had been auteurs in both Yugoslav and world cinemas before the 1960s as the decade of the emergence of modern(ist) cinema. Novaković was also unable to grasp the essence of auteurial aesthetic structures, Munitić added, because the fact that the otherwise profoundly different Yugoslav directors used documentary-style footage said more about an international quality of modern

cinema than some particularist national sensibility. Therefore Munitić called for the analysis of traits shared by filmmakers from different parts of Yugoslavia.

Zečević's final contribution (1968b) to the polemic singled out a 1966 open letter, "For a Different Cinema," conceived by a group of younger filmmakers from Serbia—led by Dušan Makavejev and Živojin Pavlović—and then supported by their colleagues from other parts of Yugoslavia. The letter maintained that "instead of a spectator as a dreamer and consumer, authentic filmmaking requires and assumes an active critical spectator;" that cinema "can not relinquish taking a stance on moral, social, and political questions;" and that there can be no more fear of cinema and distrust towards filmmakers as reflected in the state censorship and artistic self-censorship (Bogdanović et al. 1966, 6). The letter was published only a couple of months after the removal of Aleksandar Ranković, with the explicit intent of extending the spirit of broader social reforms to the realm of cinema. Zečević referred to the letter as an indicator of the existence of multinational Yugoslav cinema oriented towards humanistic liberties and debureaucratization.

The confluence of the supra-national and revolutionary features of Yugoslav cinema was recognized on the international critical stage as well, especially during the meeting between Yugoslav and Italian cineastes held under the title *Cinema: The Conscience of Society* from 08-12 October 1969, in the Croatian coastal town Lovran. The Yugoslav delegation was led by Slobodan Novaković, followed by Petar Volk, the director of the FJF; Hrvoje Turković and Petar Krelja, film critics from Zagreb; film directors Fadil Hadžić and Želimir Žilnik, and others. The Italian delegation was led by Guido Aristarco, the eminent Marxist film scholar and editor of the film journal *Cinema Nuovo*. Aristarco was accompanied by Gianni Toti, an experimental filmmaker and editor of the Italian Communist Party's (PCI) magazine *Vie Nuove*; A. Savioli,

the film critic of another PCI newspaper, *L'Unità*, and Giulio Corazza, the film critic of the Venetian *Il Gazzettino*.

A report about discussions in Lovran, published in the SKJ's monthly bulletin, focused on different conceptualizations of ideology in the presentations of the hosts and their guests. Yugoslav cineastes reflected on ideology as "a phenomenon existing independently of art, occasionally penetrating the art's currents and bringing, as a rule, more damage than benefit," whereas their Italian colleagues saw ideology as "an element integrated into all forms of thinking and action, thus only leaving the question of its movement and activation" (Đokić 1969, 25). Aristarco repeated the old Marxist mantra about cinema as a medium dominated by the ideas of the ruling classes. Novaković responded with a thesis about the central ideological conflict in contemporary cinema as an essentially aesthetic clash between "classical" and "modern" cinema in which the latter allows auteurs to express their subjective vision of the world. Building upon Novaković's presentation, Turković touched on the obsolescence of the ideological argumentation, that is, its significance for Italy as a "pre-revolutionary" society different from the "post-revolutionary" Yugoslavia (23) where the adoption of the Marxist classics and rejection of ideological functionalism were superseded by the resolving of more practical socialist issues. Turković's somewhat arrogant stance was criticized by Želimir Žilnik, the director of *Rani radovi/Early Works*, the winner of the 1969 Berlin International Film Festival. *Early Works* was an anarchic response not only to the failing utopia of the Yugoslav Revolution, but also to the disappointing 1968 student protests in Yugoslavia and worldwide. The film itself was almost banned and received theatrical release in Yugoslavia only after a court trial. Žilnik therefore unsurprisingly argued that the ideological critique did not vanish from the "post-revolutionary" Yugoslavia, morphing instead into an implicit dialogue between filmmakers and

politicians in which the former use open-ended metaphors to suggest the need for further social transformation and avoid the political manipulation of the 1968 student movement.

For Aristarco, however, the revolutionary phenomenon represented a letdown in both Italian and Yugoslav cinemas. He maintained that contemporary Italian films, especially those by younger auteurs, were imbued with sentimentality due to broken postwar promises and “the betrayed revolution” (Đokić 1969, 27), while Yugoslav films suggested that the revolution stopped halfway through, thus leaving a division of traditional and new films insensitive to numerous important ideological nuances. Aristarco’s debate with Yugoslav cineastes preceded his altercation with the Cuban filmmaker and theorist Julio García Espinosa at the 1974

Rencontres internationales pour un nouveau cinéma in Montreal. García Espinosa

attacked Aristarco’s idea of the “return to Marxist critique” as lacking any historical concreteness and undermining the centrality of the transformative—rather than interpretive role—of Marxist analysis. He ... claim[ed] that the choices made by Cuban filmmakers were determined not by a desire to revolutionize film aesthetics, but by a need to contribute to a cultural revolution, which has its own specific historical and political needs (Salazkina and Rozsa 2015, 66).

García Espinosa’s emphasis on the revolutionary transformation of film distribution and exhibition ultimately underlines the revolutionary experience of Yugoslav and Cuban filmmakers as not only constitutive of their national cinemas, but also a point of distinction between them and their counterparts in “pre-revolutionary” countries.

To sum up, the Novaković-Munitić polemic is significant not only for the participants’ consideration of Yugoslav cinema as either a supranational cinema or a collection of national cinemas, but also as a cinema marked by its relationship with socialism and revolution as, to some extent, equally or more important than its (supra)national status. But, despite the fact that Novaković’s thesis about multiple national cinemas in socialist Yugoslavia was thoroughly challenged by other polemicists, his fundamental assumptions prevailed in late 1960s when, for

example, Macedonian filmmakers asked that the FJF take notice of the interests of Macedonian cinema (Novaković 1968c, 580). The idea of multiple national cinemas triumphed in the years of the nationalist disintegration of Yugoslavia when it was adopted even by its former opponents (Munitić 1999). In any case, the Novaković-Munitić polemic was particularly important for filmmakers such as Antun Vrdoljak. In the period leading up to the Croatian Spring, he tirelessly promoted the specificity of Croatian national cinema and directed films which, instead of the narrative of socialist revolution and resistance to the occupiers, envisaged WWII as a civil war, i.e. as a mixture of inter-confessional, inter-national(ist), and intra-national armed conflicts.

Section 7: Asymmetric Nationalism: The Case Study of the 1971 Cinematic Exchange between Croatia and Great Britain

Foreword: *Based on the extensive archival research at the Croatian State Archive and the associated Film Archive in Zagreb, this section constitutes a journal article to be submitted for publication in Nationalities Papers. The article makes use of the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange to survey the international emergence of Croatian national cinema as part of the upsurge of nationalism in Yugoslavia during the turbulent Croatian Spring. It thus shows the practical repercussions of the critical polemic about (supra-)national cinemas in Yugoslavia examined in the previous dissertation section. The article brings to the fore Antun Vrdoljak, an internationally acclaimed Croatian filmmaker, cultural diplomat, and a co-organizer of the aforementioned exchange, whose promotion of Croatian national culture has led him to become a prominent nationalist politician in post-socialist Croatia. By foregrounding the US-American Ken Wlaschin as the transnational co-organizer of the exchange on the British side, this essay delineates how the “small” Croatian cinema affected the national devolution of British cinema and the emergence of New Scottish Cinema. The section seeks to re-write conventional film historical narratives by demonstrating that the so-called “small”—and variously racialized—states and nations can, in fact, impact and destabilize cultural and political empires. Additionally, I argue that the standard paradigm of national cinema should incorporate and elevate non-theatrical and useful cinema to give weight to the less visible and often economically disadvantaged national film cultures.*

In contrast to Chapter 2 that brought out the work of Živojin Pavlović and Dušan Makavejev as filmmakers from Belgrade and Serbia, this section and chapter underscores Vrdoljak as an emphatically Croatian filmmaker who fought against the perceived Serb hegemonism within the

Yugoslav state and cultural identity. In this respect, Vrdoljak's national activism paralleled the overall tendency of the Croatian Spring by claiming that Croatia, as the second largest Yugoslav republic, could not unrestrictedly develop its national potential. As will be further illustrated in this and subsequent dissertation sections, such claims of Croatian subordination were neither completely unfounded, nor totally true: for example, while there was a tendency to privilege certain aspects of cultural production in Belgrade and Serbia, both Croatian cinema and Vrdoljak's career benefited from their cooperation with film institutions and agents from other parts of Yugoslavia. Along similar lines, socialist Yugoslavia attempted to pursue parity and balance in its cultural policies whenever possible, from opening new postwar universities in the less developed regions to establishing the international animation festival in Zagreb immediately after the establishment of the FEST as the Belgrade international film festival. To reiterate an important point from the dissertation introduction, in socialist Yugoslavia, especially from the 1960s onwards, complaints about exploitation by other parts of Yugoslavia were omnipresent in practically all Yugoslav republics and regions. Yet, even under such circumstances, and with the historical legacy of relative underdevelopment to boot, socialist Croatia managed to produce a valuable cinematic output that reached and affected the much better known British cinema.

This section temporarily foregoes the chronology of the dissertation to prioritize the international significance of the 1971 exchange. In the last section of the chapter, I will get back to Vrdoljak's, here briefly mentioned, war films from 1969 and 1971 to peruse how these films reflected the Croatian filmmaker's subversion of the Yugoslav revolutionary mythology and, in turn, enabled him to advance Croatian national cinema at home and abroad.

In the wake of Brexit, are there any parallels to be found between the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia and the uncertain future of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland and, by extension, the European Union? This question has been pondered by a number of scholars and journalists who by and large highlight a potential for a widening of political and national cleavages in the post-Brexit UK, especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland, while refuting the likelihood of violent conflicts seen in the 1990s Balkans; at the same time, the precedent set by Brexit makes the integration of the so-called Western Balkan states into the EU an increasingly distant prospect (Baker 2016; Bieber 2016; Buric 2016; Becker 2017; Belloni and Brunazzo 2017; Ker-Lindsay 2019; Hayden 2020; Kyris and Baciagalupo 2021; McTague 2022). Recent comparisons between the political outlook of the United Kingdom and the breakup of the Second Yugoslavia are noteworthy precisely because of the outsized role that the British Empire and the United Kingdom have played in moulding various historical iterations of Yugoslavism¹¹³ as well as observing, participating in, and studying the post-socialist disintegration of Yugoslavia—the latter involving a wide scope of practices, from diplomacy to media coverage to academic research to military interventionism/warfare. Much less attention, however, has been given to the Yugoslav impact on the United Kingdom’s self-understanding, broadly understood. Adopting a research perspective on how Croatia, as part of “small” socialist Yugoslavia, both affected and was affected by the “grand” United Kingdom could thus productively challenge the scholarly emphasis on the unidirectionality of cultural imperialism practiced by the “great powers.” This article, then, seeks to complement otherwise valuable investigations of the Cold War cultural imperialisms, such as Radina Vučetić’s monograph about the Americanization of the 1960s Yugoslav culture (2018), or Sangjoon Lee’s exhaustive study

¹¹³ See the Section “Peasants, Vampires, and Partisans: British Cultural and Political Racialization of the Balkans and Yugoslavia” in this dissertation.

of the US cultural diplomacy and the origins of the Asian cinema network (2020), by broadening the analytical perspective and placing a greater emphasis on the agency of the targets of cultural imperialism and their ability to challenge the dominance of cultural empires.

This essay is an inquiry into the cinematic exchange between socialist Croatia and Great Britain in 1971, organized against the backdrop of the Croatian Spring which was marked by the rise of liberal and nationalist tendencies in the second largest Yugoslav republic. In postwar Yugoslavia, cinema was deemed the most important new medium for the promotion of the country's socialist modernization and revolutionary transformation. The first two decades of Yugoslav cinema were characterized by its pronounced supranational configuration. By contrast, the post-1966 shift towards decentralization of the Yugoslav federation and greater independence of Yugoslav republics gave rise to the discourse of republican/national cinemas, such as Croatian, rather than hitherto established Yugoslav cinema. The development of Croatian cinema as a national cinema unfolded both within and, as this case study demonstrates, outside of Yugoslavia. The same period, late 1960s and early 1970s, saw the UK coming to terms with the nationalist turmoil of the Troubles and the crisis of British cinema exacerbated by the economic austerity and the concurrent withdrawal of Hollywood studios as the main employer of the British film industry. It is in this context that the exchange with Croatian cinema stimulated a US-expatriate-turned-UK-film curator, Ken Wlaschin, as well as filmmakers and policymakers in Britain, to start thinking about a redefinition of British cinema along national lines coupled with a budgetary rationalization.

In the following section, I chart the early Cold War cultural rapprochement between Yugoslavia and Great Britain in which Yugoslavia strove to shed the (imposed) attributes of underdevelopment and ideological rigidity. After the overview of the origins of the London Film

Festival as a platform for the British “discovery” of Yugoslav cinema in a manner tied to the 19th century British imperialist and colonialist exploration and appropriation of “exotic” cultures, I outline the historical context of the Croatian Spring during which the UK used cultural and diplomatic cooperation to further the liberalization of Yugoslavia. Following the comparison of the two main organizers of the 1971 exchange, Antun Vrdoljak and Ken Wlaschin, I probe the Week of Croatian Film in London and the reciprocal Week of British Film in Zagreb as the first major international promotion of Croatian national cinema and a learning opportunity for British filmmakers and policymakers interested in resisting the US cultural imperialism by creating a supranational European cinema, one that followed the example set by the organizations such as the European Communities. The closing contemplation about the non-feature film as the basis of a refashioned paradigm of national cinema, relevant for both Croatian and Scottish cinema, provides the final stepping stone for my conceptualization of asymmetric nationalism as a way of understanding the cultural influence of Croatian cinema on British cinema.

Is Yugoslavia Czechoslovakia?

Postwar British and socialist Yugoslav political and cultural entanglement was closely linked to the Conservative Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s somewhat counterintuitive backing of the Communist-led Yugoslav Partisans as the most effective multinational resistance movement in the WWII Balkans and, indeed, Europe. British support of Yugoslavia was deepened after the 1948 Tito-Stalin Split which turned Josip Broz Tito into the most reliable, if still considerably independent socialist partner of the Cold War west. Historian Miroslav Perišić (2017) identifies the year 1950 as a turning point in Yugoslav cultural relations with the

international community in general and the west in particular. In the middle of the ongoing ideological conflict with the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslav authorities opted for a radical shift away from Socialist Realism and other dominant cultural models in the socialist Eastern Europe. In the same vein, Yugoslavia entered the UNESCO and started various programs of cultural cooperation with the west, from organizing exhibitions of mediaeval and contemporary art, to hosting international theatre performances and sending abroad Yugoslav theatre ensembles, to intensifying academic exchange, and so on. Particularly popular, especially in Great Britain, were performances of ethnic dances by folklore ensembles from various parts of Yugoslavia (Perišić 2013, 52-54). As further demonstrated, the British interest in South Slavic folklore is not to be divorced from the 19th century British colonialist fascination with the “small” and “primitive” cultures displayed at imperial exhibitions.

Early 1950s saw a high degree of initiative of Yugoslav cultural actors and institutions in their contacts with international partners. As a result, the Yugoslav Committee for International Cultural Relations, established in 1953, “quickly proved unable to handle, follow-up and keep track of all the diversified international contacts” (Perišić 2017, 297). While the Committee praised the overall results of this early cultural decentralization, there was still a tendency to present Yugoslavia abroad as a more or less coherent realm with a high quality cultural production.

International promotion of Yugoslav culture played an indispensable role in 1950s Great Britain where “the prevailing perception continued to be that Yugoslavia was a country of *brave warriors* but of *primitive culture* and *economic underdevelopment*” (Perišić 2017, 298, italics added). A significant part of the British public could not distinguish between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, while the performances of the Belgrade ballet ensemble at the Edinburgh

International Festival brought about an unexpected realization of “the existence of ballet in Yugoslavia” (299).

Notwithstanding—or, rather, because of—British condescension and ignorance, the Yugoslav ambassador in London, Dr. Jože Brilej from Slovenia, insisted that without increasing cultural cooperation with the UK as a gateway to other western countries, Yugoslavia “would continue to receive the pitiful affinity awarded to small nations that were regarded as being ‘culturally underdeveloped and thus not even close to being equal to other European nations’” (298-299). Along similar lines, Brilej argued for a reduction of ideology in Yugoslav cinema: “[I]f the goal was for Yugoslav films to be seen abroad, their content and production must be adapted to suit a foreign public’s requirements and tastes” (Perišić 2017, 299). Brilej warned that the British film distributors were “terrified by the political tendencies” in Yugoslav revolutionary films *Crveni cvet/The Red Flower* (1950, Gustav Gavrin), *Zastava/The Flag* (1949, Branko Marjanović), and *Na svoji zemlji/On Our Own Land* (1948, France Štiglic). The Yugoslav ambassador therefore suggested “studying the international film market” and producing films like the Italian neorealist classic, *Ladri di biciclette/Bicycle Thieves* (1948, Vittorio De Sica), which had a year-long run in the London theaters (Perišić 2013, 55). For the Cold War British audience, Brilej suggested, the less overtly political Italian film about poverty was more palatable than Yugoslav films about revolution.

Brilej’s recommendation to downplay the confrontational tenets of socialist ideology was partly reflected in co-productions such as the Austrian-Yugoslav *Die Letzte Brücke/Poslednji most/The Last Bridge* (1954, Helmut Käutner) and Norwegian-Yugoslav *Blodveien/Krvavi put/The Blood Road* (1955, Kåre Bergstrøm and Radoš Novaković) and Yugoslav submissions at the festivals in Berlin, Cannes, Edinburgh, and Venice in 1955. In 1957, “a three-week Yugoslav

Film Festival, organized by the British [Film Institute]” took place in London (Perišić 2017, 300). In addition to the London retrospective which featured 7 fiction and 7 documentary Yugoslav films, a similar retrospective was held at the Edinburgh International Film Festival, established in 1947 (Perišić 2013, 56). The growing Yugoslav cultural presence in the west, however, did not mean that the country abandoned its anticolonialist agenda, as evidenced by Yugoslav participation in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the wake of the Tito-Stalin Split, Yugoslavia pursued not only its own vision of socialism, but a new position in the increasingly polarizing Cold War. At the time, Yugoslav officials held that no other country had a potential to spread its ideas across the divided world (Perišić 2013, 118). Granted, there was a certain degree of (more or less conscious) self-exoticization and concession in the Yugoslav cultural strategy adapted for the ideological rivals in the west. However, in the absence of comprehensive findings about the 1960s cultural relations between the UK and Yugoslavia, the above history of the 1950s exchange between the two countries shows how Yugoslav culture went from a cultural curiosity to a role model for some aspects of British culture, such as the reorganization of British national cinema.

Still, early postwar British interest in Yugoslav culture was, much like the first contemporaneous efforts of British cultural rejuvenation, informed by the echoes of the British imperial legacy. This is most obvious in the case of the 1951 Festival of Britain, a 5-month long event, that

aimed to provide respite from the effects of World War by celebrating the nation’s past achievements in the arts, industry and science, as well as looking hopefully to a future of progress and prosperity. ... Originally the plan for a 1951 festival derived from the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851 which showcased the achievements of newly industrialised Victorian society and its global Empire (Easen 2003, 51).

By 1948, the original idea of the “Universal International Exhibition” was abandoned in favor of a national festival due to financial constraints. In addition to popularizing cinema in numerous

venues across the country, the Festival of Britain also catalyzed the production of documentary films. In the context of this study, the most interesting documentary screened at the Festival was *David* (1951, Paul Dickson), a short story featuring “a nationally respected scholar” returning to his small, coal-mining hometown in south Wales. The universally positive reviews of *David* ranged from a British trade paper *Kinematograph Weekly* seeing it as a “charming and efficiently presented authentic life story of a Welshman,” to Welsh newspapers praising the film’s story as a “true reflection of the integrity of character that is a feature of the Welsh nation” (Easen 2003, 58-59). Although the success of *David* was insufficient to produce a concept of Welsh national cinema, it stood in sharp contrast to another documentary produced for the festival, Humphrey Jennings’s *Family Portrait* (1950). In 1981, a prominent British filmmaker, Lindsay Anderson, criticized Jennings’s “‘fantasy of the Empire’ and his resort to ‘the Past as a refuge’” (58).

While Sarah Easen sees the legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain primarily in the British Film Institute’s (henceforth BFI) continued financing of British experimental cinema and the construction of the National Film Theatre (NFT), other authors consider the Festival of Britain as crucial for the establishment of the London Film Festival (LFF) in 1957 (Davies 1979, 249). The LFF proved to be a platform for further “discoveries” of “small” (supra-)national film cultures such as Yugoslav and Croatian. Before delving deeper into the relationship between the introduction of “small” national cinemas at the LFF and the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, it is necessary to sketch out the historical context of the Croatian Spring as the temporal backdrop of the exchange.

From the Prague Spring to the Croatian Spring

After the 1966 removal of the Vice President of Yugoslavia Aleksandar Ranković as the main proponent of integral Yugoslavism, which Slovenian and Croatian political elites saw as the Serb hegemonism (Ramet 2005, 208), the process of decentralization in Yugoslavia gained momentum. The proponents of decentralization saw it as a further step in the development of self-management as the official Yugoslav Marxist doctrine. Adopted in 1950, just like the Yugoslav international cultural agenda examined above, self-management aimed for the realization of Friedrich Engels' concept of "withering away of the state," i.e. the abolition of the statist control of society which was associated with the Soviet Union. In practice, the decentralization of Yugoslavia revolved around the struggle for greater economic independence of the more developed Yugoslav republics such as Croatia and Slovenia and the concomitant rise of nationalism. Social antagonisms were heightened by the 1965 economic reform which sought to debureaucratize Yugoslav enterprises and make them more open for competition in global economic circulation, producing instead an economic crisis amid growing inflation and discontent with what many conservative Communists saw as a shift towards capitalist modes of production and consumption (Klasić 2012, 23-26). The decentralization of Yugoslavia was spurred by the liberal reformist Communist elite in Croatia, led by Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Mika Tripalo. Together with the liberal reformists from other Yugoslav republics, especially Serbia, Croatian liberal Communists represented a younger generation of leaders who looked like potential successors to Tito and the revolutionary generation of Yugoslav politicians, though, importantly, without threatening Tito's supreme authority. While Croatian liberal reformists generally advocated for the preservation and reform of Yugoslavia through its gradual

confederalization, they nevertheless allowed a greater public presence of Croatian nationalism. This led to the Croatian Spring (*hrvatsko proljeće*), also known as the “mass movement” (*masovni pokret*, usually abbreviated as *maspok*), a four-year long period of increased Croatian nationalism which, at its peak in late 1971, seemed to have led Croatia outside of the Yugoslav federation.

Following the Warsaw Pact’s crushing of the liberal Prague Spring in 1968, the Croatian Spring posed an international challenge for Tito’s regime. On the one hand, Leonid Brezhnev’s government openly opposed the liberalization of Yugoslavia, even if there was no evidence of any planned Soviet-led military intervention in Yugoslavia (Batović 2017, 270). On the other, “Yugoslav experimentation with self-management socialism, and its liberal component, was interesting to the West not only as a test of a new and unproven socio-political system but also a promising tool to influence further liberalisation and greater independence of the Soviet eastern European satellites” (267-268). However, the US and UK do not seem to have supported disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia for fear of losing an important geo-political buffer zone in the Cold War. Ultimately, Tito deftly used concern over the further destabilization of Yugoslavia and a possible military intervention by the Warsaw Pact to make a conservative turn and re-assert his authority. This resulted in his ousting of Croatian liberal reformists and the repression of Croatian nationalists after the Karadordevo meeting on December 1, 1971, followed by the removal of Serbian liberal reformists in 1972.

