

The Yugoslav black wave cinema of the sixties and the seventies is one of the grand, though hidden, chapters of cinema history, so outstanding by its social and political engagement, its formal invention and its courage.

This volume makes its black shine. This is Yugoslavia, and the modern cinema, at their blackest and their brightest.

Mladen Dolar



... and Its Transgressive Moments

Surfing the Black



Yugoslav Black Wave Cinema...

From "Early Works" (1969) by Želimir Žilnik

"In the eyes of the despot, men are always debased. They drown before his eyes and on his behalf in the mire of common life from which, like toads, they always rise up again. Muta pecora, prona et ventri oboedientia. ["The herd is silent, docile and obeys its stomach."] For our part, it is our task to drag the old world into the full light of day and to give positive shape to the new one."

(Letter from Marx to Arnold Ruge)



Surfing the Black

Yugoslav Black Wave Cinema and Its Transgressive Moments

Edited by
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and Žiga Testen**

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Prologue

“The four of them, who make do and get by, do it in such a manner that it is obvious that they avoid any guidance or project that would enable their activities to take the shape of a concrete action or event. Regardless they keep insisting on referring to a certain project.

This is revealed by the fact that the four of them, who make do and get by, are not novel and unknown to us but carry with them a familiar structure. A structure that nevertheless appears to be stuck onto them from the past and is attached to them in accordance with the real, while not bearing any guiding or motivating function for them. They have not yet abolished the project, but it is already so superficial that it only appears to us as dead weight.”

The above statement (quoted from a text by Rudi Šeligo on Žilnik’s Early Works written in 1969) is unspecific and general enough to designate many ‘four of them’. Originally referring to the four protagonists of Žilnik’s Early Works, it became – upon being discovered in a pile of photocopied articles on the Black Wave – a sort of a motto for a series of activities Pietro Bianchi, Gal Kirn, Dubravka Sekulić and Žiga Testen undertook when our disparate interests found common ground in the topic of the Yugoslav Black Wave cinema.

A steady but constant worldwide increase of interest in this relatively marginal, yet revealing, episode of Yugoslavian history contributed a feeling of urgency to our inquiry, but at the same time lacked a clear idea as to where it would eventually take us. Nevertheless, it seemed this could potentially be the moment when ‘history’ offers a glimpse of a possible rupture – of a not yet defined or articulated event – and as such stands on disposal for the present.

Consequently, the aforementioned four initiated the project entitled Surfing the Black, under the auspices of the Jan van Eyck Academie, that was structured as a multi-disciplinary research attempting to cross over politics, philosophy, design, art, architecture, and some speculative thinking with the activities ranging from archival work, interviews, seminars, screenings, a conference and, is finally reaching a (temporary) conclusion with the publication you are

currently leafing through. We investigated the subject with a critical but also biased distance (as three of us were born in Yugoslavia), in an attempt to open up the discussion of the Black Wave from its (limited) post-Yugoslav context and investigate its possible correlations and interpretations.

The Black Wave

“Recent developments (in Yugoslav film) evolved into a movement difficult to overlook today. ‘New film’. Above all it stands for the subordination of form to the psychological contents of human ethical and metaphysical drama today. ‘New film’ doesn’t intend to sparkle, but to torture. It doesn’t want to seduce, but rather to burden our ethical, political and state conformism, by impertinently portraying the fate of its heroes.

However, ‘New film’ doesn’t use a slogan or pun, but the revelation of psychological truths, which come as a consequence of ethical crises and the ideological wilderness of the contemporary world.”

Živojin Pavlović used those words to express the political and aesthetic discontinuity that characterized the new cinema movement that spread in Yugoslavia from the mid 60s until the early 70s. This period, frequently referred to as the “golden age” of Yugoslav cinema, saw a true outburst of creativity in cinema.

The decade witnessed a proliferation of films by talented young authors who, working under the sign of individual expression and aesthetic experimentation, pushed and explored the limits of the constraints of the socialist state and lead to a new path of visual expression.

Finding both inspiration and support for their artistic inclinations among the abundant innovative tendencies of the recent international cinema (some of them the Italian neorealism, some other the French Nouvelle Vague, and some in Jonas Mekkas) but re-shaping them in an innovative and original way —

Aleksandar Petrović,
Boštjan Hladnik,
Živojin Pavlović,

Dušan Makavejev,
Ante Babaja,
Vatroslav Mimica,
Kokan Rakonjac,
Krstó Papić,
Matjaz Klopčić,
Bato Čengić,
Želimir Žilnik (unconsciously)

The Book

The book consists of two integral parts; A collection of six theoretical essays and three fanzines that zigzag between the essays, consisting of loose thoughts, leftovers, posters by various contributors, and an interview.

Part One

The six essays collected in this volume were originally presented at the international conference “Surfing the Black” held at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht in (June 28-29, 2010) and the series of seminars that preceded the conference.

The conference was organised as a workshop for intensive discussion and collaborative scrutiny of the Black Wave through each individual paper, which were subsequently revised in the light of the discussions and screenings. Additionally, a number of other authors were invited to contribute texts in order to compose a representative volume of contemporary scholarship in Yugoslav Black Wave cinema. The authors of the essays returned to different aesthetic and political moments of this complex topic surrounding the film production.

Part Two

The other block of the book has been reserved for a series of contributions by writers, artists and designers collected during our inquiry and thematically distributed among three fanzines.

‘Inflation of Radical Phrases as opposed to a Lack of Radical Action’ is a fanzine that documents a series of contributions received from artist and designers we asked to design posters for some of the Black Wave films. With some notable exceptions the posters accompanying the Black Wave filmography rarely critically engaged with the content of the films or their own medium.

We requested the invited contributors to do it and in return got some un/expected results. A selection of the posters was interpreted as an independent

photographic work by Slovenian photographer Peter Rauch specially for this book.

‘Those Who Make revolutions Only Half Way Dig Their Own Graves’ is an interview the editors of this book made with Želimir Žilnik in the winter of 2010. Žilnik reflects on the film production of the 60s and 70s, evoking structural changes in socialist political economy, but also noting that film had a crucial role in Yugoslav society of the time.

Finally, he comments on his current film production in relation to the topics he opened during “the black wave” period and questions the continuities and ruptures.

‘Black Wave ABC’ is a glossary addressing some of the key concepts and terms related to the Black Wave but at the same time expanding the scope of attention to other topics ranging from daily politics and economic concepts (such as self-management), flickering thoughts that could open a new angle on these films and possibly chart a new research trajectory through the materials; contemporary notions (troll) that could inspire new readings of the past, and forgotten ideas of the past that could help us in the future.

Last, but not least, it is also in some way an index of the contemporary artists whose work is informed and inspired by the Black Wave.

(Un)intentionally following what Branko Vučićević calls the ‘Serbian cutting’ when discussing Dušan Makavejev’s editing method, the content of this book is distributed among sections of sixteen pages interlacing the essays with the zines and allowing them to intervene with each other.

Now What?

We returned to this specific political-artistic sequence of the Yugoslav past not simply to bring back memories of the ‘good old times’. Even less did we want to emancipate Yugoslavian art from the socialist ideology as it existed in midair. Rethinking conjuncture, in our case history of film meant to mobilise

the specific historical resources that would give an answer to some of the paradoxes and deadlocks of the current affairs.

Apart from a more concise and complex understanding of the past, emancipatory thought strives to stay always opened to the future, which goes beyond the nationalistic mythologisation and blunt affirmation of the existing state of affairs. Instead of applying a simplified schema of the eternal struggle between dissident ART VS. totalitarian STATE, we attempted to do justice to the specificity of Yugoslav black wave film experience, which pointed to some central questions of the relation between revolutionary art and politics.

Finally, these films - beside being first to open some social and political topics - showed not only that another way of seeing the world is possible, but also another way of making things together.

The history cannot be simply nationalized, as we were taught in the post-Yugoslav communities.



'Inflation of Radical Phrases as Opposed to a Lack of Radical Action'
Posters on display at the Jan van Eyck Academie gallery space during the
Surfing the Black conference (photo by Lilo Bauer)



Gal Kirn

New Yugoslav Cinema — A Humanist Cinema? Not Really.

Introduction:
Humanist hypothesis

In contemporary cultural theory on the Yugoslav cinema there is a widespread belief that the 1960s New Yugoslav Film is a dissident cinema. Moreover, it is believed that new film movement was massively influenced by humanist Marxist philosophy school Praxis¹, which itself was already at the time extremely critical towards the official Yugoslav Communist Party. Praxis school was some kind of avant-garde in Yugoslav theory that was based on the works of *Early Marx* expounding the critique of “collectivism” and “all forms of authoritarianism”.² As is common with all “avant-garde” groups, they try to impose their “worldview” on all other phenomena: the New Yugoslav Film simply translated and mediated Praxis’ humanist ideas into the cinematic world. The cognitive climate of Praxis p. 167 overdetermined the sphere of culture. This process of a “cultural translation” shall be called a humanist hypothesis. The hypothesis here is used in a sense from ancient theater, where it meant a program that would be handed out by the ushers before a play would begin. Ushers provide the summary that defines the setting and identifies the actors giving a few notes about the production. Many contemporary “ushers”, cultural researchers like Daniel Goulding (2002), Gregg DeCuir (2010), Krunoslav Stojaković (2011)³ and others would subscribe to this hypothesis. One of the central concerns of the article is a refutation of this hypothesis that in turn sketches elements for a more complex reading of New Yugoslav

1

The Praxis school anchored its major theoretical preoccupation around the conceptual double of alienation-disalienation and individual Subject-praxis. This was a common tendency in the Western Marxism of that time, which returned to humanist Marx and put too much hope in the figure of Man. This beautiful dream of socialist Man never came true. This was not only due to the wrong course of the Yugoslav socialist leadership. It was also due to the poverty of thought, its inability to articulate itself more openly and stringently with revolutionary politics.

The abstract notion of Man is the major symptom of the humanist turn. Its vague nature proofed to be extremely difficult to locate or to be ‘realized’ at any point in historical development. We will not go into details, let us only direct on our and Ozren Pupovac’s contributions on the conference on Praxis organized by Rosa

Luxemburg Foundation (12-16th October 2011, Korčula). Some literature can be found in the journal 11.teza Jerkić and Mokrović (2007), a very important contribution was made by Mikulić (internet source). See also the interview with Pupovac (2011).

2

These claims were reiterated by different Praxis philosophers, from Gajo Petrović and Milan Kangrga to Zagorka Golubović and Nebojša Popov. See also Goudling (2002).

3

Pavle Levi (2007) in his excellent first chapter explores this hypothesis. We should admit that Levi’s account is much more complex and further reserved towards a too direct link between Praxis and New Yugoslav Film.

Film. In the first part we discuss the role of the self-management infrastructure and the official cultural policy of socialist Yugoslavia, whereas in the second part we move towards an evaluation of polyvalent politics of aesthetics that shows different cinematographic forms from the period of 1960s and 1970s, especially centring on film works of Makavejev and Pavlović.

Antitotalitarian memory and liberal nostalgia on the role of art in Yugoslavia

Before starting the more filmic part of the article, we should place our intervention in a broader body of the cultural research that participates in the rewriting of the Yugoslav (cultural) past. The humanist hypothesis does not simply fall from the sky. In some cases it directly fits into the simplistic schema, which opposes good Art and the evil State party apparatus.⁴ This schema was imported from a broader and dominant theoretico-ideological narrative of the Yugoslav past. This narrative brings together seemingly opposed, but “democratic” perspectives: the dominant anti-totalitarian and liberal-memorial.

Firstly, the anti-totalitarian narrative is an essential ideological background of different nationalistic historiographies and everyday journalism. In the period of 1990s, post-socialist countries witnessed a veritable massive process of rewriting the history that was embedded in the new nationalistic-building process.⁵ The anticommunist reference to monolith totalitarianism distorts Arendt’s thesis on the origins of totalitarianism⁶ and simply applies without any critical comparisons the ideological matrix to all post-socialist societies. There was no freedom, only repression. In the post-Yugoslav context antitotalitarian discourse destined Yugoslavia to an image of gloomy repressive past and projected a conspiracy of an ever more corrupted communist elite that dominated and controlled all social spheres.⁷

4

An emblematic example of this standpoint was delivered by Nebojsa Popov, who in 1960s and 1970s was a member of a critical Marxist school Praxis. Recently, he launched a retrospective account on socialist Yugoslavia as a dualism between Praxis (emancipation) and anti-Praxis (anti-emancipation of Party), i.e. between dissidents and corrupted communist Party (2003). The victory of anti-Praxis signaled the break-up of Yugoslavia.

5

For an excellent critical account of transitology and anti-totalitarianism see Buden (2009), Rakita (2011).

6

Hannah Arendt in her *Origins of Totalitarianism* explicitly states that Tito’s Yugoslavia is not a totalitarian state (1973). An extremely important analysis of totalitarianist discourse, its ideological being embedded in the end of history see Žižek (2001).

7

A whole series of memoirs of former communist politicians and the emerging new political elite appeared, centred around the question who was more dissident or more reformist.

Some of its theoretical representatives drown social conflicts in psychological traits of Tito (“cult of personality”) treating history as development of psychology of one person and his partners in crime. Others, especially “external and neutral” observers, promote a more orientalist view on the Balkans: the Balkans is a land of eternal animosities of ethnicities and clashes of religions. It could not be but condemned to a failure, Yugoslavia was a prison-house of nations or artificial entity, soon to be forgotten.⁸

Problem of this narrative is that it reduces the history of Yugoslavia to the “negative” of history of League of Yugoslav Communists⁹ p. 153, a mere mirror of what communist leadership was telling about the dissidents, “anarcho-liberals”. Now, the communist leadership becomes this dark force that governs all the historical processes. Analogically, the antitotalitarian narrative posits the role of art in an instrumental way. Art in socialist times is an instrument in the hands of the Party, which supports the thesis that art is only a supplement to politics, thus it becomes state art or propaganda¹⁰. This formulation receives a specific “turn” when applied to forms of dissident art, which opposed the stringent authoritarian rule of Tito. Two consequences stem from this twist: firstly, dissident artists, preferably writers, but also film directors, are retrospectively labelled as the representatives of the national literature and national film (not Yugoslavian, but Serbian cinema, Croatian literature, new Slovenian art...). Secondly, and more importantly, their dissident art becomes a directly political art. Instead of propaganda art we have dissident art that propagates the “real” values and freedom. According to heroic dissidents, art becomes a supplement to the future national State, a supplement to nationalistic politics, which became a part of new ideological universe. Miško Šuvaković lucidly coined this new synthesis as “Nationalist Realism”(2006).

8

Besides its transhistorical assertion, this narrative played an active part in the nationalistic break-up of Yugoslavia. For a general theory of Orientalism see Said (1979), for a critique of re-appropriation of Orientalism in post-Yugoslav films see Žižek (1997), Pavle Levi (2007), Jovanović (forthcoming).

9

The Communist Party was renamed the League of Yugoslav Communists, which was a federal institution, but had republican Leagues: the League of Slovenian Communists, the League of Croatian Communists, ... This organizational

principle was underlining the difference with the Soviet type of socialism.

10

Apart from the very early post-War years Yugoslavian leadership did not impose a doctrine of socialist realism. Quite the opposite, the mainstream doctrine became (socialist) Modernism, a specific cultural policy that would distinguish the Yugoslavian type of socialism from other existing socialisms. See the catalogue of WHW on Bakić and their general approach to Modernism via exhibitions.

Secondly, the liberal-memorial account is a counterhegemonic account, but shares the dissident kernel of historical revisionism¹¹. This reading rehabilitates specific political and artistic moments insofar as emancipated from the socialist past and its ideology. There were some bright moments in socialist past that should be remembered today. According to this theoretical account art is one of the presupposed fields in society (politics, economy, culture), whose autonomy should be taken for granted. Stemming from this autonomy of art is a necessary precondition for artistic freedom.¹² It is only from this guaranteed artistic oasis that individual artists will be able express their freedom: artist speaks in the name of Art, which through individual freedom/expression could enable real collective freedom. The liberal account posits true ART as the lighthouse of freedom and individual artistic expression. To be more precise, the liberal argument was by no means absent from the Yugoslav artistic/theoretical space in times of socialism. Many critical intellectuals, like Praxis philosophers¹³, some Black Wave film-makers and film-critics, were developing their arguments along similar lines.¹⁴ We need to add that this account has many variations: from Yugonostalgia¹⁵ p. 169 to a liberal reading of the past that also does away with all nostalgic accounts.

What follows is a critical suggestion for a reading that goes beyond dissident discourse of the Yugoslav cinematic past and maps out complex inter-relations between ideology, art and socialist political economy. We shall answer the question, whether the New Yugoslav Film opened a path towards a specific non-bourgeois autonomy of art.

11
I have described political roots of Yugoslav liberalism in another article (2011).

12
The field of art in relation to the ideology of authenticity and the bourgeois ideology of autonomy is elaborated by Rastko Močnik in many of his works on literary theory and art in general.

13
For a further account see the entry in the glossary of this volume. There is not much written on the Praxis school, as it has been largely erased from the official canons of intellectual history. Some texts can be found in the journal 11.teza Jerkić and Mokrović (2007). An important contribution was made by Mikulić (internet source). See also the interview with Pupovac (2011).

14
This view on Yugoslav film was articulated by Dušan Stojanović (see Goulding 2002). A very good critique of the bourgeois view from the beginnings of Yugoslavia was written by Komelj (2009).

15
See Velikonja (2009).

Cultural policy and cultural infrastructure in self-management socialism

A recent film *Cinema Komunisto* narrates the Yugoslav film history (from Mila Turajlić) shows pathetically Tito's fascination for film (Titostalgia). Much more than this personal anecdote on the big leader, it is important to recognize the official stance of the League of Yugoslav Communists that embraced Lenin's thesis of the film as the most important art and means that reaches the masses. From the 1950s onwards something that we can name Yugoslav socialist Modernism emerged. Contrary to the contemporary antitotalitarian memory, we need to stress that Modernism was a part of the official cultural policy of Yugoslavian state. After the break-up with Stalin in 1948, when the short era of socialist realism finished, the search for new image of Yugoslavia was launched, the search for legitimacy of new independent path to socialism.

The central role normally given to diplomacy and economy was necessarily attributed to socialist art, which was invested with a modernist claim: art can convey the "eternity" of communist struggle, the future will be remembered by artworks and not everyday political discussion¹⁶. The cultural and cognitive conditions cannot be understood without the general cultural policy that was oriented to international promotion of self-management socialism (Zimmerman 2010). It pushed for the representation of Yugoslavia as free and democratic, more humane socialism. Artists could travel to West and East and they were not having difficulties to show their artwork outside Yugoslavia. The existence of Praxis school, Black Wave and generally socialist Modernism are all sign of political and cultural freedom, rather than political repression and dogmatic over-politicized cultural policy.

According to Sergio Germani, an important scholar on Yugoslav film, Yugoslav Modernism was a broad movement, which comprised of "a general creative swing in the theatre, literature, fine arts and music" (2010: 280). To this list we can add new graphic art, and later body art and performances: never before or after was Yugoslav art so flourishing, it reached its peak in different cities throughout Yugoslavia from Ljubljana and Zagreb to Novi Sad, Belgrade and Sarajevo (Šuvaković 2006). Surely, this development was polyvalent in terms of aesthetics and politics of artworks. There was a mass of mainstream 'conservative' Modernism, which was accompanied and challenged by a more radical, to some extent also neo-avant-garde artistic practices. The latter, at least in terms of aesthetics, attacked or radically departed from either the established and canonized art of

16
For a thoughtful account of the status of this picture and the role of art see Boris Buden's contribution to this volume.

Modernism or from socialist kitsch, which entered into the sphere of culture en masse from the late 1960s onwards. The examples of these new radical tendencies can be found in avant-garde cinema (Tomi Gotovac), graphic arts (International Graphic Bienalle), memorial sites (Bogdan Bogdanović, Vojin Bakić, Dušan Džamonja) but also in theatre, body art (Marina Abramović from 1973 onwards) and performances (group OHO).¹⁷ Many of progressive artistic initiatives dealt with issues of Yugoslav modernization and “failure” of existing socialism very openly and polemically.¹⁸

Apart from the dismissal to discuss the general cultural policy and its effects (spread of Modernism), proponents of humanist hypothesis forget to analyze material conditions of socialist art. Branka Ćurčić correctly points out that contemporary cultural analysis, but also Praxis school excludes the realm of culture from the sphere of production.¹⁹ The cultural realm and human creativity is analyzed autonomously without reference to the economical processes. The “idealist” gesture that cuts culture from production means a lack of proper analytical tools to analyze “postfordist” turn in socialist Yugoslavia, that happened precisely in the period of 1960s. This was the period, where creativity and culture became an important part of socialist economy that was opened to market (domination over plan, see²⁰). After the US and USSR, Yugoslavia had the highest percentage of people enrolled to universities (see Ćurčić 2011). We argue that in order to understand the emergence of New Yugoslav Film it is necessary to include the analysis of self-managed infrastructure and structural transformations.²¹

There are a couple of important historical points that show on specificity of the art’s condition. Artists in Yugoslavia were already from the 1950s onwards granted a legal status of the freelancer (see Levi also*) and this was particularly valid in the film industry, where filmmakers were pushed in a constant search for new projects. They

17
For a more detailed account of some groups see the book edited by Đurić and Šuvaković (2003). On the first serious analysis of the Yugoslav avant-garde cinema see the catalogue edited by Piškur and Soban (2010).

18
It was a time of introduction of market relations – where market forces would slowly start substituting planned economy. Capitalist elements were not even hidden in the market reform of 1965. More on the development of the postfordist tendency can be found in my article on the postfordist tendency in Yugoslavia (2010).

19
See 2011.

20
We analyzed the structural transformation of the socialist political economy in another article (2010), with a particular focus on the consequences of the market reform that introduced a range of capitalist elements as early as in 1965.

21
See the interview with Želimir Žilnik and the text by Ana Janevski in this volume.

became economically responsible for the success of the film. However, cultural workers were not simply left to the market and they also did not have to organize everything from the scratch. On the opposite, people working in the film industry benefited from social infrastructure of studios and laboratories, there was certainly waiting-line, but any serious film project got access to the technical infrastructure. Žilnik assessed that the major institutions (state and republican governing bodies) and self-managed enterprises budgeted also art films and not only entertainment films or war spectacles. In 1960s a tremendous film production took the place due to the economic prosperity and tremendous technical improvements like the use of smaller cameras, but also with the rise of Jadran and Avala film studios. Avala studios became one of the biggest film studios in Europe with very capable and progressive studio management. Apart from producing big-budget co-productions²², studio management stayed very supportive towards new filmic tendencies, experimentation with film. Each year they would produce one debut feature-movie of a non-established film-director.

More importantly, the implementation of the self-management model and promotion of decentralization triggered an emergence of new cultural institutions on local levels. New Yugoslav Film with its polyvalent tendencies should be necessarily researched via the interference of cinema clubs and different amateur and anti-genre film festivals²³. It was due to this emerging platform-infrastructure that cultural workers enjoyed material support either for organization of discussions and events, or through small budgets that enabled critical research and cultural production. Cine-clubs^{p. 125} were places, where young amateurs and would-be film directors would get technical equipment (camera) in order to film. This was again part of the official cultural policy that promoted the idea “technique to the people”. However, this more technical framework needs to be expanded on a political perspective. It is noteworthy that few artists’ groups or artists organized politico-economically, as a film collective, or even started creating independent film enterprises. The emblematic case is a successful film enterprise Neoplanta from Novi Sad, which enabled film-directors a great deal of economic independence. Neoplanta was a film company standing developing independent film production and most often worked with profit.²⁴ We could name

22
For a detailed filmography see their webpage: http://www.filminserbia.com/Stages/Studios/Avala_Film_Studios/116/Default.aspx.

23
For a detailed analysis see Ana Janevski’s contribution in this book.

24
Let us take the example of Žilnik’s Early Works: the film’s cost is estimated around 130,000 dollars, but its profit was around 650,000 dollars. These were significant numbers and could be invested either in future film projects or in additional equipment. However, the highest profits were made with partisan audiences by mainstream film directors.

this type of enterprise some sort of a private-public enterprise *avant la lettre*, as they produced and distributed films across Yugoslavia, even abroad, having their own material means, but as well being dependent on a larger social infrastructure and state/municipal budgets.

The autonomy of art was not simply granted, but had to be struggled for, and gained only via skills, improvisation and organizational efforts of artists.²⁵ The analysis of the general material conditions brings us closer to rethink the “birth” and shaping of the whole generation of the New Yugoslav Film directors. Pavlović, Žilnik, Makavejev, Godina and so many others marched through the cine-club path. Surely, together with the organizational efforts the sheer amount and novel aesthetical forms opened a path for a specific, non-bourgeois art autonomy. This new generation of film-makers was not yet established and fought for specific autonomy that would emancipate Art from the more etatist instrumentalization of art. Surely, we can agree that this struggle was ambivalent, because it was guided by at least two contradictory, even exclusive perspectives: on the one hand they strived for bourgeois autonomy, more rights of artistic freedom and experimentation. More or less consciously, they advocated for autonomy as an individual engagement, as Dušan Stojanović would say, they strived to transform “one collective mythology” into plurality of “individual mythologies” (see also Goulding 2002*). But on the other hand, through their own artistic production they did not only stick with individual declarations, but succeeded in producing a distinctive aesthetical stamp that still today remains so fascinating. In other words, New Yugoslav Film returned to the initial question of the *avant-garde* art, namely, what is the role of art in transforming the society? Authors from New Yugoslav Film delivered extremely different answers, ranging from more revolutionary, dissident to individualistic, revisionary and disillusioned.

New Yugoslav film or Black Wave?

Filmmakers and film-critics that actively participated in the 1960s and 1970s, more specifically in the period between 1962 and 1972, called the progressive tendency New Yugoslav Film or a bit less frequently open film (Goulding 2002 and Levi 2007). The term New Yugoslav Film operated until 1969, when the official Party-intellectual journal *Borba* p. 124 published an article from Dejan Jovičić, whose article should be seen as a start of an offensive that denounced new film as black film. Black Wave was a political and an aesthetical

25

See the panel discussion from the book *Omitted History* (2006) and again the already mentioned interview with Žilnik.

disqualification, which was relentlessly used against the film-makers making quite difficult circumstances to continue their work.

What were the most obvious reasons for this political move on the side of the Party? The official critique attacked these new films as pessimist and nihilist, losing all beliefs in the socialist progress, or totally losing contact with reality. A pessimist representation of socialist reality replaced the former optimistic one. As one critic would say new film-makers portrayed entire society as one big toilet, where social outcasts play a major role. This condemnation later on culminated in more systematic political pressure, which meant a very dark future for these film-directors. Some of them went abroad, (Dušan Makavejev, Želimir Žilnik, Lazar Stojanović), while others remained in Yugoslavia (Aleksander Petrović, Živojin Pavlović, Karpo Godina), though marginalized and with difficulties, they carried on with their work.

Contemporary readings of this film period radically disagree already with the naming and status of this vast body of films. Some theorists would side with the name Black Wave cinema, while the others with new Yugoslav film. First reading is already our known opponent, the dissident and simplifying reading, which suggests that we should stick with the term Black Wave in order to stress the antagonism between Party and dissident artists (DeCuir). Mostly, these accounts repeat the “official”, Party functionary view, but in contrast to Party view, they only stress the dissident message, romanticizing the artists and their artworks. They encompass the radical difference between official and alternative (artistic) representation of the socialist society (Škrabalo 1998, Tirnanić, 2008). Our research sides much more with critical and close readings of that period done by Goulding (2002), Jovanović (2011), Levi (2007).

These authors rightfully stress a polyvalent character of the films. This thesis also means that Black Wave/new Yugoslav Film was never a homogenous film movement, even more, it arguably cannot be even seen as a movement. Even if the Party recognized its potentially destructive and nihilist force, the fact is that film directors never wrote any manifesto and we would have immense difficulties to extract criteria for specific aesthetics of their movies. On the opposite closer we observe these films, more differences in their approach and politics can we detect. We could unquestionably find striking ‘deviations’. For example, films of the same director Živojin Pavlović vary considerably, even when we are talking about the same decade. Or, the other extreme, the distinct stamp of critical filmic language of Želimir Žilnik can be recognized all throughout his work. Most adequately we could name new Yugoslav film was *auteur* cinema, which was emerging and interpenetrating Western and Eastern cinematographies.

However, it is much easier to completely reject the term Black Wave than to fight for its re-appropriation. Let us exercise a defence of the term “Black” in order for a different future use. The history of

struggles for interpretation gives us at least one lesson: one should never leave the theoretical terrain to the ideological enemy. DeCuir's analysis in this respect is symptomatic; he suggests to reduce Black Wave films to political rhetoric, to a 'methodological Marxist' call to criticize all the existing. Our thesis is precisely the opposite: in the incredibly creative period of 10 years many of these authors developed a specific filmic language that is very different from the previous and later Yugoslav cinema. Much more than the dissident position of authors (and consequent attack from the Party), we argue that politics in Black Wave appeared through a certain detour, through specific aesthetical innovations. Also, there is a certain tradition of the "black" that can be traced to crucial past references in the film history. In this respect Daniel Goulding rightly asserts:

The term black film had its origins in the short-lived black series of Polish documentary films in the fifties, the Czech dark wave films of the sixties, and the French films of black pessimism of the thirties – especially those of Marcel Carné.²⁶

To this list we could add some Italian neo-realist films. Through this politico-aesthetical interpretation we can "emancipate" the term "black" from the Party-narrative, which saw Black Wave as a simple negation of the socialist reality, or as the wrong representation of then existing socialism. Like the Polish predecessors or Czech black contemporaries, Black Wave film-makers were not simply opposed to socialism, because most of their films did not have a superficial anti-communist message. On the opposite, many of these films showed what was going wrong in Yugoslav socialism, with dominant dealing with past and present issues. These films attempted to strengthen socialism, to criticize it from within and at the same time to rethink what socialist art should be. They succeeded in criticising the dominant genre convention and explored refined aesthetical means: from naturalistic shocking development to intellectual and affective montage, from docudrama to partisan films. We prefer to use the term new Yugoslav film (or auteur cinema), but also insist in not relegating the term "Black Wave" to the dissident discourse. In this respect it is pertinent to ask, what was the reason that such a massive and self-evident re-appropriation of the Yugoslav black films into the mainstream anti-totalitarian discourse happened? Does it only have to do with some superficial readings, fabrications of the film-makers (their biographical anecdotes), or with something that is internal to the political aesthetics of their films?

²⁶
(2002: 79).

Against the humanist hypothesis and for plurality of political aesthetics

From what we wrote so far it is quite clear that we are putting into brackets the humanist hypothesis, that is, that Black Wave film should be understood along the humanist lines, which would put "under" Praxis philosophy. Surely, there were influences, but difference in political and aesthetical orientations within new Yugoslav film simply do not allow us to verify this thesis. At best we could say that there is a certain analogy in their "political" effect: they were both fighting for specific autonomy, and (in)directly criticised the role of the Party in the Yugoslav society (autonomy of art, autonomy of theory). Apart from this analogy we will see that we do not gain anything if we force the humanist hypothesis.

Perhaps the easiest way to test the humanist hypothesis against the major new Yugoslav films would be on the level of political message. Most of these films belong to the cinematic tradition of "social critique", which is more or less explicitly political. As Krunoslav Stojaković (2011) showed, their role was in ideology-critique, that is, in the critique of the Yugoslav existing socialism, which according to idealist distinction can be measured in the distance between official ideas and reality. However, apart from this directly political verification of these films, we will provide a sketch for further research on the "cinematographic form"²⁷ that we can detect in three different films of that time: Lazar Stojanović's *Plastic Jesus* (1971), Dušan Makavejev's *WR Mysteries of Organism* (1971) and Živojin Pavlović's *When I am dead and Pale* (1967).

Stojanović's antitotalitarian cinematographic form

Let us begin at the very end of the new Yugoslav film period. It is in the year 1971, when Lazar Stojanović made *Plastic Jesus* (1971). If there is a film that fits "antitotalitarian-dissident" discourse, it is *Plastic Jesus*. After the film appeared Lazar Stojanović was imprisoned. It is noteworthy that he was the only artist-film-maker imprisoned because of his artwork in socialist Yugoslavia. However, unfair or brutal this charge was, what remains also true is the poor aesthetical and political value of the movie. Already weak in the composition, the movie *Plastic Jesus* dialectically edits and treats Nazism and socialism along the same line. It shows Tito and Hitler one after another, comparing Nazi ceremonial to Yugoslav socialist celebration. Anyone making this kind of film already knew what will

²⁷
See Emanuel Barot's fascinating account "Camera politica" (2009).

wait for him. In the country, where antifascism was an official ideology and where it was strictly forbidden to edit the images of leaders, this film would necessarily provoke and produce a subversive meaning. But even if we do not find much aesthetical value in Plastic Jesus, even if it is one of the major political opponents, we should nevertheless give it a credit for starting the old ethical form of art (see Rancière, 2004). For the first time in film history, Plastic Jesus articulates the totalitarian image *avant la lettre* and becomes a first cinematographic form of dissidentism-totalitarian paradigm that opened a path that was (ab)used by many dissidents – artists and ideologists – up until today.

Makavejev's humanist cinema

The closest exemplification of humanist cinema - introducing the humanist ideals into the symbolic imagery - can be ascribed only to one film-director, namely to Dušan Makavejev. His film *Mystery of Organism*²⁸ is somehow a common representation of *Zeitgeist*, liberal atmosphere of the end of 60s. During the film a whole range of speeches reminds the spectator on student demands for greater freedoms and especially sexual liberation. In some interviews but also clearly visible throughout the film, Makavejev strives to develop certain anarchistic imaginary of politics, politics of subversion that he orchestrated through a refined editing, “Serbian cutting”, of the material.

Images from the communes from USA, ‘organon’ to release sexual tensions and old images from revolutionary history are interwoven with the central plot of the character Milena, who engages in the real revolution of everyday life in the suburban settlements of a big city. On various occasions she stands on the balcony and agitates for sexual liberation in the revolutionary movement and transformation of the society. Opposite to the image of young woman, spectator sees the counter-image of young man Iliych (Lenin), who is the rigid and Soviet professional ice-skater. Metaphorically, Iliych stands for the professional revolutionary that relies on the instance of Party and obeys its program. Against his image and on the background of the discussion with Old Left (Party), New Left - Milena - is a perfect embodiment of the principle of self-creativity and individual engagement. This political principle, which relies on the emancipation of human being, is perfectly congruent with the theoretical teachings of Praxis group.

In *Mystery of Organism* Makavejev portrays the creative and revolutionary force of May '68 generation that celebrates the indi-

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For a short review that criticizes a mere postcommunist reading of Makavejev's film see Buden (2008).

vidual and most importantly sexual liberation, which challenged patriarchal and other structures of domination. Empty formula of old Left and their unrealized dream of socialism were challenged by the radical subversive messages of young Left. But already within the film, don't these revolutionary phrases of Milena also run the risk of emptiness she strived to criticize? The same weapon that was used against the Party started rolling against the subversive protagonists from its very beginning.

The sense of general irony operates with the mechanism of counter-repression, which challenges any rigid order, either capitalist or socialist, but also one could argue their own political position. Even if at some moments there is a place for self-irony, spectators cannot but avoid having impression of certain naïveté of this strategy. Once this logic of subversion was included in the governmental machinery, re-appropriating individual desires in the advertising techniques, the subversive potentialities lost all its power. Moreover, they become the heart of the new postfordist regime. The governmental response to May '68 could be read through Foucauldian negative critique of the sexuality: the latter is one of the fundamental stakes-objects of postmodern and biopolitical regime that regulates the diverse bodies, horizons and practices of enjoyment.²⁹

I would definitely agree that in terms of aesthetics Makavejev remains to be one of the most innovative and influential figures of the Black Wave, some would even say that he made a new approach for ‘mainstream avant-garde cinema’, I would be very critical towards his political stance. The fundamental thrust of the politics of subversion and deconstruction resulted in plurality of identities and ways of enjoyment, which would be later on easily incorporated in the capitalist machinery or socialist power strategies. Thus, Makavejev's film exemplifies the image of humanism, the idea of disalienated Wo-Man and sexually empowered masses.

Pavlović's socialist self-management realism

On the other spectre of Black Wave politics I would locate Živojin Pavlović. If something Pavlović is a precise counter-image to Makavejev, exemplifying the image of antihumanism. My thesis is that many of his films that dealt with social topics are a good example of

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In Yugoslavian politics the student revolts had a very interesting epilogue. Most of students were fighting socialism with socialist demands on the basis of equality and bigger freedoms. The socialist leadership waited and thwarted their emancipatory potentiality with a brilliant strategy.

As Tito admitted students to official talks, he peacefully embraced their demands;

he granted them more freedoms and participation in the university organisations in order to develop more autonomy. At the same time, he used their political demands in order to deal with the nationalist tendencies, imposing a course of re-centralization and ideological conformity to his line.

Inflation of Radical Phrases as Opposed to a Lack of Radical Action

socialist realism, or rather self-management realism, which I do not read in ironical way. As already mentioned above the initial idea of socialist realism was very much linked to avant-garde and affirming role of art in transforming the world. Socialist realism does not mean only a mere imitation of the reality, but is revealing the reality in its revolutionary development. I will take a closer look of film *When I am dead and pale* to proof this thesis, which is actually an anti-humanist hypothesis.³⁰ In terms of its aesthetics, the film has a much darker, not a very uplifting portrayal of the scenery, whereas its dramaturgical constitution follows a linear narrative, where the protagonist meets different layers of the society and its subdued to certain internal transformations that are paralleled on the macro level. Politically, it does not follow a typical humanist topos of the discrepancy between official ideology and historical reality. It does not the lament about the empty formula of old socialist world and elevate the new formula of the young.

In all his films spectators will not find figures of the ruling class counterposed by revolutionary slogans of students or marginalized. *When I am dead and pale* is much more a meticulous and skilful portrayal of the landscape of Yugoslav society in all its contradictory nature. The film did not show the reality as it was, but its extremes, it wanted to show much more how extremes of major contradictions might develop after the market reform in the mid 1960s. In one of the most important and prophetic shot of the film we see a semi-provincial setting. The camera takes a spectator on the short journey through Yugoslavia, cutting its way through the whole society. We see a side shot of the chief protagonist Jimmy that is passed by a group of fighting peasants, protesting workers gathering around factory and singing soldiers, who are on the move against imaginary enemies... This shot contains a very poetic, but also a pessimistic picture that evokes the future disintegration if the tendency is to realize and the hypothesis that some different social groups never encounter.

Apart from the social commentary that focused on the transition processes in Yugoslavia, the story itself introduces one of the first antiheroes, Jimmy Barka (*Jimmy the Boat*)^{p. 123}. Starting from the countryside, Pavlović does not romanticize a pure soul of the rural countryside, his characters, anti-heroes, meet tremendous problems to assert any kind of activity. Pavlović is interested in the »portrayal of life on the margins of economic existence« (Levi, 2007: 36). But can't we also say the opposite: isn't Jimmy completely free, the generic human being that can do whatever he wants, freed from the

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I have developed a more detailed analysis of this film in the magazine Pages: http://www.pagesproject.net/2006/daily_pages.php?lang=en&date=2009-03-01



New Collectivism 'W.R. – Mysteries of the Organism'



Prologue

An amusing anecdote circulates regarding the poster for Dušan Makavejev's 1967 feature movie 'Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator'. The poster was submitted for the Zagreb Salon of Applied Arts where it was evaluated by a less than impressed jury and almost immediately rejected. Presumably the reason for this rejection was the fact that the jury immediately recognised (the works were submitted anonymously) and associated the formal qualities of the poster with the high modernism like works of the legendary Croatian graphic designer Ivan Picelj.

Just before being completely eliminated from the competition one of the jurors noted though that it can't be Picelj's work after all - if it had been him the movie stills appearing on the poster would have remained identical all the way 'But wait!' he said 'There is a break in the pattern - the images in the sequence occasionally change and there is more of a melody than a rhythm present on the poster. Hence it can't be Picelj!' This surprising discovery eventually enabled the poster to not only appear in the exhibition but also be awarded by the very same jury. The poster in question turned out to be the work of Picelj's younger colleague and occasional collaborator Mihajlo Arsovski who not only designed the poster but in fact commissioned himself for the job (the poster was only used to advertise a screening of the film in Zagreb and was not to be used as a country wide promotional material).

This anecdote, entertaining as it is nevertheless hints at the predominant direction and concerns Yugoslavian graphic design has been taking and occupying itself with at the time. From the strict rationale of the grid of Ivan Picelj to pop/art and counterculture inspired soft modernist works of his younger colleagues Mihajlo Arsovski and Slobodan Mašić in Zagreb and Belgrade respectively and all the way to the highly rational and pragmatic works by Slovene graphic designers.

It is impossible to say (at least from the material available to the writer of these lines) if there has been any pressure from the state on the direction of graphic design. The official

line regarding other fields of art was one of a Yugoslavian kind of soft modernism. In stark difference to the Soviet socialist realism present at the time and to whose influence Yugoslavian graphic design digresses to only for a short period of time.

It seems more that the federal republic based local graphic design associations and its promoters (that were namely very scarce) in true self-managed tradition would be left to themselves to figure out what was expected of design under the given circumstances. They would eventually reach a certain consensus on a formalist modernist approach with a strong association to industry and technology — the source of progress and modernisation of the country — with occasional digressions into popular culture. The kind of Swiss modernism of Picelj was not a singular voice or even a dissident exception in socialist Yugoslavia but rather something that was tolerated, promoted and most probably even supported by the state as well.

There were critical voices arguing against or at least raising doubts about this approach as well though as this short review from the student newspaper Tribuna shows. The following review of an exhibition of Swiss posters 60' - 61' organised and exhibited in the Modern Gallery of Ljubljana was written by one of the foremost members of the Slovene conceptual art scene Marko Pogačnik at the time already an active member of the conceptual art formation OHO.

Is the notion of a professionally designed spoon merely a trick to attract potential spoon buyers? Is the spoon designed to inflict pleasure on the user? Is it designed in a way that would encourage the enthusiasm of culinary connoisseurs for the applied arts? Spoons are eating tools. Things are.

The painter, that paints a house (the man that designs a Cockta poster, the painter painting a zebra crossing, the architect designing a building, the painter painting a painting), all form a visual ambiance. In this chaos of visual impulses there are no better or worse objects. Things appear in this world with their appearance.

Clearly designed and aesthetically purified traffic sign on the edge of the road causes the complex of 'things' (paint, metal etc.) to become a transmitter of visual impulses and hence constitutes space. Being, the totality of all things via visual impulses is called the environment. The environment is a secondary thing, being a mere substitute for the unsubstitutable presence of things.

In forming the direct visual reality, the poster has its function, that is constantly being reestablished by its directness while it is incorporating itself to the visual ambiance of the street. (here its economic reality is secondary)

Therefore we ask ourselves, what is the point of exhibiting swiss posters in the Modern Gallery. We can think of 3 peripheral reasons

- 1 — For the economists to see an efficient poster
- 2 — for the audience to enjoy colorful pieces of paper
- 3 — to please the connoisseurs of applied arts.

In the meantime the street where the masses move out of need not pleasure remains unnavigable in its uncommunicativeness.

The above text, probably hastily written in an attempt to be more of a poetic writing exercise than in making an argument nevertheless clearly expresses the sentiment of the already visibly present critique of design and consumerism worldwide. A couple of years after Pogačnik's text was published Viktor Papanek's *Design for the Real World* was published in Split (1974), Jerko Denegri edits a critical design reader entitled 'Design and Culture' featuring among others the first Yugoslavian translation of Jean Baudrillard - an excerpt from his *Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*.

Clear connections and associations were made to the Italian led anti-design movement such as the works of Bruno Munari, Enzo Mari, the writings of Manfredo Tafuri, etc. and some concrete practice related experiments in such a critical direction are made by the designer of the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade, Dragan Stojanovski. In fact an interesting article can be found reviewing another poster exhibition taking place in Belgrade - this time an exhibition documenting the poster competition for the poster of the Ljubljana Biennial of Industrial Design where the author comments on the selected posters referring to them as 'merely decorative arrangements without any transformative potential on the street' and especially points to one completely rejected series of posters that has been nevertheless in an inspired move by Dragan Stojanovski used on the invitation card for the show.

The series is by Gorki Žuvela and features a series of quotes from Papanek's 'Design for the Real World' (such as 'When

becoming a designer one most decide between earning money or being of use to society at large') casually scribbled across a series of generic industrial products (such as an office chair etc.) while the author of the article calls for more of such engaged interpretations of messages transmitted via graphic design - clearly absent in the graphic design practice of the time.

Coming full circle back to the topic of the Yugoslavain Black Wave it was perhaps a slightly disappointing discovery that these (albeit rare) critical moments of Yugoslavian graphic design did not make any contact with the Black Wave authors. While the posters and accompanying printed ephemera and title sequences were often designed by renowned designers such as Slobodan Mašić and Mihajlo Arsovski they are mostly more or less exercises in form and very rarely actively engage with the content of the films or their own context as mass media devices.

As a simple gesture of possibly reawakening the potential of the black wave filmography we have commissioned a series of graphic works from selected designers and artists each working on interpreting one Black Wave feature film as a starting point.

We have cued them that we aim at using their works as simple poster campaigns to be showcased on the streets of ex-Yugoslavian cities - here again departing from Pogačnik's text.

Brief

Each designer or artist was given a movie to react on and asked to produce a work, preferably to be used as a poster. The list of collaborators that included artists and designers from the area as well as worldwide currently includes —

Åbäke
David Bennewith
Alexandre Bettler
Rafaela Dražić
Experimental Jetset
Neda Firfova
Paul Gangloff & Hilde Meeus
Bardhi Haliti
Jack Henrie Fisher & Popahna Brandes
I.T.U. - International Typographic Union

Joris Kritis
Luisa Lorenza Corna &
Marianne Noble
Emilio Macchia
Vasilis Marmatakis
Metahaven
Avigail Moss
Isidora Nikolić
Novi Kolektivizem
Our Polite Society
Mark Owens
Rasmus Spanggaard Troelsen
Nina Støttrup Larsen
Sulki & Min
Katarina Šoškić
ŠKART

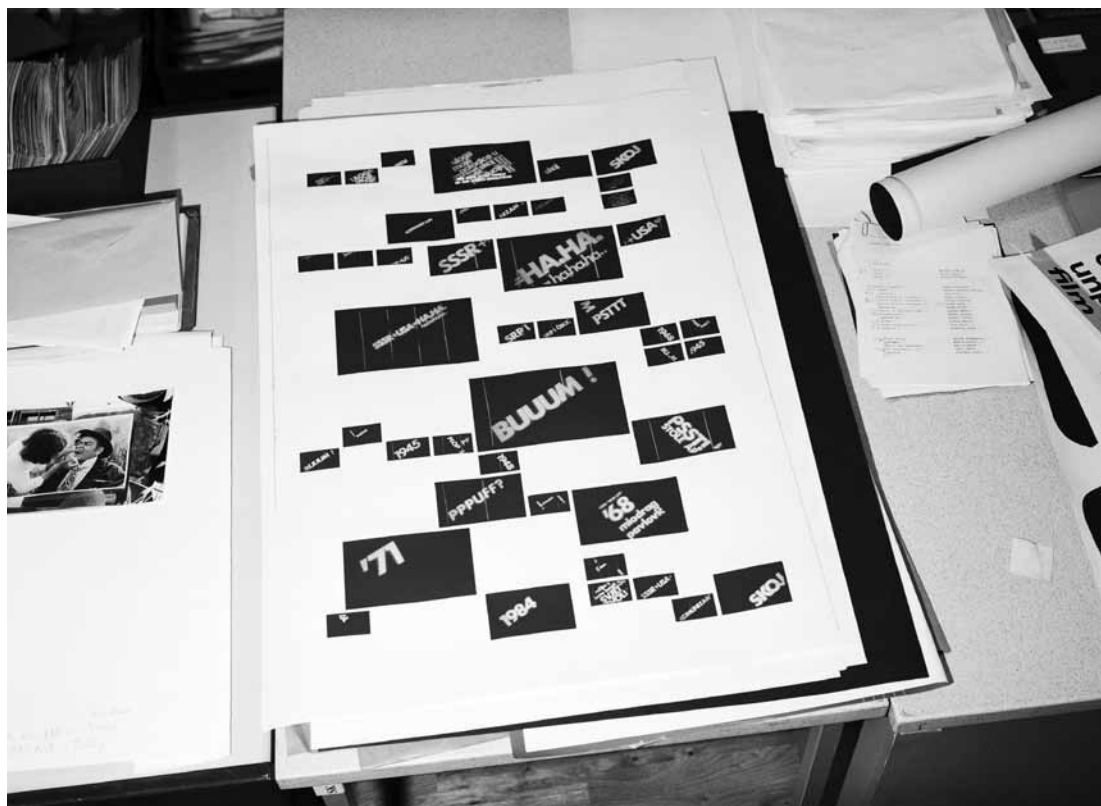
They were asked to deliver black and white B1 posters in digital format with no other demands regarding the content of the posters (specifically it was noted that 'the posters may or may not contain the title of the film) - and a note was added on request of one of the participants that 'the poster may or may not take the form of a graphic work'.

All the posters were first shown in Belgrade in 2011 and have since then mostly thanks to photographer Peter Rauch occasionally made illegal appearances in Slovenia, France, the Netherlands etc.

This section of the book documents a small selection of the submitted works. They were interpreted as an independent work by the Slovene photographer Peter Rauch. He worked according to a series of premediated shooting scripts and / or situations exploring the notion of interventions into public space. The locations and scripts loosely reference the plots of the films but the emphasis was on chance encounters and situations that happened during the actions. In this way a rather utilitarian and technical notion of a photo-shoot turned into a (collective) event.



Luisa Corna & Marianne Noble
'The Role of my Family in the World Revolution'



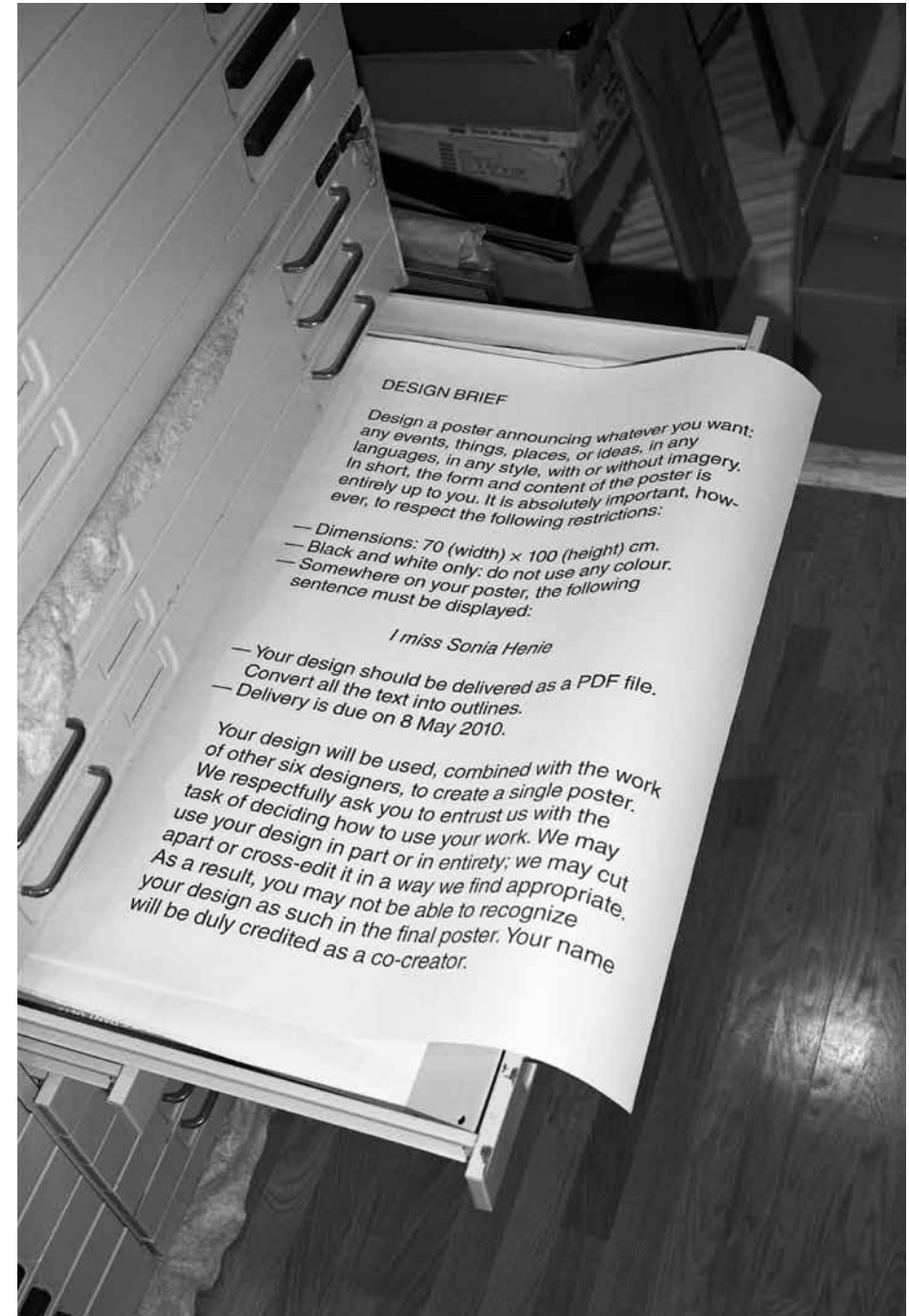
Joris Kritis 'Plastic Jesus'
David Bennewith 'Innocence Unprotected'



Paul Gangloff & Hilde Meeus 'Innocence Unprotected'
Our Polite Society 'Black Film'



Nina Støttrup Larsen 'When I'm Dead and Gone'
Sulki & Min 'I Miss Sonia Henie'



Jack Henrie Fisher & Popanha Brandes 'Three'
Experimental Jetset 'Early Works'



Jack Henrie Fisher & Popanha Brandes 'Three'
Avigail Moss 'The Role of my Family in the World Revolution'



social ties? The self-managed man in the self-managed society? – wasn't this an ultimate phantasm of the Yugoslav ideologues and Praxis philosophers? Isn't he a perfect ideological subject?

Jimmy can manage his own life in his own way, he is a nomad that travels from village to city, back and forth, and manages to survive. He can pick up any job he wants, and to certain degree he becomes even successful... Nevertheless, it finally turns out that this self-managed subject fails to integrate in the self-managed society. From the one that has nothing to lose and is free to one as the ultimate failure is only a small step. Jimmy is a young man in his twenties who is not employed and has big troubles finding a stable job... He is not nihilist or completely passive and he is also not close to a subjective figure of Bartleby who prefers not to do anything. As Levi says, Jimmy is in permanent present, a "social outcast who doesn't lack vitality" (2007: 36) and to some extent resembles Godard's hero Poiccard in his *A bout de soufflé*. The whole social order rests on the condition that a young man and woman enter the sphere of labour, the sphere where you can really start participating in the self-management of the social relations. However, there is a major blockage that prevents Jimmy from entering this realm of work. On the one hand, he is faced with the harshness of the social situation, rising unemployment and underdevelopment of the countryside and on the other hand, he himself claims not to be happy to work too much. These objective and subjective conditions make him a perfect example of excluded subjectivity, of something that represents a stain on the symbolic order that cannot be integrated. That is why he is treated as a dangerous element, something that disrupts the order: in the village he undermines the authority of the corrupt local headman, whereas in the city the law of competition excludes him. He is on the run again. There is no space for a bad folk singer in the midst of rock and roll subculture.

In Althusser's terms "ideological interpellation"³¹ did not work in the case of Jimmy Barka. Jimmy could have been the perfect subject, a perfect self-manager, but the journey reveals specific ideological conditions of self-managed state, the vital entry gates of ideological institutions. When Althusser talked about ideology he rethought the role of State and Law in the process of reproduction of social relations. What the film shows is the specific role the State assumed, it is precisely through the absence of any State institutions that we can learn something about Yugoslavian past. Self-management socialist order was supposed to facilitate maximum political involvement of all working people on all levels of society. Despite the revolutionary character of the self-manage-

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See especially his essay on Ideological State Apparatuses (2008).

ment model in the history of socialisms, the fact is, that the role of the Party in Yugoslavia was never questioned.

The League of Yugoslav Communists operated on the principle of 'democratic centralism', its avant-garde role demanded organization and discussion: how to direct society? In these precise historical circumstances the political decision was to cede the 'domination' of economy from planned economy to market forces, politically to the domination of technocratic fraction in the ruling class. And the film of Pavlović demonstrates this in relation to the specific set of institutions that 'held' Yugoslav society together. In the countryside the social life was organized around seasonal work that local headman - manager set in a primitive infrastructure, whereas family ties dissolved precisely in the places we would least expect. In Belgrade the entrance of the market hit the city life with all its intensity: cultural industry opened a set of new professions (cultural managers, free-lancers) and institutions, with which younger generations identified. However, all these old and new institutions that operated in new conditions of self-management necessitated one move on the side of the subject. It was a structural need to enter the sphere of more stable work, which our subject Jimmy Barka never came even close to.

This structural condition of Jimmy Barka was not so exceptional or alien to the Yugoslav context. As official figures show Yugoslavia at that time had to deal with a severe unemployment for the first time after WWII. This fact was something unimaginable for the state of working people, something that needed to be hidden and was not dealt with politically. And this is basically one of the analytical paths opened by the film. Pavlović located, with artistic means, the start of transition and the beginning of the end of socialist welfare. Some marginal political-economists articulated the effects of these economic processes only 15 years later³², when Yugoslavia was walking its final Marathon round on the explosive public toilet of Europe. The film itself ends on a pessimist note in absurd manner. After making the whole round of the Yugoslav society he is shot dead on the public toilet in the village, where he grew up.

Instead of a conclusion

To be interested in Yugoslavian past today does not mean to bring back memories of good old times. Even less would I want to emancipate Yugoslavian art from the socialist ideology.³³ Rethinking conjuncture, in our case filmic history, always mobilizes specific historical resources. Apart from a more concise and complex understanding of the past, emancipatory thought strives to stay always opened to the future, which goes beyond the nationalistic mythologies and blunt affirmation of the existing state of affairs. To return to the interiority and contradictoriness of the new Yugoslav film we needed to challenge two dominant readings: a humanist

hypothesis and a general antitotalitarian frame that is based on a simplified schema of eternal struggle between dissident ART VS. totalitarian STATE.

First provisional conclusion would be that in order to understand the specific effectivity and cultural practices of the Black Wave film-directors, we should take into account the material conditions of self-management production. Much more than simple filmic adaptation of Praxis ideas, we have to do with a set of cultural practices and specific dynamic of cultural production. Also, we should take into account the development of resonances and tensions with official cultural policy, how artists and their artworks struggled for formation of specific type of art-autonomy, which as we saw oscillated between "bourgeois" (individual mythologies, freedom of artists) and "socialist" (organization of freelance cultural workers, socialist critique of socialism) answer to this eminently political problem.

Second provisional conclusion pertains to our schematic analysis of cinematographic forms in three different film. We rejected the uniformed hypothesis of humanism in these films and affirmed a radically heterogenous character of the new Yugoslav films. These artworks embrace new aesthetics and old genres, ranging from socialist realism and neorealism (Pavlović), to antitotalitarian image (Stojanović) and humanist cinema (Makavejev). Above all, different politics of these films is evident, and this is even more valid, when we add the works of Aleksander Petrović (revisionism of Three), Želimir Žilnik (critique and des-illusionment of Early Works, docudrama *Unemployed people...*), Karpo Godina and others.

What remains important for further research is to explore the ways, in which these artworks opened a question of the role of art in transforming the society. The perspective through which we could approach these progressive currents in Yugoslav film and art could be formulated in the concluding question: how did new Yugoslav film create a specific art-autonomy (politics) and if it succeeded in creating an artistic form of revolution? The question remains, how to stay engaged politically but at the distance from the Party prescription? However today, with the absence of Party and revolutionary politics, the question should be again displaced to the realm of politics and should not be simply guarded by utopian promise of art.

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Bavčar, Kirn, Korzika (1985).

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Typical example Bogdan Žižić's film *Damnatio memoriae* (2001) – I analyzed other examples of re-appropriation of socialist memorial sites in another article (2009).

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Ana Janevski

We Cannot Promise To Do More Than Experiment*

On the Yugoslav Experimental Film and Cine Clubs in the 1960s and 1970s

The starting point for this essay is the experimental film in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in all its potentiality.¹ This type of film established an important shift in the dominant filmic language and proposed new and different thematic, aesthetic and production paradigms at the time.

In general, experimental film has been considered as separate from mainstream film. For a long time it has been predominantly considered within the domain of fairly marginalized theory and practice. Also, its definition and its parameters of classification have been quite contested issues. Although its designation could be the subject of a dissertation, it is interesting to note that, beside being called “experimental” and “avant-garde”, this form of cinematic expression has also been named “visionary cinema” (P. Adams Sitney), “independent cinema” (Emory Menefee), “underground/ independent” cinema (Jonas Mekas), not to mention the principles of “antifilm” and “alternative” film elaborated by Yugoslavian theory and practice in Zagreb and Belgrade.

What Jan-Christopher Harak wrote about US tradition – “in the earliest phases the American avant-garde movement cannot be separated from the history of amateur film”² – holds true for the Yugoslavian experimental tradition too. In the former Yugoslavia, experimental film almost consistently derived from the tradition of the so-called amateur film, whose base consisted in the numerous cinema clubs (*kinoklub*) that developed in all major cities of the former federation, especially in the 1960s and 70s.

According to the official system – the socialist self-management system of that time – self-organization was also present in the field of culture. Even more so, cinema clubs were part of the socialist project to bring technical culture and achievements closer to

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Reply of the KOD Group, a group of visual artists from Novi Sad, Serbia, to Dušan Makavejev when he invited them, as a selector of a the special program at the newly established Belgrade Film Festival in 1971, to do something performative.

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This essay is an updated version of the text already published on the occasion of *As Soon As I Open My Eyes I See a Film: Experiments in Yugoslav art in 60s and 70s*, curated by Ana Janevski, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2011 and *This is All Movie: Experimental Film in Yugoslavia 1951-1991*, exhibition curated by Bojana Piškur, Ana Janevski, Jurij Meden and Stevan Vuković, Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, 2010.

2

Harak J-C (ed.): “Lovers of Cinema: The First American Film Avant-Garde, 1919-1945”, Madison University of Wisconsin Press, 1995, p.18.” quoted in Stevan Vuković, “Notes on Paradigms in Experimental Film in Socialist Yugoslavia” in the catalogue *This is All Movie: Experimental Film in Yugoslavia 1951-1991*, exhibition curated by Bojana Piškur, Ana Janevski, Jurij Meden and Stevan Vuković, Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, 2010.

all citizens, not only professionals. Thus, forming amateur societies (amateur film, amateur photography, visual amateur groups, “colonies”, etc.) was systematically encouraged. In 1946, the special institution *Narodna tehnika* (*Popular Engineering Society*) was established with the aim of organizing, sponsoring and promoting different amateur activities. Even though the amateurs were under the “political” control of the centre and hierarchically organized, they were mostly left to their own devices as peripheral “amateur reservations”.

The chance to pursue film was primarily taken up by young people, often students and film buffs. In this way an important platform was created for experimenting and the conventional film language of Yugoslav cinematography was reassessed. After WWII, Yugoslav cinematography was nationalized and in all republics the development of the infrastructure of the film industry was intensively worked on.³ During the 1950s, the war themes, the People’s Liberation Struggle, the partisan fight against fascism, and the revolution were the most frequently used sources of inspiration among film authors. The official politics privileged this form of film expression, which made the distance between professionalism and so-called amateurism grow. Yet the marginalization of amateurism into the sphere of cinema clubs allowed more freedom of action.

When referring to the creation of new institutional forms in former Yugoslavia, touching upon broader political contexts is unavoidable. In fact, Tito’s model of Yugoslavian socialism, implemented after the break with Stalin in 1948, tried to take advantage of the two dominant systems — it promoted both the foreign policy of non-alignment and a new form of socialist economy in the self-management system. Its theoretical basis was provided by the “Praxis” movement in the “human anthropology” of early Marx, and by the summer school on the island of Korčula, where leading Marxist philosophers from all over the world gathered in the 1964-1974 period.

At the same time, Tito’s historical “no” to Stalin detached artistic practices from social realism and helped open the country to Western cultural influence by putting it in a position between “East and West”, introducing wider cultural freedom, assuming a modernist paradigm of abstract art as the official state art and showing Hollywood films in the cinemas. Moreover, the Yugoslav Film Archive or Yugoslav Cinemateque (Kinoteka) was formally established in 1949 in Belgrade with the aim to preserve Yugoslav films and film material and to further film culture and education. In 1951, it became part of the international network (FIAF - Federation Internationale des Archives du Film) and started with the screening of the first avant-garde films from the twenties and thirties, Hollywood movies, French New Wave, Italian Neorealism.⁴

The people who participated in the film evenings in cinema clubs in the former Socialist Yugoslavia were frequent visitors of

theatre movies, regular readers about films and possessed a vast knowledge about the films already mentioned. One of the major impetuses came also from the modernist models of other arts: visual arts, literature and theatre. Yet, film as a medium was becoming more and more widespread. It was the only medium that allowed an intertwining of visual arts, the literature of (anti)narrative, music and film references: it allowed the choice of different subjects and the employment of various techniques.

Due to constant demands for professionalization in all social systems, especially in the art world, from today’s perspective it is almost impossible to read correctly the meaning of the terms “amateur film” and “amateurism” as related to film buffs active in the cinema clubs in the 60s and beginning of the 70s all over socialist Yugoslavia. Yet members of cine-clubs were amateurs, most of them adhering to the meanings Maya Deren stressed in her 1959 essay “Amateur Versus Professional”, in particular her consideration on the Latin roots of the term “amateur.” It designates one’s practice as being “for the love of the thing rather than for economic reasons and necessity.”⁵ Or as Jonas Mekas pointed referring to the independent filmmaker: “You will make movies, you will record and celebrate the life, but you will not make any money.”⁶

In the former Yugoslavia, the term amateur mainly designated production conditions while experimental indicated the procedures, aspirations and effects of a specific cinematic expression. Thus the separation between the two is unstable and unclear. This creative confusion in classification can be attributed in part to most of the filmmakers whose works can, in retrospect, be described as experimental met few possible destinies. Either they soon exchanged amateur filmmaking for professional work in the cinema (e.g. Dušan Makavejev) or in the visual arts (e.g. Mladen Stilinović) or they went

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One of the best examples is the Avala Film, founded in 1945 in Belgrade, the largest film company in the country. The studio made its first film in the post-war Yugoslavia of 1947 and went on to produce or co-produce over 400 documentaries, 200 Yugoslav feature films and 120 international productions. Nevertheless, every republic hosted at least one film production company.

4

“Public program including the touring of 89 Yugoslavian towns were realized in 1952. It was then that the movie theatre was opened in Belgrade. The Museum of Yugoslavian Film Archive was a federal institution but in 1952 it came under the

jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia, so that other republics subsequently opened similar movie theatres. The first was opened in Zagreb in 1957, and then in Sarajevo and in Ljubljana in 1963.” Stevan Vuković, *ibid.*, p. 64.

5

Maya Deren, “Amateur Versus Professional”, *Film Culture* 39, winter 1965, p. 46.

6

Jonas Mekas about underground film, Whitney Museum, New York, 1992.

down in (or out of) history as film amateurs when the mid 70s saw the decline of cine clubs.⁷

The Serbian filmmaker Lazar Stojanović, writing about the American underground film, associates it with freedom and rebellion, rather than with a cinematographic genre, where underground equals amateurism, directness, imperfection and resistance. Moreover, a(n independent) film director is supposed to have above all a good knowledge of film and a strong personality. This praise of amateurism, in combination with a militant attitude of the director, can also be observed, albeit in a more apolitical version, in Mihovil Pansini and his GEFF.⁸

Main GEFF tendencies are: to fight against conventional film, and especially against conventional work in amateur film. To draw our amateur film from the narrow frameworks of the amateurish. [...] we want the tear down the borders that existed between amateur and professional film. Film is one. [...] Someone makes a film as an amateur but works as a professional. On the other hand, amateur film can be sold subsequently. There fore it is not possible to say what amateur, what professional film was. If we cannot determine this, then there is no point in dividing films into amateur and professionalism.⁹

In 1962 and 1963, a group of film amateurs gathered in the Cinema Club Zagreb that was founded in 1953. They came up with the term *antifilm*. To be precise, two members of the cinema club, Mihovil Pansini and Tomislav Kobija, initiated lively discussions on the concept of *antifilm*, and these conversations were spontaneously named *Antifilm and Us*.¹⁰ The main postulates of the antifilm were the negating of film as an act of conveyance, as an act of expression or communication between the artist and the viewers, but rather considering it as an act of disclosure, of research exploration and reduction. The antifilm requested multiple reductions: the reduction

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See Bojana Piškur and Jurij Meden "A brief Introduction to Slovenian Experimental Flm" in the catalogue *This is All Movie: Experimental Film in Yugoslavia 1951-1991*, exhibition curated by Bojana Piškur, Ana Janevski, Jurij Meden and Stevan Vuković, Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, 2010.

8

Sezgin Boynik, "Contributions to a better Apprehension and Appreciation of Plastic Jesus by Lazar Stojanović", in *Život Umjetnosti*, no. 83, Zagreb, 2008.

9

Mihovil Pansini, "Prvi dan 19.12.1963", in Prva knjiga GEFFA 63, Mihovil Pansini, Vladimir Petek, Zlatko Sudović, Kruno Hajdler, Milan Samec (eds), GEFF Komitet, Zagreb, 1967.

10

Along with Pansini and Kobija, Vladimir Petek, Zlatko Sudović, Kruno Hajdler, Milan Samec, and a number of other authors also took part.

of the author's involvement to his work, then the reduction of narration, of expressive means in the film, of rational metaphor, of the traditional communication with the viewers, etc.

Immediately the biennial Genre Experimental Film Festival, better known as GEFF, was established in Zagreb (the last one was held in 1970), parallel to the Music Biennial and the New Tendencies.¹¹ The festival attracted film enthusiasts from cinema clubs across the former Yugoslavia and they contributed to the creation of formal and informal cinematic networks.¹²

From the very first edition of the festival, named *Anti-Film and New Tendencies in Cinematography*, GEFF's inclination to connect all human activities was expressed, not only in the field of art, but in science and technology as well, overlapped with the broader world tendencies and interest in film as a subject of historical and theoretical research.

Thus the themes of the following festivals were: *Exploration of Cinematography and Exploration through Cinematography* (1965), *Cybernetics and Aesthetics* (1967), and *Sexuality as a New Road towards Humanity* (1970). Yet, what were the expressive novelties that *antifilm* and cinema-club experimental movies introduced, and who were the participants in GEFF? Paul Adams Sitney during his visit to Zagreb describes the GEFF as such: "[...] the festival of GEFF, a remarkable affair in which the entire Yugoslavian cinema comes together, feature makers, professional animators, experiments dadaist of the film, and rank amateurs in 8mm club."¹³ The festival was accompanied by thematic discussions with the participation of filmmakers, philosophers and artists, while the informative section included retrospectives of avant-garde films from the twenties, and the projections of foreign avant-garde films. In the first GEFF edition, a Belgrade-based Yugoslav Cinemateque (Kinoteka) program included a selection of the French, German, and American avant-garde features, and a set of movies by Norman McLaren. In 1967, the guest star was Paul Adams Sitney with a ten-hour program of the American avant-garde and the Fluxus Anthology, while at the last

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The first GEFF Book, which documents in detail the so-called five discussions on *anti-film*, together with the booklet of the 67 edition and the newspapers accompanying the last one, are the only documents that testify to the festival activities. The graphic designer Mihajlo Arsovski designed all the material.

12

For an accurate list of the most prominent organizations and events related to experimental film in the former Yugoslavia,

see the catalogue *This is All Movie: Experimental Film in Yugoslavia 1951-1991*, exhibition curated by Bojana Piškur, Ana Janevski, Jurij Meden and Stevan Vuković, Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, 2010.

13

Paul Adams Sitney, "Italy, Yugoslavia (fragments) published in *Film Culture*, no. 46, Autumn 1967, republished in *As soon As I Open My Eyes I See a Film: Experiments in Yugoslav art in 60s and 70s*. Ed. Ana Janevski, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2011.p.

GEFF the guest was Paul Morrissey with films from the Warhol Workshop and Carolee Schneemann with her diary-sexual movies. The projections of the films were an important and fascinating source for experimenting and deconstructing the traditional cinematic structures and the established parameters in editing film materials, both on the levels of form and content.

The main centres of avant-garde film expression were the cinema clubs in Zagreb, Belgrade and Split, and from the very beginning, these three cinema clubs announced different orientations, different authorial tendencies and technical solutions.

The *structuralist* inclinations of the Cinema Club Zagreb were marked by deliberation and experimenting with the medium, intertwined with visual arts. These tendencies towards multidisciplinary were already registered in the group EXAT 51, while the poetics of Gorgona with its main idea of the anti-group and the anti magazine, and holding of New Tendencies (biennial exhibition of kinetic and optical art from 1961 to 1973 with many international artists) were an important inspirational model for the development and emergence of the term antifilm itself. It's important to mention that in Zagreb in the 1960s we encountered authors who introduced the critical and new-media approaches into the dominant artistic production. They negated art trends, expressed critical views and employed ironic and subversive strategies rarely used before in the fields of visual and film art. Those artists, during the 1960s, reached out and delved into an almost nihilistic atmosphere of anti-art¹⁴: the foundation of the Gorgona anti-group and the publishing of anti-magazine, anti-painting of Julije Knifer, no-art of Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos and consequently the antifilm, which finally resulted in the emergence of the so-called "New Artistic Practice", which from the 1970s onwards developed especially in the students' centers of former Yugoslavia.

The Zagreb filmmakers were interested in film for its properties and structure, and for the possibility of deliberation and experimentation via the medium itself. They promoted the values of experimentation and innovation without narration, the introduction of accidental and existential issues, or they focused on the media itself.

We find a range of direct interventions on the film tape: from scratching, painting and cutting it, to a testing of the tone-negative picture like in Vladimir Petek's *Encounters* (1963). The anti-narrative approach is emphasized by the use of the accidental – as was the case in the film *Scusa Signorina* (1963) by Mihovil Pansini, at the time one of the chief ideologists of the antifilm. *Scusa Signorina* was filmed with the camera turned backwards, without supervision of what was being recorded, so the planned coincidence leads to the disappearance of the author. Lukasz Ronduda commented on the use of the accidental in such films of the time: "By making use of coincidence and a prior decision in their films, they sought to surpass

previous humanistic methods of production of meaning and to allow for a different perspective, transcending human imagination and perception, rather than differing from them."¹⁵

Visual artist Mladen Stlinović established in 1969 the student film club Pan 69. Through the Union of Socialist Youth the club received some funds to buy the necessary equipment and start making films. At first, Pan 69 had six or seven members and they were able to shoot films without any preliminary script-writing or approval, as the cine clubs did. This self-organized space (of liberty) allowed experimenting with a camera and film tape, mainly 8 and 16mm, and for public/club projections of films. The first produced film was screened at GEFF, and was screened at numerous (amateur) film festivals.

Cinema Club Split was formed in 1952, and it "launched" four generations of amateur authors. The films made in the Split club were mostly distinguished by rigid visual and editing structures, precise rules of framing, a pronounced absence of narration, and were characterized by the so-called "filming in frame" of Ivan Martinac. At the same time, Martinac is one of the central individuals that "seduced" generations of future authors gathered around the Cinema Club Split and in some alternative circle there was talk about the *Split Film School*.

The Faun's structure was programmatic. It was like Jonas Mekas' manifesto on the underground, like the Dada Manifesto... to make something that would be a flag.¹⁶

Tomislav Gotovac's *The Forenoon of a Faun* (1963), which won multiple awards at the first GEFF, was a structuralist triptych about the idea of the fixed camera on a tripod. "The voyeuristically observed movement of vaguely delineated figures on the sun terrace of a hospital is followed by a Wols-like gaze at the texture of a scratched wall and then, with all the erotic overtones of the rhythmic

14
'Anti' can be understood, according to the dominant disposition of the group, either as a negation of official art tendencies, or as an awareness that their artwork is barely acceptable or unacceptable as art.

Likewise, anti can be seen in the context of Gorgona's emphasis on the ideas of anti-art and anti-painting, as well as their affinity for the literature of absurd, antidrama and antifilm." Branka Stipančić, *Josip Vaništa, The Time of Gorgona and Post-Gorgona*, Kratis, Zagreb, 2007. In a conversation with Mihovil Pansini, to the question: "How did you decide on the term

anti-film?", he answered, "Everything was anti back then." Mihovil Pansini was also one of Gorgona's "adherents".

15
Lukasz Ronduda, *ibid*.

16
"It's All a Movie", interview of Goran Trbuljak and Shrove Turnover with Tomislav Gotovac, *Magazine Film*, no. 10-11, pp. 39-66, Zagreb, 1977, in: "Tomislav Gotovac: As Soon As I Open My Eyes I See a Film", *Croatian Film Club's Ass., Zagreb, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2003*.

back-and-forth, a zoom onto a tree-lined intersection, with passersby and that consumer fetish of the era, the car.”¹⁷ The term that would have allowed this film to be qualified as structural had not yet even entered into circulation in world experimental cinematography.

From his beginnings in the Cinema Club Zagreb, through the making of the Belgrade Trilogy from 1964 *The Direction (Stevens-Duke)*, *Blue Rider (GodardArt)* (1964), *Circle (Jutkevič-Count)*, to the inauguration of anti-narrative features of contemporary artistic discourse, acting outside of any artistic context, Gotovac became also a predecessor of the new art from the 1970s. In 1967, Tomislav Gotovac realized the first happening in Yugoslavia *Happ-Our Happening* in Zagreb. He was also the country's first streaker, running naked through Belgrade in 1971. In his radical performances and provocative artistic expressions he tested the boundaries of public space within the socialist state. Many of his actions consisted of simple but charged activities, such as begging, cleaning city spaces, shaving and cutting people's hair in public, all of which confronted the urban environment and the socialist-petit-bourgeois moral system with his corporeal figure. Nevertheless, film was the motto of Gotovac's life and artistic philosophy: an object of genuine fascination, an obsession the film experience formed a connection and a red line between works that do not disclose themselves in the medium of film, from collage to photography, and especially in his performances and actions. Asked what motivated him to watch a certain film more than once when he was very young, Gotovac replied: “I knew even back then, that was my life. I did not make a distinction between life and film. I don't know if I can explain this. I am now watching, I am watching a movie...”¹⁸

Gotovac's whole activity is related to “cinéphilie”. It is embodied by the experience of the spectator, by the everyday feeling of the films as well as the filmic way of thinking art. In the lack of possibilities for realising films Gotovac discovers a “cinema with other means”¹⁹. The deconstruction of its constitutive elements becomes an autonomous part of the artistic experiment. His cinematic way of thinking penetrates far into the private realm and explicitly incorporates private aspects into the films. At the same time, he is interested in the composition behind the narrative structure of Hollywood film, creating his own system of references and codes and using the structural means of experimental film to undertake his analysis. Thus *The Forenoon of a Faun* juxtaposes ambivalent shots of human interaction with an almost abstract detail of a wall and a cityscape. This accumulation of images, registering without intervention, reduction and repetitiveness, ‘cataloguing’ the fragments of reality and finding systems in unexpected, unforeseen circumstances, marks a personal standpoint that resists narration.

Talking about experimental film, Gilles Deleuze comments that one of the crucial tendencies of experimental film is to recreate – then to inhabit – a concentrated shot of pure images in motion. Deleuze

thus considers that its main point lies in its tendencies. Indeed, rather than being a specific genre or type of film, experimental film is about taking a certain stance; it's an orientation that avoids the film's most standardized function – of being a means for storytelling – focusing instead on its primary capacity to make things visible, creating building blocks of perception. The concrete results can then, of course, be poetic or political, expressive or just narrative. He also advocates that experimental film introduces formal tendencies and expressions, which are then accepted and absorbed by the mainstream discourse. While in Gotovac's case this point could be arguable, it finds more ground in the films realised by the Belgrade filmmakers.

For me cinema is an operation similar to guerrilla war, declared against all that which is determined, finite, dogmatic and eternal. Such a war should also be fought in cinema.²⁰

The most political stance in the experimental film in the former Socialist Yugoslavia is definitely in the activity of the Belgrade cine club circle. From the Cinema Club Belgrade founded in 1951 and the Academic Club Belgrade founded in 1958, as opposed to the Split School and Zagreb anti-film tendencies, emerged films of symbolic and expressive cinematography. Under the influence of Russian Expressionism, Polish Black Series and French New Wave, the first Belgrade films from the end of the fifties reflected human anxiety in search for the surreal and the absurd. Variations on the theme of innocence in flight from reality is a frequent subject of Belgrade film lovers of the time, as seen in the films *The Wall* (1960) by Kokan Rakonjac, *A Triptych on Matter and Death* (1960) by Živojin Pavlović, on the failure to escape and on existential anxiety, or in *Hands of Purple Distances* (1962) of Sava Trifković, about a girl's flight through a deserted and bizarre landscape.

The Cinema Club Belgrade mainly gathered a group of film *connoisseurs* organizing for the members practical and theoretical classes, It was necessary to pass exams to enter the club as well as to propose the script to the judgment of the rest of the members to get the necessary equipment for filming. The participation to the film projects of other members was also required.

17
Georg Schollhammer “Faun, Narcissus, Silenus. Tom” in *One Needs to Live Self-Confidentialy...Watching*, Croatian presentation at the 54 Biennale di Venezia, Antonio G. Lauer. A.K.A Tomislav Gotovac and Bad. co, curators What, How and for Whom/WHW, Venezia, 2011.

18
Tomislav Gotovac, *ibid.*

19
Dejan Sretenović, “Cinema World of Slobodan Šijan” in *Slobodan Šijan, Around Film*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, 2009.

20
Konrad Klejsa, “Dušan Makavejev: The Paradoxes of a Subversive Imagination” in *Piktogram*, nr 4, 2006, Warsaw.

Those Who Make Revolutions Only Halfway Dig Their Own Graves

The first antagonism with the Zagreb circle in particular started already during the first GEFf discussions, when Belgrade cinema makers like Makavejev stressed their interest in researching reality and taking a distance to pure experimentation. Moreover they started to have their film produced by the national production companies, switched to filming on 35 mm, while the Zagreb-based author still filmed in 16 mm or even 8mm, without being remunerated. Some of them being unable to professionalize turned to visual arts, like Mladen Stilinović, or like Gotovac who developed his very specific practice.

In the 1960s we witness the shift, as Stevan Vuković has defined it, from the *amateur paradigm* to the *author paradigm*²¹. The Cinema Club Beograd gave rise to the new major film paradigm of the 60s and 70s, what would later be denoted as the “New Yugoslav Film”. Namely, the cine club activity was a useful frame for the production of professional filmmakers such as like Dušan Makavejev, Želimir Žilnik, Živojin Pavlović, Aleksandar Petrović, (Karpo Godina in Slovenia). The disruptions that occurred in the *amateur* films became evident in mainstream films, or in this case the professional film and caused a shift there.

Yet, for those directors the cine-club activity was a kind of *materiel d'apprentissage*. Želimir Žilnik, active in the Cinema Club Novi Sad, very quickly saw film as a tool of criticism. About the advantages of *amateur* film he posits: “Very early I was forced to use all the methods of movement of amateur film. This environment of amateur film enabled me to rid myself of administrative labyrinths, which were the only way to acquiring money to make a film. It was a form of freedom.”²²

While the amateur films in Zagreb are characterized by experimenting with the medium, and while in Split a unique film expression is developing, the amateur film in Belgrade takes a step forward and turns towards open criticism of the present and the alienation of the modern socialist man, pointing to class and social contradictions in socialism in Yugoslavia at the time, breaking through the rarely disputed boundaries of state-socialist values.²³

21

Stevan Vukovic, *ibid*, p. 53.

22

Marina Gržinić and Hito Steyerl, In the “Firm Embrace of Socialism, an interview with Želimir Žilnik”, *Zarez*, nos. 134-135, Zagreb, 2007. Žilnik’s film “Early Works” had been realized in 18 days and obtained the *Golden Bear* at the Berlin Film Festival in 1969. Anyway many of the “Black wave” films have been shown during foreign festivals, mainly at the Oberhausen film festival.

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Among the first films that were locked away in a vault between 1958 and 1971, were Dušan Makavejev’s *Don’t Believe in Monuments* (1958) and *The Parade* (1962) while the amateur omnibus *The City* (1963), by Marko Babac, Kokan Rakonjac and Živojin Pavlović is one of the officially forbidden films in the history of Yugoslav cinematography.





**ПО ЗЛАТО
СА РАДОВА**

ЖЕЉИМИР ЖИЉНИК, југословенски филмски режисер, добио је на Филмском фестивалу у Берлину највишу награду „Златни медвед“ за филм „Ради радова“. На филму трајански се састају доживљенија награда у области уметности, упркосеру и социјалном напредаку према још „Златни медвед“ и осталим наградама ЕКА ФЕИЦА. СТИВАРЕЉИ

On December 13th, 2010 Dubravka Sekulić, Gal Kirn and Žiga Testen met and spoke with Željimir Žilnik in Berlin, following a premier of his film “Old School of Capitalism”...

SURFING THE BLACK

Although you trained as a lawyer, culture has always been an important part of your adult life. How did you end up in the field of cinematography? What was the atmosphere when you came into contact with the official Yugoslav cinematography?

ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK

After initial experiences in the amateur cinema clubs, where I made approximately five short films, I ventured into the professional cinematography in the mid 1960s. The cinema clubs were crucial for the development of the entire group of black wave directors and cinematographers. Before the invention of home video democratized to some extent the media, cinema clubs were the only places where access and knowledge about the film making technology and equipment could be gained outside of the professional field. The films me and other cinema amateurs made with the clubs and the media attention they received were also crucial in order to approach professional film studios with our proposals.

Cinema clubs existed in most of the major cities in Yugoslavia. They were connected into a network and presented an alternative to the centralized and more controlled film studios based in each republic. Film production companies in Belgrade and other republics, like Avala film in Belgrade, Jadran film in Zagreb, Viba film in Ljubljana were, at the time, very professional, technologically well equipped fortresses that were formed as some of the first cultural institutions in socialist Yugoslavia. Why first? Because of socialist, Soviet and Lenin concepts and also because making film documentation in the post-war period – to record how the country had been destroyed and how the new regime was organizing its reconstruction – was very popular.

Cinema was regarded as an educational tool and in the first months and years many

educational and propaganda films were made. But in the 1960s the policy changed. Studios invested 30-40 % of their time and resources in co-productions, 30-40% in partisan spectacles or popular comedies and the remaining time was reserved for the production of so-called “contemporary films”. These films were considered independent productions of some kind. Independent in the sense that they were free from the topical and structural restraints that foreign co-productions had to deal with or free from the complicated system of reaching some political or ideological consensus necessary for producing partisan spectacles.

It would be wrong to think that partisan spectacles were mere propaganda. Actually, they were like a battlefield on which two major tendencies of interpretation of the People’s Liberation Struggle (PLS) were fighting for domination. However, what was at stake in that battle was not necessarily related to my generation. For us, this post-Stalinist ‘creativity’ brought along some significant advantages such as the openness of the country, economic growth, mobility of many of our experts and companies who would at the time travel the globe creating large engineering feats such as the large dams in Africa as well as setting up film infrastructure in the newly liberated territories of Africa and Asia.

Returning to the topic of the cinema clubs, the crucial fact was that my generation of cine-amateurs, including Karpo Godina and Lordan Zafranović, was fortunate enough to be close to the previous generation of cine-amateurs, with fantastic filmmakers like Živojin Pavlović, Saša Petrović, Dušan Makvejev, Kokan Rakonjac, Mihovil Pansini, Boštjan Hladnik, cinematographer Aleksandar Petković or Dušan Stojanović, who was the most prominent film theorist in Yugoslavia at the time. They were making their first professional films and going from cinema clubs to film studios. It is important to explain the possibility for this new generation, roughly 10 years older than I am, to enter the “official” cinematography.

The topics they were interested in had nothing to do with the big partisan spectacles that were the preoccupation of the studios, nor

could they enter them on the basis of their experience as they were making mostly short, amateur films. It came as a surprise that the studios all of the sudden opened to them. The opening of Yugoslavias economic and political communication with the rest of the world was followed by the opening of the cultural sphere. And while the official ideological rhetoric was manouvering between the claims that "Yugoslavia is realising a humane socialism" and "the dicatatorship of the proleteriat should be strenghtened" the situation on the ground was yielding different results. I remember that in January 1963, at the Youth Congress, Tito unexpectedly gave a speech on the "importance of culture, as well as of its errors". I was 21 at the time, and, as an editor in chief of an organization called "Youth Tribune" from Novi Sad, I was present at the assembly.

It was odd for Tito to speak at Youth meetings, but he did and his speech was about culture. It has become one of his most famous speeches. His rhetoric was very surprising to us, as he, after pointing out that Yugoslavia was getting increasingly recognized by people everywhere, stressed how Yugoslav artists forgot about the people and the plight of the working classes in favour of abstract paintings. Although he didn't have anything against abstract paintings, and he even mentioned Jackson Pollock in his speech, he stated that this was not what socialism had in mind. He continued to utter some very frightening sentences, for instance, that he saw that many artists in Yugoslavia were taking the high modernist abstract direction and he compared the effect of their art on the society and working class to the comprachicos. All cultural organizers present left the gathering wondering was in which direction this speech would take the cultural policy, and although abstract modernism was defended later by the text of Oskar Davičo about the anti-fascist cry of Guernica, some kind of a rupture did take place.

Therefore, when the likes of Makavejev, Pavlović or Rakonjac approached the studios with the proposal to make something on the living conditions of the Yugoslav working class they were accepted. This is how it all began. Makavejev went to the mining town of Bor to

do the research for his first film "Man is Not a Bird" that was eventually shot there. In Bor Makavejev could portray the enormous contrasts that existed in the country that was quickly modernizing. On the one side, there were huge construction and reconstruction works, mostly of industry, done by peasants exclusively who came from rural places. During the day they would build factories and overnight they would get drunk and enjoy music in kafana. In "I Also Met Happy Gipsies" for example, Aleksandar Petrović tried to capture the reality of the Roma people. The Roma people are the black spot in the reality of all Eastern European societies. These films were aiming to present a part of human destiny and a part of human reality. Neither of these films were initially ideologically attacked. They were representing reality. The final production of film is always the question of creativity. It is not something that can be imposed by the Party. But that made that new atmosphere.

STB

Couldn't we say that this unprecedented development of independent film production (amateur, cine clubs...) was also the time, when the self-management socialism was also taking shape in the field of culture?

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Around 1965 when I started collaborating with Avala Film the Yugoslavian system was in a process of trying to prove its distinction against the Soviet Union. The organizational structure of self-management, which until then existed only in the industrial field, was just introduced into the cultural policies. The system of self-management was extremely successful in the process of the reconstruction and industrialization of the country and this success gave us a critical energy.

Workers, who were part of that system, really felt as the co-owners of the factories; they believed they could really influence decisions made by directors. But we, filmmakers, were actually part of the free market since we were not employed. We were more outside of the system than in the system. We saw that all the benefits of the system – a permanent safe job, good pensions, right to the

23. ЈУН 1969. — БОРБА — СТРАНА 4.



Јурискињама судбину присуствовао је и неки број бес-
средних филмских радника

*Данас вероватна одлука
о забрањеном филму*

**Судском већу
приказани**

„Рани палачи“

housing, i.e. workers would be given a flat in a new housing compound and a permanent tenant – were diminishing the revolutionary potential of the workers and transforming them into socialist kleinsburgers. The transformation of the country from year to year we had been witnessing was huge. And this is what we drew inspiration from.

STB

Did state ideology of self-management become crucial for work in film studios, like Avala film? How much the process of making films was influenced by it and general organisational structure?

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When I was first introduced to Ratko Dražević, the notorious director of Avala film, his first question was: “Žilnik, were you a man of sports?” When I replied affirmatively, he explained further: “That’s good, you see, it is hard work the film business. When I first distribute assignments between the director and the producer I hand them boxing gloves and watch how they fight it off. If the director gets on the floor first than I tell him that he is not ready to direct yet.”

Dražević, like others running film studios, was an experienced pre-war communist who also proved himself in the war, and right after the war he was a general in charge of setting up the import of technological goods. When I came to Avala film, the first generation of cinema-amateurs-turned-authors was already working there. The attitude was that Makavejev as a psychologist and a passionate cinephile, proposed projects with non-linear narration, with elements of collage, thus putting studios in total confusion, but, given the experience pre-war communists had with surrealists intellectuals before WWII who were influential communists but also prone to confusion, they found it almost an inevitable part of the creative process.

We could work on our films, as they would always somehow work out. The only thing we had to pay attention to was not to obstruct the production of partisan blockbusters or big co-productions. It tends to be forgotten that pre-war communists in

Yugoslavia who lead the partisans were not just outcasts struggling for survival and starving for food; many of them were highly educated intellectuals who after the war became influential in the cultural field. So in the 1960s this first generation, some 10 years older than we were, started this new cinema movement.

It is interesting to see who they had as screenwriters for their films. Aleksandar Petrović, for instance, made his film “Three” based on a story by Antonije Isaković, a writer who was also the president of a Commission for Culture and Ideology of the Serbian Censor Committee, a general director of the publishing house “Prosveta” and, besides, also the president of the Serbian section of the Commission for Reviewing Films (Yugoslav censorship body). For his excellent films “Red Wheat” and “See You in the Next War” Živojin Pavlović had engaged Ivan Potrč and Vitomil Zupan, prominent intellectuals of partisan movement as his screenwriters. This connection is intriguing and it cannot be said that there was a distance between the new film authors and the “regime”.

Naturally, when Karpo, Lordan, Bato Čengić and me, the “third” generation, came unto the scene, we wanted to take some distance from that film practice. Some of “our” unique inspiration we found with the “New American Cinema”, the “New Brazilian Cinema”, old masters like Jean Vigo and Bresson etc. And although we didn’t seek the “intellectual” support of the “well established” writers, we were nevertheless well received. It was the prevailing atmosphere in those first few years of establishing self-management in culture, in the 1960s. It was open. Of course that was not the main package of the produced film in the country. All the time this new wave, later proclaimed the black wave, was taking no more than 15% of all the state’s investment into cinematography. This independent film production, enabled by the self-management system, hadn’t even been fully legally incorporated at the time and naturally exposed the dogmatism of the period.

I am certain that Ratko and the likes of him, the old guards, didn’t care about this. But all of a sudden dogmatics started appearing all

over the place, pointing out for example that the independent film production was only focusing on the misery of the human condition while socialism was trying to improve it. They further argued that the focus was unfairly on the plight of man in the era of modernization and not on the improvement of man. The reactions to these dogmatic accusations that were looking for more control actually gave the independent production even more freedom.

Big production houses, based on the new self-management legislation, started requiring for all insecure productions to form independent film associations that would be partners to the major ones. Thus Avala, and other major ones could keep their hands clean if ideological discontents arose. Makavejev’s second film for Avala, “Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator”, for which I was an assistant director, was produced as a type of co-production. Žika Pavlović, was one of the authors who worked exclusively this way. His first film, “The Return”, was banned in the process of being made, so the producer, Avala film, advised him to finish the film at his own risk. As his films were very well received by the audience, the possibilities of this “Semi-private” production turned him into a relatively wealthy man in just a couple of years.

STB

What this “risking” and “co-production” meant practically? It reminds us on the contemporary public-private enterprises?

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Already engaged in risky international co-productions, the major studios wanted to share the risk of “independent” films at the least. They rarely understood these films entirely and most of them usually didn’t have a complete script when the production started. The implementation of self-management in culture enabled the organizational models of co-production, in which the crew would organize themselves into a film work collective, and invest their “creative labour” while the production house would invest the technical equipment. Our contracts would state something like: “Želimir Žilnik is entering this

production by investing 60% of his director’s fee that will only be paid if the movie brings in profit...”. This way, the “actual” money invested in the film by the production house would be smaller and the risk would fall on the crew, who were working for free. Contracts would also stipulate how the profit, if there were any, would be shared, and also when the film would become profitable.