While the US and UK may not have orchestrated the 1970s crisis in Yugoslavia, or at least not with a clear intention of destabilizing or destroying the country’s system, Washington and London did not hesitate to test the limits of their interference in the Croatian Spring. For example, the curious visit of US President Richard Nixon to Zagreb after his official meeting

with Tito in Belgrade in 1970, had long served as (albeit insufficiently substantiated) evidence of Nixon's support for Croatian nationalism (Jakovina 1999). The activities of British diplomats in Yugoslavia reflect the aforementioned backing of liberalization and simultaneous reluctance to endanger the Yugoslav position in the Cold War (Batović 2012). The proclaimed British reluctance to fully bolster Croatian nationalists is all the more important given the voices such as the Croatian economist Hrvoje Šošić who publicly advocated on October 29, 1971 "that Croatia should be accepted into the United Nations, similarly to the status of Belarus and Ukraine at the time," adding that "Croatia should also establish its own central bank, elect a governor, and send him or her to the United States to obtain loans" (Batović 2017, 208). The stability of the socialist Yugoslav regime, both within and outside Yugoslavia, was additionally complicated by the heated struggle against the anticommunist nationalist diasporic terrorism, including Croatian radical separatists (see Tokić 2020 and Nielsen 2020).

Yet, even with the Croatian Spring coming to a head towards the end of 1971, the British Foreign Office and the Zagrebian branch of the British Council saw nothing problematic in continuing the organization of the Croatian-British cinematic exchange in London and Zagreb. Perhaps because the main curators and organizers of the exchange—Antun 'Tonči' Vrdoljak and Kenneth 'Ken' Wlaschin—framed their considerations of Croatian and British cinemas as a productive cultural novelty rather than an everyday political issue. The following section provides more information about Vrdoljak and Wlaschin's personal and professional backgrounds before moving onto the extended scrutiny of the 1971 exchange itself and related conceptualizations of national cinema.

Vrdoljak and Wlaschin

Born in Imotski in 1931, Antun Vrdoljak came from a Croatian agrarianist, anti-Communist family. Following a short and successful career in film acting, Vrdoljak switched to directing. He gained prominence with *Kad čuješ zvona/When You Hear the Bells* (1969) and *U gori raste zelen bor/The Pine Tree in the Mountain* (1971) which, contrary to the majority of Yugoslav films about war and revolution, portrayed WWII as a primarily bloody civil war, thereby undermining the socialist Yugoslav foundation myth. *When You Hear the Bells* shared the Silver Prize at the 1969 Moscow International Film Festival, leaving behind films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968, Stanley Kubrick) and *Oliver!* (1968, Carol Reed). This accolade helped Vrdoljak join the Croatian political and cultural elite and become the president of the Association of Film Workers of Croatia and the president of the Film Board of the Croatian Committee for International Cultural Relations in October 1969 (Zaključci I sjednice Odbora za film 1969). It is from these positions that Vrdoljak worked on the promotion of Croatian national cinema. After the end of the Croatian Spring, Vrdoljak's colorful career continued after a 5-year hiatus with a host of realized and planned film projects during the Croatian Silence in which he sided with the ideals of Yugoslav revolutionary socialism.

Following the rise of Croatian nationalism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vrdoljak became one of the first vice-presidents of post-socialist Croatia and closest collaborators of his old friend and first president of the independent Croatia, Franjo Tuđman. As an experienced cultural diplomat, the vice-president Vrdoljak worked tirelessly towards the international recognition of Croatia. Vrdoljak was, by his own admission, disappointed with the administration of President George H.W. Bush and the last US ambassador

to socialist Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmermann, because they considered measures to prevent the collapse of Yugoslavia. Vrdoljak was much more pleased with President Bill Clinton to whom he, as the President of the Croatian Olympic Committee, expressed gratitude at the opening of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City for supporting Croatian independence, “bringing peace,” and “helping clear the region from the occupiers” (Sömen 2007, 38). Since the 1990s, Vrdoljak proved controversial on multiple fronts, first as director general of Croatian Radiotelevision where he “purged” journalists from the socialist era, using “mostly arbitrary or ethnic criteria” (Škrabalo 2006, 26). Vrdoljak directed the revisionist WWII film *Duga mračna noć/Long Dark Night* (2004), based on his opportunistic adaptation of the screenplay that he co-wrote in 1980 with the prolific East German screen-writer Wolfgang Held. This unmade 1980 screenplay, developed with the East German DEFA, was focused on the Ernst Thälmann Company, a Yugoslav Partisan unit composed of ethnic Germans from the Independent State of Croatia (Milekic 2016). Vrdoljak’s “testamentary” film *General* (2019) is a nationalist spectacle about Ante Gotovina, the controversial retired lieutenant general who was acquitted in 2012 by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) after standing trial for war crimes in the Croatian War of Independence.

Ken Wlaschin was the program director of the LFF and NFT, the latter now known as the BFI Southbank, from 1970 to 1984. Born in 1934 in Bradish, Nebraska, US, Wlaschin had a father of Romanian origin, which could partly explain his later interest in Eastern European cinema. Wlaschin received scholarships for studies in English at the prestigious Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire and University College in Dublin, Republic of Ireland. He married the Scots-Irish Maureen ‘Mo’ Kennedy-Martin, a sister of Troy Kennedy-Martin whose

long screenwriting career includes *The Italian Job* (1969, Peter Collinson) and *Kelly's Heroes*¹¹⁴ (1970, Brian G. Hutton) and more politically engaged *The Jerusalem File* (1972, John Flynn) and *Edge of Darkness* (1985, TV mini-series, Martin Campbell). Wlaschin's spouse "became a highly respected folk singer in London in the late 1960s and '70s, mostly as lead singer and guitarist with The Tinkers, who became known for their versions of Irish songs such as The Rifles of the IRA" (Davison 2009). Wlaschin's familiarity with Scottish and Irish nationalism, particularly in the early stage of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, could illuminate his interest in national cultures in the UK in general and national cinemas in particular. Also, bearing in mind Wlaschin's knowledge of Yugoslav cinema and the Pula film festival, soon to be examined in greater detail, it seems plausible that he was attracted to the notion of Croatian national cinema because of the similarities between the British and Yugoslav cultures in which "bigger" nations (English and Serb) seemed to have created and/or dominated the formation of broader identities (the imperial British and the supra-national Yugoslav) at the expense of the "smaller" nations (e.g. Scottish and Croat).

Another factor shaping Wlaschin's interest in national cinemas may have been a combination of his transnational military and journalistic experience coupled with his expertise in film studies. He "served in the US army's Counter-Intelligence Corps from 1958-61, training at Ford Holabird, Maryland, and serving mainly in Poitiers, France, where he also studied French at the University of Poitiers" (Davison 2009). This military background "was the reason why some thought [that Wlaschin was] a covert member of the CIA, which of course he denied" (Malcolm 2009). After the military service Wlaschin moved to Italy where he worked as art critic of the English-language newspaper *The Rome Daily American*. Wlaschin's next stop was

¹¹⁴ WWII spectacle and US-Yugoslav co-production filmed mostly in Croatia, which may have reinforced Wlaschin's interest in Croatian cinema.

London where he worked as arts columnist for *The Daily Sketch* and drama series editor for London Weekend Television. In 1968, Wlaschin was hired by Leslie Hardcastle to take over the LFF and the NFT. Hardcastle reminisced in no uncertain terms about the profound change Wlaschin had brought to British film culture:

When I hired him ..., the movie industry was dominated by American screen. British people were to a large extent ignorant of movies from elsewhere. Ken literally gave Britain world cinema. He also brought us serious subjects, showed us the artistic side of cinema. He was the best programme officer, or director the NFT ever had, and the longest-serving. He gave us, and himself, international standing (Davison 2009).

After leaving the LFF and NFT in 1984, Wlaschin moved to Los Angeles where he replaced the struggling festival Filmex with the respectable AFI FEST (Los Angeles International Film Festival) which he ran until 1993, “again changing the emphasis away from Hollywood and towards small, independent productions from around the globe. During those years, he also directed the National Film Theater at the Kennedy Center in Washington” (Davison 2009).

Wlaschin spent the last decade of his career as the American Film Institute’s (AFI) Director of Creative Affairs and Vice-Chairman of the National Center for Film and Video Preservation. In addition to his curatorial and managerial work, Wlaschin authored about 20 books on topics such as silent cinema, opera on screen, and film stars, as well as the foreword to Ronald Holloway’s book *The Bulgarian Cinema* (1986).

Significantly, during his tenure at the LFF and NFT, Wlaschin faced considerable funding problems and cultural prejudices:

The British Film Institute insisted that the break-even figure for audiences was 55%, including matinees, a figure that would have been welcomed with open arms by most commercial cinemas in London. This sometimes meant the cancellation of some of Wlaschin’s most enterprising plans and a hasty rejigging of the NFT’s programme. His own wide-ranging tastes were criticised as either too commercial (an early Disney tribute, which was hugely successful) or too esoteric (*film weeks from smaller countries, hitherto ignored*) (Malcolm 2009, italics added).

Despite these roadblocks, Wlaschin managed to leave a larger and better equipped NFT and significantly expanded LFF to his successors. Equally importantly, he organized the first African Film Festival as part of the LFF and promoted films from Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe. In many ways Wlaschin contributed to deprovincialization and internationalization of British cinema on the one hand, and re-nationalization of the sub-national cinemas within the UK on the other.

Going back to the early history of the LFF, it is worth pointing out that the festival curiously shared certain features with Yugoslav, rather than the better known Western European, festivals. The first LFF took place in 1957, which means it was founded after the establishment of the Festival of Yugoslav Film (FJF) in Pula in 1954. From the beginning, the LFF was conceived as “a festival of festivals,” its main goal being to fill the gap in the local distribution of international films: ““Some of the most original and interesting films given at, say, Cannes or Venice never reach this country, and cinema-goers reading the enthusiastic reports of visiting critics may well feel sad at being excluded”” (LFF brochure according to Davies 1979, 249-250). In this regard, the LFF bore resemblance to the Belgrade International Film Festival FEST, established in early 1971, with a similar goal of attracting viewers back to film theaters and providing them with a greater variety of films than usually presented in commercial distribution (Batančev 2017). Both the FEST and the LFF operated as “festivals of festivals” without presenting any awards. This can be explained by the inferiority complex of the festival organizers in Belgrade and London in comparison to the “A class” festivals in Cannes, Venice, and Berlin. The self-perception in London and Belgrade was that their festivals were not attractive enough for the world premieres of prestigious Hollywood and art films. Along similar lines, the FEST and LFF never became festivals with specialized foci—such as Cognac Crime Film Festival, Fantasia Festival, and

Toronto Reel Asian Film Festival to name a few—for the fear of losing a wide audience in Yugoslav and British capitals.

Despite the shortcomings of the concept of a “festival of festivals,” the Belgrade FEST—lavished with state financial support in the first decade of its existence—proved to be relatively successful in “city-branding” (Elsaesser 2005, 85) as one of the most salient functions of modern film festivals. Prior to Josip Broz Tito’s death in 1980, the FEST excelled in attracting films, stars, and filmmakers from both sides of the Iron Curtain and fostering a certain kind of festival glamour. At the same time, the LFF had struggled with securing stable sources of funding, let alone contributing to the city-branding of London. As Wlaschin himself wrote in 1981: “... unlike Cannes and Venice, the festival does not have a beach and has never been tourist-oriented, at least in the traditional sense ... It has no starlets, no beaches, no yachts, and it’s oriented towards neither glamour, film theory, politics, nor sales” (Diestro-Dópido 2014, 243-244). Throughout its first 25 years, and especially in the 1970s era of economic austerity in the UK, the LFF operated on a shoestring budget, with the NFT and BFI’s employees volunteering many hours each year to organize the festival. Within the British cultural establishment, plagued by scepticism towards the social value of film, it was not easy to keep the festival afloat, let alone formulate a coherent festival agenda. Yet, the following section from the introduction to the programme of the 1973 edition of the LFF reveals Wlaschin’s ambition as the festival’s programmer:

Certainly the continuing aim of the LFF since it was created ... has been to give the creative film makers of all countries an opportunity to *speak directly to English audiences across nationalistic boundaries*. It has other aims as well, of course. To present the best new films of the year regardless of category. To show the development of the great masters of world cinema. To encourage interest in new and/or unknown directors. To reveal trends in international film-making. Even, perhaps, to provide standards against which the best of ‘art’ and ‘commercial’ cinema can be measured and to hasten the breakdown of such arbitrary categories... (according to Davies 1979, 252, italics added).

At the same time, Wlaschin cared about stressing how the LFF's changing identity was prompted by the encounter with the "less known" film cultures such as Yugoslav: "As early as its second year, 1958, the range had been widened to include entries from events as little known as the Pula festival which contributed the top Yugoslav film of the year"¹¹⁵ (Davies 1979, 252). Wlaschin also mentioned the French-Tunisian co-production *Goha* (1958, Jacques Baratier), starring Omar Sharif, as further evidence of the expanding list of countries represented at the LFF, allowing the festival's programmers since 1959 to occasionally select films which were not already screened at other festivals. In short, even long before Wlaschin's appointment at the LFF and NFT, Yugoslav cinema proved influential for British film curators interested in foreign national cinemas.

However, the "discovery" of "small" national cinemas at the LFF was not considered unproblematic in the UK. I owe this insight to Mar Diestro-Dópidó's doctoral dissertation which compares the histories of the LFF and international film festivals in Buenos Aires and San Sebastián. Diestro-Dópidó (2014, 212) notes a peculiar lack of sources about the LFF's history, citing the British film scholar and curator Ian Christie's remark that the BFI, as a central British film institution overseeing the work of the LFF, "has no memory, like it has always happened at

¹¹⁵ This is a chronological list of Yugoslav features screened at the LFF from 1958 to 1972, as per Julian-Huxley and Hartnoll 1981: 1958 - *H-8* (directed by Nikola Tanhofer, starring Antun Vrdoljak); 1959 - *Vlak bez voznog reda/Train without a Timetable* (directed by Veljko Bulajić); 1962 - *Sibirska Ledi Magbet/The Siberian Lady Macbeth* (Andrzej Wajda); 1967 - *Tople godine/The Feverish Years* (Dragoslav Lazić), *Rondo* (Zvonimir Berković), and *Ljubavni slučaj, ili Tragedija službenice PTT-a/Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator* (Dušan Makavejev); 1968 - *Kaja, ubit ću te!/Kaya* (Vatroslav Mimica); 1969 - *Događaj/An Event* (Vatroslav Mimica) and *Horoskop/Horoscope* (Boro Drašković); 1970 - *Vrane/The Crows* (Ljubiša Kozomara and Gordan Mihić) and *Lisice/Handcuffs* (Krstó Papić); 1971 - *WR Misterije Organizma/WR Mysteries of the Organism* (Dušan Makavejev); 1972 - *Slike iz života udarnika/Scenes from the Life of Shock Workers* (Bahrudin 'Bato' Čengiđ). The films directed by Tanhofer, Bulajić, Berković, Mimica, and Papić are widely considered as belonging to Croatian cinema as well.

the present time. ... But that's what the BFI, London, Britain, has sort of wanted." Even so, one of the most significant sources on the history of the LFF—a brochure *Water Under the Bridge: 25 Years of the London Film Festival*, published in 1981—contains an uncharacteristically sharp and astute critique of the LFF's "uncovering" of "small" national cinemas. The critique was penned by Martyn Auty (1981, 6), a Scottish filmmaker and writer affiliated with the Edinburgh International Film Festival:

The fundamental question that needs posing here is what it means to 'discover' a film-maker or a national cinema. The process is both ethnocentric—an Icelandic cinema, for example, may 'not exist' for British film-goers until it has been accorded a season—and colonialist insofar as the 'unknown' film-maker is brought back from some movie safari and put on show. In this respect *film festivals bear an ideological resemblance to the great Victorian exhibitions where exoticism was assimilated into the fabric of imperialist cultures* (italics added).

In his response to Auty's essay, also published in *Water Under the Bridge*, Wlaschin was curiously silent about the alleged LFF's "colonization" of foreign national film cultures. Instead, he juxtaposed the LFF as a festival "interested in cinema" with the Edinburgh International Film Festival as "interested in cinema culture." Wlaschin asserted that "the LFF is not primarily organised for critics, theorists, distributors nor consumers but for the film-makers themselves, the real creative force of the cinema" (1981, 14). It seems that, rather than denying British imperialism and colonialism, Wlaschin sought to first challenge British elitist prejudices towards other national cultures, and then question the alleged unity of British national identity and its cultural superiority to "small" national cinemas. For example, Wlaschin saw as a positive "development" that during his tenure "a first film from Iceland can rub shoulders with a Hollywood horror film in the LFF and the same audience can appreciate both" (Diestro-Dópido 2014, 248). As will be further explicated, Wlaschin's alignment of national cinemas in Yugoslavia and sub-British national cinemas was not only inspired by his desire to provide

alternative production models for the crisis of the 1970s British cinema, but also preceded the better known initiatives for British cinematic devolution in the 1990s.

Wlaschin's "discovery" of "small" Croatian national cinema complicates the British "discovery" of "big" Japanese national cinema in the wake of its first triumph at a "major" international festival (Venice), *Rashomon* (1950, Akira Kurosawa). According to Julian Stringer (2003), British film viewers were introduced to Japanese national cinema through a three-step process. First, British trade publications such as *Sight and Sound* had their reporters at major international film festivals quickly learn to "distinguish" between the "high-quality" and "disappointing" Japanese films; the latter were usually melodramas rejected by the said reporters due to their cultural bias towards (a certain kind of) emotion on screen. Then, emerging British film institutions, such as the LFF and NFT, focused on bringing and presenting the Japanese films praised by the same British reporters. Finally, British distributors would buy Japanese films successfully screened at the LFF and NFT. In the end, British film trade reporters worked not only on constituting a Japanese cinematic canon seemingly preferred by the British cultural milieu, but also establishing significant parts of British film culture as a desirable platform for the promotion of hitherto "lesser known" national cinemas such as Japanese. The first specialized season at the NFT was devoted to Japanese cinema, while the first LFF opened with *Throne of Blood* (1957, Akira Kurosawa) and screened a several more Japanese films. Fundamentally, "the concept of [Japanese] national cinema was enlisted as a form of cultural currency so as to support and advance notions of British film culture" (Stringer 2003, 93), while Wlaschin's promotion of Croatian cinema as part of the better known Yugoslav cinema called into question the perceived unity and homogeneity of British national cinema.

From the Croatian Counter-Revolution...

Shortly before the start of the Week of Croatian Film in London, a Croatian newspaper translation of Jolin Williams's interview with Ken Wlaschin aptly illustrated Wlaschin's interest in the application of the paradigm of Croatian national cinema onto the British context (*Večernji list*, September 11, 1971). The interview's subheadline, "Why the Experience of Yugoslav Films Captivates British Intelligentsia?", was indicative of the tendency to continue subsuming Croatian cinema under the better known category of Yugoslav cinema, while failing to acknowledge Wlaschin's specific position as a US expatriate in the UK, meaning that he had not been a typical representative of "British intelligentsia." It seems that the idea of Yugoslav and British cinemas as collections of smaller national cinemas was still too radical for Wlaschin's interviewer and/or the interviewer's editor who presumably conceived the subheadline.

Emphasizing the competition between Yugoslav republics as the key feature of the country's diverse and high quality film production, Wlaschin stated in the translated interview:

Yugoslavia has one of the most fragmented, yet most creative film industries today. ... The high quality of films produced in Croatia is reflected in the first Week of Croatian Film ... and the fact that the last two London Film Festivals also screened Croatian films. If the Yugoslav experience were applied to Britain, it would mean that British film industry would be divided into high quality production units operating in England, Scotland, Wales, and North Ireland. Indeed, we can learn from Yugoslavia, as it is worth thinking about why there is no Scottish or Welsh cinema. ... One of the most significant aspects of the Week of Croatian Film is that it shows that good films can be made even with small budgets. British filmmakers would not be mistaken in looking for solutions to their problems in Zagreb (*Večernji list*, September 11, 1971).

As will be discussed further, Wlaschin saw the main benefit of national devolution of British cinema in a structural reorganization which would grant a greater degree of independence to smaller production units in different parts of the UK.

The Week of Croatian Film was held in London from September 13-20, 1971, with the following main selection: *Tko pjeva, zlo ne misli/One Song a Day Takes Mischief Away*¹¹⁶ (1970, Krešimir Golik), *Nedjelja/Sunday*¹¹⁷ (1969, Lordan Zafranović), *Hranjenik/The Fosterling*¹¹⁸ (1970, Vatroslav Mimica), *Događaj/An Event*¹¹⁹ (1969, Vatroslav Mimica), *Lisice/Handcuffs*¹²⁰ (1970, Krsto Papić), *Mirisi, zlato i tamjan/Gold, Myrrh and Frankincense*¹²¹ (1971, Ante Babaja), *U gori raste zelen bor/The Pine Tree in the Mountain* (1971, Antun Vrdoljak), and *Vlak bez voznog reda/Train Without a Timetable*¹²² (1959, Veljko Bulajić). Wlaschin had selected films from the last 3 years with a special emphasis on genre diversity (“Hrvatski film u Londonu” 1971). *Train Without a Timetable* was proposed by the Association of Film Workers of Croatia as the first internationally acclaimed Croatian film. In addition to the main program, around 20 short and animated Croatian films were screened in London as well. Selected films were treated as Croatian on the basis of the criteria established in the *Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970* (Boglić 1971) that was published specifically for the London event. The Almanac’s editor indirectly suggested that Croatian films are those made by directors residing in Croatia (i.e. the director’s residence was more important than any filmmaker’s self-declared or perceived ethnicity or nationality) and (co-)produced by a Croatian production company.

¹¹⁶ Popular musical comedy, set in the 1930s Zagreb, about a boy’s perception of the love triangle involving his petty bourgeois parents and an elegant womanizer.

¹¹⁷ Modernist film about a group of anarchic youths wandering through a small Dalmatian town.

¹¹⁸ Psychological drama about the Holocaust. A group of prisoners at the concentration camp decides to feed one of their own, so that he can kill a cruel kapo, only to see their “fosterling” promoted into a new kapo.

¹¹⁹ Adaptation of the eponymous short story by Anton Chekhov.

¹²⁰ Rural drama set against the backdrop of the Tito-Stalin Split.

¹²¹ Allegorical drama about a married couple caring for a 100-year old woman called Madonna. An intergenerational conflict reflects the contrast between the Yugoslav revolutionary generation and their disillusioned successors.

¹²² Epic story about the postwar migration/“colonization” of peasants from the impoverished Dalmatian Hinterland to the fertile regions of Slavonia and Vojvodina.

Highlighting the significance of the international promotion of Croatian national culture, the Zagrebian newspaper *Večernji list* (September 4, 1971) announced that the Week of Croatian Film in London would be

the first presentation of Croatian cinema abroad, as hitherto individual Croatian film auteurs and films have been exhibited to the international audience and critics at various [presentations of] Yugoslav cinema. The Week of Croatian Film in London is organized under the auspices of the convention of cultural relations between Great Britain and [the Socialist Republic of] Croatia. ... The organizers of these events are the [Croatian] Committee for International Cultural Relations and the [British] Foreign Office.

There is no available detailed information about the contacts between the Croatian Committee for International Cultural Relations and the Foreign Office ahead of the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, or direct contacts between Vrdoljak and Wlaschin themselves. According to the above newspaper report, after the successful presentation of Croatian film in London, Vrdoljak received invitations to organize similar events in two other British cities, as well as Canada, West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. This was in keeping with the late 1960s strategy of the Croatian Committee for International Cultural Relations which pursued closer ties with the Croatian neighbors such as Italy, Hungary, and North African states in the wider Mediterranean region with which Croatia was connected through its access to the Adriatic Sea (Izvršnom vijeću Sabora Hrvatske 1969). The Croatian government simultaneously sought to establish stronger cultural cooperation with the west in general.

Upon his return from the Week of Croatian Film in London, Vrdoljak's impressions about the event were marked by his contentment with the first international exhibition of Croatian national cinema, on the one hand, and thinly veiled nods to the culminating nationalism of the Croatian Spring, on the other. No stranger to self-promotion, Vrdoljak underlined in a newspaper interview that the London event unfolded without technical gaffes typical for similar Yugoslav

presentations abroad, “though we worked as amateurs, volunteers even. And on a small budget [allotted for translations, subtitling, prospects, and other accompanying material usually produced by the federal export agency Jugoslavija Film]” (M. M.a 1971). Vrdoljak was especially pleased that the British cinephiles acquainted themselves with a previously unknown national cinema which, despite its relatively modest output, boasted a broad spectrum of genres and styles.