Avala film had a policy to produce two feature films of debuting directors each year. In 1968, as I was the author who had won the Grand Prix Oberhausen for my documentary the “Unemployed”, and a silver medal of Belgrade for my short film “Little Pioneers”, it was my turn. As my idea for a film, “Early Works”, seemed too unfeasible, I was asked to take the risky road and I managed to make Neoplanta the co-producer, knowing that this would give me more freedom as an author.

STB

We speak a lot about Avala film, as it was the major player in the film production in Yugoslavia, but actually you made most of your films at that time under the auspices of Neoplanta film, which turned to be the most important production organization behind the whole black wave. How and why did this shift take place?

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Actually, the rise and fall, so to speak, of the black wave can best be understood through the case of Neoplanta film. Initially, major film studios were established in the capital cities of each Yugoslav republic. After a while, the executive body of Vojvodina, the independent region, part of the Republic of Serbia, decided to establish a film company dedicated to local topics. Therefore, Neoplanta was established in Novi Sad, the city where I live and the capital of Vojvodina. There were no professional filmmakers in Vojvodina at the time, so Neoplanta had to turn to us, cine-amateurs, to propose the themes and start productions. It is important to note that with my involvement with Neoplanta my true professional career as an independent author started since all my assignments at Avala film were as an assistant.





The first director of Neoplanta, Svetozar Udovički, was a wonderful person. Although he trained as an actor, his acting career failed to materialize, so before Neoplanta he was manager of the theatre and performing arts department. Udovički and two secretaries were the first employees of Neoplanta. At the time of the founding of Neoplanta, I was already an established cine-amateur, and Udovički gave me the opportunity to make my first professional short film, "Newsreel on Village Youth in Winter", one of the first productions of Neoplanta.

When I proposed him to make a film documenting the lives of the people of my generation in the villages in Vojvodina, he agreed on it, but refused to pay me a fee in advance. He said he couldn't really imagine what would be the output of my idea. So I made my first film via the "risk it method". I assembled the entire crew with people who were willing to work without being paid up-front. Films considered as a "safe" investment had to have finished script and a plan of shooting to get into actual production and budget would be allocated. I didn't have a budget, I also didn't and couldn't have a detailed script, so I had decided to play it by ear.

When the whole pre-production process and the selection of the location were done I requested the actual film equipment from Neoplanta. I wanted the film to be recorded with an audio camera. At the time this request equaled requesting to be flown around the world in a Boeing 727. There were only two cameras of such capabilities available in Serbia at the time. One was in use by Filmske novosti to record Tito's speeches and the Communist Party Congresses while the other was the one used by Avala films. Although the one from Avala would have been easier to obtain, it was too heavy for the floor of the village cafe where we were shooting the film, so Neoplanta eventually agreed to fetch the camera from Filmske novosti. This is how my first professional production came into existence.

STB
.... and eventually you made the film.
Did the risk pay off?

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Upon release the film was on the one hand critically-acclaimed by the newly developing international film scene and on the other hand accompanied by uproar and scandals locally. It was a lucky coincidence that at the time there was great interest in the Yugoslav film production coming from the international audience. For example German TV would in that year buy 10 – perhaps even 15 – movies from the region to be screened on their channels.

My film got noticed by a German film critic from ARD who decided to buy it and it was this single purchase that paid off the whole investment in the film. The production cost us approximately 3,500 DEM and all the profit above that amount became our fee.

STB

In a way, that was a win-win situation, both for authors, who had more freedom and for production houses, as they were not risking to lose a lot of money?

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It is questionable whether all these films would have been made if this production model did not exist. However, in one aspect it was counterproductive, as I was later told by some other directors from the period, like Puriša Đorđević: the big in-flux of money would often stop or pause their urge to make more movies.

Once I asked him why he put his directing career on hold for three years after he made that fantastic film trilogy "Morning", "Noon", "Dream". He responded that with the amount of money he had made he could afford to go to Paris and live there for two years. He added that at present he regrets having done that, that he should have continued working. But here is the thing, in the late 1960s we were certain that that production freedom would last and increase. We were too optimistic.

STB

Neoplanta, being the youngest of the "majors" was giving the most space for this independent productions as it was the least burdened with keeping up with others in producing the partisan

spectacles? Was it a happy coincidence that you were from Novi Sad and that you could broker the deals between Neoplanta and the whole group of the new filmmakers.

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Neoplanta is a very interesting case, revealing both the glory and misery of the Yugoslav situation. At the time of its founding, it was completely free from all the complications and discontent resulting from the topics having to do with the Partisan Liberation Struggle that were burdening the other studios.

The task of the productions was not to portray the struggle as accurately as possible; films were used to solve the disputes between politicians, to prove who was a greater Titoist, Communist, Partisan. All kinds of mystification were present, which, in my opinion, had the exact opposite effect of what these films were trying to achieve, and they eventually managed to devalue the nature of the anti-fascistic struggle that was precarious and by its appearance and social position much more similar to the French anti-fascistic struggle.

Due to the epic portrayal in films, it soon became forgotten that the partisan struggle was illegal, extremely scarce in its means of warfare, highly risky and claimed many casualties. None of these issues burdened Neoplanta and I managed to bring in other people that were established at the cinema club scene, Karpo Godina, Naško Križnar, Prvoslav Marić, Bora Šajtinac, Dušan Ninkov for example. Soon the films that we made became successful at international film festivals.

The golden years of Neoplanta lasted until the attack on the black wave. Although "the elimination of the enemy" happened in 1972, when many of the previously completed and awarded films were "withdrawn from the public" and literally put in a bunker, the ideological verdicts commenced upon completion of "Early Works", in spring and summer of 1969. The local cultural scene in Novi Sad became more dogmatic than in other any other parts of the country. As the ban on my film "Early Works" was lifted after the trial

in Belgrade, and it was shown in Berlin and Pula where it won several awards, the communist leadership of the Province and the City, Messrs. (then Comrades) Dušan Popović and Mirko Čanadanović, organised an ideological review. Using the rethorics of the Soviet Communist Party of the 1930s, my film was declared anarchistic, and "like everything anarchistic - anticommunist".

What ensued was the whole year of "probing" if their "action of correcting ideological errors" would be accepted in other parts of the country. During that year, Makavejev, whom I invited to Novi Sad, succeeded to film "W.R. - Mysteries of the Organism". The premiere of that film provoked another "gathering of the conscious cadres", and on the public debate, organised by the same politicians, that film was "sentenced" to a bunker for ten years which effectively meant it was impossible to screen it in Novi Sad nor in any other place in Yugoslavia. However, as the film was co-produced by Bavarian television, it was successfully shown abroad, first, in Cannes in 1971 and then on other festivals and cinemas in the world. Neoplantas director Svetozar Udovički was sacked, and Draško Redep was appointed in his place. He organised the removal of a few of us, film-makers, from the production facilities and banned more than twenty films.

Draško Redep "controlled the situation" for the next fifteen years. Together with politicians who supported and appointed him, Redep made a monstrous partisan spectacle titled "The Great Transport", a great historical falsification made in co-production with Sherwood Productions from Hollywood. Under the direction of Veljko Bulajić international actors, such as Helmut Berger, were hired and as the budget skyrocketed to fifteen million, Neoplanta was driven to bankruptcy and in 1985 shut down. Redepi was prosecuted for financial fraud, and to cover up the scandal, on the ruins of Neoplanta, a new production company called Terra film was founded. Eventually Svetozar Udovički was asked to return as a director in the late 1980s and with him I also returned and made the film "The Way Steel Was Tempered", the "Kenedi Trilogy" and also several dozens of documentaries. Goran





Marković's, "Tito and I" was also produced by Terra film. Today, Terra Film is up for privatization, and we are claiming the building back. Not to keep it for ourselves, but to make it official that it was us, a group of filmmakers, that earned that building. We would like to donate it to the museum of contemporary art in Vojvodina and prepare an exhibition on the history of the filmmaking in the region.

STB

It seems a bit too distant now to truly understand the impact occupation of Czechoslovakia had on Yugoslavia. That event and student protests left a clear mark on your first film "Early Works".

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The moment of the occupation of Czechoslovakia was definitely more disturbing for us than the occupation of Iraq was to the Western people, perhaps even more than 9/11. Czechoslovakia was trying to take the same path of Titoism and self-management and to be independent from Soviet Union. We were so sure of Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia coming closer to the similar concept of "socialism with a human face" was a sign that the whole (socialist) world would eventually transform this way. So when we were asked to go to the borders and start digging the trenches in case the Soviet Union would occupy Yugoslavia our dreams were shattered.

The hope that socialism and communism would step by step realize itself disappeared when the tanks advanced in Prague. In Yugoslavia, there were huge rallies with 100.000 people showing up in support of Czechoslovakia and Dubcek to warn against rising Stalinism. This brought Tito and Yugoslavia a lot of international recognition from the West, as it reaffirmed the image of the bold country that is against Stalinism and the domination of the Soviet Union, even at the cost of war. As the reaction vis-à-vis the occupation was a sort of anti-Stalinist pledge, it was really hard for us to realize the reaction against this tremor was actually a stance of re-Stalinization of the country. The student protests and occupation had a big impact on me when I was making "Early Works".

STB

How much were you influenced by the Praxis philosophers, especially because "Early Works" are strongly influenced by the Early Works of Marx and Engels, who are even quoted in the film?

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The quotes in "Early Works" are an integral part of the film dialogues, and that is even noted in the film credits as "Additional dialogues - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels". If you watch the film, you will see that the life of the protagonists, the group of young people, the peasants and the workers all question Marx and Engels. The protagonists are wondering whether the ideas and rhetoric of the classics of Marxism are adequate for understanding of the reality and conflicts of the state socialism, and even the military intervention of 1968. Whether these ideas stay merely an ideological chatter, or do they contribute to the world at large.

As I was organizing debates at the Youth Tribune in the early 1960s, I had become acquainted with most of the praxis philosophers as a young man. When I was 20 or 21 I took part as an observer to their Summer School in Korčula. There Marcuse, Habermas, Bloch, Bauman and others – were praising Yugoslavia as an ideal system that liberated man completely, while we were making films which reflected the energy and creativity of the ordinary people in their struggle to survive.

Actually, we, the filmmakers, were more influenced by Camus and Sartre, who we found much more in sync with reality, than by "the humanism imposed from above" of some marxists, as we wanted to speak about reality itself, not its promise. Then, of course, for filmmakers, everything is about the film in the end – it's a matter of form and language. Film as a tool or medium is focused on individual destiny, on emotions, love, or getting old, ill and dying.

In my "Early Works" I play a bit with this. It is ironic that something that was inspired directly by something claimed by the state as a good influence, can be afterwards



They later pointed the finger at a specific phenomenon: the thriving of capitalism under the guise of a socialist revolution, and depicted the reality of precarious lives, mass unemployment, failed strikes, crises, etc.

As a consequence of an ideological campaign led by the cultural-political establishment, those films become known as the *Black Wave*. The article that introduced the term Black Wave was published in the newspaper Borba in 1969. A journalist stated that the Black Wave in Yugoslav films presents a “systematic distortion of the present, in which everything is viewed through a monochromatic lens. Its themes are obscure and present improper visions and images of violence, moral degeneracy, misery, lasciviousness and triviality.” Thus started the process in the course of which Makavejev’s, Žilnik’s and Godina’s films were banned from local screenings while Lazar Stojanović got a prison sentence for his film *Plastic Jesus* with Tomislav Gotovac in the main role.

New Artistic Practice

The deliberate use of formal stylistic innovations in experimental film, that is to say the invention of hitherto disregarded connections, links, or interdisciplinary synapses between different forms of art, leads to analogous innovation in other fields of art, and even to an overlap in case of artistic standpoints of Gorgona, the New Tendencies and Anti-Film. This parallel of somewhat implicit chronology of influences can be drawn in both the artworks, videos and films from the 1970s, as well as with short films of the then cinema clubs.

The artistic production of the 1970s is characterized by the radicalization of visual codes and the emergence of new art forms – from video art to the use of artist’s body, from redefining the exhibition strategies to interventions in public space, and even to completely forsaking the boundary between life and art. In this radicalization and search for new forms of artistic expression, film and visual art meet. New Art Practice²⁴ is the umbrella term for the various critical and radical forms of that “new art” that appeared in Yugoslavia after 1968. Such activities emerged and developed quite independently of each other, though they soon merged along a common artistic mentality, based mainly on the opposition to traditional and institutionalized forms of art and its presentation, founding its bases in the Student Cultural Centres both in Belgrade and in Zagreb.

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New Art Practice was introduced by the Croatian art critic Marijan Susovski in the homonymous catalogue *The New Art Practice in Yugoslavia 1966-1978*, Gallery of Contemporary Art Zagreb, 1978.

The hybridization of visual art and film in the artistic practices of the 70s was not particularly present; artists were more inclined to use video particularly for documentation purposes. Still there are examples of films as work of art and not as mediator, interpreter or representative of some painterly, performative or other work, establishing, according to Stevan Vuković, *the conceptual paradigm*.

In the film *NP 1977* (1977), Serbian conceptual artist Neša Paripović walks and runs through the city of Belgrade. His route is not structured by the urban grid of streets and sidewalks, but follows an imaginary trajectory. Miško Šuvaković in his analysis of Paripović's film, raises several problems: the mythology of the self-representing artist, the transformation of ordinary activity into exceptional acts, the reduction of film to the mechanical action of movement, the deconstruction of traditional narration, and the speculation conveyed by cinematic discourse, concerning questions of action and production.²⁵

Zoran Popović introduced film as a medium in new art and realised short experimental films such as *Head/Circle* (1969) and he managed to capture a diversified flow of information related to artists, exhibitions and events, thus affirming the importance of documenting actions and works.

Mladen Stilinović realised some 20 experimental films before starting his career as an artist. Already in his films from the early 1970s Stilinović is dealing with his future themes, the economy of production and the economy of language, with verbal irony and verbal clichés, with speech as a sensitive indicator of the social and political regime and occurring changes. Thus it is not surprising that one of the artist's first books – *Watchers are Asked* (1974) – was created via taking photos of separate frames of a 16 mm film and then linking them into a continuous whole and a recognizable accordion format. This book could be seen as a film by using other means, as if a film were deconstructed into its constitutive elements, becoming an independent work of art.

The phenomenon of cinema clubs and GEFf was at its peak in the first half of the 1960s, but was never systematically explored nor valorised within the cultural-artistic framework of the time, outside the strict discourse of amateur and experimental film, and therefore never institutionalized within a broader history.²⁶

New interpretations and readings of amateur experimental film are not comprised only of interpretations of formal innovations negating media-specified coordinates, but they uncover new connections with the original intention and tendencies. The cinema clubs allowed for the opportunity of avant-garde experimenting, for self-organization in the spirit of socialist self-management and for some form of political engagement. They mentioned art's relation to power, the possibilities and impotence, the distance from the structures of dominance and their mutual collaboration.²⁷

The phenomenon of the Black Wave, which was in a way

initiated in the cine clubs, seems to be the most radical and critical artistic expression, capable of revealing the mechanisms and side effects of Titoist socialism, of anticipating in a way the Yugoslav crises and of provoking political reaction. Why are they so interesting today, especially from the post-Yugoslav and post-socialist perspective?

One of the intentions of the research is also to oppose the simplified and ideological representations of the (Yugoslav) socialist past. The most popular version seems to be based on a dichotomy of the brave dissident artist struggling for the freedom of expression in a totalitarian regime. This vision takes the countries of the former Eastern Bloc for a homogenous entity and ignores the singularity of the Yugoslav socialist Project. At the same time it is not about some kind of Yugonostalgia, but about a critical research and reading of the common heritage of the socialist project and the positioning of art practices within the given socio-political constellation. Thus the goal is not to give an encompassing historical overview, but rather, researching concrete artistic practices that can propose a new perspective of acting in a contemporary situation and to understand the significance of this heritage today.

By analyzing cinema clubs as extra-systemic spaces, that is systems of culture autonomous from the official one, we demonstrated how the institutional framework has, therefore, shown itself as prone to reconfiguration, reinvention and adjustment, thus making possible the paradigmatic twists in the film and artistic production.

When we read the documents on GEFf, it becomes clear that there were a number of controversies voiced in the conversations and the different perspectives of cinema amateurs (later professionals) from former Yugoslavia, but almost all of them were in agreement on the importance of collectivity (reaching) beyond program association, on the need to create a radically different film and then every other work of art, can be a catalyst of positive social changes. "Amateurs are costless film lovers. This costlessness love gives them freedom and directs them toward the avant-garde and non-conformity. They can ask forbidden questions and give illicit answers."²⁸

25
Miško Šuvaković, *Neša Paripović, Autoportreti*, Novi Sad, Prometej, 1996.

26
We should certainly point out Hrvoje Turković's systematic explorations of the framework of Croatian experimental film, which represented an important and precious source.

28
Mihovil Pansini, "Recapitulation of the Fourth Conversation", op cit.



Pavle Levi The Raw Image

Excerpt from the book *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema**

A clear diagnosis about the absurd senselessness of reality is by itself an undisputedly positive reactant. Even if it does not cure, it gives rise to an irresistible urge to be cured.

— Miroslav Krleža (quoted by Živojin Pavlović)

The relationship between individual freedom and collectively defined social interests and norms is one of the key themes of Živojin Pavlović's oeuvre, masterfully pursued in such films as *The Enemy* (1965), *When I Am Dead and Pale* (1968), and *See You in Another War* (1980). While some other Yugoslav New Film *auteurs*, notably Dušan Makavejev, worked primarily within the framework of Marxist-humanist theory, invested in the idea of constructive socialism, Pavlović tended to consider the problem of freedom from a historically less-specified and politically less-optimistic perspective, which included humanist ideals as themselves also an object of critique.¹

His work developed along a trajectory that may be seen as a highly condensed version of the evolutionary path of the language of cinema, as outlined by André Bazin in his seminal 1950s essay by the same name.² Pavlović's earliest films – amateur productions made under the auspices of the cine-club “Belgrade” (*Triptych on Matter and Death*, 1960; *Labyrinth*, 1961) and the first professional shorts (*Living Waters*, 1962; *The Ring*, 1963) – are formalist, rhetorically driven works, made by a critic-turned-filmmaker, who, heavily inspired by the Soviet revolutionary cinema in general and Sergei Eisenstein's theory and practice in particular, invested himself in montagist fragmentations and reconstitutions of space, in visual symbolism and metaphorical modes of expression.

Gradually, however, Pavlović began to discover the directorial possibilities contained in an altogether different approach to cinematic form: an approach grounded in a heightened authorial respect for the integrity of the pro-filmic reality, in the use of lengthy camera takes, and the so-called integral narration (the camera following the action, subordinating its movements to the narrative content, rather than seeking to realize a predetermined pattern of shots, of incomplete but interdependent framings that, edited together, would create a synthetic filmic space and a sense of unified action). It was some entirely practical considerations – having to do with the blocking and editing of

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Stanford University Press, 2007

1
See Živojin Pavlović, *Jezgro napetosti* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1990), 55, 59.

2
André Bazin, “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema,” *What is Cinema?*, vol.1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

certain scenes in his first feature, *The Return* (1965) – that initially triggered this discovery. But what began in *The Return* as a brief and unplanned, instinctive departure from the “expressionist” abstraction of space (as Bazin would have it) subsequently developed into Pavlović’s increasingly systematic use of deep-focus cinematography and elaborate staging of action across multiple spatial planes: it developed into a distinct realist style.

The film that marked a high point of this style is Pavlović’s fourth feature, *When I Am Dead and Pale*. With *The Rats Are Awakening* (made a year earlier, in 1967) and *The Ambush* (produced in 1969), this piece of rough cinematic naturalism – a portrayal of life on the margins of economic existence – forms part of an informal “trilogy” of socially engaged works, representative of the director’s obsession with what he termed “poetics of viciousness” and “aesthetics of the disgusting.”³

When I Am Dead and Pale tells the story of Janko Bugarski, nicknamed Džimi Barka (“Jimmy the Boat”) p. 123, a young man in his twenties who, having no permanent employment or regular living habits, aimlessly wanders around the Serbian province, distinguished by impoverished, dilapidated workers’ settlements, collective farms, and village fairs – all places evocative of harsh living conditions and marked by an overall “anti-aesthetic” visual appearance (ugliness). Centered around its protagonist’s “journey through life,” the film has a loose, episodic narrative structure, akin to that of a “road movie.” Jimmy is an ambitionless and disoriented character – in the director’s own words, “a man without a compass” – whose nomadic and, in no small measure, absurd life ends abruptly and in an equally absurd manner: in the film’s memorable final scene, he is shot to death on a toilet.⁴

Jimmy is not particularly representative of the protagonists commonly found in Pavlović’s films and literature (besides being a director, he was also an established novelist, essayist, and author of short stories). Typically, his characters tend to be ideologically disillusioned individuals – often disappointed communists (as is the case in *The Ambush* and *The Red Wheat*, made in 1970) – who embody the gap between ideological idealism and practice/reality, the discrepancy between “how we would like things to be” and “how

they in fact are.” Knowing “neither what he wants, nor what he does not want,” Jimmy is, by contrast, envisioned as a representative of a state of mind that Pavlović thought widespread among the Yugoslav youth in the mid-1960s (the period preceding the student uprisings of 1968): an intellectual and moral apathy, an attitude of resignation toward issues of ideology, provoked by an all-out exhaustion of the grand narratives of human emancipation, be they traditional (religion) or modern (Marxism).⁵

Yet even if he is disoriented, Jimmy does not lack energy, vitality: the force of life pulsates strongly in him. For film scholar Nebojša Pajkić this suggests that he is not simply a character without any identity but a social outcast whose life is a trajectory without a past or a future, a series of intense moments belonging only to the permanent present.⁶ In the film Pavlović emphasizes this dimension of his character by presenting the viewer with a succession of scenes typically deprived, in the process of editing, of proper dramatic exposition and resolution – a technique inspired by Jean-Luc Godard’s elliptical approach to narrative in films such as *Breathless* (1959). Thus, Jimmy may also be understood as a local, Yugoslav version of Godard’s Michel Poiccard (Jean-Paul Belmondo) or as something of an equivalent of such literary antiheroes as Saul Bellow’s Augie March (*The Adventures of Augie March*) or Jack Kerouac’s Dean Moriarty (*On the Road*).⁷

Each “stop” on Jimmy’s journey is defined by a relationship with a different woman: first Lilica, his pick-pocketing partner; then Duška, a roadhouse singer; Mica, a postal worker; an unnamed dentist’s assistant; and, once again, Lilica. All of these characters are portrayed as more decisive than Jimmy and superior to him in their ability to economically sustain themselves. But their identities and aspirations remain clearly formulated within the patriarchal framework: despite, or perhaps because of, Jimmy’s complete lack of commitment, the women in the film function as agents of his (potential) social integration. Partnership with Lilica (ever ready to fake pregnancies) is the best way to sustain the lifestyle of a social parasite. Duška begins to build Jimmy’s career as a folksinger (despite his horrendous voice). Mica provides him with a temporary home (she is the clearest maternal surrogate in the film) and gives a

3

The “trilogy” marked the peak of the first half of Pavlović’s prolific career. Between 1963, when *The Return* was shot (held back for release until 1966, for painting “too dark” a picture of the Belgrade crime world), and 1998, when death interrupted the completion of the project entitled *The State of the Dead* (released posthumously in 2003), he made fourteen feature-length films.

4

Arthur Penn is said to have paraphrased this scene in his 1975 film *The Missouri Breaks*. John Schlesinger, who saw the film in New York, also claimed that it inspired his *Midnight Cowboy* (1969).

5

Živojin Pavlović, “Čovek i život” and “Antiheroj, rat, moral, seksualna revolucija,” both included in: Pavlović, *Djavoļji film* (Novi Sad: Prometej, 1996), 226-28, 240-41.

6

Nebojša Pajkić, *Jahač na lokomotivi: Razgovori sa Živojinom Pavlovićem* (Belgrade: SKC, 2001), 94.

7

Critics like Pajkić, Nenad Polimac, and Dinko Tucaković also praised *When I Am Dead and Pale* as a work that thematically and narratively anticipated the countercultural developments in the New Hollywood cinema.

further boost to his career by helping “institutionalize” him as a singer in the military garrisons. The dentist’s assistant expects Jimmy to stop wandering, marry her, and lead a life of social and economic stability. Yet, as some recent analyses of the film have pointed out (Branko Dimitrijević, Goran Gocić), although the behavior of the female characters seems to reinforce the standard patriarchal myth about the “taming” of the unbound male Eros, at the same time it is Jimmy – and not his female companions – who is regularly sexually objectified, fetishized.⁸ Thus, for example, he temporarily occupies the place of the “young male game” in Duška’s busy sexual life, and he satisfies ageing Mica’s fantasy about still being sexually desirable. But after his miserable failure at a singing competition in Belgrade, Jimmy responds to the dentist assistant’s complaint that his aimlessness is ruining her life by hitting her in the face. With this aggressive manifestation of his frustration over a feeling of impotence (“Do you think I wouldn’t want things to be better?” he asks, standing in front of a prominently displayed Yugoslav flag), Jimmy’s wandering is also revealed as grounded in a crisis of patriarchal masculinity. His persistent refusal to accept the society’s rules of the game has, partially at least, been a refusal to assume those roles and “duties” that the decidedly patriarchal order he inhabits has carved out for him.

Firmly situated at the forefront of *When I Am Dead and Pale*’s visual register is the unobtrusive, anti-rhetorically conceived sequence shot, a stylistic device deemed most suitable for tracing the complexities and the ambiguities of the multilayered pro-filmic reality. Often evocative--in its apparent absence of directorial intervention – of documentarist factography, the film largely realized Pavlović’s (by then clearly articulated) ideal of “creating an atmosphere that will by no means seem arranged, but rather as a consequence of incidental occurrences.”⁹ An acclaimed example of this approach is found in the long panning shot set in a provincial workers’ settlement, depicting Jimmy and an army officer walking by a group of chatting peasants, then crossing paths with some protesting workers (who criticize the building of “political factories”), while in the far background a platoon of singing soldiers is on the move, followed by a group of playful children.¹⁰ Also frequently praised by critics is the scene of the singing audition in Belgrade, in which the emerging urban youth culture of the mid-1960s is contrasted with the thus far depicted culture of the provincial Serbia. Featuring the Black Pearls (one of the earliest Yugoslav rock bands), this scene is entirely filmed in the *cinéma vérité* style. In its lengthy opening shot the camera patiently focuses on the drummer awaiting his cue; once he energetically begins to play, it embarks on a sideways track, revealing the location and introducing other musicians.¹¹

Pavlović’s propensity for integral narration, for the mise-en-scène driven organization and control of space (radically different from the montage-based approach of his colleague and friend

Makavejev) may be partially attributed to his burgeoning infatuation with Italian neorealist cinema--Luchino Visconti (his *Ossessione* of 1942, in particular), Antonio Pietrangeli, and Mario Monicelli--as well as to his admiration of such older masters as Jean Renoir and Carl Theodor Dreyer. Yet Pavlović never considered realism to be a goal unto itself but rather a formal strategy, an instrument, in the service of his cinema’s central objective of confronting the viewer with the “drastic” or “raw” image – an image capable of triggering a powerful visceral reaction, commonly a mixture of shock and disgust. “How is it possible,” he asked in *Poetics of Viciousness*, a series of theoretical essays written in the early 1960s, “to bring the human being to the point of emotional catharsis by consistently triggering in him repulsive reactions?”¹² Putting a naturalist style of filmmaking in the service of the drastic image’s “unpleasant associativity” seemed to Pavlović like the most effective solution, so he strove to “nurture the irrational while firmly respecting the laws of cinematic realism.”¹³ Thus, one invariably finds in his films images depicting the “uglier side” or reality: images of decay (urban and rural), filth, social maladjustment, drunken brawling, people stabbing each other with knives, defecating, excessively cursing, rolling in mud, engaging in violent sex in dilapidated barns and roadhouses, and more. The killing of Jimmy at the end of *When I Am Dead and Pale*-- culminating in the final shot of the film’s dead protagonist sitting on the toilet, while the camera slowly dollies in to reveal his bloody face – masterfully accomplishes what is perhaps best understood as the channeling of an entire narrative trajectory toward its resolution in a “raw” image.

It is through this desire to aesthetically nurture the impulsive, the irrational, and, ultimately, the destructive manifestations of human existence that the formative influence of Eisenstein’s theory and practice on Pavlović’s work exhibits its enduring effects. For the “drastic/raw” image of Živojin Pavlović is directly rooted in Eisenstein’s early theory of “montage of attractions,” which defines attractions precisely as intense, aggressive stimuli, as physiological

8

Branislav Dimitrijević, “Sufražetkinje, radodajke i lažne trudnice,” and Goran Gocić, “Pevač i pevačica: izazov i restauracija poretka,” both included in: *Kad budem mrtav i beo* (Belgrade: Institut za film, 1997).

9

Pavlović, *Jezgro napetosti*, 51.

10

Srdjan Vučinić, “Barka koja nije Nojeva,” in *Kad budem mrtav i beo*, 75.

11

See Pajkić, *Jahač na lokomotivi*, 94-95.

12

Pavlović, “Dva surova filma,” in *Djavoļji film*, 82.

13

Pavlović, “Putevi mašte,” in *Djavoļji film*, 128.

“shocks” directed at the audience with the aim of provoking a visceral reaction.¹⁴ *Poetics of Viciousness* is replete with references to the greatness, the genius, of Eisenstein:

The foremost poet of brutality, the one who used strictly cinematic tools to extrapolate its overtonality – its “over-brutality” (possible only in true art) – was certainly S. M. Eisenstein. Wherever he engages the piercing power of associative destruction, at whatever point in his work – whether as an element of a larger event (the raising of the bridge in *October*); or, as the true sense of a state of being (the procession and the separator in *The General Line*); as the amplitude of an event, its central axis of meaning (as in the “Odessa Steps”); or, as the climax of a tragedy (peons’ death in *Que Viva Mexico*)--he manages to achieve its maximum concentration, while also avoiding turning it into a self-sufficient goal; instead, he enriches it with cine-poetry, a pure kinesthetic poetry... aligned with the author’s fundamental obsessions.¹⁵

But Eisenstein developed the theory of “montage of attractions” within the framework of his famously anti-naturalist approach to art. He spoke of attractions as aggressive stimuli that are sufficiently independent, even arbitrary, in relation to the work’s proper diegetic content. In Pavlović’s cinematic practice, on the other hand, the intense physiological impact of the “raw” image crosses paths, coexists, with the declared “Bazinian” desire to maintain respect for the integrity of the pro-filmic reality. For him, attractions are an essential element of cinema, but they are truly effective only when interpolated into the pro-filmic continuum. (In this respect it is quite telling that besides Eisenstein, it was Luis Buñuel who, in Pavlović’s view, excelled in producing drastic images, true cinematic attractions; but it was primarily those of his works “unburdened by the surrealist caprice and [montage] artificiality”--*Los Olvidados*, *El*, and *Land Without Bread*--that interested the New Film auteur.)

A question, therefore, has to be asked at this point: after attractions have been integrated into the pro-filmic continuum – after they have been deprived of their fundamentally anti-naturalist quality, as autonomous elements in the montage chain – is there any reason why they should still be thought of as “Eisensteinian”? After all, the Soviet filmmaker himself explicitly warned against an attraction being allowed to exist “within the limits of the logical action,” to “rest within,” or to “operate beneath,” the overt dramatic content of the work.¹⁶ Is, then, Pavlović’s realist modification of film attractions in the end any different from, say, Jean Mitry’s proposed re-conceptualization of the same – a re-conceptualization that, as Jacques Aumont clearly demonstrated, so fundamentally missed the anti-naturalist character of Eisenstein’s cinema by seeking to tame its

formalist “excesses” through a docile reinstatement of the primacy of narrative logic? Writes Aumont, in his critique of Mitry’s re-tailoring of Eisenstein’s theory:

Reality should not be “betrayed,” nor are we justified in “interpreting” or “taking advantage” of it. Since Eisenstein pays precious little attention to the rules of the “lifelike,” the “concrete,” or the “implied,” his crimes are almost complete, and Mitry scarcely has time, particularly with *October* and *Strike*, to deal with all the ways in which they deviate from his norms; there are whole pages in which he “invalidates” most of the metaphors in *October*, positing against their “bad” montage of attractions, a “good” reflex montage, by which he means a montage that “uses only those symbols determined by the content. In other words, a montage of significant facts maintained and understood within the limits of the unfolding logic of the narrative action.”¹⁷

There is, however, something about the intended aim of the “raw/drastring” image that makes it distinct from (and, therefore, not quite reconcilable with) Mitry’s project. Even though the formal means Pavlović employs to induce the “unpleasant associativity” of the image differ from those favored by Eisenstein, the primary status of such an image as the mediator of the viewer’s relation to the diegetic world still remains squarely within the framework of the latter’s thought. That is to say, for Pavlović, as for Eisenstein, attractions or “raw” images function as accentuated visual elements channeling or directing the process of spectatorial investment in the diegetic reality. Eisenstein envisions this process as directed toward the realm of the “logical action”: by causing intense visceral reactions, attractions provide the viewer with external points of entry into the film’s dramatic and thematic content (this “externality” being a consequence of Eisenstein’s anti-naturalist foregrounding of discontinuous montage). The viewer’s response to an autonomous, independent attraction--a response that is initially physiological but, as Eisenstein’s conception of montage develops, begins to incorporate emotions, psychology, and, of course, intellect – is carried over a cut, transposed into (or onto) the narrative.

Pavlović, on the other hand, wishes to orientate the operation of spectatorial channeling in the opposite direction: his “drastic” images are intended to effect a denaturalization of the viewer’s comprehension of the “logical action,” to obstruct his or her percep-

14
Sergei Eisenstein, “Montage of Attractions,” in Eisenstein, *The Film Sense* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947), 230-33.

15
Pavlović, “Drastična filmska slika,” in *Djavolji film*, 80-81.

16
Eisenstein, “Montage of Attractions,” 231-32.

17
Jacques Aumont, *Montage Eisenstein* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 149-50.

tion of the diegesis. To fully grasp what is at stake here, one has to turn to the central philosophical problem at the core of much of Pavlović's cinematic and literary oeuvre: the problem (posed in rather Nietzschean terms) of human nature stretched between its two, ultimately irreconcilable, poles. On one side there is life as a biological phenomenon: as a pulsating, irrational force, a series of drives for food and sex but also for violence and destruction. On the other side there is the "carcinoma of nature" that distinguishes humans from all other living beings: consciousness. Seeking to make human existence pleasurable, or at least tolerable, consciousness, in the end, always either "degenerates life itself or, its own efforts result in failure."¹⁸

Proceeding from such an understanding of the human condition, Pavlović assigns to art the function of socially destructive criticism: of expressing the "paroxysms of existence," of tapping into an "unhealthy ground" on which the affective, impulsive forces and the senseless acts manifest themselves in situations of suspended or, at least, loosened consciousness. And it is precisely along those lines that he also interprets Eisenstein's notion of attractions. Reflecting on his fascination with *The Battleship Potemkin*, the filmmaker points out:

I went to see it. And the film literally crushed me. Afterwards, I recuperated and began to think: what was it about this film that impressed me so strongly that I stopped liking everything I saw before. That is how I arrived at montage. But this was merely an illusion... For what fascinated me so much about the film was above all the "Odessa Steps" sequence. And "Odessa Steps" are not merely about montage. "Odessa Steps" are, first and foremost, grounded in irrational directing – not random directing, but directing given to foregrounding the force of irrationality; a force which films are only occasionally capable of attaining, but when they do, nothing can surpass this grandiosity, this power. Of course, it was only later that I realized: what allured me toward Eisenstein and his film was not strictly montage.¹⁹

For Pavlović, then, the most significant feature of Eisenstein's technique is that it supplements the film image with outbursts of irrationality, of the "unaccountable." Attractions do not simply assist or guide one's perception of the image; rather, they confront the viewer (in a rather Batailleian fashion) with the unknowing of the represented reality, with what might be described as a loss of "perceptual digestibility" of the pro-filmic. Understood thus, attractions or "raw" images cannot but be integrated into the diegesis; they cannot but be presented in a "Bazinian" manner – as visceral stimuli interpolated into the pro-filmic continuum, existing within "the

unfolding logic of the narrative action." For their function is none other than to outline the limits of legibility of this continuum, of this logic of action. In films made by Živojin Pavlović an attraction marks the ultimate failure ("denaturalization") of the total comprehensibility of the signified. It permits the impulsive, the irrational, the non-symbolizable, to have its revenge – in no less than the arena of cinematic naturalism – on that "carcinoma of nature" that is the spectatorial cogito. An attraction prevents the image from being fully consumed by what Eisenstein himself referred to as the "retardations of conscious volition."²⁰

Finally, it is only when considered against the backdrop of such a conception of the film image that the precise nature of social critique found in a work like *When I Am Dead and Pale* can be fully grasped. The film offers a demythologizing portrayal of the Yugoslav socialist everyday, a vision in sharp contrast to the official, state-sponsored stories of general prosperity taking place under the sign of an enthusiastic collective commitment to the communist goals. Specifically, following on the trail of a large-scale economic reform introduced by the federal authorities in 1965, *When I Am Dead and Pale* takes the viewer on a tour of what may unambiguously be read as symptoms of this reform's failure. Moreover, this diagnosis revolves around the film's central premise's stating that from any "socially constructive" point of view imaginable, the main character, Jimmy the Boat, cannot be seen as anything but entirely useless, "pure waste." Not only is he regularly unemployed, but (much like Accatone and other such protagonists of Pier Paolo Pasolini's borgata films) he prefers not to have to work at all (at one point he even openly boasts that he is "too lazy to work"). In a manner paralleling his induction of the "perceptual indigestibility" of the raw image, Pavlović uses this "inassimilable" dimension of Jimmy's personality as the key point of reference inside the narrative: in relation to it, the Yugoslav system of "socialist self-management" – which envisioned workers as decision-makers, as direct participants in the management of production – comes across as a system perpetually concerned with managing the appearance of productivity and social prosperity. As film critic Saša Radojević lucidly observed,

all that is expected of the many characters in the film... who constantly talk about work, but actually do not work, is socialization. No one is desperate because there is no production, but because there is no socialization. Proletar-

¹⁸ Pavlović, "Čovek i život," 229.

¹⁹ Pavlović, "Režija je materijalizacija ličnih opsesija," in *Djavolji film*, 268.

²⁰ Sergei Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions," in *The Eisenstein Reader*, ed. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1998), 47.

ians and soldiers are not supposed to enthusiastically fulfill their duties at work, but to endorse a spirit of friendship and leisure, a castration of revolt that might bring down the glass-tower in which the foundational myths of the socialist society are piled up.²¹

By the early 1970s, a politicized offensive against the New Film's tendency toward overt social criticism was gaining momentum. Led by the dogmatic cultural watchdogs of the state establishment, the offensive focused on the harmful, even "subversively antisocialist," views that have, supposedly, severely contaminated Yugoslav cinema, giving rise to what would be labeled its "Black Wave."²² According to some unfavorable opinions expressed at the time, directors such as Aleksandar Petrović, Makavejev, Želimir Žilnik, and, above all, Pavlović – whose ominous, unscrupulously destructive authorial vision proved itself a particularly fertile ground for frequent attacks on him as a paradigm of damaging "social nihilism" – painted in their films a picture of the entire country as nothing more than "one big toilet."²³ Consequently, a number of "Black Wave" films encountered various sorts of official and unofficial bans on their releases: Žilnik's *Early Works*, Pavlović's *The Ambush* (which, although never officially banned, was held out of distribution until the early 1990s), Petrović's *Master and Margarita* (1972; based on Mikhail Bulgakov's novel by the same name), Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (cleared for screenings abroad but not at home). Other films, such as Žilnik's *Freedom or Cartoons* (1972) – ostensibly loosely inspired by Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* (which Eisenstein, much more famously, desired to put on the screen decades earlier) – were never permitted to be completed. The offensive against the Black Wave culminated in 1973, when the controversy caused by the graduating student Lazar Stojanović's thesis-film, *Plastic Jesus*, led to the filmmaker's arrest. Petrović and Pavlović were declared morally, politically, and pedagogically "inappropriate" and were removed from their teaching posts at the Belgrade Academy of Dramatic Arts. Pavlović, however, continued to direct films in Slovenia, where he completed four features during the 1970s...

21
Saša Radojević, "Smrt na poslu," in *Kad budem mrtav i beo*, 55.

22
Vladimir Jovičić, "'Crni talas' u našem filmu," *Borba*, Aug. 3, 1969. For a pronounced critique of the "black wave," which also seeks to distantiate itself

from Jovičić's "naïve and undocumented" attack, see Milutin Čolić, "'Crni film' ili kriza 'autorskog' filma," *Filmska kultura* 71 (June 1970).

23
Quoted in Pavlović, *Djavoļji film*, 260.

labeled as a black wave, put on trial and eventually banned. Even more ironic is that "Early Works" was officially exempted in the court and then unofficially banned by just being put aside. Even square kilometers of marxist texts and analysis didn't convince the state apparatus to notice the obvious thing - that the existing system of state socialism, was based on the will for power and authority. That, by the way it forms, governs and breaks down, it resembled authoritarian tribal societies. As, in the case of the state socialism of the USSR, when it turned eighty, it got terminally ill and eventually died.

Marxists generally didn't understand "Early Works" and my other films, nor the whole "new Yugoslav cinema". They stayed "above" them. However, there was not a single text on the black wave that wouldn't give itself a credit for "burying the black wave from the standpoint of Marxist's principles". For instance, Praxis philosophers never wrote a single text on the black wave, neither when the films were screened, nor when they were banned and their authors politically persecuted. Of course, five years later, Praxis philosophers found themselves in the similar position, persecuted, but also denied the Praxis of solidarity they denied to the black wave authors.

Today, when we are confronted with the failures of the first twenty years of capitalism in the states of former state socialism we have to examine both the past and present with scrutiny we never before had. We readily admit that there were more emancipatory achievements in the state socialism, than in neoliberalism, but continue to turn the blind eye on the real reasons for the failure of socialist project. It is ironic that, among all intellectual gymnastics, the most precise description of the methodology and network of "engaged communists" in the project of autodestruction is the testimony of Roman Abramovich at the London Court in the process with Berezovsky.

STB
The court case against "Early Works", although you won, marked somehow the beginning of the end? What was the reaction of the judge?

žž

The judge concluded that the film was slightly anarchistic and contained elements of pornography, but it could not ruin the state. This was June 1969, and film went straight from the courtroom to the Berlin film festival and won the Golden Bear. But the victorious atmosphere was soon cut short in August thanks to the article that appeared in *Borba*. Although it was becoming painfully obvious that things were about to change, we still hoped that it can't prevail the ambience in the state that was furiously against Stalinism and Stalinist threats.

STB

So, the production continued for some more time uninterrupted?

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In 1969 and 1970 the production houses continued to produce films that would later be labeled as black. But there was an important change: the stories in the films were not taken from everyday life anymore, rather they turned to the mistakes from the Stalinist past. For example, the story of the film by Bata Čengić, for which Karpo was the cinematographer, "The Role of My Family in the World Revolution", portrays how officers after WWII still believed in Stalin and became disillusioned in him after 1948.

Other films tackled the topic of forceful collectivization that was happening in Yugoslavia just after the war under the influence of the Soviets. Collectivization was abandoned in favour of peasants keeping smaller plots of land when it became clear that large-scale collectivization was too problematic. At that time, Makavejev, whom I brought to Neoplanta, was finishing "World Revolution" and described it as a Titoistic answer to all the Stalinist threats with even some archival footage of Stalin included. Actually, it was in 1971, when most of the productions that ran in 1969 and 1970 were finished, that the most powerful series of films came out.

STB

Ideological questioning stayed, did this affect the film language?



Bogdan Tirmazić u filmu "Rani radovi"

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Not by the late socialist ideology, that would continue to encourage formal experiments hoping that this would deaden the social and political edge. Also, the classical classification that "art formalism, dadaism, abstraction are just hidden forms of petit bourgeois". The New Yugoslav film that later came to be called Black Wave by its opponents, is much more in line with what was happening in the east, much more than we might be willing to admit. New Polish and Czech films appeared a few years before the new Yugoslav films and they were, unlike Soviet films, well known in Yugoslavia.

But there is a big difference between them when you look at them closely. Polish and Czech films applied their type of aesthetics to some marginal and modest anti-fascist narratives set during WWII. For example, Czech film stories – the Czechs did not have a substantial resistance movement – such as "Closely Watched Trains" (Jirí Menzel, 1967) or "The Shop on Main Street" (Ján Kadár, Elmar Kos, 1965) were focusing on those elements during WWII and forced a breakthrough.

In contrast to that, our author films did not have that war pretext. Makavejev's "Man is Not a Bird" or "Love Affair, or "The Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator" or Žika Pavlović's "When I Am Dead and Gone" are all about young contemporary men who feel lost in that socialism. Only later in the 1970s do the films tell stories from the past, as I have mentioned earlier. In this sense, our black wave was more polemic, but it is absolutely in line with the film language of East Europe. The Czech new wave, until 1968 and the Soviet occupation at least, didn't cause any ideological "probes" whereas our films stirred polemics from the beginning – some films went on trials, some were banned. There is a clear tension. It would be absolutely untrue to claim that what was happening in Yugoslavia with the black wave was an explosion of authentic expression. Absolutely not.

STB

The organisational forms of filmmakers survived the ideological attack, didn't they?

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Already by the mid '70s, the neo-dogmatic attitude removed our films, quickly began to be compromised. When it was realized that it didn't work, as if nothing had happened, a return came towards production models from the end of the '60s. Especially in Belgrade, the whole production started relying on – what's its name – film collectives that were organized independently from the large production houses.

Basically everyone could form film work collective, all it took for an independent film work collective to get started was to have an "office" address, register at the court and make a stamp. As these were small organizations, some kind of service centre was formed in Belgrade that would help various film communities handle laws, administration and even bookkeeping. The majority of the interesting films that were made in the 1970s and 1980s were produced through these types of organization – these included practically all the films of the so-called "Prague school".

The most interesting of the collectives was Art Film 80 that managed to realize 17 Belgrade films in five years, among others the most important films by Srđan Karanović, Goran Marković, Goran Paskaljević. They all worked there, no one went to the major studios as they focused on large international co-productions, or inter-republic co-productions based on themes that were of interest to the broadest audience, either commercial comedies such as "Štefice Cvek u raljama života" produced between Belgrade and Zagreb or some of the last partisan epics.

STB

Television also played an increasingly important role in financing the productions, can it be said that the state had its stake in that? Or does it have to do more with changing economic production of the films?

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I was present when Art Film 80 was formed in 1981 in Belgrade. At that time, television programming reserved Mondays for

broadcasting drama programs, for which original television films were produced. This was, almost by default, a source of an initial budget for a film. It would go more or less like this: Goran Marković would go to the television company with his producer and present an idea for a drama about the correctional facilities for youth delinquents and explain how it would fit perfectly into the Monday drama program. If they thought the topic was interesting, television would take up the idea and develop it and together with a film work collective would apply to the republic funds for more funding.

In addition, television broadcasting companies usually had their own laboratories and other equipment, which could lower the costs of production. Most of the budget that came from television would then be spent on research and preparations. As the negotiation process was not as long as with republic funds or major production houses, films would quickly enter the production phase. Still, the larger part of the honoraria of the authors would be invested in the production, hoping that if the film became a success they would not only get the money back, but also earn some.

It is important to stress that the Yugoslav film market was huge compared to the present situation. Successful domestic film would easily gross between 120,000 and 250,000 dollars. The costs of these “costumeless” films – without large scenography and production demands would cost 120,000 to 180,000 dollars, which was feasible for the domestic market. Another difference from the present situation is that the international market for Yugoslav films was much larger at the time than it is today. First of all, that was before the boom of “new” cinematographies in Asia, China and the like. Also, Yugoslavia had much better international cultural contacts and the relevancy of the cultural production was higher. Authors of the “generation after the black” who started to work in the 1980s managed to have continuity and probably more individual young talents emerged than a decade earlier.

What was actually happening in those years? The aftershocks of the occupation of

Czechoslovakia continued to shake the whole system of socialism. As a result government structures became both opportunist and skeptical, but also rooted in careerism and existing hierarchies. The middle class was trying to live comfortably and aspiring to get some connections and jobs in foreign trade. The class of the so-called red bourgeoisie that was invisibly for a while became visible to everyone, bringing doubt into the system.

Counter-revolutions slowly, but surely, were becoming mainstream, designed by the disappointed apparatchiks, who didn't manage to reach the high political position during neostalinist period of the early 1970s. They sought the support of the middle class, above all of the mediocre intellectuals, that found diverse and extensive Yugoslav intellectual scene, too “challenging and modalist” - and sought local legitimacy. The new system of regional values that was established this way was embraced by the politicians who found “socialism too demanding, not feasible and based on the risky premises of the dictatorship of the proletariat”.

STB

You keep mentioning the word independent about your productions and productions of the generation that came after you, how much this independence was constrained by the material and technological conditions of the film production?

ZZ

This was the time when filmmaking was entirely dependent on film technology and infrastructure. The latter was not only expensive but also extremely inaccessible. The process depended on huge laboratories, machines that not even all the federal republics at the time had, and on editing tables. So, although we were independent as filmmakers, we were always dependant on these extensions of the state mechanism – the laboratories and the editing facilities. Everything had to go through them.

STB

One question always comes to the fore in your films, the fact that very politically engaged critique, without any





idealisation is always articulated through the work on some marginal group, lumpenproletariat, workers, Roma people...Is this the black in the black wave as Boris Buden would coin it? How come it was not possible to structurally open the question of the figure of the worker within the socialist horizon (state ideology), and why was it not so much discussed in films, but rather represented in ironic terms?

zz

It's not easy for me to answer that because there were various factors that influenced both me and my production. When "Early Works" was on trial, I could speak freely and defend my film. The judge told me: "You are right. Socialism won't collapse because of your film, we believe in the freedom of creation. I will not sentence it." But actually, my film ended up in court because a group of workers from Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina complained that film was anti working class and reactionary.

The working class in socialism was opportunistic and prone to manipulations. Therefore the bureaucracy didn't have to be openly against free art language, they could use the working class to defend why they were against it. It was almost as if they were saying, the working class believes this is the best system ever, how dare you criticize it from the workers' perspective. Although later I did make a couple of films in which workers were the main protagonists: "Vera and Eržika" and "Dragomir and Bogdan: Electricity". But I found at the centre of the Yugoslav working class marginalized people shoved aside by the system that was hailing them as its core. Ironically, although these films were probably the most explicitly critical, they were screened on television without causing any problems as they were about workers.

STB

Film here then asks a question of the new sociality and where it can be positioned. And film becomes sort of a public space in which this new that can't be articulated nevertheless starts its existence? This is often enhanced by the fact that you use "real people" in your productions.

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Film is always an intervention in public space. The important benefit that comes with low budget productions is the speed with which you can respond to circumstances. Even when I was working for television I was still regarded and labeled as problematic – so I would get assignments no one wanted to tackle and the shortest shooting slots. Even in those circumstances I made 15 films for television, as the amount of production on television in the 1980s was amazing. Basically, it was my status of underdog that enabled me to do more or less what I wanted.

The production aspect is crucial. To make something you need to have a person in front of the camera that will carry the story. The story can be told in feature films with articulate actors or in semi-documentary films with people that are expressive enough, and more importantly, authentic enough to communicate their personalities.

The continuity of working with so-called marginal people was that, to my surprise, I found myself in ideologically designed cultures with various elements that remained hidden from the public and I discovered authentic characters who, despite everything, lead dignified lives. That was always the greatest inspiration, and not only for me, but for the whole crew. The reason I managed to make so many titles and not get depressed by the unfavorable conditions of production probably lies in that fact.

Furthermore, working on these types of film has always been a great learning process. My crew, for instance, cannot wait for a new film to start, to meet new interesting people, drink rakija, coffee and hang out with them. When someone tells you, "you film people, your life is swell", it is not difficult to find a way to communicate. Relationships like that would not be possible in more comfortable working conditions, as there would be a distance between those in front of and behind the camera. Due to the way we worked, the people in front of the camera understood that we would help them communicate something to the broader public.

In the last decade we have been shooting mostly on video, so we can easily

watch the takes from that day together the same day. We don't mystify, so when we watch the takes, I explain to them what works on screen and what doesn't. Another important thing is that we promise people that we will give them the raw material for their documentation. Thus it is clear from the start that I make my version and that they can make a version of their own if they want. These arrangements make the atmosphere relaxed and I have even noticed that being involved in the project enables people to gain more confidence.

STB

Thus you would frame this focus and production marginality more as a choice instead of a last resort?

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One can always question that aspect of my work, production marginality in continuity. You ask me whether it is intentional or the only option available. First, due to the circumstances, I lost early on the possibility of belonging to the "official cinematography". The same thing happened to Makavejev after *Mysteries of Organism*. However, this by all means unpleasant experience was actually a very enlightening experience, as it was only then that I started realizing that cinematography is such an extensive part of the power system in such small countries, and countries adhering to state socialism at that.

The films depending on the state always have to be in some degree of coordination with the state administration, and in line with the logic of the personnel policies. For example, a director can't get a film every year, there has to be some distribution. As a result of this rule, some of our most talented people who stayed connected to the representation of the mainstream state policy made a few films only. Another thing, once Yugoslavia fell apart films with so-called "decent budgets" became totally rude as the market couldn't return anything. Simultaneously, these films generated big losses as they cost millions of Euros and only made 50,000 Euros profit.

Filmmaking in such a way is a totally parasitic activity, especially compared with the amounts of money black wave films were

earning. On the other side, the existing European funding for films, Euro Image for example, are structured, regulated and controlled in such a way that it reminds one of the prescriptions for feature films given to Soviet authors at the time of Breznjev.

So, although I made 10 films in the last ten years, I never applied for support for a feature film. Occasionally I would apply for funding for a documentary film, one about a young generation born in Western Europe returning to Serbia because of repatriation for instance. In the end, we made a half-hour documentary on that topic, but the film also served as research for the feature film "Kenedi Goes Back Home".

STB

Although the terms black film and black wave, came from the attack initially, you seem to be the one that has "internalised" it in very productive way, at least the "Black Film" could be read in this perspective?

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You are here referring to my short film "Black Film" that was done in January 1971. It was a kind of ironical reflection on this new label that had been formed. The fact that we could mock this label reveals that its ideological imposition was, to say the least, ambiguous. Simply, if it was a political proclamation that black films were anti-socialist, I wouldn't have been able to officially make something entitled "Black Film" and to put on the table the aesthetic topic of the place and meaning and strength of the film experience.

The fact that I could mock the label so easily also shows that the black movement never existed as a genuine movement. The differences between the authors who were eventually expelled under the same label were substantial. For example, when I talked to Karpo Godina, my cinematographer for "Early Works" and my crew, we were always saying to each other that our film should not look like mainstream films do. It should also be distinct from the films by Saša Petrović, Žika Pavlović, and even Makavejev. The most encouraging for us youngsters – bear in mind that we were 25, 27 at the time – after the screening of "Early





Works” was that both Makavejev and Pavlović were stone-faced. They were saying, “What have you made? This doesn’t look like our direct legacy”. Pavlović even said, “Ah Želimir, that is a cul de sac. Where is the man’s passion, his sexual energy?”

For us, filmmakers, everything in the end is about putting the film together. When you watch the films that are now labeled as black wave, it becomes clear that each of us had different ideas about what it means “to put a film together”. One could expect the same style, the same type of film tools, but they are really completely different.

STB

But, there was a general atmosphere that somehow connected these films on a level that was beyond or behind the film language?

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The situation was one of competitive freedom. The biggest constraints were of course situated in the domain of technology and as far as this aspect was concerned the state institutions could not be circumvented. The laboratory was highly important, as everything was shot on 35mm. Materials had to be sourced through official state channels. Technically, this was the time well before digital and even before beta, so cameras were huge, expensive and only big organizations could afford them. Beside this, the forms of production organization were quite open. It was impossible to produce a film without any input from state facilities.

Doubtlessly the most inspiring for us was the Zeitgeist, and the feeling that the times were changing and improving at supersonic speed. We got to be part of that exciting period in which day by day we gained more freedom. Not in our wildest dreams could we imagine that we would be so brutally stopped only a few years after that splendid start. This feeling of optimism was increased by the firm belief that the themes we were putting on the table, both aesthetic and thematic, were crucial for the future.

STB

Would you agree with the thesis that culture played important part, perhaps even a crucial role in creating the

general optimism and development in the country?

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I think it is fair to say that art and film at the time were 20 perhaps even 30 times more present in the media than they are today. There was almost immediate reflection in the media on new films and books. Culture was much more important during socialism than it is today. When I went to Germany in 1973, I was utterly surprised when I saw how little coverage excellent films by Fassbinder or Edgar Reitz received. There would be a short paragraph in some specialized magazine, while we were getting pages and pages of coverage, and fierce debate.

And then in 1972, the general atmosphere in the country changed almost overnight, and the first to go were the films. The project of Yugoslav socialism, the way it was practiced in the 1960s, was shaken initially by the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1969. When the economic growth started to slow down it brought insecurity and time to reflect. As attacks on films were increasing, optimism about the future was diminishing.

STB

In the 1960s in Yugoslavia, culture got extremely good coverage in the media, specially the press, there were numerous articles, discussions, even theoretical essays. The film was “socialised”. Did this backfire when the newspapers became the major channel for attacking the films?

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The banning and tabooing of the films was tremendously present in the media. Through this presence we can solve the big mystery of which films were called black by the establishment. The new Yugoslav film was not attacked as a whole, and even some films that are now considered to be part of the black wave, were not explicitly mentioned, although they were put aside.

The simplest way to make the precise list is to go through the minutes of the re-dogmatized party meetings, when they were listed. Some authors, although much criticized, would have only some films labeled as

problematic – they were consequently banned. For example, Aleksandar Petrović's films "It Rains in my Village" and "The Master and Margaret" were stigmatized because they were seen as questioning socialist structures. Of all the films Makavejev made, only "WR: Mysteries of Organism" was listed. I only had one film listed and that was "Early Works". From 1948, when the organized film production in Yugoslavia started, until 1972, almost 560 films were produced altogether. The number of black wave films blacklisted amounted to roughly 30 – 10 feature films and 20 short films.

What was the impact of this stigmatization of culture? For me personally, the campaign was similar to McCarthy's anti-communist campaign in America. The greatest problem for the attackers of black wave films was to find evidence for their claim that these films were against socialism and anti-communist. How can you argue that Makavejev is anti-communist when Makavejev himself described "WR" as the most pro-Titoist film ever, and explicitly against Stalinism, which was one of the characteristics of Yugoslavia anyway. We had become outcasts, but it was difficult to find a plausible explanation why we were banned without even having contradicted the established Yugoslav ideology.

Once we had become official outcasts the media became silent. In 1973 I made the small film "Uprising in Jazak", about the anti-fascistic and partisan struggles of the inhabitants of a small village close to Novi Sad, during WWII. The film was openly shown at festivals and was well received, but the press did not mention it.

So I went to the editor of a large newspaper and asked him why nothing was written about the film. He showed me the memo from the Committee of the League of Communists of the City Novi Sad, which stated: "Because some authors in the media of cinematography started exposing anti-socialist tendencies, we advise you not to mention any work by Aleksandar Petrović, Živojin Pavlović, Dušan Makavejev and Želimir Žilnik. You are free to mention their names in case of the death of an author". I was frightened, but the

editor told me not to worry, that it is just a party document, nothing more. I had already left the party in 1969 and this was the moment when I decided to leave the country and work somewhere else as the borders were open. So I went to West Germany in 1973. When I came to Germany, there was simply no way that I could say that I was censored in Yugoslavia. It would be as if you came here now and claimed you were censored in Monaco. Yugoslavia was considered an ideal state and ironically our films greatly contributed to the creation of that image.

When I arrived in Germany, German filmmakers just started getting organized into filmmakers' cooperatives, very similar to our self-management system. Alexander Kluge even told me they were organizing themselves after our model. So, instead of saying that I came to Germany because I couldn't make films in Yugoslavia anymore, I had to say that I had come to trace and research the lives of the Yugoslav guest workers. Eventually I did make some films about guest workers.

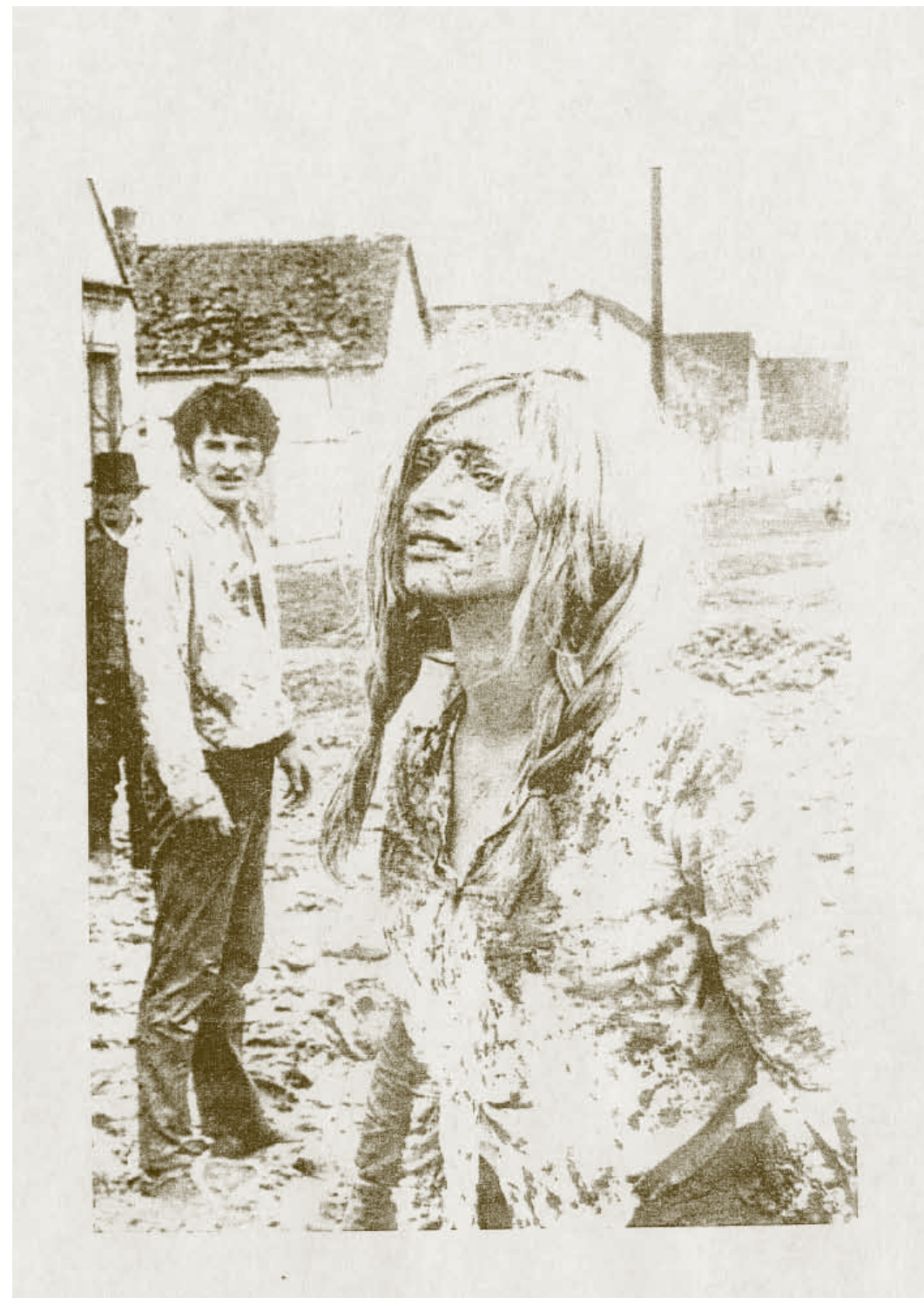
STB

What was the immediate reaction on the breaking of the black wave? In a film this would release a whole new revolutionary potential, but in reality the event of banning just faded away?

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Interestingly, the removal of the black wave and its authors from the scene didn't cause a big disturbance in the country because of the huge ideological pressure. There was almost no solidarity. Praxis philosophers never wrote a single text in which they reflected on that. So for all of us that was a moment in which we felt uneasily that this country, ideology and party that we had grown up with was regressing.

When Boris Buden asked me at your conference whether I ever felt like a victim, I replied that I never had and that actually the potential of the Yugoslav project was the real victim of this new re-Stalinization. One could even be bold and wonder whether the dismantling of Yugoslavia was the result of the black film authors or the result of stopping the black film authors?





STB

You return to the theme of the revolutionary potential of a group in your latest film “Old School of Capitalism”. Is it possible to read that film as a sort of an epilogue of the “Early Works”? As a sort of a “we told you so...” to the red bourgeoisie and their inability to “stay true to the socialism”?

ZZ

To be honest, much more than a precise concept, the driving forces between both films were particular experiences, pieces of information, and even emotions related to lived events. “Early Works” draws a lot from the strong emotions I experienced while filming the documentary about the student protests, “June Turmoil”, in June 1968.

Due to the limited amount of negative we had, most of the events we witnessed while filming on the various locations where protests were taking place never made it in the film. We were also following some of the numerous delegations sent from faculties to factories to forge an alliance with workers. Together with them we were stopped, harassed and apprehended by the police. The extent to which the police, both in uniform and civilian clothes, were aggressively trying to prevent the meetings was the biggest taboo surrounding the protests. I was still in shock by what I had experienced during the protests when the opportunity arose to make the first feature film a few months later. I went back to my notes and to the conversation I had during protests with a young girl who was severely injured by the police. She told me about the absurdity of the whole situation: “I was shouting ‘Long live comrade Tito!’ I was writing an article about Karl Marx and they were beating me up! Imagine the confusion.” That conversation was the main input for the screenplay for “Early Works”.

Similarly, the work on “Old School of Capitalism” started when I heard about the horrible injustice that happened to the workers of the privatized and then bankrupt factory for railway repair “Sinovoz” from Zrenjanin. The workers occupied it to protest against its closure. This story was banned from the media.

I realized that those workers were in a similar situation to that of the students 40 years ago. They were exposed to threats, this time not only from the police, but also from a private security company hired by the new owner. They had nothing to lose, it was a matter of life and death.

Initially, there was no concept beyond the feeling that their struggle had to be documented somehow. At first two documentaries were made. One was a precise chronology of the union battle, their protests, travel to Belgrade, strike at the House of Unions, where a man died overnight. For the other documentary, entitled “The Case of Bankruptcy Mass”, I invited a team of young journalists to make three essays, to add a layer of data about manipulation, defrauding, court cases...

Atypical about this film is that I managed to finish and tell this story only at the third attempt. The initial two were doomed to fail in the process of making. The first idea was to have a woman playing the tycoon who bought the factory. Preparing for the future, the tycoon has a Chinese assistant, teaching her children Chinese so they can be prepared for the Chinese domination of the world. When the privatization has already happened, Lazar Stojanović, the heir, returns to the country after having lived abroad and tries to regain ownership as the factory was being nationalized. I wanted to show that aspect, that many factories were nationalized after WWII and sold without denationalization. When he meets the new owner, they realize they were in love when they were children and they embark on a trip around the world, leaving the factory to the Chinese assistant, saying how “property is just a dream”. When the Chinese woman realizes that the the factory workers are only really good in folklore, she decides to turn the factory into a performance company that mixes Serbian folklore with Chinese opera and to travel the world with them.

The film was supposed to end with a spectacular performance. I wanted to shoot this with the workers occupying the factory in Zrenjanin, but after two days I realized that the energy between the leading actress and the workers was not working and decided to abort

the shooting. That is both a pro and a con of my method – I actually don't have to answer to anyone for the production costs and I can allow myself to stop the crew and say "doesn't matter, we had our fun, 30 beers, but we have to think of something better to tell our story."

The second try was a bit of a tragedy. I found a perfect actor, Dragan Jokić who was a refugee from Croatia and whose sons were severely injured during the war. He was living next to the open market where he was working. I asked the Croatian writer Vedrana Ruden to play his wife who left him when the war started. She is now married to an Austrian and owns a villa in Opatija. They had an excellent chemistry together and everything was going fine until on the fifth day of the production I went to pick him up and his sons told me that Dragan had passed away during the night.

After those two failed attempts with strong individual protagonists, I realized that I needed to feature a group in which no one would stand out. So I came up with the idea to introduce in a film a group of real anarcho-syndicalists in whose papers I read some of the sharpest analyses of the theme. At the initial meeting, they agreed to star in the film, as a group that "kidnaps the capitalists". The whole shooting lasted two days. One of the strongest similarities with "Early Works" lies in the fact that in both films there is no main individual character, but a whole group instead. This continuity is more a question of style, emotions even, than a conscious decision. Both films were made at a time when the dominant model of social life was rocked and most of its values were put in question. Serbia entered capitalism in the year 2000, being optimistic it would return to the normal world and feel the purification after Milošević, only to have all hopes shattered a few years later. What came after was a horrible, depressing and deep disappointment, similar to what the students were feeling after the protests in 1968 had dissolved.

STB

The revolutionary potential in "Early Works" is embodied in a young Jugoslava that had the best boobs of Balkan, while in "Old School of Capitalism" we constantly shift between the bearded anarchist and the bearded,

and almost toothless worker. Both visually and symbolically that is a striking transformation of the image of the revolutionary.

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This also relates to the changes in film language, aesthetics and focus that we mentioned before. 1968, the year we shot "Early Works" was the year of the sexual revolution and the hippy movement and it saw the first nude woman in a Yugoslav film. The student rebellion was opposing dogmatic taboos dominant in socialism, and the film we made tied in with that idea. The critique of the red bourgeoisie seemed to be just one of the small steps in the return to the authentic sources of socialism. The sources of socialism as we understood them had to do with freedom, individuality, the breaking of classical class structures and establishing a communal society. Although exposed to Marx's ideas of the commune due to the fact that Marxism was a compulsory subject at school, it was the American hippy movement that provided crucial inspiration to the young generation in Yugoslavia.

Forty years later, society has already lived through a few rounds of disappointment. The millions of women from East Europe who go to the West and earn a livelihood for themselves and their families by prostituting themselves have completely perverted the idea of sexual revolution in post-communism. One should add also the permanent fear of STDs and the rise of porn industry. So, having naked girls in a film today is actually a step towards tabloid aesthetics.

STB

Such beautiful women are now girlfriends or wives of the new capitalists?

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Exactly! What was semantically knocking on the closed door by means of the nude Milja, was achieved with a bearded anarchist talking about the ideas of war – the state as exploiter and tormentor of its own people and the bureaucracy being part of the apparatus. The continuity in provoking taboos remains, but it is the taboos that change.



Sezgin Boynik On Makavejev, On Ideology

The Concrete and the Abstract in the Readings of Dušan Makavejev's Films

I. A New Science for Reading the Films

Amos Vogel, one of the most prominent popularisers and theoreticians of the 'subversive film' genre, proposes an epistemological origin for this cinema genre based on discoveries in science, in particular discoveries in Quantum Mechanics and the Theory of Relativity. The discoveries created such a conception of the world that, according to Vogel, who is quoting Einstein, science has become a version of religion, which then should be specified by terms like "the impenetrable" and "the incomprehensible". The opaqueness of this new science is a new state of being of the world, which has immense consequences for our political, philosophical and artistic conceptions as well: "to withstand these [changes] we need a new breed of man: flexible, tolerant, innovative and questioning."¹ This "new man" who is at the edge of the "decline of Western hegemony and bourgeoisie civilization" (p. 18) accordingly needs to define modern art in terms of: "dissolution, fragmentation, simultaneity and decomposition". In sum, this is a definition of subversion, which is the scientific, political, philosophical and artistic replacement of the logical with the illogical in shaping the new policy of "fight against the growing international trend toward totalitarianism" (p. 1), which could be described as some kind of kaleidoscopic world view.

The political and artistic consequences of this new epistemology have clear effects on the practice of cinema, which has to be subversive or not at all. This practice of cinema, similar to the complexity of science is, as Alberto Toscano recently argued, referring to the turn that is fashionable in contemporary social science, based on the "refusal of reductionism".² This refusal, as Toscano concisely described, "suspends the criteria for distinguishing between the ideal and material" (p. 181), and could be furthermore clarified as the "(re)turn" to vitalism which at the last instance of its theoretical operation suppresses the antagonisms between materialism and idealism. Complex turns in social sciences, as well in the aesthetics, are based on the assumption of the "world's unpredictable and dynamic richness" (p. 183) in which the cognitive position becomes impossible. This ultimate "indeterminacy" (like Vogel-Einsten's "impenetrability" and "incomprehensibility") of the world is fully penetrated by the ideology of science which is constituted by the denegation of the antagonistic contradictions. In this beautiful and harmonious complexity, objects of knowledge are in endless re-figuration between idealism and materialism. This

1
Amos Vogel, *Film as Subversive Art*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974.

2
Alberto Toscano, *Partisan Thought, Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory* 17:3, 2009, p. 181.

constant re-figuration which suspends the decision between the antagonisms is the core of this philosophy. What was once material might reappear as ideal, or vice versa. The philosophical effects of this complexity turn are not the abstraction of thought, but the disqualification of the singularity and the “partisanship” of thought that should be based, as Toscano writes, on the antagonistic principles of materialism.

In reading the films by Makavejev, Vogel is most explicit in describing their “complexity”. According to Vogel Makavejev’s “viewpoint is cosmic: fragmented, kaleidoscopic and multilayered”.³ This “cosmos” is completely different from the classical cosmos of the 20th-century man. It is based on the most novel conceptions of scientific knowledge which “[as his films] express[es] time-space continuums, the absence of linear realities, the proven *inability* of our sense organs to ‘understand’ the world around us”. The epistemology which is based on the “conventions of finitude, predictability, narrowness, and order”, as was the case with the linear and narrative cinema, no longer exists for Makavejev: “the world is now *seen as infinite*, more complex than ever imagined...” (p. 51). This inability is ideological, not only because it enables to decide between antagonistic contradictions, but also because it is suspending the contradictions between the antagonisms. Vogel is dreaming of science (or of Heisenberg’s principle or Schrödinger’s cat) and retrospectively of cinema-science which would allow an entirely different spectrum of antagonistic positions or conventions to co-exist in one strange but nevertheless harmonious whole. This utopia at the same time does have very social and political consequences, and Vogel is drawing these consequences through the reading of Makavejev’s *WR*: the film is “representative of a new breed of international subversion between the October Revolution, Consciousness III (in the USA) and Wilhelm Reich p. 185” (p. 53). The utopia of this tripartite is introduced as the ideological re-formulation of contradictions, as the complexity in which the antagonisms of the structure are held in the conceptualization of wholeness. This is surely the philosophy of the New Age and apart from an epistemological stalemate it also re-produces the politics based not on struggle but on peaceful co-existence.⁴

Writing on Dušan Makavejev’s films in her book-length study thirty years after Vogel, film scholar Lorrain Mortimer is also turning to the new and more complex science in order to understand the films of this type of cinema. This science which Mortimer is hoping to develop as a guiding principle in the reading of Makavejev’s films is based on the complexity of antagonisms where the peaceful opposition is no longer between materialism and idealism, but between the philosophies of two different interpretations of “material”. These “materials” have different natures. One is abstract, intellectual, sophisticated and cultural. The other is related to the concrete, real, sensual, carnal and human. Even though throughout

the book Mortimer seemingly prefers the second “material”, there is no explicit tension between the two that would open the field for the theory of contradictions. Again, antagonisms are not regarded as contradictions, and the complexity between the two “materials” are stalemated in the utopian co-existence. Most clearly we can see this in her interpretation of the end of the film *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, where bewildered and confused Vladimir Illich – who has just cut off the head of his lover Milena, following the irresolvable tension between the intellectual and emotional or the ‘ideological’ and ‘real’ part of his consciousness – walks through the woods and finds the Gypsies sitting around a fire, a scene that is accompanied by the soundtrack of Bulat Okudzhava. “That is harmony with communal ethics,” writes Mortimer and interprets the conclusion as “the Marxian ideal of creating a society that provides for each according to his or her need, one that respects all living beings”. Finally Vladimir Illich joins the group of gypsies warming themselves around the fire in the snow.⁵ The harmony that Mortimer sees in the last sequence of Makavejev’s film is psychological because it appears as the post-traumatic solution to the irresolvable tension of the psyche. Nevertheless, this harmony also has a more effective ideological function, as it is based on the co-existence of two antagonistic positions of the “material”; one is

3
Amos Vogel, Makevejev: Toward the Edge and the Real...and Over, *Film Comment* 9:6, November-December 1973, p. 51.

Vogel employs the complexity and the impenetrability criteria in many cases of his film criticism, but as far as I know he was most explicit and enthusiastic with Makevejev and Werner Herzog which he describes the latter as: “...working solely with the materials of reality, Herzog, in a cosmic pun on *cinema vérité*, recovered the metaphysical beneath the visible. It is only in such works that we achieve intimations of the *radical humanism* of the future.” Amos Vogel, *On Seeing a Mirage*, in *Films of Werner Herzog*, ed. by Timothy Corrigan, Methuen, London, 1986, p. 46.

4
Publication Revolution and Film: Materials for Film Festival edited by Dušan Makavejev and Lazar Stojanovic in 1971 is also example of this peaceful co-existence of conglomerate epistemology.

Apart from October Revolution, Consciousness III (Psychedelic Revolution,

Parapsychology, etc.) and Reich also book includes translation of Mariguela and Black Panther’s manifesto’s, Situationist International pamphlet, Cuban Cinema discussions, Anarcho-Feminist manifesto’s (SCUM) among the others. But this “complexity” could be described with the effect of pedagogical and didactical policy of Makavejev which is important part of his general cultural policy of what he understood as socialism.

5
Lorrain Mortimer, *Terror and Joy: The Films of Dušan Makavejev*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London, 2009, p. 185. Bulat Okudzhava is “underground poet-singer” which enjoyed popularity in Soviet Union at sixties and seventies and as well in Yugoslavian films. His songs can be heard among others in Aleksandar Petrović’s *The Master and Margaret* (1972) and in Miloš ‘Miša’ Radivojević’s, *The Promising Boy* (1981).

an abstract material (the Marxian ideal) and the other is related to concrete material (the needs of human beings). But the Ideology of co-existence in Mortimer's reading of Makavejev's films is not fully realized before this inner tendency toward the harmony is established at the natural setting of the Gypsies warming around the fire. This pattern of "natural" which is strictly ideological is crucial in most of the readings of Makavejev's films. We have to grasp this "nature" in its full complications. In order to realize this, we have to understand first and foremost the epistemology of Mortimer's cinematic theory. This epistemology, similar to Vogel's, is based on the replacement of old scientific paradigms with new ones. Mortimer is very concisely describing this new science as *non-Euclidean*. She immediately emphasizes the political consequences of this knowledge as: "Euclidean mind' haunting our thinking about utopia since Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia and Pol Pot's Cambodia" (p. 58). She adds to this also "Tito's Yugoslavia without Milovan Djilas" in the pages following the above quotation. This "Euclidean mind", which is the episteme at the heart of all the various totalitarianisms, is at the same time the scientific foundation of the classical thought.

The "non-Euclidean mind", as the ontology of the 20th-century man with its *n*-dimensionality, the Theory of Relativity and complexity combined are the epistemologies of the new science that Mortimer intends to evaluate in the readings of the art of Makavejev. Showing due respect to the complexity of Mortimer's theory, we could reduce her system to two successive sources of thought. Firstly, to rational thinking that roughly corresponds to the first or abstract "material" of human knowledge. Secondly, to irrational thinking that corresponds to the second or concrete "material" of human knowledge. This concrete and irrational mind is what designs the cinema of Makavejev, but not in its absolute dominancy, it has to be in the "dialogue with the rational" (p. 29). The resurrection of the categories of co-existence and harmony is realised by the inclusion of the cinematic theory of Edgar Morin who in his book *The Cinema, or The Imaginary Man* (1957) – which he translated and introduced himself – imagines the "country where the animal, vegetable, and mineral, the spiritual and material, are in some kind of mobile continuity" (p. 28). This continuity battles against the paradigm inherited by Descartes, of "disjunction/reduction/simplification that leads us to shatter and mutilate the complexity of phenomena" (p. 29).⁶ This idealist irrationalism has a very special relation to thought, and in the introduction to Morin's book Mortimer is drawing further political consequences from it: "It was the 'mystical epileptic reactionary' Dostoyevsky, rather than all the great secular thinkers, who had more clearly seen the fanatical spirit of Bolshevism before it came into being."⁷

Mortimer takes this thought further to the field of anthropology by elaborating on the early writings by Dennis Wrong on a critique of "over-socialized conceptions of human nature",

concluding that "discursively produced and abstracted human conceptions are repressing the real human existence consisted of flesh, blood and bones" (pp. 51-53). Conjunct to this anthropology is the theory of Michael Jackson on re-enchantment, based on "libidinal and occult economies". They are not against reason, as Mortimer stresses, but against "the fetishization of a logocentric notion of reason...that has eclipsed our sense of the variety of ways in which human beings create viable lives – emotional, bodily, magical, metaphorical, practical and narrative" (p. 54). With these two elaborations we have arrived at the heart of the conception of "nature" in Mortimer's reading of the world (of Makavejev), a critique of over-socialized abstraction and an introduction of sensuous magic. However, we have yet to describe the "materiality" of this universe of the imagination, re-enchantment and the concrete. We have to arrive exactly at the core of the philosophy of the "natural".

Mortimer, in the very beginning of her book on Makavejev, writes: "To talk about Makavejev and his context we need to talk not only of fruit and flowers, of animals, even rats and mice, but of the installation of a shower, the baking of strudel, a strongman hanging from a plane by his teeth, a man singing to a horse in the snow and addressing him as God, and the magic of the severed head coming to life and speaking of its convictions" (p. 7). All these small and big things, normal and paranormal, organic and inorganic are the "materials" of Makavejev. These "materials" are primarily alluding to a concrete existence of things, but a more important and apparent allusion of this concreteness is that the "material" is related to human nature. In many readings the materiality of Makavejev's films, as we will further see in examples yet to come, is concerned with the human concreteness that has been described as the sensual or carnal. Mortimer is constructing from this "materiality" and "concreteness" a specific epistemology based on the ontology of the body or the sensual. The "carnal truth" as she calls it, is the epistemology of the trans-cultural and directly related to a "phenomenon of man", which has its "visible continuities" through man's existence in history. This is why, as she explains, we are affected by old ethnographic photos of people from different cultures. Their laughter, anger, worries and happiness are the same as ours. Over the centuries

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As quoted by Mortimer.

7

Translator's Introduction to Edgar Morin, *The Cinema, or Imaginary Man*, transl. by Lorraine Mortimer, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London, 2005, p. xvii.

and millennia nothing has changed, we are still what we have always been – men in this world. Knowledge of the “carnal truth” is nothing more than the tautology of everyday obviousness. It speaks, as Louis Althusser said, with the ideological language of repetition and identity. Not only the idealist philosophies are infected by this everlasting sameness of the human “materiality” that guarantees the continuous re-production of the trans-historical “men” or “humans” of ideology.⁸

Mortimer is so much concerned with this “carnal truth” that is based on the re-cognition of the obviousness of “materiality” (the sameness of the smile, cry or fight) that she is not even bothered if this “truth” is in contradiction with the truth introduced by the sociological, cultural or political facts. The fact, for instance, that Frank Sinatra was a puppet of the Mafia and a corrupted singer does not bother her, because Sinatra is speaking of “carnal truth”. As Mortimer puts it: “whatever he said or sang, the layer of tenderness in the grain of his voice [will always] gave him away” (p. 31-32). We will soon see that in the theory of Mortimer, even if less explicit, this is also confusing the “understanding” of the carnality of Radovan Karadžić’s racism. Nevertheless, Makavejev is a master of “carnal truth”. His mice, acrobats, partisans, fascists, gypsies, hippies – everything in his movies and all his “materials” are telling this truth of human nature.

Things in Mortimer’s cosmos become more complex when she confronts this “truth” with the concept of ideology. Considering the proposal that this “truth” is obvious, spontaneous, idealist, trans-historical and based on re-cognition we can easily conclude, following the writings of Althusser, that this is not a “truth” or cognition at all, that this is based on the spontaneous knowledge of ideology. But in confronting the concept of ideology with the “carnal truth” Mortimer is drawing two parallel conclusions in which languages are used that are very different from Althusser’s. Even if in complete opposition to Althusser’s problematic, Mortimer’s interrogation of ideology is in communication with Althusser. In fact, she is trying to develop a counter-Althusser theory related to “truth” and ideology. In principle Mortimer claims that the body and

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There are attempts too in Marxist theory, such as Sebastiano Timpanaro’s who in order to strengthen the materialistic theory of human condition and the continuity of its existence derives the theses on constant dimensions of aesthetic-cultural-biologism:

“But we should not forget either that this cultural continuity – through which, as Marx observed, we feel so near to the poetry of Homer – has also been rendered possible

by the fact that man as a biological being has remained essentially unchanged from the beginning of civilization to the present; and those sentiments and representations which are closest to the biological facts of human existence have changed little.”

S. Timpanaro, *On Materialism*, transl. by Lawrence Garner, New Left Books, London, 1975, p. 52.

sensuality are speaking of a “truth” that the discursive and constructed elements of ideology (such as sociology and culture) are distorting. The closer we are to our bodies, the lesser we are manipulated and distorted by ideologies. She takes social and epistemological approaches to this claim.

Socially it is related to Makavejev’s film subject of the “Eastern European real people”, or to the place where “the young are the most mad and mature”, which is the exact opposite of the films and lives of the petit bourgeois free world, where young bourgeois intellectuals in the crisis of “post-pubertal” leftism endlessly, dogmatically and abstractly discuss the revolution (p. 71). These “Westerners” were so much under the influence of the political-theoretical “anti-humanism” of Althusser’s Marxist structuralism, Mortimer argues, that they “had not learned lessons from history or contemporary Realpolitik about the ways that the sovereignty of an idealized ‘people’ could be used to bludgeon actual human beings, to legitimize tyrannies and maintain the domination of those who loved wielding power” (p. 72).

As usual, humanism is on the agenda here with the strategically calculated position of disqualifying the politics of the Eastern European left with the realm of their sensuality. In this trans-ideology, what matters is not the “left” or “right”, but the definitive truths which the bodies of these “left” or “right” men are reproducing in their everyday lives. This is the “concrete” condition of the human, where they could “appear in their existential plenitude, free from their ideological loading” (p. 74). The epistemological relation of carnal truth to the ideology in Mortimer’s book has been most illuminatingly described in the passage where she compares the work of Makavejev to the work of Jean Rouch. She claims that both men have the ethnographic dimension of knowledge in their movies, but this dimension would reveal itself only in “unpredictability and mystery” (p. 100). Apart from political and social circumstances of socialist conditions which, as the dogmatic ideologies, prevent the “truth” from being practiced, there are also academic theories which distort this “truth” or prevent it from being re-cognized. In the introduction to Edgar Morin’s book, Mortimer clearly specifies which academic theories are obstacles in the realization of this “imaginary cinema” that is “stripped of flesh, poetry, scepticism and imagination from film studies”. It is a theory of cinema “inspired by Louis Althusser’s brand of Marxism, film scholars advocated a kind of surgical practice, one that tended to cut out the heart, soul, even the guts of the film experience to get out the cancer of ideology” (p. xi). Here we have two Althusseres, one that is the ideologue of the political dogmatism, and the other who is the surgeon of the sensuality of real experience. We will in the following pages make more explicit the philosophical and historical conjunctures of this denegation of ideology from the cinema studies, but first we are dealing with the content of the “truth” which Mortimer recognizes in Maka-

vejev's carnality. This "carnality" is generally manifested as two antagonistic fields of Makavejev's "cosmos". One is sex and the other is death – joy and terror, in other words.

II. What is Ideological in Sex?

Almost all the readings of Makavejev's films link the "sexuality" issue – which is explicitly manifested in his films – with a certain ideological background. In these readings sex as the affirmative "material" of Makavejev's concreteness has a clear ideological association. In this chapter we will try to make this relation between the Ideology and the Sex more explicit. According to these readings, if a sense of alienation from the sensual means that human beings are under the spell of ideology and abstraction, then the practice of sex has to have an automatic affirmation of the un-ideological. This formula, as it operates in Mortimer's conceptualization, could be proscribed as: when there is sex, there shall not be ideology. But things get their famous complexity when we apply the structural dichotomy familiar to the "complex theories" to the issue of sex. According to this schema there has to be concrete, real and true sex as opposed to abstract, intellectual and false sex.

The readings of Makavejev's work, including Mortimer's, reproduce these dual sex experiences, as the dichotomies of alienated and non-alienated sex, or as the practices of fixed ideological and non-ideological positions. Many of these readings are related to the two different and antagonistic sexual orientations (Milena's and Vladimir Illich's) as the main forces of the dialectics in the film *WR: Mysteries of Organism*. These two orientations are strictly categorized with their political ideologies. Milena's orientation as the Reichian whose ambiguity ("She is dressed, but talks about fucking," or "She'd rather talk about it than do it") reminds the policy of Yugoslavia's non-alignment or being in-between, whereas Vladimir Illich as the determined communist with the Soviet origins has a more direct but Pavlovian approach to the sex. Milena's ambiguity will make her lose her head (literally), but Vladimir's narrow-mindedness and simplicity will cause him to lose his political beliefs. As we recall, at the end of the film, Vladimir kills Milena and joins the "natural" state of being. Vladimir cannot survive real and concrete sex, because he is dedicated to the abstract and kitschy sex of his ideals, which is an obstacle for him to fully penetrate the materiality of the "earth". Harking back to the terms of the earlier discussion this would mean that he was too academic and ideological to have sex with a liberated Reichian woman. Raymond Durnat in his full-length book on *WR: Mysteries of Organism* is most exemplary in his description of Vladimir: "[his] dominant ideology, rational, altruistic, Behaviourist, would construct his mind, his sense of self, *in toto*. Vladimir's dismissal of 'dying for love' as 'brutishly zoological' evokes a Marxist dismissal of Darwinism, psychoanalysis, biology (and ecology)."⁹

In order to see the connection between Vladimir's ideology, his scientific postulates and politics with sex we have to look at Thomas Elsaesser's early text on the *Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator* published in 1968. *Switchboard Operator*, the second feature film of Makavejev also deals with the impossible relation between free-woman and rigid-man, which ends with the madness of the man and the death of the woman. The man's name is Ahmed.¹⁰ In Elsaesser's interpretation Ahmed's enthusiasm for Dziga Vertov's film and Berthold Brecht/Hans Eisler's music is not part of Makavejevan irony and pastiche.¹¹ He is fully aware of the euphoric and emancipatory roles these cultural products are playing in the minds of Ahmed (and of Makavejev), but he adds that the real problem starts when euphoria and emancipation are frozen in reality and reside only as an abstraction in the memories of its believers, or its practitioners. The real problem is then that the revolution has lost its permanence or its concreteness and is recuperated into the realm of ideals. This recuperation is most explicit in the fields of sex and love: due to "communism's backwardness in recognizing human emotional needs and gender problems", together with a strong work ethic that prevails in socialist countries, "traumatizes the relations between the sexes".¹² Elsaesser is adding a new nuance to the familiar pattern of Makavejev as the "film maker of concrete versus abstract" which has deeper historical and epistemological implications. The drive for revolution, which went wrong, was an essential component of the euphoria and emancipation displayed by the socialist countries. The revolution as being made up of dense experience, vitality, vividness of the concrete has disappeared during the course of scientific socialism and turned to a memory "which became too impersonal, too abstract and schematic" (p. 323). The main reasons for this recuperation are, according to Elsaesser, sexologists and criminologists who during the film *Switchboard Operator* are explaining scientifically the film's plot. Then, Ahmed as the true

⁹ Raymond Durnat, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, British Film Institute, London, 1999, p. 47.

¹⁰ Durnat is describing Ahmed as the "Communist with the Muslim roots" and derives the explanation for the tragic end of the film from the "affinities between Islam and Socialism" (p. 88).

¹¹ Makavejev is in interview for *Cahiers du Cinema* saying that many people who heard

this song in film thought, because of the German language, that it is a Nazi song. He is adding that he deliberately chose this song in order to play with this association in Michel Delahaye, Dušan Makavejev: *Ljubavni Slučaj [Love Affair]*, *Filmske Sveske*, number 1, January 1968, Belgrade.

¹² Thomas Elsaesser, *Of Rats and Revolution: Dušan Makavejev's The Switchboard Operator* [1968], in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2005, p. 323.

communist who loves Vertov, Brecht and the Revolution, loves them as ideas in his mind, and cannot see the real emancipation of the revolution on a day-to-day basis, which is joy, euphoria, excitement, and orgasm all together.

The article of Constantin Parvulescu on the politics and sexual revolution in the work of three Eastern European film directors is most explicit in its claim that the term “sexual revolution” is a redundant one, since “revolution always, *necessarily*, is also a sexual revolution.”¹³ Parvulescu is deducing this pleonasm from the works of Marta Meszaros as the contradiction between the class origin and the love relations in the Socialist state (Hungary) or from the conflict between the labour and the sex policies through the work of Milos Forman related to another socialist state (Czechoslovakia). The labour policy of the respective socialist states is in both examples the real cause of the sexual problems; dully and gauntly it is said that “love and sexuality are distractions from the important things on the agenda of Soviet-style communism: production and five-year plan” (p. 87). The inability to manage sex issues will inevitably haunt the communist states and this repression will ruin the revolution. This has brought us to Herbert Marcuse who in his book *Eros and Civilization* developed the hypothesis on the political causes of socialized psychoanalysis; or the concept of the popularized Freudianism adopted to the organism of the social whole. Parvulescu is taking this tension between sex and revolution to the ontological sphere by asking the crucial question related to the problematic of Makavejev’s films: how much (sexual) revolution can man (and woman) endure (p. 92)? Considering the pleonasm of the term sexual revolution we can easily claim that this problematic of “to what degree can man endure the revolution” is also related to another problematic of Makavejev, the one regarding the abundance of corpses in his films.

Raymond Durnant rightly justified this conflict between man and the revolution with the Beatles’ song *Revolution* from 1968 which he took as the parole in his reading of the Makavejev’s *WR*: “You say you want a Revolution/ well you know...” What is this revolution about? It is best described by Pavlevescu through the character of Reichian Milena as the consciousness-thing based on the “spontaneity, noise, and natural” which supports the values of “diversity and originality” (p. 100, 101).¹⁴ The complexity effect of this “revolution” is an immediate task, even if we accept its impossibility, or as Pavlevescu puts: “No revolution is ready to have these values as its ultimate goals” (p. 101). We should not forget, as this reading suggests, the catastrophic effects of repressed libido and pleasure that millions of people of various socialist states suffered. From Milena’s neighbours who are chanting in the chorus that “life without fucking isn’t worth a thing” Pavlevescu is drawing far-reaching conclusions about the relation between sexuality and fascism, especially about the (red) fascism of the Soviet republic:

“The promotion of free love is an opportunity to criticize the legacy of Stalinism” (p. 99).

At the end of his intellectual elaboration the author has reduced Makavejev’s problematic to the Frommian dilemma of frightened men that run away from freedom. Once again we have arrived at the affirmative concept of the men with a “wealthy and colourful nature” endlessly reproducing themselves in the presence of the “earth”.¹⁵ This is the “man” of most of the readings of Makavejev, the man for whom his own manhood is the sole proof of the un-ideological nature of its concreteness, and “materiality”.

Nina Power in her brilliant recent article on sexuality in Makavejev’s features rethinks the above-mentioned discussions on the relation between sex and politics from the materialist point of view, by querying the content of the “materiality of Makavejev’s work”.¹⁶ Her answer is direct and unconditional; it is the “dark force that lies beneath the surface of both everyday and the universal” (p. 44). Here we have arrived at a completely different terrain than we did in the previous readings where “beneath” the Makavejev’s “earth” lie affirmation and a positive life force waiting to be emancipated. This “dark material” as a constitutive force in Makavejev’s films has also a visceral effect, but this is not linked with the celebration of sexual liberation. Power, referring to the materialism of Deleuze and Guattari, claims that the destructivity in Makavejev’s plots is due to the “quick ‘deteritorialization’ of this desire [or material]” (p. 47). Furthermore she suggests that at the core of Makavejev’s politics lies the gradualist policy of the “step-

13
Constantin Parvulescu, *Betrayed Promises: Politics and Sexual Revolution in the Films of Marta Meszaros, Milos Forman, and Dušan Makavejev*, *Camera Obscura* 71, Volume 24, Number 2, 2009, p. 77.