When Vrdoljak, as the president of the Association of Film Workers of Croatia, observed in the same interview that there was nothing odd in presenting Croatian cinema under its already established national denomination, there is little doubt that he supported the notion of Yugoslav cinema as a collection of national/republican (i.e. Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, etc.) cinemas, previously formulated by one of the leading Yugoslav film critics (Novaković 1968a). Vrdoljak underlined that British filmmakers learned about Croatian cinema as a stimulating example for the cinema of “their own multinational country.” Vrdoljak claimed that British filmmakers understood that the main argument of Croatian filmmakers was “that advancing national specificities does not lead, as some [that is, Yugoslav supra-nationalists] opine, to separation, but to a better understanding and world unity... And we got tired of being the last in line at the international appearances” (M. M. 1971a). Although it is true that the majority of Yugoslav films awarded at the international festivals were primarily produced in Serbia and by Belgrade production companies, Vrdoljak’s insinuation that Croatian films were deliberately sidelined was exaggerated. In addition to Vrdoljak’s aforementioned success at the 1969 Moscow festival, boosted by the support of his co-producer from Belgrade, films directed by Veljko Bulajić were

regularly featured and occasionally awarded at the most prestigious world festivals,¹²³ *Rondo* (1966, Zvonimir Berković) won the award for the best screenplay at the Atlanta International Film Festival, not to mention numerous international awards and critical acclaim earned by the Zagreb School of Animation and Croatian filmmakers specialized in short films. As though Croatian cinema never benefited from its participation in the broader Yugoslav framework, the concluding remark of Vrdoljak's interviewer alludes to the contestation of the supranational Yugoslav cinema: "Indeed, who else will care more about our cinema than us [i.e. the Croats themselves]?"

The rest of the Croatian newspaper coverage of the Week in London indicates moderate satisfaction with its organization as well as sober expectations about its success. Director Krsto Papić, who presented his film *Handcuffs*, said that he did not expect that the Week of Croatian Film would be anywhere near the main event in a global cultural center such as London, nor did he expect that Wlaschin would have organized the Week in the first place. Nevertheless, Papić was pleased to see Wlaschin's fascination with national cinemas in Yugoslavia as a potential role model for the re-organization of British cinema ("Hrvatski film u Londonu" 1971).

Papić's colleague and film critic Petar Krelja (1971) was a bit irritated by the Croatian public's high expectations of greater international recognition of Croatian national culture in the wake of the London mini-festival. Krelja considered the mere chance to present Croatian cinema in the UK a great success. Delighted to have heard the Croatian language at the NFT, he maintained that the polite applause of the London audience should have been interpreted as an

¹²³ Bulajić's film about war and revolution, *Kozara* (1962), shared the Golden Prize at the Moscow International Film Festival in 1963. One of the members of the festival jury was Dušan Vukotić, best known as a representative of the below mentioned Zagreb School of Animation.

impetus for a more resolute shift towards contemporary topics on the path to a greater global relevance of Croatian cinema.

In a slightly ironic report, headlined “An Ornament of the Westminster Abbey,” a Zagrebian journalist Antun Smrekar (1971) noticed that there had been too many cultural events in London overlapping with the Week of Croatian Film. Curiously enough, both Croatian and British cineastes gathered at the official banquet hosted by the Yugoslav ambassador in London, a career diplomat from Serbia, Dobrivoje Vidić. This suggests that Yugoslav diplomacy had supported the affirmation of Croatian national cinema as part of the post-1966 decentralization of Yugoslavia until the political backlash against the rise of nationalism during the Croatian Spring.

If Croatian filmmakers were clearly astonished by the opportunity to present their work in London, then the reciprocal *Tjedan britanskog filma* (The Week of British Film, held in Zagreb from September 26-October 2, 1971) demonstrated that British filmmakers considered an alliance with their Croatian colleagues whom they admired for a high degree of cultural institutionalization. A delegation of British filmmakers who came to Zagreb looking for a way to resist Hollywood’s domination in their own backyard, proposed to their hosts a plan for the creation of an (essentially supra-national) European cinema which would have included their Eastern European colleagues as well (M. M. 1971b). British filmmakers were frustrated with the sudden exhaustion of financial support from their government and the withdrawal of Hollywood companies which, having been taken over by big business, stopped using Great Britain as a filming location. The ongoing financial crisis fueled a vigorous debate about the identity and future of British national cinema (for more on this, see Betts 1973, 285-287; 316-317). At a press conference in Zagreb, director Ken Hughes complained that in the previous two years 75% of British filmmakers lost their jobs, adding that only 20 British features were produced each

year,¹²⁴ which was less than Yugoslavia's yearly output at the time. Television was named as the main factor behind the mass closing of film theaters in the UK, but an arguably even greater problem was the widespread support for commercialization "rather than cinema becoming a part of the state cultural agenda" (M. M.b 1971). Hughes was surprised that a well-attended press conference in Zagreb was held in an office owned by Croatian film workers, a situation impossible in the UK where filmmakers and journalists usually gathered in pubs. Actress Darwina Taylor stated that US distributors did not want to buy British films if they were regarded as abstruse for the moviegoers in the US mid-West. Taylor intimated that British filmmakers, with their backs against the wall, had no other choice but to unite with their European colleagues to create a common European market—"just like [commercial] traders [in the European Economic Community] already have"—as a bulwark against US cultural imperialism.

Taylor's reference to European traders as a role model for European filmmakers corresponds with the pro-European efforts of the UK government of Edward Heath. After Charles de Gaulle vetoed Britain's membership in the European Communities (EC) in the 1960s, seeing the UK as a likely tool of US interference in the EC, the Heath government managed to renew negotiations in 1970 and finalize the integration of the UK in the EC in 1973. The fact that Taylor floated the idea of a supranational European cinema in Zagreb should come as no surprise given how comfortable the British filmmakers must have felt in 1971 Croatia and Yugoslavia. Highlighting the popularity of the British TV sitcom *On the Buses* (1969-1973) in Croatia and the likeness between the sitcom's milieu and Zagreb, Taylor herself remarked that there was a potential for

¹²⁴ If the number of British features produced in 1969 and 1970 seems exaggeratingly small, it is because Hughes obviously did not take into account Hollywood productions filmed in Great Britain and incentivized by the British government bodies, much to the chagrin of British filmmakers (for more on the relevant British film policy, see Barber 2013, 23-37).

the British public to become more interested in the foreign content. Taylor's perception of Croatian filmmakers as partners in a joint European cultural framework mirrors the overall "impressive" bilateral relations of Yugoslavia and the European Economic Community in the 1970s (Zaccaria 2016, 2). In this context, then, even seemingly small gestures such as Taylor's invocation of shared European identity in 1971 Zagreb could be viewed as foreshadowing the more systematic push to replace the YU(goslav) supranational framework with the EU supranational framework, especially in the case of post-socialist Slovenia and Croatia as the EU member states.¹²⁵

Going back to the Croatian press coverage of the 1971 Week of British Film in Zagreb, film director Anthony Friedmann spoke about the flood of Hollywood films into British theaters as a result of which some of his colleagues deliberately started producing films in Cockney in an effort to create a cinema "that would be 'particularly British'." According to Friedmann, the sold-out Week of Croatian Film in London was attended by 14,000 viewers who were "not used to distinguishing Croatian from 'Yugoslav' cinema," so he welcomed the deepening of British-Croatian cinematic ties.¹²⁶ Unlike Wlaschin, however, British filmmakers in Zagreb did not talk about Croatian cinema as a role model for the establishment of sub-British national cinemas, which can be explained by the fact that they represented both British cinema as a whole and Great Britain as a country in the capacity of cultural diplomats at the event co-organized by the Foreign Office.

¹²⁵ For a comprehensive critical comparison of the political imaginaries associated with Yugoslavia and the EU as supranational entities, see Petrović 2012 and Petrović et al. 2022.

¹²⁶ Another newspaper report (Švarcmajer 1971) confirmed that a preliminary agreement reached in London sought to initiate direct British-Croatian co-productions in lieu of previous partnerships via Italian and French mediators. The call for British-Croatian partnership came after the retreat of Hollywood investments from Great Britain.

The Week of British Film itself nonetheless supplied the Zagreb press with additional material for the ongoing public debate about the Croatian position within Yugoslav federation. The bulk of the Week of British Film, curated by Vrdoljak, was comprised of social dramas about the everyday life of the lower British classes—*Kes* (1969, Ken Loach), *Spring and Port Wine* (1970, Peter Hammond), *Bronco Bullfrog* (1970, Barney Platts-Mills), and *Bartleby* (1970, Anthony Friedmann)—whereas the remaining films—*The Go-Between*¹²⁷ (1970, Joseph Losey), *Performance*¹²⁸ (1970, Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg), and *Cromwell*¹²⁹ (1970, Ken Hughes)—did not have the same common denominator. The critic of a Zagrebian youth weekly, Vladimir Krušić (1971), singled out the tragic thrust of Loach's (now classic) leftist film and the authenticity of *Bronco Bullfrog*, adding that *Performance* succeeded in building an atmosphere resembling an LSD trip more than in employing Mick Jagger's stardom. The most striking part of Krušić's text remains his negative review of *Cromwell*, a film about an emblematic historical persona involved in a revolution and civil war, two phenomena important for the creation of postwar Yugoslavia. Namely, Krušić suggested that screening *Cromwell* at the moment corresponding with "a lively revival of our own national myths, and preparations for their transfer onto the film stock, could be useful as a clear warning that a myth can be easily turned into an insipid heap of empty phrases and lies." Krušić's label "our own national myths" most likely does not refer to any Croatian national myths, but Yugoslav narratives about WWII constructed in the film spectacles such as *The Battle of Neretva* (1969, Veljko Bulajić), *Sutjeska/The Battle of Sutjeska* (1973, Stipe Delić) and *Užička republika/Guns of War* (1974, Živorad Mitrović). Krušić's "failure" to distinguish between national and supranational myths in

¹²⁷ Drama romance film about the illicit cross-class relationship in the early 20th century rural England.

¹²⁸ Controversial depiction of the countercultural identity crisis in the Swinging Sixties.

¹²⁹ Biopic about the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell.

his allusion to the maligned pre-production of *The Battle of Sutjeska* demonstrates once again why such ambiguous attributes as “our” and “domestic” were preferred in the public discourse instead of the more specific and loaded terms like “Croatian” and “Yugoslav,” much like the category of “national” could actually stand for “supranational”, i.e. Yugoslav.¹³⁰ At the same time, Krušić’s critique calls for an extended analysis of the interconnections between Yugoslav and British supra-national cinemas in the following section of this article.

...to British Devolution

The 1971 campaign for the international recognition of Croatian national cinema, led by Antun Vrdoljak, exposed the insecurity of Croatian filmmakers who believed that the theatrical feature film, as the dominant form of the global mainstream film culture, must also furnish the foundation of their national cinema. Instead, Vrdoljak and his colleagues could have attempted to establish the short animated film as the fulcrum of Croatian national cinema, precisely because of the international prestige of the Zagreb School of Animation (also known as the Zagreb School of Animated Films).

As co-founders of the ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d’Animation), the Zagreb animators used the opportunity to reinforce their international standing after Charles de Gaulle’s government withheld financial support to leftist French filmmakers and film institutions, including the first international animation festival in Annecy and the French-based ASIFA itself, because of their support of the 1968 protests. After the cancellation of the 1969 Annecy festival,

¹³⁰ In socialist Yugoslavia, a phrase “domaći film” (“domestic film”) was used to avoid charges of promoting either nationalism or supra-nationalism with categories such as “Serbian/Croatian/Slovenian cinema” and “Yugoslav cinema” respectively (Batančev 2012, 42).

the executive board of the ASIFA backed an earlier proposal that Zagreb would alternate with Annecy and Mamaia (Romania) as the other hosts of the international festival of animation. Zagreb was chosen because of the reputation of its school of animation as well as “the independent international position of Yugoslavia” (O zasjedanju Izvršnog odbora ASIFA u našoj zemlji 1970, 5). The Zagreb animators were then finally able to relieve the festival of its valorization of animation trends from the overwhelming influence of the festival host, a particularly problematic tendency at the Annecy festivals. Accordingly, at the inaugural 1972 World Festival of Animated Film Zagreb—today known as Animafest Zagreb and considered the second oldest international animation festival in the world—the films of the Zagreb School were screened out of competition. Yet, the newly implemented “neutrality” of the festival host did not prevent the Zagreb animators and critics from viewing the output of their international colleagues with a peculiar sense of superiority bordering on arrogance (Sremec 1972; Bešker 1972), in contrast to Croatian filmmakers in 1971 in London.

It should be stressed that there were at least two more distinctions between the international orientation of the Zagreb School of Animation and Vrdoljak’s vision of Croatian national cinema. First, as Morton (2020) and Ajanović (2017) suggest, the Zagreb animators generally promoted—and sometimes even celebrated—Yugoslavia as a socialist country that supported their creativity, without instances of censorship more readily associated with Yugoslav documentary and fiction films. Second, the Zagreb animators used the Yugoslav non-aligned political platform to criticize and satirize both capitalism and real socialism. The former was targeted for consumerism, the latter for collectivist dehumanization, while both ideologies came under fire for the proliferation of nuclear arms. A whole decade before the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, Dušan Vukotić’s *Surogat/Ersatz* (1961) became the first non-US film to

win the Academy Award for Short Subjects, Cartoons. After numerous international retrospectives, the Zagreb School of Animation was examined in Ronald Holloway's monograph *Z is for Zagreb* (1972), published by Tantivy Press in London. It is safe to argue that the Zagrebian animators attracted more global attention in the 1960s and 1970s than their British colleagues. Of course, placing the fundamentally internationalist Zagrebian short animation at the core of Croatian cinema could have profoundly altered not only Vrdoljak's limited vision of national cinema, but also the very idea of national cinema as such.

In his seminal essay "The Concept of National Cinema," published in 1989, Andrew Higson argues that definitions of British cinema "almost always involve, on the one hand, the construction of an imaginary homogeneity of identity and culture, an already achieved national identity, apparently shared by all British subjects; and on the other hand, the valorisation of a very particular concept of 'British cinema,' which involves *ignoring whole areas of British cinema history*" (44, italics added). Although Higson notes "internal cultural colonialism" embedded in the notion of national cinema, he does not question the unity of British cinema. Nor do, for that matter, Higson's numerous colleagues (e.g. Street 2008; Burton and Chibnall 2013; Hunter, Porter and Smith 2016) who have continuously published volumes about British cinema long after the emergence of the below mentioned New Scottish Cinema in the 1990s. Higson's theorization is nevertheless useful as it points to the domination of the theatrical feature film at the expense of other uses of cinema in the formation of national cinema. It would therefore be productive to enrich the paradigm of national cinema with the less visible non-theatrical cinema and "useful cinema" as "a body of films and technologies that perform tasks and serve as instruments in an ongoing struggle for aesthetic, social, and political capital" (Wasson and Acland 2011, 3).

Take into account, for example, the historical diverseness and value of non-theatrical cinema produced in Croatia as part of the First and Second Yugoslavias, starting from the interwar era marked by Oktavijan Miletić's small-gauge films (DeCuir, Jr. 2013). In his history of Croatian educational film, Vjekoslav Majcen (2001) examines a rich cinematic tradition ranging from interwar instructional and ethnographic films to postwar *element-filmovi* (educational films which served to explain certain components/"elements" of the curriculum). Particularly interesting are the interwar educational films about public hygiene produced under the auspices of the Zagreb School of Public Health, established in 1927 by Dr Andrija Štampar, an international expert in social medicine and a co-founder of the World Health Organization. Medicine was the vocation of the director Mihovil Pansini, a practitioner of *antifilm* which he defined as "a purely visual-acoustic phenomenon ... free of all psychological, moral, symbolic meaning" (Levi 2012, 116). Pansini was the founder of the Genre Film Festival (GEFF), an underexamined experimental film festival, held biannually in Zagreb between 1963 and 1970, as a platform for exploring postwar modernism at the intersection of cinema, visual arts, music, theatre, and literature. Similar inclinations shaped the prolific amateur and experimental cinema in postwar Yugoslavia, including filmmakers from Croatia, such as Ivan Martinac¹³¹—who worked in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Split—Andrija Pivčević, Ante Verzotti, Vjekoslav Nakić,¹³² Tomislav Gotovac, Vladimir Petek, Željko Kipke, Ivan Faktor, Ivan Ladislav Galeta,¹³³ Tatjana Ivančić, Tatjana Dunja Ivanišević, and others (Mišeljić 2018; Belc Krnjaić 2020; Turković 2013). If the paradigm of national cinema is expanded to incorporate all forms of film production and consumption, then it becomes clear that "Croatian national cinema" and/or cinema produced

¹³¹ Films by and about Martinac, most of them without dialogues and hence easier to watch, are available here: vimeo.com/ivanmartinac

¹³² See Nakić's films here: www.youtube.com/@vjekoslavnakic/videos

¹³³ See Galeta's films: www.youtube.com/@3egaleta/videos

in Croatia was hardly inferior to British national cinema. As a matter of fact, relative to its resources and tradition, Croatian cinema was in some aspects on par or—in the case of animated film—even superior to British cinema, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. It should therefore come as no surprise that Croatian cinema, even in its limited form advanced by Vrdoljak, was able to exert influence on the globally better known British cinema.

This proposed extended paradigm of Croatian national cinema throws into sharp relief the gradual fragmentation of British cinema, most visible in the emergence of Scottish national cinema. An eminent scholar of the 1990s New Scottish Cinema, Duncan Petrie, identifies first ideas about the Scottish national cinema in the early 1970s (2000, 145-146), when Bill Douglas started directing his trilogy of medium-length films (*My Childhood*, 1972; *My Ain Folk*, 1973; *My Way Home*, 1978). The 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange thus corresponded with and, through Wlaschin's work, influenced the first steps towards the conceptualization of the Scottish national cinema. It is interesting that Petrie considers medium-length films, rather than feature films, as the foundation of the Scottish national cinema. Further problematizing the dominant paradigm of national cinema, Zach Finch acknowledges that many Scots participated in and benefited from the British imperialist and colonialist project, adding that “without overstating [the historical colonization of certain parts of Scotland], Scotland remained a junior partner within the British Empire. The Scots' continued diverging political and social values from England with regard to Brexit and Scottish independence help make the case for Scotland as something of an underdog nation without a state” (2017, 65). Finch proposes that Scottish short films, produced since the 1930s, be taken as the foundation of Scottish national cinema. Similarly to my above consideration of the Zagreb School of Animation as an alternative nucleus of Croatian and Yugoslav cinemas, Finch highlights the importance of the format of short film,

often disregarded “because of its low economic impact and relatively low visibility. As a result, this lowers the profile of, and limits the scholarly conversation regarding nations with *impoverished* film industries” (54, italics added). The discourse of “impoverishment” and “smallness” regarding Scottish cinema appeared as early as 1977, when the conference Cinema in a Small Country, co-organized by Scotland’s Association of Independent Producers and the Scottish Arts Council, marked the beginning of a more sustained, institutional effort to secure a greater, primarily financial, independence of Scottish filmmakers: “The event did not directly effect a change in the current situation, but it did help galvanise the film-making community, allowing their desires to be collectively articulated in a forceful manner and signalling the need for change” (Petrie 2000, 145). Following the success of Bill Douglas, Bill Forsyth attracted even more attention to “home-grown Scottish auteurs” with his features *That Sinking Feeling* (1979) and *Gregory’s Girl* (1981).

Unsurprisingly, these “home-grown Scottish auteurs” featured prominently in Ken Wlaschin’s consistent championing of the less known national cinemas as relevant for the project of sub-nationalization of British cinema. Talking about his selection for the latest edition of the LFF in his 1979 interview for the Sarajevan film journal *Sineast*, Wlaschin singled out the cinemas of Nigeria and Mali for striving towards their own national style instead of emulating western cinemas. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Wlaschin observed, the LFF struggled against film consumerism by introducing a plethora of international filmmakers to its audience and registered the steady rise of Asian cinema, particularly in India, Indonesia, and Hong Kong. Most importantly, Wlaschin continued to bemoan the dependence of English filmmakers such as John Schlesinger and Ridley Scott on US capital, while insisting on the distinctiveness and social

realism of Scottish films such as Bill Forsyth's *That Sinking Feeling* (1979) (Kunovski 1980, 129-130).

Some of Wlaschin's ideas about the concept of national cinema and the associated rationalized production models reverberated in subsequent 1990s debates about the recognition of the New Scottish Cinema. In 1994, Colin MacArthur attacked the Scottish Film Council and the Scottish Film Production Fund for backing "narrative-based storytelling derived from Hollywood film practice, coupled with an emphasis on market-driven production strategies. This not only drives up costs but also fails to address the more pressing cultural and social questions to which an indigenous Scottish cinema ought to be committed" (Petrie 2000, 152). MacArthur proposed the alternative of a "low budget, aesthetically austere ... Poor Scottish Cinema" modeled after the movements such as Italian neorealism, French New Wave, and Brazilian Cinema Novo, as well as the work of a number of international filmmakers, including Yugoslavia's Dušan Makavejev. Eddie Dick, director of the Scottish Film Production Fund from 1994 to 1997, rejected MacArthur's idea as culturally defeatist ("Poverty is not a condition which we should accept, glorify or aspire to. We should be doing everything to eradicate it") and economically unsustainable due to the unavoidable underpayment of the work force in the film industry (152-153). While the "economics vs. culture" debate continued to preoccupy Scottish film policy makers in search of a "truly" Scottish cinema, it is worth noting that even as late as 2000 Petrie still viewed Scottish cinema as part of "a devolved British cinema" (155).

It is important to reiterate that in Wlaschin's 1970s discourse, the issue of national cinemas in Great Britain was closely tied to the search for more efficient economic models of film production. Under Wlaschin's supervision, the internationalization of the LFF's programs both shaped and was shaped by the contemporaneous decline of commercial moviegoing in Britain,

the development of an arthouse cinema network in London, and the growing number of subtitled international films broadcast by the BBC. These changes led filmmakers in Great Britain to respond to the trends they saw in the work of their international peers, which in turn enabled Wlaschin to curate for the first time a special section on British Independent Cinema at the 1977 LFF. Praising the diversity of productions from London, as well as “Scotland, the North, the Midlands and the South” (Davies 1979, 254), Wlaschin endorsed the idea of “a new wave, British style,” thereby appealing to the British government to follow the examples of the governments of Australia and West Germany and increase investments into its cinema. By promoting “small national cinemas” such as Croatian and various inter-national “new waves,” Wlaschin was actually animating the British government to revitalize the country’s struggling film production through considerably small investments in the refashioned national—even regional—production mode. Essentially, Wlaschin proposed that if the illusion of British national and economic grandeur in its film production was unsustainable under the austerity of the 1970s, then the solution could be in “thinking small,” both in terms of film budgets and identity scales. If such a changed production policy added to the affirmation of national and regional identities outside of London, all the better.

Conclusion

At first glance, the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange exposes the British colonialist gaze as a common thread running through the history of the 1951 Festival of Britain as a reflection of “the great Victorian exhibitions,” the 1950s British “discovery” of Yugoslav culture and cinema, and the establishment of the LFF in continuity with the Festival of Britain and as a

platform for further “exploration” of “exotic” national cinemas such as Croatian. On the one hand, this process of “discovery” and recognition of a “small” national cinema was indirectly associated with the official British affirmation of the Croatian national particularity as a means of encouraging further decentralization and liberalization of Yugoslav socialism within the Cold War geopolitical landscape. On the other, the transnational film curator Ken Wlaschin used the economic and national crises of early 1970s British society to advance the idea of a devolved British cinema modeled after decentralized Yugoslav cinema. Wlaschin’s advancement of Croatian national cinema suggested that thinking in terms of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish national cinemas could both help the UK film industry overcome its production dependence on the US and mitigate national tensions instigated by the Troubles. Wlaschin’s involvement in the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange thus preceded and affected the subsequent emergence of New Scottish Cinema in the 1990s and related tendencies towards British cultural devolution in general. At the same time, this essay provides additional support for the argument that the paradigm of national cinema could be productively enriched by incorporating and, indeed, foregrounding non-theatrical and useful cinema.

Significantly, the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange also showcases a dynamic of what I call *asymmetric nationalism* whereby a seemingly “small” and “inferior” Croatian nation reveals and illuminates the blind spots in the self-perception of the “great” British nation. The analyzed case study is striking because a globally better known British culture harnessed its dialogue with a lesser known Croatian culture not only as a platform for cultural diplomatic influence, but also as a learning opportunity to understand the deficiencies of its own cultural and national model. This is why further research on other examples of asymmetric nationalism could complicate the dominant research focus on the cultural imperialism practiced by larger nation-

states. In regards to the analogies between the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the precarious prospects of the post-Brexit UK mentioned at the beginning of this article, the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange brings to light a revealing instance of a questioning the artificiality of British cultural identity from an international point of view. The analytical optic of Croatian national cinema as a role model for similar formations in the British context could be brought to bear on the potential for the further demise and ultimate collapse of imperialist British identity. After all, as the preeminent (and self-declared Welsh European) cultural scholar Raymond Williams asserted in his essay “Culture of Nations” (1983, 193), “‘The Yookay,’¹³⁴ of course, is neither historical nor cultural; it is a jargon term of commercial and military planning.”