14
The noise in this description shall not disconcert us; in many examples of film, music or literature this “noise” is manifesting as the criteria of “natural”. Recommended reading would be Juan A. Suarez, *Pop Modernism: Noise and the Reinvention of the Everyday*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 2007.

15
Makavejev told in many interviews that during the making of *WR: Mysteries of Organism* he was completely Reichian and only 5% under the influence of Erich Fromm.

Also he is adding that even at the time of *Switchboard Operator* he was thinking through the problematic of Fromm, he was “subconsciously” a Reichian. Christian Braad Thomsen, *Lets Put the Life Back in Political Life: Interview with Dušan Makavejev*, in *Art Politics Cinema: The Cienaste Interviews*, ed. by D. Georgakas & L. Rubenstein, Pluto Press, London & Sydney, 1984, p. 84.

16
Nina Power, *Blood and Sugar: The Films of Dušan Makavejev*, *Film Quarterly*, Spring 2010, Volume 63, Number 3, p. 44.

by-step organization of liberation”.¹⁷ Theoretically, for us, today, watching the films of Makavejev it would mean that contrary to what is suggested in the agnosticism of the immediate flow of the uncontrollable force or the spontaneous expulsion of the revolutionary drive, we have to deal with these forces on their own terrain and in their own terms. This is indeed the most practical position. It allows possible theoretical and materialist readings of Makavejev’s work that are detached from the ideology of man, of freedom, “nature”, the tendency of this nature, and from all kind of “spiritualisms”. To put it in philosophical terms, using Althusserian terms, it is to avoid the “abstract empiricism” of confusing the object of knowledge with the real object.¹⁸

Alain Badiou, discussing sex as one of the “passions for the real” in the 20th century through the reading of five cases of Freud, argued that this insertion of meaning to the object of sex has ended up in “culturalist” and “spiritualist” formalizations: “The enduring aim of this ploy is to reintroduce meaning into the place of, and instead of, truth, thereby injecting the ‘cultural’ into libido. This is hermeneutic ploy, and Freud immediately saw it as an insidious negation of his discovery. Briefly, it was necessary to come back to bare sex and to its radical absence of meaning.”¹⁹

Otherwise we would end up with the constant misanthropy and nihilism of sexual politics, because as Power rightly warns that all “politics based on desire will be [always] unfair” (p. 47).

III. Corpses and their “Times”

The dark forces that Nina Power has named as the “materiality” of Makavejev’s work are also a constitutive part of many idealist readings of Makavejev. Usually this dark force is related to “death” or “corpse” and apart from their concreteness being constantly underlined, another ideological effect of these readings is the “re-humanization” of these corpses, which is either related to the processes of rehabilitation or reconciliation. As Mortimer wrote: “I

want to get blood, flesh, and bones in the picture, to bring back not ‘the body’, the reified and abstracted one of much social theory, but the tortured, slaughtered, decaying bodies of people whose lives were cut short, people loved and remembered by others” (p. 189).

The famous film critic and film theoretician Cavell, after watching a film experiment of Makavejev at Harvard University in 1978, in which he compiled silent sequences from Ingmar Bergman’s various films and produced a strange cinematic experience, wrote a long article on Makavejev’s films which is still very influential and often referred to. Cavell’s point of departure is that Makavejev’s films are truly “concrete” works of art. Writing about *Sweet Movie* he claims that “it is the most concentrated work that follows the idea that the way to assess the state of the world is to find out *how it tastes*.”²⁰ Immediately after this methodological proposition, Cavell adds that “orthodox epistemologists” established in Film Theory cannot penetrate this truth. Cavell’s proposal is a gustatory methodology of knowledge, or, as he expresses it with the language of exorcism, the method in which these things “work themselves out” (p. 18). According to him the films of Makavejev are formally and spiritually complex structures (for example, they are endless variations between the documentary and the fictional form) which he describes as “films of excavation” (p. 19). This method which would possibly lead to the gustatory experience of the art work is in the end a “reconstruction of something lost or broken”, which eventually could contribute to a better understanding of ourselves. As Cavell puts it: “This search [the excavation] at once traces the integrity of the individual strata of a history and plots the positions of *adjacent strata*” (p. 19). This is not only important as the practices of excavation popularized by the spiritualized psychoanalysis of “digging to unearth buried layers of the psyche” (p. 19), but this methodology has at the same time far-reaching philosophical consequences. According to Cavell this philosophy based on a “principle of aligning the adjacent strata” is directly related to the overall film form of Makavejev’s work. This is the principle of

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This step-by-step is the part of Makavejev’s policy which he best described in a famous interview for *Film Quarterly* as:

“we have to fight power with spontaneity and humour, but in a more organized way than it is done...kind of well organized anarchy”.

R. Sitton, J. R. MacBean, Ernest Callenbach, *Fight Power with Spontaneity and Humor: An Interview with Dušan Makavejev*, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. XXV, no. 2, Winter 1971-72, pp. 3-9.

18

Louis Althusser & Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, Verso, London, 2009, p. 148.

19

Alain Badiou, *The Century*, transl. By Alberto Toscano, Polity, Cambridge and Malden, 2007, p. 78.

20

Stanley Cavell, *On Makavejev On Bergman*, in Cavell on Film, ed. by William Rothman, State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 2005. This “experiment” (in the classical sense of it, as the experimenting with the effects of film to people’s behaviour) was part of the “Bergman and Dreams” conference organized at Harvard University.

The papers of the conference together with the Makavejev’s statement which he co-authored with M. Duda (*Bergman’s Non-Verbal Sequences: Source of a Dream Film*

Experiment) and the earlier version of Cavell’s text were published in the book which Vlada Petric edited: *Film & Dream: An Approach to Bergman*, Redgrave, New York, 1981.

Makavejev and this alignment has a different meaning than the montage of Eisenstein and the collages of Surrealists.

Alignment of the history and plot in positions of adjacency is possible only with the reintroducing of the historicist conception of history. 'Historical time' has its own tendency, linearity, integrity, and homogeneity and is the history of ideology, a practical field which makes possible the similarity or adjacency between the moments of linear development. Before dealing with the consequences of this historicism for Film Theory we have to ask what the "materials" of this adjacency are. Or we could ask: What constitutes the kinship between the various "materials" (wars, plots, revolutions, fascisms, etc) of the historicist development? A philosophical answer to this would obviously, by the logic of its own schema, imply that the absence of the contradiction between different "materials" is a pre-condition for the alignment to be realised. But this move is not sufficient to "theoretically" satisfy the adjacency between the proximal materials. This thought would need one more step in this operation to fulfil the task of historicist application. It has to name the historical "materials" as the "concrete", as the "real" things, which are beyond earth and history, which actually will reside for a long time in their "materiality" beneath our conception.

These historical materials are, as Cavell puts the real bones of the famous and infamous actors of the various plots of history. This principle of historicism based on the materiality of the bones has "significance as the intersection of nature and history, as a task of a continuous and natural unfolding of interpretations, each felt as a complete and each making possible the next, until a human form of life fits together" (p. 20). The same principle of alignment with adjacency is also operative in the film editing technique favoured by André Bazin as 'continuous shooting', which Cavell compares to the excavation method. Bazin primarily developed this principle in his analyses of the films of Orson Welles and has been described by Andrew Dudley as the "invisible montage". It is most clearly explained in the writings of Bazin that are related to the technique of sequence shooting as the new language of *decoupage*. Bazin describes this technique as such: "If, through a deliberate effort of attention, we try to see the ruptures imposed by the camera on the continuous unfolding of the event represented, and try to understand clearly why we normally take no notice of them, we realize we tolerate them because they nevertheless allow an impression to remain of continuous and homogenous reality...this is universal psychological experience."²¹ This is a very sensitive issue to deal with in the limited



21

Andre Bazin, *Orson Welles: A Critical View*,
tranl. Jonathan Rosenbaum, Elm Tree
Books, London, 1978, p. 77.

Anonymous

(Used as a mass noun) is a group whose members are geographically spread around the world but connected through the Internet, initiating active civil disobedience, while attempting to maintain anonymity. Originating in 2003 on the image board 4chan, the term refers to the concept of many online community users simultaneously existing as an anarchic, chaotic, global brain.

It is also generally considered to be a blanket term for members of certain Internet subcultures, a way to refer to the actions of people in an environment where their actual identities are not known.

See Troll, p. 191

Anti-Film

The concept of anti-film was proposed by a group of film amateurs led by *Mihovil Pansini* and *Tomislav Kobija* during discussions held in Cinema Club Zagreb, in 1962 and 1963. They concluded that anti-film was not a film of conveyance, expression or communication between artist and the viewer, but an act of disclosure, exploration and reduction. There were multiple reductions: the reduction of the author to his work, then the reduction of narration, of expressive means in the film, or rational metaphor, traditional communication with the viewers, etc.

“Anti can be understood according to the dominant disposition of the group as a negation of official art tendencies, but also as an awareness that their artwork is barely acceptable or is (?) unacceptable as art. Likewise, anti can be seen in the context of gorgonic emphasis on the ideas of anti-art and anti-painting, as well as their affinity with the literature of the absurd, anti-drama and anti-film.”

See GeFF, p.131

Avala film

Film production enterprise founded in Belgrade in 1945 that became the largest production house in Yugoslavia.

Flagship projects were partisan epic films and commercial comedies, but they were also involved in numerous co-productions of mainly German and Italian films. In the 1960s they produced each year a feature film by a young author who had won an international prize for short film, that is how they produced films of Makavejev, Žilnik, etc.

See Surfing the Black Zine No. 2, p. 157

Barka, Jimmy

Where can I go, but wander? On the banks of the river and next to the train station left alone for a time, but always with a companion. Jimmy Barka never questioned his nature, and instead of driving headlong into the future he preferred to stroll — giving himself enough time to take things in, to find strategies. He never drifted far from being that small boy, Janko Bugarski, the one that stole a boat with the purpose of undertaking a pleasure cruise. A cruise of escape that would never leave his mind. Barka never wished to take up an occupation, but instead would enlist his talents, whether they be talents or not, to get by.

We should not partake in any back story for Jimmy: to do so would be to offer him excuses. And he would not want it that way. Jimmy knew his place and he was comfortable conforming to it. Things would just fall in line, and to think any differently would be to offer one hope.

NM

See Kad budem mrtav i beo, p. 134

Barka, Džimi

A young man with no job and no real desire to work, without real shelter or real support, he wanders around small towns while singing at fairs and engaging in meaningless relationships with women. He is a social outcast whose life doesn't have any direction, past or future, but just intense moments of present happenings. He chooses to have no purpose.

He does not choose even the women who are with him; they rather chose him. The cheated and humiliated former warden of the construction site (where Džimi used to work)

shoots him with a rifle while Džimi was using the wooden outdoor toilet. With his pants down and blood on his face his meaningless life comes to an end in the wooden outdoor toilet.

BF

See Nikolić, Dragan, p. 161

Biće skoro propast sveta

It Rains in my Village (1968) is a colour feature film written and directed by Aleksandar Petrović. Cast includes Annie Girardot, Ivan Palúch, Mija Aleksić, Eva Ras, Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović, Dragomir 'Gidra' Bojanić. Produced by Avala film, Les Productions Artistes Associés and nominated for 1969 Palme d'Or.

Black

This publication was offset printed using PANTONE Red 032U for the essay sections and all available iterations of Pantone Black for the rest of the publication.

Body in Early Works

“The whole film is a physical performance, a kinaesthetic version of body art, where everything revolves around the body and everything is done with the body — the body is exposed to view, beaten up, dragged through the leaves and mud, tortured by burning, squeezing, being dragged by a car, fed and emptied, buried, caressed, pleased, suckled, carried, poisoned, resurrected, raped, nasty dirtied, carefully washed, exposed to coldness, killed, burnt.”

“Early works are truly a proletarian film in unexpected literalness of the term – the only important investment of protagonists in their adventure are their bodies.”

(Goran Gocić)

See Rani Radovi, p. 167

See Jugoslava, p. 134

Borba

Was the official daily newspaper of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. It was founded in Zagreb in 1922, banned in 1929 and regular circulation continued only after WWII, when the publishing was moved to Belgrade. For a long time, pages in the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets were alternated in the same edition.

The first organised attack on what was later to be called the Black Wave films was published in a special section of Borba — Reflektor in the issue of August 3, 1969. A supplement written entirely by Vladimir Jovičić had the title 'Black Wave in Our Film', which was the first time the term Black Wave appears.

Buđenje pacova

The Rats Woke Up (1967) is a black and white feature film directed by Živojin Pavlović and written by Dragoljub Ivkov, Ljubiša Kozomora, Gordan Mihić and Momčilo Milankov. Cast includes Severin Bijelić, Pavle Vuisić, Milivoje Tomić, Tomanija Đuričko and Ljubomir Čipranić. Produced by Filmska radna zajednica it has won the Silver Berlin Bear for Best Director 1967 and the Silver Arena at the Pula Film Festival for Best Director in 1967.

See Essay by Owen Hatherley p. 179

Čengić, Bato

(Maglaj, 1933 – Sarajevo, 2007).
Film director and writer.

See The Role of my Family In the World Revolution p. 193

Class Struggle

Yugoslavia proclaimed that class struggle was over, that the workers were victorious and that there was no class division.

Constitution changes

True to the concept of the withering away of the state, Yugoslavia opted for constitution changes after the break with the Soviet Union. The concept of the continuously transforming society materialised most in the frequent changes of the constitution.

The Constitution was changed in 1946, 1953, 1963, and 1974, and minor changes were occurring at other times. Some of these changes brought also the change in the name of the state. The 1974 the Constitution was the longest constitution ever in the world. Ironical for a state that wanted to make itself disappear.

Consumerism

“Socialist society is actually per definition a consumer society, because it has to meet the basic needs of the broad working masses and to provide more of the results of material and spiritual culture.”

Contemporary Yugoslav Cinema

Was a film program curated by Willard Van Dyke, Director of the Department of Film of MoMA in the Museum of Modern Art, which featured ten filmmakers from Yugoslavia and twelve feature films. Van Dyke described the new Yugoslav film in the press release as “inquiring, doubting, enigmatic and sometimes deeply critical of the society from which it springs. Its heroes are the defeated, the bewildered, and the unsatisfied savage young.” The program lasted for twelve days (November 13 – November 25, 1969) and featured films by —

Bato Čengić (Playing at Soldiers)
Boro Drašković (Horoscope)
Branko Ivanda (Gravitation, or the Fantastic Youth of Boris Hervat, the Clerk)
Dušan Makavejev (Innocence Unprotected)
Đorđe Kadijević (The Journey)
Gordan Mihić and Ljubiša Kozomara (Crows)
Krešo Golik (I Have Two Mommies and Two Dadies)

Vatroslav Mimica (Kaya I'll Kill You and The Event)
Živojin Pavlović (Ambush and When I am Dead and Pale)
Želimir Žilnik (Early Works)

Boro Drašković, Dušan Makavejev, Želimir Žilnik, Živojin Pavlović and Branko Ivanda took part in the showings. On the occasion of that visit they were shown films by Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey, and met with Jonas Mekas.

Cinema club

The cinema clubs offered opportunity for avant-garde experimentation and self-organisation in line with socialist self-management and some form of political engagement. In that regard, cinema clubs, and later the student cultural centres, became extra-systemic spaces of autonomy that bore witness to the development and coexistence of parallel systems of culture in relation to the official one. The institutional framework thus showed itself as being prone to reconfiguration, reinvention and adjustment and enabled paradigmatic twists in film and artistic production.

The cinema clubs at the time (prior to home-video) were also more or less the only way to gain access to the filmmaking technology and equipment. So it was mostly here that photographers or amateur film enthusiasts educated the people regarding the whole chain of production methods of filmmaking. Cinema clubs were organised within the framework of Narodna tehnika.

See Narodna tehnika, p. 157

Citroën 2CV

(French: 'deux chevaux', literally: 'two tax horsepower') was an economy car produced by the French car manufacturer Citroën between 1948 and 1990. It was technologically advanced and innovative, but with uncompromisingly utilitarian unconventional looks, and deceptively simple Bauhaus inspired bodywork that belied the sheer quality of its underlying engineering.



It was designed to move the French peasantry on from horses and carts. It is considered one of Citroën's most iconic cars. In Yugoslavia it was nicknamed 'spaček' and was considered to be along with Citroën's Dyana the car of the 60s and 70s liberated generation. It is prominently featured in the film 'Early Works'.

Commission for Foreign Cultural Relations

Was a federal body that was coordinating all official representations of Yugoslav culture abroad, as well as cultural co-productions and collaborations. The *jury for the selection of films for foreign festivals* was part of the commission and would from the annual Yugoslav film production choose films and send them to foreign film festivals.

Members of the jury were filmmakers like Dušan Makavejev and Aleksandar Petrović, who were both members in 1960s. Black Wave films, notorious for their success at international festivals, were also chosen by the jury.

Crni film

Black Film (1971) is a black and white documentary short, written and directed by Želimir Žilnik. Cinematography is by Karpo A. Godina, editing by Kaća Stefanović and it was produced by Neoplanta, Novi Sad.

The documentary addressed the issue of homelessness in socialist Yugoslavia and the inability of the system to admit and solve the problem. The name is an appropriation of the phrase that was given to all films as an attack on the 'Black Film /Black Wave'. See Homeless, p. 133

Declaration on the 'Black Film'

1
You are observing the class structure of Yugoslav society. The lumpenproletariat and "humanist intelligentsia". Instrumentalised exploitation of the poor for filmic purposes. A lesson to family Žilnik regarding the hungry, the dirty and the stinky. The child needs to be shown what life really is.

2

In the country that is not quite sure in its name, hymn nor government, at the moment when basic needs (bread, milk and dollars) are becoming increasingly expensive, the film caste is narcissistically enjoying in the "elaboration" of the workers' and peasants' suffering. This enables them, as constitutive elements of the part of civic structure that manipulates with society, an illusion of engagement and compassion.

3

Everybody should be screwed, including oneself. Starting with scattering one's own's marital bed! How would we feel if the wretches would really start putting it up to our asses? Luckily that is not going to happen.

4

I still need to make socially engaged films though. Because I am confronting two enemies – Firstly, my petit bourgeois nature that transforms my engagement into an alibi and a business opportunity and secondly, the powerful manipulators and structures of power who would only benefit from my silence.

5

Film – weapon or shit?

6

Look again point 4.

Culture (Market)

"I would like to comment on something, the idea of communism and equal wages, it was not in effect in this case. Market existed and Neoplanta, as a societal, and not a state company, had to be careful about investing. And for his first film Žilnik had to go to the bank and sign a contract, a bank loan. He signed that he must return the money and he did, as film was successful and it returned money five times.

This is why Neoplanta was so successful, because it could earn a lot of new money and the company and directors could invest this money into the new films and the company was growing at that time. So, it was not financed by the state, as it was not a state company. It was something between - it is neither private nor state, it was societal, something like public-private partnership today. And all filmmakers were actually freelancers. They didn't have fixed wages, all of them earned different fees according to

success of the film on the market. But almost all were quite successful.

This is just to think how in this communist-socialist idea culture is really and already observed as a market. Cultural industry working under the conditions of market. Of course, state was also responsible for all cinema theatres which were built and where you could show films and earn money, but also media, reporting advertising, everything was functioning quite well, but as an industry.” (Boris Buden)

Ćosić, Bora

(Zagreb, 1932) Writer. His novel ‘The Role of my Family in the World Revolution’ that he adapted into a screenplay for the film of the same title won in 1969 the Nin Book prize, at the time one of the most distinguished book prizes in Yugoslavia.

He was an editor of the magazine ‘Rok’ about art and culture published in the 1960s in Belgrade.

Čovek nije tica

Man is Not a Bird (1965) is a black and white feature film directed by Dušan Makavejev and written by Dušan Makavejev. The cast includes Milena Dravić, Janez Vrhovec, Eva Ras, Stole Arandelović and Boris Dvornik.

Produced by Avala film it has won the Silver Arena at Pula Film Festival in 1965 for Best Actor.

See Essay by Owen Hatherley p. 179

Dravić, Milena

(Belgrade, 1940). Actress, one of the most important Yugoslav actresses, established herself both in commercial partisan spectacles and experimental Black Wave films.

She collaborated with Dušan Makavejev, Živojin Pavlović and Puriša Đorđević. In Makavejev’s W.R. Mysteries of Organism she plays the role of revolutionary Milena.

See also Milena, p. 154

Dražević, Ratko

First director of Avala film that opened the door of this big production house to Black Wave filmmakers.

See Surfing the Black Zine No. 2, p. 57

(Dutch) Squatters’ Movement

Some of the prominent members of the squatters’ movement in the Netherlands came from the early 1960s anarchist movement Provo. Squatting became legal in the Netherlands in 1971, when the Supreme

Court ruled that the concept of domestic peace (huisvrede) (which means a house cannot be entered without the permission of the current user) also applied to squatters. This meant that owner had to take squatters to court in order to evict them.

Once the building was squatted the police were invited to inspect to confirm that building was indeed occupied by the squatter. To consider a house occupied it has to contain a bed, a chair, a table and a working lock on the door that the squatter can open and close. Dutch squatter activists in the 1970s were marking empty buildings by putting up a poster that read, “Ik sta leeg, kraak mij!” – in English, “I’m empty (vacant), squat me!” – to invite people to move in. With the passing of the Squatting Ban Bill on October 1, 2010 squatting has been made illegal in NL.

See Our Polite Society poster, p. 25

See also Homeless, p. 133

Džimi Barka

Where can I go, but wander? On the banks of the river and next to the train stations, solitary for a time, but always with a companion; Jimmy Barka never questioned his nature, and instead of driving headlong into the future, he preferred to stroll — giving himself enough time to take things in, and to strategies.

He avoided drifting too far from that scrawny boy, Janko Bugarski, the one that commandeered a boat with the purpose of a pleasure cruise. A cruise of escape that would not leave him.



Barka never wished to take up an occupation, instead he preferred to enlist his talents, whether they be talents or not, to get by. We will not partake in any back story for Jimmy; to do so would be to offer him an alternative, and he'd not like there to be excuses. Jimmy knew his place and he was comfortable conforming to it. Things would just fall in line and to think any different would be to offer hope.

NM

Early Works

(Marx and Engels) Were translated and published in Yugoslavia after WWII and were part of the curriculum for the subject Marxism, compulsory in all secondary schools. As a topic for his secondary school graduation paper, Želimir Žilnik took the early works of Marx and his letter to Ruge. The screenplay of "Early Works" was loosely based on this paper. Marx's quotes proclaimed by the actors in the film come from that study.

Fajfrić, Bojan

An artist from Belgrade and very big fan of the Black Wave, who moved to the Netherlands at a young age pursuing an artistic career while the war in Yugoslavia was ending (the Dayton agreement was being signed). After a short but successful career in the world of commercial art galleries, he made a career switch and became a video / film maker.

His passion (for the Black Wave films) influenced this change, but at the same time he believed that after the Black Wave there was not much left for him to say about art and society, and how they influence each other.

Finally, he decided to face his frustration by taking over the roles of 6 major Black Wave characters: Milena (p.15), Jugoslava (p.15), Ivo-Vrana (p.15), Tom (p.15), and Džimi Barka (p.15). He re-enacted the executions that took place at the end of each film:

1 'WR: Mysteries of Organisms' (1971) by Dušan Makavejev

- 2 'Early Works' (1969) by Želimir Žilnik
- 3 'The Ambush' (1969) by Živojin Pavlović
- 4 'Plastic Jesus' (1971) by Lazar Stojanović
- 5 'When I Am Dead And Gone' (1969) by Živojin Pavlović

Bojan believed that this was the only way to be able to enter the historical narrative, to deal with his "heroes" and possibly thereafter continue his career as a film artist.

BF

Film Newsreel

(Filmske novosti) Founded in 1944, following the liberation of Belgrade. The basic activity of FN was the recording, storing, producing and distributing of film and video material pertaining to social, economic, cultural life and sports in Yugoslavia. Initially it focused on documenting the work on rebuilding and modernising the country after WWII.

FN was actively engaged in documenting the activities of Yugoslav president Tito both nationally and internationally. During his sojourns abroad, film crews of FN recorded numerous stories about everyday life in the countries Tito visited. Blackwave filmmakers used on some occasions the facilities of FN to edit their short films.

Film work collective

(Filmska radna zajednica) After economic reforms in Yugoslavia in 1965, when self-management was also implemented in the field of culture, it was possible for filmmakers and other workers in that field, to self-organise in interest labour collectives and thus participate more independently in the economy and production.

"Film-as-Praxis"

The filming is conceived as a kind of game. Each new film project functions as a continuation of a social experiment.

The problem is defined, the situation is established, the process of shooting has started. The creation of the film works simultaneously as:

- 1 the possibility to resolve given questions/issues
- 2 exercise in establishing a new cultural cell/formation and
- 3 a reflection of what will (or will not) be achieved during the production processes.

Therefore, even when at the end of the shooting the addressed problems are not entirely solved, the shooting itself continues to function as a significant episode of social activism. (Pavle Levi)
See Crni film, p. 127

GeFF — Genre Film Festival

Biennial film festival established by film enthusiast and cine-amateur Mihovil Pansini in 1963 in Zagreb that lasted until 1970. The festival gathered film enthusiasts and films of the cinema clubs from all over Yugoslavia. The GeFF Book documented the events and discussions at the first festival, most importantly the so-called five discussions on anti-film. It is the only document on the emergence of the concept of anti-film.

Godina, Karpo

(Skopje, 1943). Karpo Godina Acimovic is a cinematographer and film director, l'enfant terrible of the Black Wave, whose specific visual style marked many of the films. He collaborated closely with Želimir Žilnik. Similar to other filmmakers, he started his career in a cinema club in Ljubljana, where he also graduate at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film, and Television.

Gorgona

Named after the mythological creature of Gorgon, it was an avant-garde art group from Zagreb which consisted of artists, art historians and philosophers such as Dimtrije Bašičević-Mangelos, Miljenko Horvat, Marijan Jevšovar, Julije Knifer, Ivan Kožarić, Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar, Đuro Seder, Josip Vaništa who were operating along the lines of anti-art in the period

between 1959 and 1966. Beside intervention into the art field, their practice included running a gallery and publishing the anti-magazine Gorgona.

See Anti Film, p. 123

Gotovac, Tomislav

(Tom) (Sombor, 1937 – Zagreb, 2010). Avant-garde film director and performer who combined visual arts, the avant-garde, experiment, feature and documentary films, performance, body art and conceptual art. Won prizes at GeFF in 1963, 1965 and 1970. Made Forenoon of a Faun in 1963.

He helped found the Belgrade Cinema Club and starred in the film Plastic Jesus for which he was harassed and sued by the authorities in 1972. He studied film directing at the Academy of Theatre, Film, Radio and TV in Belgrade from which he graduated in 1976. In 2005 he changes his name to Antonio G. Lauer. He is known to say, "When I open my eyes in the morning I see film".

Gratinirani mozak Pupilije Ferkeverk

The Gratinated Brains of Pupilija Ferkeverk (1970) is a short film written, directed, shot and edited by Karpo A. Godina. The cast includes Oblak Bard, Manca Čermelj, Milan Jesih, Matjaž Kocbek, Tomaž Kralj and Ivo Svetina. The typographic intermissions are by Slobodan Mašić. Produced by Neoplanta film.

Helvetica

A widely used sans-serif typeface designed in 1957 by Swiss typeface designer Max Miedinger with Eduard Hoffmann. It is often regarded as the hallmark of the International Typographic Style (also known as the Swiss Style) a progressive graphic design movement derived from modernism.

Although there is no physical evidence to confirm this, it is a widely believed that the



first lead or metal Helvetica letter forms to be used in Yugoslavia were acquired by the Graphic Institute in Zagreb in the early 1960s at the request of Ivan Picelj, a Croatian painter, sculptor and graphic designer and founding member of the progressive EXAT 51 group. According to Picelj, Helvetica represented the face of modernity.

Another Yugoslavian graphic designer who has extensively used Helvetica is Slobodan Mašić who has designed numerous title sequences (see Žilnik's Early Works) as well as posters for the movies of the Black Wave. His use of Helvetica differs from a strictly grid-based approach of the Swiss Style and is applied with a casual and loose approach associable with counter culture and pop-art.

ZT

Henie, Sonia

(Oslo, 1912 – on an Oslo-bound airplane, 1969) was a Norwegian figure skater and film star. She started competing at the age of nine and in the course of her competitive career won more Olympic and World titles than any other female figure skater.

When she ended her competitive skating career, she started performing in acting and live shows and moved to Hollywood. At the peak of her acting career she was one of the biggest earners in Hollywood.

Homeless

After WWII Yugoslavia proclaimed *the right to housing*, claiming that it is “the basic legal institution providing the working man with one of the important means of life” (Conclusions of the First Yugoslav Forum on Housing and Construction, 1956). This effectively meant that society was responsible for providing housing for its citizens. A flat was considered a right and not a commodity.

Flats were distributed through the work places and all working people invested in housings fund by obligatory deductions from their salaries. Additional money for investment came from the profits

of enterprises owned by society. The first issue of the architectural magazine “Čovjek i prostor” (Man and Space) published by the Zagreb Society of Architects had this slogan prominently printed on the cover. However, the country became speedily modernised and urbanised and many people migrated from the villages to the cities, so it was impossible to build a sufficient number of flats. Furthermore, some of the enterprises were not profitable enough to invest in flats so many injustices in distribution occurred.

As the problem of homelessness was not supposed to appear, there was a certain structural blindness of the system to acknowledge the problem and think of solutions. Forced to solve the problem of housing themselves, people often resorted to illegal self-building in the outskirts of the major cities on the arable land.

Inflation

(of Radical Phrases as Opposed to a Lack of Radical Action) Poster project, part of Surfing the Black.

The title phrase was taken from Wolfram Schuette's review 'Critical and Destructive: Želimir Žilnik's Early Works' originally published in German in Frankfurter Rundschau on July 7, 1969 as part of a report on the Berlinale festival.

Ivo Vrana

Eighteen years old Dalmatian who, having lost parents in the war, goes to Serbia to live with his relatives. He is a young man possessed by the spirit of the revolution and he voluntarily participates in actions designed to eliminate Chetniks in eastern Serbia in 1945.

Ivo tries to use the ideology in everyday life and in this attempt experiences the disintegration of ethics that leads to a tragic event; he is captured by the village patrol that mistakes him for a Chetnick. Because it is impractical to take him to the village since he is a suspicious person likely to escape, he is killed on the spot.

BF

Jan van Eyck Academie

Post-academic institute for research and production in fine arts, theory and design. On June 28–29, 2010 the Surfing the Black conference took place at JVE. The Surfing the Black book would not exist without JVE, as four researchers met and found common interest in this topic at the institute and received support to make this project.

During the completion of this book, in the summer of 2011, following the elections, the Dutch cultural policy changed and the Ministry of Culture decided to end the funding of JVE and other Dutch post-academic institutions, thus putting an end to research and internationalism, which is what the institute has been renowned for. Inevitably, personnel changes ensued and the institution as we knew (and liked) disappeared. We managed to complete our project, but JVE ceased to be the place where projects like this are possible to develop.

Ironically, 40 years after the attack on the Black Wave it seems that the Dutch constellation or affects of the new policies are already taking a similar course. In the case of Yugoslavia it led to the termination of the massive experiments of the Black Wave and Yugoslav art and the cultural production in general.

Jimmy Barka

Where can I go, but wander? On the banks of the river and next to the train stations, solitary at times, but always not too far from a companion. Jimmy Barka never questioned his nature, and instead of driving headlong into the future, he preferred to stroll-- giving himself enough time to take things in, and strategies before skipping.

He avoided drifting too far from that little boy, Janko Bugarski, the one that commandeered a boat with the purpose of a pleasure cruise. A cruise of escape that would not leave him. Barka never dared to take up an occupation, instead he preferred to enlist his talents, whether they be talents or not, to get by.

We will not partake in any back story for Jimmy; to do so would be to offer him an alternative, and he'd not like there to be any excuses. Jimmy knew his place and he was comfortable living there. Things would just fall in place and to think any differently would be to offer hope.

NM

See also Fajfrić, Bojan, p. 130

Jovanović, Jovan

(Belgrade, 1940). Film director, screenwriter and editor. Notable films are *Izrazito ja* (1967) and *Kolt 15 Gap* (1971).

See also Mlad i zdrav kao ruža, p. 154

Jugoslava

Radical student, an activist travelling through rural Serbia with her 3 comrades. Shaken by the political turbulences of 1968 (primarily the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia) and disenchanted by the student protests, this revolutionary group, inspired by the writings of young Marx, goes to the country in the hope to assist workers and peasants in their fight for emancipation.

Frustrated because their revolution was not successful, the three young men decide to eliminate Jugoslava, who witnessed their impotence. They shoot her, cover her with the party flag and then set her on fire with a Molotov cocktail.

BF

Kad budem mrtav i beo

When I Am Dead and Gone (1967) is a black and white feature film directed by Živojin Pavlović and written by Gordan Mihić and Ljubiša Kozomora. The cinematography is by Branko Vukadinović, it has been edited by Olga Skrigin and the cast includes Dragan Nikolić, Ružica Sokić, etc.

It has been produced by Centar film, Belgrade and won the Golden Arena 1968 at the Pula Film Festival of Yugoslav Films.



Inflation of Radical Phrases as Opposed to a Lack of Radical Action

From "Early Works" (1969) by Želimir Žilnik

"In the eyes of the despot, men are always debased. They drown before his eyes and on his behalf in the mire of common life from which, like toads, they always rise up again. Muta pecora, prona et ventri oboedientia. ["The herd is silent, docile and obeys its stomach."] For our part, it is our task to drag the old world into the full light of day and to give positive shape to the new one." (Letter from Marx to Arnold Ruge)



Early Works

1

scope of this essay, but we have to note that Bazin has underlined the intelligibility and the abstractness of this process of the realization of reality. In his philosophy this realization is too quickly happening without taking a necessary detour for abstraction, which is based on the postulates of revelation driven by the metaphysical conception of history as propagated by Mounier or de Chardin.²²

If the sameness of the concrete materials of the world constitutes its "nature" and "history" through continuity, the film art that claims to be real will be structured on the editing table as a continuous experience as well. Art has to regain its lost wholeness, "to reconstruct its break", or to claim its integrity. This mimicry of the world by film art is not a simple mimicry of the Aristotelian classical schema; it is based on a complex set of elements. This would be clear if we look at the thought operation of Cavell from the point of his discovery of continuity. After this discovery Cavell expands his philosophy with a claim that Makavejev uses a natural time of continuity to such an extent that his films could appear to us as being a real world that can be "tasted". This possible taste is acquired not only by the historicist ideology used, but also through the ability of these films to reveal the hidden things, or the hidden history. In order to achieve this, the film work has to investigate its truth not through the rational logic of its own discourse, but through the "intuition" that would make the invisible montage of the world apparent. In this case the films of Makavejev are not about the conceptual configuration of the world, they are directly related to the world. They are films that become the world.

This ideology is taken further by the film critic Charles Warren. Under the influence of Cavell, Warren described Makavejev's films as earth-like or a "commitment to the body, a quality of earth, which insists on the body and physical quality of what is before the camera". Furthermore, according to Warren these are the "moments of history apprehensible as such".²³ This apprehension to Cavell happened at the moment of intuition of his thought which following the feast-scene with Otto Muehl's Commune in *Sweet Movie* that associated him of Karl Marx's characterization of religion as the heart of the heartless world (!) arrived at Carl Gustav Jung's

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Bazin described this retort and un-detoured abstraction as necessity: "Obliged to exercise his liberty and his intelligence, the spectator perceives the ontological ambivalence of reality directly, in the very structure of its appearance" (p. 80). For Bazin's metaphysical origins see Dudely Andrew, *Andre Bazin*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1978, p. 66 -69, p. 106.

23

Charles Warren, *Earth and Beyond: Dušan Makavejev's WR: Mysteries of Organism*, in *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, ed. by C. Warren, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover & London, 1996, p. 206.

archetype-haunted dream on the “secrets of the earth”.²⁴ The “missing heart of the world” is compensated by the archetypes of the collective unconsciousness; or the world of Marx is healed by the parapsychology of Jung. In the archetypal dream the secret of the earth is revealed to Jung as the bones resting in the trans-historical time at the bottom of the cave. It is not surprising that Cavell in his intuitive investigation comes to the same conclusion; the bones and the corpses of history as the real earthiness of the world and of Makavejev’s films. His moment of history of this apprehension is the Katyn Forest massacre which he describes as the “ultimate evil” of modern history. This sequence of the dark side of history is re-presented in the film *Sweet Movie* as archival material. This intuition, apart from establishing the materiality that is ‘concrete’ in the films of Makavejev, is also describing this material with the terms of death and terror. By underlining the Katyn massacre as the ultimate dark force Cavell proposes a political explanation for this morbidity, which is Stalinism. We will in the following pages see what this Stalinism stands for, but for now it is important to stay with the line of intuition of Cavell, which ends the story with a moral tale. Even if *Sweet Movie* is “picturing the earth full of corpses”, its ultimate lesson is that “fight for freedom continues to originate in the demands of our instincts, the chaotic cry of our nature, our cry to have a nature” (p. 26).

Lorrain Mortimer took this intuition even further, and developed the whole historicist explanation of the world through the films of Makavejev. In this world the bones and the dead occupy a very crucial place. They do not rest in the memories of the people, but are at the core of our understanding of the world which is based on carnality. The bones are the ultimate of carnal truth. They are the guarantors of our “nature” that has yet to be reconciled with the overly socialized and secular world. They are, according to Mortimer, the imaginary, emotional and somatic part of our knowledge that in many cases has more far-reaching consequences than the economical, political or cultural realms. Not to listen to and understand this realm will inevitably end in cataclysm, as was case with Yugoslavia – as Mortimer tries to demonstrate. The fact that the Communist authorities in Yugoslavia discouraged the villagers from opening the sites and removing the remains of the ones

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Interesting comparison: in his film *Hole in the Soul* (1995), Makavejev is quoting his friend and famous Jungologist of Yugoslavia Vladeta Jerotic saying that his problem is having “hole in the soul”.

There are considerable accounts of references on Jung in Makavejev, apart from his last film, he is referring to Bergman as a

director of Jungian soap-opera (in statement *Bergman’s Non-Verbal Sequences: Source of a Dream Film Experiment* co-authored with M. Duda), furthermore his speech in *Source* series starts and ends with Jung (Dušan Makavejev, *Little Monkeys Crawling on My Shoulders*, Source of Inspiration Lectures, 6. September 1994, Sources, Amsterdam, 1995).

massacred by the Partisans had haunted the minds of the Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian men for decades, writes Mortimer. Referring to an article written by Aleksa Đilas in the early 1980s in which is argued that this resistance by the Communists to reconcile with their own horrors (“not properly buried bodies”) might have “implications for the future of the country” is, as Mortimer has it, a prophetic statement. This is a prophecy of the “carnal truth” which does not need ‘sociology’ in order to justify itself. Actually, this discourse on postponing the reconciliation (“proper burial”) was a crucial element in the ideological construction of the Yugoslavian break-up and its devastating transitional aftermath.²⁵

This is no longer about the dead who bury the dead, as Marx warned, but a step further from this, about the dead who bury the living and capture them in their trans-historical immobility.²⁶

IV. Abstract as Ideology, Concrete as Life

At the current philosophical “cosmos” where we have arrived, two dichotomous strata are determining entire readings of Makavejev’s world: an abstract world represented by the ideologies which its ultimate expression reached with Fascism and Communism, and the concrete which is the real material of Makavejev’s world, viz. sex and death. The complexity that this schema implies is actually based on the mutual re-configuration of idealist and materialist philosophies; it is suspending any world that is either materialist or idealist. They are both at the same time. There is not a dividing line, which is essential in any philosophical intervention.²⁷ The silent assumption of this worldview is that of vitalism, which at the last instance reproduces the philosophies based on idealism. In this case the concreteness which is essential for Makavejev’s world is not a

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Not only in Yugoslavia, but as Katherine Verdery tries to show in her anthropological study, ‘proper burial’ and post-socialist transition has direct link in many other countries: *Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Post-socialist Change*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999.

26
This historicist view is clearing is off the discursive terrain for many retroactive readings on the break-up of Yugoslavia.

It is not surprise that some texts are directly performing this retro-active reading through the films of Makavejev; there are many examples for this, but probably most amazing is Warren who from the formal

language of the *WR* draws this conclusion: “the explosion in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia may seem anticipated in a film such as *WR*, with its harsh juxtapositions, its tearing in so many different directions.” p. 227.

27
[Intervention] consist of ‘drawing a dividing-line’ inside the theoretical domain between the ideas declared to be true and ideas declared to be false, between the scientific and ideological”, in L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy* in *Lenin and Philosophy* and other essays, Transl. By Ben Brewster, Monthly Review press, New York, 2001, p. 37.

material of the materialist philosophy. This materiality, as we have shown, has a very strange character. It is a concreteness of idealism, or the reality of ideology. It has a life, ontology, tendency and homogeneity of its own. Furthermore, this concreteness is the merit of the ultimate truth, which has been labelled as “carnal truth”. This carnality reveals its truth either as the real spatial performance as in sexuality or joyfulness (because fucking takes place) or at the level of the spatio-temporality of the dead and the bones (bones manifest themselves for a longer period of time). So concreteness as the idealist imagination can take place both in space and time as the real continuums of our ‘cosmos’ (the word which continuously reappears in these readings). Only those having the real and sex and the deep feeling of history can live the life of un-ideological.

This tautology is visible in almost all humanist ideologies, or as Althusser has shown, humanism is constantly reproducing itself in its absolute self-referentiality. Althusser in his famous article *Marxism and Humanism* in which he developed his anti-humanist hypotheses is primarily dealing with the humanist Marxism of the Eastern European thinkers. It is performed a theoretical reversal of this situation by re-introducing the concept of the human (via concrete and real) at the film studies where the theory of Althusser was most effective. This reversal is most strongly performed in the readings of the Eastern European cinema, especially with the readings of Makavejev’s films.

The book by James Roy MacBean on *Film and Revolution* that deals mostly with Godard’s political films aims at the very rigorous Marxist analysis of the cinema based on the counter-Bazinian position of anti-mysticism and the critical reading of Metz’s denegation of the concept of ideology.²⁸ Especially dealing with Godard’s Althusser-influenced materialist films of “the break” MacBean is aiming at the theoretization of the anti-humanism of Godard’s films. For example, referring to the political conflict between Godard the materialist and Glauber Rocha who has a spontaneous approach does not fail to describe the position favoured by the first: “Godard rejects the emotional approach as one which plays into the hand of the enemy, and seeks to combat mystification in any form, whether it comes from the right or the left” (p. 137). The book is devoted largely to the political-work of Godard. In the chapter that deals with the work of Makavejev (*Sex and Politics: Wilhelm Reich, World Revolution, and Makavejev’s WR: Mysteries of the Organism*) describes the formal similarity between the two directors (“experiments with montage and collage”) and then repeats the famous comparison that “Makavejev’s films have a greater emotional density than Godard’s most recent films” (p. 241). This emotional density re-appears in MacBean’s reading of the famous end scene with Bulat Okudzhava’s song as the invocation of the concrete humanisms of the “Communist

commitment to a just distribution among all citizens, but which also touchingly evoke the personal plight of the individual, who, no matter how great his ideals may be, remains as frail and emotionally vulnerable to the life’s troubles as the rest of us...even if his name happens to be Vladimir Ilyich” (p. 252). This humanism appears as social equality, of “each according to his need” (p. 253).²⁹ Even the most strict materialist analyses based on the critique of Bazinian mystifications in Makavejev’s cinema are letting their rigour loose and allow them to show emotions. Why is this the case with Makavejev? What makes him so appealing to the concrete humanist Ideologies? I think that the relation of Makavejev to two antagonistic communist figures, Stalin and Marx, would bring us closer to this Ideology of concreteness.

V. Makavejev and Stalin

The emotionality of Makavejev as opposed to the intellectuality and the rigour of Godard is the most common comparison between the two directors. Nina Power, who very successfully de-mystified the Ideology of sexuality in Makavejev’s interpretation, has always insisted on Makavejev’s “viscerality” and has described him as “the anti-Godard” (2010: 47). Mortimer has reproduced this difference with far-reaching political and religious consequences: “Godard’s work is marked by a denial of the actual and the sensuous in their own right...he is a Calvinist whose passions are articulated in a cerebral, masculine, ascetic-religious mode akin to those of many ‘revolutionaries’ in the past and present; Makavejev is ‘principled pagan’: hungers to understand things as they are, his intelligence wedded to a passion for living in this, our only world” (Mortimer 2009: 87-88). Raymond Durgnant contrasts the “vivacity” with which Makavejev portrayed Mao to the way Godard portrays leftist youth in *La Chinoise* who are reading Mao’s *Little Red Books* like Christians would read the *Guide to the Inner Light*.³⁰ This division can be

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James Roy MacBean, *Film and Revolution*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London, 1975.

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It is exactly with this same words that Althusser describes the Ideological “novelty” of Marxist humanism:
“it called on man finally – no longer in the imaginary world of religion, in the ‘heaven of the State’, or in the alienated abstraction of Hegelian philosophy, but on the earth, here and now, in real society – to

‘realize’ his true essence, which is the human community – ‘communism’”,
Is it Simple to be a Marxist in Philosophy? [1975], in *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of Scientists & Other Essays*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, p. 233. In which circumstances MacBean’s anti-humanist hypotheses related to Godard throughout the book turns to its opposite of Okudzhava’s communion humanism in case of Makavejev is probably one of the crucial question for us dealing with Yugoslav studies to thoroughly handle with.

summed up as Makavejev the filmmaker of emotions and sensuality, and Godard as the filmmaker of the intellect and the cerebral. Makavejev as the artist of the concrete in contrast to Godard the artist of the abstract. This division of the concrete and abstract is further contrasted with Makavejev's relation to Stalin, which ultimately is described as one of freedom contra dictatorship.

Stalin is ultimately evil, and theoretically represents the highest position of abstractness; of a total elimination of anything real, concrete and human. It is the ultimate spectacle, and as such corresponds to everything that is the opposite of truth. Stalin is the ideology.

We can approach this Stalinist ideology in relation to Makavejev's work from many different aspects:

A - Stalin as the heir of Lenin: in the film of *WR* there is a scene where Vladimir Ilyich (who obviously represents Lenin) hits Milena after their argument. Milena looks at him from a lower position completely petrified and sees his V.I. (Lenin) turned to Stalin. The Stalin that Makavejev uses is not a real Stalin, but the personified one from the movie of Mikhail Chiaureli *The Vow*. This scene according to many interpretations of Makavejev is directly proves that Makavejev's philosophy is based on the fact that Stalin is Lenin who has gone mad. As Mortimer observes with her pop-psychoanalytic phraseology: Lenin was a true neurotic who wanted to change people and help them. His asceticism, nonetheless, paved the way for Stalin's rule" (p. 183). MacBean also describes Stalinism as the psychopathological "domination which turned all of the Soviet bloc into an enormous network of insane asylums" (MacBean, p. 251). (N.B. He mistakes the Nazi Germany asylum footage which Makavejev uses in *WR* as originating from the Soviet Republic.)

He specifies the Stalin-Lenin juxtaposition as the "attempt to trace the authoritarian and repressive trends in Soviet Communism to Lenin himself" (MacBean, p. 248). Actually the scene where Makavejev is juxtaposing the image of Stalin with an image of Lenin is based on Chiaureli's film where Stalin is crying to the deceased Lenin, or the Lenin who is no longer among us. The suturing effect of the ideological continuation from Lenin to Stalin is based on the absence, the absence of Lenin as the signifier. Nevertheless this causality between Lenin and Stalin is not necessarily a political or philosophical. For example, it does not always claim that seeds of Stalinist evil lay at the heart of Leninism. It is based on the dichotomy between the concrete and the abstract. Both Lenin as the ascetic, neurotic and idealist and Stalin as the dogmatic, stiff and alienated are abstractions, in contrast to the actual persons' concreteness. This will bring us to the second important aspect.