¹³⁴ Pejorative spelling that Williams used for the UK.

Section 8: Peasants, Vampires, and Partisans: British Cultural and Political Racialization of the Balkans and Yugoslavia

Foreword: *The following short section, presented in 2019 at the international conference “(Re)Thinking Socialism: Knowledge, Memory, and Oblivion of the Socialist Past” in Sofia and updated for the dissertation, supplements my research on the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange by looking at the historical conjunctures and cultural representations that shaped the British perception of the Balkans and Yugoslavia. The longevity of British exoticizing and racializing representations of the Balkans is linked to Winston Churchill’s pragmatic support of the Partisans as the most effective WWII resistance movement of the multinational Balkans. Additionally, these historical phenomena and processes coalesce in the figure of the belligerent Balkan peasant present in Antun Vrdoljak’s films When You Hear the Bells (1969) and The Pine Tree in the Mountain (1971), to be closely analyzed in Section 10.*

In what follows I will provide a brief overview of the enmeshment of political and cultural history of the British imperial attitude towards the Balkans, with a particular focus on the Yugoslav nations. British imperialist discourse tended to racialize the Balkan people as “small,” “underdeveloped,” “little known,” “savage,” “rural,” “innocent peasants,” and so on. The Balkans had figured as an important theatre of British political and cultural imaginaries since the early 19th century with British public support of the Greek national uprising against the Ottoman yoke. British support of the Greeks stood in sharp contrast with its geopolitical support of the declining Ottoman Empire as the bulwark against Russian inroads into the Turkish Straits. The Russian influence on many Slavic and/or Orthodox Christian nations fighting against the

centuries-long Ottoman rule was of particular concern for the British Empire. This is most visible in the distinguished role played by the British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, at the 1878 Congress of Berlin which confirmed and extended the independence of former Ottoman provinces such as Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina to be occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A liberal conservative Serbian historian Miloš Ković (2010) contextualizes Disraeli's politics of the preservation of the balance of imperial powers against the backdrop of Disraeli's Orientalist fictional literary output that focused on Egypt and the Balkans. British liberalism exerted strong influence on 19th century Serbian politicians, most notably Čedomilj Mijatović, who served as a diplomat in London and worked on infusing the Serbian Orthodox Church with the religious ideas of the Wesleyan Church.

In the British cultural imaginary, the Balkans have been most readily associated with the figure of the vampire. As is well known, a staunch British monarchist from Ireland, Bram Stoker, had based the protagonist of his classic Gothic novel *Dracula* (1897) on popular legends from Eastern Europe, specifically the region of Transylvania. Stoker has arguably fashioned the blood-thirsty, irrational Dracula as a polar opposite to the ideal of the rational and composed British gentleman: "Count Dracula's flesh embodies everything that the British gentleman must, to use Kant and Freud, ... (expel) from himself in order to claim new subjectivity. Thus the only way he can stay alive is to be permanently attached to the bloodstream of the world's ruler" (Bjelic 2003).

What is more, the term "vampire" is widely considered to be the only word of Serbian origin in the English language. One of the best known and documented cases of vampirism is associated with the Serbian peasant Petar Blagojević who died in 1725 in Kisiljevo on the Austro-Ottoman border. An official of the Habsburg Empire, Ernst Frombald, had published a

report about his visit to Kisiljevo and detailed local peasant stories about a series of supernatural events allegedly set in motion by the “undead” Blagojević as well as popular local legends about vampires. Frombald’s report was widely translated and read across Central and Western Europe, thus contributing to the spread of the discourse about vampirism. Tomislav Z. Longinović’s insightful book *Vampire Nation: Violence as Cultural Imaginary* (2011) analyzes the western cultural and political representation of “the serbs” as the bloodthirsty Other of the West. From the legend about Petar Blagojević to Stoker’s vision of Dracula to the media reports about the “bloody” 1990s Yugoslav Wars, Longinović traces a continuity of the western projections of the monstrosity and backwardness of “the serbs,” always prepared to shed blood for a small piece of land. I refer to Longinović’s scrutiny of the “vampire nation” to tease out the multifaceted British fascination with the figure of the Balkan peasant as a vampire, an archaic inhabitant of an exotic Arcadia, a fearless revolutionary insurgent, and/or a “savage” national(ist) warrior.

Consider, for instance, another popular literary, theatrical, and cinematic genre exploiting the exoticism of Central and Eastern Europe: Ruritanian romance. In her book *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination* (1998), Vesna Goldsworthy, a Serbian scholar and writer working in England, draws on Edward Said’s and Maria Todorova’s critiques of Orientalism and balkanism respectively, to chart the continued fascination of numerous British authors with the Balkans. In addition to Lord Byron and Bram Stoker, Goldsworthy unpacks the works by Agatha Christie, George Bernard Shaw, E.M. Forster, Lawrence Durrell, and Evelyn Waugh, as well as British women travel writers and authors like Edith Durham, Olivia Manning, and Rebecca West. West penned one of the best known travel books in English, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia* (1941), shot through with a heavy dose of idealization of the “noble” Serb peasants as the racialized Other of the British civilization

(Korchnak et al. 2021). Vesna Goldsworthy pays special attention to Ruritanian romance, a literary, theatrical, and cinematic genre featuring narratives set in fictional countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Ruritanian romance is usually centered on swashbuckling adventures and romantic stories involving monarchs and members of the upper classes, Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) being the best known example of the genre. By default, Eastern Europe in Ruritanian romances is exoticized and ruralized, as even the genre's name unmistakably indicates.

More recently, Samuel Foster's book *Yugoslavia in the British Imagination: Peace, War, and Peasants before Tito* (2021) seeks to complicate Todorova's investigation of balkanism by pointing to different phases of the Anglo-British relationship with the Balkan peasantry from the Disraeli era to WWII. Foster holds that the media representation of the plight of the virtuous Balkan peasants under the Ottoman yoke and their struggle against the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires played an indispensable role in building Anglo-British popular support for the creation of First Yugoslavia throughout and after WWI. Yet,

As a proscribed form of identity, Anglo-Britishness was an inherently elitist concept that largely built upon understandings of duty and deference to the institutions of state. Any true sense of belonging remained localized or restricted to one's constituent nation. Ireland's dramatic departure from the union in 1922, mirrored by [interwar] Yugoslavia's own political dysfunctionality, demonstrated the degree to which such state systems could potentially engender alienation, division and resentment in an age of nation-states (Foster 2021, 155).

Foster concludes that the transformation of Britain into a consumerist mass society in the 1930s meant that "the 'British Imagination' grew less constrained by the need to define Britain's transnational relationships through parallels or allegories" (155) related to other cultures.

However, the decline of British cultural projection on Yugoslavia did not mean that the British government would not attempt to harness Yugoslav resistance to the Axis powers in WWII to its own ends. Well before Winston Churchill made a fateful decision to support the

NOP (i.e. Tito's Partisans) instead of Draža Mihailović's JVuO aka Chetniks as his natural ideological ally, Great Britain contributed to and supported the Yugoslav coup d'état on March 27, 1941, which coincided with the mass street protest against the newly signed Accession of Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact. The coup, led by the pro-British General Dušan Simović, overthrew the regent Prince Pavle Karađorđević as a perceived exponent of German interests and placed the underage Petar II Karađorđević on the throne. In response, the Axis Powers attacked and finally forced Yugoslavia to capitulate on April 18, 1941, thus forcing the Yugoslav King and government to flee to London. Churchill's government would eventually send two military missions to the Partisans and Chetniks, to confirm which of the two resistance movements would be most beneficial in the struggle against the Axis powers and their collaborators.

The 1943 mission to the central command of the Yugoslav Partisans was particularly important. Led by a Scottish conservative Unionist Fitzroy Maclean, Churchill's literary assistant, William 'Bill' Deakin, Churchill's son Randolph, and the above mentioned author Evelyn Waugh, the Maclean Mission has been credited with shifting Churchill's support away from the Chetniks to the Partisans. While Churchill had received certain guarantees from Tito, namely that the Yugoslav King Petar II would be allowed to return to power after the end of the war, Tito quickly abandoned his brief postwar cooperation with the liberal democratic Yugoslav politicians and thereby effectively proclaimed the success of the world's second effective socialist revolution. Churchill's decision to support the Partisans was not easy to understand even for his emissary Fitzroy Maclean who recounted the famous conversation with Churchill:

I thought it right to remind [Churchill] that the Partisans were communist-led. "Do you intend to make your home in Yugoslavia after the war?" he asked. "No," I replied. "Neither do I," he said. "That being so, don't you think we had better leave it so to the Yugoslavs to work out their own form of government? What concerns us most now is who is doing the most damage to the Germans." Thinking our conversation over afterwards, I felt convinced, and still feel convinced, that this was the right decision (Stafford 2011).

Controversies surrounding Churchill's support for Tito are aptly illustrated in Christopher Catherwood's book *Churchill and Tito: SOE, Bletchley Park, and Supporting the Yugoslav Communists in World War II*, published in 2017 by Frontline Books, a renowned British publisher specialized in popular military history. Based on the personal archive of the Churchill's assistant Bill Deakin, Catherwood's resolutely anticommunist book seeks to defend Churchill's 1943 decision made "as a *British* Prime Minister acting in *British* interests against *Britain's* deadliest enemy the Third Reich" (xvi, original emphasis). Catherwood argues that the reports of Maclean and Deakin's mission at the Partisan headquarters did not so much shape Churchill's decision making as they confirmed the veracity of the Bletchley Park ENIGMA/ULTRA intelligence material that suggested Tito's Partisans were the safest bet on the Balkan resistance front. Catherwood (2017, 139-140) further argues that Tito persuaded Maclean that the multinational character of the NOP was a great advantage in comparison to the predominantly Serb Chetniks. Meanwhile, Churchill secured Yugoslavia's postwar "third path" in his agreement with Stalin at the Yalta Conference dividing Yugoslavia as a 50% Soviet and 50% western sphere of influence (187). Catherwood's biased defense of Churchill's intentions and acts notwithstanding—particularly because other British historians and memoirists debated and/or criticized Churchill's decision making regarding the occupied Yugoslavia¹³⁵—the fact remains that Tito and Maclean stayed very close even after the war, so much so that Maclean became the only foreigner the state allowed to own a real estate in postwar Yugoslavia (Goldsworthy 1998, 147) and, thus, actually have a home in Yugoslavia. Maclean responded in kind by writing a few flattering books about Tito and Yugoslav Partisans.

¹³⁵ See, for example, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans: The Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (2003) by Heather Williams, *Hoodwinking Churchill: Tito's Great Confidence Trick* (2011) by Peter Batty, and *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power, 1943-1944* (1990) written by Michael Lees, a former SOE officer who was sent to the Chetnik headquarters.

It should be noted that Churchill's view of the Balkans did not lack the typical elitist British prejudice against the region. In 1931, Churchill fiercely criticized the 1914 assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife—the event that triggered the Great War—as an essentially barbaric act (Miller 2014, 21), even if the British Empire eventually entered the Great War on the side of its allies, the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Serbia. In 1900, Churchill published his only major fictional work, a Ruritanian romance under the suggestive title *Savrola: A Tale of the Revolution in Laurania*. Needless to say, Churchill was not interested in a serious promotion of revolutionary causes that could endanger his conservative ideals. After all, in the postwar period, Churchill could not have benevolently observed Tito's aiding the communist forces in the Greek Civil War, or the Yugoslav regime's support of the global anti-colonial movements. At the same time, Churchill was pragmatic enough to support Tito in his conflict with Stalin and secure much needed financial assistance for Yugoslavia after 1948, greeting every liberal move of the Yugoslav regime as chipping away at the Eastern bloc. To this day, however, numerous anti-communist intellectual circles in post-Yugoslav realm deem Churchill as the most responsible international actor for Tito's ascension to power.

The importance of the Maclean Mission was reinforced even through its relationship to Yugoslav revolutionary films. For example, both Fitzroy Maclean and Bill Deakin were among the invitees to the 1969 gala premiere of the most expensive Yugoslav WWII spectacle, *The Battle of Neretva*, in Sarajevo (Ugledne inostrane ličnosti... 1969). Moreover, in September 1971, just as Antun Vrdoljak was wrapping up the Week of Croatian Film in London and the Week of British Film in Zagreb at the peak of the Croatian Spring, Bill Deakin vehemently protested the representation of his (Deakin's) character in the screenplay of another Yugoslav spectacle, *The Battle of Sutjeska* (1973, Stipe Delić, starring the Welsh British actor Richard

Burton). Having read the screenplay gifted to him by the film's production team at a formal lunch with the British Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Deakin singled out a scene in which, after a member of the Maclean Mission dies and Tito is wounded, Deakin asks Tito whether it makes sense to continue the struggle against the much stronger enemy. In the screenplay, Tito responds sharply to Deakin that no one, not even the Supreme Commander of the Yugoslav Partisans, has the right to commit an act of treason by ordering his people to surrender. After receiving Deakin's protest, the Yugoslav ambassador in London informed the cabinet of the Yugoslav President that, under the British law, Deakin would consider such a defeatist representation of his character as a libel. This was all the more disconcerting for the distribution of *The Battle of Sutjeska* in the west because the misrepresentation of Deakin would have been considered Tito's official view of the Maclean Mission in light of Tito's support of the production and his heavily publicized friendship with the Welsh-British star Richard Burton who played Tito in the film. Tito's response to the ambassador in London was rather conciliatory: "I think that everything that irritates and disparages the British Mission must be immediately cut out of the film" (Drugu Nikoli Popoviću... 1969-1973). Tito had many reasons to maintain cordial relations with the UK. After all, he was the first Communist head of state to visit Great Britain: the historic visit took place on March 16, 1953, merely ten days after Stalin's death. Greeted by the Duke of Edinburgh, Prime Minister Churchill, and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Tito sought to enhance relations with Great Britain as a way of keeping Yugoslavia intact in the ongoing conflict with the Eastern Bloc ("1953: Marshal Tito makes historic visit to London" 1953). In 1972, Yugoslavia became the first socialist state visited by Queen Elizabeth II (Street and Oliver 2022).

Section 9: Conceptualizing Croatian National Cinema in *Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970 and Beyond*

Foreword: *Presented at the 5th International Conference Socialism on the Bench: Antifascism, organized by the Centre for Cultural and Historical Research of Socialism in Pula, this short section delves into the inconsistent conceptualization of Croatian national cinema in a promotional publication prepared for the 1971 Week of Croatian Film in London. It is supplemented by the post-socialist Croatian scholars' views of (supra-)national cinema.*

This paper considers the conceptualization of Croatian national cinema in *Almanac of Croatian Film 1966-1970* (henceforth the Almanac), published on May 30, 1971 by the Association of Film Workers of Croatia (with the assistance of the Commission for Foreign Cultural Relations of the Croatian Assembly, i.e. socialist Croatian government) in order to present Croatian cinema for the 1971 Week of Croatian Film in London (and, presumably, the English-speaking public of similar retrospectives in other countries). The Almanac is comprised of narrative summaries of Croatian fictional, documentary, and animated films, as well as brief overviews of Croatian production capacities and biographies of prominent filmmakers. The hardcover Almanac was printed on high-priced *Kunstdruck* paper with an abundance of black-and-white film stills and photographs of filmmakers. Translated into English by Vera Andrassy and Lina Bernetić, the Almanac was edited/written by Mira Boglić, mentioned in the dissertation Section 6. The Almanac's editorial board included directors and reliable Party cadres, such as Veljko Bulajić, Fadil Hadžić, and Dušan Vukotić, as well as the liberal nationalist director

Zvonimir Berković, screenwriter and film historian Ivo Škrabalo, and transnational star Relja Bašić.

The Almanac is notably the first publication in English (or, for that matter, any foreign language) to speak of Croatian cinema as a national cinema distinct from the internationally well known Yugoslav cinema. It was published at the peak of the Croatian Spring which was marked by the liberal policies of the Croatian Communist leadership and the concomitant rise of Croatian nationalism as a reaction to the perceived Serb hegemonism within the Yugoslav federation. In the context of this rising tide of nationalism, one of the most problematic parts of the Almanac is the following remark in the section about the largest Croatian production company, Jadran Film: “The very first documentary made by the company (*Jasenovac*) attracted the attention of the public in foreign countries with its portrayal of the suffering of the Yugoslav peoples during the inhuman German occupation” (Boglić 1971, 106). The documentary *Jasenovac* (1945, Gustav Gavrin and Kosta Hlavaty) was indeed the first film about the titular WWII concentration and extermination camp in eastern Croatia that operated from August 1941 to April 1945. To this day, politically motivated controversies abound about the exact number of people killed in Jasenovac. Even so, historians Slavko and Ivo Goldstein (2011, 313) deem as plausible the number of 82,000 victims, mostly Serbs, Romani, and Jewish people. However, the brutal concentration camp was not run by the German occupiers, as the Almanac purports, but by the collaborationist Ustašist regime of the Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (NDH, Independent State Croatia). In fact, the Ustašas’ atrocities in Jasenovac were the subject of much official and unofficial debate in both socialist and post-socialist eras. Controversies were not put to rest even after the long-awaited unveiling of the monument to the victims of the Ustašist genocide—Stone Flower designed by Bogdan Bogdanović—in 1966. It cannot be denied that Jasenovac, the

largest Quisling camp of its kind in occupied Europe, was not memorialized as extensively as its counterparts (e.g. Auschwitz and Buchenwald) in the lands occupied by the Third Reich. The absence of memorialization of Jasenovac could arguably be justified by the desire of the Yugoslav Communist regime to eschew the rousing of both Serb revanchism and Croat nationalism in the postwar period. The historical burden of Jasenovac could be used to control and neutralize postwar Croatian nationalism which, in turn, either downplayed the Ustašas' atrocities or refused to be equated with the Ustašist ideology. The disposition toward de-emphasis of the NDH crimes in the first two decades of the Second Yugoslavia was reflected in Yugoslav cinema as well. For example, *Deveti krug/The Ninth Circle* (1960, France Štiglic), which gained international traction as the first Yugoslav feature film about the Holocaust, did not explicitly tackle Jasenovac. In any case, Boglić's misrepresentation of the Jasenovac camp is all the more curious given that elsewhere in the Almanac she praises Croatian films such as *Ponedjeljak ili utorak/Monday or Tuesday* (1966, Vatroslav Mimica) and *Crne ptice/Black Birds* (1967, Eduard Galić) for addressing the Ustašas' war terror. Writing about the latter film, Boglić even notes "the infamous concentration camp" in Nova Gradiška (Boglić 1971, 19), though this seems to be a *lapsus calami*, as it was the Stara Gradiška concentration camp that was part of the Jasenovac complex.¹³⁶

Similar fallacies and ambiguities color the Almanac's deployment of other ideologically loaded terms, such as socialism, revolution, and Yugoslavia. While downplaying socialism and revolution may be interpreted as the desire to make Croatian films more appealing to capitalist

¹³⁶ The cinematic exploitation of Jasenovac continues to the present. The most recent examples are the Croatian production *Dnevnik Diane Budisavljević/The Diary of Diana B.* (2019, Dana Budisavljević) and Serbian production *Dara iz Jasenovca/Dara of Jasenovac* (2020, Predrag Antonijević) which were used in Serbia as a counterpoint to the release of *Quo Vadis, Aida?* (2020, Jasmila Žbanić), the film about the 1995 Srebrenica massacre/genocide.

countries as a potentially lucrative market, the Almanac's usage of the notion of Yugoslav cinema seems ambiguous, if not outright opportunistic and falsifying. In some passages of the Almanac, Yugoslav cinema appears to be invoked because of its international recognizability, whereas in others it gets completely disregarded in favor of Croatian cinema without ever clearly distinguishing between the two terms. To provide a brief illustration, the Almanac mentions that the largest Croatian studio Jadran Film "has produced or participated in the production of more than 100 Yugoslav features" (Boglić 1971, 107). It is not clear how both Jadran Film's productions and co-productions could be categorized as "Yugoslav:" does that, for instance, mean that Jadran Film's productions are simultaneously both Croatian and Yugoslav? The Almanac does not elaborate on what constitutes "Yugoslav features," nor does it mention the distinctiveness of other national/republican cinemas within Yugoslavia (e.g. Serbian, Slovenian, Macedonian) as potential counterparts to Croatian cinema. Ironically, the subchapter on the export of Croatian films is mistitled in the manner of a Freudian slip: "The Sale of Yugoslav Feature Films Abroad" (114).

The Almanac's editor indirectly suggests that Croatian films are those made by directors residing in Croatia (i.e. the director's residence was more important than any filmmaker's self-declared or perceived ethnicity or nationality) *and* (co-)produced by a Croatian production company. This implicit criterion seemingly explains why *Kad čuješ zvona/When You Hear the Bells* (1969) belongs to Croatian cinema as the film was directed by a Croat (Antun Vrdoljak) and co-produced by a Croatian company (FRZ Zagreb). However, the fact that *The Bells* was co-produced by a Belgrade studio FRZ Beograd begs the question why it could not be considered a Yugoslav film as well. The Almanac's implicit national criterion could account for the omission of the historical drama *Sarajevski atentat/The Sarajevo Assassination* (1968), directed by the

Zagreb-based Fadil Hadžić, but produced by FRZ Belgrade. Yet, it is hard to justify the Almanac's exclusion of *Bitka na Neretvi/The Battle of Neretva* (1969), directed by another resident of Zagreb, Veljko Bulajić, and co-produced by Jadran Film. Such an exclusion could be interpreted by the perception of *The Battle of Neretva* as *the* Yugoslav film, a spectacle produced not only by film companies from Yugoslavia and abroad, but also by a host of Yugoslav enterprises as well as the JNA and supported by Josip Broz Tito himself. These inconsistencies speak about the unease with which the Almanac (and the Association of Film Workers of Croatia as its publisher) grappled with distinctions between national and supranational cinemas.

The effects of such a blurry conceptualization of (supra-)national cinema are obvious in the Almanac's chapter symptomatically titled "The People in Croatian Film" which includes biographies of filmmakers who were born and/or built their careers outside of Croatia, but lived and worked primarily in Croatia (e.g. director Veljko Bulajić and actors Slobodan Dimitrijević and Ilija Džuvalekovski). At the same time, the chapter does not list the biographical information of many important filmmakers, mostly actors (e.g. Pavle 'Paja' Vujisić, Bekim Fehmiu, Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović, etc.), from other parts of Yugoslavia whose names and film stills are featured throughout the Almanac. The Almanac's editor did not explain the arbitrary criteria for the exclusion of these actors who definitely left an imprint in Croatian cinema as deep, if not deeper, as their naturalized colleague Džuvalekovski. Likewise, the Almanac does not expound whether the engagement of the non-Croatian filmmakers enriches or complicates the self-fashioning of Croatian national cinema.

Other examples of the Almanac's moot points about nationhood and WWII in Yugoslavia include the summaries of Vrdoljak's *When You Hear the Bells* and *Mirisi, zlato, tamjan/Gold, Myrrh and Frankincense* (1971, Ante Babaja). The summary of *The Bells* begins as follows:

“The film opens in the first year of the war [i.e. 1941] which was at the same time, the revolution. ... Three neighbouring villages: Serbian, Croatian and Muslim lead their own little war.” The summary does not clarify that the peasants featured in the film are involved in a civil war rather than a revolution, much like it fails to account for the film’s distinction between religious and national identities. By the same token, the film’s summary does not acknowledge the Croatian nationality of the political commissar, explicitly mentioned in the film, emphasizing instead his cultural difference as “a young underground worker” and “a man from the town, not to be trusted!” (Boglić 1971, 39). The summary thus fails to note the entanglement of class and nation in the urban Croatian commissar’s mediation of the conflict between the Orthodox (Serb) and Muslim peasants in Vrdoljak’s film. A similarly vague summary of *Gold, Myrrh and Frankincense*, based on the eponymous award-winning novel published in 1968 and penned by the dissident Croatian author Slobodan Novak, centers on the protagonist, “a veteran soldier and communist ... [and] one of those fighters and idealists who has not been able to find a place and take part in present-day life.” Together with his wife, the protagonist nurses “a sick old woman” who is “the last member of an ancient landowning family and lives in a dilapidated palace.” The summary underlines the uneventfulness of the story in which “everything repeats itself like in a magic circle” (Boglić 1971, 61), without explaining the grotesque nature of the circle, that is, the sick woman’s constipation due to which she experiences bowel movements only every 18 days. The humiliating position of the protagonist and his wife vis-à-vis the sick centenarian, symbolically named Madonna, actually mirrors the discontent of the younger Yugoslav generation who rose against the unkept promises of the older revolutionary generation in the late 1960s. The Almanac’s summaries of *The Bells* and *Gold...* thus served to obfuscate provocative elements of the films’ criticism of the Yugoslav revolutionary myth.

Boglič's difficulties with defining Croatian national cinema bring to the fore other authors' attempts in this respect. In his liberal nationalist history of Croatian cinema, Ivo Škrabalo (1998, 353-359) aligns himself with Slobodan Novaković's understanding of Yugoslav cinema as a collection of national cinemas explicated in the dissertation section 6. In a more rigorous essay, Hrvoje Turković ([1999] 2016, 156-157) notes that a film's national belonging does not have to depend on the nationality of its copyright holders. Instead, the multicultural framework makes possible that a film produced in socialist Yugoslavia, such as *U raljama života/In the Jaws of Life* (1984, Rajko Grlić), may be considered as both Croatian and Serbian film in the postsocialist era due to the origins of its director and producer respectively. While flexible and future-oriented, Turković's reframing of national cinema appears myopic insofar as it reduces Yugoslav cinema to merely a once useful label for international distribution and eschewing of national conflicts within Yugoslav federation. By contrast, Tomislav Šakić (2016, 33) sees Croatian film as part of Yugoslav cinema, that is, a "unified film market which had its common public, festivals, awards, journals, academies, not to mention legislation, film import, international distribution and exhibition at the foreign festivals." Šakić concludes that Yugoslav cinema, bolstered by mutual intelligibility and shared emotional experience, formed a "lived culture" that came into existence by overcoming the insular paradigm of national cinema and its association with ethnicities and/or individual republics in Yugoslavia (33-34). Finally, in his analysis of mostly thematic continuities between Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinemas, Nikica Gilić (2017, 104-105) carefully notes that "[t]he start of socialist Yugoslav cinema can be well understood through the fact that Vjekoslav Afrić from Croatia directed the first Yugoslav feature-length fiction film (*Slavica*, 1947) for a Belgrade company, Avala film, while Nikola Popović from Serbia directed the first such production of a Zagreb-based company, Jadran film

(*Živjeće ovaj narod/This Nation Will Live*, 1947).” However, Gilić seems to be more interested in highlighting preoccupations with nationalism in Yugoslav cinema well before the country’s 1990s dissolution than in providing a definite historical delinieation of Yugoslav cinema. That said, I would support Šakić’s above position as a means of opposing the historical erasure and/or marginalization of Yugoslav cinema, especially in cases such as Boglić’s Almanac about Croatian cinema.

Section 10: Between Homeland and Fatherland: Antun Vrdoljak's Counter-Revolutionary Subversion in Films about WWII Croatia

Foreword: *This section, to be submitted for publication in the journal War & Society, positions Antun Vrdoljak's war films from 1969 and 1971 as his cinematic confrontation with the Yugoslav revolutionary narrative during the Croatian Spring. The article analyzes the intellectual environment that ushered in Vrdoljak's cinematic revisionism, specifically his relationship with Partisan generals-turned-Croatian nationalist dissidents Ivan Šibl and Franjo Tuđman. Coupling narrative analysis of the films with a closer examination of Vrdoljak's international success at the 1969 Moscow film festival, this section expands on Vrdoljak's trajectory towards his co-organization of the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange investigated in Section 7. In addition to mapping Vrdoljak's interconnected discourses of nationalism, agrarianism, communism, and Ustašism, the article contributes to the historiography of rural war violence. Finally, it adds to the dissertation's interest in the filmic representation of peasantry, already detailed in essays about Živorad Mitrović's and Živojin Pavlović's films.*

In 1970, a prominent Croatian film director and cultural diplomat, Antun Vrdoljak, received a newspaper reader's question about the reception of his war film *Kad čuješ zvona/When You Hear the Bells* (1969, henceforth *The Bells*). Boasting about the film's universal acclaim, from the rural Croatian region Banija where the film was set to foreign countries, Vrdoljak did not miss an opportunity to note that "especially here in Zagreb, 25 years after the [Yugoslav] revolution, we carry the stigma of Ante Pavelić, as if there had never been Quisling, Draža Mihailović, Pétain, Rupnik, Wrangel..." ("Antun Vrdoljak: ..." 1970). This was just one instance

in which Vrdoljak suggested that *The Bells* and his next film *U gori raste zelen bor/The Pine Tree in the Mountain* (1971, henceforth *The Pine Tree*) aimed to clear the Croat nation's name from the atrocities committed by the fascist Ustaša regime of the NDH and accordingly revisit the revolutionary nature of the predominantly peasant Partisan resistance movement. Conversing with Max Bergholz's history of intercommunal violence in the NDH-governed rural Bosnia, this article scrutinizes *The Bells* and *The Pine Tree* and explores Vrdoljak's cinematic subversion of socialist Yugoslav revolutionary myth. I compare and contrast Vrdoljak's war films with general Ivan Šibl's war diary, as their literary foundation, and the historical and political writings of the first president of postsocialist Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, as their intellectual underpinning. The article considers the inter-national success of Vrdoljak's films in relation to his carefully crafted reframings of the official Yugoslav historical narrative about WWII.

Vrdoljak's Agrarianist Roots

The formative trauma of Vrdoljak's childhood was the death of his uncle who was, according to Vrdoljak himself, executed by the Partisans merely because he was a school principal in Vrdoljak's hometown Imotski during WWII. Various interviews with Vrdoljak do not stipulate if the rationale for the execution was that Vrdoljak's uncle was deemed an official of the occupying Italian Fascist regime, a supporter of the anticommunist forces during the war, or something else. In a 1997 interview for the Croatian edition of *Playboy* ("Tako sam skovan bio vam drag ili ne" 1997), Vrdoljak revealed that his father and uncle were members of the Hrvatska seljačka stranka (HSS, Croat Peasant Party), one of the most important political parties in the interwar Yugoslav monarchy. The main tenets of the HSS's ideology were agrarianism,

republicanism, and social conservatism.¹³⁷ Vrdoljak's family background in the HSS evidently motivated his preoccupation with peasants in his early war films. During WWII, most members of the HSS were passive and neutral in terms of siding with either the Ustašist regime of the NDH or the Partisan resistance. The same 1997 interview for *Playboy* illustrates Vrdoljak's family's unusual attitude towards the Ustaša regime in the NDH who he says they could not forgive for conceding Dalmatia, including Vrdoljak's home town Imotski, to the Italian Fascist occupiers. In other words, Vrdoljak's problem with the Ustaša regime in the NDH was what he saw as the regime's betrayal of Croatian national and territorial interests, rather than the Ustaša war atrocities.

Heeding his father's advice, the young Vrdoljak continued his postwar education in Osijek and eventually enrolled in the Zagrebian Academy of Dramatic Arts as one of its first students of acting. He quickly became one of the most promising Croatian film actors, winning accolades for his roles in films such as *Nije bilo uzalud/It Was Not in Vain* (1957, Nikola Tanhofer), *Cesta duga godinu dana/The Year Long Road* (1958, Giuseppe De Santis), *H-8...* (1958, Nikola Tanhofer), *Noći i jutro/Nights and Days* (1959, Pjer Majhrovski) and *Rat/The Atomic War Bride* (1960, Veljko Bulajić). In parallel with the acting career, Vrdoljak also worked as a journalist which helped him widen the circle of influential friends. Soon enough, he got a chance to pursue his interest in film directing. In 1960s Yugoslavia, it was customary that inexperienced directors' first foray into the feature would be in omnibus films, a form usually consisting of 3 short, linked films directed by 3 different directors. This was the case with Vrdoljak as well, who co-directed the omnibus *Ključ/The Key* (1965) with Vanča Kljaković and Krsto Papić. After this film, Vrdoljak made the switch to directing and specialized in working with actors.

¹³⁷ For more about the history of the HSS and its main leader, Stjepan Radić, see Biondich 2000.

Vrdoljak's Relationship with Šibl and Tuđman

In Vrdoljak's own opinion, the key film of his career was his 1969 feature directorial debut, *The Bells* (Sömen 2007, 39). Set in rural Croatia, *The Bells* stood out among other Croatian NOB films which were mostly conceived as urban thrillers (Polimac 2012, 10). As a JNA conscript in 1962, Vrdoljak came up with the idea for the film after reading the book *Ratni dnevnik* [*The War Diary*], written by the Croatian general Ivan Šibl. At first, Vrdoljak hesitated to ask for Šibl's permission to adapt his diary, not only because Šibl still seemed faithful to Tito's regime, but also because the general almost destroyed the career of the prominent filmmaker Krešimir 'Krešo' Golik. Šibl discovered that the 19-year old Ustaša lance corporal Golik had published a story "Ustaša se živ ne predaje" ["An Ustaša Does Not Surrender Alive"] in the newspaper *Ustaša* during WWII. Because of Šibl's investigation, Golik could not direct in Croatia for a while, though he continued working as an assistant director on various productions and co-directed the film *Kala* (1958) in Slovenia (Polimac 2012, 45). What Vrdoljak did not fully grasp at the time was that Šibl, despite remaining loyal to his antifascist roots, was well on the way of becoming a nationalist dissident.

Šibl had become a People's Hero¹³⁸ (*narodni heroj*) as a teacher-turned-urban resistance fighter in Zagreb and then a revolutionary Partisan political commissar in the WWII central Croatia. Retiring from active military duty as Lieutenant General in 1953, Šibl briefly worked in

¹³⁸ A prestigious socialist Yugoslav title given to individuals and organizations for heroic deeds. The vast majority of 1,322 People's Heroes were Partisans. In his analysis of the secular cult of People's Heroes, Vjekoslav Perica (2010, 111) distinguishes between the "hero-warrior" whose feats brought military success to the Partisans, and the "hero-martyr" who sacrificed themselves to spite the enemy and die in great pain, but were ultimately immortalized in the official historical narratives. For the reasons behind and effects of the relative overrepresentation of Serbs and Montenegrins in the Partisan units and, relatedly, among the People's Heroes, see Vujačić 2015, 229-235.

Belgrade as the editor-in-chief of the official gazette of the SKJ, *Borba*, during which time he published controversial articles penned by one of the best known Eastern European dissidents, Milovan Đilas. Following his stint as the director of Radio Zagreb, Šibl played a pivotal role in the opening of Television Zagreb in 1956, which damaged his reputation among (mostly Serbian) politicians who thought that Television Belgrade should have been the first Yugoslav TV company. As the first director of TV Zagreb, Šibl was credited with the establishment of its cultural program and the independence of its news production, thus effectively ending the idea of centralized Yugoslav news media system (Galić 2016, 514). After leaving TV Zagreb in 1963, Šibl occupied a number of political offices, including the President of the Croatian branch of SUBNOR from 1969 to 1971. As one of the most distinguished representatives of the Croatian Spring, Šibl was removed from office and public life after 1971 and passed away in 1989. Since the proclamation of Croatian independence in 1991, the annual award of Croatian Radiotelevision for consistent and outstanding career achievements in radio and TV production bears Šibl's name.

Šibl's intellectual trajectory and engagement in Croatian culture is particularly interesting in relation to his participation in WWII. He had published several non-fiction books about WWII, most notably the aforementioned war diary (first published in 1960 and re-published in 1966 and 1986). An accomplished screenwriter in his own right, Šibl scripted an urban war melodrama *Naši se putovi razilaze/We are Going Separate Ways* (1957, Šime Šimatović), marked by a leitmotif of betrayal in the resistance movement. The same leitmotif is present in the first Yugoslav TV series about the WWII resistance, *Sumorna jesen/The Grim Fall* (1969, Zvonimir Bajsić), produced by TV Zagreb, written by Šibl, and based on his personal experiences from the wartime Croatian capital. The leitmotif of betrayal marked Šibl's postwar life as well, as he felt

that his revolutionary zeal served only to establish a Serb-dominated socialist Yugoslavia. Šibl once confided in Vrdoljak his desire to write a novel with a motto: “I am a man without a future, disgusted by the present, ashamed of the past” (Sömen 2007, 42).

After the end of the Croatian Spring, Šibl befriended Franjo Tuđman, a historian, retired major general of the JNA, and nationalist dissident in socialist Yugoslavia who went on to become the first president of Croatia (1990-1999). According to the reminiscences of Šibl’s widow (Zemunović 2015), Šibl and Tuđman dreamed about a liberal democracy during the Croatian Silence,¹³⁹ the difference being that Tuđman believed in the realization of Croatian independence, while Šibl did not. Šibl resented the condescending attitude of some Serbian Communist officials who referred to the Croatian Partisans as a strictly geographic term, thus alluding to the preponderance of Serb Partisans in WWII Croatia. Coincidentally, during his filmmaking hiatus between 1974 and 1979, Vrdoljak rented Tuđman’s villa in Zagreb to direct TV advertisements (Škrabalo 2006, 16-17), thereby financially helping the imprisoned Tuđman for whom he would eventually serve as a vice-president of postsocialist Croatia.

As both Tuđman and Vrdoljak were members of the national cultural organization *Matica hrvatska*, which spearheaded the rise of Croat nationalism during the Croatian Spring, it is important to trace how Tuđman’s political ideas found their way into Vrdoljak’s war films. Already in 1960, having served in WWII as a Partisan political officer just like Šibl, Tuđman retired from the Yugoslav military. As outlined in Stevo Đurašković’s scrupulous analysis of Tuđman’s pre-1990s academic output and political writings (2014), in his career as a military historian, Tuđman vehemently opposed the unofficial historical narrative of “Croat guilt” for the

¹³⁹ The period following the end of the Croatian Spring in 1971 and lasting until the late 1980s during which time large parts of the Croatian public discreetly opposed the Communist regime.

Ustašas' WWII crimes in his efforts to achieve the coveted postwar Croatian military independence.

The official Yugoslav historical narrative portrayed all Yugoslav nations as equally responsible for the wartime heroism and atrocities. Ethnic divisions in the NOB and local memories of the war violence had been downplayed in favor of a narrative of the collective revolutionary struggle against fascism, all in hope of avoiding postwar national conflicts fueled by specific war memories. The narrative of "Croat guilt," for example, was buttressed by the perceived Communist government's silence around the predominantly Serb victims of the Ustašas-run Jasenovac death camp in the NDH, which bolstered anti-Croat resentment in postwar Serbia.

At the end of the 1950s, the question of national responsibility for WWII crimes loomed large in the context of the proposed reorganization of the JNA,

which sought to introduce Territorial Defense Units (TO) as a kind of national guard in each individual republic. The reorganization of the Army was to be conducted within the scope of the aimed overall decentralization of the political and economic system by the large-scale introduction of workers' self-management. ... The TO issue eventually triggered a clash between Army centralists resisting the introduction of the TO and decentralists pushing for it. The clash eventually resulted in a peculiar *Historikerstreit* of military historians over the interpretation of the [NOB] founding myth which was quite significant since the [JNA] was conceptualized as one of the foundations of the [socialist Yugoslavia] stemming directly from the Partisan movement. ... [T]he centralist faction eventually went so far as to minimize the significance of ethnic Croat and Slovenian participation in the [NOB, foregrounding instead the core Partisan forces under Tito's direct command], and even characterized the Croats as being resistant towards the very idea of Yugoslavia as a polity (Đurašković 2014, 61-62).

In his books, including titles such as *Rat protiv rata* [*War against War*] (1957) and *Okupacija i revolucija* [*Occupation and Revolution*] (1963), Tuđman advocated for decentralization of the JNA by emphasizing the national character of the Partisan resistance within the territory of each Yugoslav republic. Defending the late rise of the Croatian Partisan movement, Tuđman pointed to the Croats not being targeted by the Ustašas' atrocities and an

understandable reluctance to revive Yugoslavia under the Serb hegemony, adding examples of the Croat resistance to the Ustašist regime. Tuđman provocatively argued that “a majority of the drafted Home Guards (Domobrani, the NDH’s regular army) were not fascists since they had defected in large numbers to the Partisans” (Đurašković 2014, 62). But even this did not produce a more emphatic response of the Yugoslav nomenklatura. Instead, Vladimir Bakarić, the gray eminence of Croatian Communists, invited Tuđman to take over the Zagrebian Institute for the History of the Workers’ Movement which embarked on a project of Croatian nation-building along civic rather than ethnic lines. Although Tuđman’s historical research followed the political agenda of the Croatian liberal Communists led by Savka Dabčević-Kučar, he was ultimately removed from the Institute and expelled from the SKJ in 1967 for his vociferous minimization of the number of victims in the Jasenovac concentration camp. Before and after his ascension to power as a nationalist political leader in 1990s post-socialist Croatia, Tuđman continued to develop a concept of national reconciliation (*nacionalno pomirenje*) “as a peculiar ‘forgetting of the (Second World War) past’ with the goal of reconciling the descendants of the Ustašas and the Partisans in order to unify around the struggle for an independent [Croatian] state” (59). Shortly before the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, Vrdoljak overcame his family affiliation with the anti-Communist HSS and adopted Tuđman’s concept of national reconciliation which curiously mirrored its own genealogy: Tuđman, a former Partisan, essentially borrowed (and then adapted) it from the infamous head of the Ustašas’ concentration camp network, Vjekoslav ‘Maks’ Luburić (68).

Though Vrdoljak did not explicitly base his war films on Tuđman’s revisionist historiography, I argue that there are a number of parallels between their works. Both Tuđman and Vrdoljak were interested in the national aspects of the resistance movement in the NDH,

simultaneously understating the Ustašas' violence while emphasizing the defection of the Home Guards to the Partisans. As will be demonstrated in my analysis of Vrdoljak's films, Tuđman's concept of national reconciliation is akin to Vrdoljak's interest in the similarities between the warring peasants in the NDH, despite their national, religious, and ideological differences. Vrdoljak's fascination with the wartime peasant self-defense echoes Tuđman's aforementioned ruminations about Territorial Defense Units as the basis of postwar Croatian military and political independence. Consequently, both Tuđman and Vrdoljak undermined the official myth of the Yugoslav revolution by highlighting the unresolved Croatian national issue in socialist Yugoslavia. In the following section I will expand on the various ways in which Vrdoljak's cinematic subversion of the Yugoslav revolutionary myth not only augmented critical points of Šibl's war diary as his literary inspiration but also preceded the more recent historiographic exploration of rural violence in the occupied Yugoslavia.

Three Towers as Three Knives

To fully appreciate the significance of Vrdoljak's intervention into the mythology of the NOB and Yugoslav revolution in the country's rural environment, it is first necessary to elaborate on its relation to Max Bergholz's book *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community* (2016). Bergholz's book is the winner of multiple academic awards, including the Herbert Baxter Adams Prize which is awarded annually for a distinguished first book published in English in the field of European history. The book has been translated into Bosnian and, according to the author's website,¹⁴⁰ is slated for translation

¹⁴⁰ www.maxbergholz.com/publications

into Chinese by the Beijing-based publishing house Imaginist. This is significant because contemporary China has shown a tendency to study the nationalist dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia as an important lesson for its own national policy.¹⁴¹

Bergholz's book is a microhistory of WWII intercommunal violence in the village of Kulen Vakuf on the border between contemporary Bosnia and Croatia. The author uncovers a massacre of approximately 2,000 Muslim and Croat villagers, perpetrated by predominantly Serb insurgents in reaction to the Ustašas-led pogroms of the local Serb population. Bergholz's book sheds new light on the complex dynamics of both inter- and intra-ethnic war atrocities as well as solidarity amid and after violent acts. The author effectively opposes the rhetoric of "ancient ethnic hatreds" as the main cause of nationalist violence in the Balkans by exposing the NDH as a weak state unable to prevent its most extreme local representatives and the Ustašas from engaging in mass violence against the local Serbs. To this end, Bergholz highlights instances of solidarity of some local non-Serbs with the Serb victims of war violence and the effort of a small number of (in this particular case, Communist) "advocates of restraint" among the insurgents to prevent the retaliatory massacre. Crucially, Bergholz propounds violence as an important force in forging new identities during and after the war. He argues that "[t]he basis for an antagonistic sense of ethnicity, and for its sudden increased salience in certain moments, can have roots in previous experiences and memories of violence" which then create "a new form of local level, post-conflict nationalism" conceptualized as "sudden nationhood" (2016, 319). The author provides the following conclusion about the driving forces of mass violence among neighbors in multiethnic communities:

¹⁴¹ For instance, see the interview with Zorana Baković, a retired long-time correspondent of the Slovenian daily *Delo* from the Far East (Romac 2021) and the book authored by a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Hao 2016).

When strong situational incentives appear in a local community to decisively solve economic and inter-personal problems in an ethnic key, some neighbors will engage in violence on an ethnic axis; this violence will tend to occur in locations where, and at times when, perceived security threats of those neighbors targeted for persecution are highest; and, while this violence can be instituted “from above,” it can also be driven “from below,” especially in contexts where state control is weak, and local autonomy over violence is strong. These findings provide us with ways of accounting for why, as well as when and where, neighbors in local communities who have been peaceful, if not entirely conflict-free, for long periods, might attack their neighbors in certain moments. In doing so, we do not have to adopt a conception of “ethnic groups” as our collective historical actors, nor assume a sense of long-term conflict among such actors, or accept notions of a group’s traumatic history of suffering somehow mystically repeating itself. What is perhaps most striking in these findings is the clear logic and rationality that drives some neighbors to attack each other on an ethnic axis (Bergholz 2016, 312).

Rather than directly transposing the concept of “sudden nationhood” into my analysis of Vrdoljak’s films, I harness it as a comparative backdrop to examine a host of historical phenomena present in Bergholz’s microhistory, Šibl’s war diary, and Vrdoljak’s war films, including the weak statehood of the NDH; fluid religious, ethnic, and ideological identities; opportunities for plundering as a major incentive for ethnic violence; individual advocates of restraint of war violence; and the conflict between the perceived irrationality of the Balkan peasantry and the clear logic and rationality of intercommunal mass violence.

Šibl’s war diary is a subjective account of the author’s involvement in the WWII resistance as a Partisan political commissar in the central region of Croatia called Banija. The diary was written in plain, unadorned language which leaves the reader imagine all possible implications of described events and interpersonal relationships. On the one hand, Šibl remains faithful to the revolutionary cause by criticizing Ustašas’ crimes against Serbs, Jews, and Roma (1966, 57; 64-66; 173); celebrating the Partisan revolutionary struggle and paying tribute to his comrades-in-arms Nikola ‘Demonja’ Demić and Vasilj Gaćeša who were posthumously named People’s Heroes; and admiring the self-sacrifice of the female Partisans (309-313) and the transformation of the Partisan forces into a well organized army (330) that believed in the glory of the October Revolution (304) and the resilience of the Soviet Red Army (397-398).

On the other hand, Šibl does not hesitate to show the less flattering side of the NOB and revolution, including national and religious differences as well as class conflicts within predominantly peasant Partisan units. In the very first entry, on January 29, 1942, Šibl notes that he was billeted in a peasant house with an Orthodox Christian icon on the wall (1966, 11), thus alluding to his alien status as an urban Croat. Elsewhere, Šibl opposes the Partisan plundering of “luxury goods,” such as shirts and napkins (108-109), a motif exploited in Vrdoljak’s film. One of the most problematic sections of the diary is devoted to Petar Krnjaić, the peasant Partisan commander of Šibl’s unit, who ordered that the village Prekop be burned down and all male villagers older than 16 executed, most likely because the village was the site of an Ustaša massacre of local Serbs. As such acts of revenge were not sanctioned by the Communist leadership of the Partisan movement, Krnjaić’s unit disobeyed his orders by only burning a few houses and eliminating only the few armed Ustašas in the village. Following accusations of spying for the collaborationists (82-87), Krnjaić was court-martialed for his order to annihilate Prekop and executed at the regional Partisan headquarters. This episode illustrates not only the Partisans’ capacity to commit and resist committing a crime, but also Šibl’s implicit thesis about the peasants’ shifting ideological allegiances, another motif that Vrdoljak transposed into *The Bells*.