B - Stalin as Abstraction, Abstraction as Ideology: one of the first critiques of the image of Stalin, as represented in the cinema, is written by André Bazin. This comes before Khrushchev's attack on the cult of personality. In now classical article which caused Bazin

many problems at the time when the French Communist Party was overly Stalinist he is describing the Stalin of the Soviet cinematography as the kitsch person abstracted from the real contradictions of the world, which could likely be compared to Tarzan of Hollywood. The one difference between Stalin and Tarzan is that the films about the latter do not pretend to be documentaries.³¹ Mighty as he is represented in the movies, without any faults or lacks, Stalin is ontological rather than psychological. It is because he is no longer 'human', Bazin argues, that even while he is alive he could be the main character of a film (p. 36). This is the Stalinism of Milan Kundera's totalitarian kitsch where shit does not exist: the Ideological totalitarianism of absolute. The most important thing is that this Stalin is abstract, detached from real people, and from their pleasures and bodies. This is also the Stalinism of Svetlana Boym who in her article on the Soviet Perestroika documentaries detects a general form of the history of the Russian documentaries. They blur the clear division of the 'factual' and 'fictional'. Russian documentaries of the Stalinist period are staged and camouflaged. Echoing Bazin's Tarzan she is stating that "they are more like the 'docu-dramas' on American television and must be treated with caution".³² As a conclusion, nothing is true in the universe of Stalin. Makavejev's films are principally anti-Stalinist because their subjects are occupied with their "earthiness" as can be read in the account of Charles Warren. This earthliness is defined and structured with three mutually dependent categories: of humour, people as people or un-idealized people, and sex.³³ This humanist tautology of "people as people" can be traced in many different Makavejev and Yugoslav Marxist problematics. Warren juxtaposes the two and declares that

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Raymond Durgnant, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, British Film Institute, London, 1999, p. 52. Or Makavejev's difference from the post-modernist Godard (Andrew Horton, *The Mouse Who Wanted to Fuck a Cow: Cinematic Carnival Laughter in Dušan Makavejev*, p. 225), "Godard finds in everyday-trivial the lack of real contact and communication that is reflected in the spatial vacuums and awkwardness of his visual compositions, Makavejev discovers a means of expressing the essence of the intimacy" (Martin Walsh, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, p. 14), or "Where Godard suffers from constipation as Basil Wright has remarked – Makavejev irascibly liberates his floating mystery" (Yvette Biro, *Pathos and Irony in Eastern European Films*, p. 44).

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André Bazin, *The Stalin Myth in Soviet Cinema* [1950], in *Movies and Methods* Volume II, ed. Bill Nichols, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, p. 35.

32

Svetlana Boym, *Stalin is with Us: Soviet Documentary Mythologies*, in *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, ed. By C. Taylor and D. Spring, Routledge, London and New York, 1993, p. 203.

33

Charles Warren, *Earth and Beyond: Dušan Makavejev's WR: Mysteries of Organism*, in *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, ed. by C. Warren, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover & London, 1996, p. 206.

“Yugoslavia is not the USSR and it resists Stalinism. Milena tells to Vladimir that Yugoslavs care about ‘personal happiness’ and do not blur that with State concerns’ (p. 227). Yet we have to bear in mind that in the case of Yugoslavia this has been very much blurred, especially the anti-Stalinist state policy which was also widely supported by the ‘dissident’ philosophy of Yugoslavian Humanist Marxism known as Praxis. Praxis has based its critique of Stalinism on the tautology of the human. This is how Gajo Petrovic, one of the founders of Praxis, reflects on this philosophy: “What makes man man is the general structure of his Being, which Marx called ‘praxis’”³⁴. The way in which Praxis defines man as man is contra to Stalin, so their philosophy is contra Stalin. This anti-Stalinist Marxism in the case of Praxis is neither materialist nor idealist, it is “consistent naturalism and humanism” (p. 29), which they derived philosophically from the Erich Fromm’s version of “authentic Marxism”. Apart from being positively defined, this concreteness of the people is at the same time far from grim and serious and is full of joy. This is how Andrew Horton describes the carnival laughter in Makavejev’s work in spite of the apparent Marxism in his films: “laughter of the people, by the people, and for the people as individuals emerges as form of salvation”.³⁵ That is why Stalinism cannot grasp irony, joy and pleasure.

c - Stalin the Hitler: “He was a true Red Fascist!” These are the last words of Milena, describing Vladimir in *WR*. Red Fascism as the merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American image of totalitarianism is a political terminology par excellence. It has played a crucial role in post-WWII America, constructing the policy of anti-communism which was paved through the troubled equivalency of Hitler with Stalin. Apart from generating the discourse on the acuteness of the task to fight communism, Red Fascism also served the fantasies of what might happen.

For example, we have to look at Hitler in the 1930s in order to avoid a possible coming of Stalin’s Fascism.³⁶ This fantasy is somehow at the core of totalitarian ideology, as a bizarre psychopathological paranoid state that confuses the abstract and the real. This is how Stanley Cavell in his article on Makavejev describes the archive materials of the ultimate evil of Stalinism, or the Katyn Forest massacre shown in *Sweet Movie*, as a “dreamlike sequence” and poses the great moralist question that a freedom lover would: “Isn’t that forest a name for the region inhabited by regimes that no longer know that there is a difference between dream and reality, acting out the one, wiping out the other?”³⁷ Stalin mistook the concrete for the abstract, and according to his critics it is this confusion that makes him so uncanny. The imagination of totalitarianism is best described by its principal ideologue and the architect of the “containment policy” Georg F. Kennan as: “When I try to picture totalitarianism to myself as a general phenomenon, what comes into my mind most prominently is neither Soviet picture

nor the Nazi picture as I have known them in the flesh, but rather the fictional and symbolic images created by such people as Orwell or Kafka or Koestler or the early Soviet satirists. The purest expression of the phenomenon, in other words, seems to me to have been rendered not in its physical reality but in its power as a dream, or nightmare. Not that it lacks the physical reality, or that this reality is lacking in power; but it is precisely in the way it appears to people, in the impact it has on the subconscious, in the state of mind it creates in its victims, that totalitarianism reveals most deeply its meaning and nature. Here, then, we seem to have phenomenon of which it can be said that it is both a reality and a bad dream, but that its deepest reality lies strangely enough in its manifestation as a dream...”³⁸

d - Re-Stalinization of de-Stalinized Yugoslavia: When Gajo Petrovic discusses the encouraging developments in the field of philosophy in Yugoslavia he does not fail to mention that there are certain “remnants of Stalinism in us opposing free discussions on philosophy” (p. 30). This is similar to what Makavejev told Jonas Mekas in interview in 1972: “I feel that in my country Stalin’s ghost is living in different corners and comes out from time to time just to tell us we are not as free as we believe we are” (Mortimer, op. cit., p. 169). How we could understand these statements, coming from the philosopher and the artist of the country which officially declared its socialism as non-Stalinist? We could understand this only as part of the observation that true de-Stalinization is possible only with the arrival of the concrete and of polyvalence in socialist politics.

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Gajo Petrović, *Marx in the Mid-twentieth Century: a Yugoslav Philosopher Considers Karl Marx*, Anchor Books, New York, 1967, p. 171.

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Andrew Horton, *The Mouse who Wanted to F..k a Cow: Cinematic Carnival Laughter in Dušan Makavejev’s Films*, in *Comedy/Cinema/Theory*, ed. by A. Horton, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1991, p. 232.

In same volume article by Charles Eidsvik is picturing this concrete and abstract dichotomies with more complex and surreal terms: “Eastern Europeans lived in paradoxical, multiple and incongruous realities. In such realities what is normally taken for humour is serious and seriousness itself is comic”, *Mock Realism: The Comedy of Futility in Eastern Europe*, *ibid*, p. 103.

36

Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Peterson, *Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930’s-1950’s*, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 4, April 1970, pp. 1046-1064.

37

Stanley Cavell, *On Makavejev On Bergman* [1978] in *Cavell on Film*, ed. by William Rothman, State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 30.

38

George Keenan, *Totalitarianism in the Modern World*, op. cit, Les Adler and Thomas Paterson, *ibid*, p. 1062.

The Yugoslavian socialism of self-management, which necessarily brought with it the process of de-Stalinization, did not detach from the abstractness of the socialism which is a constitutive element of the orthodoxy and ideology of Stalinism. Their detachment was false, it didn't imply the cosmic re-order of things, or it was never able to introduce the un-ideology of concreteness. Or, as Herbert Eagle noted, the concern of Makavejev's films, as was the philosophy of the group *Praxis*, was the failure of Yugoslavian socialism to foster individual development.³⁹ Accordingly, *Man is not a Bird* is a film about "un-freedom". As Eagle puts it, the "central conflict of all Eastern European societies is between Marxist humanist praxis and repressive regimented institutions" (p. 136). The possible emancipation that humanist Marxist films might introduce is most clearly described by Daniel Goulding as "[daily practice] of transforming a single collective mythology into a multitude of private mythologies".⁴⁰ Goulding is quoting from Makavejev's essay on another representative of the New Yugoslavian Film, Kokan Rakonjac. He says that the physiognomy of this new tendency is based on "viewing the world as it is, without hierarchy and ideological intervention" (p. 72). Since Goulding has based his idea of Socialist Yugoslavia on the fluctuating theory of the successive policies between the centralist (latent Stalinist) and liberalist (self-managing) tendencies as developed by the Dennison Rusinow in his classical book *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, the "liberated cinema" of Yugoslavia was accordingly never truly liberated from the constraints of Stalinist strata. According to this philosophy it should be declared that Makavejev's utopia of an un-mediated 'real' society ("as it is") is a logical oxymoron in any state of affairs, because it categorically suspends the possibility of the spontaneous expression of concreteness of human creativity. Probably it is something more than a matter of style to name this prevalence Stalinism.⁴¹

VI. Makavejev and Marx

Another important pattern when reading Makavejev's films is that they could have very different meaning depending on the position of

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Herbert Eagle, *Yugoslav Marxist Humanism and the Films of Dušan Makavejev*, in *Politics, Art and Commitment in the East European Cinema*, ed. David Paul, Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1983, p. 133.

40
Daniel Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1985, p. 66. Actually this policy of polyvalency

was primarily developed by the theoretician of the Yugoslavian New Film Dušan Stojanović.

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For example attack to the New Yugoslavian Film as "Black Wave" was interpreted by Goulding as Stalinist counter-offensive move of latent nationalists, and the initiators been labelled following the style of Stalinism as "Jankovicevites" (referring to a local "Stankhovitevites" [p. 83])

looking at them and the ocular regimes or ideological beliefs of the spectator who enjoys them. As Durgnant, referring to Hitchcock's *Strangers in Train* noted, this cognitive polyvalence could be proclaimed with the term 'the joy of perpetual analysis. This polyvalence has been the constitutive philosophy of the entire New Yugoslav Cinema, including Dušan Makavejev who described this as a policy of multi-reading influenced by the psychological investigations introduced by the Gestalt theories. These readings could suggest that Makavejev's films can be reduced to the primary tension between the artist as individual and society as a collective, where the role of the artist is to be the creative emancipator to represent the full potentiality of this individual and the subject.

Everything said and done, this would lead us to the ideological position of Makavejev's films as the guarantors of the freedom despite the repressive socialist state. The re-occurring Stalinism of Yugoslavian ambiguity and the discourse of sexual emancipation as part of political freedom could likely end up as the Marcuseian cultural policy of the *n*-dimensional man, where Makavejev's central problematic would be labelled as Martin Walsh did in his text on *WR* as "ultimate disparity between individual and the state: sex/the individual versus politics/the state".⁴² Since the potential ghost of Stalin has been haunting Yugoslavia in the spaces of this "politics/the state" field, this policy of the individualism is un-conditional for the emancipation from the constraints of society and ideology. It is this philosophy of the "personal is political" that appeared before postmodernism which encouraged Durgnant to label *WR* as the "humanist postmodern" (p. 69). Makavejev, before being humanist postmodernist, was for a long time a cinematic representative of "humanist Marxism". This cinematic Marxism, or cine-marxism is counter to Stalin and it is in direct anti-thesis of Godard's Althusserian Marxism.

What is Makavejev thought in relation to Marx? In what sense is the principle of Makavejev based on individual freedom, the sensual, carnality, emotions, sex, the cosmos and the polyvalence of all of these, connected to the Marxian theory and practice? It is possible to grasp the Ideological discourses related to these questions once we clarify Makavejev's Marxism as related to the dichotomy between the individual and the state. Up until now we have seen many examples of how these discourses criticized the film studies influenced by certain dogmatic brands of Marxism which repressed the concreteness of human being such as pleasure, hedonism and sensuality. Durgnant, as many others did, called them "political correct" film studies "underestimating the hedonistic counter-cultures, and emphasising Althusser-style syntheses of

42
Martin Walsh, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, *Monogram* no. 5, London, p. 15.

structuralism, Leninism, Maoism” (p. 88).⁴³ But still there is the fact that Makavejev himself was a Marxist, humanist or not, that has to be dealt with by his appreciators. The polyvalence of his films has been the key for introducing the peculiarity of Makavejev’s Marx. This was most clearly agitated by the Marxist aesthetician and the founder, long-time international authority and the high representative of the Naturist and Free Beach Movement, Lee Baxandall in his article on Eastern European Cine-Marxism. This peculiar cine-Marxism differs from the original version by Godard, in the sense that this Eastern European version fully grasped Brecht’s rule of “never failing to give the pleasure”.⁴⁴ Apart from this local specificity, Baxandall is introducing the ontological multiplicity of Marxism as: “there has not been one Marxism, but many” (p. 73), with his open preference of the “real” one which has full “awareness of the value of subjectivity”. This Marx is precisely the opposite of Marx as “‘scientist’ impostor concocted by such interpreters as the neo-Stalinist Louis Althusser, who was said to have stifled the ‘humanist’ in himself to go on to discover the laws of ‘scientific materialism’” (p. 83). The Marx of Makavejev is humanist, that much we understood, but how does this humanism correspond to polyvalence? Since humanism could be the signifier of the ‘project of men’ initiated by the collective socialism of the Stalin, it is not so easy to connect polyvalence with humanism.

The usual answer is that Stalin’s humanism is based on the abstract, ideological or kitsch concept of man, whereas real humanism is based on real man, or “the human genotype, the innate nature that undergoes socialization” as Baxandall clarifies (p. 92). A crucial element here is the concept of human “nature”, as the eternal and complex reality of the concrete. This schema allows the “humanist Marxist” to avoid the possible paradoxes of the “individual versus collective” dichotomy with the polyvalence of Makavejev. According to this schema, what has been labelled as the collective in socialist countries does not have a polyvalent nature, it is abstract and stiff, or granite of univocal ideology. The nature of the individual is in its elements based on the complexity of the concreteness, and it is truly a polysemic. This is why it is so distinctly

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The brand of Yugoslav Marxism known as *Praxis* is usually linked, as in Herbert Eagle’s observation, with the Makavejev’s film-philosophy.

The fact that the journal of Yugoslav Marxist’s *The Praxis* in 1965 refused to publish Louis Althusser’s article due to its “Stalinist positivist” theses is seen as extra encouragement for the idea of linking films of Makavejev with the philosophy of Praxis.

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Lee Baxandall, *Toward and East European Cinemarxism?, in Politics, Art and Commitment in the East European Cinema*, ed. By David Paul, Macmillian, London and Basingstoke, 1983, p. 88.

subversive, as Amos Vogel calls it, as “the eternal subversion”: essence of life, under all circumstances and in all societies, was eternal change, the constant transformation of all forms and systems” (*Film as Subversive Art*). We arrived at the main Ideological pattern of the reading of Makavejev’s polyvalence. It is referring to the multiplicity, richness, multi-colouredness of the naked man un-mediated by any ideological abstraction with his concrete nature in full bloom. Real concrete is evidence of polyvalence.

Marx is redundant here, as Durgnant, who is a non-Marxist admirer of Makavejev, observed: this ambiguity makes up the socialist position, which is not, after all, among one man’s vision, but a range of positions, and not a single statement, ‘once and for all’, but a progression of reflections, a network of changing ideas. Many of which non-Socialist can share” (p. 63).

Conclusion: Concretely Watching Films (of Makavejev)

In fact, we have reached the main dilemma of the relation between polyvalence, change, knowledge, arts and politics. The readings based on the ideological conception of the concrete are not able to propose a dividing line between progressive and regressive politics and given this hibernation the “carnal truth” cannot generate any other thought except the obvious knowledge about its own “nature” or “material”. We can demonstrate this by showing the political implications of carnal truth in the case of Mortimer.

Mortimer’s attempt to derive any correct political conclusions from the carnal truth ends with the ambiguous morality of confusion. She might call this confusion beautiful, as she did in the case of the tenderness in Frank Sinatra’s voice, but things get problematic when she links this carnality with the specificity of the subjects of Makavejev’s films. This specificity is the ‘Yugoslavian people’, with notable Balkan origins. She is very determined when explaining the emancipatory potential of these Balkan bodies in reading the immigrants Dionysian joyfulness at the Zanzi-Bar in Makavejev’s film *Montenegro*: “vitality of the immigrants, their genius for resourcefulness, the obstinate and inveterate art of surviving, whether the circumstances” (Mortimer, p. 239). This inveterate capability of lasting might be part of their special material, of their different and more enduring bodies. Also these Balkan bodies are representatives of the different epistemology that Mortimer is picturing through the character of Alex who “embodies what serious ideologues find hard to appreciate: an active vulgarity that goes against too earnest and abstract a conception of the person on the wrong end of the immigrant worker/capitalist exploiter, poor country/rich country continuum.

It is a vulgarity that is a part of human being” (p. 232). The antagonisms of capitalist colonization and the antagonisms of the class struggle in this “cosmos” are done away with as political

correctness by Mortimer, and furthermore posed the critique for this correctness as the theoretical reductionism of people to social designations “performed by the right-minded thinkers”, which doubles the already existing social diminishment (Mortimer, p. 233-234). The political emancipation of the Balkan immigrants, according to this, can only be based on their own bodies, which is proof of their durability, their resourcefulness. Throughout the article we have seen that the carnal and sensual truths are based primarily on reference of its own resources. It is all about the concrete truth of concrete things; or the real knowledge of our bodies. But are there no antagonisms at the core of carnal truth itself? Does sensual vulgarity contradict itself? How to explain the confrontation of two different concrete bodies? What are the limits of their “truths”?

Is there any “dividing line” between their truths? The most crucial question is this: Is there a possibility to divide right from wrong in the carnal truth? In the end, how to explain the violence of concreteness? Mortimer in this case too re-produces two different types of violence: the “hot” one which is a direct, erupted and spontaneous violence; and the “cold” violence of the calculated, opportunistic and analytical mind. For example according to her at the Srebrenica there were two kind of violences operating, the “hot” violence of Ratko Mladic and his pupils “equally drunk on plumb brandy and ethnic paranoia” and the “cold” violence of the liberal democracies of the Dutch officers (Mortimer, p. 181-182). Trying to explain the “material” of Radovan Karadzic himself, who is assumed as the representative of the “hot” part of the world, Mortimer is not able to say the last word. At once Karadzic is a representative of the abstractness that harks back to the Lenin-Stalin “asceticism” and alienation (p. 182-183); but at the same time he is the men of the Balkan, with his grotesque of the carnality. He is, as Mortimer explains in the pages discussing the *Montenegro* movie, one of Montenegro’s (referring to Karadzic’s Montenegrin origin) shameful sons (p. 250).

He is a Zanzi-Bar Dionysos gone mad, or went “uglier and more brutal”. But still there is no possibility to divide this monster from Dr. Frankenstein; neither the class or colonial antagonisms nor any other discourse of “cold”, politically correct and abstract world can help to make this decision. At the end there is only one perspective for the carnal truth in order to operate in the world of politics: it’s the “trust”, the trust in its own truth, or as Mortimer puts: “in the end it is the question of t r u s t” (p. 178).⁴⁵

Throughout the text I have deliberately based my arguments on the examples of the ideological readings of Makavejev’s films in order to make clear their theoretical and political consequences. The consequences are the un-dialectical approach of sameness, ending most of the time in the historicist interpretation of the development (which consequently opens variety of regressive and retroactive political positions). This process is grounded in the knowledge that is

strictly based on self-referential and absolute truths, in the text referred to as ‘concrete’ or precisely as ‘carnal’, ‘natural’ or ‘sensuous’, which are strictly related to human nature. The readings, whose abundance is quite impressive, are in almost all cases reproducing the ideology of the re-humanization of the theory, especially film theory. The lure of these theories are their insistence on the concept of concrete, as material of our everyday, of our intimacy, essence, obviousness and human nature which continuously hangs on our daily worries of bread, water, love, sex, wine or loss. These hypotheses are not naïve; they are reproducing the most conservative and regressive thoughts on society and politics if not handled with caution and reserve. Their obviousness is their lure, but at the same time it might guarantee their succession, which considering the current state of affair in film theory it would be fair to announce this theoretical caution as acute.

As I mentioned earlier this text is not about the new proposal of reading Makavejev, its sole purpose was to deal with the ideological origins and confusions which some idealist and phenomenologist inspired readings generates. What is most striking, to say it scandalously, is that Makavejev films which supposed to have polyvalence of readings and patterns are always ending in the same pattern of identity, carnality, sensuality, and humanist tautologies. Are there not any other patterns which the polyvalence of Makavejev’s films could offer to us? There are signs of this; we can mention the reading of Pavle Levi who clearly indicates the simplicity of reduction of Makavejev to Herbert Marcuse’s “essential incompatibility between the notion of human freedom and the various institutionalized and reified forms of social and political life”.⁴⁶ Levi is instead proposing more active conception of polyvalence, which could offer a possibility of “debate” for the spectators of Makavejev films, “possibility accompanying the freedom granted to him or her, to choose a specific perspective, a concrete idea, he or she will stand for” (p. 34). This is a full possibility of polyvalence, or the possibility for cultural policy through the polyvalence, which according to Levi, “does in the end, implicitly presuppose a basic leftist political inclinations of its viewer-participants” (p. 34). This reading is crucial in underlining underestimated possibility of pedagogy of the Makavejev films which is

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Referring to Wilhelm Reich’s attack to FBI investigators approaching his property, a sequence also mentioned in the film *WR*, Raymond Durnant writes that: “this may well be left-wing ‘direct action’ against incipient Fascism, but it is also right-wing anarcho autonomy, against democratic state tyranny”, p. 21.

46

Pavle Levi, *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2007, p. 29.

continuously de-negated in the idealist readings based on 'psychologization' and 'personalism'.

Another reading, but a less affirmative one, is based neither on policy nor culture is a recent elaboration on the Black Wave, primarily referring to a work of another of its protagonists, Želimir Žilnik, by Boris Buden as a practice of disengagement with the representational identity policies of the Yugoslavian socialism. The films of Yugoslavian alternative cinema known as New Yugoslavian Cinema, or better Black Wave, probably for the first time, has been interpreted in this reading with the non-representational politics, which is neither the critique of that system (the socialism), nor any engagement with this representation; "the black" stands for what it is, without any extrapolation of culturalism, or as we have said earlier on "the sex", without any further additive meaning. It is this "black" which is the material of the Makavejev, and which is the driving force all the avant-garde arts, the negation; not the subversion, but the simple and concise negation. Or as Buden puts:

"[the black of black wave] is about where the society as society is absent and about what politics, however democratic, cannot represent."⁴⁷

This position of negation is important in the case of Makavejev films, not only because his films are constituted by the "dark" materials, but that this negativity is a theoretical partisanship for further investigation of possibilities detached from humanist affirmations, phenomenologist tautologies and spiritual communions. It is not exaggeration to claim that the negation is starting point for the materialist reading that could bring us more closely to the concrete.

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Boris Buden, Shot it Black! An Introduction to Želimir Žilnik, *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, No. 25, Autumn 2010, p. 47. In his earlier article dealing especially with Makavejev, Buden took a risk of "sociological" explanation of this non-representative a-culturalist position.

This risk ended up in the intensification of falseness of the Yugoslav socialism; which materialized, as Buden interpreted in the last words of Milena's in *WR: Yugoslavia was already a capitalist when it claimed it was socialist*. Boris Buden, *Behind the Velvet Curtain; Remembering Dušan Makavejev's WR: Mysteries of Organism*, *Afterall: A Journal of Art, context and Enquiry*, No. 18, 2008.

Kapi, vode, ratnici

Drops, waters, warriors (1962) is a black and white omnibus feature directed by Marko Babac, Živojin Pavlović, Kokan Rakonjac and written by Marko Babac, Slobodan Novaković, Živojin Pavlović, Olga Vujadinović, Dušan Makavejev, Kokan Rakonjac. The cast includes Stole Arandelović, Ljuba Tadić, Janez Vrhovec, Snežana Lukić, Petar Lupa, Dušan Janičijević, Olga Vujadinović. Produced by Cinema club Belgrade and Sutjeska film.

Three segments, originally shot as three short amateur films produced by the cinema club Belgrade, after an idea of cinema-tographer Aleksandar Petković, were 'packed' as an omnibus and with the help of Sutjeska film from Sarajevo, presented at the professional Yugoslav Film Festival in Pula. It was the first official stepping out of amateurs into the professional field.

Korčula Summer School

Between 1963 and 1974 the island and city of Korčula were a meeting point for critical leftist intellectuals from East and West. The local House of Culture would, for a brief period of time, become the centre of debates on the position of critical philosophy, sociology and political perspectives.

Henri Lefebvre, Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch, Jürgen Habermas, Zygmunt Bauman were, among many others, frequent guests of the summer school. The Korčula Sumer School was organised by the Yugoslav philosophers gathered around the journal Praxis. One can speculate that the experiences at the summer school impelled Lefebvre to coin the term 'Dionysian socialism'.

League of Communists of Yugoslavia

In 1952, during the sixth Congress of the Communist Party it was decided to give the Communist Party of Yugoslavia a new name, which became the League of Commu-

nists of Yugoslavia in order to reflect the transformation the state was going through and the change in the party's role in society under the influence of workers self-management and the ongoing state reforms.

Lipanjaska gibanja

The June Turmoil (1968) is a black and white documentary short written and directed by Želimir Žilnik, camera is by Dušan Ninkov, sound by Bogdan Tirnanić and Branko Vučićević and edited by Miodrag Petrović - Šarlo. Produced by Neoplanta film, Novi Sad.

The film is documenting the student demonstrations in Belgrade in June 1968. It was primarily shot in the courtyard of Kapetan Mišino Zdanje (Faculty of Philosophy building) where students gathered and in which famous artists participated, showing solidarity with the students.

See Interview with Želimir Žilnik, p. 57
See also Student protests, p. 188

Ljubavni slučaj, ili tragedija službenice PTT-a

Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator (1967) is a black and white feature film written by Branko Vučićević and Dušan Makavejev. It has been directed by Dušan Makavejev with assistance from Branko Vučićević and Želimir Žilnik.

The cinematographer was Aleksandar Petković, it has been edited by Katarina Stojanović and the cast included Eva Ras, Slobodan Aligrudić, Ružica Sokić, Miodrag Andrić. Produced by Avala film.

Makavejev, Dušan

(Belgrade, 1932). Film director and screenwriter. One of the most prominent figures of the Yugoslav new film. Although psychologist by education, he entered the film world via the Belgrade cinema club, of which he was one of the most prominent early

members. Želimir Žilnik started his professional film career assisting Makavejev on his first feature films.

See also Reich, Wilchem, p. 185

Marshall Plan

(Officially the European Recovery Program, ERP) was the large-scale American program to aid the reconstruction of Europe after WWII. The US gave monetary support to help rebuild European economies to diminish the influence of Soviet Communism. The plan was operational for four years.

It was named after the Secretary of State George Marshall. From 1948 until 1952 \$13 billion in economic and technical assistance was provided to assist the recovery of the European countries that had joined in the Organization for European Economic Co-operation. The same aid plan was offered to the Soviet Union and its allies, but it was rejected. The goals of the plan were to rebuild a war-devastated economy, remove trade barriers and modernise industry.

By 1952, as the funding ended, the economy of every participant state had surpassed pre-war levels; for all Marshall Plan recipients, the output in 1951 was at least 35% higher than in 1938. The Marshall Plan was one of the first elements of European integration.

Thesis on Feuerbach No.11

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.”

Mašić, Slobodan

Architect, graphic designer and publisher. Has been almost an in-house graphic designer for Bitef (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) and Fest (Belgrade's annual film festival), designing their visual identity from

their beginning (Fest, 1971; Bitef 1967) and up until the mid-90s. He designed numerous title sequences as well as posters for the films of the Black Wave. He is the founder of the 'Independent Editions Slobodan Mašić', a small independent publishing imprint that, according to Mašić, never rejects any publication proposals. Since its foundation in 1969 it published numerous titles.

Besides being editor-in-chief of his own publishing house he has also been credited as co-editor (with Bora Ćosić) of Rok magazine, dedicated to literature, art and aesthetic studies of reality. In 1969 it dedicated an entire issue to Želimir Žilnik's feature film Early Works. His bold and casual graphic design language is a unique mix of the International Typographic Style, counter culture and pop-art. Slobodan Mašić lives and works in Belgrade, Serbia.

ŽT

Milena

Young Yugoslavian communist and feminist, influenced by Wilhelm Reich, preaches the idea of the liberating power of orgasm. She encounters the hard-liner Stalinist Soviet ice-skating star Vladimir Ilyich. They start a romantic relationship while she attempts to explain him the advantages of revisionist Marxism in comparison to his orthodox Stalinist ideas. Milena is killed when her sexual encounter with Vladimir goes awry.

He, unable to fully experience his orgasmic urge, beheads her with his skate. At the end Milena's head is displayed on the autopsy table where she speaks her last words: “Comrades! Even now I am not ashamed of my communist past”. BF

Mlad i zdrav kao ruža

Young and Healthy As a Rose (1971) is a color feature film written, directed and edited by Jovan Jovanović with cinematography by Petar Lalović and cast including Dragan Nikolić, Aleksandar Gavrić, Danilo 'Bata' Stojković, Marija Baxa. It has been produced by Dunav film, Belgrade.





The film was publicly screened twice in 1971, at the Pula film festival and in some cinema in Belgrade. After that its permission for screening was revoked and it was kept in a bunker. As it was made in the same period of the last Black Wave film, it shares the same main actor with some of the most prominent Black Wave films (See also Nikolić, Dragan p. 161), and shares the fate of these films. It often is categorised as a Black film by some authors.

Mud

“Man is born of filth, and wades a little while in filth, and makes filth, and rots down again in filth, till at the last he is no more than the muck that sticks to the soles of his great-grandson’s shoes.”

— Friedrich Schiller

Underneath the narrative, we think Rani Radovi is primarily a movie about mud. Already in the first second of the film, we see a man digging in the mud, intercut with a scene of a woman covered in soap (to wash off the mud). Further in the movie, a car is dragged through the mud, food is harvested from the mud, the main characters are beaten in the mud, and there’s even the suggestion of rape in the mud. Mud is showered off, mud is turned upside down, mud is set on fire, and finally, one of the characters is murdered in the mud. The narrative might be the super-structure, but the base is mud.

In a recent television interview with Želimir Žilnik, mud is a recurring theme as well. Dušan Makavejev recalls that during their first meeting, in 1961, Žilnik was covered in dirt and cement. A film critic mentions that mud is the perfect prop for a film noir. And even the script for Rani Radovi was muddy: Branko Vučićević recalls that the script for the movie was created by cutting and pasting, and because there was a shortage of glue, the writers used flour and dough to stick the document together – graphic mud. Further in the TV documentary, mud is mentioned even more explicitly, as a young Marx is quoted: “A despot always sees man as degraded. He sees man drown in the mud

of common life, from which they again and again emerge, like toads.”

Borges once wrote, “Nothing is built on stone. All is built on sand, but we must build as if the sand were stone.” He is right. Only, instead of sand, all is built on mud. Mud is the interface between nature and culture. Mud is what separates our feet from the earth. Even as a sound, the word ‘mud’ floats between ‘mother’ and ‘modern’: between the past and the future. All creatures evolved from the Darwinian ‘puddle of life’, the primordial mud. Everything will eventually return to that same mud.

Mud and aesthetics are strongly linked together. In psychoanalysis, there’s a lot written about the relationship between filth and creativity, but let’s not get too scatological. Instead, let us just consider the simple fact that paint and ink are basically forms of mud and that painting, drawing, designing, writing and printing are nothing but different names for the same act – mastering mud.

Thinking of the above, we wanted our poster to refer to the concept of mud. We thought the technique of mono-printing would fit this theme really well, especially since both the name of the film and the name of the director can be expressed through specific initials: ‘RR’ and ‘ZZ’. Initials that can easily be translated into a mono-print composition.

The poster is in fact actively printing itself, referring to the act of self-reflection. But at the same time, it is referring to mud and, through mud, to creativity, culture and modernism. In the short time that we walk on mud, we should try to control it, master it, shape it, before we return to the mud again.

Experimental Jetset
12/05/10

Narodna tehnika

(People’s techniques) The organisation was managing a variety of amateur clubs and organizing workshops ranging from radio making to photography to more practical workshops. The organisation was ideologically unmonitored and corresponded to the

socialist idea of modernising society and people mastering technology and the permanent education of the workers. The phrase of the practice was 'Tehnika narodu, tehnika u narod' ('Technology to the people, technology for the people').

Nedostaje mi Sonja Henie

I Miss Sonia Henie (1972) is a color short directed by Karpo A. Godina, Dušan Makavejev, Puriša Đorđević, Miloš Forman, Tinto Brass, Paul Morrissey, Frederick Wiseman and Buck Henry. It has been written by Snoopy while the concept is by Branko Vučićević. Cinematography and editing is by Karpo A. Godina and the cast includes Dobrila Stojanić, Buck Henrie, Miloš Forman, Catherine Rouvel, Tinto Brass and Sonia Henie. It has been produced by Neoplanta film, Novi Sad.

During the second Belgrade International Film Festival – Fest '72, Branko Vučićević and Karpo Godina challenged some of the international and local filmmakers to come to an attic in the centre of Belgrade and film a scene. The filmmakers had four constraints, two related to the filming technique (master shot and fixed optics of the camera), one related to the content (a sentence "I miss Sonia Henie" had to be uttered in the film), and finally the length of time was limited to 3 minutes.

See also Schulz, Charles, p. 185

Neoplanta film

Was founded after it was realised that Vojvodina had the most advanced and developed cinema network in Yugoslavia and a very active amateur cinema club scene, but no professional film production and that some films produced dealt with issues important for Vojvodina.

Although officially established on June 29, 1966, it started operating only in September, due to technical difficulties. Svetozar Udovički was appointed as the first director. Initially, Neoplanta focused on the produc-

tion of short films. Through Želimir Žilnik, who was from Novi Sad, a lot of established authors, such as Dušan Makavejev, started making their films for Neoplanta.

As a small production house, it was a good counterpart in co-productions to the much larger Avala film. After the attacks on the Black Wave films, Workers' council of Neoplanta rejected the black authors and Udovički, and turned towards production of partisan films and comedies. The goal was to produce the 'ultimate' partisan film "The Big Transport" about Vojvodina's engagement in PLS, and Veljko Bulajić was invited to direct it. The film became one of the most expensive films and the whole venture turned into a fiasco, bringing Neoplanta to the brink of bankruptcy.

At the end of the 1980s Udovički was asked to return and recreate the magic of Neoplanta's beginnings. Udovički invited Žilnik to make a feature film.

However, when it became obvious that Neoplanta was beyond repair, it was shut down and, making use of the property and technology, the new production company Terra Film was formed. The first film that Terra Film produced was Žilnik's "The Way Steel Was Tempered" in 1988.

See Surfing the Black Zine No.2 p. 57

Nevinost bez zaštite

Innocence Unprotected (1941/1968) is a black and white feature film written and directed by Dušan Makavejev with poems by Aleksandar Popović and cinematography by Branko Perak. It was edited by Ivanka Vukasović and the cast includes Dragoljub Aleksić, Ana Milosavljević, Vera Jovanović, Bratoljub Gligorijević, Ivan Živković, Petar Milosavljević and Stevan Mišković. It was produced by Avala film, Belgrade and won the Silver Berlin Bear 1968 - Special Jury Prize and the FIPRESCI Prize 1968 at the Berlin International Film Festival.

This is a compilation film that uses archive footage of the film 'Innocence Protected' shot in Belgrade in 1941 during Nazi occupation. The film was meant to

PORTRAIT OF A PRODUCTION Part 1/2
Neoplanta (Novi Sad, Vojvodina, SYugoslavia) 1966 - 1971

SOURCES OF FUNDING

- 1) Fund for Cinematography – Socialist Republic of Serbia
- 2) Fund for Culture – Socialist Autonomous Province Vojvodina 2 feature, 6 short and 2 animated films per year
- 3) Profit from feature films produced by Neoplanta
- 4) Honorariums for commissioned films
- 5) Production of film documentation (about construction of large scale objects, urban development of the cities, and other film archival work in Vojvodina)
- 6) Collaboration and work on projects for Television Belgrade – II program, and future TV Studio Novi Sad

SHORT FILMS

author	50
commissioned	32

TOTAL: 82

PRODUCTION COSTS

author	3,732 831.-
commissioned	3,266 560.-

TOTAL: 6,999,391.-

REVENUES (author short films)

1. sales in the country	218 525.-
2. sales abroad	166 741.-
3. awards to producer	770 000.-
4. recourse – fund of SR Serbia	768 000.-
5. recourse – fund of SAP Vojvodina	1,220 000.-
6. neoplanta resources	705 600.-

net income (author short films).....	637 053.-
net income (commissioned short films)	764 375.-
uncovered cost (author short films)	474 957.-

TOTAL net income (all short films): 926 471.-

PORTRAIT OF A PRODUCTION Part 2/2
Neoplanta (Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Yugoslavia) 1966 - 1971

FEATURE FILMS* Sveti pesak, Lepa parada, Rani radovi,
Samrtno prolece, W.R. Misterije organizma, Dorucak s
djavolom, Sloboda ili strip

* Neoplanta in this period was registered only for
production of short films, so all feature films were
produced through co-production.

		TOTAL: 7
		<hr/>
FUNDS INVESTED		
1) from Fund of Province	1,900 000.-	26.84%
2) from co-production funds	2,008 800.-	29.60%
3) from Neoplanta	2,510 001.-	35.70%
4) still needed for completion of films		
"sveti pesak" and "sloboda ili strip" ...	655 000.-	7.86%
	TOTAL: <u>7,074 809.-</u>	100.00%

ANTICIPATED PROFIT	2,641 792.-
ANTICIPATED LOSS	599 799.-
	ANTICIPATED NET INCOME
	<u>2,041 993.-</u>

Neoplanta film - the production enterprise for short films,
produced or co-produced the majority of black wave films, both
short and feature, in just 4.5 years.

"Portrait of a production" was a title of a special
showcase of Neoplanta's short films on the
Oberhausen short film festival in 1971. The data in this
"portrait of a production" comes from a 500+ page long
recapitulation of Neoplanta's production in 1971, published
when it became evident that it would become impossible to
continue with production of such critical films.

To precisely grasp the context in which black
wave films (at least the ones produced by Neoplanta) were
produced, one has to look at the numbers, and these numbers
show, how the most steady and the most permanent funder of
Neoplanta's productions were the Republic and the Province.

be the first sound feature film in Yugoslav
cinematography. It was never released due
to Nazi censors, and after WWII it was
considered to be pro-Nazi. Makavejev
found the footage and complemented it with
interviews with the surviving members of
the cast, including the writer, producer,
director and the star of the film gymnast
Dragoljub Aleksić.

Nezaposleni ljudi (i žene)

The Unemployed Men (and Women) (1968)
was written and directed by Želimir Žilnik
with camera work by Petar Latinović and
edited by Milica Poličević. It has been
produced by Neoplanta Film, Novi Sad
When the film was produced, its
second half, dedicated to unemployed
women, was censored and never screened.
While we were making this book (in 2010)
some reels re-surfaced in the Cinemateque
in Belgrade. The film presents a series of
portraits and situations people found them-
selves in after being made redundant during
the time of the economic reforms that were to
establish a market economy in Yugoslavia.

In the interviews, people speak about
their doubts and confusion, because they had
expected socialism to give them more social
security. They criticise the parasitic bureau-
cracy, they sign in to leave for Germany and
work there, since Yugoslavia has signed an
agreement on taking over workforce around
that time.

See also Unemployed, p. 193

Nikolić, Dragan

(Belgrade, July 23, 1943). Actor, featured in
some of the most remarkable Black Wave
films ('When I am Dead and Gone', 'Young
and Healthy as a Rose', 'The Role of My
Family in the World Revolution', etc.)
Primarily due to his role in 'When I am Dead
and Gone' he is considered to be the poster
boy of the Black Wave film.

However, the fact that he was so prom-
inently cast in these films did not obstruct the
development of his career after the films were
banned. He played the role of Jimmy Barka.

Non-Aligned Movement

Founded in 1961 in Belgrade, gathered decol-
onised African, Middle East, Asian
and South American countries that wanted
to stay neutral to the polar division of the
world during the Cold War. Yugoslavia, the
founding member, was the only European
country in the movement.

O ljubavnim veštinama ili film sa 14441#

About the Art of Love or a Film with 14441
Frames (1972) is a documentary short
written, directed, shot and edited by Karpo
A. Godina. Typographic interventions are by
Slobodan Mašić and the soundtrack by Peda
and Bata Vranešević aka Laboratorija zvuka.
Produced by Zastava film.

"The army asked me to make an
official military film. Instead I made one that
said: 'Make love, not war.' The military liter-
ally chopped it up with an axe, but I was able
to save one print." (Karpo Godina)

The film is set in Saramazalino, a
village near Štip, Macedonia and explores the
fact that there was no interaction between
some thousands of girls, workers in a textile
factory, and some thousands of soldiers
stationed in a garrison nearby. The film is
a visual collage of steady master shots and
the whole narration of the film is in the
soundtrack.

Partisan Art

In these extreme circumstances and given the
specific guerrilla warfare of Yugoslav parti-
sans who were always on the move, we would
be tempted to paraphrase Cicero: 'During the
war, art is silent'. Indeed, most commentators
treat partisan art as mere war propaganda or

not very relevant for the struggle. However, Miklavž Komelj succeeded to show through a detailed documentation not only that partisan art existed, but that we can only understand it once we take into account the unfavourable circumstances.

According to Komelj, the novelty of partisan art lies in its gesture that re-invents the material conditions of art itself. During the occupation official artistic institutions did not give legitimacy to what was art and how it had to be practised, or even who make art. The task of partisan art was to invent a new artistic autonomy, with new institutions and a new canon. Partisan art emerged from its very impossibility: it created its own conditions from their very absence. This conception of art is radically different from the liberal idea of autonomy, which is always presupposed, or is affirmed by spontaneous artistic ideology. The liberal conception of art is accompanied by a set of presupposed aesthetic criteria, which legitimize what is art and what it is not.

Nevertheless, the conception of partisan art comes closer to Sartre's conception of 'engagement' than merely defending the novelty of artistic form. Partisan art was from the beginning political. Art inseparably linked its own freedom to the people's liberation. This political dimension of art was not only declaratory, or blindly instrumentalized by the General Command of partisans. Partisan art cannot be understood in pure propagandistic terms, as a simple means in the struggle. Quite the opposite, partisan art became an end in itself. It would be otherwise difficult to explain why the General Command financed and supported the printing of thousands of copies of avant-garde partisan poets such as Karel Destovnik Kajuh and Matej Bor, or developed a very ornamented graphics and large collection of France Prešeren?

Why this support for the 'avant-garde art', if it was much wiser to use the time and material means to spread propagandistic material, or simply to distribute food and real weapons to help the partisan struggle? The creative and complex nature of partisan activities is well situated and explained by a historical account of partisan women.

When they joined the partisans there was no more spare time, as the women

testified: they were involved in military work and fighting, they were nursing and caring for the wounded or being engaged in politico-cultural work, education and cultural organisation. It was not merely the educated communist elite that was leading the people, instrumentalizing art. Rather, it was the first time in the history of Yugoslavia that masses of anonymous poets, music band and choir members, theatre groups, sculptors, painters and cultural workers took the historical stage outside of the established institutions.

Komelj's analysis refers to the tremendous force and eruption of cultural works among the masses. It was not necessary that masses who spoke up for the first time formulated revolutionary slogans; they were included in the revolutionary process simply by the very gesture of speaking up. The liberation struggle brought also the freedom of expression, that is, to people that were denied the right before. They fought for it and started exerting it.

GK

Partisan Cinematography

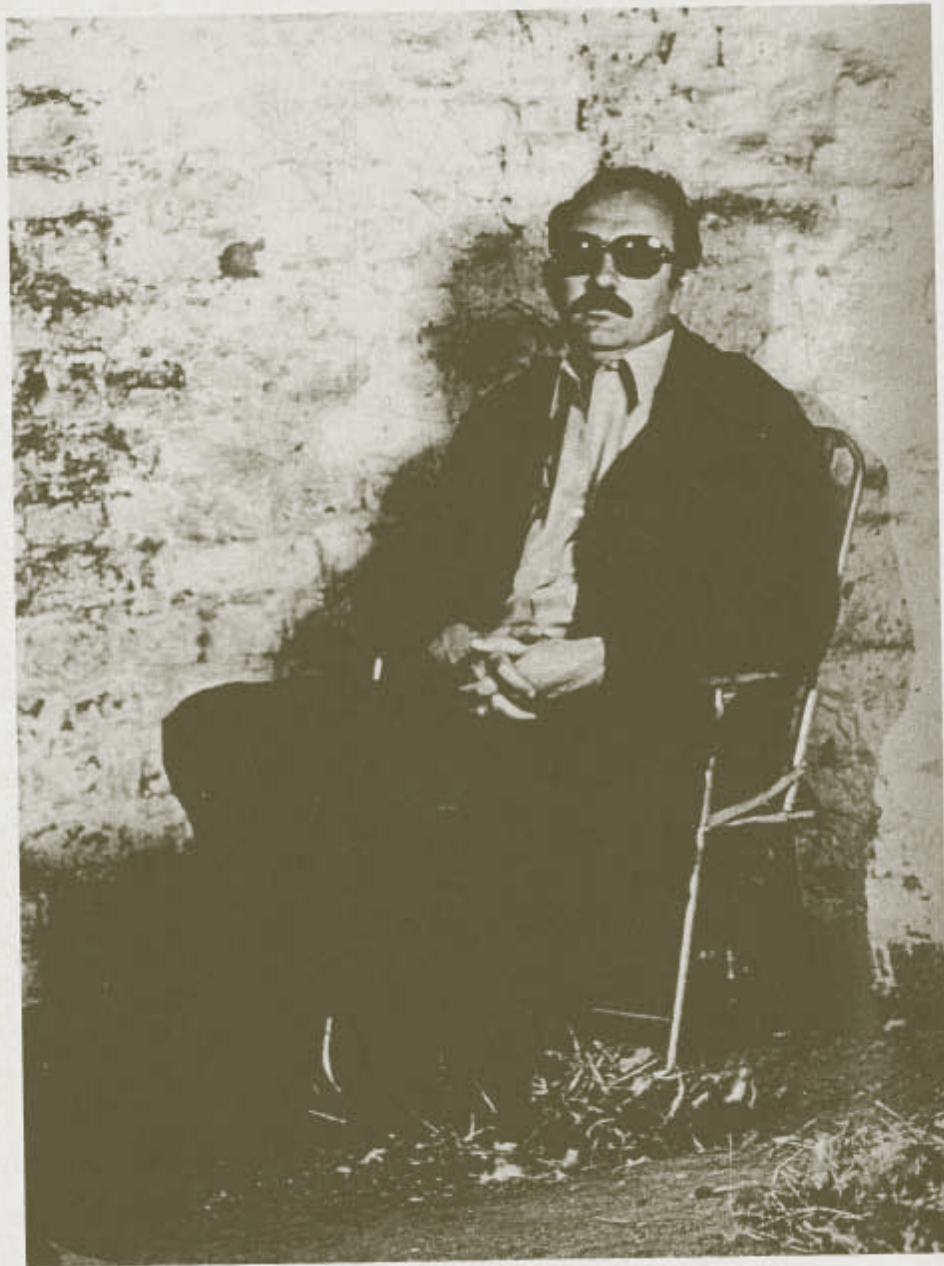
Historical archives, documents and testimonies that show us the existence of the "real" partisan film and even rudimentary film crews that started appearing during the war. Three periods of partisan cinematography can be distinguished—

I — Spontaneous partisan cinematography (1941-1943), when PLS did not have any official policy regarding the filming and expertise and materials for production were scarce;

II — Beginning of organized partisan cinematography (1943-1944), that started after October 1943 when the General Command of partisan forces issued the directive to document on film and photography all sorts of material evidence on the partisan struggle, both for archival purposes, but also for the international recognition of the partisans, which took place some months late;

III — Institutionalized partisan cinematography (1944-1945), that starts in the autumn of 1944 when, on October, 7th 1944, the Executive Council of the Liberation Front in Slovenia officially formed the





Section for Film and Photography, headed by France Brenk.