To facilitate further comparison of Šibl’s diary and *The Bells*, I will first provide the official English-language synopsis of the film used in the promotional material for international sales:

It is the first year of [the] war. Three villages live [side by side]. In the evenings and early mornings the Serbian Orthodox church-bell is heard in Upper Kladare. In the neighboring Lower Kladare the muezzin cries the summons to prayer from the minaret. At the same time the Catholic church-bell is sounded in nearby Prolom. Villages like villages, and life like life, until the war turns the three towers, the three Gods into three knives.

Having completed a few underground actions in the occupied Zagreb, a young underground worker [i.e. the political commissar Vjeko] must cross over to the liberated territory. In the city, his pregnant wife

is arrested and kept as hostage. Upper Kladare and Lower Kladare fight in a manner that is in collision with his romantic idea of a revolution. The war is tough, cruel, and the peasants fight for their land, their cow, their house. When he tries to form a squad from this group of armed peasants, they openly tell him: 'We are not a State that is at war, but a village that was attacked.' But in war, everyone has trump-cards. His trump-cards were his courage and his honesty. The real conflict begins when the peasants seize an armed young man [Meho] from the neighboring [Muslim] village. After the unwritten, but inveterate law, that the captive belongs to his capturer, the peasant demands the prisoner's gun and - head!

Fighting for the prisoner's life, the underground worker slowly begins winning his main fights for order and lawfulness: he succeeds to win their confidence, and to organize the group of armed peasants into a real small squad. Everything has its price though: the young man [Kubura], devoted to him from the beginning, is killed in an action. In addition, he must part again from his wife and just-born son, with whom he spent one single night ("When You Hear the Bells" 1969).

The film's plot is based on the introductory chapter of Šibl's diary about his stay in the Orthodox village Bojna which local peasants defended from the attacks of the neighboring Muslim villages aligned with the Ustašas. The film introduces a Catholic village to complete Vrdoljak's metaphor of three peaceful religious bell towers¹⁴² turning into three war knives.

According to the Croatian film historian Nikica Gilić (2010, 90-91), Vrdoljak's tendency to emphasize the peasants's religious rather than national identities in *The Bells* can be attributed to the primacy of religion or its overlapping with nationality in remote rural Balkan areas.

Moreover, although Vrdoljak protagonist Vjeko spends most of his screen time with the Orthodox characters, there is practically no mention of their nationality. In keeping with Šibl's diary, the Orthodox characters in the film call their Muslim neighbors "Turks," which is a derogatory term for the (once mostly Christian) Balkan population who converted to Islam during the Ottoman rule. The references to the Ottoman yoke may have helped Vrdoljak to not only show the long historical continuity of the Banijan peasants' identities, but also mitigate the consequences of the film's indirect equation of religion and nation in decentralized socialist Yugoslavia marked by the rise of nationalisms.

¹⁴² Vrdoljak probably referred to the historical similarity between the church towers and minarets as the latter do not actually have bells.

Still, rather than any entrenched sense of religious identity, *The Bells* highlights vicious circles of plundering and destruction of property as the driving force of intercommunal war violence. In his diary, Šibl praises the wit of the Banijan peasants and their interest in politics, insisting on a difference between their ancestors, who fought on the Military Frontier for the Habsburg Monarchy and its imperial successors against the Ottoman Empire, and the majority of enserfed peasants in other parts of the Ottoman Balkans. A long history of frontier wars in Banija resulted in an unusual war without proper warfare during WWII, illustrated by Šibl's diaristic description and Vrdoljak's cinematic depiction of the entrenched peasants throwing witty insults at their neighbors-turned-enemies. Both Šibl and his cinematic counterpart Vjeko were puzzled by the obviously frontier mentality of the peasants who, knowing very well every bush and rock in their region, sought to defend their village first and then attack their neighbors only when it was safe to plunder.

At the beginning of *The Bells*, Kubura, a charming Orthodox peasant, informs Vjeko that the first conflict started when the Ustašas used the military mobilization as an excuse for an unacceptable confiscation of the cattle. A short time later, Vjeko confronts the Orthodox peasant leader Gara for allowing the plundering of the Catholic village. Gara responds with a good deal of historical irony: "You think these people will fight for free? Truth be told, nobody knows whose property is whose in these villages any more. It got muddled up in pillages, now it's everyone's." Yet, right after this exchange, Gara asserts his authority by slapping a young Partisan caught in the unsoldierly act of plundering. Gara's attitude towards pillage sounds like Vrdoljak's position on postwar Yugoslav self-management in which the notion of "social property" (*društvena svojina*), introduced by Tito's government, was meant to designate the working class as the owner of the products of its labor. In reality, however, the Yugoslav

nomenklatura and technocratic managerial class held sway over the working class who nevertheless maintained some influence in the self-management of their firms (Kirn 2019; Musić 2021).

In a curious foreshadowing of Bergholz's examinations of the generative capacity of violence in (post-)war identity-building, the notion of property is applicable to people and commodities alike in both Šibl's diary and Vrdoljak's film. In the diary, Šibl describes an ambush in which the Orthodox peasants-turned-Partisans kill Suljica, a Muslim peasant, on the spot and capture his countryman Meho and their carbines. Unlike Suljica who gained notoriety as a "cutthroat" (*koljač*), that is, a murderer who preferred to cut his Orthodox victims' throats, Meho is a recent returnee from a German prison camp whose life is saved by Šibl as a Bergholzan "advocate of restraint." In his typically sparing manner, Šibl informs us about his education of Meho in revolutionary internationalism as a uniting force on five continents, adding that his new disciple "was in captivity in Austria, yet he keeps conflating Austria and Australia" (Šibl 1966, 25). Yet, when Šibl asks an Orthodox peasant what is more valuable, a seized carbine or converted Meho, the peasant instantly replies: "The carbine." The Orthodox peasants start considering Meho "a half Partisan, half captive" only upon seeing that he did not try to escape to his Muslim village in the middle of a shootout. The reader of Šibl's diary is left to imagine the process whereby Meho, a recurring Muslim POW, saw how a Zagrebian political commissar fought alongside the Orthodox peasants and learned that the values of socialist internationalism and Partisan identity could not only save his life, but also provide a way out of the war violence that seemed to have captured his existence.

Meho's complex character is transposed into Vrdoljak's film under the same name. When an Orthodox peasant Mićan realizes that the commissar Vjeko will spare Meho's life, he angrily

exclaims: “Where was the Political [commissar] when they [i.e. the Muslim neighbors] were plundering here!” A bit later, Mićan protests to the village elder Gara because Mićan’s son captured Meho, which means, in keeping with the ancient frontier custom, that he should be able to do with the captive as he pleases. While the Partisans are expected to save hostages caught by an Ustaša unit, Mićan is not enthusiastic about risking his life because nobody helped him and his Orthodox countrymen when their village had been pillaged. The fact that Mićan lost three sons in the war augments the tragedy of his obsession with property as well as struggle for any lofty ideals, especially when in his dying moments Mićan asks Gara if there is anything worth sacrificing three sons.

A similarly ambiguous enmeshment of parental emotions, fixation on property, and othering is evident in Gara’s character as well. On the one hand, having lost his only son to a conflict with the Muslim village, Gara bears a grudge against Vjeko for saving Meho and turning him into a Partisan. Gara is not intimidated even after Vjeko’s warning that he could be executed for his anti-Muslim hatred. In this regard, Vrdoljak draws on Šibl’s account of the peasants as less than ideologically emancipated warriors. On the other hand, Vrdoljak is careful enough to show Gara’s positive side when he exchanges three captured German soldiers for Vjeko’s wife and child. Furthermore, after Muslims release a captured Orthodox boy thanks to Meho’s mediation, both Gara and Kubura admit that the “Turks” can be heroes too. The change in Gara and Kubura’s attitude towards their neighbors, if temporary, nevertheless corresponds to Bergholz’s conceptualization of the fluid wartime perception of the local Other as potentially both friend and foe.

Another concept from Bergholz’s study that is discernible in the diegetic world of *The Bells* is the NDH’s weak control of remote rural areas as a precondition for the explosion of

intercommunal violence. The peasants' fundamental distrust towards any form of government is reflected in the film's synopsis cited above: "We are not a State that is at war, but a village that was attacked." From a broader historical perspective, the distrust of the film's peasants towards the State is reinforced by their skepticism towards modernization in general. This skepticism is encapsulated in Gara's vocal desire to destroy paved roads leading to his village as they bring "armies and other miseries." Gara's comment is a clear echo of the aforementioned rich history of warfare and violence on the Military Frontier, a history that required Gara's ancestors to be ever vigilant against their neighbors as well as various militaries ravaging their homeland.

The pernicious impact of modernization on the rural way of life is visible in the film's final montage of the dying Kubura and the empty passing train as symbolizing the irreversible technological intrusion into the peasant world. The film's closing sequence serves to enhance the bleak defeat of the rural lifestyle rooted in hard labor and harsh humor. When Vjeko asks a peasant Partisan why he restlessly molds clay, the peasant says that he is unaware of what his hands are doing. The peasant then complains that "you can't get a callus from gunplay, you can use the gun just for killing" and angrily curses his uncalloused hands that abstained from agricultural work. In the following scene, the mortally wounded Kubura regrets that he cannot curse the neighboring peasant enemies. With his last breath, Kubura asks Vjeko to respond accordingly to the curses from the Muslim peasants. Vjeko's desperate cursing barrage, juxtaposed with Meho's crying over the dead Kubura, suggests that the political commissar can no longer be "the advocate of restraint" in the bloody intercommunal conflict. The commissar did everything in his power to cultivate the peasants and liberate them from their prejudices but, in the end, he is forced to acknowledge that modernization and technologized warfare as well as the promise of revolutionary transformation (and the accompanying postwar collectivization)

would inevitably uproot the peasant culture. This unorthodox view of the fate of the peasant class was one of the problematic aspects of *The Bells* that plagued the film from its conception to its ultimate inter-national success.

There is No Bad Publicity

Antun Vrdoljak used his position in the cultural elite of socialist Croatia to attack the filmmakers associated with the Yugoslav New Film/Black Wave by labeling the movement as a “Serb patent” and an “antisocialist” project (Turković 2009, 102). In addition, Vrdoljak insisted on making entertaining, if not frivolous films, whereas the New Film auteurs treated the popularity of their work as a secondary priority at best. Vrdoljak’s animosity towards the Yugoslav New Film is all the more curious given that he would not have been able to make *The Bells* without one of the key producers of the Belgrade branch of Yugoslav New Film, Dušan Perković, who led the production unit FRZ Belgrade. An accomplished actor and screenwriter, Perković produced some of the most provocative 1960s Yugoslav films, including one of the most critical films about the Yugoslav revolution in general, *Zaseda/The Ambush* (1969), directed by Živojin Pavlović. Pavlović’s and Vrdoljak’s films premiered the same year and shared not only the same (co-)producer and vivid peasant characters, but also a refined Croatian star Ivica Vidović who embodied two revolutionary “aliens,” a Croatian Partisan in WWII eastern Serbia in *The Ambush* and a Muslim captive Meho in an Orthodox village in Croatia in *The Bells*.

Vrdoljak had to ask for Perković’s help after the largest Croatian studio, Jadran Film, refused to produce *The Bells* on the grounds that its narrative was potentially politically

controversial. During the filming of *The Bells*, Vrdoljak neither spoke to journalists, nor showed his screenplay to anyone outside of the film crew. The first test for his atypical take on the WWII history was a screening of the rough cut of *The Bells* for a committee of the Croatian ministry of culture as one of the film's indirect co-producers. The committee recognized the quality of *The Bells*, despite some of its provocative aspects, but the Croatian republican censors nevertheless decided to ban the film's final cut. Vrdoljak was hoping that Šibl could intervene with the head of Yugoslav film censorship in Belgrade, famous Partisan general Peko Dapčević, but Šibl refused to get involved on the pretext of his delicate political position and a lack of contact with his former brother-in-arms. In the end, general Dapčević was full of praise for *The Bells*, thus effectively overruling the ban of the Croatian republican censorship and motivating Vrdoljak's co-producer Perković to submit the film to the Moscow International Film Festival. Perković explained to the bewildered Vrdoljak that the temporary ban of *The Bells* in Croatia actually provided excellent free publicity for the film, especially in the Belgrade media which always had an appetite for a cultural scandal in Zagreb. Ultimately, the speculations of the Zagreb press about the (Belgrade) Black Wave's "infiltration" of Croatian cinema were crushed by the resounding success of *The Bells* at the Zagreb premiere, after which Vrdoljak and Šibl finally became good friends (Sömen 2007, 41-42). Perković's tactic of promoting *The Bells* at a renowned international festival, which in turn served to thwart any further attacks on the film within Yugoslavia, was the same tactic Perković used to preemptively protect his provocative productions of the Belgrade branch of the Yugoslav New Film. The official Yugoslav position on these critical films, including Vrdoljak's, would fundamentally change only with the early 1970s backlash against political and cultural opposition to the Communist regime.

Perković's tactic proved far-sighted when *The Bells* shared the Silver Prize with the classic French-Italian comedy *Playtime* (1967, Jacques Tati) at the 1969 Moscow International Film Festival, coming ahead of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968, Stanley Kubrick) and *Oliver!* (1968, Carol Reed). This was the second ever award for a Yugoslav film at the Moscow festival, after another film about revolution, *Kozara* (1963, Veljko Bulajić), shared the Golden Prize six years earlier. Since 1959, the Moscow festival served “to facilitate [Soviet] foreign and cultural policy,” alternating with the older Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the postwar period after “the Soviet government imposed a new rule: only one international film festival could be held annually in Eastern Europe” (Bláhová 2015, 264).

In her insightful article about international film festivals in Moscow—dedicated to the “world cinema revolution” as a counterpoint to mainstream western film culture—and Tashkent—which focused on Asian, African, and Latin American cinemas—Elena Razlogova (2020, 142) notes that “[s]trong unofficial connections forged by international festival guests transcended and contradicted the aims of Soviet cultural diplomacy” which treated these festivals as a propaganda tool in its Cold War cultural conflicts. The following passage is particularly instructive for understanding the interaction of the “big” and “small” cultures and nations in the international film festival circuit:

Major European festivals championed art films against commercial cinema represented by Hollywood at the same time as they aligned with the American film industry in their own film markets and star glamor[.] ... They upheld European standards for art cinema, including, for example, non-linear narrative and an identifiable self-reflexive individual ‘auteur’ style[.] ... Participation at a top festival made a film known among critics worldwide. It could lead to better chances for distribution in the arthouse circuit, attract financing for future film production, and make a world reputation of an aesthetic movement and a national cinema[.] ... As outsiders in the global art cinema distribution system, the Moscow and Tashkent festivals had little power to propel a film to international stardom in this way. Film critics hailed postwar international art cinema ‘waves’ as they emerged at major European festivals: Italian neorealism with Roberto Rossellini’s *Rome, Open City* (1945) at Cannes in 1946, Japanese cinema with Akira Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* (1950) at Venice in 1951, the French New Wave with François Truffaut’s *The 400 Blows* (1959) at Cannes in 1959, or Brazilian *cinema novo* with Glauber Rocha’s *Barravento* (1962) at Karlovy Vary in 1962. Such a perspective constructed implicit cinematic hierarchies, where a national or regional

film movement did not get a spot on a world cinema ‘map’ until it got ‘discovered’ at a major European film festival (Razlogova 2020, 143).

Though it is not clear why Razlogova groups Western European festivals (Cannes, Venice) and an Eastern European festival (Karlovy Vary) as “European” in contrast to the Moscow festival as somehow less “European,” her main point about the importance of personal ties among international cineastes is useful for understanding the interaction of international cineastes’ subjectivities and the climate that contributed to Vrdoljak’s success in Moscow.

The 1969 Moscow festival’s international jury—Sergey Gerasimov (president of the jury, USSR), Vija Artmane (USSR), Mbissine Thérèse Diop (Senegal), Madiha Yousri (Egypt), Glauber Rocha (Brazil), Dev Anand (India), King Vidor (USA), István Szabó (Hungary), Jerzy Kawalerowicz (Poland), Erwin Geschonneck (GDR), Anatoliy Golovnya (USSR), Zahari Zhandov (Bulgaria), Stanislav Zvoníček (Czechoslovakia), Ion Popescu-Gopo (Romania), Alberto Sordi (Italy), and Yves Ciampi (France)¹⁴³—gave the Golden Prize to the Cuban film *Lucía* (1968, Humberto Solás),¹⁴⁴ Italian-French *Serafino* (1968, Pietro Germi), and Soviet *We’ll Live Till Monday* (1968, Stanislav Rostotsky). Were these films “compatible with Soviet ideology,” as Razlogova (2020, 145) suggests was the case with the top awards at the Moscow festival? *Lucía* has been celebrated for its stylistic versatility and feminist take on the Cuban War of Independence and communist Revolution, *Serafino* tackled the plights of a young non-conformist peasant, while Rostotsky’s film became one of the festival’s almost customary Soviet co-winners by depicting the everyday life of a contemporary Soviet school. The common denominator of the winning films was their focus on youth which should come as no surprise

¹⁴³ www.moscowfilmfestival.ru/miff43/archives/?year=1969

¹⁴⁴ According to Razlogova (2020, 144), the decision to award the Cuban film was “intentional: the proposal for the 1969 [Moscow] festival vowed to showcase films from ‘developing nations’ .”

after the global 1968 student protests. *Playtime*, on the other hand, was not only the most daring of Tati's films in terms of the scope of its production, it was also a complex comedy about the prescient topics of consumerism and futurism. The appeal of Vrdoljak's *Bells*, then, could have been in its refreshingly small-scale depiction of WWII in comparison to spectacles such as Yugoslav *The Battle of Neretva* (1969, Veljko Bulajić) and Soviet *Liberation* (1970, Yuriy Ozerov). In addition to its cinematic qualities, *The Bells* likely excelled as the best Eastern European film in the competition and, as such, attracted numerous Eastern European members of the festival jury, not to mention it being perceived a part of the wave of Yugoslav films that took the late 1960s international festivals by storm. At the same time, in the analysis of the roots of *The Bells*' success at the 1969 Moscow festival, it can be productive to take into account the wider landscape of Cold War international relations. The Moscow festival typically had a more heterogeneous set of international selections in comparison to the Western European festivals on the one hand, while ignoring "films from enemy political camps, including, in different periods, [socialist] China [and] Albania [as well as non-socialist] Israel [and] South Korea" (Razlogova 2020, 145) on the other. Therefore, by awarding a prize to a Yugoslav war film in 1969, the Soviet establishment symbolically signaled, at least for the time being, that the non-aligned Yugoslavia had no reason to be concerned about a Soviet-led invasion similar to the one in 1968 Czechoslovakia.

Nevertheless, the positive reviews of *The Bells* in Soviet newspapers conspicuously lacked any deeper scrutiny of Vrdoljak's representation of WWII as a civil war. *Sovetskaya Kultura* emphasized the film's humor in its coloring of the "battle of true humanism against fascism, violence, and cruelty," while *Izvestia* praised the transformation of the peasant protagonists into "conscious fighters of an organized movement," adding that *The Bells* perfectly corresponded to

the motto of the Moscow festival: “for the humanism of film art, for peace, and friendship between nations” (Sömen 2007, 70). It seems that the lack of familiarity with the intricate historical context of the WWII resistance in rural Croatia led the Soviet film critics to highlight only the surface level of the representation of antifascism in *The Bells*. In any case, there is little doubt that the “internationalist” appeal of *The Bells* awarded in Moscow boosted the film’s export to the USSR, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, East Germany, Iraq, Syria, and Australia (Boglić 1971, 115). The triumph of *The Bells* enabled Vrdoljak to continue his exploration of nationhood, peasantry, and revolution in *The Pine Tree* (1971).

Peasants between Fatherland and Homeland

The two years that passed between the premieres of *The Bells* and *The Pine Tree* (1971) saw the further rise of demands for a higher level of Croatian independence within the Yugoslav federation. Vrdoljak still paid lip service to the ruling ideology with the opening text of *The Pine Tree* which announced that the film was “dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the [WWII] uprising of the people of Croatia,” adding that “all events are true and described in *The War Diary* by Ivan Šibl.” This underscoring of historical veracity in turn validated Vrdoljak’s stronger emphasis on the national question in *The Pine Tree*. After the resounding domestic and international success of *The Bells* which had been financed by co-producers from Croatia and Serbia, *The Pine Tree* was produced by the largest Croatian studio, Jadran Film.

On the surface, *The Pine Tree* emulates the structure of *The Bells* insofar as its protagonist, the Partisan political commissar Ivan (henceforth the Political, as he is predominantly referred to in the film) moves from Zagreb to Banija where he joins a resistance unit led by a Serb peasant,

Dikan. But, from the very beginning, *The Pine Tree* presents a more bitter and brutal image of inter-ethnic strife and intra-ethnic conflict with the perceived traitors. The role of the Political as an “advocate of restraint” of violence in *The Bells* is undermined in the first ten minutes of *The Pine Tree* when Dikan tells the Political not to interfere with the execution of a Serb peasant who allowed a Home Guard soldier’s escape. The harsh sentence is justified by the necessity of avoiding a military collapse like that of the royal Yugoslav army in April 1941. Along similar lines, Dikan says to the Political that nobody told peasants how to cultivate the land, and nobody will tell them if they should execute an inattentive countryman. Vrdoljak thus points to the tradition of peasant self-management as predating the postwar Yugoslav state doctrine, though the relative political independence of the peasants in the film is not destined to last long or evade the Communist understanding of revolutionary progress: when a peasant Ićan mentions that the “torture” of peasants will stop after the war, the more “class-conscious” peasant Markeza tells him that the cessation of exploitation, rather than “torture,” applies to the workers only, not the peasants. *The Pine Tree* thereby implicitly criticizes the Communist betrayal of the peasantry’s class struggle after the imposed postwar collectivization. The peasant Ićan is also representative of another change in Vrdoljak’s approach to the war mythology in comparison to *The Bells*: being a Croat in a predominantly Serb Partisan unit, he serves as a reminder that there were Croats fighting against the Ustašist war terror.

One of the prominent motifs of *The Pine Tree* is the Partisans’ shaming of the Home Guard. According to Šibl’s diary (1966, 56), the Partisans forced the captured Home Guards to strip down to their underwear in order to quite literally expose the NDH as a weak state unable to prevent the humiliation of its soldiers. Mostly drafted and therefore less invested in the survival of the NDH than the Ustašas, the Home Guards were generally reluctant to defect to the

Partisans until the Allied victory was looming towards the end of the war (Šibl 1966, 181; 217-218). To paraphrase Dikan from the film, the captured Home Guards were more interested in returning to their villages because most of them were ethnic Croats who did not feel threatened by the Ustašas as the Serb peasants.

The seized Home Guard uniforms play an important role in one of the most revealing sequences of *The Pine Tree*, once again based on Šibl's diary: the overtaking of an Ustaša stronghold by the Partisans dressed as the Home Guards. In Šibl's diary (1966, 38-41), the overtaking practically ends without a shot fired and with the disarmed Ustašas released after it is established that they were not involved in any warfare or crimes against civilians. In Vrdoljak's film, however, a bloody shootout ensues after Dikan accidentally drops his hat, emblazoned with a five-pointed star in the middle of a conversation with a Croat peasant-turned-Ustaša. Significantly, before the shootout Dikan and the Ustaša talk about shared peasant concerns, such as their families and households. In the aftermath, Dikan admonishes himself for starting the conversation in the first place, realizing that he and the killed Ustaša were too similar, almost "like relatives." *The Pine Tree* thus moves beyond the Tuđmanist "national reconciliation" between the Croat Partisans and Ustašas towards an inter-national, intra-class reconciliation between the Serb and Croat peasants. Moreover, as will be demonstrated below, *The Pine Tree* suggests that the Serb peasants from Croatia have more in common with Croat peasants than with Serbs from Serbia. This implication is in keeping with the shared political platform of the liberal Communist leaderships in post-1966 Belgrade and Zagreb who sought to convince the Serb minority in Croatia to detach from Serbia as the national hegemon and embrace Croatia as their homeland. Within the increasingly confederalized Yugoslavia, the Croat majority could

then claim Croatia as its nation-state with Serbs as its largest national minority and finally resolve nationalist tensions within Croatia.

The sequence of the Partisan overtaking of the Ustaša stronghold features the only scene in *The Pine Tree* that directly mentions the revolution. Against the backdrop of the Partisans' execution of the surviving Ustašas, including a vocally proud murderer of (presumably Serb) children, the revolution appears as nothing more than the utopian delusion of privileged urbanites. A wounded Home Guard officer Ivo, previously captured by Dikan and forced to lead the Partisans' action, reminisces about his gymnasium dreams of socialist revolution. When Dikan attempts to cheer him up with a grotesque anecdote about a fellow Partisan who dragged his intestines "like an armful of plums" after the Ustašas disemboweled him, Ivo throws himself at Dikan and desperately exclaims: "What revolutionary book did you come out of, [fuck] your peasant's [mother]!" In this way Vrdoljak exposes the drift between the urban, bookish vision of the revolution and its brutal reality in the rural environment.

Vrdoljak's examination of complex national, ideological, and class divisions in WWII is further complicated by the film's adaptation of Šibl's striking entry (1966, 191-194) about Captain L., the commander of a captured Home Guard Labor Regiment, one of many such units manned by Serbs whom the NDH regime harnessed as laborers rather than soldiers. In his fifties and thus much older than most Partisans, Captain L. came from inner Serbia as an officer of the interwar Yugoslav military. In World War I, he had fought as a Serbian soldier against Austria-Hungary and participated in the final battles on the Macedonian front. After the defeat of the royal Yugoslav army in 1941, Captain L. joined the Home Guard because the Ustašas threatened the lives of his Bosnian Croat wife and two daughters. After a while, Captain L. had succumbed to the Ustašas' pressure and became their informant. Šibl does not inform the reader whether the

Partisans put Captain L. on trial, or what evidence there was of his working for the Ustašas as an informant. The execution of the treacherous Captain L. was inevitable, writes Šibl while looking at the Captain's belongings, including the letters and photographs of his family. Yet Šibl also contemplates that Captain L. could have remained an honorable man under less adversarial circumstances, his fate exposing the weight of personal tragedies lost in the war statistics. "I will hardly ever forget the day when Captain L. was executed," Šibl laconically concludes (194).

In *The Pine Tree*, Dikan keeps "the Home Guard Officer" in captivity as "a traitor," after the Home Guards under the Officer's command choose to return to their homes to avoid the Ustašas' retaliation for any attempt of defection to the Partisans. Clean-shaved and refined, the Officer is visualized as a virtual alien among the rustic, mustachioed Serb peasants such as Dikan.¹⁴⁵ Dikan advises the Political to avoid debating and bonding with the Officer put on trial. Dikan is concerned about repeating the same mistake he made with the peasant-turned-Ustaša in the Ustaša stronghold when he felt too close to the enemy, precisely because of the shared language and life experience. Defending himself before a court martial comprised of the Political, Dikan, and another Partisan, the Officer appeals to the Partisans' sense of military honor by referring to his youth when only his great personal audacity helped him advance from a shepherd and corporal to an officer (of the royal Serbian military). The Officer says that he was wounded four times in the Great War and that he could now be Dikan's father. Dikan, however, does not have patience for the Officer's plea for solidarity, and shouts at him: "But you served the homeland then, whereas now you serve the mortal enemy! ... Whether you steal or guard the bag [with money]—it's all the same to me!" The Officer resolutely refutes Dikan's insinuations

¹⁴⁵ The distinctiveness of the Officer is underscored even in casting as this character was played by the transnational Yugo-French star Charles Millot, born Veljko Milojević to the family of a Serb Orthodox priest in Bjelovar, a town presently situated in central Croatia (Cindrić 2018).

that he stayed alive by converting to Catholicism and accepting the Ustašas' help in order to protect his Bosnian Croat wife. Indignant at Dikan's insistence that he should have fought for the homeland at all costs, the Officer exclaims:

What homeland?! I had already bled for the fatherland, for the King and fatherland, and where is my King now? In London! And now you're telling me, after twenty years, that my King is not a real king and that my fatherland, for which I fought, is not a real fatherland, but that I have to give my life and children for a new king and a new fatherland! I'm not giving away my children to God, King, or fatherland, and you can kill me, but I'm not giving away my children.

This cry encapsulates the agony of the Officer who fought for the unification of the South Slavs in WWI, only to be abandoned by the Yugoslav royal family Karađorđević who took refuge in the UK from the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia, thus significantly weakening the Karađorđevićs' legitimacy in the struggle for the liberation and postwar political reconstruction of Yugoslavia. Vrdoljak teases out the historical irony of the interwar Yugoslavia which was supposed to finally resolve the Serb national question by uniting all Serbs, including the Serbs in Croatia such as Dikan, in a single state entity. And yet, were the interwar Yugoslavia not created after WWI, the Officer might not have ended up in the same state with a compatriot Dikan charging him with treason in WWII. In a subtle nod to the public debate about the 1967 Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language, Vrdoljak highlights a linguistic (and therefore cultural) gap between the Officer from Serbia who uses the word "fatherland" and Dikan, a Serb from Croatia, who uses the word "homeland," commonly used in the Croatian language as well. After the Officer is escorted out of the improvised courtroom, Dikan makes a parallel between allowing the Political—an ethnic Croat—to do with the captured Croat Home Guards as he saw fit and his decision to punish the Officer as his compatriot for serving "the butchers of Serb children."

In the following scene the next morning, the Political gives a speech at the grave of a fellow Partisan whom he praises for cherishing his homeland more than his own youth. At the grave of the dead Partisan, Dikan observes the Officer digging his own grave. The scene represents Vrdoljak's ironic comment on the postwar commemorative celebrations of the Partisan heroes that overshadowed the (court-martialed) executions of the Partisans' enemies. We finally learn the true cause of Dikan's vindictiveness as he divulges to the Officer that he had watched Ustašas torture and kill his two sons. Dikan remained silent and did not try to save his sons for the fear of betraying the wounded Partisans in his shelter. The care for wounded comrades, a common trope of both histories and films about the Yugoslav revolution, supersedes even parental love in *The Pine Tree*. Ever vigilant to preserve the complexity of his characters and avoid them pursuing personal vendettas, Vrdoljak has Dikan exclaim, before executing the Officer, that he swore to punish all culprits responsible for orphaning 30 children in his village. In contrast to Captain L. from Šibl's diary, who was executed as an Ustaša informant, the Officer's treason in Vrdoljak's film is conspicuously detached from serving Ustašism. In the film, the Officer's treason does not have to be proved as he should have died with his family to demonstrate his heroism, military ethics, and loyalty to Serbdom.

In the closing sequence of *The Pine Tree*, after a sudden attack by the Nazi-Ustašas coalition, the wounded Dikan laments over how quickly his life has passed, though the final freeze-frame of his face leaves the possibility of his surviving the wound. After the inter-communal, inter-confessional civil war depicted in *The Bells*, *The Pine Tree* completes Vrdoljak's "de-revolutionization" of cinematic representation of WWII in the occupied Yugoslavia. In addition to underscoring the similarities between peasants, even those of different national or ideological adherence, Vrdoljak essentially framed WWII as a civil war not between

the Orthodox, Catholic, and Muslim peasants—presented in *The Bells*—but a fratricidal war between two factions of Serbs, represented by Dikan and the Serb Home Guard Officer in *The Pine Tree*.

Conclusion

The Bells and *The Pine Tree* showcase an extraordinary nimbleness of Antun Vrdoljak in his journey from his family's resentment of the victorious Partisans and their execution of Vrdoljak's uncle to undermining Yugoslav revolutionary mythology in his films. Through forming personal and intellectual coalitions with former Partisan officers-turned-nationalist dissidents Šibl and Tuđman, Vrdoljak found a way to approximate his anti-Communist agrarianism to Tuđman's idea of national reconciliation of battling ideologies within the Croat nation as the most efficient means towards the realization of Croatian independence, one that Tuđman and Vrdoljak would lead in the 1990s. Vrdoljak used Šibl's war diary as a springboard for a series of refined counter- and anti-revolutionary moves in his films: peasants are not the motor of the revolution, but its ultimate victims in the postwar collectivization; peasants are much more preoccupied with resurrecting the Military Frontier mentality of their ancestors, plundering, and brutal violence towards their othered neighbors than with attaining revolutionary goals; religious and ethnic differences between peasants are emphasized when undermining and mocking the all-Yugoslav socialist revolution, but muted when spotlighting the commonalities between the peasants fighting for Partisans and Ustašas; the state intervention and technological modernization are peasants' enemies rather than allies; WWII was not a war between the good and evil, Partisans and Ustašas, Croats and non-Croats, but—as *The Pine Tree* openly suggests—

a war between various Serb groups; the Ustašas are not an atrocious fascist movement, but just another side in a chaotic war; and so on.

What is particularly striking is that throughout the entire process of making and circulating *The Bells* and *The Pine Tree*, Vrdoljak does not lose sight of the Serb hegemony within Yugoslavia as his main critical target, even while his Belgrade co-producer helps him to produce *The Bells* and send the film to the prestigious Moscow festival. Bearing in mind the controversies and contradictions at the center of Vrdoljak's representation of WWII, what is at the root the contemporary critical success and lasting appeal of his films from 1969 onwards? *The Bells*, for example, is regularly featured on the Croatian critical and viewers' lists of the best Croatian films. The secret arguably lies in Vrdoljak's profound affection for his peasant protagonists, the affection that prevails over his explicit political agenda. Importantly, though, Vrdoljak's affection for peasants did not prevent him from redeploying the complex history of WWII intercommunal rural violence from its service to revolutionary socialism to its reframing as the beginning of the struggle for Croatian postsocialist independence. Needless to say, unlike his peasant characters, Vrdoljak did well in both socialism and post-socialism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In April 2023, a post-Yugoslav anthropologist born in socialist Serbia and working in post-socialist Slovenia, Tanja Petrović, gave a lecture about the “effects of ambivalence” in the 1980s Slovenian alternative art scene at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade. In her lecture, Petrović (2023) analyzed techniques of “imitation, (excessive) identification, repetition, citation, and collage” deployed by 1980s Slovenian artists to playfully challenge the perceived contemporaneous ossification of Yugoslav socialism and, simultaneously, ironically undermine Yugoslav revolutionary antifascism. Two moments in Petrović’s lecture stuck out to me. First, talking about the ambivalence with which some of the Slovenian artists spoke about their past in the recent oral historical interviews with her, she appealed to her listeners to call for and practice an unambivalent embrace of Yugoslav antifascism, especially today in the age of self-evident and extremely concerning anti-antifascism all over Europe and in many other parts of the world. The second significant moment in Petrović’s lecture was the context in which she referred to her inspiration by the book *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* (2014), written by the Jamaican anthropologist David Scott.

Petrović is preparing to publish a book titled *Utopia of the Uniform: Affective Afterlives of the Yugoslav People’s Army* (Duke University Press). Judging by the title alone, the book will address the JNA as the military organization that had once been served by all able-bodied male Yugoslavs aged 18 (if they did not postpone their service to pursue higher education). Founded on the tradition of the Yugoslav Partisan warfare, the JNA was an institution conceived as providing the passage into adult masculinity for its conscripts. The army was particularly

important for poor and disadvantaged young men who, had it not been for the military service, would have probably never seen and experienced a part of Yugoslavia different from where they were born and/or raised. Also, the Yugoslav People's Army was envisaged as the guardian of the values of the Yugoslav Revolution, protecting the country from its many real and alleged enemies. So, what is the relationship between the Yugoslav Revolution in this respect and Scott's *Omens of Adversity*?

Well, for one, Scott's book is about the intricate temporalities and tragic demise of the Grenada Revolution (1979-1983), that is, about: 1) the ascendancy of the socialist New Jewel Movement led by the charismatic Maurice Bishop; 2) the acts of internecine revolutionary violence, including the execution of Bishop and his colleagues in 1983; 3) the US military intervention that effectively suppressed Grenada's revolutionary potential; 4) the post-memory of the Grenada Revolution, that is, the intergenerational transfer of the revolutionary traumas and dreams through visual and literary media; and 5) the transitional post-revolutionary liberal justice system put in place to ensure that the US neo-colonizing supremacy in the Caribbean region remains untouched by the historical emancipatory aspirations of the Haitian, Cuban, and Grenada Revolutions. Thus, Scott's *Omens of Adversity* helps researchers such as Tanja Petrović and, indeed, myself, to work through the tragic, but invigorating post-memory of the Yugoslav Revolution and, by extension, other globally important revolutions.

Accordingly, in my analysis of the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, I cited Petrović's 2012 study of the European Union's neo-colonialist absorption of post-socialist Croatia and Slovenia as occluding the Yugoslav imaginary of the union based on revolutionary socialism. Here, I should point to the connection between Petrović's critique of the EU's neo-colonialism towards the heritage of the Yugoslav Revolution and Scott's critique of the US neo-

colonialism towards the heritage of the Grenada Revolution. Unlike the US and the EU's unity in a shared striving towards maintaining western global supremacy, the Caribbean island and the Balkan peninsula, through Scott and Petrović, become united in recovering the great achievements, painful memories, and the living legacies of the Grenada and Yugoslav Revolutions.

In approaching the writing of these concluding remarks and my desire to capture the global relevance of the Yugoslav Revolution and its cinema, I remembered hearing sometime ago about a staggering statistic: on average, each doctoral dissertation is read by less than 2 people. Cynics could say that that incredibly small number includes members of doctoral examining committees, but I refuse to succumb to such an overt pessimism. Still, the fact remains that my examining committee is my first test audience in this context. What is more, my previous experience in screenwriting and dramaturgy suggests that I should write for the audience whenever possible. And that, if I manage to reach out to my test audience on this occasion, I will hopefully repeat that success with other readers, including non-experts. So, I went back to the perennial set of questions facing all doctoral students writing in English, such as myself, whose more or less historical research tends to be relegated to some kind of area studies: why is your research important to us today? And what are your major interventions in the, presumably inter- and trans-disciplinary, field of cinema and media studies? It occurred to me that the most effective way to begin to answer these questions would be to address my first examiner: Prof. Haidee Wasson.

There are multiple reasons why I think that Prof. Wasson's academic figure and scholarly oeuvre make her the principal addressee of these concluding remarks. First of all, she is easily one of the most distinguished, awarded, and respected cinema and media historians of our age, in

North America and across the world. Furthermore, Prof. Wasson's research continuously reaffirms the significance of media history for media studies in general, as the so-called new media actually have a long history. Second, and more to the point: Prof. Wasson already declared her personal interest and investment into the educational importance of socialist cinemas. She did that at one of our departmental EDI meetings held during the COVID-19 pandemic on Zoom. Contributing to the discussion about the necessary additions to the undergraduate syllabi, Prof. Wasson made the point that the history of socialist cinema is underrepresented and understudied at the university. At the time, I was struck by her remark because the issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion have been more readily associated with the under- and mis-representation of the BIPOC, gender, and sexual identities. Very quickly, however, I realized that Prof. Wasson was on the money: histories of socialist cinemas are indeed a matter of equity, diversity, and inclusion. It then stands to reason that this thinking-out-of-the-box played an important part in Prof. Wasson's serving as Concordia's Associate Dean of Faculty Relations and Inclusion, Fine Arts.

Finally, what makes Prof. Wasson the key addressee of my effort to recover the cognitive and material wealth of the socialist Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema is the fact that, unlike other members of my examining committee, she was neither (un-)lucky to be born in a socialist country, including Yugoslavia itself, nor led to learn Serbo-Croatian language as part of her professional training. Nor is, as already mentioned, Prof. Wasson's research primarily focused on studying socialist and/or leftist cinemas. Importantly, however, Prof. Wasson does know a lot about these subjects: after all, it was her who recommended that, ahead of my comprehensive exams, I read Alice Lovejoy's *Army Film and the Avant Garde: Cinema and Experiment in the Czechoslovak Military*, the book that cemented my faith in the ability of native English speakers

to do justice to the historical complexity of socialist cultures, if only they made such an undertaking their mission. By the same token, if I manage to make Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema near and dear to Prof. Wasson's heart, so that she continues to think about and refer to it, then a crucial part of my own research mission will be accomplished.

There is, of course, another very important, corollary reason for singling out Prof. Wasson's scholarly perspective, a reason that I have discussed throughout the dissertation: the outsized role that the United States, in its many shades and forms, played in buttressing and harnessing socialist Yugoslavia and its Revolution during the Cold War, only to contribute to its prolonged post-socialist burial and "balkanization," which ultimately informs and frames my own life and dissertation. In a nutshell, during the Cold War, the US supported socialist Yugoslavia in a way similar to the Soviet Union's support of socialist Cuba, as a country that was supposed to upset and destabilize the rival superpower in its own backyard. Indeed, there is no other socialist revolutionary country that the US supported as it did postwar Yugoslavia (at least until the US rapprochement with socialist China). If anything, throughout the Cold War, the US feverishly fought against the spread of socialism and revolutions, from participating in the Korean War, to breaking up the Sino-Soviet alliance, to waging a genocidal war against the Vietnamese Revolution, to flexing its muscles on the Grenada Revolution, and so on, and so forth. Granted, this was all done under the banner of geopolitical containment of socialist revolutionary regimes, all of which perpetrated their own fair share of war and revolutionary violence. Still, why did the US abandon the Yugoslav Revolution, oh so easily, when it spent so much time and resources supporting it? Was it really all about the end of the Cold War after which Yugoslavia suddenly became a redundant pawn in the geopolitical chess game?

With an important caveat that the US was far from being the only, or even decisive, factor in the long 1990s collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, I put forward Rade Pantić's (2022) keen observation that the only consensus that unites the "post-conflict" post-Yugoslav states is the *antisocialist* consensus. Whatever their convictions may be, post-Yugoslav comprador elites are primarily tasked with preventing any possibility of the restoration of emancipatory socialism in the region. In addition to implementing and perpetuating the neo-liberal doxa, these comprador elites keep parroting that everything about Yugoslav socialism was bad which, of course, is patently untrue. Alas, this is what has to be done to maintain the neo-liberal hegemony as the organic continuation and consequence of the post-Yugoslav antisocialist consensus.

As I wrote throughout the dissertation, neo-liberal ideas and inclinations started bleeding into socialist Yugoslavia and its cinema even before the US supported the assassination of Salvador Allende, thus enabling Milton Friedman to create the neo-liberal "Miracle of Chile" under Augusto Pinochet's regime; by the way, this was the same Milton Friedman who gave lectures in and wrote reports about the 1970s self-managed Yugoslavia. Some of these neo-liberal ideas and inclinations, just like the overall US influence on socialist Yugoslavia, were not obviously pernicious or perceived as such by Yugoslav political and cultural actors. Just as a reminder of previous dissertation's sections, neo-liberal instincts and ideas permeated Moni Finci and Emerik Blum's developmentalism at Bosna Film and in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian economy respectively, as a way of including Bosnia-Herzegovina in the cutting-edge western economies. Živojin Pavlović directed the film on contemporary themes, *When I'm Dead and Gone*, as a commentary on the rising socialist unemployment and correlated neo-liberal economic practices in Yugoslavia. Pavlović then went on to make the NOB/revolutionary film, *The Ambush*, in which he scorned the post-1965, pro-capitalist Yugoslav market socialism and

self-management as directly related to the selfish, dog-eat-dog aspects of the Yugoslav revolution. Pavlović's peer, Antun Vrdoljak, used liberal nationalism to demythologize the Yugoslav Revolution, promote Croatian national cinema as forcibly divorced from Yugoslav cinema, and campaign for Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia as a whole. Both Pavlović and Vrdoljak, together with their producer Dušan Perković, emulated Yugoslavia's increasingly neo-liberal managerial class by prioritizing their own interests and commodifying their films on the international film festival circuit as a way out of the "small" Yugoslav market.

Concomitantly, both Pavlović and Vrdoljak promulgated a particular brand of personal exceptionalism and classist individualism. Pavlović divested himself of the Yugoslav working class due to its post-1965 conformism, whereas Vrdoljak never believed in its supra-national or class potential in the first place. Both Pavlović and Vrdoljak admired and, more emphatically, resented the raw revolutionary power of peasantry. Whether because of their disillusionment and cynicism or personal and political agenda, both Pavlović and Vrdoljak came to favor their cultural elitist *selfhood* over any cross-class alliance with the already fragmented Yugoslav workers and peasants. In turn, when socialist Yugoslavia came to the brink of its collapse in the early 1990s, its surviving capacity depleted by the 1980s debt crisis, the globalizing neo-liberalism could not but see the very idea of workers' self-management, such as it existed in socialist Yugoslavia, as its core enemy.

As global neo-liberalism turned the industrial working class into the post-industrial precariat—injecting the latter with the quasi-utopian and atomizing dream of never ending "self-improvement" on the ever-shrinking job market—the very notion of workers self-managing their companies, as relatively limited as it was in socialist Yugoslavia, had to be smashed to pieces and preferably forgotten. In addition to anti-Yugoslav nationalists, the process of the final

destruction of Yugoslav socialism was witnessed and affected by the 1990s “international community.” Headed by the US as the new neo-liberal hegemon, it first dragged its feet in resolving the putative conundrum of state and national sovereignty in the dissolving Yugoslavia, only to intervene in the most opportune moments.

Here I circle back to the 1990s as the formative decade of my “love-hate” relationship with the US. Back then, if any form of distraction from the war-torn Yugoslavia was at all possible and available, variously pirated Hollywood movies and American TV shows rendered an escapist gateway into narratives such as the more or less understood, and critically filtered, proto-fascist fantasies of *Dirty Harry* (1971, Don Siegel) and the false, liberal-white heteronormative utopia of *Friends* (1994-2004). This escapism planted the seeds of my later decisions to pursue studies of media and history during which I learned that I was just one out of many people born in socialist Yugoslavia who became obsessed, in one way or another, with Americana and ‘Merica. In the meantime, listening to my aunt’s story about the 1995 genocidal Srebrenica massacre right after it happened and long before the state-controlled Serbian media started reporting about it, I still didn’t know how and when the resurrected Serbian imperialism would come home to roost. And then it did, with resounding force, in the shape of NATO bombing of Third Yugoslavia in 1999.

Before and during the bombing (or, more appropriately, the undeclared war), people in Third Yugoslavia were being killed, atrocities were being committed. Many, many lives destroyed and forever changed for the worse. But, the cold, sanitized aesthetics of NATO and US war media spectacle was something else. Distracting the US public’s attention from the fallout of his sexual abuse of Monica Lewinsky, President Bill Clinton was all too happy to put on the attire of a humanitarian interventionist preventing yet another European genocide. The long

history of the US state-sanctioned genocides did not seem to bother President Clinton much. Nor did the fact that his active support of the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia seemed to imitate Hollywood fiction, as the political satire *Wag the Dog* (1997, Barry Levinson) more or less precisely, but nevertheless eerily foreshadowed Clinton's interventionism. It was no less sickening to observe the rest of the US media travesty, including the antics of Clinton's diplomats Richard Holbrooke and Madeleine Albright and the on-screen romance of the newlyweds Christiane Amanpour, CNN's correspondent from the 1990s Balkans, and Chief Spokesman for the State Department, James Rubin. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO, US Army officer Wesley Clarke, started acquiring clout for his 2004 presidential nomination which was endorsed by the iconic (quasi)leftist documentary filmmaker Michael Moore. As one summary of the Kosovo War and NATO intervention succinctly put it:

One side, NATO, fought with ultramodern technology using only limited manpower (15,000 NATO crew, assisted by 30,000 technicians), operating from great distances, in order to minimize pilot risk. ... There were only two NATO casualties, and these were the result of an Apache helicopter malfunctioning during a trial flight. The war for NATO personnel was what one observer calls a guilt-free turkey shoot. For those on the ground—Serbs and Albanians alike—the bombing was very real. Ten thousand died. Such a war raises various ethical issues. It presumes, for one, that the lives of one side are more valuable, more important than even the lives of those being saved. ... It was a “virtual” war, undertaken with “virtual” consent, and treated by the media as a spectator sport (Rogel 2003, 181).

As part of the NATO machinery, the US military-industrial-political-media complex enjoyed its Fukuyamian end-of-history heyday. Post-Cold War American triumphalism thus eclipsed the Yugoslav Revolution, especially the Revolution's efforts to foster multinational solidarity and eschew nationalist conflicts between Yugoslav people in order to defend Yugoslavia's unity from any internal and external enemies. Having said that, where does this extended, but necessary excursion into the genealogy of my research fit with the intellectual output of Prof. Wasson as an expert in the study of American media and a Canadian academic?