The first partisan film document of WWII is the recording made by Rudi Omota, a pre-war film worker, during the anti-occupation concert that took place in Ljubljana on December 12, 1941, organised by the Academic Choir France Marlot under the guise of a celebration of Italian culture. He recorded the very last song performed that night, Lipa (Linden) during which the occupied Italian forces realised what was going on and dissolved the choir and banned any cultural events.

Rudi Omota continued to film short films of actions in Ljubljana and joined the PLS. The first systematic filming was done by Antonio Peraica, who worked for the Italian Cinecitta before 1943, while General Command was stationed in Drvar in 1944. The materials from the third period were the most preserved and documents show there were even some partisan cinemas established in liberated territories.

Valuable documentation material was also made by the film documentation units of the allied forces.

GK

Partisan Film Spectacles

Synonym for popular Yugoslav cinemas. They were large-scale epic spectacles and demanding productions that, in time, became too focused on representing the partisan struggle through Rambo-like heroes who were capable of attacking an entire platoon of German soldiers by themselves.

While in the history of PLS it was usually the case that partisans were many times outnumbered by the axis soldier, the acts of partisan were usually much more collective and sacrificial than was portrayed. The most lavish production was the film "Battle of Neretva" produced by Avala film in 1969, the same year that many of the Black Wave films were produced. "Battle of Neretva" tells the story of one of the crucial battles during WWII in Yugoslavia, code-named Fall Weiss by the Axis powers (and in Yugoslav sources often called "Battle for Wounded). The battle aimed to completely

destroy the partisan units, when the Partisan General Command and Units, together with 4500 wounded and typhoidal patients were surrounded in the valley of the river Neretva by an enemy that was roughly seven times stronger.

The director of this film was Veljko Bulajić, the most prominent name in the genre, and the cast consisted of some of the most famous actors in the world of that time, Yul Brynner, Hardy Krüger, Franco Nero, Sylvia Koscina, Orson Welles, Sergei Bondarchuk. The film was nominated for the 1970 Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film. Another notable film is Battle of Sutjeska (1973) in which, famously, Richard Burton was cast as Tito.

Pavlović, Živojin

(Šabac, 1933 - Belgrade, 1998). Film director and writer. Studied decorative painting at the Academy of Applied Arts in Belgrade. After several years of writing about film and art in newspapers, which he took up at the age of 19, he ventured into the film medium via cinema club Belgrade. Initially he struggled to fit in, but he soon became one of the amateurs that in no time tuned professional.

His films were successful at film festivals, and during the course of his career he won four Golden Arenas for best film and best director in Pula, as well as prizes in Venice and Berlin. He was equally successful as a writer and for the novel "Death Wall" he received in 1985 the Nin prize, one of the most renowned prizes in Yugoslavia. In the aftermath of the attack on the Black Wave, he had to quit his teaching position at the Academy for Film in Belgrade.

See Pavle Levi Essay, p. 77

People's Liberation Struggle

Also referred to as partisan struggle. Mainly organized by the communists, except in Slovenia, where the Liberation Front gathered various antifascist forces that

joined the communists in their struggle for national liberation. The partisans did not only fight against Nazi and Fascist occupation (Yugoslavia was divided between Italy, Hungary, German Reich, Romania and Bulgaria), but had to fight the political authorities of the old Yugoslavia, the collaborators, Ustaša, Chetniks, Domobranci and other bourgeois forces.

The formal recognition of partisans as the sole antifascist forces in the coalition came quite late, in 1943, which is why the partisans had to rely on their own capacities. This historical situation ‘forced’ them to practice ‘autonomist’ politics. The goal of the partisans was to organise the people’s armed struggle against the occupation, but already during the war a social revolution took place. The partisans had a programmatic vision, which demanded a transformation of social relations and it was inscribed in the planetary socialist revolution. In the temporary liberated zones, as in large parts of Serbia (the republic of Užice was the first liberated zone in Europe, in August and September in 1941) and parts of Bosnia and Slovenia, local committees of liberation struggle were formed. These committees as new political forms practiced popular politics and organised educational infrastructure, cultural events, political meetings for the mobilisation of the masses and basic economical conditions.

It was in these impossible conditions that art flourished; partisan poetry, graphic art, theatre and painting were the most important forms of artistic production with massive involvement of non-intellectuals. The partisan struggle produced new modes of thinking, which entailed a specific revolutionary articulation of mass art and communist politics. Yugoslavia was one of the few states in Europe that was liberated from the Nazi occupation by its own forces. When Belgrade was liberated in 1944, the Soviet Red Army had to ask the partisans for permission to enter Yugoslav territory. The international recognition and autonomy of the partisan struggle was significant for the events that would follow WWII. We can distinguish at least three referential points of this event that were essential to the new Yugoslavia and partisan subjectivity.

Firstly, national liberation was conceived as a manifestation of solidarity of the masses as part of the international anti-fascist struggle.

Secondly, a social revolution, which entailed the introduction of new class relations and a transition to a communist, socialist Yugoslavia.

Thirdly, there was a cultural revolution, which meant the break with the bourgeois canons and art autonomy and the masses finding their way to the sphere of culture. GK

Petković, Aleksandar

(Belgrade, 1929 - Belgrade, 2000). Cinematographer, one of the most important members and driving force between cinema club Beograd. Slightly older than most of the cine-amateurs, he ‘oversaw’ their development from amateur into professional filmmakers and continued to work with them as a cinematographer until the end of his and their careers (and lives). He collaborated mostly with Dušan Makavejev, Živojin Pavlović, and Aleksandar Petrović. He spent the decade after 1972 mainly working for television as a director of photography.

Petrović, Aleksandar “Saša”

(Paris, 1929 - Paris, 1994). Film director and screenwriter. In two consecutive years, 1966 and 1967, his films were nominated for the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film. The films were “Three” and “I Even Met Happy Gypsies”. His film “It Rains in My Village” was nominated for the 1969 Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival. He was considered to be one of the most prominent protagonists of the Yugoslav new film, who greatly influenced a younger generation of filmmakers.

He was teaching at the Academy for Film in Belgrade in the late 1960s until the attack on the Black Wave in 1973 had both him and Živojin Pavlović expelled from their teaching positions. His 1973 film “Master and Margarit” was banned and Petrović lived in Paris for a few years.

Pioneer and/or Union of Pioneers of Yugoslavia

Pioneering organisation whose members were elementary school children (aged 7-14) in Yugoslavia. Founded during WWII in Bihać on December 27, 1942, by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia after the Soviet pioneer organisations. The organisation was a member of the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia.

The pioneers were often called “Tito’s pioneers”. The Union published newspapers and organised workshops, field trips and competitions for pupils.

Although membership was voluntary, most children would become member during the ceremony held in all schools on the Day of the Republic, November 29. Pioneers were wearing a uniform consisting of a white shirt, navy skirt/trousers, red scarf and specific navy cap and had to pledge the pioneer’s oath—

“Today, as I become a Pioneer, I give my Pioneer’s word of honour – That I shall study and work diligently, respect parents and my seniors, and be a loyal and honest comrade and friend.”

Plastični Isus

Plastic Jesus (1971) was written, directed and edited by Lazar Stojanović. Cinematography is by Branko Perak and the cast includes Tomislav Gotovac, Vukica Đilas, Ljubiša Ristić, Adolf Hitler, Ante Pavelić and Josip Broz Tito. Produced by FDU, Centar film, Beograd.

Produced as a graduation film by Lazar Stojanovic, this film stirred an already electrified atmosphere between filmmakers and the state, mostly because of the use of archival footage of Hitler, Tito and Pavelić in the film, which was considered as a provocation because Tito was believed to be linked with totalitarianism. The film was banned and Lazar Stojanović was jailed. The film was publicly shown for the first time in 1990.

Praxis School

Marxist humanist philosophical movement that originated in Zagreb and Belgrade during the 1960s. Some of the most prominent figures of the school and its founders were Gajo Petrović, Milan Kangrga (Zagreb) and Mihailo Marković (Belgrade). From 1964 to 1974 they published the journal Praxis, at the time considered to be one of the leading journals in Marxist theory. It had both international and Yugoslav editions and featured authors from both East and West. They (in) famously rejected to publish a text by Louis Althusser because of his anti-humanist, Stalinist tendencies.

Rakonjac, Kokan

(Struga, 1934 - Belgrade, 1969). One of the founders of cinema club Belgrade. Author of a series of short films and considered to be one of the most talented authors of his generation and one of the first to deal with melancholic urbanity and alienation as topics for film.

Rani radovi

Early Works (1969) is a black and white feature film written by Želimir Žilnik and Branko Vučićević with additional dialogues by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

It was directed by Želimir Žilnik with cinematography by Karpo A. Godina and the cast included Milja Vujanović, Bogdan Tirnanić, Čedomir Radović, Marko Nikolić. Typographic interventions are by Slobodan Mašić. Produced by Neoplanta, Avala Film it has won the Golden Berlin Bear, Youth Film Award - The Best Feature Film Suitable for Young People - at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Rani radovi, special issue of Rok magazine

Dedicated to the film, published in 1969, edited by Bora Ćosić and designed by Branko Vučićević.



'Sexuality'
A scene from Dušan Makavejev's W.R. - Mysteries
of the Organism



Boris Buden Shoot It Black!

An Introduction to Želimir Žilnik

Re-published with permission
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It's not easy facing up when your whole world is black.
— The Rolling Stones, 'Paint It Black', 1966

It is usually said that Želimir Žilnik is one of the most prominent directors of Black Wave, a tendency in Yugoslav film that emerged in the wake of the political and economic liberalisation of the country in the 1960s and 70s, and presents the best that Yugoslavia had produced culturally in its short-lived history.¹ But what does it actually mean to be a protagonist in this cultural story from the Communist past? To what does 'black' concretely refer in the famous phrase the 'Black Wave'? Let us start with this simple question.

The newspaper article from 1969 in which the notion of the 'Black Wave' was first introduced opens from a curious perspective.² The author looks at the reality of Yugoslavia from the future of several decades on – thus from today's present – and argues that this future will not be able to find 'our true picture'. That is, the authentic picture of Yugoslav society of that time is not in the 'yellowed yearbooks of the contemporary daily press', for 'this informative level stored in the archives and computer brains will fade into oblivion', but instead in the art made at the time. The future, as he states, will not believe those who had directly witnessed the actual reality but rather the 'condensed and suggestive artistic story and picture that this reality produced'.³ In his view, this is why the future will have a black picture of Yugoslav society of the 1960s and 70s – because Yugoslav art, and above all Yugoslav film, painted this society black.

Isn't it interesting? In a society ruled by Communists one would expect the voice of the Party to be at the same time the voice of the history itself – which *Borba*, the newspaper where this article appeared, undoubtedly was⁴ – and not to tremble before this history helplessly expecting its final judgement. 'What will the future think

1

Inspired by Italian Neorealism and various new waves in European cinema, the authors of Black Wave rejected the norms and ideals of an optimistic, self-congratulatory official culture, and openly exposed the dark side of socialist society – above all its ideologically hidden capitalist truth that emerged with the implementation of market economy and its devastating social consequences like unemployment, massive migrations of workers both within the country and abroad, poverty, crime, etc.

The most prominent directors along with Žilnik were: Živojin Pavlović, Bata Čengiđ, Dušan Makavejev and Aleksandar Petrović.

2

Vladimir Jovičić, "'Crni val" u našem filmu', in *Borba*, 3 August 1969, pp. 17–24. All translations are the author's.

3

Ibid., p. 17.

4

For this reason I do not mention the name of the author of this particular article explicitly in this text. His personality is of secondary importance since his personal and public opinion at that time was immediately identified as the opinion of the Party itself.

of us?' This is not the question of those who are supposed to know the course of history and legitimise their rule precisely from this very future. Moreover, no law of historical materialism, no Marxist concept, however undogmatic and creatively enlightened, would endow art, that superstructural phenomenon, with the power to give the only 'true picture' of society and even to be the last word of history itself. And yet this is the logic on which the argument against the Black Wave filmmakers relies. *Borba's* critic accuses them of betrayal. But betrayal of what exactly? Not, primarily, of reality: they are not so much blamed for having unfaithfully represented reality in their films – for painting it more black than it really is – but rather their real 'crime' consists in misrepresenting the society they belong to. So when the critic uses the notion of a 'true picture of our society', it is not so much the 'truth' that is at stake here – that is, a realistic representation of social life – but 'the picture of the society' that he is actually concerned about. He complains that society, in the Black Wave films, 'dresses in drags before taking pictures of itself'. But by that he obviously doesn't mean that it should take off its clothes and expose itself in full nakedness, as it really is.

This apparently slight shift in accentuation from 'truth' to 'picture' has far-reaching consequences. The real conflict between the critic and the 'traitors' doesn't take place where we usually project it from our post-communist perspective: between Communist ideology on one side and the autonomy of art on the other. The case of Yugoslav 'Black Wave' is definitely not that of ideologically stubborn communist apparatchiks who try to impose the dogma of (socialist) realism on freedom-loving artists. Moreover, it is not even the socialist cause that the critic insists upon: the well-known discourse on the social function of art, of its programmatic role in building a new society, of its educational duties, for instance, in boosting optimism. A classical discourse of socialist realism is totally absent from this polemical text.⁵ Rather, he argues that the problem with the pessimism of which he, and through his voice the Party itself, accuses the Black Wave filmmakers is not that it spreads defeatism and so disarms the progressive forces of society, but rather that it spreads an unflattering picture of Yugoslav society. This is what the whole drama is about: how the society represents itself to the Other, both the Other abroad and the Other of posterity. Specifically, the authors of 'black films' are blamed for 'clownishly presenting the nation and the society for the sake of a cheap and ephemeral mundane fame'. In the eyes of the critic they are guilty of submission to the fashionable taste of the international market.

In support of his criticism he naturally calls on authorities. However, these are not Marx, Engels or Lenin, nor any of the Yugoslav Marxists or leading Party intellectuals. It is Bosley Crowther instead, legendary film critic for *The New York Times* and at that time art director of Columbia Pictures, who is quoted from an interview he gave at that time to a Yugoslav magazine: 'You

Yugoslavs [...] you are so vital [...] you know how to look at women, you can laugh from the heart, you are open, there is an original joy of life in you. Why then are your films so bitter, so dark? What is the truth? You as I have seen you, or you as you present yourselves in the films? [...] Or is this all in your film a temporary fashion of pessimism which, with a certain delay, comes to your authors from abroad?'⁶ Thus we have the official position of the Party on cultural issues at the time drawing its arguments from an identification with a Western-Orientalist gaze that imagined Yugoslavia as an exotic realm of authentic enjoyment of life and natural vitality.

But the question of representation becomes even more dramatic from the perspective of the future, or in relation to posterity. Again, at stake is the picture of the society that will survive it in works of art, or as *Borba's* critic writes, 'a picture of us that is going to be bequeathed' to the future. He insists that we shouldn't be indifferent to this 'sort of recognition', for if the art is now painting this picture black, the future too will have a black picture of us.

Writing from a contemporary perspective, this all is to suggest that we must necessarily abandon our post-communist perspective if we really want to understand what that 'blackness' ascribed to a great deal of Yugoslav film production at the end of the 1960s really was about. Not only because of all those unbearable clichés about the communist past (whose real ideological effect is not so much in blackening the utopia of the past but rather in brightening the actual one about liberal democracy and capitalism as the only exit solution of world history), but there remains one more, even better reason: the notion of the 'Black Wave' was coined from this post-communist perspective itself.

'Black Wave' is obviously a concept forged in struggle, and implicates a certain instrumentalisation of art in that struggle. But what struggle? Not the one for a better – for instance, a just, classless, in short, communist – society. Here we are definitely not dealing with a story about art being (unjustly) caught in a social struggle. From the point of view of the critic who introduced the slogan 'Black Wave', the social struggle was already over, or more precisely, the social cause of the struggle had become obsolete. However, the

5
Indeed, the author explicitly distances himself from any concept of an 'educational' function of art. For him it is 'didactically old-fashioned to ascribe any functional attribute to art'.

The idea that a work of art should deliver some sort of message he also puts aside as 'Zhdanovism', or the party doctrine on Soviet arts and culture developed by the Central Committee Secretary Andrei

Zhdanov in 1946. Moreover, he openly writes that he would have some understanding for the 'blackness' of Yugoslav films only if it would stay within the 'art for art's sake' concept of art. *Ibid.*, p.19.

6
Ibid., p. 20.

struggle went on, but in another form, on another battlefield and for another cause. Now it was the struggle for recognition that was fought exclusively on the field of culture. What was at stake in this struggle was now *identity*.

It sounds paradoxical, but the position from which the voice of the Party announced its *j'accuse* against the Black Wave filmmakers was the position of an already dead society – a society that had exhausted all its utopian potential and had reached the limits of its further expansion in terms of social justice and an overall social prosperity. It was a society that was facing its historical end, a society with no future whatsoever. It literally didn't see itself in the future, or better, it saw only an alienated picture of itself there, a picture that had been already appropriated by art, by the Black Wave films. This is why our understanding of the Black Wave cannot be reduced to a post-communist cliché about art struggling with society for its freedom. On the contrary, it is about a society struggling with art for the 'true' picture of itself, a society in the final struggle for its cultural survival. In launching this struggle in 1969, the communist critics of the Black Wave precisely proved to be post-communists long before all those democrats who would replace them later. They knew very well that they were no longer in command of history, but were still able to anticipate its development. Moreover, by occupying themselves exclusively with the question of cultural representations they had already accomplished that notorious cultural turn which would be later ascribed to postmodernism as one of its main features. Yugoslav communists of that time already looked at the society they were in charge of from the point of view of its cultural afterlife.

Of course, politically the Party was still identified with its historical mission – to radically change the society for the better – and still saw itself as being able to achieve this goal. But this, to use Lacanian terms, existed only on the imaginary level of their identification. In short, this was how Yugoslav communists identified with the ideal picture of themselves, with their ideal-ego. However, at the same time, but on a symbolical level, they identified with the gaze of history itself – i.e. with their ego-ideal – in which they saw the society they had built surviving only in a cultural translation that fully escapes their control. They ruled society, but only in an imaginary realm. Symbolically they had already lost it, they had surrendered society to culture. For them, in 1969, the challenge was no longer to build a new, better society, but rather to properly represent the dead one. Thus, a true picture of social reality still seemed to be possible, but only in an anticipated cultural retrospective. This also marks a move within realism itself: from its socially prospective dimension (the concept of socialist realism deployed in the service of society as a utopian project) to a culturally retrospective realism. The latter is no less ideologically dogmatic than the former. The name of the dogma now is cultural memory

– the only form in which social experience is still available to us today, in retrospect of course. The Party knew this in 1969.

Now we could probably answer the introductory question: to what does 'black' refer in the notion of the 'Black Wave' of Yugoslav cinema? It refers primarily to the end of society, to the experience of the abyss that opens up at this end, to that bottomless contingency one encounters after a social experiment – or, better, after the human experimentation with the social has been historically exhausted. It is the blackness that has absorbed all the utopian light that had hitherto clearly illuminated society's path to the future. In its subjective dimension it is the darkness of the fear we are filled with when we face, existentially, the terminality of society – that is, when we become aware of the possibility of its total absence, in short, a social fear in its ontological dimension.⁷ This is best expressed in words of one of the most famous actors of the Yugoslav Black Wave, Bekim Fehmiu, who acted in European and Hollywood productions as well. In *Borba's* article Fehmiu is quoted saying: 'We have never lived better and yet, everything is black before our eyes.'⁸

However, to calm this fear and to pacify this ambivalence, a fetish was introduced: the fetish of cultural identity that also implied, within the political concept of sovereignty, national identity. At that time – the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 70s in the former Yugoslavia – there was a major shift in the way Communists legitimised their rule. The narrative of class struggle was essentially abandoned. The Party stopped conceiving of itself as the vanguard of a universal history that would lead it to its classless end, communism. Instead it began to legitimate its rule within the history of a particular nation by identifying itself as its political elite, which, after having finally accomplished the goal of national liberation and achieved full national sovereignty, was leading the (nationally framed) society into progress under the given historical conditions of a socialist regulated market economy and open participation in international *Realpolitik* and global capitalism. In short: the communist leaders of this era did not aim to adapt society to the communist utopia. Rather they adapted the communist utopia to a society that had fully identified itself with its nation. Of course, this fundamentally changes the situation on the so-called cultural front. The communists were no longer fighting in the trenches against the traditional bourgeois culture that was

7

In terms of Heideggerian *Angst* that makes a subject experience society's being-toward-death.

8

Ibid., p. 20.

devoted to creating essentialist identities of the Yugoslav nations, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrinians, Albanians, etc. Rather they made a non-aggression pact with it – ‘you leave politics to us, we leave national culture to you’ (with a few clearly defined exceptions) – and so even strengthened their identitarian, that is, national legitimization. To stay in the saddle they had to remount a fresh horse of identity politics, and were now riding it blindly into the catastrophe of the 1990s.⁹

To sum it up: it became identity or, in a slightly broader sense, cultural identification, that offered a perspective of a life after the end of society. No wonder almost all grasped for it. But not all indeed. Some preferred not to.

The most prominent among those who entered the darkness at the end of society with their eyes – and the lenses of their cameras – wide open was and still is Željimir Žilnik, the most important author of the Black Wave, whose entire filmic opus, extending over almost half a century, represents the most radical and consistent expression of its ‘blackness’.

Moreover, Žilnik is the only one of the Black Wave filmmakers who explicitly responded to the official accusation: ‘You are blaming me for making black films. So be it, then.’ In 1971 he shot a documentary, which he titled literally *Black Film*.¹⁰ p. 127 Žilnik picked up six homeless people from the street and brought them to his home, not only to share the warmth of a middle-class apartment (it was January), but also to actively participate in making a film about their problem. (This would become typical of Žilnik’s documentary drama: allowing his amateur actors, whom the film story is about, to consciously participate in its making, or, in other words, to play themselves.)¹¹ The next day on the streets of Novi Sad he used his camera to enquire about how to solve the

problem of homeless people in the city. Neither the passers-by nor the officials have an answer to this question. The filmmaker himself doesn’t have it either, for ‘these stinky people’, as he calls them in the film, cannot stay in his flat forever. So, finally, after telling them that no solution to this problem has been found and that he is running out of tape, Žilnik asks those people to leave his home.

Again: what is black in this ‘Black Film’? The reality it depicts? The failure of communists to solve social problems? The notorious gap between a utopian promise and reality? No! It is the film itself, the very idea of art, especially film art, claiming power to change social reality – this is what is really black in *Black Film*. In fact it begins with the author saying to the camera: ‘I used to make these films two years ago, but such people [the homeless –B.B.] are still here.’ The film is a radically honest self-reflexive critique of the idea and practice of so-called socially engaged cinema. Žilnik openly considers *Black Film* being his own tomb. In a manifesto published on the occasion of the 1971 film festival where the film premiered, he calls the whole festival a ‘graveyard’.¹² p. 190 ‘Black’ here refers to the ‘misery of an abstract humanism’ and of the ‘socially engaged film that has become a ruling fashion in our bourgeois cinematography’; it refers to its false avant-gardism, social demagoguery and left-wing phraseology; to its abuse of a socially declassed people for the purposes of film; to the filmmakers’ exploitation of social misery, etc.¹³ But, what is even more important, ‘black’ doesn’t refer at all to a ‘lack of freedom’, which is usually presented from today’s post-communist perspective as the worst ‘blackness’ of the communist past. In the 1971 manifesto Žilnik explicitly states: ‘They left us our freedom, we were liberated, but ineffective.’¹⁴ ‘Black’ refers to a chasm that no freedom can bridge, a chasm that will survive the fall of communism.

9

With the new constitution of 1974 multiculturalism has become the official ideology of Yugoslav state. The discourse on social justice didn’t simply disappear from Yugoslav politics. It was translated into the new language of identity politics, which dominated political public – not, however, as an intra-social cause but rather as an international one.

The question of an (un)just redistribution is now posed not in relation of one class of society to another, but rather in relation of one republic – one nation – of Yugoslav (con)federation to another. This is clearly a post-socialist turn as it was defined by Nancy Fraser in her *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the ‘Postsocialist’*

Condition, New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p. 2: it demonstrates a shift away ‘from a socialist political imaginary, in which the central problem of justice is redistribution, to a “postsocialist” political imaginary, in which the central problem of justice is recognition’.

10

“Black Film” was recently featured in the film program of Documenta 12, curated by Alexander Horwath.

11

‘I do not hide from the people I am shooting the fact that I am making a film. On the contrary. I help them to recognise their own situation and to express their

position to it as efficiently as they can, and they help me to create a film about them in the best possible way.’ Žilnik in an interview in *Dnevnik*, Novi Sad, 14 April 1968. Quoted in Dominika Prejdová, ‘Socially Engaged Cinema According to Željimir Žilnik’, in Branislav Dimitrijević et al., *For an Idea – Against the Status Quo*, Novi Sad: Playground Produkcija, 2009, p. 164.

12

Z. Žilnik, ‘This Festival Is a Graveyard’, manifesto to the 18th Yugoslav Festival of Short Film, Belgrade, 1971. Published in *XVII. Westdeutsche Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen* (exh. cat.), Heinz Klunker (ed.), Oberhausen: Westdeutsche Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, 1971.

13

Ibid.

14

Ibid. Reporting from the festival in Belgrade the same German critic, Heinz Klunke, criticises Žilnik for seeing the situation ‘too darkly’ and for underestimating the freedom that filmmakers in Yugoslavia have been granted, a freedom that Žilnik, as Klunke writes, ‘equates with pure complacency.’ From H. Klunke, ‘Leute, Filme und Politik in Belgrad’, *Deutsches Allgemeine Sonntagsblatt*, 28 March 1971.

For Žilnik a film, and in a broader sense culture, however liberated from totalitarian oppression, will never provide a remedy for social misery. For him the emancipatory promise of culture is a bluff. In his mocking the authors of the socially engaged films from 1971 who search ‘for the most picturesque wretch that is prepared to convincingly suffer’, he already makes fun of the liberal inclusivism that twenty years later will impose its normative dogmatism on the cultural producers of the new (and old) democracies. We know that picture very well: one discovers somewhere on the fringes of society the victims of exclusion, those poor subaltern creatures with no face and no voice. But luckily there is an artist around to help them show their faces and make their voices heard. How nice: what bad society has excluded, good art can include again. For, as one believes, what has been socially marginalised can always be made culturally central, that is, brought to light – to the transparency of the public sphere – from the dark fringes of society. The rest is a democratic routine: a benevolent civil society, sympathetic to the suffering of the poor and excluded, makes a political case of the social darkness; and as soon the party politics is involved, a political solution searched for and finally found, a law is changed, a democracy is reborn, now more inclusive than ever before.

Not with me, answers Želimir Žilnik, already in 1971. He, who has been working his entire life with different kinds of so-called marginalised people – from street children, unemployed, homeless people to transvestites, illegal migrants, Roma, etc. – knows well what their ‘blackness’ is about. It is about where the society as society is absent and about what politics, however democratic, cannot represent: a ‘blackness’, which is rapidly swallowing that light we have historically gathered around.



Owen Hatherly

Marxism and Mud

Landscape, Urbanism and Socialist Space in the Black Wave

Spaces of Socialism

Is it really possible to speak of socialist space? In some areas, writers on post-communism in the last decade have spoken about little else. This is the primary material of what we could call the hauntological take on the legacy of ‘actually existing socialism’, inflected consciously or otherwise by Derrida’s *Spectres of Marx* – work such as Susan Buck-Morss’ *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, Charity Scribner’s *Requiem for Communism*, Svetlana Boym’s *Architecture of the Off-Modern*, to mention just three. These writers have concentrated on space – the domestic spaces of communal apartments, the public space of housing estates and workplaces, often in an ambiguous, if slightly depoliticised way, torn between the futile celebration of ‘micro-resistances’ against power and ideology or towards attempts to salvage something genuinely emancipatory from the (for want of a better word) socialist states of 1917-89. Yet how true is it to even class these spaces as coherently socialist? The cinema of (again, for want of a better phrase) the Black Wave is notable not so much for the familiar move of finding something repressive and anti-individual in the notion of socialism itself, but more for holding the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia up to its socialist principles and finding it wanting.

It does this to a large degree through exploration of the social spaces of the SFRY, predominantly finding a place undergoing a depoliticised process of industrialisation and ‘modernisation’, with little concern for egalitarianism or solidarity. Most of all, it looks for this not so much in the direct centres of modernisation and modernism – the Corbusian town planning embraced in post-earthquake Skopje, in the huge ensembles of New Zagreb and New Belgrade – but in the spaces of combined and uneven development, in the interstices, in the places where people fall through the cracks. It finds in that process of modernisation a very specific landscape, one of peasant shacks selling Pepsi, of advertising and dilapidation, and most of all, of *mud*.

However, should we consider the spaces of the SFRY ‘socialist’ purely because of the state’s self-description? If we do, we fall in line with a certain, extremely limited, definition of what the socialist project actually is. For instance – in the first serious attempt at building socialism, in the Soviet Union of approximately 1917-32, commissars, unions, architects and planners came up with numerous definitions of what a socialist city would entail. Initially, the Constructivist architects grouped around OSA (the Organisation of Contemporary Architects) favoured a space they called the ‘social condenser’ – workers clubs and housing schemes that would, in a sense, attempt to engineer solidarity, by providing communal spaces and facilities and spatial organisations that

favoured public, rather than private space; one built example of this is the Narkomfin Dom Kommuny or collective house on Novinsky Boulevard, Moscow.¹

In 1930, in ambiguous response to the first Five Year Plan's hyper-urbanising bent, they suddenly changed tack, favouring instead the sociologist and former Left Oppositionist Mikhail Okhitovich's dispersed, 'disurbanist' notion of the socialist city, which, influenced by Marx and Engels' call in the *Manifesto* for dissolution of the gap between city and country, imagined socialism entailing single-family houses dispersed along practically endless transport, electrical and telecommunications networks, with industry connected to it along 'ribbons'; this vision of a verdant, anti-urban but hardly peasant socialism was, perhaps unconsciously akin to William Morris' *News from Nowhere*, one of the more influential late 19th century socialist utopias. Okhitovich's ideas were briefly favoured and then comprehensively condemned, and replaced with an interesting rhetorical move. Lazar Kaganovich declared in 1932 that debate over what a 'socialist city' was or could be was closed, because the legal public ownership of land and property meant that the city was automatically 'socialist', irrespective of what happened in it². The result was a chaotic primitive accumulation, a re-run on an enormous scale of the enclosures and traumatic encounters with the city that were attendant on industrialisation in early 19th century Western Europe.³ In so doing, the cities were to an extent 'ruralised', with the importation of an insecure, formerly peasant proletariat and the replacement of the 'social condenser' and the *Dom Kommuny* with the overcrowded, atomised *kommunalka*.

Kaganovich's strikingly circumscribed definition of socialism persisted to a large degree in the various forms of 'actually existing socialism', and not only then. It can be found in the British Labour Party, whose one-time chairman Herbert Morrison opined that 'socialism is what Labour governments do', and in the analyses of post-1989 Sovietologists, such as Stephen Kotkin, whose *Magnetic Mountain*, a Foucauldian history of the foundation of Magnitogorsk, rests on the contentious premise that

Soviet autarchy and state ownership of property = socialism. More generally, 'socialist' urbanism is usually considered to refer to one of two things – first, the hyper-Hausmann planning, all vast boulevards and stepped, New York-style skyscrapers, that was favoured in the USSR and its satellites between 1932 and 1953 (with a brief resurgence in Romania and the USSR in the 1970s and '80s) and, more famously, a modernist gigantism based on prefabricated towers in geometrical arrangements on the outskirts of cities, based at second-hand on the ideas of French architect and syndicalist Le Corbusier, which can be found on the outskirts of practically all 'socialist' cities⁴. For anyone who considers that the socialist project still has emancipatory potential, these definitions are obviously inadequate. However, the SFRY had better claim to the word than most.

Partly this is because Socialist Yugoslavia, unlike, say, the DDR, Hungary, Poland or Romania, (but like the USSR, Cuba and China) was founded in popular revolution, in direct partisan struggle rather than solely through the ministrations of the Red Army. Arguably it is this 'partisan event', as Ozren Pupovac calls it⁵, as much as the split with Moscow in 1948, that leads to the attempt to found forms of socialism that did not rely on the ethically and politically crippled definitions of a Kaganovich or a Morrison. The self-management of industry introduced in 1950 is one of the most obvious instances of this; the attempt to regard socialism in terms of direct popular participation rather than 'revolution from above'. However, from the 1965 Economic Reforms onwards Yugoslavia, which had after all already been the recipient of US Marshall Aid, began to integrate itself closely into the world market, allowing foreign capital to own up to 49% of a given self-managed enterprise, while state subsidies were gradually being withdrawn from industry, and even from social provision.

More pointedly with reference to the Black Wave, Yugoslavia suffered from combined and uneven development to an especially sharp extent. In a 1970 study, British trade unionist Roy Moore found a strikingly unequal situation, where in 1966 per capita income in Slovenia was 8100 dinar, and 1610 in Kosovo⁶; income differentials had risen from 4:1 in 1959 to 8:1 in 1969⁷. Efforts to redress this

1

On these debates, and on the lived experience of the Narkomfin in particular, Victor Buchli's *An Archaeology of Socialism* (Oxford: Berg, 2000) is interesting. The OSA's journal, *Contemporary Architecture*, has recently been reprinted, and is essential reading (Moscow, 2010).

2

On Kaganovich's role on ending early Bolshevik 'dreaming', see Richard Stites' *Revolutionary Dreams* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

3

For an account of this process of 'ruralising' hyper-urbanisation, see Moshe Lewin's *The Making of the Soviet System* (New York: The New Press, 1994).

4

For an eclectic exploration of these two spaces and their neoliberal successors, see Alfrun Kliems and Marina Dmitrieva (eds), *The Post-Socialist City* (Berlin: Jovis, 2010).

5

See Gal Kirn's essay in this volume.

6

Roy Moore, *Self-Management in Yugoslavia* (London: Fabian Society, 1970), p. 8.

7

Moore, p. 11.

were administered through the Fund for the Financing the Development of Less Developed Republics and Regions. Moore noted that ‘the fund has fallen short of its planned target every year since the economic reform’ In a sense, the 1965 Economic Reform committed the SFRY to developing the already (relatively) wealthy areas of the country, with the less developed areas offering both internal and external *Gastarbeiter*.^{p. 193} Moore notes, for instance, ‘the claim that ‘there is no intention in holding anywhere back to assist the undeveloped areas’ has found expression in the general preference for external finance as opposed to any distribution of Yugoslav funds’.⁸ Self-management itself was not exempt from this process; for instance, ‘research by Professor Rudolf Biconic into the agendas of workers councils showed that in the less developed republics questions of canteen, toilet and working conditions predominated, whilst in more advanced republics general plant policy, issues such as expansion and prices formed the agenda items’.⁹ From this it’s easy to gather that exploitation was harsher in some areas than others.

So we can see that the Yugoslavia of the late 1960s was marked by inequality, an imbalance between country and city, and integration into the global market. In this sense, it certainly doesn’t fit Kaganovich or Kotkin’s definition of socialism as state autarchy. But does the SFRY in these films fit a wider definition of socialism as solidarity, communality, collective life and labour? It seems more likely that the Black Wave’s main interest was – with certain major exceptions - in presenting a Yugoslavia that fit neither definition. It’s arguable that this pit it against the iconography of previous socialist film – of, say, the affirmationist montage-symphonies of labour and technology in Dziga Vertov’s *The Eleventh Year* (1928) or *Enthusiasm, Symphony of the Donbas* (1931), or Joris Ivens’ *Magnitogorsk film Komsomol – Song of the Heroes* (1932) – but it is equally clear that the critique is made from socialist premises. These films are essentially about the absence of truly socialist spaces in the socialist republic, but some come close to proposing what a socialist space might actually look like. But given the striking absence of certain ‘socialist’ spaces from the Black Wave, we must begin with a film that is outside its corpus, even given the term’s capacious definition.

The Process

Probably the most famous film made in Yugoslavia in the 1960s was neither a patriotic epic by an official director or a subversive or ‘black’ Novi Film, but a turn to the arthouse by a Hollywood exile,

8

Moore, p. 8.

9

Moore, p. 16.

Red Bourgeoisie

The reforms of the Yugoslav economy leaning towards more economic liberalisation and market socialism were a fruitful ground for a re-emergence of the classes in Yugoslavia, especially the red bourgeoisie. “There is a saying in Yugoslavia that goes: the snow falls on the hills, not to cover them but to show the tracks of the animals”. The June [1968] version of this saying was: “The barricade is not there to block the street but to show who is on the other side”. For the students, workers and peasants of Yugoslavia the importance of the June insurrection was precisely in unveiling their class enemies. [...]

It would be mistaken, however, to limit the results of the liberalization measures to these negative phenomena. The fact is that to carry out their economic reforms, the League of Communists was forced to institute democratic reforms. What the League called self-management, i.e., the decentralization of low-level economic decisions, was in the beginning interpreted by the working class as a giant increase in their responsibility and freedom in comparison with their earlier Stalinist experience.

The working people of Yugoslavia could not help but hope that self-management meant that they, and not a particular clique, would take the basic social and economic decisions.

Out of this hope was born a new political current in Yugoslavia. Within the Workers’ Councils and particularly at the University this current began to take the form of a political action programme for the realization of socialism in Yugoslavia. In June the students of Belgrade rose up, marched and fought for this programme. In June the enemies of socialism were unveiled for all to see. Who was on the other side of the barricade? None other than the ‘red bourgeoisie’, the League of Communists.

Reich, Wilhem

(1897 – 1957). Austrian-American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, known as one of the most radical figures in the history of psychiatry. In 1933 he published *The Mass Psychology*

of Fascism. Reich worked with Sigmund Freud in the 1920s and was a respected analyst for much of his life, focusing on character structure rather than on individual neurotic symptoms.

He tried to reconcile Marxism and psychoanalysis, arguing that neurosis is rooted in the physical, sexual, economic and social conditions of the patient, and promoted adolescent sexuality, the availability of contraceptives, abortion and divorce, and the importance of economic independence for women. Reich took on the idea that Freud rejected, that the libido represented a physical energy, further arguing that he had discovered a primordial cosmic energy. He called it orgone, and the study of it orgonomy. Reich fled Germany following the Hitler’s rise to power in 1933 and ultimately settled in the USA, where in 1947 he had a fallout with FDA because of his orgon theory. He died of heart failure in prison.

Saint-Just

“The revolutionaries who perform the revolution only half-way are digging their own graves.” — as quoted in *Early Works*

Schulz, Charles M.

(November 26, 1922 – February 12, 2000). Cartoonist. Author of *Peanuts*, one of the most iconic and most influential comics in the history of the medium, still reprinted on a daily basis. One of the recurring panels in the comic portraits Snoopy, one of the main characters, is lying on the roof of his dog house, sighing “I miss Sonia Henie”.

Sexuality

It is well known that the sexual revolution from the late 1960s and early 1970s found its theoretical reference in Wilhelm Reich’s fusion of Marxian and Freudian ideas.

Bringing together sexuality and revolution, Freud and Marx, in certainly not illegitimate.

But what the 1960s movement for the ‘liberation’ of sexuality – and this is where



Deleuze and Guattari, with their rather naive critique of psychoanalysis, get caught in the same trap as sexual revolutionaries with their theoretical guru Reich – overlooked was that the revolutionizing of sexuality is in the end a capitalist project par excellence. It is indeed the historical development of capitalism that demonstrates the invalidity of the so-called “repression hypothesis” (criticized by both Freud and Foucault).

The ‘tragedy’ of the 1960s movement would therefore consist in the fact that they did manage to produce a true act. To use Lacan’s words, they showed that structures are not rigid (opposed to classical structuralism). By literally walking the streets they are internally dynamic. But as every true act, this one also misperceived its consequences.

The liberation of sexuality did not put them outside of capitalist reality. It successfully installed them at the very core of the capitalist mode of production, in the libidinal economy. Or to use Lacan’s challenging remark to the revolutionary students of Université VIII Paris: it turned out that sexual revolutionaries were merely the islands of the very regime that they were tending to subvert. While they were revolting, the regime commented: “Regardez-les jouir!” (Look how they enjoy it!). A failure, without any doubt, but one we can learn from.

ST

Socialist Self-Management in Yugoslavia

A first major rupture in the international workers’ movement. It practiced a specific development of socialism, later compared to the Chinese way. It was a critique of the Soviet bureaucratic type of socialism. Yugoslavian socialism claimed to politicize the whole society and invent new political forms of participation.

Despite being introduced top-down, by official ideologues and functionaries of the League of Communists, it started with the decentralization and dispersion of political power into smaller self-management units, where in the last instance workers had the formal possibility to take decisions.

State property was transformed into social property, the property of the entire society, where nobody was owner. Many new political institutions were formed, which mediated between different political levels of state and would be accelerating Lenin’s conception of withering away of the state.

Yugoslav self-management was a social formation which combined elements of both communism (introduction of different social relations, different types of properties, abolition of private land property, domination of labour over capital, establishment of the basic health, social, educational infrastructure and more access to all people) and capitalism (introduction of market elements, managerial domination over workers).

It was only after 1956, after the introduction of market reform (4-Ds: Depolitisation, Decentralization, De-etatisation and Democratisation) that the capitalist elements started being dominant over the communist and the path towards capitalist restoration was paved.

GK

Socialist Self-Management

Introduced in the field of culture with the economic reform in Yugoslavia in 1965. It enabled the organisation of interest collectives in the field of culture.

Street Kids

Yugoslavia was not always capable to successfully tackle all the structural problems of the society. Although a good support system was established to take care of the children who were orphaned during the war, some children were not caught by the system’s safety net. Žilnik tackles this topic in his 1968 short film ‘Little Pioneers’.

Stojanović, Lazar

(Belgrade, 1944). Film director, scriptwriter and publicist. In the late 1960s he was an editor of the progressive student magazine

Vidici. His student film “Plastic Jesus” was banned and he spent three years in jail because of his anti-Titoist tendencies.

Students

In the 1960s Yugoslavia was one of the most progressive societies. Education was free, supported fully by the state budget, with special scholarships available for poor and undeveloped areas. At universities the social mobility introduced by socialist Yugoslavia was most visible. Until the 1968 protests, it was assumed that students should take up an active role in the everyday political and cultural aspects of society. LCY as well as many student and youth organisations were present at the faculties.

Studying “from employment” (continuing the education in order to advance professionally, while already employed) was also supported, as it was well in line with the paradigm of continuous education that was one of the corner stones of the social policy.

Student protests, June 1968

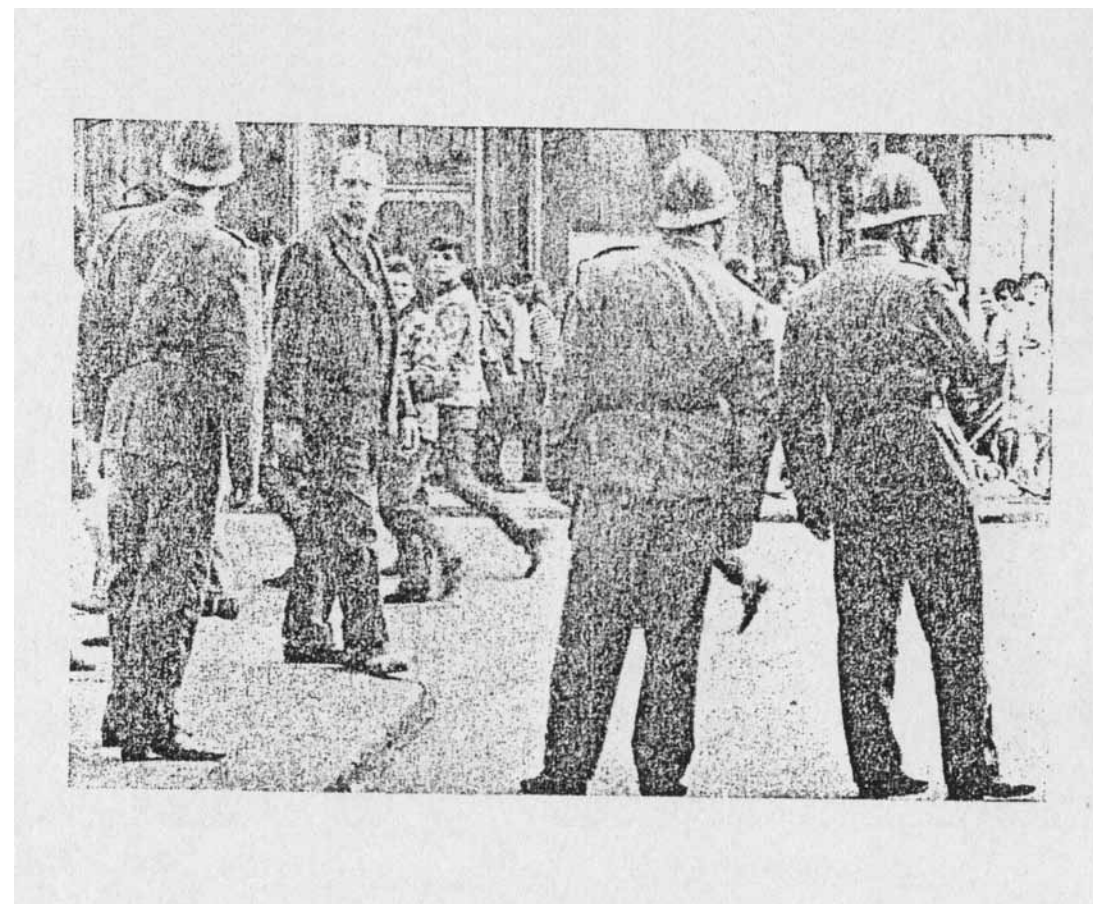
Started on June 2, in the student quarters in New Belgrade, following the commotion about a film screening that was not open to all students. The next day, June 3, three to four thousands student began a 10-km march to downtown Belgrade, where the faculty buildings were situated. About midway the students were halted by the police and clashes ensued.

However, during the following days, students managed to cross the river and occupy some of the faculty buildings, most notably the faculties of Philosophy and Sociology. From the occupied faculty of Philosophy the occupation of other faculties was organised and coordinated. Committees for the elaboration of students’ demands, political agitation and propaganda, and for the construction of student-worker unity were established and a students’ Action Programme was drafted. Students at the other universities in Yugoslavia also started joining in the protests, but the police were working

hard to obstruct the communication between students and especially between the workers and students (see — ŽŽ interview p. 57).

The students demanded a return to the more equal socialist path, actions against the red bourgeoisie, reappearance of the class society, and increasing inequalities, the establishment of a real democracy and self-management relations, and the real autonomy of the university. Demands were communicated via large banners hanging from the faculty buildings bearing slogans such as: “Students, workers and peasants unite against the bureaucrats”, “Tomorrow without those who sold yesterday”, “Down with the red bourgeoisie”, “Show a bureaucrat that he is incapable and he will quickly show you what he is capable of”, “More schools, fewer cars”, and “Brotherhood and equality for all the people in Yugoslavia”. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia promptly started organising reactions to prevent students from gaining popular support. Some days into the unrest, on June 6, students addressed the following open letter to the workers of Yugoslavia: “We are not fighting for our own material interests. We are enraged by the enormous social and economic differences in society. We do not want the working class to be sacrificed for the sake of the ‘reforms’. We are for self-management, but against the enrichment of those who depend on and control the working class. We will not permit workers and students to be divided and turned one against the other. Your interests and our interests are the same, ours are the real interests of socialism”. They hoped that some broader unity would be established between students and workers.

On June 10, when the crisis reached its tipping point, president Tito surprised the nation by supporting the students’ Action Programme. Students celebrated their victory by storming out of the faculties, as their movement had suddenly gained a semi-legal status. Tito’s move effectively de-activated the possibility of the mass movement and most faculties followed the instructions given by the authorities that they should focus on student organisation at faculties, except the students of the faculties of Philosophy and Sociology, that continued, together with



'Student Protests, June 1968'
Riot police on the streets of Belgrade in Želimir Žilnik's
June Movements

interested students from other faculties, to construct a radical critical position towards society as a whole. They justified their claim for a new type of critical university linked to the working class by disputing the role of the League of Communists as the avant-garde of the working class. They claimed that the League of Communists was restoring capitalism in Yugoslavia.