In 2018, Wasson and her frequent collaborator Lee Grieveson co-edited *Cinema's Military Industrial Complex*, a valuable volume about the US military's long-standing and multifaceted engagement with and application of cinema. The volume details and analyzes the role of the American military in developing, influencing, and employing film technologies and viewing infrastructures, film watching and analysis, military filmmaking, and various agencies, organizations, and institutions. Two contributions to the volume stood out to me: Grieveson's chapter (2018) about cinema's integral role in shaping and channeling US militarism and imperialism, and Vinzenz Hediger's (2018, 159) striking account of the Pentagon's 2003 screening of *La battaglia di Algeri/The Battle of Algiers* (1966, Gillo Pontecorvo), the film "explicitly designed as a manual for revolutionary warfare by its authors," as a re-purposed educational tool for the counter-insurgency in the Iraq War.

Writing about the struggle of American socialists to prevent President Woodrow Wilson from mobilizing and policing cinema as part of the growing US imperialist apparatus during WWI, Grieveson (2018) uncovers the roots of the intensely mediatized American "permanent war" and the "War on Terror" as its contemporary iteration. My dissertation supplements Grieveson's long-term research interest in the relationship between cinema and empires such as the British and American (Grieveson and MacCabe 2011a; Grieveson and MacCabe 2011b; Grieveson 2017). In addition to my investigations of the long history of the British imperialism in the Balkans through the lens of the 1971 Croatian-British cinematic exchange, as well as the US cultural imperialism reflected in the co-production projects examined in Chapter 1 and the history of the Belgrade FEST, I unearth the critical scrutiny of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Serbian imperialisms in socialist Yugoslav cinema. In so doing, I fill the gap in contemporary film history that has primarily focused on the best known colonial empires, as in

the case of the groundbreaking *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Shohat and Stam 2014 [1994]).

As for the above mentioned Hediger's essay, it retraces how, in the 21st century, the US army attempted and failed to exploit *The Battle of Algiers* and its broad connection to Carl Schmitt's theorization of "the 'autochtone-defensive' insurgent, who defends his territory or fights for freedom from occupation; and the 'world-revolutionary aggressive' insurgent, who chooses a terrain to fight for what he sees as a just cause, whether communist world revolution or the new caliphate" (Hediger 2018, 164). Other important reference points for the author include Frantz Fanon's conception of the "revolutionary war" in which "the violent confrontation of the insurgency induces social change that would otherwise not occur," fighting "over control not of territory, but of the population, with the ultimate goal of governing the population," as well as Stathis N. Kalyvas' argument that "populations choose sides in insurgencies motivated by safety concerns and a concomitant interest in reliable governance and swift justice, rather than ideology" (Hediger 2018, 164-165). All of these concerns saturate my research about the peasants' participation in the Yugoslav Partisan revolutionary war and its postwar cinematic representation and utilization.

If framed a bit differently, my dissertation could have shared more explicit points of connection with Wasson's interest in the military shaping and usage of cinema. I could have written more about the rich history of the JNA's military studio Zastava Film, including its instructional films about survival in nature¹⁴⁶ and appropriate officers' behavior,¹⁴⁷ an anti-alcoholism propaganda documentary,¹⁴⁸ a documentary about the history of the Yugoslav

¹⁴⁶ Some are available with English subtitles at:

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwfXAIpcKIzN6_Y9HUTa_oOWR6XOI4A49

¹⁴⁷ www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhJfeedX7U8

¹⁴⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlk_KRZTqrU

military police,¹⁴⁹ and a comedic TV show *Vojnici/Soldiers* (1981)¹⁵⁰ about the misadventures of a group of conscripts. In line with Hediger's essay about *The Battle of Algiers* as a revolutionary manual, I could have elaborated on Tito's personal cameraman Stevan Labudović training some of the first independent Algerian filmmakers and filming the Algerian Revolution, all captured in Mila Turajlić's archival documentary diptych *Ciné-Guerrillas: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022) and *Non-Aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022). I could have juxtaposed these cinematic phenomena to the wider history of postwar Yugoslav militarism, including the exports of its arms industry to national regimes such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi's Libya.

However, in addition to the demands of self-contained case studies that comprise most of this manuscript-based dissertation, I had other reasons to go beyond Wasson's and my mutual concern with the ways in which the state and state-sponsored organizations such as national militaries deployed cinema. Namely, throughout the dissertation, I sought to elucidate the polyvalent power of the armed struggle, to use Salazkina's term, in the (trans-)formation(s) of socialist Yugoslavia and its Revolutionary Cinema. Radiating from the secular trinity of the Resistance (to the occupiers)-War (against the collaborationists)-(socialist) Revolution of the People's Liberation Struggle as the postwar Yugoslav founding narrative, the power of the armed struggle pervaded all sections of the current project as well as Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema and Yugoslav society in general. Yugoslav producers imagined their militant ancestors as revolutionaries, Yugoslav filmmakers constantly re-enacted and re-imagined WWII, the Belgrade FEST served as the Cold War meeting point, the NOB veterans commented on "undesirable" cinematic texts and events, Yugoslav leader Tito seemed to have liked nothing

¹⁴⁹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkmmoolHoAw

¹⁵⁰ www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ixq9ILJsdr8

more than to parade for film cameras in his expensive marshal uniforms, Živojin Pavlović wrote about the film camera as a weapon, and so on, and so forth. Yet, despite the omnipresence of the rhetoric of the armed struggle, socialist Yugoslavia was not a military dystopia. As Wasson is interested in US cinema's military-industrial complex, I am interested in Yugoslav military-cinematic culture.

Culture is a keyword for one of the focal, and quite militant, points of my dissertation: peasants. Generally speaking, peasants and farmers have been heavily underrepresented and under examined in cinema and media studies, especially in comparison to the urban working class. The main reason for this discrepancy is that, since its inception, cinema as a medium has been strongly connected to the age of industrial production and urban life. But, without peasants who both cultivate and defend the land, there are no People in the People's Liberation Struggle, there is no mass Partisan movement, or Yugoslav revolution. Without the failure of Yugoslav agricultural collectivization, there is no abandonment of the Soviet-style planned economy during the Tito-Stalin Split, or self-management as such. Without Yugoslav peasants building and migrating to the industrialized cities and towns, there is no socialist modernization in the second stage of the Yugoslav Revolution. And without Yugoslav peasants split between their rural homeland and urban settlement, there is no cultural tension that productively fueled so much of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema.

Speaking of cultural tensions, consider another common thread running through my dissertation: the intergenerational conflict around the historical thrust and narrative of the Yugoslav Revolution and its cinema. The revolutionary generation—one that carried a burden of the liberation struggle, spearheaded postwar modernization and enjoyed most of its privileges—was criticized by the younger generation of the Yugoslav New Film movement (Makavejev and

Pavlović) for the revolutionary terror and failure in completing the promised revolutionary utopia, especially after the pro-capitalist 1965 economic reform. The Croat nationalist Antun Vrdoljak, the peer of the Yugoslav New Film generation, eroded the Yugoslav Revolutionary narrative as profoundly anti-Croat. The common trait of filmmakers such as Makavejev, Pavlović, and Vrdoljak was that they were all children during WWII and observers of, rather than participants in, the NOB and revolution. In reaction to the cinematic critique of the generation of Makavejev, Pavlović, and Vrdoljak in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the aging revolutionary generation resorted to the suppression of political and cultural opposition and the parallel state sponsorship of Partisan spectacles such as *The Battle of Neretva* (1969), *The Battle of Sutjeska* (1973), and *Guns of War* (1974). The declared target audience of these Partisan spectacles was the first postwar Yugoslav generation that did not remember the NOB and revolution. This postwar generation was disappointed with the effects of the post-1965 market socialism and clashed with the revolutionary generation during the 1968 and 1971 student protests. Therefore, the revolutionary generation sought to utilize the Partisan spectacles by, first, reminding the postwar Yugoslav generations of the grandeur and significance of sacrifices built into the NOB and revolution, and second, beseeching these younger generations to adhere to the Revolutionary ideals. Many members of the younger generations adopted a disaffected or ironic attitude towards the Revolution, opting instead for the entertainment appeal of the New Hollywood films that swept the Yugoslav film theaters in the 1970s and 1980s. Other members of the younger Yugoslav generations grew to appreciate the NOB/Partisan films, especially the heavy-handedness of the Partisan spectacles. All in all, the interactions of various Yugoslav generations shaped the complexity and diversity of the NOB/Partisan genre as the most

emblematic socialist Yugoslav genre and homemade type of theatrical film (though, of course, there were many short, that is, non-theatrical NOB/Partisan films).

The latter quality of the theatrical NOB/Partisan genre puts my dissertation into stark relief in comparison to Wasson's first book *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (2005). From her very first book, dedicated to the myriad of ways in which the New York MoMA turned cinema into an art, Wasson shows that the dominant leitmotif of her historical research is materialist thinking outside of the box of the traditional film theater. To do that in *Museum Movies*, she follows a broad three-step process. First, Wasson (2005, 26) provides multiple, well-established definitions of her object of study, that is, *film art* or *art cinema*:

A term might identify a film as art based on a particular mode of production, a national origin, or a specialized mode of exhibition. The idea of art cinema might be underpinned by formal principles based on modernist theories of disruption. It might describe a group of films, made and seen at a particular point in history, circumscribed by common formal features and points of origin (German expressionism, French New Wave [or Yugoslav New Film/Black Wave]). Some scholars have suggested that film art is best understood as a generic strategy designed to counter Hollywood's reign or American international dominance. Some people use the term to indicate films they like a lot.

Then, Wasson singles out the textual approach to film analysis as the once dominant approach in cinema studies that privileged films as self-contained and self-centered textual objects. Most commonly, the text-centered approach has provided insight into filmmakers' narratives and styles as, simplistically put, instruments of their ideological expression. Wasson (27) writes: "One of the problems with the film-centered approach to the question of film art is that it does little to help us understand the conditions under which films came to our attention as art (or as foreign) in the first place; nor do such methodologies tend to signal the larger cultural politics of such films as objects made and seen somewhere at some time, participant in some cultural configurations and not others." This critical remark is immediately followed by a set of

interconnected methodologies that Wasson (27, underlining added) brings to bear on the re-framed notion of film art/art cinema:

This book continues the work of scholars committed to moving away from predominantly formalist or object-centered approaches to the question of what constitutes art cinema (or cinema in general) by refocusing on the material, institutional, and industrial factors that underpin this question. To invoke the term *art cinema* is to reference a complex of factors including not just the films themselves or their mode of production but also crucial interfaces that form the distribution, exhibition, and discursive contexts that mediate our encounter with films and constitute the apparatus of cinema. This includes attention to film critics, museums and galleries, film societies, film festivals, universities, state organizations, and so on.

There are two important aspects of Wasson's *Museum Movies* that I reflect on in my dissertation. First, Wasson uses the MoMA as an infrastructure and catalyst for complex dynamics and processes situated *around* and *beyond* film art/art cinema as a filmic text. Second, just like in the case of her inquiries into the US cinema's military-industrial complex, the plethora of Wasson's methodological viewpoints in *Museum Movies* is virtually *spellbinding*: "program notes, film programs and related exhibitions, newspapers articles and press releases, popular magazines, film criticism, radio programs, and distribution catalogues," alongside "internal documents, memos, reports, and correspondence circulated among [the Film Library] staff, museum trustees, industry members, and grant officers, as well as other film organizations." These materials work to examine "practices of film appreciation and study as they formed through specialized and nontheatrical exhibition practices;" the MoMA itself as "an active site for the generation of ideas about art and museums, unique not just for its collection and display of modern art and abstract art but also for its embrace of a new museology, integrated around mass-mediated systems and a renewed educational ethos that included everyday aesthetics;" and the museum's Film Library itself, that is, "the conflicting interests of the constituents to whom library staff were most beholden: museum trustees, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the film industry" and "an overview and discussion of the exhibition and

reception of the library's first film programs, tending to how these films were presented, where they circulated, and how they were received" (Wasson 2005, 28-29). The *richness* of Wasson's object of study and methodologies that shift away from the film text is evident and undeniable. Nonetheless, Wasson did not suggest that the focus on "just the films themselves or their mode of production" is in and of itself invalid, only that the text-based approach had oversaturated film studies at the expense of other valuable methodologies.

In this dissertation, I do make use of the text-based approach to films. Without deeper narrative and/or stylistic analysis, I would not have been able to elucidate how Vrdoljak made use of his early war films as nationalist laboratories and platforms for his nationalist cultural diplomacy. Likewise, I would not have been able to delineate the adaptation of Pavlović and Šibl's diaries and self-referential writings into Pavlović and Vrdoljak's films. Nor would I have been able to compare and contrast *Captain Leši* with other Westerns, Hollywood and non-Hollywood alike. As mentioned before, although it seems to have its pitfalls in terms of making more general claims, I grew to appreciate the emphasis on a small number of films and cinematic phenomena as giving the opportunity for a more in-depth and exhaustive analysis of individual texts and practices and their various implications. I hope that, having read the dissertation, the reader will find that sometimes a small number of case studies can bring as many insights as broad surveys of the lesser known "foreign" national cinemas. At the same time, I invoke Yugoslav films to follow Wasson's suit and, by relying on additional sources ranging from film journals and production company documents to film catalogs and governmental correspondence, "signal the larger cultural politics of such films as objects made and seen somewhere at some time, participant in some cultural configurations and not others."

As for the spellbinding richness of Wasson's case study and her upending of film art/art cinema in *Museum Movies*, they made me think about my own research: is it about something too poor and obscure? Am I going to be able to, at best, contribute something from the Yugoslav perspective that can be beneficial to understanding the much more abundant American cinematic culture? Or, can I aspire to write about something that the US film culture does not have, or tends to overlook? This is how, building off the Soviet historical-revolutionary genre and Munitić's theorization of the Yugoslav film about revolution, I started thinking about the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle. In this notion, the Cycle cuts across the boundaries of the established, primarily Hollywood, genres and stands for a supra-genre that united more or less all Yugoslav films insofar as they related to the whole sweep of the history of the Yugoslav Revolution. The Revolution stands for the phenomenon that the US is anxious about on its own turf, generally suppressing socialist revolutions around the world and supporting all sorts of revolution-related violence abroad when it suits its interests. Finally, Yugoslavia stands for the second socialist revolutionary country which the US supported in the larger Cold War struggle against the USSR.

Whereas *Museum Movies* led me to reconsider "the films themselves" and the naturalized category of the film genre, Wasson's more recent book *Everyday Movies: Portable Film Projectors and the Transformation of American Culture* (2021) turned my attention to the cinematic "mode of production." To be sure, *Everyday Movies* does not engage in the film production/industrial history that I employ throughout my dissertation. Rather, Wasson examines portable film projectors as a powerful technology subject to Hollywood standardization in the 1910s, used as a public relations instrument at the New York World's Fair in 1939, massively deployed by the American military during WWII, and proliferated as a ubiquitous postwar device. In so doing, Wasson maps an industrial era in which the US was the world leader not

only in the production of constantly improved portable projectors as material objects, but also in the production of new modes of their usage and consumption. In short, Wasson writes about the era when the US produced plenty of media technologies *and* ideas surrounding their application.

In my project, the productivist propulsion of the cinematic medium is intrinsic to socialist Yugoslav modernization, registering and reflecting its postwar development as well as being continuously diversified in terms of its production, distribution, exhibition, utilization, consumption, reception, and theorization. I foregrounded international co-productions as the production that allowed Yugoslav filmmakers to advance their country's image on the global stage and learn from their international partners. In the case of the Partisan Westerns, I showed that Yugoslav filmmakers learned from the popularity of Hollywood and international Westerns and created a generic hybrid centered on Kosovar Albanian peasants, just like postwar Yugoslavia adopted hybridization in agriculture. I demonstrated that, in the absence of material abundance and technological development that they saw in the US economy and cinema, Yugoslav filmmakers looked to the Soviet avant-garde cinema and their own revolutionary experience as a means of overcoming poverty and material shortage. Thinking outside of the box and always being on the lookout for alternative solutions to new problems, like the Partisans during WWII, postwar Yugoslav filmmakers developed their culture *by other means*. Therefore, if Yugoslav filmmakers were (relatively) poor, they were not out of ideas. If they were outnumbered, they were not outgunned. Their resourcefulness and originality were ultimately recognized even by their seemingly better positioned British colleagues.

To borrow a literary analogy, if Wasson is akin to Thomas Pynchon, I am more like Thomas Bernhard. Or, if you prefer, Wasson is James Joyce to my Samuel Beckett. The writer *Waiting for Godot* famously worked for a while as a secretary to the author of *Ulysses*. At the time, one of

the main causes of Beckett's numerous psychological crises was his keen awareness that, as a writer, he could never match the breadth of Joyce's literary maximalism. Beckett felt like this until he realized that he should go the other way and become a literary minimalist. This is how, the story goes, we got the obsessive, repetitive, and austere style of *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*.

My intention, however, is not to create a false dichotomy between the "opulent" US and "poor" Yugoslav cinema for its own sake. Thanks to Wasson and Acland's concept of useful cinema (2011), as well as cognate conceptualizations of industrial, educational, non-theatrical, functional, and orphan films, today we can compare and contrast a vast body of films and related practices, institutions, and discourses in seemingly distant geo-historical contexts. Alongside the Yugoslav army's film studio and Croatian non-theatrical and useful cinema, I would like to mention a few other local examples of useful cinema and its cognates.

The Yugoslav newsreel studio Filmske novosti functioned as a news media outlet until the emergence of television. For decades, it has served as an indispensable archive of Yugoslav history, both internal and international, especially for the purpose of capturing the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement. Some Yugoslav filmmakers found a safe haven in the politically unproblematic educational films. Having directed an NDH-funded documentary *Straža na Drini/The Drina Guard* (1942) and an early Partisan film *Zastava/The Flag* (1949), Branko Marjanović ended up on thin ice with his shelved anti-Stalinist feature *Ciguli miguli* (1952). Eventually, he switched to making memorable educational films about animals. In the 1950s, many classrooms in Yugoslavia made use of slide films and the accompanying teaching manuals. As film education was introduced as an experimental subject in numerous elementary and high schools, various authors, including the first director of the Yugoslav Film Archive Milenko

Karanović, wrote about the pedagogical value of the medium. Živojin Pavlović published a book *Film u školskim klupama* [*Film in School Benches*] in 1964 in which he cautioned against the danger of cinematic “kitsch.” The Academic Cine Club (Akademski kino klub), established in the largest Balkan student dormitory, Studentski grad in Belgrade, produced and archived experimental and alternative cinema, simultaneously providing a gathering point for the native student population and the exchange students from the NAM countries. Useful cinema and its relatives revolutionized and improved the living standard in various segments of Yugoslav society. At the same time, their quality and abundance provide a stable basis for increasing the international visibility of marginalized cinemas such as Yugoslav.

Before turning to closing remarks about another important aspect of this dissertation, the convergence of (supra-)nationalism and racialization in film studies, I should briefly comment on a curious overlap of these issues on the margins of Stephen Groening’s “Appendix: Timeline for a History of Anglophone Film Culture and Film Studies” in *Inventing Film Studies*, a volume edited by Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (2008). As Harvard University features prominently in the history of film studies as a discipline, it is worth pointing out the academic trajectory and output of Prof. Vladimir ‘Vlada’ Petrić (1928-2019). After teaching film history and theory at the newly established Academy of Theater, Film, Radio, and Television in Belgrade in the late 1950s-early 1960s, Petrić attempted to pursue doctoral studies at the All-Union State Institute of Cinema (VGIK) in Moscow. Following an ideological conflict with Nikolay Lebedev, Petrić ultimately defended his dissertation at New York University and became the first doctor of Cinema Studies in the United States. Soon thereafter, Petrić became the Henry Luce Chair at Harvard University where he taught film history and theory until retirement and co-founded the Harvard Film Archive with the documentary filmmaker Robert

Gardner and the philosopher Stanley Cavell. Petrić left an indelible imprint in both US and Yugoslav film cultures, especially through the Vlada Petrić Foundation. That said, a recent publication of Petrić's critical texts contains an essay that puts him squarely within a certain generation of the Euro-American film scholars oblivious to the wider ramifications of the history of racism in the US: in the essay Petrić defended *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) on aesthetic grounds (Radić 2023), an argument that would not have been made by an expert in the American Studies proper.

This segue brings me to what this dissertation's discussion of nationalism and race means for the time and space in which it has been produced. This year marks the 30th anniversary since the premiere of one of the most important (documentary) films produced in Canada, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993). Directed by the outstanding Indigenous filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, the film is a powerful testimony of and commentary on the 1990 Oka Crisis and the multcentury occupation of the Indigenous lands and people. As one of the cornerstones of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle (and the cinema dedicated to the Struggle) was resistance to the occupiers, I hope that in my further research I will be able to elaborate on and fortify the bond of solidarity between the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cinema and the resistance cinema of the First Nations, Native People, and other Indigenous People. As an immigrant to Canada, one who benefited from resources on the Indigenous lands and waters, I hope that I will contribute to the end of the occupation.

With the same humility, I submit this research to other racialized people struggling against oppression. In particular, I offer this project to many inspiring thinkers and activists who fight against the carceral state, imperialism, and colonialism. The work of organizations such as Community Movement Builders, Unity and Struggle, and the Stop Cop City; Felicia Denaud

writing about the Unnameable War and the Master-State Complex; Nazia Kazi exploring the systemic amnesia in the War on Terror; Orisanmi Burton exposing “a statecraft of torture” and US prisons as sites of counter-revolutionary warfare; Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba publishing *Let This Radicalize You: Organizing and the Revolution of Reciprocal Care*; Manolo de los Santos illuminating the contradictory, yet inspiring example of Venezuelan socialism: these are some of the people and organizations that revive, transform, and apply strategies and tactics of Resistance, Liberation, and Revolution. They are all part of the growing community of the podcast *Millennials Are Killing Capitalism*, “a platform for communists, anti-imperialists, Black Liberation movements, ancoms, left libertarians, LGBTQ activists, feminists, immigration activists, and abolitionists.” The podcast tellingly featured a 2-episode discussion of socialist Yugoslavia, its Partisan struggle, and the construction of the Non-Aligned Movement, co-hosted by Gal Kirn and Dubravka Sekulić. In addition to the existing and growing literature about global revolutionary cinema and media referenced in the introductory sub-chapter about the YRC, I wish to highlight books such as Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall’s *Slave Revolt on Screen: The Haitian Revolution in Film and Video Games* (2021) and James E. Genova’s *Making New People: Politics, Cinema and Liberation in Burkina Faso, 1983-1987* (2023) as further demarginalizing revolutionary cultures and constructing geo-historical revolutionary alliances.

All revolutions are messy. Almost all of them are bloody. More often than not, revolutions seek a way out of an impasse and/or desperation. Socialist revolutionaries imagine a light at the end of the tunnel of revolutionary violence. They imagine a world in which the newborn children will be loved, if not forever happy, so that they could remember the children devoured by the revolution. In this dissertation, I barely scratched the surface of the other side of the Yugoslav Revolutionary Cycle, one in which work becomes war by other means until all

wars are abolished. I did not write about the cinema in which workers go on a paid vacation at the Adriatic Sea; retired peasants enjoy hanging out with their families and grandchildren; people laugh. (Although, even in that cinema, women do most of the housework.) Instead, I did what most scholars of socialist Yugoslavia had done since the 1990s: write about her relationship with war and violence, about the roots, stages, and consequences of her death. But, there is a huge difference between me and most of these scholars.

For, even when I write about tangible nationalist tensions and a history of brutal violence in the NOB/Partisan/war films, my dissertation narrates more about what socialist Yugoslavia *created* and *produced*, rather than how she was *killed* and *destroyed*. And this is not just a somewhat banal statement. So much was lost with Yugoslavia's death: many factories, villages, and, most tragically, so many children born in her. Yet, her orphaned cinema outlived her. She made it, nourished it, and left it to us, her Revolutionary Cinema, to tell us about, and play out, her life. And how, once upon a time, her cinema had so much to show to the cinemas in the US, USSR, and UK. To learn from, transform, and upset their unity and uniqueness. This dissertation also showed and suggested what socialist Yugoslavia and her Revolutionary Cinema had to communicate and give to other countries and their cultures, mentioned in one way or another in this manuscript: Algeria, Austria, Australia, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, France, Grenada, Haiti, Hungary, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Mozambique, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, Vietnam, West Germany... Pardon me? You can finish the list? Oh, thank you. Thank you very much.

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