Afraid of the effect of these claims, the police closed the faculties on July 20 and the faculties were expelled from the LCY. As a result of the protests, universities were given the autonomy students were seeking, and the space for more autonomous student culture was established, most notably through student (cultural) centres. However, during the 1970s and later, students became isolated within their institutions and had a diminished impact on the transformation of society, that was, especially after the 'bureaucratic revolution' in 1972 and re-Stalinisation of the country that ensued, increasingly becoming technocratic, consumerist and market driven.

'This festival is a cemetery'

Title of an open letter addressed to the filmmakers and festival visitors and signed by Željimir Žilnik, Bogdan Tirnanić, Slobodan Mašić, Prvoslav Marić and Petar Volk.

1

Attacks forced and organized from the outside on the loyal-critical film experienced a total moral collapse, and today, in a situation that is just seemingly different, everyone rushes to become a protagonist or a proponent of the so called engaged film that is becoming dominant fashion of our always civilly constituted cinematography. From all sides we are flooded with information about how the lowest strata of our society lives, but no one wants to explain us why they live that way, as in that case, one would have to face the question: who rules our lives.

New wave of this quasi-engaged film is only satisfied when, in a search for the details of life that would formally confirm its fake social courage, finds that more picturesque wretch willing to convincingly languish in front of the camera. We are refusing to understand this sudden concern of the film caste as anything other than the new type of faking.

2

Films want to continue resembling the field reports. But reports to whom?

Our documentaries practically don't have any audience other than the ones in festival halls. Making for that audience films on socially weak groups is malice, because they can't relate to them in any other way than as a good fun. We reject to continue making and supporting films that will ideologically relax the audience; it needs to be scared, annoyed, spat at. And that can be possible only when/if in front of the lens is put the new emerging civil class, its exploitative role and moral misery.

Only those films can today be a barometer of freedom and creative range of our film. Our goal is to show that those who bear responsibility for our future don't have anything with quasi-ideological fanaticism of our social films – they cleared away with ideological consciousness long time ago and they are guided by the principles of power, principles of profit, principles of success.

3

The newest manipulation of our film situation is also the thesis on the young Yugoslav film. There is no such film. Those who are declared young are already way passed into middle age, but much worse than that is their total affiliation to the existing production relations and obedient identification with the surrounding they come from.

On this festival there is neither an author nor the film willing to take and bear the risk greater than the risk allowed. In a relation to the world young film our, so called, young cinematography is directly reactionary and represents only continuous reproduction of the old, by evil well known relations in Yugoslav non-selfmanaged cinematography.

4

If we don't want to continue enjoying in our own rot, that is already seriously starting to stink, the next festival must be organized by completely different principles.

Beside projections in this hall, we demand for projections for the people. Alongside the films of producers that for short film get social subvention and are not interested in making any breakthroughs, a works of independent, personal and informal production, films on 16mm and 8mm should be shown.

5

This festival is a cemetery. On this festival everything is a tomb next to a tomb, including of course signatories of this declarations.

7. III 1971.

Tirnanić, Bogdan

(Belgrade, 1941 - Belgrade, 2009).
Journalist, essayist, film critic. Acted in 'Early Works'.

Tom

Experimental, rebellious filmmaker and artist from the bottom of the social ladder. In constant conflict with the ruling system of socialist Yugoslavia. Travels without a penny from Zagreb to Belgrade in pursuit of filmmaking. Somehow manages to survive with the help of women. Film material is Tom's only passion in life. Yet he is being watched by the people in power. In the end he moves in with a girl, which ends tragically. She kills him in a fit of jealousy.

BF

Tri (1965)

'Three' is a black and white feature film directed by Živojin Pavlović and written by Antonije Isaković. Cinematography is by Tomislav Pinter and it has been edited by Mirjana Mitić. The cast includes Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović and Stole Arandelović. Produced by Avala film it has won the 1965 Golden Arena for Best Actor and Best Director at Pula Film Festival of Yugoslav Films and was nominated for the 1967 Oscar for the best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards.

Tribina mladih

(Youth Tribune) Founded in 1954 as the Youth Department of the People's University that was established in the same year. "'Tribina mladih' was the first open, cultural, youth center in territory of Yugoslavia, where were organized diverse debates, lectures and exhibitions. That was the place where, for the first time, were challenged some questions about ideologically rigid society, which people were living in.

The main idea of 'Tribina mladih' was contained in its own title - open 'Tribina', discussion versus academic, ex-cathedra, one channeling principle. Because of its critical discourse, 'Tribina mladih' was derogated many times, but one fact remains that it created unique ambient in Novi Sad these years. It was meeting point for intellectuals from Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade and Skopje, especially when magazine 'Polja' was in question.

Segment of pop culture was not existing; media were poor, newspapers one channelled, TV program informative. Attempt to build one 'Yugoslav cultural space' that would be thrilled by different ideas, disturbed 'local bureaucrats' who entailed internationalism of communist ideology from one side, and anti-fascism from the other. Those structures started to close themselves in the frame of 'regional-socialism', that Žilnik perceives as one of causes of future breakup of country."

Troll

dear general,

don't worry we're from the internet. from the future. anonymous advisers.

our consultancy is direct and unrelenting. you will not hear what you yearn for. you are rigid. and you don't have sense of humor. you have power.

your power and rigidity turn you into the material suitable for sculptures. sculptors are invaders. and like sun tzu teaches us: you must use the path of an invader.

let me tell you story about barbra streisand. first, a little bit of history, in your case: a little bit of future. soon, people will be able to send texts, images, sounds and videos to each other without any delay all around the world. that's what we, from the future, call internet.

in 2003 barbra streisand will try to stop kenneth adelman from publishing a photo of her house. at that moment in reality just few hundred people would see the photo. soon after that, due to her celebrity status, many will publish the news about her attempt and as a result more than half a million people will get to see the photo in the following month. she didn't use the path of an invader, of anonymous sculptor.

that is why when the sculptor wishes for cannons facing each other during the filming: use the path of invader. calm down. and you'll be fine.

don't feed the art with rigidity and power. get the sense of humor. or in the future history will mock you.

anonymous



Udovički, Svetozar

First director of the Neoplanta film production house who opened the door of the young production house to the Black Wave film.

Following the attack on the Black Wave and the shift of Neoplanta's production towards partisan spectacles in 1972, he ceased to be a director and was subsequently fired only to return a decade later to attempt to solve the problems the company has ended up in while producing the failed partisan spectacle 'Large Transport' that turned out to be a flop as well as a completely mismanaged enterprise.

Uloga moje porodice u svetskoj revoluciji

The Role of My Family in the World Revolution (1971) is a colour feature film written by Bato Čengić, Bora Ćosić and Branko Vučićević, directed by Bato Čengić with cinematography by Karpo Godina and edited by Vuksan Luković. The cast includes Milena Dravić, Dragan Nikolić, Milivoje Tomić, Danilo 'Bata' Stojković and Mija Aleksić. Produced by Bosna Film, Sarajevo.

Unemployed (Men and Women)

The self-management and market socialism that Yugoslavia chose meant that it was not possible to solve unemployment by artificially raising quotas as happened in socialist countries with a planned economy. Already in the mid-1960s, after the economical reforms in 1965, unemployment had become an acute problem. To solve it, the state had to open the borders and 'export' the unemployed. Special offices were established within official state employment bureaus that would help people find work placement abroad.

There were two types of work placement available: 1) in 'friendly' non-aligned countries, usually in Africa and the Middle East, in government institutions as what was called technical assistants, usually highly

educated engineers or other professionals; 2) in Western Europe, usually Germany and Switzerland, in various positions ranging from factory workers to nurses, often referred to as *gästarbeiters* (German for guest worker).

Ustanak u Jasku

Uprisa in Jasak (1973) A documentary short written and directed by Želimir Žilnik with cinematography by Milivoje Milivojević and edited by Kaća Stojanović. Produced by Panfilm, Pančevo.

In the film the inhabitants of Jasak, a village in Vojvodina, Serbia, narrate how they contributed to the anti-fascist struggle during the second world war. The film was Žilnik's response to the partisan spectacles of the time, more specifically to the partisan spectacle the 'Large transport' being produced by Neoplanta at the time.

See essay by Owen Hatherley, p. 179

Vidovdan

The "Surfing the Black" conference was held at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht on June 28, 2010 and that cannot have been a coincidence. Anyone who has lived in Yugoslavia will immediately know that this is a mythical date, the date generally referred to as Vidovdan, St. Vitus' day, the date that condenses the entire Yugoslav history and the fate of this ill-doomed country. St. Vitus was a Christian saint from Sicily who died in 303 during the anti-Christian purges conducted by the Roman Emperor Diocletianus.

His day is celebrated on June 15 according to the Gregorian calendar and on June 28 in the places, such as Serbia, where the old Julian calendar is still used as far as the orthodox church is concerned. So let me give you a brief history of Yugoslavia in eight quick and easy lessons, all centered around this simple leitmotiv.

Lesson one. On June 28, 1389 the Serbian army suffered a great defeat at the battle of Kosovo. The battle was fought on Kosovo Polje, a field only a few miles away from Prishtina, the present capital of Kosovo.

The Turks were at the time making their progress through the Balkans, encircling Byzantium, Constantinopolis, which they would eventually capture half a century later. The Serbian feudal lords had then some swerve and independence and the biggest of them was prince Lazar who was leading the Serb army and was famously killed during the battle, as was the sultan Murad I who led the Turks – allegedly he was assassinated by a young Serbian nobleman, Miloš Obilić. It was a fierce battle, with huge losses on both sides, and Serbia did not recuperate from the defeat.

This defeat was immediately turned into the stuff of myths, folktales and songs, extolling the bravery and the martyrdom of the Serbs, so that Kosovo was retroactively seen as the cradle of Serbia and its loss came to epitomize its doom and sacrifice, the trauma around which the Serbian cause was formed. Indeed what followed was 500 years of Ottoman rule during which the Kosovo battle was seen as the inspiration for the rebellion and the movements of national renewal, the mythical motor for the strife for political independence, with Serbia as the grand hero and the grand victim in one. The Turkish rule only ended in the Balkan wars preceding the WWI. The core of the Kosovo problem, which caused so much havoc in the past decades and continues to ignite more, stretches back to that date.

Lesson two. As fate would have it, on June 28, 1914 a young Serbian called Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to Austrian throne, in the streets of Sarajevo. This event notoriously triggered WWI, it is the date which symbolically inaugurated the bloodbath of the twentieth century. This was another empire, and a new incarnation of Miloš Obilić in a re-enactment striking at the core of the empire. This time it worked, the empire eventually indeed crumbled.

Lesson three. On June 28, 1919 the Versailles Treaty was signed, exactly on the fifth anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination. This was the treaty that finished the WWI and one of its consequences was the creation of this new country, Yugoslavia, gathering for the first time in the same state the Southern Slavs who have been

hitherto divided between two empires, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian one. For better or worse.

Lesson four. On June 28, 1921 the newly formed country of Yugoslavia proudly passed its first constitution, generally referred to as the Vidovdan Constitution. Its centralist provisions, in a multi-national country, already announced the troubles to come, and the troubles didn't wait long to come. The constitution was short-lived. In January 1929 king Alexander annulled the constitution which installed him as the monarch and introduced dictatorship to set things right. Only to be assassinated in his turn a few years later.

Lesson five. On June 28, 1948 the Cominform, the body which after WWII took relay from the Comintern (dissolved during the war), proclaimed the notorious resolution which banned the Yugoslav Communist party from the community of Soviet led communist parties. The Cominform leaders must have fully realized the symbolic value of this date to make their impact, and they must have hugely underestimated and misunderstood its ambiguous message. This was a virtual declaration of war on Tito, a ruler deemed too independent for the Stalinist view, but who would not concede defeat. Thus Yugoslavia at that point was forced to start on its own way to socialism, under constant threats from the Soviet bloc countries and walking the thin line of a balance act. This was the beginning of what was to be the Yugoslav path, with the emphatic twin slogans of workers' self-management and the non-alignment in the foreign policy. For the better for the worse.

Lesson six. On June 28, 1989 there was the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Kosovo battle. That was the biggest mass rally in Yugoslav history, and the man presiding over this colossal commemoration was Slobodan Milošević. He presented himself as the man who would now vindicate the fateful history of that day, even more, the man who would now finally win the Kosovo battle, lost 600 years ago, and thus set things right. He staged himself as the hero who will at long last unite all the Serbs and straighten out Yugoslavia. The celebration in Gazimestan, on Kosovo Polje, was his finest hour, his claim to historical grandeur.

Lesson seven. On June 28, 2001 Slobodan Milošević, having lost the elections the previous year and toppled from power, was extradited to the Hague Tribunal for war criminals. The date was most carefully chosen.

Lesson eight. On June 28, 2010 the "Surfing the black" conference at the Jan van Eyck Academie started. This is the celebration of, and the reflection upon, one of the great things that Yugoslavia should be remembered by, something that falls into an entirely different category than the gory history of calamities epitomized by this date. The courageous and lucid movies that a bunch of young Yugoslav filmmakers produced in the sixties and the early seventies are as far removed from the great historical events and their glorification as possible. If anything, they blatantly de-glorify. They rather offer us a tool through which to undo this calamitous history of heroes and victims, and if there is a claim to history, then only through the keen view of harsh realities, the intelligence, the wit, the subtle reflection, the formal invention, the will to experiment and the courage. This is Yugoslavia at its blackest and its brightest.

MD

Village Fair

The villages did not experience the fast modernisation and urbanisation processes that Yugoslavia was undergoing. While in urban surroundings much attention was paid to the development of cultural life and infrastructure, villages were left to make do with the more populist forms of entertainment and the village fair became a symbol of a non-urban surroundings and culture, often looked down upon by the cities.

Vranešević, Predrag and Mladen

Brothers from Novi Sad who started working together in 1971 when they wrote the soundtrack for Karpo Godina's short film 'Litany for Happy People' with lyrics by the poet and musician Branko Andrić. For the

music, that plays a really important part in this film, they were awarded at the Belgrade Festival of Short and Documentary Film, which motivated them to continue composing for film and, later, television. They also continued to collaborate with Karpo Godina. In 1977 they formed a band, Laboratorija zvuka (Sound Laboratory).

Vučičević, Branko

(Belgrade, 1934). Author, translator and scriptwriter, man in the background of many of the Black Wave films and creative advisor for many authors. He collaborated closely with Dušan Makavejev, Karpo Godina and Želimir Žilnik both on developing ideas for the scripts and also behind the camera. He can be seen in film 'I Miss Sonia Henie' as the main interlocutor between the local crew and international directors.

He refers to himself as a kind of "sleeping member" of Fluxus, and he should be credited for spreading the knowledge about the movement in Yugoslavia. In the 1990s, during the wars in Yugoslavia, he coined the (deeply disturbing) term "Serbian cutting" referring to the special type of editing used in Serbian film.

Vujanović, Milja

(Belgrade, 1945 - Belgrade, 2005). Actress and the most beautiful woman in Yugoslavia in 1967. She was the first actress to appear nude in Yugoslavia, in the film "Early Works". In interviews after the film she proudly claimed "I will bare all in films again!". Allegedly, the prize for the best actress was not given at the 1969 Berlinale, because the jury couldn't decide to award it to her or to Geraldine Chaplin.

W.R. – Misterije Organizma

W.R. - Mysteries of the Organism (1971) is a feature film written and directed by Dušan Makavejev with cinematography by Predrag



Popović and Aleksandar Petković and edited by Ivanka Vukasović. The cast includes Milena Dravić, Jagoda Kaloper, Ivica Vidović, Zoran Radmilović, Miodrag Andrić, Tuli Kupferberg, Jacke Curstis, Živka Matić, Nikola Milić, Dragoljub Ivkov and Milan Jelić. Produced by Neoplanta.

The film was banned in Yugoslavia upon its release and was one of the triggers for the big shift in artistic direction of Neoplanta.

Warsaw Pact Invasion on Czechoslovakia

Took place in the night of August 20–21, 1968, when the Soviet Union and its main satellite states (Bulgaria, GDR, Hungary and Poland) invaded CZ in order to halt Alexander Dubček's Prague Spring political liberalization reforms. Happening just after the May '68 student protests, this invasion had a poignant resonance, especially in Yugoslavia.

Youth in 1950s and 1960s

The generation born during or just after WWII was seen in Yugoslavia as the most important part of the population and should be given an opportunity to develop in ways its parents' generation never could. The ideas of social equality and the community's engagement in everyday life was enhanced through various common activities and education.

There was infrastructure, culture houses, camps and workshops. However, they were much more present in urban than rural areas, and village youth was often forgotten and left to fend for itself, which increased the gap between those who decided to move to the cities and those who stayed in rural areas.

Youth Work Action

Organised voluntary labour activities of the youth of Yugoslavia, usually used to build

the much needed public infrastructure (roads, railways) necessary for the country's modernisation. Public buildings and industrial infrastructure were built as well.

YWAs were organised on local, republic and federal levels by the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia. The youth was organised in the youth work brigades. They worked hard, but a lot of cultural activities were organised also. Although more common after the war, the first YWA were organised during WWII in the territories liberated by Yugoslav partisans.

Yugonostalgia

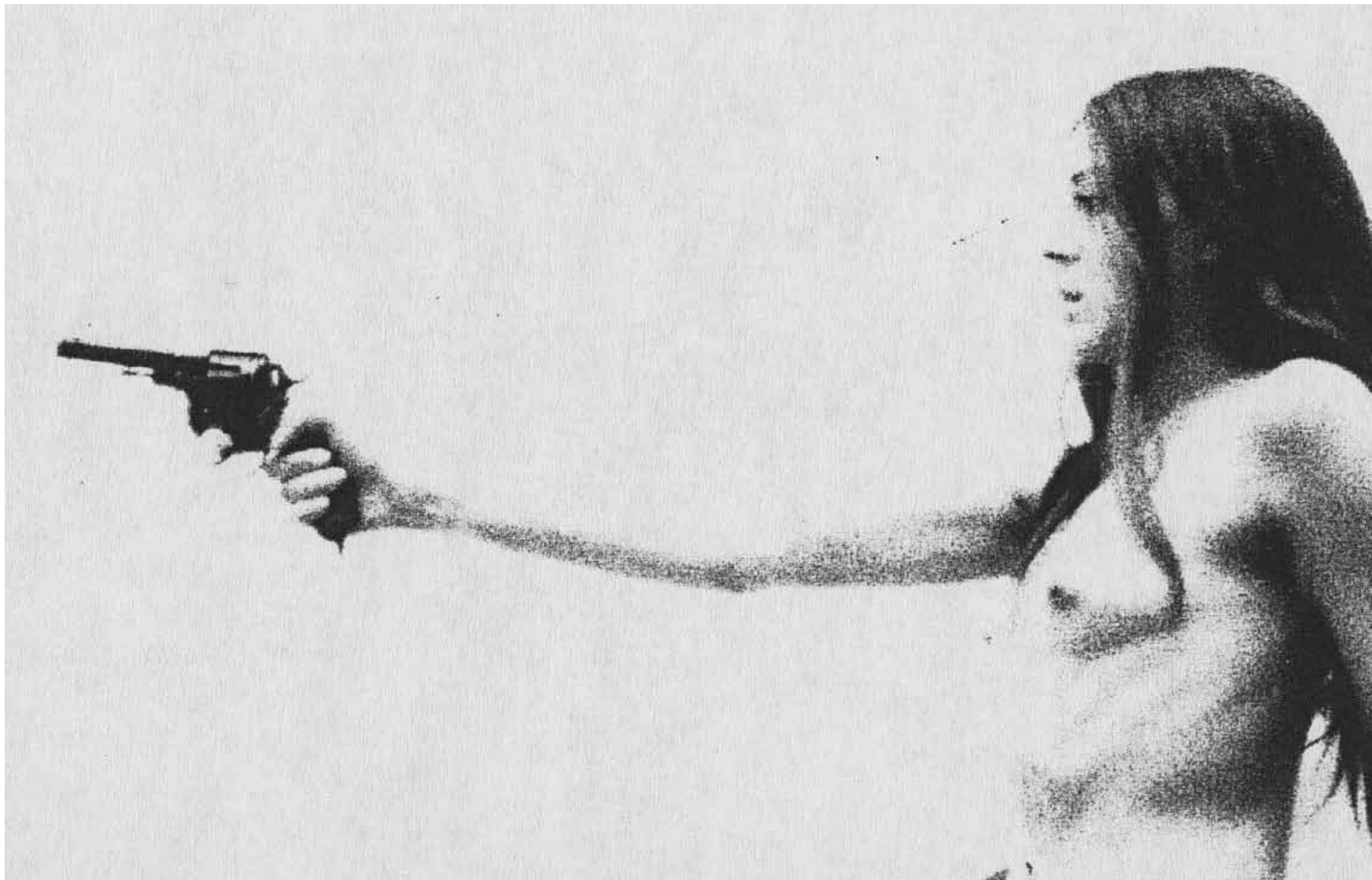
Comes "from below" and could be seen as a form of "passive" resistance to the capitalist transition, extreme nationalism and the recent wars in the Balkans. Yugonostalgia adheres to the idea of the "good old times", a positive image of socialist Yugoslavia in the world and of the idealized great leader Tito. Instead of demonization of the past we encounter the naïve idealization that invents the past that did not really exist. This type of memory is much more polyvalent and critical than anti-totalitarian memory, it is not an official state ideology.

Yugonostalgic motivations and forms are multiple, but they do not always exclude the nationalistic memory or remain on the level of lamentation. Most often Yugonostalgic practices are placed under older patriotic claim of "brotherhood and unity", or demand a more authoritarian politics. Nonetheless the political effects and the cultural translation of Yugonostalgic accounts most often turns into escapism and commodification of memory.

GK

Yugoslavia

When mentioned in this book, Yugoslavia usually refers to the second Yugoslavia, that was formed during WWII and the people's liberation in 1943. During the course of its existence, the second Yugoslavia bore three names: Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (1943), Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1946), and, the most commonly



known, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963). Yugoslavia consisted of six republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two autonomous provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo).

Yugoslav film industry

Inspired by the early period of the Soviet Union, soon after the war Yugoslavia started to found and invest in film production. One of the motivations was to document and show the process of modernisation that the country was undergoing. Due to that ideological decision rather soon a network of well-equipped film studios was established in the capital cities of all republics, as well as an amateur network of cinema clubs.

Yugoslav People's Army

Has its origins in the Yugoslav partisan struggle during WWII. They were part of the antifascist People's Liberation War of Yugoslavia and came into being in the town of Rudo on December 22, 1941 under the name People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. After the Yugoslav Partisans liberated Yugoslavia from the Axis Power, PLAY was renamed the Yugoslav Army, and in 1951 the qualifier People's was added.

Zastava film

Film production department of the Yugoslav People's Army. Filmmakers serving obligatory army duty would often be appointed to Zastava film and produce films during their military service.

Zdravi ljudi za zabavu

Litany of Happy People (1971) is a color documentary short written, directed, shot and edited by Karpo A. Godina with a soundtrack by Peda and Bata Vranešević aka Laboratorija zvuka. Produced by Neoplanta.

The idea to make this film came up when Godina and Žilnik were location-scouting for Žilnik's first feature film 'Early Works'.

See Essay by Boris Buden, p.169

Žilnik, Želimir

(Niš, 1942). Youth spent in political work, edited "Youth Tribune" and "Polja" and made amateur films. Made five documentaries and one feature film. Tried but never convicted. Military training successfully accomplished, often commended. Loves life. Lives in Novi Sad. (Biography from 1971. Promo material for "Black Film")

Orson Welles. In his adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial*, largely shot in and around Zagreb (with some excursions to Paris) and released in 1962, Welles created some of the most striking images of the tower block landscapes now regarded, somewhat contentiously, as typically socialist and 'eastern'.¹⁰ Anthony Perkins' Joseph K lives in a typically neat and ordered open-plan apartment, with deck-access outside, where he has unnerving, nervous amorous encounters with his drunken neighbour. The concrete and steel architecture erected around the outskirts of Zagreb, particularly along the frequently renamed postwar boulevard now named after the town of Vukovar, provided Welles with an alienating new landscape to play with, a particularly thorough and unadulterated essay in Corbusian planning, the equal of anything else in Europe, providing a mute, threatening backdrop to Perkins' plaints and panics.

The most memorable of these location shots takes place in a Zagreb housing estate, where K, leaving his flat, walks along the paths between massive, long Unites d'Habitation, to find an old woman dragging along a clearly crippling heavy suitcase, scraping along the asphalt paths and the expanses of edifying greenery. She angrily rebukes all his attempts to help her, as if they were somehow impertinent. In this brief scene, Welles sketches out, not without wit, some of the stereotypical ideas of what the kind of Modernist planning favoured by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia does to people. The buildings are looming, baffling, with the spaces between them indeterminate and treacherous; even simple acts of human kindness are distrusted here. What makes this critique of a modernist landscape so interesting as a contrast with the black wave is the conspicuous absence of these spaces from most of the works made by the Novi Film's directors. Rather than dwelling on the problems created or otherwise by socialistic rehousing programmes, the films of Makavajev, Žilnik, Petrović and others concentrate on collapsing villages, overcrowded early 20th-century tenements, homelessness or shanty towns, with mud rather than concrete assumed to be the main source of social ills.

Perhaps this absence is political, an omission dictated by a refusal to assent in the propaganda showcases of the regime, stressing the embarrassing persistence of grinding and usually rural poverty in the context of a massive modernising project. It's also just possible this depiction of picturesque Balkan misery is what endeared them to awards judges in Berlin or Cannes, who always enjoy local colour and folksy proletarian grotesques. In the

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For further reading on Welles' *Trial*, see the articles by Mladen Dolar, Alexander Garcia Duttman and Peter Szendy collected in the Zagreb journal *Frakcija*, issue 53/4.

most politically and historically self-conscious of these works – Makavajev’s *Switchboard Operator* and *WR – Mysteries of the Organism* – another modernist, socialist project is remembered and ambiguously continued, the attempts to transform what the early Soviet avant-garde called *Byt*, or everyday life, considered in its most grimly mundane form, as a hard to eradicate remnant of pre-revolutionary moralities and conformities. Many of them considered architecture as a means of transforming *Byt*, something which, as we have seen, was attempted especially seriously in the collective housing briefly popular in the late 1920s - which provided an obvious architectural precedent to the Modernism of Welles’ Zagreb. The films of the black wave show an attentiveness both to a modernising but far from modernist landscape, and the extremely ambiguous attempts to eradicate *Byt* from this landscape, which frequently condemns or patronises rather than attempting to seriously engage with the legacy of what Marx and Engels called ‘rural idiocy’; but what they do not appear to critique is the socialist project of modernisation *as such*.

‘I am entertaining myself in this wasteland!’

To catch a particularly relentless and unnerving glimpse of the kinds of spaces that Welles’ Zagreb tried to replace, the mid-1960s films of Aleksandar Petrović are particularly instructive. Here, both the built and natural environment are brutally unforgiving, without being ‘brutalist’ in the architectural sense. This can be found as early as *Three*, Petrović’s 1965 panoramic Second World War drama, although naturally it deals with a pre-revolutionary landscape, but one which, as the site of partisan struggles can be considered as the crucible in which a socialist consciousness was formed. The first and second of the three vignettes are especially interesting in this regard – in the first, we have a peasant mob who first show enough bravery and solidarity to raid and loot a consignment of military supplies, and then minutes later they wilfully condemn an innocent man to death by firing squad solely because they noted he ‘wasn’t from round here’ and hence was obviously the ‘fifth column’. In the second and central part of the film we find an awesome and terrifying landscape of rocky outcrops, marshland and ubiquitous slurry, which two lost partisans attempt to traverse, followed by a far better equipped SS brigade. The landscape is as much their enemy as the Nazis, and Petrović frequently uses dazzling aerial tracking shots to depict it, a Luftwaffe’s eye view, of something vast and bitterly inhumane.

This becomes much more pointed in the slightly later colour films of rural life in the Socialist Federal Republic, their titles usually rendered in English as *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967) and *It Rains in My Village* (1968). *Happy Gypsies* – or *The Feather Buyer*,

in the original – is the best known of these films, an occasionally shocking, unrelenting and partially ethnographic depiction of a Romany community in Sombor, Vojvodina. First of all, this is clearly an economy untouched by anything which could be described as ‘socialism’, based on fairly desperate small-time trading and graft. This isn’t due to this being some sort of enclave of petty capitalism, though – as one of them comments, ‘a crooked gypsy or a crooked worker, what’s the difference?’ The state exists mainly to reprimand the characters – though here the gypsies have good proletarian instincts, responding to a police visit with a curt refusal to give any evidence. In terms of the landscape, we do see glimpses of small-town Hapsburg elegance and a skyline of factory chimneys in the distance in Sombor, but mostly the depiction is of tiny, practically prehistoric shacks, with minuscule windows and thatched roofs, just a few decades and a lot of money short of becoming theme-park tourist attractions when their residents are swept out; and then there’s the utterly ubiquitous mud, through which the characters trudge, often fully aware of the grimness of their fate; as one peripheral character exclaims, here there is practically ‘nothing but mud!’

‘Belgrade’, as a dream and reality of the big city, is not much better for the film’s protagonists. They may dream of it, watching it on the televisions that one character is reduced to recurring, comic attempts to pawn – at one point we see it on screen as a swinging ‘60s utopia of skyscrapers, beat groups, twanging guitars, girls on Vespas and fresh-faced dancing youth – which Petrović quickly cuts in with locals bouncing around cheerfully in the mud-tracks between the houses. Yet for the young woman who does briefly escape, the capital is a shanty town even worse than the shacks in Sombor, and in one brief scene, a carceral tenement block whose staircases she attempts to serenade with gypsy songs for cash. Aside from the likelihood that the gypsies’ shacks would have by now become a tourist attraction, there is nothing in this film that suggests we are in anything other than an entirely capitalist, developing country.

In the subsequent film, released abroad as *It Rains in My Village* but best rendered literally as *The End of the World Is Nigh*, questions associated with the 1920s’ Communist avant-garde are investigated in a very different way to the films of Dušan Makavajev, as we shall see later. The landscape is centred around a ruin, a large gutted church, and we see a remarkably Edwardian looking wedding in the introduction – yet this time-warp appearance is superficial, and a couple of minutes later we find someone wandering around in front of a Pepsi insignia. So far, we could be in 1960s Greece, Turkey, anywhere else in southern Europe that exports *Gastarbeiter*. And again, there is mud, mud everywhere, and picturesque folksiness – in this case via the bitter, apocalyptic songs sung with gusto by the local band.

This changes when a ‘real city girl’ enters, a painter, specialising in vaguely Latin American magic realism with a line in flying pigs, a mannered peasant style, who arrives to teach in the village school. Her rhetoric, or at least her phraseology, is socialist – she’s the first person in the film to call anyone ‘comrade’, and straight-away gets her arse ogled for her trouble. She soon takes a picturesque peasant lover, the pretty but unsophisticated Trisha, who she jilts as soon as he becomes serious about her – in the no doubt somewhat simplified English translation, she curtly says ‘you peasants are interesting, but not for long’. Although in another director’s hands her frank sexuality would be vitalised into an earthy, rustic life-force, here it is something rather malevolent, a nihilism that accords with Alexandra Kollontai’s (misattributed) Glass of Water theory of sexual intercourse, later referenced in *WR*. This is soon reversed, as the painter receives her comeuppance at the hands of another character fond of vaguely socialistic rhetoric. In this sense, for all its surrealism, the film is rather close to Stalinist orthodoxy, for all its ostensible non-conformism – a sexually honest woman is perfidious, her politics a mere cover for her wantonness, and any meeting of intellectuals and peasants is necessarily exploitative; though in this, it is at least more unexpected than Makavejev’s Marxist-Feminist heroines.

A pilot who flies a crop-spraying plane crashes in the village, bringing to it the dynamism of modernity – later, an increasingly unstable Trisha tattoos a plane onto his chest. The pilot is explicitly embarking on a war upon nature, an attempt to subjugate it to human will; he and the painter share some contempt for the ‘earth’ and all it entails, and have a brief affair, which here soon ends in much the same cynical manner as she does her previous dalliance. What is interesting here is that the villagers’ problem with the pilot is not that he is disrupting their age-old life, altering their crops, worrying their sheep and so forth; but the fact that he gets to fly around and they do not.

In a pivotal scene, Party representatives, carrying pictures of Che, Tito and Lenin, turn up to literally remind them of their vanguard’s existence; after the initial query of ‘what are you doing here in this wasteland?’ the villagers demand that ‘every village should have a plane!’ and mutter angrily about the ‘red bourgeoisie’ – they don’t fear modernity, they desire it, and are bitterly discontented by its absence. Much as Petrović revels in the customs, songs and general local colour, he shows a relentlessly miserable landscape – in terms both of the buildings and the countryside they sit in – and a people desperate to leave, itching to escape. Yet as the farcical ‘election’ that ends the film makes clear, they remain entirely peripheral. The contempt for the peasantry and for the muddy wastes of the countryside recurs in Želimir

Žilnik’s *Early Works* (1969), where the young Communists are literally dragged through the mud, beaten and abused, for their – rather less immediately patronising, but equally disconnected – attempts to bring revolutionary culture to the peasantry. ‘I am happy’, comments one, ‘that peasants will no longer exist after Communism’. Accordingly, for all their moments of solidarity against outsiders, there is no sense that these rural spaces could be remotely socialist – and any Party visitors begin with that assumption.

A later film of Žilnik’s challenges this in an only partly parodic fashion. *Uprising in Jazak* (1973) asks the surviving villagers in an area whose partisans were especially committed and successful in the antifascist struggle to, in the contemporary parlance, ‘re-enact’ their actions, which the now-ageing partisans embark upon in a gleefully untrained, yet theatrical fashion – it’s Socialist Realism of a particularly warped sort, an upbeat film about heroic revolutionary deeds, but which prioritises real people describing real events, and takes its power and pathos from that, evoking both Eisenstein’s use of non-actors playing themselves in his collectivisation film *The General Line*, and the Proletcult promise of workers creating their own forms; except the directorial eye is more quizzical than that suggests. Like the villagers of *The End of the World Is Nigh*, they speak in amazed terms about their amazed first encounters with aeroplanes, though this time it’s the planes of the Nazi occupiers, and their task is to shoot them down. The villagers are clearly enormously excited by the task of describing their deeds, which makes their actions and re-enactments, on a tiny budget and with inadequate props, feel sometimes absurd.

One question that comes to mind, though, looking at this village, is – what has the revolution done for them? We’re still in mud and dilapidated dwellings (the former is referenced by one old woman as a soft place to hide from the Fascists), and the fact that the only people we see are the ageing, poor villagers means that Jazak appears as a place from which all young people have disappeared, a place condemned to die. That said, the film ends in ambiguous affirmation, with socialism symbolised in ambiguous socialist realist style through a tractor, expropriated from the Nazi occupiers. This is surely (albeit affectionate) parody, with Žilnik visibly grinning from behind the camera. The solidarity of Jazak’s partisans is still very palpable, and in that sense it is a socialist space – but whether the village has really been transformed by socialism is another, less easily answered question. Nonetheless, *Uprising in Jazak* is a frankly endearing reminder that, as Raymond Williams put it, contra the anti-peasant strains in Marxism, the ‘rural idiots’ and the ‘barbarians and semi-barbarians’ have been, for the last forty years, the main revolutionary force in the world’.

Vermin, almost as much as mud, is a recurring motif of these films, most obviously in the personal cataclysm catalogued in Živojin Pavlović's fittingly named *The Rats Woke Up* (1967), where, as in Makavejev's *The Switchboard Operator* the same year, the dispatch of rodents flirts with political allegory. The film depicts an urban, but still decidedly dilapidated and corrupt environment; and again, one whose 'socialist' component is conspicuous by its absence. The film documents a crumbling early twentieth century tenement urbanism, and its characters live in sweatily close proximity to each other, giving them a means of prurient sexual surveillance a little reminiscent of Welles' Corbusian Zagreb; in one especially striking scene, a Piranesian communal staircase replete with Victorian ornament and criss-crossing washing lines is the scene of a prostitute's transaction. Elsewhere, there is a grimly peri-urban hinterland of factories and slaughterhouses, of pornographic photos hoots in singularly depressing industrial spaces. The central character is an ordinary citizen on a descent into the underworld, a man who was 'taught something for twenty years' until he had to 'forget it in 24 hours', and again, this descent takes place in a landscape which is mean, low and traditionalist, rather than dominant, large-scaled and modernist. In the telling concluding scene, we see a line of commuters wading across thick mud underneath a shiny, dramatically cantilevered new road bridge, the modernity of which doesn't seem to have transferred to the space below.

Pavlović's later *When I Am Dead And Pale* takes a sweeping view across Yugoslav society, starting from another muddy village and progressing through industrial sites and new flats to the capital. Its protagonist, Jimmy Barka, has a Beatle hairdo and later a moustache, and is caught between consumerist modernity and an older world, and is regarded with suspicion by both for his unwillingness to work. Early on, for instance we see him trying to get his fiancé a job in a laundromat (whose pristine whiteness is a vivid contrast with the dark wastes all around), but he himself moves from unemployment to a semi-accidental attempt to become a singer, initially of folk songs. He uses his sexuality to get by, as does his partners, one of whom manages to procure him an article as the hot new singer by sleeping with a newspaper critic.

Sex is strikingly commodified in the film, a means to an end used by both men and women, seemingly equal and unromanticised but far from emancipatory – several leagues away from the Reichian Sexpol of Makavejev. It takes place in a landscape of dirty rooms and barracks with pornographic pictures pinned to the wall, of shanty towns and wastelands – in one especially striking scene, his fiancé gets dressed in a shack surrounded by old tyres, piles of wood and scrap metal. The Self-Management society he moves

through, largely unobserving, is one where privileged bosses cajole workers out of strikes via promises of entertainment ('against whom are you striking? This is a workers' state', he reminds them), where new flats exist, but where we only see their interior, private spaces, and where army manoeuvres and socialist rhetoric are both largely for show. Money is paramount – in one scene, he meets his estranged fiancé, now a thief, on the outskirts of Belgrade. She hands him some money she has filched, and he rubs it longingly against his cheek.

What is particularly clear is that Jimmy Barka is treated by all levels of society as a peasant, and hence as a useless element in the new society, his status as a lumpen remnant stressed through the folk songs he tries to earn money by singing (badly). The workers disapprove, snapping at him derisively 'play a song for workers, not farmers – workers, you cretin, *proletariat*' – and so do the metropolitan consumer audience. At a talent contest, he comes on after various pop turns – renditions of the Monkees' 'Daydream Believer', Chuck Berry's 'Memphis Tennessee' – and his out-of-tune folksy attempt gets him practically thrown off stage, to racialised calls of 'enough with these Turks!' His eventual fate, being shot in an outhouse as a football game among the mud and barracks of his home village takes place around him, is not presented so much as tragedy as grim inevitability – the gunshots don't even stop the game. As a portrayal of those who fell through the cracks of society, of those that were superfluous waste products for both official socialism and the new incipient consumerism, the film is horribly convincing. But as a panoramic picture of a society, *When I am Dead and Pale* is so relentlessly bleak that the Party ideologists' case that the Black Wave would efface the actual achievements of socialism from the historical record by showing only its flaws seems more sympathetic. There must surely have been more than this.

Slightly more hope is held out in Makavejev's *Man is not a Bird* (1965), which is nonetheless the film of his which most resembles these trudges through muck and misery. There is much glass smashing and folk singing, but here it is mingled with a heroine who, at least in one handbag-swinging scene, seems a Yugoslav version of Julie Christie in John Schlesinger's *Billy Liar*, a young and effervescent woman clearly bent on escape from her provincial, industrial town. But we're also very far from the Northern English city of Schlesinger's film, as here we're dealing with an industrial revolution in progress, where the monumental processes of mining and smelting take place in what is still essentially a village, and a startlingly stunted one at that. An affair between her and a seemingly heroic, self-effacing and much older socialist engineer initially promises much, but is stopped in its tracks by proprietorial and traditional sexuality – specifically, in this case, the sense of the house and the family as something inviolable.

The engineer is staying at the guesthouse owned by the heroine's parents, and not long after they enter into an entirely consensual relationship, he is thrown out for, in a metaphorical sense, misunderstanding a monetary transaction – 'we let you stay in our house, but our daughter was not part of the deal!' Throughout, this blasted landscape of heavy industry and flimsy housing is one of deceptive surfaces, where the heroic workers that schoolchildren are shown on a tour turn out to be vicious, drunken wife-beaters, and where a factory performance of the 'Ode to Joy' and a coupling in a car are seen as equally valid means of escape. Again, we have no socialist spaces here – even the factory floor-cum-concert hall remains a space of ceremony and a not only sartorial class divide. The film's title appears to be derived from Brecht's poem 'The Tailor of Ulm', a catalogue of initial failure and eventual success, and accordingly Makavejev would go on to sketch out the tentative outlines of a more socialistic space.

Forwards in Time

Socialist Realism was a doctrine stressing the need not to show life merely as it is, but as it will be – something shunned by the Black Wave, for obvious reasons. Yet there is one major attempt to hold out some sort of viable future space, and as much as it is a film of the late '60s Zeitgeist, it delved back into the 1920s for inspiration. The decline of bourgeois sexual mores via Sexpol and communalisation was perceived by Wilhelm Reich in the late 1920s to be tentatively creating in the USSR 'the economic outlines of a future sex hygiene of the masses', sexually matter of fact without prurience, which he argued was halted by Stalinism.¹¹ *The Switchboard Operator* (1967) and *WR - Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) consciously resurrect this Reichian spectre along with the techniques of the Constructivist avant-garde. The two films were sporadically banned, with the latter having the rare honour of suppression in both communist and capitalist countries (as did Reich himself) and is still only available in the UK in a bowdlerised version.

The earlier of the two films is coldly striking in its combination of perversity and sobriety. Given the cumbersome but telling original title *Love Dossier – the Tragedy of a Switchboard Operator*, it plays constantly with official discourse, be it police or medical – but it opens with the question, asked again after its abandonment after the

1920s; 'will man be remade?' This then sharply cuts to an (actual) lecture by an ageing, diminutive sexologist, giving what will become the New Left orthodoxy of the naturalness of sexuality, to be demolished by Foucault a few years later with much glee. With a tone that suggests the discussion of the finer points of flora and fauna as much as it does human sexuality, we are told of the freedom from repression of other cultures, who even have a place for sex in their religions, of how sexuality has always been a subject for artists, not out of pleasure, mind, but out of 'an interest in man's environment' – cut to a montage of pornographic engravings and Roman phalluses.

We're now in the heart of mid-60s consumer urbanism, listening in on two fashionably dressed young women, working in the centre of communications technology that is the switchboard, facilitating technologically the old stories of *amores* and interrupted dialogues. The two girls walk around gossiping about their sexual history, in a city marked by traffic noise, glass and steel, noticeable only as non-'western' when the girls see a poster of Mao having his tie put on by some adoring children, then a huge banner of Lenin being unfurled over a building. While over the soundtrack a deafening Party anthem plays, we see an odd parade, the street being lined with floats of consumer goods, the camera catching a giant tube of toothpaste. The focus shifts again, this time to one of these young women being pulled naked from a well, then to a criminologist, whose manner, though somewhat more swaggering, evokes that of the sexologist – the same list of data, the same collections of curios in the service of the argument. So we already know what is going to happen to one of these women, and we are asked to make the assumption that their obvious sexuality is in some way the cause of their demise.

Particularly, we begin with a mistrust of the lover she takes, Ahmed, who is a shy Bosnian Party member and former partisan now working – of course - as a ratcatcher; we see him piling up rats on a pyre, in front of a large modernist government building, implying that the struggle against nature and vermin continues. Our immediate suspicion, and association of sex and death, become more and more difficult to sustain in the calm serenity of the film's sex scenes, depicted with an undemonstrative slowness, the two suspended from the bombastic Party festivals going on outside. In the scene where Isabella, who we know is imminently going to be killed, seduces Ahmed, she uses a 'wonderful old Soviet film' being shown on television as bait of some sort. The film is in fact Dziga Vertov's monumentalisation of coal mining, *Enthusiasm – Symphony of the Donbas*, and specifically its montage of the destruction of churches. While we know the two are fucking in the background, the film plays and we see the steeples of churches, pointing at phallic angles via the vertiginous camera angles, shaking until being torn down to huge cheers, punctuating until the final hoisting of a red flag over the church – and the lovers, sated.

11

On this connection – essentially Makavejev's reuniting of Eisenstein and Reich, who were themselves briefly interested in each other's work - see Raymond Durgat's *WR – Mysteries of the Organism* (London, BFI, 1999).

Makavejev uses Vertov's own methods of defamiliarisation and disjointed montage, his marshalling of fact into obviously formed works, but here in the sections of society Vertov himself didn't quite mention. Our couple's domesticity, in cramped, pre-modernist circumstances, is what is especially noticeable, such as in the rather touching scenes of quotidian life that make up much of the film – cooking, showering together, and memorably pottering around alone in a courtyard to the sound of Ernst Busch declaiming a Mayakovsky poem, set by Hanns Eisler. The strident and swinging music and the declarations that the movement is going 'forwards in time!' sit disjunctively but appropriately with the carnal idyll set up here. The collective space of the courtyard contains only the two of them.

I Still Dream of Orgonon

In *WR*, the critique is widened to the totality of late 60s society, in particular in the USA and of course Yugoslavia, which nonetheless provides the film's centre - the figure of the declamatory Reichian prophetess Milena, who we first see reading a party paper, dumping her unreconstructed proletarian lover ('remnant of our glorious past!'), and benignly noting her flatmate fucking a young conscript crying 'forward, people's army!' We see the consumer communist society of *The Switchboard Operator* tottering, as said ex-lover builds barricades against the 'red bourgeoisie', fights police, and she turns a walk round her apartment block into a Reichian sermon against Stalinist sexual oppression. Dressed in a uniform, she calls at a growing crowd 'free love is where the October revolution failed... politics attracts those whose orgasm is incomplete!' The tenants link arms and sing ribald versions of party anthems and she is carried aloft as Communist heroine.

Then we have a romance. Milena meets a people's artist. His name is Vladimir Ilyich, and he's a Russian dancer. Though her friends don't approve of his 'revolutionary art in the costumes of Tsarism' she is smitten. So we see her and friends try and convert him to their self-management sexpol, in the licentious space of their shared apartment. Milena tries everything to shock Vladimir Ilyich, she compares Reich and that other Soviet unperson Leon Trotsky: W.R is 'World Revolution' as well as 'Wilhelm Reich'. Her naked flatmate waves her legs in the air. He calmly says 'this sounds like the theory of Alexandra Kollontai that revolution does away with marriage', implying that the USSR has transcended such frippery. 'You want permanent revolution and permanent orgasm.' Her ex-lover crashes through the wall and locks Vladimir Ilyich in a cupboard, which we soon discover is in fact an Orgone Accumulator. Milena is blithely unconcerned at this violating of the walls of her apartment by 'highly skilled worker Radmilovic': as we've seen in her

apartment block agitprop, private space is, for her, always convertible into public space, whose inhabitants can be marshalled into those lusty versions of Party chants.

The argument in *WR* is as spatial as much as political – it is telling that Milena's demise occurs in the muddy countryside, rather than the apartment block where she agitates. In all cases it's a debate *between* socialists. Milena and Vladimir Ilyich argue with each other in quotes from Lenin; she throws at him the famous lines from *The State & Revolution* that 'when freedom exists there will be no state', he retorts with the line that listening to the *Appassionata* makes one want to 'pat on the head' one's enemies rather than destroying them. *WR* is a total presentation of the internal debate within Marxism and the Marxist avant-garde itself, against its repressive proponents and for its original promises. As such, it presents a space which resembles neither the ultra-modernist paranoia of Orson Welles' Zagreb or the rustic chaos of Aleksandar Petrović's Sombor. In Milena and her friends' apartment block there is a *communal* space, where ferocious and hilarious political debates flare up in stairwells, and where 'highly skilled workers' crash through the walls to make their points rather than muttering at the back of meetings; and where someone reads communist theory as her flatmates copulate in the corner. The spaces in Welles, Pavlović and Petrović's films could to greater or lesser extents have been replicated in any other 20th century capitalist time and place, but both are dead spaces when set against *WR*'s throwing open of spatial and social possibility.

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Surfing the Black

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and its Transgressive Moments

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